

# Water Allocation Management System Project

2010 WPAC Forum

June 22, 2010

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# Presentation Objectives

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- To provide a brief historical overview of Alberta's water allocation management system
- To describe current water use in Alberta
- To describe pressures and drivers for change
- To provide information on the Water Allocation Management System review

# Historical overview of water allocation

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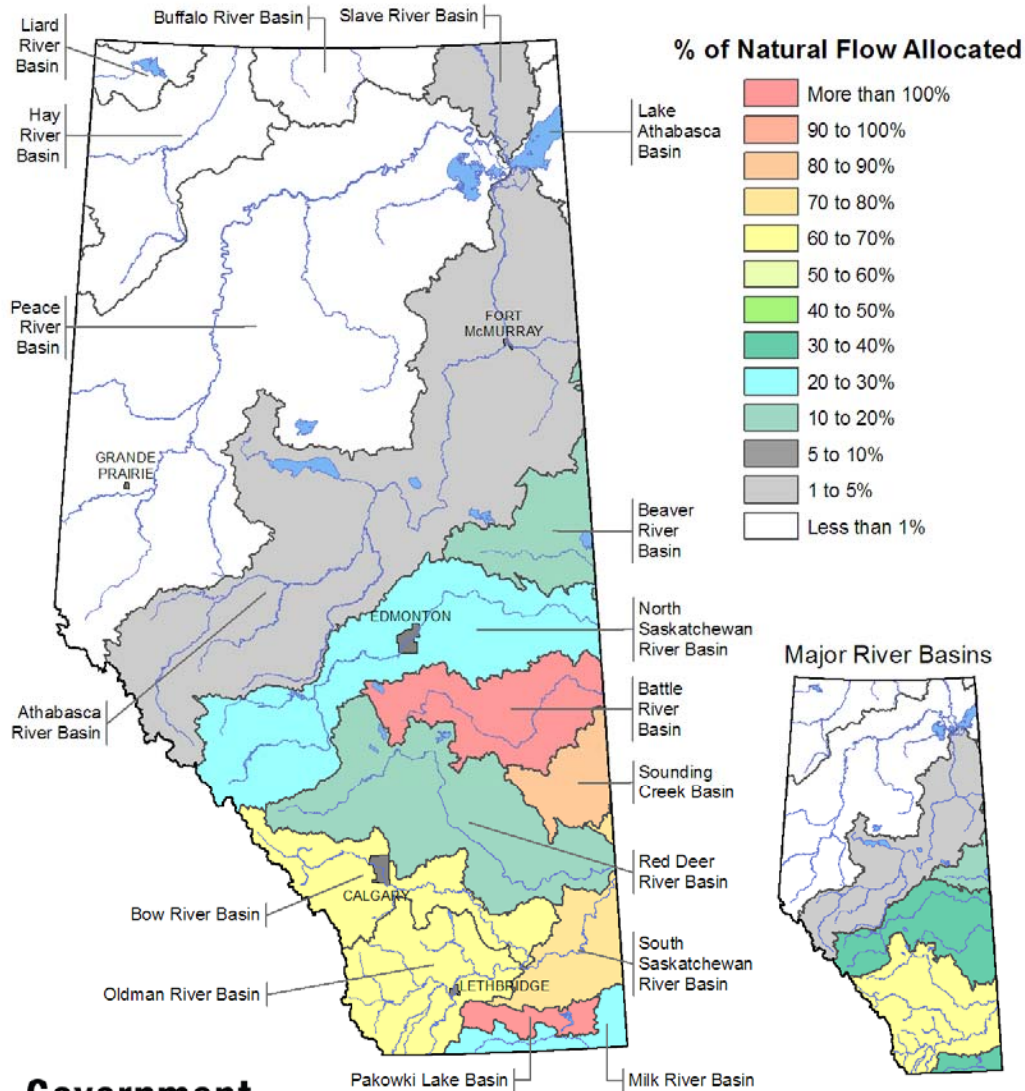
**Pre-1894:** Riparian rights

**1894:** The first water management law (*North West Irrigation Act*) is passed

**1931:** Control of natural resources transferred to the province. *Water Resources Act* is passed

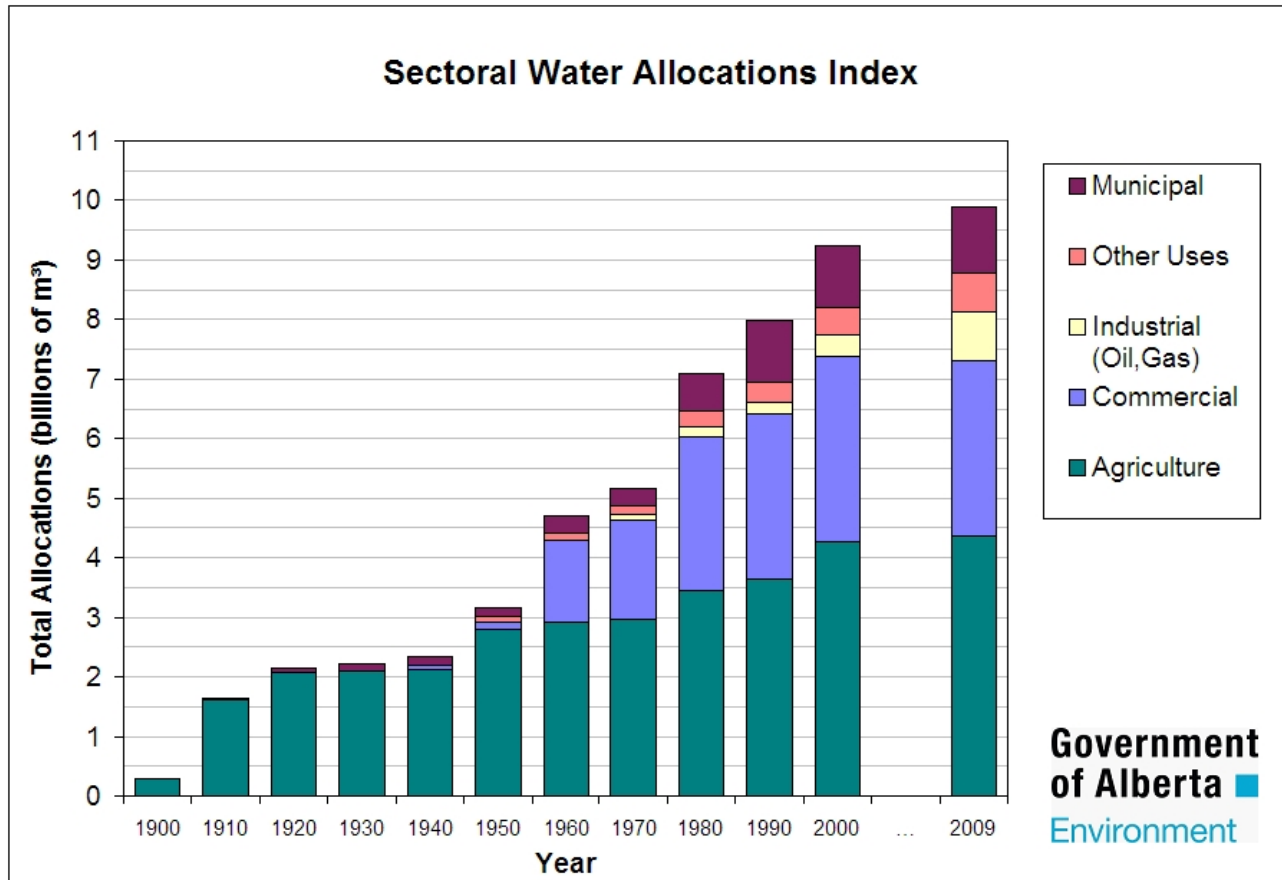
**1999:** *Water Act*

# Allocations in 2008 by River Basin Compared to Average Natural Flow



Where is the water?

# Who uses the water?



# Opportunities and Drivers for change

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- Protect aquatic ecosystems by design instead of by default
- Establish certainty in the definition of water allocation entitlements contained in licences
- Support growth through water re-allocation
  - Create opportunities for users to access the resource and to manage water shortage risk
  - Ensure distribution of risk accommodates for both societal values

# Other drivers for change

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- Changes in societal values
- Population and economic growth pressures
- Changing policy context
  - Regional land use planning
  - Cumulative effects management
- Premier's 2009 mandate letter
  - “Implement the renewed Water for Life Strategy...”

# What is the Water Allocation Management System project?

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- Comprehensive review of Alberta's current water allocation management system
- Will result in recommendations for enhancement or renewal of the system
- Focused on “how” water is allocated, rather than “to whom” or “for what purpose.”

# External reviews

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- Minister's Advisory Group
  - Water Management and Allocation in Alberta
- The Alberta Water Council (WATSUP)
  - Recommendations for Improving Alberta's Water Allocation Transfer System: Water Allocation Transfer System Upgrade Project
- Alberta Water Research Institute
  - Water License Transfers: Policy and Practice in the United States and Australia

# What we are hearing

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- Define and protect water for the environment
- Define water allocation entitlements and obligations for all water uses
- Enable licence holders to manage the risk of water shortage
- Employ regional decision-making and water transfers
- Enhance knowledge to support water allocation management decisions

# Engaging others

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- Initial engagement process (Fall 2009 – Spring 2010)
  - GoA staff and MLAs
  - First Nations community conversations
- Planning for consultation in 2010

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Thank You

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