

SER-WC WEBINAR 2020

Legal Framework to Protect Aquatic Habitats in Saskatchewan

by Alex Blais-Montpetit, MEnv, CAN-CISEC, EPT

Anthropogenic stresses to hydrosystems in the province of Saskatchewan have increased over the past several decades. These stresses have been triggered by the development of cultivated lands and drainage practices; construction of dams, reservoirs and canals to store and divert water to both rural and urban communities; construction of road infrastructures; and new subdivision development with increased access to waterways including marinas, boat launches, and shoreline stabilization works.

One environmental protection measure the province has implemented to preserving the integrity of hydrosystems and associated aquatic habitats is by regulating land development activities that can cause adverse effects to the bed, bank or boundary of any watercourse or water body through a regulatory approval called the Aquatic Habitat Protection Permit (AHPP). AHPPs are intended to mitigate impacts from project development by providing conditions that must be followed by proponents. *The Environmental Protection and Management Act, 2010* and regulations provide the framework for AHPP by identifying three 'adverse effects' criteria subjecting development activity to an approval.

This webinar aims to introduce the province of Saskatchewan AHPP framework through case studies. Upon the end of the webinar, participants shall be able to distinguish the 'adverse effects' criteria defined by the Act, the actors responsible to administer and enforce AHPPs, and the legal mechanisms to rehabilitate and restore aquatic habitats altered by development activities that were either not permitted or exceeded their AHPP conditions. The webinar will also address the vision of the AHPP program to adapt the regulatory framework for future aquatic habitat stresses.

Bio

Alex Blais-Montpetit is a recent graduate of the Ecological Restoration program from the University of Victoria. He is presently employed at the Saskatchewan Water Security Agency with the Aquatic Habitat Protection Unit, where his work focuses on leading the province's aquatic habitat protection permitting process for the southwest region. Alex has also four years of consulting experience in contributing to the design of environmental management documents and conducting environmental construction monitoring for major civil infrastructure projects such as the Regina Bypass in Saskatchewan and the Site C Dam in British-Columbia. He is also a Canadian Certified Inspector of Sediment and Erosion Control (CAN-CISEC) and member of the International Erosion Control Association (IECA).