



Building Resiliency to Multiyear Drought with the Alberta WPAC's

May 1, 2024

Background

During the summer of 2017 the Alberta WPAC's directors crafted a Statement of Opportunity (SOO) for Alberta Water Council to develop drought management resources that could be delivered to key municipal stakeholders that often don't have significant resources to consider drought management planning in operations. At the time, most provincial and municipal resources were focused on drought mitigation. After acceptance of the SOO, a project committee was established and the current Building Resiliency to Multi Year Drought toolkit and resources were completed by summer 2020. In the summer 2023, AB WPACs committed to a province-wide WPAC staff train the trainer session for the project; a further commitment was made to host a minimum of 4 regional workshops for municipalities during the winter of 2023/24. There was a recognized need for information and tool to support community lead drought planning to build resiliency to multi year droughts and mitigate the severity and duration of the impacts.

The 11 WPAC's quickly mobilized, trained additional staff, hosted workshops, delivered individual presentations, and continue to field questions and distribute information and resources to aid partners as they mitigate the current drought and build resilience to future events. Provincial drought response coordinators have continued to recognize the WPAC ability to adapt, convene and collaborate with water users and decision makers in response to the current drought conditions.

Building Resiliency to Multi Year Drought Workshops & Presentations

Location	Date	Hosts	# of Participants
Vegreville	Nov 30, 2023	NSWA, BRWA, RDRWA	50
Blackfalds	Jan 26, 2024	NSWA, BRWA, RDRWA	80
Grande Prairie	Jan 30, 2024	MPWA, LSWC, AWC	85
Lethbridge	Feb 29, 2024	MRWC, OWC, SEAWA, RDRWA, BRBC	110
Athabasca	Mar 7, 2024	AWC, LSWC	60
Edmonton	Feb 16, 2024	NSWA	20
Cochrane	Feb 26, 2024	BRBC	127

Individual WPACs are also attending Municipal meetings to present on local conditions, share information about GOA drought related activities, and share information and resources as

capacity permits. The NSWA's Wednesday webinars have included drought topics, and are open to anyone to attend. The WPACs in the South Saskatchewan River Basin participated in person at three day long water sharing agreement meetings in February and March and have participated in many media related queries.

WPAC investment

WPAC's had not anticipated such a demand for workshops and drought support nor was it budgeted for in our 2023/24 workplans. As such we have tracked the collective investment associated with 2023/24 events which total: **\$126,450. Broken down the costs are as follows:** Staff time \$70,595, travel expenses \$13,244, and hosting expenses \$42,613.

What have we heard from Municipalities?

- It is hard to find resources and data online.
- Staff capacity is limited at small municipalities.
- Concerns about downloading of provincial responsibilities onto municipalities without accompanying financial resources to support this work.
- Who can we hire to help us with this? (WPAC's are limited in capacity too)
- Intermunicipal challenges - in communications, in coordinating emergency response actions. etc. Intermunicipal challenges - in communications, in coordinating emergency response actions. etc.

Needs and Gaps

- Templates for municipalities to use to develop drought management plans. The WPAC's heard RMA was providing a template for municipalities, but they are just directing folks to the AWC website.
- Workshop materials could consider Indigenous communities and federal jurisdiction associated with water management in Indigenous communities.
- Update to the workshop materials to reflect learnings and gaps.

Ongoing Drought Resiliency Work

WPAC's are well positioned to support drought management and planning and have engaged with ~90 municipalities, representing ~70% of the province. The municipal needs and support required to plan for, manage and mitigate long term drought are far beyond what the WPAC's had anticipated.

WPAC's continue to meet with the provincial Drought Command Team for monthly updates, share provincial data and resources via our communication networks, and help connect people with the appropriate provincial staff to address questions and concerns.