



October 25, 2010

Meeting Report: Non-Point Source Pollution Project

Background:

The Alberta Water Council (AWC) set up a Project Team at the June 24 meeting of the Council to look into non-point source (NPS) pollution issues in Alberta. I am representing the CSWG on this project.

Point source pollution can be defined as contamination that enters a water body that has a well defined point of origin and/or discharge; it often stems from a single source/conduit. Point source pollution is more readily measured and controlled. Non-point source pollution in surface water is the focus of this project.

The Project Team has applied for funding from the Innovative Approaches Program in Growing Forward. The CSWG, Intensive Livestock Working Group and the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association are signatories on a letter of support as part of the grant application because these groups represent agriculture and all have representatives on the Project Team. The grant will allow for more extensive work, however, the project will proceed with or without the grant. A final report is expected in the fall of 2011.

Project Scope:

The project team has four main tasks:

1. Develop a working definition of NPS pollution
2. Determine the current state of knowledge of NPS pollution data, science, and the management of NPS pollution in general and in Alberta in particular
3. Examine the tools used to manage NPS pollution
4. Make recommendations to allow better management of NPS contaminant loadings in our watersheds.

The team has developed a draft definition as noted below. Consultants will carry out tasks 2 and 3 and the team will develop the recommendations based on the consulting reports. Draft

recommendations are expected to be presented to the AWC by June 2011 with release of the final report in the fall of 2011.

Draft Definition:

Non-point source pollution is contamination that enters a water body from diffuse points of discharge and has no single point of origin; it often has origins and discharges that are small, widespread and difficult to pin point.

Supporting Characteristics:

- Diffuse points of discharge that are not easily identifiable and can be sporadic
- Difficult to prevent, measure, control, quantify and manage
- Associated with particular land uses, as opposed to individual points of origin and/or discharge
- Common NPS can originate from activities related to agriculture, forestry, urban, mining, construction, roads/streets, recreation, hydraulic modification (i.e. dams, channels), hydro modification
- Transported by rain water, snowmelt, runoff, air deposition and groundwater
- These discharges to surface water are often not regulated or covered by an approval or code of practice

Team Members:

Ken Banister – Energy Resources Conservation Board

Laura Bowman – Environmental Law Centre

Yin Deong – City of Calgary

John Englert – Alberta Transportation

Andrea Kalischuk – Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Roger Kelley – Trout Unlimited

John Kolk – Intensive Livestock Working Group

Bernd Manz – Aquatera Utilities Inc. (representing AUMA)

Sharon McKinnon – Crop Sector Working Group

Ron McMullin – Alberta Irrigation Projects Association

Stephanie Neufeld – EPCOR Water Services Inc.

Dwight Oliver – Councillor, Clearwater County

Tracy Scott – Ducks Unlimited

Jay White – Alberta Lake Management Society