**Mackenzie River Basin Board: State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report**

Bilateral Water Management Agreement Implementation and Data

**Explore and recommend how the ongoing work to implement the Bilateral Water Management Agreements (BWMA) could be better profiled in the SOAER.**

**Context**

The vision for the Mackenzie River Basin Board’s State of the Aquatic Ecosystem Report (SOAER) is as follows:

* To uphold the intention of the Master Agreement, by providing information about the aquatic health of the basin with the goal of informing action and decision-making.
* To build on the previous efforts of the MRBB and its committees, such as the Traditional Knowledge Steering Committee and the Bilateral Water Management Agreements made between provincial and territorial member governments.
* To recognize and affirm the inherent value of diverse knowledge systems in basin health assessment, offering a platform for equitable knowledge presentation.
* To critically approach the power dynamics associated with presenting Indigenous knowledge and Western science.
* To recognize the basin as a place of meaning for people and to tell the story of that place.

**To pursue this vision, the SOAER will:**

* Pursue the use of different information presentation mechanisms beyond conventional text-based reporting, acknowledging the accessibility and informational benefits.

Be a comprehensive assessment of the “State of” the basin, rather than a repository or platform for directly uploading knowledge – emphasizing the report's role in synthesis, analysis, and presentation over information hosting or accumulation.

**Description of the work**

* The contractor will highlight the work of the Bilateral Management Committees across the basin by:
  + working with subject matter experts in applicable jurisdictions to describe the intent of the BWMA and Appendix C. The description will explain that the various BMWA are in different stages of negotiation and implementation and take a risk informed management approach that resulted in the varying classifications and commitments. It will note that BWMA are under the umbrella of the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement. The contractor will work with Bilateral Management Committees (BMC) and subject matter experts in applicable jurisdictions to summarize the BWMA commitments, and how the commitments have evolved and are being adapted to the current context. Content could include text, video, images/maps with narration, audio etc.
  + building an understanding of how BMWA work is connected to the SOAER.
  + developing an understanding of how Traditional Knowledge contributes to the BWMAs. Contractor will describe the model and work being carried out in the Liard trilateral (Joe Copper Jack’s Land and Peoples Relationship model) and the AB-NWT TK Framework
  + collaborating with BMC members to develop a clear scope of what’s in/what’s out of the SOAER update. This may include the development of data sharing agreements and a clear understanding that knowledge rests with the knowledge holder.
  + Note that publicly available information produced (and any other bilateral information if parties provide) to support the BWMAs will be included in the assessment of indicators.

**Value**

* Work implemented to support bilateral or multilateral efforts will be shared more broadly
* Bilateral research and monitoring efforts are important and ongoing, therefore it makes sense to leverage efficiencies in resources, data collection and interpretation, processes and methodology.
* The bilateral efforts to bridge/braid/weave different ways of knowing are progressive and essential. These efforts should be underscored more broadly.
* Showcase partnering efforts across transboundary waters and the importance of collaboration and connections.

**Outreach and Communication**

A) Summer/Fall 2025: MRBB Secretariat with support of MRBB members to connect with BMC members to share updated SOAER timeline and discuss SOAER content (text, video etc.)

B) During SOAER development: BMC members, with support of contractor and MRBB Secretariat, will review and approve BMC and BWMA content prior to website update being finalized. General updates will also be provided upon request.

C) SOAER Update Completed: Summaries and promotional materials will be shared with BMC members.