

## Freshwater management

The sustainable management and stewardship of Canada's freshwater environments is one of the great challenges of our time, and one of the most important means by which Canada can demonstrate global natural resource leadership.

Recent investments, while encouraging, should be seen as a first step towards a coordinated national approach to protecting all of Canada's freshwater resources, which are central to our nation's health and prosperity. Ongoing investments in freshwater are needed to protect and restore our large lakes and river systems, and the surrounding watersheds that support them.

### Total Recommended Investment:

**\$675 million over five years, and \$200 million over the following five years (2029–2034)**

- **\$475 million over five years to expand freshwater management practices nationally:**
  - **\$280 million** in additional funding for the Freshwater Action Plan to improve water quality, manage water quantity, and protect aquatic biodiversity through implementing watershed action plans and in-water actions nationally, starting with:
    - Saint John River (Wolostoq) and watershed
    - Great Lakes
    - St. Lawrence River System
    - Lake Winnipeg Basin
    - Fraser River
    - Mackenzie River
    - Canadian Columbia Basin

Investments should be prioritized through a risk-based analysis using science and research and in collaboration with Indigenous peoples. [ECCC]

- **\$195 million** to address the funding gap in the rest of the country for projects that address issues including climate mitigation, climate adaptation, truth and

reconciliation through capacity building and partnerships with Indigenous peoples, habitat restoration, water technology and innovation, community-based water monitoring, fish population recovery, planning, and natural infrastructure. [ECCC]

- **\$400 million over ten years** to build on the BC Watershed Security Fund to address water quantity and quality challenges and improve freshwater environments for Pacific salmon and steelhead in the Fraser River Basin and other priority watersheds (coordinate this funding with the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative). [ECCC]

Many of Canada's vast freshwater resources are located on Indigenous lands, whose people have stewarded these resources since time immemorial. Their inherent rights, traditional knowledge and understanding of these ecosystems should be a core component of any plans or actions taken. Additional funding for freshwater ecosystems should directly support both Indigenous-led water stewardship efforts and progress towards the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Canada.

### Contacts

Liz Hendriks – [ehendriks@wwfcanada.org](mailto:ehendriks@wwfcanada.org)  
Gia Paola – [g\\_paola@ducks.ca](mailto:g_paola@ducks.ca)

Photo: Laro Photo

