



You are here : [Home](#) > [Environmental Management](#) > [Regulatory Frameworks](#) > [Provincial Legislation](#) > **Water Act**

[RAMP](#)[RIVER](#)[PEOPLE](#)[RESOURCES](#)[ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT](#)

Water Act

The [Alberta Water Act](#) is a revised and updated version of the original Water Resources Act and came into force January 1, 1999 (Government of Alberta 2005a). The Act was created in order to address the wise management and conservation of water resources according to today's pressures.

Of relevance to the Oil Sands region, the Water Act governs the following (Queen's Printer, 2007c):

- The [Framework for Water Management Planning](#) - this includes the Strategy for the Protection of the Aquatic Environment
- The Rights to Divert (water) and Priority of Rights (Part 3)
- Approvals, Licences, Preliminary Certificates Registrations (Part 4)
- Inquiry and Enforcement Orders (Part 10)
- Offences, Penalties and Related Matters (Part 11)



Source: Hatfield Consultants
(click to enlarge)

The Framework for Water Management governs the withdrawal of water and the conservation of water bodies and biodiversity through the 'Strategy'. Because Alberta is a diverse landscape consisting of 11 distinct river basins management frameworks are being created at the basin level.

Athabasca River Water Management Framework

The [Athabasca River Water Management Framework](#) is part of the [Water for Life Strategy](#), a provincial strategy created to sustainably manage Alberta's water. The Framework outlines different management actions for different river flow conditions. These management actions may include limiting the withdrawal of water from the Athabasca River during environmentally-sensitive flow conditions.

The Athabasca River Water Management Framework takes a phased approach, with a framework that is based on scientific research, stakeholder input and expertise within the provincial and federal governments. Phase 1 is currently in effect, guiding regulatory decision-making in upcoming project applications. Phase 2 will be implemented in 2010, and will help ensure that environmental and socio-economic goals are met over the long-term. Monitoring and assessment of the protective and socio-economic goals in the region will continue throughout the life of oil sands projects. The Framework will be adjusted as necessary to ensure water use does not threaten ecosystem sustainability.

The [Canada Water Act](#) must also be considered when the impact extends beyond Alberta borders.

[Next page: Policies and Initiatives](#) ►

[Website Terms Of Use](#)