

# Transboundary Waters Secretariat

## Purpose

The Transboundary Waters Secretariat (TWS) works cooperatively with neighbouring jurisdictions to ensure Alberta receives its water entitlements and meets its obligations under existing inter-jurisdictional water management agreements. Where agreements do not exist, TWS works to develop such agreements.

## Organizational Location

Situated within Alberta Environment and Park's Strategy Division, Watershed Adaptation and Resilience Branch.

## Key documents pertaining to Transboundary Waters Secretariat's mandate

### International Boundary Waters Treaty (1909)

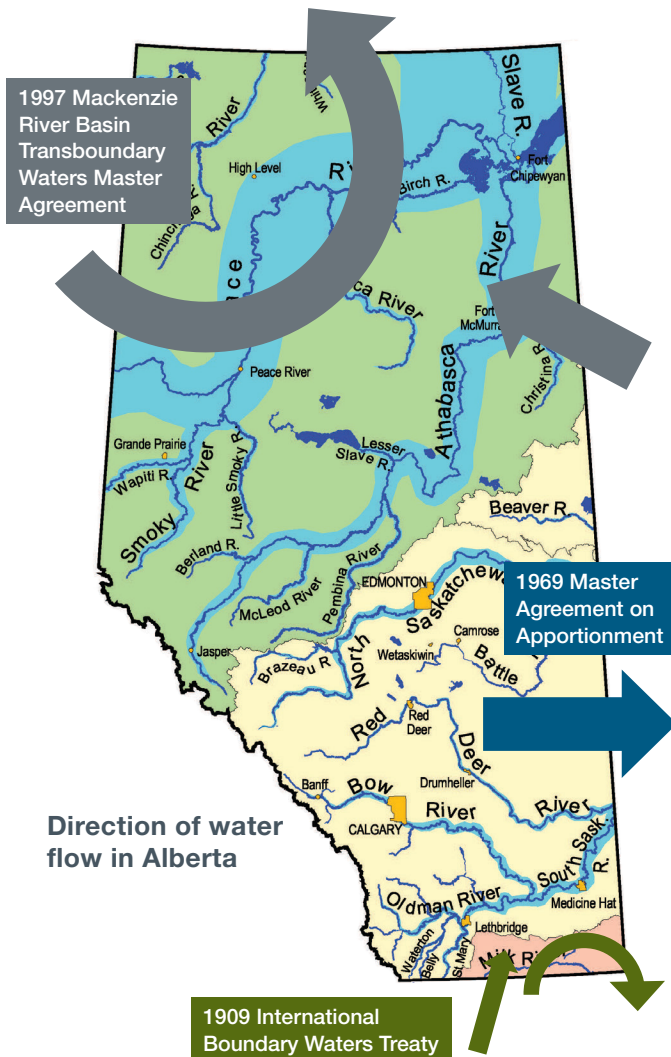
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-17/FullText.html>

- The 1909 International Boundary Waters Treaty Act is a treaty between Canada and the United States which established the International Joint Commission (IJC).
- The treaty established the principles for each jurisdiction to follow to manage joint waters, including the apportioning of the St. Mary River and Milk River.
- Issues with inter-jurisdictional water management resulted in the IJC clarifying and providing flexibility to the apportionment.
- The 1921 Order of the International Joint Commission on the Administration of the Waters of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers.
- The 2001 Letter of Intent to Better Utilize the Waters of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers.

### Master Agreement on Apportionment (MAA) (1969)

<https://www.ppwb.ca/information/79/index.html>

- An interprovincial agreement on waters flowing east from Alberta to Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- The MAA is managed and implemented through the Prairie Provinces Water Board.
- The agreement includes water apportionment obligations, and water quality and groundwater commitments.



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- **Bilateral agreement under MAA that affects Alberta:**
- Schedule A - An apportionment agreement between Alberta and Saskatchewan (<https://www.ppwbc.ca/information/110/index.html>).

**Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement (1997):**

<https://www.mrbb.ca/information/31/index.html>

- An interprovincial agreement on water shared between British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, and Yukon.
- The Master Agreement is managed and implemented by the Mackenzie River Basin Board.
- The Parties are to manage the shared waters to maintain the ecological integrity of the aquatic ecosystem. This includes consideration for water quantity, quality, biology, groundwater, climate change, and incorporation of traditional knowledge.

**Bilateral Agreements under the Mackenzie River Basin Master Agreement that affect Alberta include:**

- Alberta-Northwest Territories Bilateral Water Management Agreement (BWMA) signed in 2015
- British Columbia-Alberta Bilateral Water Management Agreement – negotiations ongoing
- Alberta-Saskatchewan Bilateral Water Management Agreement – negotiations ongoing

**Highlights**

- Reports for the Montana-Alberta St. Mary & Milk Rivers Water Management Initiative
- *AB-NWT BWMA First Annual Report 2015-16*
- AB-NWT BWMA 2016-17 Annual Report (to be released shortly)

**Future Focus**

- Development of BWMA with British Columbia and Saskatchewan for shared waters in the Mackenzie River Basin.
- Engagement with Indigenous groups on the bilateral agreements
- Working with other divisions in Environment and Parks, as well as other ministries and agencies to meet the commitments of the inter-jurisdictional agreements.
- Working towards developing resiliency to climate change within inter-jurisdictional water management agreements.

