

# Prairie Provinces Water Board

## ***STRATEGIC PLAN***

### **BACKGROUND**

Recognizing that water use within one province may impact another province and because federal and provincial governments have shared responsibility for water, the Governments of Canada, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba signed the *Master Agreement on Apportionment (MAA)* in October 1969. The purpose of this Agreement is to apportion water between the Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, and to protect surface water quality and transboundary aquifers. The *MAA* also provides for the cooperation of the governments in transboundary water management and establishes the Prairie Provinces Water Board (PPWB) to administer the Agreement. The *MAA* is comprised of the core agreement, five schedules, and two amending agreements. Schedule C defines the duties and authority of the PPWB.

While the *MAA* provides a core foundation for the sharing and protection of transboundary waters, the Board understands the need to ensure the Agreement is current. Consequently, over the years the Board has recommended amendments to the Agreement and revised its work program to respond to new challenges. This is exemplified by the inclusion in the *MAA* of a groundwater mandate and the addition in 1992 of the Agreement on Water Quality (Schedule E) to the Master Agreement and the inclusion in the of a groundwater mandate. The Board has created a Charter, Strategic Plan and five-year Operational Plan to ensure that the PPWB effectively administers the core principles and deliverables of the *MAA* that reflect current priorities of governments.

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to identify current challenges of transboundary water management and identify the core *MAA* mandate to fulfill conditions of the Agreement and guiding principles that achieve the vision and mission. Specific goals are outlined to achieve the core *MAA* mandate. Strategies are outlined to achieve these goals.

The Strategic Plan will be implemented by the Board through its Secretariat and Committees and by the Member Governments.

### **CHALLENGES IN TRANSBOUNDARY WATER MANAGEMENT**

- Authorities over water are shared amongst governments;
- Actions in one government may affect other governments;
- The volume and timing of flows in streams that originate in the prairies are highly variable throughout the year and from year to year;
- Water use and consumption in southern Alberta is a large percentage of available supply;
- Population and economic activity are increasing;
- Climate variability will affect timing and volume of available water;
- Monitoring must be rationalized within existing budgets;
- Threats to surface water and groundwater quality are increasing; and,
- Knowledge and understanding of transboundary aquifers is limited.

### **VISION**

Effective transboundary water management on the Prairies.

## **MISSION**

1. To ensure that transboundary waters are equitably apportioned and protected in accordance with the *Master Agreement on Apportionment*;
2. To provide a forum for the exchange of information in order to prevent and resolve transboundary water conflicts; and,
3. To promote cooperation in transboundary water management.

## **MAA: CORE MANDATE**

The PPWB interprets its core mandate to be:

- The PPWB will comprise of senior water resource officials from within each Government to administer the *MAA*;
- Define apportionment of eastward-flowing transboundary streams;
- Set out agreed-to water quality objectives for river reaches at the boundaries and a requirement to periodically conduct reviews of objectives at least every 5 years;
- Foster transboundary water quality management that promotes the protection and restoration of the aquatic environment;
- Consider transboundary groundwater quantity and quality matters;
- Cooperatively consult and exchange information or make recommendations to governments on transboundary water issues referred to the Board; and
- Encourage co-operation in the development and use of water and related resources to support economic growth.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Equitable sharing of water in transboundary streams, lakes, and aquifers;
- Acceptable levels of water quality at interprovincial boundaries;
- Consensus approach to resolving differences and making recommendations;
- Science-based approach used to assess compliance with the *MAA*; and
- Co-operation in the effective, economical and beneficial use of waters flowing from one province to another.

## **GOALS**

The goals are based on meeting the core mandate and conditions of the *MAA*.

1. Agreed transboundary apportionment of water is achieved.
2. Transboundary groundwater aquifers are protected and used in a sustainable manner.
3. Agreed transboundary *MAA* water quality objectives are achieved.
4. Governments are informed about emergency and unusual water conditions.
5. Transboundary water issues are addressed cooperatively to avoid disputes.
6. Ministers, senior managers and appropriate staff of governments are informed about PPWB activities.
7. Information, knowledge and research are shared among governments.
8. PPWB business is conducted effectively.

## **STRATEGIES**

Goal 1. Agreed transboundary apportionment of water is achieved.

- 1-a Environment and Climate Change Canada monitors streamflows and provides quality-controlled data to PPWB.

- 1-b PPWB calculates apportionable flows and apportionment balances using the agreed methodology.
  - 1-c PPWB reports apportionment balances to Governments.
  - 1-d Governments consult and cooperate to ensure apportionment is achieved.
  - 1-e PPWB assesses the adequacy of monitoring for *MAA* purposes.
  - 1-f PPWB assesses and continuously improves agreed apportionable flow methodology.
- Goal 2. Transboundary groundwater aquifers are protected and used in a sustainable manner.
- 2-a PPWB defines and quantifies aquifers along the interprovincial boundaries.
  - 2-b PPWB develops an approach to equitably share and avoid appreciable harm to water within transboundary aquifers.
- Goal 3. Agreed transboundary *MAA* water quality objectives are achieved.
- 3-a Environment and Climate Change Canada monitors water quality and provides quality-controlled data to PPWB.
  - 3-b PPWB compares water quality data to *MAA* objectives, and annually identifies excursions and periodically assesses trends.
  - 3-c PPWB reports identified excursions and trends to Governments.
  - 3-d Governments undertake measures to protect and restore the quality of transboundary streams if objectives are not met.
  - 3-e PPWB assesses the adequacy of water quality monitoring for *MAA* purposes.
  - 3-f PPWB assesses and improves *MAA* water quality objectives as required.
- Goal 4. Governments are informed about emergency and unusual water conditions.
- 4-a Governments report emergency and unusual surface and groundwater quantity and quality conditions to other Governments as outlined in the Event Contingency Plan.
  - 4-b Governments monitor water at boundary reaches to identify impacts of unusual events.
  - 4-c Governments in which the event occurred prepare an evaluation report.
  - 4-d PPWB refines the Event Contingency Plan to define what constitutes an emergency.
- Goal 5. Transboundary water issues are addressed cooperatively to avoid disputes.
- 5-a PPWB encourages and facilitates consultation and the exchange of information on transboundary water issues.
  - 5-b Governments inform each other about water projects being planned.
  - 5-c Transboundary surface and groundwater quantity and quality issues referred by Governments are investigated by the PPWB.
  - 5-d Consensus is developed on recommendations to Governments for transboundary quantity and quality issues that have the potential for conflict.
  - 5-e Governments inform each other about matters pertaining to streamflow forecasting.
- Goal 6. Ministers, senior managers and appropriate staff of governments are informed about PPWB activities.
- 6-a PPWB Members use the PPWB Charter to inform Ministers and Government officials of the roles of Governments and the PPWB.
  - 6-b PPWB Members brief their governments on the PPWB.
  - 6-c Senior managers are invited to Joint Meetings with the PPWB as needed.

- 6-d PPWB publishes and the PPWB Members share annual reports with Ministers and Government officials.

Goal 7. Information, knowledge and research are shared among governments.

- 7-a Governments share information on science investigations and research activities of mutual interest.
- 7-b PPWB promotes scientific research and transfers scientific information through workshops and fora.
- 7-c PPWB provides information to the public on PPWB transboundary water issues as requested.

Goal 8. PPWB business is conducted effectively.

- 8-a PPWB work planning and budgeting is consistent with member agency timeframes and provides adequate direction and funds to enable achieving goals.
- 8-b Day-to-day activities are administered effectively.
- 8-c Board and Committee members communicate effectively before and after meetings.
- 8-d Priorities and responsibilities of Committees are clearly defined.
- 8-e PPWB Charter, Strategic Plan, Bylaws and Rules and Procedures are reviewed and updated every five years.
- 8-f Succession planning is done to ensure continuity of Board, Committee and Secretariat functions.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

The PPWB is responsible for making information available to interested parties. To fulfill this responsibility, the PPWB:

1. Provides timely reports to governments about the status of apportionment and water quality objectives established under the *MAA*;
2. Provides an annual report to Ministers on the administration of the *MAA*;
3. Provides reports and, where necessary, recommendations to governments on matters related to transboundary water issues;
4. Communicates among Board members to prevent and resolve issues;
5. Presents information about the *MAA* and the PPWB at governmental and non-governmental meetings; and
6. Distributes, upon request, reports produced for and by the PPWB to interested parties.

The PPWB Strategic Plan was approved by the Board at Meeting No. 120 on February 8-9, 2017.



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