



FOR RELEASE
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New government strategy promotes water for nature and for people

WHITEHORSE—The *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan* that provides the Government of Yukon with a comprehensive approach to making water management decisions was released today.

"The strategy will help the government manage Yukon's water now and into the future," Minister of Environment Currie Dixon said. "It respects the intrinsic value of water and the fact that it is essential to the environment, people, and economy."

The strategy recognizes the work that is already underway and identifies more than 50 new or enhanced actions the Yukon government will undertake to:

- Better understand and manage Yukon's groundwater,
- Plan for water needs now and in the future,
- Improve water management programs,
- Maintain or improve access to safe drinking water,
- Promote the sustainable use of water, and
- Improve the sharing of information about Yukon's water.

The government will invest an additional \$2.7 million over three years on projects including: enhancing and formalizing Yukon's groundwater program; installing 25 new hydrometric monitoring stations; and hiring a hydrogeologist. This investment is designed to provide economic benefits to local communities and the private sector, as well as use training to increase the capacity of water managers.

"With the *Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan*, the Yukon government is better positioned to provide for present and future needs so that the quality, quantity and overall health of waters flowing through Yukon lands are sustained for all living things," Dixon added.

A draft version of the strategy was circulated for public review in 2013. In developing the strategy, the involvement of other governments and agencies which manage or advocate for the protection of water resources helped ensure the final strategy respects the diverse values and interests regarding water in Yukon.

Learn more >>>

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See backgrounder.

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Background

Water for Nature, Water for People: Yukon Water Strategy and Action Plan is intended to help the Yukon government ensure that its water management decisions maintain the quality, quantity and overall health of waters while allowing for sustainable use. It has two goals:

- **Water for Nature** ~ Preserve water quality and quantity for aquatic and terrestrial health and ecosystem services and respect the intrinsic value of water, and
- **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 wise use of water for communities and key business sectors.

The strategy has **six priorities** for achieving the goals. Work already underway is provided with each priority, along with new actions (below):

- Better understand and manage Yukon's **groundwater** regime
 - o Enhance and formalize the existing groundwater program in Yukon, and
 - o Develop a regulatory framework to manage groundwater.
- Maintain/improve access to **safe drinking water**.
 - o Foster stronger working relationships with other governments and agencies involved with drinking water sources in Yukon,
 - o Enhance opportunities for education, training and access to information,
 - o Evaluate drinking water use and efficiency, and
 - o Ensure regulatory programs meet public need for safe drinking water.
- Promote the **sustainable use** of water.
 - o Provide further guidance and advice to water users.
- Improve the **sharing of information** about Yukon's water.
 - o Improve communication, education and outreach regarding Yukon's water, and
 - o Enhance tools for sharing water information with the public.
- Improve water **management** programs.
 - o Enhance co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration with other water managers, and
 - o Strengthen our water management capabilities.

- **Plan** for water needs now and in the future.
 - o Ensure adequate water monitoring across the territory, and
 - o Enhance the use of best available science, traditional and local knowledge in decision-making.

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