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Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program (RAMP) Releases 2011 Annual Technical Report

May 1 2012

Fort McMurray, Alberta – The Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program (RAMP) today released data and information related to its 2011 monitoring of climate and hydrology, water quality, benthic invertebrate communities, sediment quality, fish populations and fish health, and lakes sensitive to acidity in the Lower Athabasca region.

The data, along with program methodology and a description of the findings, are contained in RAMP's 2011 Annual Technical Report, the 14th annual technical report released by the organization.

From a regional perspective, the 2011 monitoring program found specific localized changes in some watersheds when compared to pre-development conditions, but did not detect large-scale changes related to oil sands development.

Follow-up studies undertaken in response to results in the 2010 Annual Technical Report indicated that many of the observed localized changes noted in the 2010 report were likely due to natural variability in river conditions (i.e., primarily hydrology) that occur from year to year. Similarly, some of the variability in aquatic conditions observed during the 2011 monitoring program also reflected annual differences in water levels, which were low in many tributaries to the Athabasca River in 2011 compared to the 2010 study period, when water levels were higher than normal.

The report is available for viewing and download on RAMP's website at <http://www.ramp-alberta.org/ramp/results.aspx>.

All of the data contained in the 2011 Technical Report will be incorporated into the RAMP database and made publicly available on the RAMP website by the end of May 2012.

About RAMP:

The Regional Aquatics Monitoring Program (RAMP) is a science-based, multi-stakeholder aquatic environmental monitoring program initiated in 1997. RAMP is one of a number of programs monitoring the aquatic environment in the Lower Athabasca region of Alberta. The intent of RAMP is to determine, evaluate and communicate the state of the aquatic environment and any changes that may result from resource development within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

For more information:

RAMP Communications
communications@ramp-alberta.org
780-742-5147

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