



FOR RELEASE
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Government releases *Draft Yukon Water Strategy for Public Review*

WHITEHORSE—The Government of Yukon invites all Yukoners to participate in the development of a water strategy that will guide the government's approach to water management in Yukon for the benefit of water users and the environment, Environment Minister Currie Dixon announced today.

"We are holding a public review of the draft strategy because we want a comprehensive, thoughtful and innovative approach to water management that responds to the values and concerns of Yukoners," Dixon said.

The public review begins today and will end May 31. Comments are sought on the vision, principles and goals proposed in the draft strategy as well as six priorities and the short- and long-term actions for achieving them.

"The draft water strategy focuses on how we use and protect water," Dixon added. "This public review is part of the Yukon government's overall commitment to doing what is necessary to manage the increasing demands for water and to respond to the changes that climate change is making to Yukon's water regime."

These are the goals the Yukon government would like to achieve through its water strategy:

- Water for People—Ensure accessible, safe and sufficient water for drinking and other purposes, including industrial, recreational, heritage, cultural and spiritual uses and values. Promote sustainable and valuable use of water for communities and economies for key business sectors.
- Water for Nature—Preserve water quality and quantity for aquatic health and ecosystem services while respecting the intrinsic value of water.
- Water Monitoring, Knowledge and Management—Strengthen understanding, knowledge and overall management of water.

The draft strategy builds on the work done to date to assess how vulnerable Yukon's water supply is to climate change and to co-ordinate water management among Yukon government departments. It was developed in collaboration with water managers from territorial, federal, First Nation and municipal governments and organizations. Within the Yukon government there are seven departments with responsibilities for Yukon waters.

For more information about the Draft Yukon Water Strategy for Public Review and how to participate in the review visit www.env.gov.yk.ca/draftwaterstrategy or www.yukonwater.ca.

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See backgrounder attached.

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BACKGROUND – Draft Yukon Water Strategy for Public Review

Proposed vision

- Yukoners have access to safe and sufficient water to meet their needs in ways that also preserve ecosystem health now and into the future.

Proposed priorities

- Better understand and manage Yukon's groundwater regime;
- Maintain/improve access to safe drinking water for all Yukoners;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Improve the generation and use of water information;
- Assess and improve government management programs;
- Plan for water needs now and in the future.

Yukon government roles and responsibilities

- Seven Yukon government departments have water management responsibilities: Community Services; Economic Development; Energy, Mines and Resources; Environment; Executive Council Office; Health and Social Services; and Highways and Public Works. (See page 7 of the draft strategy for details.)
- Water management does not rest with the Yukon government alone. It is a collaborative effort among territorial, federal, First Nation, regional and municipal governments, stakeholders and the public.
- The draft strategy respects First Nations Final Agreement provisions (Chapter 19) to maintain the Yukon's water in a natural condition while providing for its sustainable use.

Yukon water facts

- Water covers about 8,000 square kilometres (sq. km) of the territory in six major watersheds: the Alsek, Yukon, Porcupine, Peel, Liard and North Slope.
- Yukon has extensive groundwater resources and aquifers, as well as widespread frozen water sources such as glaciers (1,396 covering about 10,000 sq.km) and permafrost.

Online Yukon water resources

- An online catalogue of information about how water is used, managed and monitored: yukonwater.ca
- A summary of the vulnerabilities to Yukon's water resources as a result of a warming climate: www.env.gov.yk.ca/air-water-waste/water_climate.php
- Information about water licensing: www.yukonwaterboard.ca
- Acts and regulations, including the Waters Act, the Public Health and Safety Act and accompanying Drinking Water Regulation and Sewage Disposal Systems Regulation: www.gov.yk.ca/legislation

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