



# The Canada Water Act

# **Annual Report**

# 1994-95

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Ministre de l'Environnement

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H3

His Excellency The Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, P.C., C.C., C.M.M., C.D., Q.C. Governor General of Canada Rideau Hall Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A1

Your Excellency:

I respectfully submit to Your Excellency and to the Parliament of Canada the annual report on operations under the *Canada Water Act* for the fiscal year 1994-95.

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Yours sincerely,

Jugio Marchi

Hon. Sergio Marchi



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# A. INTRODUCTION

The Canada Water Act, proclaimed on September 30, 1970, provides the framework for joint federal-provincial management of Canada's water resources. Section 38 of the Act (*Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985*) requires that a report on operations under the Act be laid before Parliament after the end of each fiscal year. This, the twenty-third report, covers operations to March 31, 1995. The fiscal year 1991–92 served as the base year for the updating of this annual report. As in 1992–93 and 1993-94, only significant changes from previous years are reported.

In addition to reporting on joint federal-provincial undertakings, this report describes other federal activities under the Act, including water research, water conservation and public information programs. A highlight of 1994–95 activities was the signing of a Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem (details on page 5).

A fund was established in 1975 to support water resources planning and implementation activities carried out under the Act on a cost-shared basis with the provinces. Under the federal government's Program Review, the Canada Water Act fund was targeted for a 90 per cent reduction by 1997-98.

The major provisions of the Act are summarized below.

### Provisions of the Canada Water Act

Part I of the Act provides for the establishment of federal-provincial consultative arrangements for water resource matters (Section 4) and for cooperative agreements with the provinces to develop and implement plans for the management of water resources (Sections 5, 6 and 8). Section 7 enables the Minister, directly, or in cooperation with any provincial government, institution, or person, to conduct research, collect data, and establish inventories associated with water resources.

Part II envisages federal-provincial management agreements where water quality has become a matter of urgent national concern. It permits the joint establishment and use of federal or provincial incorporated agencies to plan and implement approved water quality management programs.

Part III, which provides for regulating the concentration of nutrients in cleaning agents and water conditioners, was incorporated into the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA) by a proclamation on June 30, 1988. Information concerning the regulation of nutrients is reported in the CEPA annual report to Parliament.

Part IV contains provisions for the general administration of the Act. In addition, Part IV provides for inspection and enforcement, allows the Minister to establish advisory

committees and permits the Minister, either directly or in cooperation with any government, institution or person, to undertake public information programs.

# **B. HIGHLIGHTS, 1994–95**

# B-1. REPORT ON PART I OF THE ACT: COMPREHENSIVE WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

# 1. Federal-Provincial Programs

# 1.1 Regulation, Apportionment, Monitoring and Survey Programs

### Collection of Water Quantity Data

Environment Canada responsibilities under the 12 federal-provincial and federalterritorial cost-sharing agreements for water quantity surveys were met. Work under Project 2000, the initiative to modernize the hydrometric program, continued during the year. As well, the Alberta and Saskatchewan pilot projects (focussed on hydrometric instrumentation and methods) and three small pilot projects in the Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic regions (focussed on the integration of water quality instrumentation with the hydrometric program) continued on schedule.

In 1994-95, the hydrometric network comprised 833 federally funded stations and another 925 that were cost-shared with the provinces and territories. During the year, Environment Canada commenced an exercise to make the network more ecosystem-oriented, integrated and efficient.

#### Water Quality Monitoring Agreements

During the year, a Memorandum of Agreement on a Water Quality Network was signed by the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, on behalf of Canada, with the Government of the Northwest Territories. A similar agreement was also signed with the Government of the Yukon Territory. The agreements are key components of the northern environmental monitoring regime, funded under the Arctic Environmental Strategy. The Canada-Quebec Water Quality Monitoring Agreement was under renegotiation during the previous year. Several of the activities covered by the agreement are similar to those being undertaken under the federal-provincial St. Lawrence Action Plan (Vision 2000). Consequently, in 1994-95, federal officials proposed to their Quebec provincial counterparts that the agreement be cancelled.

#### Prairie Provinces Water Board (PPWB)

During the year, all apportionment requirements for interprovincial rivers and streams were met.

The Committee on Hydrology completed a report on the concept of equitable apportionment, which the Board will consider in 1995-96. In response to budget constraints, the Committee on Hydrology was requested to undertake a detailed review of the monitoring programs for the South Saskatchewan and Qu'Appelle rivers. During the year the South Saskatchewan report was completed and approved by the committee and the Qu'Appelle River report was drafted.

The Committee on Groundwater completed its groundwater vulnerability maps. This project, which was coordinated by the National Hydrology Research Institute, maps the vulnerability of the uppermost aquifers along the interprovincial boundaries to potential sources of contamination at or near the surface. Because of the significant amount of groundwater used in heavy oil production and its importance in the water balance of Cold Lake, the Committee on Groundwater evaluated the effects of groundwater withdrawals on Cold Lake and the need to include groundwater in apportionment calculations.

Reports on water quality trends at 11 interprovincial sites were completed. Trend analysis assists in the early detection of change in water quality. The trend results together with the results of a study of how often the North Saskatchewan River is being monitored were used to revise the PPWB Water Quality Monitoring Program.

To obtain copies of publications or other information, contact the Prairie Provinces Water Board at the address listed on page 13.

# Garrison Joint Technical Committee

The Garrison Joint Technical Committee, with membership from both Canada and the United States, meets to investigate proposals related to the Garrison Diversion Project and assess Canadian concerns about the potential impacts on Canadian waters. In April 1994, the Engineering-Biology Task Group of the Joint Technical



Committee evaluated the biota transfer potential of the Northwest Area Water Supply Project, which proposes to pump partially treated Missouri River water to Minot in the Souris River Basin. Technical recommendations were prepared. In addition, the Joint Technical Committee monitored the progress of laboratory tests of pretreatment methods, and studies to divert excess water from saline Devils Lake into the Sheyenne River, a tributary of the Red River.

# **1.2 Water Management Programs**

# Canada-British Columbia Lower Fraser Valley Flood Control Agreement

This program began in 1968 and has been very successful in reducing damages due to floods in the lower Fraser Valley and other areas upstream in British Columbia. During the life of the agreement, the construction of flood control structures such as dykes was completed in the municipalities or areas of Kent, Matsqui, Surrey (Serpentine-Nicomekl dams), New Westminster, Coquitlam, Abbotsford, Kamloops (Oak Hills), Surrey-South Westminster, Richmond, Pitt Meadows, Pitt Meadows No. 2, Delta, Chilliwack, Vedder River, South Dewdney, Glenn Valley, Mission, Harrison Hot Springs, and Coquitlam River. The agreement expired on March 31, 1995 having total expenditures of more than \$146 million, equally shared by Canada and British Columbia.

#### Northern River Basins Study Agreement

The purpose of this agreement, signed by Canada, Alberta and the Northwest Territories in 1991, is to assess the cumulative effects of industrial, agricultural, municipal and other developments on the Peace, Athabasca and Slave river systems. The fourth year of the agreement was chiefly devoted to intensive scientific investigations, including the continuation of research on traditional knowledge; the examination of the effects of Peace River flow regulation on the ecology of the river and the Peace-Athabasca Delta; research on nutrients introduced from municipal, industrial and natural sources; the compilation and analysis of data on the contamination of biota and bottom sediments; ecotoxicological studies; investigations into the quality of drinking water sources and into alternative treatment strategies; food web investigations; and studies of the populations, migrations, health and behaviour of fish. A one-year extension of the study agreement to March 31, 1996 was negotiated for approval by the parties.

# Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem

This six-year accord, signed in June 1994, is the fifth in a series of agreements, dating from 1971, with the primary purpose of meeting Canada's obligations under the original and revised Canada-US Great Lakes Water Quality agreements. The agreement has three primary objectives: restore degraded areas, through remedial action plans; prevent and control pollution, by adopting a philosophy of zero discharge and working with producers and sources of pollutants to achieve a 90% reduction by the year 2000 in the releases of persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic substances; and conserve and protect human and ecosystem health, by determining impacts of contaminants on basin populations and using the information to provide advice and prompt action, in cooperation with basin stakeholders, on significant ecosystem health issues. Total costs to Canada, Ontario and municipal governments in achieving these objectives are estimated to be in the order of \$2.5 billion.

# Work Sharing Arrangement: Studies on Water Resource Management for Economic Development in New Brunswick

Projects conducted during the fourth year of this five-year arrangement addressed a wide range of issues related to water resources and their contribution to economic development. The first year of a two-year integrated coastal zone management project was completed in cooperation with the Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) at three sites located in southwestern New Brunswick. The Bay of Fundy coastal area is an ecosystem of primary importance and the project will develop management tools for sustainable use of its resources. In addition, the development and implementation of community-based water quality monitoring activities at all five ACAP sites in New Brunswick were successfully completed. Studies were completed to develop a framework for applications of *aquifer thermal energy storage* (ATES) technology to reduce energy costs and atmospheric emissions, and the health care centre in Sussex, New Brunswick was converted to an ATES system for heating and cooling.

### Water Demand Management Projects in Prince Edward Island

During the year, two projects were supported to develop water efficiency strategies in the vicinity of Charlottetown. A "Charlottetown Water Demand Management Strategy" developed with the Charlottetown Water Commission will help municipal planners to adjust to the introduction of new full-cost water and wastewater rate structures. A second project, "Water Demand Management in the West Royalty Industrial Park", was undertaken with Enterprise P.E.I. and examined means to minimize the consumption of treated water and output of wastewater through proper demand management and the application of efficiencies in industrial processes.

### Canada-Nova Scotia Water/Economy Agreement

The objective of this four-year agreement, signed in June 1994, is to support and encourage the integration of water resource management into economic decision making. Following a public consultation workshop, interested parties were invited to submit proposals for consideration and funding under the agreement. Projects supported during the year included the first phase of the development of a volunteer water quality monitoring activity at the Bluenose site of the Atlantic Coastal Action Program; and the development of a database of coastal wetland habitats by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.

# Canada-Newfoundland Agreement Respecting Water Resource Management

Signed in 1993-94, this agreement is funding scientific studies to identify means for managers of water resources to promote the sustainable use of water and optimize social and economic benefits. In addition, the agreement provides for the continuation of the flood-risk mapping program and the development of flood forecasting capability. Activities in progress during the year included two groundwater management projects; studies of the Exploits River basin to determine current and future water demands and to assess water quality; the development of an integrated approach to resource management in the Humber River; the completion of the last of seven regional water resource assessments; the development of an action plan to improve water quality in the Humber River estuary; and the investigation of the sustainability of ecosystems in lakes and ponds used for finfish aquaculture.

# **1.3 Flood Damage Reduction Program**

Under agreements signed with nine provinces, the respective governments agree not to engage in, or provide assistance to undertakings vulnerable to flood damage in designated flood risk areas. The mapping and designation of additional flood-risk areas during the year brought the total coverage to nearly 800 communities in some 284 designated areas since the inception of the program in 1975.

A new Canada–Quebec agreement to undertake a five-year program of flood-risk mapping was signed in September 1994. Covering activities commenced in April 1992, this agreement also provides for the continuation of flood damage reduction policies until 2002, and for undertaking study projects related to the sustainable development of water resources. Cost-shared projects will be completed by March 1997.

A Canada-British Columbia Amending Agreement to the Agreement Respecting Floodplain Mapping in the Province of British Columbia was signed on August 2, 1994. The amending agreement extends the provisions of the mapping program until March 31, 1998 and continues the application of policies in designated flood-risk areas until March 31, 2003.

The mapping provisions of the Canada-Alberta Agreement Respecting Flood Damage Reduction and Flood-Risk Mapping were extended by three years until March 31, 1997. The policy provisions continue until March 31, 1999.

The Canada-Saskatchewan Mapping and Studies, and Community Floodplain Measures agreements expired on March 31, 1995. The policy provisions of the General Agreement continue until March 31, 2000.

The 1985 Memorandum of Understanding for the mapping of flood risks on Indian lands, renewed in 1990 between Environment Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, expired on March 31, 1995. Over the ten-year period of the arrangement, surveys and historical reviews of flooding were completed in about 125 Indian reserves or communities to determine priority areas for mapping. Some 40 Indian reserves or communities were mapped in Ontario, British Columbia and Manitoba. All projects were completed with full cooperation of the band councils. Designation, which would have restricted financial assistance in flood-risk areas, was not required under this arrangement.

# 2. Water Research and Socioeconomic Activities

Environment Canada's water research institutes conduct ecosystem-based science projects in support of major river basin programs, and activities related to the sustainable management of natural resources.

# 2.1 National Water Research Institute

Significant research highlights included:

Great Lakes Basin – Under the Great Lakes Action Plan (Great Lakes 2000), techniques and technologies for the assessment and remediation of the aquatic ecosystem were tested as part of the development and implementation of remedial action plans. In addition, as part of the development of a Lakewide Management Plan for Lake Erie, a series of research studies examined lake metabolism, spatial and temporal change, and ecosystem health. In support of the Hamilton Harbour Remediation Action Plan, detailed surveys of sediment contamination were conducted to determine appropriate remediation approaches. A study was initiated on the occurrence of potential hormone disruptors in the basin.

- Fraser River Basin As part of the Fraser River Action Plan, a report was published on erosion and deposition processes of Fraser River sediments. In addition, sampling of benthic invertebrate communities was conducted in five subbasins in order to establish the relations between community structure and local conditions. These relations are being used to develop ecosystem health based management objectives and priorities for the basin.
- Northern River Basins Study In support of the study, a report was published on the effect of pulp mill effluent on the transport of suspended sediments in the Athabasca River. Extensive work was also undertaken on organic contaminants in the Athabasca River system. Sampling from the oil sands development area and from tributaries was used to provide "fingerprint" information for tracing sources of organic contaminants in the river.
- Other Research This included the completion of studies on the occurrence, persistence, volatilization and toxicity of metolachlor, one of the most heavily used agricultural pesticides in Ontario; research on the impacts associated with the disposal of base-metal mine tailings and the potential for site remediation; investigation of the effectiveness of groundwater remediation methods; and continued progress in research on the impacts of effluents from bleached pulp mills.

# 2.2 National Hydrology Research Institute

The activities within six major strategic research areas included the following:

- Cold Regions Hydrology and Ecology A progress report was completed on results to date in a multi-year project to assess the impacts of climate change and harvesting practices on boreal forest ecosystems.
- Sustainable Groundwater Resources A series of 10 "aquifer vulnerability maps" was completed for determining the vulnerability of groundwater resources to surface sources of contamination.

- Sustainable Ecosystems in Semiarid Regions As part of the ongoing research on the fate and behaviour of herbicides in aquatic ecosystems, the development of a cost-effective, more accurate technique for assessing contaminant levels in aquatic invertebrates was initiated.
- Detection and Assessment of Climate Change Within an existing program to develop strategies for managing the impacts of climate change on water resources, a new project was initiated to develop a "vegetation index" based on satellite data as a versatile tool to estimate hydrological parameters in northern regions.
- Ecosystem Health and Cumulative Effects A new project was begun to develop a program to evaluate the health of ecosystems in mountain watersheds using riverine invertebrate communities as biological indicators.
- Large Ecosystem Initiatives During the year, the institute continued its involvement in two major federal-provincial research programs investigating the effects of contaminants on large river systems. Under the Fraser River Action Plan and the Northern River Basins Study, institute scientists assessed the effects of pulp mill effluents on aquatic ecosystem integrity.

Using research results from projects conducted under the Northern River Basins Study, the institute began work to construct a framework for long-term cumulative effects monitoring of large aquatic ecosystems affected by resource development.

# 2.3 Water Conservation

Implementation of the *Water Conservation Plan for Federal Government Facilities* was begun by some departments, and water efficiency provisions were added to the national water specifications by Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Considerable support was given to the implementation of the "National Action Plan to Encourage Municipal Water Use Efficiency" which was adopted by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment in May 1994. The net effect is that within three years, water efficiency, with the application of appropriate pricing and improved technologies, has come to the forefront as a universally acceptable approach for reducing the impact of municipal water and sewer infrastructure on natural water supplies and aquatic habitats.

# **B-2. REPORT ON PART II OF THE ACT: WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT**

There were no activities conducted during the year pursuant to Part II of the Canada Water Act.

# **B-3. REPORT ON PART IV OF THE ACT: PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM**

Partnerships and coalitions have provided — and will continue to provide — the main impetus to program activities. The primary objective of the program is to instill in Canadians an awareness and knowledge of the nature and extent of fresh water in Canada in hopes that they will learn to value this precious resource and act to conserve and protect it in their households, schools, communities and elsewhere. The task is a huge one and cannot be done by any individual, group or government acting alone. To this end, the Water Awareness program continues to cooperate successfully with business, industry, educators, other government departments and the many community, regional and national groups that are attempting to achieve the same end. This avoids duplication, fosters harmonization among various levels of government and ensures that program activities are cost effective while multiplying their effects.

During the year these coalitions resulted in the following significant contributions and achievements:

- development of the educational components of the Water Efficiency Task Force Implementation Plan of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (a manual for municipal officers and a kit for Members of Parliament will be finalized during 1995-96);
- implementation of a national campaign to observe World Water Day 1995 in alliance with all major water associations and groups (WaterCan, Canadian Water Resources Association (CWRA), Canadian Water and Wastewater Association, American Water Works Association, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Girl Guides of Canada and the Canadian Environmental Network);
- provision of review and technical assistance to the Girl Guides of Canada in the development of resource materials associated with their ongoing "Water for Tomorrow" program; and
- □ display of water awareness and accompanying print materials at various national conferences and regional events (e.g., CWRA annual conference).

Publications are a very visible component of the program and their success is well documented (e.g., regular citation in newspapers, magazines, text books, trade publications). They are used in schools and universities and have been included on regional Internet nodes. Existing publications include *A Primer on Fresh Water*, the Freshwater Series of fact sheets, *Water: No Time to Waste*, and various brochures and posters. These all provide a unique and user friendly account of the nature and extent of the water resource from a national perspective. Over the past year the following products were developed or revised:

□ the first edition of A Bibliography of Water Awareness Materials;

- a printer ready diskette version of the water efficiency brochures (City of Toronto and City of Port Colborne have been recent partners);
- □ an updated version and printer ready disk of *Water No Time to Waste*; (Metro Toronto recently produced a personalized version of the booklet);
- □ the popular acid rain colouring poster (revised and reprinted);
- a new wetlands colouring poster (developed, printed and distributed in partnership with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the Canadian Museum of Nature); and
- □ the initiation of development of an Internet interactive production, based on the water awareness products.

To be effective, partnerships have to be nurtured and products have to remain credible. The public information program will continue to pursue these challenges.

For more information on these publications, contact the Enquiry Centre at the address listed on page 13.

# C. TABLE: STATUS OF CANADA WATER ACT AGREEMENTS

Regulation, Apportionment, Monitoring and Survey Programs			
Under Negotiation in 1994–95	New in 1994–95	Ongoing in 1994–95	
Water quality monitoring agreements with Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Alberta.	Water quality monitoring agreements with Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories.	<ul> <li>Water quantity surveys with all provinces.</li> <li>Prairie Provinces Water Board.</li> <li>Mackenzie River Basin Committee.</li> <li>Water quality monitoring agreements with Quebec, British Columbia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island.</li> <li>Ottawa River Regulation Planning Board.</li> </ul>	
Water Management Programs			
Under Negotiation in 1994–95	New in 1994–95	Ongoing in 1994–95	
<ul> <li>Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement.</li> <li>Revised Northern River Basins Study Agreement.</li> <li>Water Annex with Prince Edward Island.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Water/Economy Agreement with Nova Scotia.</li> <li>Agreement with Ontario Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.</li> <li>Water Demand Management Agreements with Enterprise P.E.I. and the Charlottetown Water Commission.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Developmental Flood Forecasting in New Brunswick.</li> <li>Agreement Respecting the Fraser Basin Management Program.</li> <li>Studies on Water Resource Management för Economic Development in New Brunswick.</li> <li>Northern River Basins Study.</li> <li>Fraser River Estuary Management Agreement (extended).</li> <li>Mackenzie River Basin General Agreement.</li> <li>Lower Fraser Flood Control Agreement.</li> <li>Yukön and Alsek River Basins Agreement.</li> <li>Agreement.</li> </ul>	
Flood Damage Reduction Program			
Under Negotiation in 1994–95	New in 1994–95	Ongoing in 1994–95	
Maintenance Agreement with Ontario.     New General Agreement with New Brunswick	<ul> <li>Renewed Mapping/General Agreement with Quebec.</li> <li>Extension of Mapping/General agreements with Alberta and British Columbia.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Agreement on policies with Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan.</li> <li>Mapping Agreement with Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland.</li> <li>Study Agreement with Manitoba.</li> <li>Maintenance Agreement with Nova Scotia, New Brunswick.</li> <li>Measures Agreement with Saskatchewan.</li> <li>DOE-DIAND Memorandum of Understanding on Mapping Indian Lands</li> </ul>	

# D. LIST OF CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CANADA WATER ACT ACTIVITIES

#### **General Information**

Water Issues Branch Ecosystems and Environmental Resources Directorate Environmental Conservation Service Environment Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3 Tel.: (819) 997-2307 Fax.: (819) 994-0237

#### Publications (Public Information Program)

Enquiry Centre Environment Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3 Toll free: 1-800-668-6767 Local: 997-2800 Fax: (819) 953-2225

#### Research Institutes

Program Liaison National Water Research Institute 867 Lakeshore Road P.0. Box 550 Burlington, Ontario L7R 4A6 Tel.: (905) 336-4675 Fax.: (905) 336-4989

Conservation Programs Division Environmental Conservation Branch Environment Canada Atlantic Region 45 Alderney Drive Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2Y 2N6 Tel.: (902) 426-1718 Fax.: (902) 426-4457

Water Issues Division Environmental Services Branch Environment Canada Ontario Region 867 Lakeshore Road Burlington, Ontario L7R 4A6 Tel.: (905) 336-4712 Fax.: (905) 336-8901

Environmental Conservation Branch Environment Canada Pacific and Yukon Region 700-1200 West 73rd Avenue Vancouver, British Columbia V6P 6H9 Tel.: (604) 664-9189 Fax.: (604) 664-9195 National Hydrology Research Institute 11 Innovation Boulevard Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 3H5 Tel.: (306) 975-5717 Fax.: (306) 975-5143

#### **Regional Offices**

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#### Prairie Provinces Water Board

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