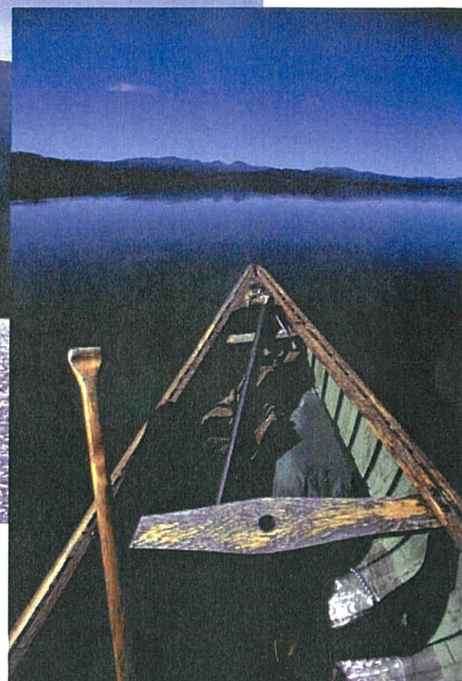


Northern Voices, Northern Waters

TOWARDS A WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE NWT



Kane



P. Vecsei

WHY DO WE NEED TO DEVELOP A WATER STRATEGY FOR THE NWT?

Clean and abundant water resources has always been a basic expectation of Northwest Territories (NWT) residents. *Northern Voices, Northern Waters - Towards a Water Resources Management Strategy for the NWT* sets out a proposed approach for developing a NWT Water Resources Management Strategy that will help ensure our water remains healthy today and into the future. This approach is based on the many issues that impact the managing of our watersheds - at the local, regional, national and global levels.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), as represented by Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) recognize that the sound management of northern water resources is a high priority.

Pressures on water from within the NWT and from neighbouring jurisdictions continue to increase. Residents of the NWT must collectively play a greater role in understanding the significance of current and emerging water management issues and in influencing and shaping the future direction of water resources management.

A PROPOSED STRATEGY TO MANAGE THE WATER RESOURCES OF THE NWT



C. Scott/GNWT



J. Skelton/GNWT

A NORTHERN VOICE FOR GUIDING WATER MANAGEMENT

Northerners have already provided much advice and comment on the importance of sound management of our water resources. Aboriginal leaders and other Northerners have spoken clearly and emphatically about their concerns and expectations on many occasions, most recently at Waterwise (2007) and the Keepers of the Water gatherings (2006, 2007).

Our '*northern voice*' must be clear and unambiguous when it comes to water management in the NWT; it must be equally clear when it comes to our expectations regarding management of waters entering the NWT. The interests of people across the territory need to be reflected in the development and implementation of the Strategy. It must be a Strategy created by Northerners, for Northerners.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Commonly, water strategies in other jurisdictions are guided by statements of principle. During Waterwise and the Keepers of the Water Gatherings and other forums, participants have articulated a number of principles which could guide the development and implementation of a NWT Water Resources Management Strategy. They include:

- Watersheds - The Essential Unit
- Surface and Groundwater Connections
- Sustainability
- Renewability
- Multiple Uses/Values
- Joint Production of Benefits
- Values and Valuation
- Treaty and Aboriginal Rights, Land Claims, Water Rights and Ownership
- Maximization of Social Well-being
- Fairness and Equity
- Integrated Management
- Natural Capital Accounting for Water
- Risk and Uncertainty
- Adaptive Management



INAC

COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

There are many NWT organizations that share responsibility for water management. They include: Aboriginal governments, regional organizations, communities, non-governmental environmental organizations, boards and agencies, businesses, interested residents and territorial and federal government agencies. All must be engaged on all aspects of the strategy, from its development to implementation.

ASSESSING WATER NEEDS

A comprehensive water resources management strategy could address some or all of the following, and more:

- Human Needs (for survival)
- Ecosystem Needs (for sustainable and healthy ecosystems)
- Traditional/Cultural Needs (to maintain traditional uses of the waters)
- Economic Needs (for sustainable development)

LAND CLAIM AGREEMENTS

The strategy must conform to all Aboriginal and treaty rights, land claim agreements, and self-government agreements. The various NWT land claims agreements set out the specific rights and responsibilities of Aboriginal governments and resource management boards with respect to water management.

ELEMENTS THAT MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN A STRATEGY

- The Purpose of a NWT Water Resources Management Strategy
- The Evolution of a NWT Water Resources Management Strategy
- A Northern Voice for Guiding Water Management
- Fundamental Principles
- The Dimensions of Northern Water Management - Assessing Water Needs
- Water Management Decision-Making - Supporting Processes
- Monitoring and Sustainability Accounting
- Current and Emerging Issues
- Moving Forward



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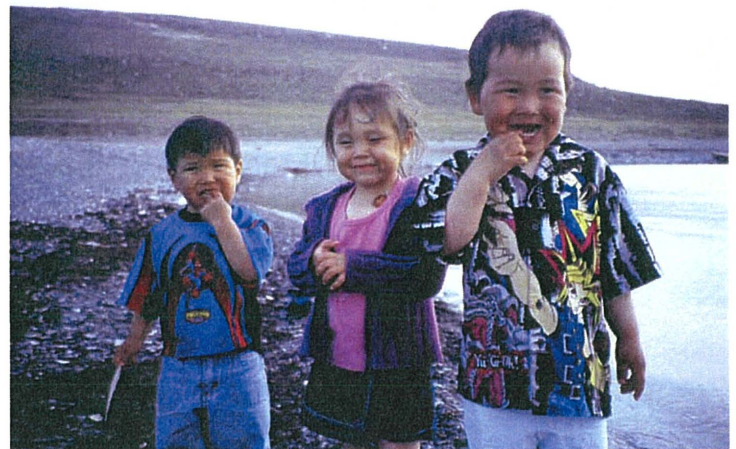
CHARTING A COURSE

A NWT consensus on what water resources management in the NWT should look like is essential if we are to collectively manage our water resources effectively, for this and future generations. Broad discussions and engagement will be necessary in determining the form of the strategy and the actions required for effective implementation. The following proposed approach is intended to spark discussions regarding a Water Resources Management Strategy for the NWT.

NEXT STEPS

The next step is to begin the broad dialogue within the NWT that is necessary to shape the discussion required to develop the Strategy and to guide its implementation. Northern voices must be heard. ENR and INAC are committed to working with all parties in the NWT which have an interest in sound water management. Only in this way, we will be able to create an NWT Water Resources Management Strategy that we will be proud to call our own.

For more information, the draft discussion paper *Towards a Water Resources Management Strategy for the NWT - A Discussion Paper on Strategy Development* document can be viewed at www.enr.gov.nt.ca.



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For further information, please contact:

Environment and Natural Resources
Government of the Northwest Territories
PO Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT, Canada
X1A 2L9



Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada