

2016  
2017

# NWT Water Stewardship Strategy



Progress Review Summary





# Check our progress

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## 2016/2017 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Progress Review Summary

Collaborative efforts by the water partners involved in water stewardship in the Northwest Territories (NWT) brought about the development of *Northern Voices, Northern Waters: The NWT Water Stewardship Strategy* (Water Strategy) and subsequent Action Plans.

The current Action Plan for 2016-2020 is divided into four components, 33 Keys to Success and 149 Action Items. By 2020, the goal is to have fully implemented the Action Plan and contributed to the vision and goals of the Water Strategy.

One year since the release of the *NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan 2016-2020*, the comprehensive 2016/2017 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Progress Review took place and assessed 52 Performance Indicators and 84 Action Items. Data for each Performance Indicator and Action Item are recorded in a spreadsheet and will be tracked over time. The information sources for the review included document reviews, website analytics, meetings with lead water partners and a water partner survey.

This document is a summary status update of all 2017 Action Items and examples of Performance Indicators from each section of the Action Plan:

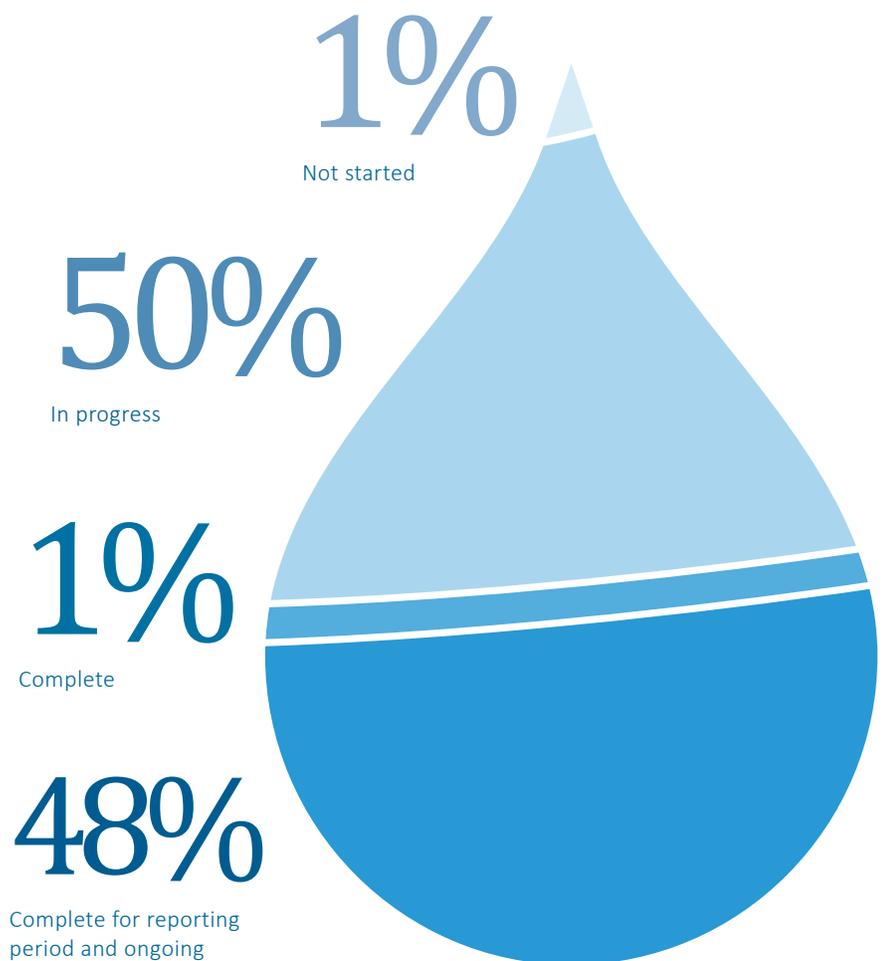
- Work together
- Know and plan
- Use responsibly
- Check our progress

More detailed information on the status of specific Performance Indicators and Action Items is available at [nwtwaterstewardship.ca](http://nwtwaterstewardship.ca). You can also request the information by emailing [nwtwaterstrategy@gov.nt.ca](mailto:nwtwaterstrategy@gov.nt.ca).

## Status of Overall Water Strategy Action Item Progress

The percentages shown are the status update for all 2017 Action Items. Progress on Action Items was assessed based on the following criteria:

- **Not started** – Activities towards the Action Item have not started and no deliverables currently exist.
- **In progress** – Activities towards the Action Item have begun and there are deliverables; however, there is still work to do.
- **Complete** – The Action Item is complete and information and deliverables are available to water partners.
- **Complete for reporting period and ongoing** – The Action Item is complete for the current reporting period; however, the Action Item requires ongoing work.



# 2016-2020 Action Plan



-  **Work Together** - Actions ensure a cooperative environment to support water managers and water partners in sharing information, building capacity and working together.
-  **Know and Plan** - Actions ensure the implementation of multi-disciplinary aquatic monitoring and research programs. These programs consider traditional, local and western scientific knowledge and use of this information in the planning and implementation of water stewardship activities.
-  **Use Responsibly** - Actions ensure water managers have the information necessary to make well-reasoned decisions.
-  **Check Our Progress** - Actions ensure progress is made in achieving the Water Strategy vision. This includes measuring and reporting on progress. Reporting results of, and responses to, evaluations and reviews must be transparent.



NWT waters are important for ecosystems and the people within those ecosystems. Abundant and clean water means clean drinking water in our homes and communities, and healthy fish in our lakes and rivers. Our quality of life depends on water and healthy aquatic ecosystems, as does the delivery of goods by barge and ice road, and the production of hydroelectricity from a rushing river.

The vision reflects the importance of working together to ensure that water continues to meet our health, cultural and economic needs and sustains our aquatic ecosystems.

The waters of the Northwest Territories will remain  
clean, abundant and productive for all time.



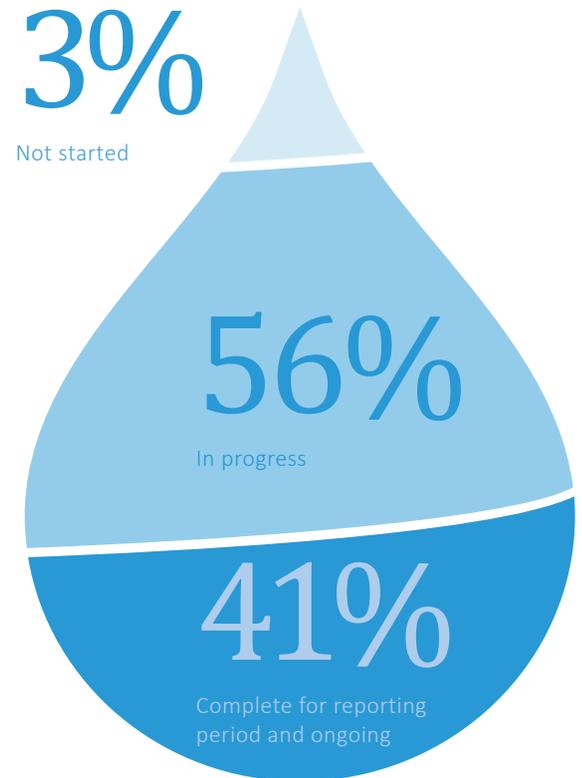


# Work Together

Lead Water Partners for 2017 Work Together Action Items:

- Aboriginal Steering Committee (ASC)
- Aurora College
- Aurora Research Institute
- Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning
- Dehcho Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Program
- Ecology North
- Environment and Natural Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories (ENR)
- Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley and The Inuvialuit Water Board
- Sahtú Renewable Resource Board
- Tides Canada

Status of Action Item Progress:  
Work Together



15

(out of 20) water partners indicated they are aware of their role implementing the Water Strategy.

# 1.1 Partnerships

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Water Strategy Implementation Workshop held in Dettah in November 2016 brought lead and supporting water partners together to share information and knowledge, discuss opportunities to collaborate, and review implementation progress.

The 2016/2017 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Progress Review helps advance Action Items under the 1.1 Partnerships section by illuminating challenges that lead and supporting water partners experience.

## Additional Information:

- The 2016 Water Strategy Implementation Workshop Summary Report is available at: [nwtwaterstewardship.ca/publications](http://nwtwaterstewardship.ca/publications)

## 3

watershed and natural resource planning documents referenced the Water Strategy.

## 11

(out of 20)

water partners indicated they are actively engaged in specific Keys to Success.



# 1.2

## Information Management

In 2016, the NWT Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program - ENR (NWT CIMP) drafted water quality metadata guidelines to encourage water partners to describe and present water quality data in the same format. This will allow for easier analysis and interpretation by data users. Metadata guidelines will assist larger initiatives, for example, developing guidelines for establishing water quality baseline conditions and revising Aquatic Effects Monitoring Program (AEMP) guidelines.

The NWT Discovery Portal and Mackenzie DataStream help share monitoring and research findings among water partners and the public. Additional long-term monitoring data are stored in Lodestar and are available to water partners upon request.

NWT CIMP created an explanatory video about its program, which is available on YouTube through [enr.gov.nt.ca](http://enr.gov.nt.ca) in four Aboriginal languages. ENR also developed a plain language summary of the 2016-2020 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan and made an audio recording available in six Aboriginal languages.

The NWT Discovery Portal averaged 501 monthly users, and Mackenzie DataStream averaged 514 monthly users.

#### Not Started:

- The NWT Water Monitoring Inventory was originally released in 2013 and will be updated in 2017.

#### Additional Information:

- The NWT CIMP explanatory video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9PsbbIkDdw>
- Mackenzie DataStream can be accessed at: [mackenziedatastream.ca](http://mackenziedatastream.ca)
- The NWT Discovery Portal can be accessed at: [nwt.discoveryportal.enr.gov.nt.ca/geoportal/catalog/main/home.page](http://nwt.discoveryportal.enr.gov.nt.ca/geoportal/catalog/main/home.page)
- The 2016-2020 NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan Plain Language Summary is available at: [enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/128-nwtws\\_plain\\_language-press.pdf](http://enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/128-nwtws_plain_language-press.pdf)

# 39%

(13 out of 33) of water partners indicated they use traditional and local knowledge often in decision-making.

# 58%

(19 out of 33) of water partners indicated they use western science often in decision-making.

# 1.3

## Communication and Engagement

Water partners gave implementation updates via posters and oral presentations at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Water Strategy Implementation Workshop. Additional water partner implementation updates were posted to the NWT Water Stewardship website, including the Community of Sambiaa K'e Source Water Protection Plan; Report on the Preliminary State of Groundwater Knowledge in the Transboundary Region of the Mackenzie River Basin, NWT; updates about the Youth Water Stewardship Photo Contest; and Mackenzie DataStream.

Aboriginal Steering Committee (ASC) members liaise between their respective regional governments and the Water Strategy, communicating on a frequent basis and providing updates after ASC meetings. The ASC provides regular guidance on Water Strategy implementation projects, particularly about information sharing and activities related to traditional knowledge.

### Additional Information:

- The workshop presentations and agenda are accessible on the NWT Water Stewardship website: [nwtwaterstewardship.ca/publications](http://nwtwaterstewardship.ca/publications)

7

significant water stewardship updates were made to the NWT Water Stewardship website in 2016.

11

water stewardship projects received guidance from the ASC in 2016.

# 24

water stewardship outreach activities were delivered during 2016/2017.



# 1.4

## Capacity Building, Leadership, Training and Education

Water partners delivered a range of water education programming throughout the NWT. Programming to promote Canada Water Week included film nights, water treatment plant tours, classroom education and community events. Other activities included a youth shoreline clean-up event, a youth water stewardship photo contest, and Rivers to Oceans Day.

Through the NWT On-The-Land Collaborative Fund, partners support various programs that have community-based water monitoring elements. For example, Tides Canada made direct grants in support of Indigenous-led water monitoring programs, such as the Ni Hat'Ni Dene and the Dehcho K'ehodi programs.

### Additional Information:

- The NWT On-The-Land Collaborative website is accessible at: [nwtontheland.ca](http://nwtontheland.ca)

# 28

(out of 33) communities are involved in aquatic community-based monitoring.



# 1.5

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## Transboundary Discussions, Agreements and Obligations

The *Implementation Highlights of Inaugural Year* report was released in March 2017 under the Alberta-NWT Bilateral Water Management Agreement (BWMA). The report outlines implementation progress during the first year (2015-16) of implementation. Examples of implementation activities include the establishment of a Bilateral Water Management Committee (BMC), the development of a multi-year work plan, and the completion of a Hay River Basin State of the Aquatic Knowledge report.

NWT and British Columbia (BC) are discussing work plan priorities for the BC-NWT BWMA. The NWT and Yukon signed a transboundary water agreement in 2002. Discussions are underway to update this agreement to align it with more recently signed agreements. The NWT has also had discussions with Saskatchewan (SK) to negotiate a SK-NWT BWMA. The NWT anticipates negotiation of a NWT-Nunavut (NU) transboundary water management agreement once NU has completed a territorial water strategy.



# 11

implementation activities were completed and 7 are in progress under the Alberta-NWT agreement.

Information about the progress of negotiations and implementation of the agreements have been communicated publicly on the NWT Water Stewardship website and at a Canada Water Week event, at the November 2016 Water Strategy Implementation workshop and at ASC meetings.

#### Additional Information:

- Information about the transboundary water management agreements implementation and negotiation process can be found at: [nwtwaterstewardship.ca](http://nwtwaterstewardship.ca)
- Alberta-NWT Implementation Highlights report for 2015/2016 can be accessed at: [enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/transboundary\\_report\\_implementation\\_highlights\\_15\\_march\\_2017.pdf](http://enr.gov.nt.ca/sites/enr/files/transboundary_report_implementation_highlights_15_march_2017.pdf)

# 3

implementation activities were completed under the BC-NWT Agreement.



# Know and Plan

Lead Water Partners for 2017 Know and Plan Action Items:

- Academic partners
- Dehcho Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management Program
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
- ENR
- Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley and The Inuvialuit Water Board
- Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
- NWT Centre for Geomatics, Government of the Northwest Territories

200

stations/sites currently make up water quality and quantity monitoring networks <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> excluding Surveillance Network Program and AEMP sites.

Status of Action Item Progress:  
Know and Plan



# 2.1

7

(out of 19) water partners indicated that their organization is currently using geomatic tools.

## Aquatic Ecosystems, including Water Quality, Water Quantity, Groundwater and Biological Components

The water quality and water quantity monitoring networks are maintained by lead water partners and collaboration among partners to maximize resources.

Several projects were initiated to advance selection of biological indicators for monitoring NWT's transboundary rivers.

NWT CIMP funded projects that improved the understanding of cumulative impacts in the NWT and results were shared publicly.

The Tracking Change research project funded water-related community-led projects in 2016 to further traditional and local knowledge research about social and ecological change in the Mackenzie River Basin.

### Additional Information:

- The Status and Trends Report for Great Slave Lake Tributaries is accessible on the NWT Water Stewardship website at: [nwtwaterstewardship.ca/publications](http://nwtwaterstewardship.ca/publications)
- Information on relevant research projects can be accessed through the NWT Discovery Portal at: [nwt.discoveryportal.enr.gov.nt.ca](http://nwt.discoveryportal.enr.gov.nt.ca) and the Tracking Change website at: [trackingchange.ca](http://trackingchange.ca)

# 27

(out of 79) water-related research licences actively involved communities, 8 of which were community-led.



Photo: Paul Vecsei

# 2.2



## A Collaborative Approach to Community-based Monitoring

The nine aquatic community-based monitoring programs active in the NWT vary in size and are occurring throughout the NWT. The NWT-wide Community-based Monitoring Program is the largest program and builds capacity in 21 communities through training sessions and hands-on monitoring. In 2016, over 300 samples were taken at 39 sites. Results from this program are available on the Mackenzie DataStream website.

### Additional Information:

- Mackenzie DataStream can be accessed at: [mackenziedatastream.ca](http://mackenziedatastream.ca)

## 9

aquatic community-based monitoring programs are active in the NWT. 7 of these programs have defined goals and 6 have standardized monitoring processes.



# Use Responsibly

Lead Water Partners for 2017 Use Responsibly  
Action Items:

- ENR
- GNWT Interdepartmental Drinking Water and Waste Management Committee
- Health and Social Services (HSS), Government of the Northwest Territories
- Land and Water Boards of the Mackenzie Valley and Inuvialuit Water Board
- Lands, Government of the Northwest Territories
- Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
- Municipal and Community Affairs, Government of the Northwest Territories

Status of Action Item Progress:  
Use Responsibly



12

(out of 17) water partners agreed that the roles and responsibilities associated with drinking water in the NWT are clear.

10

(out of 17) agreed that the roles and responsibilities associated with a municipal water licence (water use, wastewater, and waste) are clear.

# 3.1 Municipal

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The GNWT drinking water database was last updated in December 2016 and contains the results of community drinking water testing. HSS explored steps to improve public reporting of test results for community drinking water. Improved online public reporting will be introduced in the 2017/2018 year, along with improved performance reporting to water treatment plant operators (who are responsible for testing the drinking water supply). Under the *Public Health Act*, HSS environmental health officers are responsible for regularly reviewing test results to ensure drinking water is safe.

Templates for application, renewal, compliance and reporting for municipal water licences were created and are available on Land and Water Boards websites. Land and Water Boards have an online review system that anyone can access and participate in. Staff from Land and Water Boards visit communities to hold meetings and hear concerns. These meetings are advertised and provide an opportunity for local community members to share traditional and local knowledge.

Staff from ENR and Land and Water Boards also contributed to development of the document *Solid Waste Management for Northern and Remote Communities* released by ECCC in early 2017. The document will help to inform municipal waste management practices in the NWT and provides best practices to mitigate water impacts.

Inspections conducted by ENR water resources officers are tracked through the Inspection Reporting and Risk Assessment (IRRA) system.

## Additional Information:

- The NWT Drinking Water Database is available at:  
[nwt drinking water.ca/operations/water/water\\_raw.asp](http://nwt drinking water.ca/operations/water/water_raw.asp)
- The NWT Municipal Licence Application Templates are available at:  
<https://mvlwb.com/mvlwb/apply-permit-licence>
- The Municipal Licence Reporting Templates are available at:  
<https://mvlwb.com/resources/policy-and-guidelines>
- The Solid Waste Management for Northern and Remote Communities document is available at:  
[publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2017/eccc/En14-263-2016-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/eccc/En14-263-2016-eng.pdf)



1

piece of legislation (with associated regulations) is under review, 4 guidelines were reviewed in 2016 (and 1 of the documents was finalized).

11

(out of 17) respondents agreed that they know who to contact if regulatory roles and responsibilities are not clear.

# 3.2

## Industrial Development



10

(out of 17) respondents agreed that industrial water licensing roles and responsibilities are clear.

Resource Co-Management Workshops took place in Yellowknife, Hay River and Norman Wells during 2016 and 2017. The workshops discussed the integrated resource management system in the Mackenzie Valley and identified steps that could be taken to improve, clarify, and standardize processes within and across institutions.

ENR and Land and Water Boards have undertaken work towards the development of various regulatory guidelines, including guidelines for Hydrocarbon Contaminated Soil Treatment Facilities in the NWT, Mixing Zone Guidelines (to be released in 2017) and the re-release of updated Aquatic Effects Monitoring Program guidelines (expected in 2017/2018). A review of the *NWT Waters Act* and Regulations started in 2016.

Inspections of industrial water licences are tracked in the IRRA system.

### Additional Information:

- Resource Co-Management Workshop Reports are available at: [reviewboard.ca/reference\\_material/practitioners\\_workshop.php](http://reviewboard.ca/reference_material/practitioners_workshop.php)



# Check Our Progress

Lead Water Partners for 2017 Check Our Progress Action Items:

- ENR

Status of Action Item Progress:  
Check Our Progress

52

Performance Indicators and 84 Action Items were reviewed during the 2016/2017 Progress Review.

The 2016/2017 Progress Review is the first review under the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan 2016-2020.

33%

In progress

67%

Complete for reporting period and ongoing

# 4.1

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## Routine Checks

ENR launched a survey that was circulated to lead and support water partners in May 2017. 45 water partners, representing 40 organizations, responded to the survey, and provided information on the Water Strategy implementation progress. Additional meetings with lead water partners and document reviews also informed the progress review.

Implementation updates were primarily provided to water partners through the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Water Strategy Implementation Workshop in Dettah in November 2016. Water partners shared updates of recently completed, ongoing and planned implementation activities through oral and poster presentations.

### Aboriginal Steering Committee (ASC)

The Aboriginal Steering Committee (ASC), which guided the development of the Water Strategy and Action Plans, continues to guide the implementation of the Water Strategy. This guidance makes sure that implementation activities represent the values of Aboriginal governments and people, while respecting Aboriginal and treaty rights. The ASC comprises the following representatives:

- Dahti Tsetso, Dehcho First Nations
- David Krutko, Gwich'in Tribal Council
- Jeff Fraser, Salt River First Nation
- Leon Andrew, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated
- Michelle Gruben, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
- Peter Redvers, Kát'odééche First Nation
- Phoebe Rebesca, Tłı̨chǫ Government
- Shin Shiga, North Slave Métis Alliance
- Steve Kotchea, Acho Dene Koe First Nation
- Tim Heron, Northwest Territory Métis Nation
- Akaitcho Territory Government (observer)





Photo: John McKay

For more information about the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy,  
please visit our website: [nwtwaterstewardship.ca](http://nwtwaterstewardship.ca)

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