



our story 2007-08

ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS



minister's message

I want to thank the staff at Alberta Environment and our many partners in and outside of government for a successful 2007-08.

As Minister of Environment, I received direction from Premier Stelmach to update Alberta's climate change plan, renew the *Water for Life* strategy and address the cumulative effects of development.

I am pleased to say we made progress on all fronts:

- we released *Alberta's 2008 Climate Change Strategy*;
- *Water for Life* strategy renewal is well underway; and
- we are implementing cumulative effects management across the province.

We also released *Too Good to Waste*, Alberta's waste management strategy, and issued the first oil sands reclamation certificate.

More than 900 Alberta Environment staff worked with all orders of government, non-government organizations, industry and Alberta residents to advance these initiatives. Every member of Alberta Environment's team plays an important role in delivering our programs and services. The following stories highlight some of Alberta Environment's successes this past year, and a few, of the many, people involved.

Original signed by

Honourable Rob Renner
Minister of Environment



"I had many enjoyable conversations with Albertans who were proud to tell me what actions they had already taken to address climate change."

GOLDIE EDWORTHY Section Head, Intergovernmental Relations –
Environmental Stewardship

climate change

“Climate change is one of the defining issues of our times. Managing the development of a new climate change strategy for Alberta was a wonderful opportunity. I really enjoyed travelling throughout the province for the community workshops. Climate change is a passionate issue and that came through loud and clear. I had many enjoyable conversations with Albertans who were proud to tell me what actions they had already taken to address climate change.

I truly believe you need to involve as many people as possible if you want to develop a good product, especially with an issue as complex as climate change. I have worked with many multi-department/stakeholder teams over my career and I always enjoy working with individuals and hearing the diversity of views. This project probably had the largest diversity of views I have encountered.

As I sit in my Canmore home looking at the Three Sisters mountain range, I think about the effect climate change may have on the mountains and the Bow River running through town. I'm glad I was able to play a small part in hopefully avoiding any negative effects. I believe our strategy moves Alberta significantly forward in dealing with climate change.”

ALBERTA'S 2008 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY FACTS

Premier Stelmach and Minister Renner released the strategy January 2008. The new climate change strategy commits Alberta to developing practical adaptation strategies to address the challenges and opportunities of a changing climate. It focuses on three key areas:

- > conserving and using energy efficiently;
- > greening energy production; and
- > implementing carbon capture and storage.

Together these initiatives will deliver 200 million tonnes of real reductions in Alberta by 2050.



"It's been extremely exciting and rewarding to see the Alberta Water Council become an important and effective contributor to provincial water policy."

TERRY SLY Acting Executive Director, Alberta Water Council

water

“My last six years in the department have been exciting, challenging and a time of tremendous growth for me. I was fortunate enough to be part of the development of the *Water for Life* strategy in 2003, facilitating government input to the groundwater-related aspects of the strategy. Over the years, my involvement in the strategy has changed. Six years later, I’m still working on advancing the strategy, but in a different role. My work for the last four years has focused on ensuring the smooth operation of the Alberta Water Council and its project teams. The Council has hit some pretty significant milestones this year, including transitioning to become an independent, not-for-profit society and working on a set of recommendations for the renewal of the *Water for Life* strategy. The time has flown by, and the *Water for Life* strategy is entering a new phase of its implementation. It’s been extremely exciting and rewarding to see the Alberta Water Council become an important and effective contributor to provincial water policy, and I look forward to my continued involvement.”

WATER FOR LIFE FACTS

- > After extensive consultation with stakeholders and Albertans, Alberta released *Water for Life: Alberta’s Strategy for Sustainability* in 2003.
- > In 2007, Alberta Environment’s Minister asked the Alberta Water Council to renew *Water for Life*.
- > Alberta Environment partners with Watershed Advisory Groups, working on the community level, and Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, at the regional level, to protect the province’s water.



“The most challenging and fulfilling aspect of cumulative effects management is the collaboration.”

SARAH PEARCE Policy Analyst, Northern Region – Environmental Management

cumulative effects

“There is no doubt that cumulative effects management is an exciting step forward for the Government of Alberta and all our partners. In my job, I work with a team implementing cumulative effects management in Alberta’s Industrial Heartland. Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner announced the implementation of cumulative effects management across the province in October 2007. To me, this announcement was about the Government of Alberta recognizing, respecting and living with environmental limits – limits that force us to think carefully about the future and evolve as a society.

The most challenging and fulfilling aspect of cumulative effects management is the collaboration. It could never be truer to say that we all have a role in protecting our environment. Cumulative effects management is happening because a broad spectrum of people believe it is time to establish regional visions for our environment, and make sure they are achieved. By listening to and learning from all of these people, the policy we, as a government, are developing will be practical and realistic. For me, cumulative effects is about, ‘modeling the way’, ‘inspiring a shared vision’, ‘challenging the process’, ‘enabling others to act’, and ‘encouraging the heart’. I can’t think of a better reason to come to work every day.”

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS MANAGEMENT FACTS

- > Alberta’s cumulative effects approach takes into account all the environmental implications of development in a region.
- > Cumulative effects management is being implemented in regions across Alberta.
- > The goals are to create long-term outcomes for the environment and put in place actions to achieve them.
- > Alberta’s first application of cumulative effects management is taking place in the Industrial Heartland, an area northeast of Edmonton.



"There is no glamour or glory in waste management, but there is an astounding number of very dedicated people managing waste management interests."

JANET MCLEAN Land/Waste Systems Manager – Environmental Assurance

waste management

“A big part of my job involves getting to know the waste community. When I hear our Deputy Minister talk about partnership and stewardship, I see what that looks like in my work. There’s no glamour or glory in waste management, but there is an astounding number of very dedicated, knowledgeable, committed and hard working people managing private, municipal, and provincial waste management interests. Bringing people and ideas together is definitely a very rewarding part of my job.

When I go out to municipal and private sector groups to talk about waste management and how to meet their needs, I know these people really want to do the right thing. We’re not always going to agree 100 per cent but we know we’re all there to roll up our sleeves and get the best outcome. It’s these stakeholders who helped us create *Too Good to Waste*. This is a strategy that recognizes the relationships between waste reduction, waste management, waste facility management, knowledge and information, environmental protection, and human health and safety. It brings together waste issues across municipal, industrial, agricultural, forestry and oil and gas sectors for the first time.

The encouraging thing for me is that stewardship activities play such a large role in my work, in our department’s work. And we’re good at it! Our Pollution Prevention and Conservation Team is an Emerald Award winner for their work developing stewardship programs.”

TOO GOOD TO WASTE FACTS

Many of the actions identified in this strategy are underway or in development, including:

- > a new paint stewardship program;
- > a construction and demolition stewardship program;
- > targeted disposal bans; and
- > a packaging stewardship program.



"Successful reclamation takes time, and the results are worth waiting for."

TANYA RICHENS Reclamation Approvals Coordinator, Northern Region –
Environmental Management

land

“The nature of my work requires detailed planning to achieve long-term rewards. Successful reclamation takes time, and the results are worth waiting for. This past year I was part of a team that issued the first reclamation certificate to an oil sands mine. It was the culmination of a collaborative and coordinated effort between Government of Alberta ministries and the staff at Syncrude Canada Ltd. The reclamation certificate was issued to Syncrude for a parcel of land known as Gateway Hill, north of Fort McMurray.

One of the most rewarding parts of working at Alberta Environment is experiencing the passion and being a part of the innovation that people bring to their work. Our clients and the people of Alberta depend on us to do this. For example, the Government of Alberta recently implemented new soil conservation and reclamation requirements for four mineable oil sands operators. It was empowering to work with a team of experts to see these projects through, and I am proud to know that at Alberta Environment, we incorporate adaptive management to achieve the best results.”

LAND RECLAMATION FACTS

- > Alberta issued the first oil sands reclamation certificate to Syncrude Canada Ltd. for a 106-hectare parcel of land known as Gateway Hill, approximately 35 kilometres north of Fort McMurray.
- > Under Alberta’s *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, companies must ensure Alberta’s land is returned to a productive state.

who we are

Alberta Environment oversees policies and initiatives associated with air quality, water management, waste management, land use and climate change. We manage the provincial environmental review process and coordinate public education on conservation and environmental protection. We are also responsible for environmental monitoring and compliance programs to enforce Alberta's environmental legislation and regulations.

In January 2007, our department was reorganized into four main business divisions – Environmental Assurance, Environmental Management, Environmental Stewardship, and Oil Sands Environmental Management, all supported by Ministry Support Services.

Environmental Assurance

Environmental Assurance is focused on policy development, information management, and monitoring and reporting to assess assurance of environmental outcomes.

Environmental Management

Environmental Management develops place-based environment and resource management outcomes, stewards cumulative effects management systems and delivers on the ministry's regulatory mandate within these systems. The division is also responsible for operation and maintenance of provincially-owned water management infrastructure, dam safety, flow forecasting, and river engineering.

Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Stewardship develops major environmental strategies, stewards the relationship and capacity building efforts required to be successful with our partners, and leads our efforts on conservation, education and outreach.

Oil Sands Environmental Management

Oil Sands Environmental Management develops place-based environment and resource management policies with a focus on oil sands development and northeastern Alberta.

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Lethbridge
Medicine Hat
Oldman River Dam
Peace River
Rocky Mountain House
St. Mary Dam
Stony Plain
Swan Hills
Vulcan
Wainwright

A full version of the 2007-08 Annual Report
can be found on Alberta Environment's
website at: www.environment.alberta.ca

This document is printed on chlorine-free paper made from 100 per cent post-consumer fibre. In choosing this paper, Alberta Environment saved 6,283 litres of water, prevented 137 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions, conserved 3 trees and diverted 69 kilograms of waste from Alberta landfills. The paper was produced using wind power, which prevented 71 kilograms of air emissions and saved the use of 11 cubic metres of natural gas.

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