



Policy Statement: Conserve and Restore Clean, Cold Water

Principles Applied:

- All organisms require a reasonable supply of clean water to maintain their life cycles.
- Water quantity creates living space and also maintains and redefines habitat over time
- Apply the Natural Flow Regime Concept for water quantity management because not just one flow is important to aquatic animals and their habitat
- Coldwater organisms require flows that maintain their physical habitat, structural integrity and living space. .

Policy Rationale and Considerations:

The **quality** and **quantity** of Canada's aquatic ecosystems are maintained or restored to a level that ensures the health of coldwater species and communities. This provides the longest term, lowest costs for society and ecosystem management.

Objectives of Policy Statement

Water quantity should be managed in order to balance the need of human society for water while ensuring the integrity of aquatic ecosystems.

Water quantity management should ensure that sufficient volumes of water are maintained in rivers, streams and lakes to ensure living space for aquatic animals, allow them to fulfill all their life cycle requirements, maintain water quality and ensure the structural and ecological integrity of littoral areas, river channels and floodplains. This will necessitate the management of natural flow regime characteristics including lowflow characteristics, flushing flows, channel forming flows and riparian flows.

Implications to Organization

The protection of water quantity will include issues related to changes in watershed water budgets, including groundwater recharge and discharge characteristics, groundwater management, surface water flow patterns, environmental flows and discharge locations. We will need to consider Federal and Provincial Water Policies at the National and Provincial levels. We will need to assist or identify the need for development of new science and analytical tools to determine impacts of changing flow patterns on coldwater communities and their food webs and the implications on water quality as well.

At Provincial and local levels, implementation of this policy will include issues related to water abstraction for irrigation, bottle water, groundwater and surface water flow modifications, municipal water supplies, wastewater treatment, hydroelectric dam water management as well as small dam removal and other related issues.

Delivery

A variety of approaches can be undertaken. National programs should focus on acquiring science in support of water management, groundwater management, flow management from dams, water abstraction, etc. and providing technical tools to professionals that will assist them in designing better programs that balance water supply and management with protection of environmental flows in streams. Other programs can include small dam removal initiatives, improving environmental or instream flow requirements, groundwater recharge:discharge and stream flow, etc.

Provincial programs should target at applying the tools and providing support to Chapters undertaking these initiatives.

Supporting Information:

More detailed information on this Core Policy can be found in Policy Brief #1 of the National Conservation Agenda.

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