WHAT IS THE WATER MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND AND CAPITAL REGION?

The Water Management Framework for the Industrial Heartland and Capital Region presents a collaborative, cumulative effects management approach to protect the water quality of the North Saskatchewan River from Devon to Pakan, which is directly impacted by both point and non-point sources.

The Framework considers two main issues: water quantity and water quality. According to the Framework, water quality needs to be managed to ensure that the river can maintain aquatic life and support current and future industrial development, and population growth. For more information visit the Capital Region Cumulative Effects Management website and the 8 Years of Implementation Progress Report.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Modelling and other tools to support cumulative effects management are being developed and maintained to maximize water quality knowledge and improve decision-making processes in support of Framework goals. The following are milestones that are furthering the implementation of the Framework:

- **Water Quality Objectives and Maximum Allowable Loads** for the Devon to Pakan Reach – Complete. Maximum Allowable Loads and Water Quality Objectives are the benchmarks that can be used to tell us if the river is beyond its capacity to assimilate waste.

- **Effluent Characterization Program** describes monitoring and reporting requirements for industrial effluent directly entering the Devon to Pakan Reach – Developed and currently being delivered by facilities in collaboration with Alberta Environment and Parks. Clauses related to this program are being incorporated in approvals.

- **Effluent Management Program** – A next step on the road to managing river water quality, using results from the Effluent Characterization Program. The Effluent Management Program will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders beginning in 2016-2017. Clauses related to this program are being incorporated into approvals.
WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE FRAMEWORK AND WHY DO WE NEED STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT?

The Framework prioritizes a continued desire to better understand the river condition, and aims to maintain or improve water quality while supporting economic development and population growth in the Capital Region. The quality and availability of the water in the North Saskatchewan River is fundamentally important to the population and economic activity of the Capital Region. Because of its importance, prudent use and management of this resource is critical to support future growth.

The Framework demonstrates Alberta’s dedication to a cumulative effects management approach to improving water quality in the North Saskatchewan River, including a multi-stakeholder approach. The Framework provides a model for other regional water management frameworks. Industry, municipalities, utilities, and the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance representatives have been actively engaged in the development of the Framework through their participation on a multi-stakeholder committee that provides strategic advice to Alberta Environment and Parks on Framework implementation. Other vehicles for engagement, such as one-on-one consultations and focus groups, have also allowed a multi-stakeholder perspective to be incorporated into the work that supports the Framework. With a better understanding of the pressures and challenges stakeholders face and the opportunities they have available, Alberta Environment and Parks can ensure that management actions have taken into account social and economic considerations while achieving environmental outcomes. Stakeholder forums help provide advice on communicating actions and progress to the public in a way that promotes transparency and accountability.

The Water Management Framework for the Industrial Heartland and Capital Region will be incorporated into the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan. The multi-stakeholder advisory committee guiding the implementation of the Water Management Framework for the Industrial Heartland and Capital Region will continue to perform a vital function and be the vehicle to provide advice to Alberta Environment and Parks on managing water quality in the Devon to Pakan Reach of the North Saskatchewan River.