



Transboundary Water Management Agreements

The flow of surface and groundwater does not follow administrative boundaries, which often creates challenges in water governance. There are a variety of arrangements in Yukon, and abroad, that support stewardship at the watershed scale. These include the Mackenzie River Basin Board, the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council, and further south, the Fraser Basin Council and numerous International Joint Commission boards. In collaboration with partners, the Government of Yukon is administering two bilateral agreements under the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement.



Map of the Mackenzie River Basin

The Mackenzie River Basin

To maintain the ecological integrity of the Mackenzie River Basin the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement was signed in 1997. Signed by Canada, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Yukon, the Agreement established the Mackenzie River Basin Board. It also includes the requirement to establish Bilateral Water Management Agreements (BWMA) among the jurisdictions that are signatory to the Agreement.

The desired outcomes of the BWMA are to:

- Support cooperative management of transboundary waters,
- Maintain aquatic ecosystem health,
- Promote positive relationships between provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments and downstream jurisdictions,
- Be proactive, and
- To improve knowledge of water resources.

Two watersheds in Yukon flow into the Mackenzie River; the Peel and the Liard.

Peel River BWMA

In 2002, Yukon and Northwest Territories signed a BWMA for the Peel River and the Mackenzie Delta watersheds. Since that time, Territorial and First Nation government representatives have participated in meetings to share information in support of Agreement implementation. There is a current interest to update the Agreement, based on more recent and modernized Agreements within the Mackenzie basin.

Liard River BWMA

British Columbia and Yukon signed a BWMA in 2017. The BWMA applies to all transboundary waters between the two jurisdictions, primarily the Liard River Watershed. Recently, a Bilateral Management Committee (BMC) was established with First Nation governments and transboundary Indigenous organizations. Moving forward, the BMC will administer and support implementation of the BWMA, and collaborative stewardship of the Liard River watershed.

Key Partners

- Government of British Columbia
- Government of Northwest Territories
- Daylu Dena Council
- Acho Dene Koe First Nation
- Tahltan Central Council
- First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun
- Tr'ondek Hwech'in
- Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
- Tetlit Gwich'in
- Inuvialuit

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
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