

QUALITY

This brochure was made possible with support from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation.



We need water every single day to survive—for an increasing population, to maintain and improve our environment and to grow food and produce energy. As these demands grow, the quality and quantity of our water is changing. Water is the nexus between energy, food and people, and meeting all of these demands is increasingly challenging.

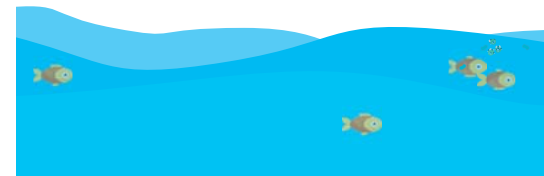
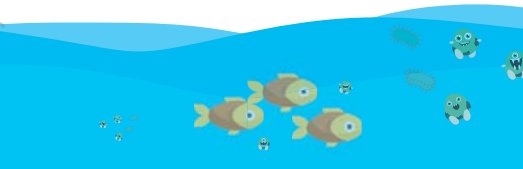
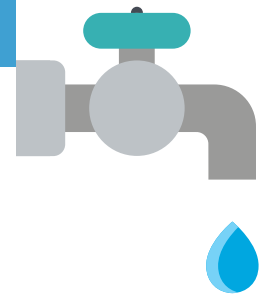
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The water in our rivers comes from glaciers, snow melt, rain and ground water. For thousands of years rivers have supported natural ecosystems of fish, animals and plants. Water is drawn out of the river for agriculture, industry and for people to drink, wash clothes and flush toilets. Some of this water is treated and returned to the ecosystem. We all share a common supply of water and some years there won't be as much water in the river to support our growing population, industry and healthy environment. This makes it especially important to plan how we manage and share our water.



Why care about water?

Ensuring the long-term security and health of water is becoming more important. Water quality and quantity is essential for our communities, economy and environmental health.

97% of water allocated in Alberta is drawn from surface water sources.

80% of Alberta's water supply is in Northern Alberta; 80% of the demand is in Southern Alberta.



Did you know?

Naturally occurring microorganisms, such as *Giardiasis*—or beaver fever—will always occur in our rivers, so untreated spring water is unsafe to drink.



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River water contains nutrients, sediment, organic matter and microorganisms that occur naturally. Rivers receive runoff from agriculture, homes and industrial operations which can add contaminants to the water. Wetlands and forests naturally filter water and help keep it clean. Wastewater and stormwater systems treat contaminants before water is returned to the river. While many substances in our rivers do not cause harm, some pollutants and parasites can make people sick and damage the environment. Regulations govern the industrial and municipal pollutants but WE must all play our part in understanding and protecting the quality of our water.