



Request for Proposals: Research and Resource Development for the Alberta Coalition for Watershed Security

Statement of Purpose

Alberta Ecotrust Foundation is seeking qualified proponents to provide research, analysis, and the development of three complementary resources: an Ecosystem Overview, Gap and Opportunity Analysis, a Building Resilience: Impacts of Watershed and Natural Infrastructure Investments Report, and a Case for a Sustainable Watershed Security Fund in Alberta. These resources will build on existing work within Alberta's water and watershed sector; demonstrate the value of sustained investments in nature-based solutions; act as a case for support in government relations and funding efforts; and guide the Alberta Coalition for Watershed Security's long-term strategy.

About Alberta Ecotrust Foundation

[Alberta Ecotrust Foundation](#) is a trusted leader in advancing environmental and climate solutions across Alberta. We collaborate with diverse partners from government, industry, non-profits, and Indigenous communities to create a future where both people and nature thrive. Since 1991, Alberta Ecotrust has mobilized resources, delivered innovative programs, and supported impactful projects that protect and restore natural ecosystems, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and build community resilience.

About the Alberta Coalition for Watershed Security

The [Alberta Coalition for Watershed Security](#) (the Coalition) is a collaborative of Alberta-based organizations working to protect and restore the province's watersheds through neutral, practical, and solutions-focused approaches. The Coalition recognizes and builds upon the important work already underway across Alberta, and seeks to support, collaborate, and amplify the efforts of organizations working on watershed security. Alberta Ecotrust acts as the Secretariat of the Coalition and is guided by a broad network of organizations and experts contributing knowledge, experience, and strategic insight.

The Coalition is currently focused on two urgent and connected goals: the renewal of the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP) in its current structure and laying the groundwork for a sustainable, long-term watershed fund. In doing so, we aim to build a legacy of healthy, resilient watersheds that can withstand the pressures of climate change and sustain Alberta's ecosystems, communities, and economies for generations to come.

Background and context

Alberta's watersheds face growing challenges: climate change, land-use pressures, underinvestment in natural infrastructure, and policy gaps. At the same time, there is an opportunity to influence provincial and federal agendas, build new cross-sector partnerships,



and secure long-term support for nature-based solutions. A coordinated, credible voice is needed to unlock political will and ensure the resilience of Alberta's water systems for future generations.

The Coalition is advancing coordinated government relations to protect and restore watersheds and strengthen long-term water security. To support this work, Alberta Ecotrust is seeking proposals from qualified organizations or consultants to develop a suite of research-based resources that will inform strategy, government relations, and funding efforts.

These resources are intended to build on existing work within the Alberta watershed and water sector, clearly articulate the value of watershed investments, and support the case for sustained investment in nature-based solutions.

Description of Services

The proponent(s) will develop key knowledge products including an **Ecosystem Overview, Gap and Opportunity Analysis**, a **Building Resilience: Impacts of Watershed and Natural Infrastructure Investments Report**, and a **Case for a Sustainable Watershed Security Fund in Alberta** (details in the Scope of Work section). Proponents may submit proposals for a single resource, or multiple resources.

The successful proponent(s) will be responsible for:

- Project coordination with Alberta Ecotrust Foundation staff (President, Director, Grants & Initiatives, and a Program Specialist) as the Secretariat and collaborate with Coalition partners;
- Conducting research; synthesizing existing data, reports, and sector knowledge;
- Engaging with relevant interest holders as appropriate; and
- Translating complex information into clear, compelling, and actionable resources tailored to government, funders, partners, and the broader public.

Objectives

The overarching objectives of this RFP are to:

- Consolidate and build upon existing research, analysis, and initiatives related to watershed protection, restoration, and funding;
- Strengthen and inform the Coalition's strategic direction and shared understanding;
- Quantify and clearly communicate the economic, social, climate resilience, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) outcomes of watershed investments;

- Provide actionable, evidence-based recommendations, which will be used by the Coalition to develop its own strategy for engagement with governments, funders, and partners.
- Support government relations efforts and support the case for long-term, sustainable funding for water and watershed security.

Scope of Work

A. Ecosystem Overview, Gap and Opportunity Analysis

Purpose

The Ecosystem Overview, Gap and Opportunity Analysis will be a comprehensive stocktaking of existing work in the watershed and water sector since 2003, when *Water for Life* was established, and will serve as a guiding roadmap for the Coalition. It will identify strengths, gaps, risks, and opportunities, and provide a clear framework to guide future strategy, government relations, and investments in watershed resiliency and restoration activities.

Key Activities

The successful proponent will:

- Coordinate with the Coalition to collaborate throughout the project to receive feedback and guidance, including organizing monthly meetings, taking meeting notes, and documenting key inputs and outcomes;
- Utilize the Coalition's previous research based on *Mapping and Analysis of Watershed Protection Funding Across Canadian Jurisdictions* (anticipated completion is late March 2026 and will be provided);
- Review and synthesize existing research, plans, policies, and initiatives relevant to watershed security in Alberta;
- Engage with 10-15 key interest holders (e.g., experts, non-profit partners, etc) as appropriate;
- Map the current watershed governance, funding, and delivery ecosystem (who does what, where, and how decisions are made);
- Assess alignment between existing initiatives and provincial policy priorities (e.g., water security, climate adaptation, etc) to identify strengths, gaps, risks, and opportunities within the current landscape;
- Develop a clear roadmap to guide Coalition priorities and future work with a focus on addressing gaps and leveraging opportunities, rather than duplicating efforts of others in the water sector.

Deliverables



- A comprehensive foundational document suitable for both internal strategic use and external engagement;
- A standalone roadmap or action framework summarizing priority actions, timelines, and responsible actors;
- Pathway demonstrating how foundational work connects to future focused advocacy, funding, and outcomes.

Estimated Budget: \$30,000

Estimated Timeline: 3–4 months

B. Building Resilience: Impacts of Watershed and Natural Infrastructure Investments Report

Purpose

The Building Resilience: Impacts of Watershed and Natural Infrastructure Investments Report will synthesize and communicate the key outcomes of natural infrastructure and watershed investments in Alberta from 2014 to the present. Building on existing Alberta work, the report will articulate the environment, social, economic, climate resilience, and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples outcomes associated with watershed investments.

The report will support the Coalition’s government relations efforts, funding advocacy, and public communication by clearly demonstrating how watershed investments deliver measurable value and contribute to long term water security, community well being, and climate resilience in Alberta.

Key Activities

The successful proponent will:

- Coordinate with the Coalition to collaborate throughout the project to receive feedback and guidance, including organizing monthly meetings, taking meeting notes, and documenting key inputs and outcomes;
- Utilize the Coalition’s research, including: *Mapping and Analysis of Watershed Protection Funding Across Canadian Jurisdictions* (anticipated completion is late March 2026 and will be provided) and the *Ecosystem Overview, Gap and Opportunity Analysis*;
- Compile, synthesize, and analyze data, evaluations, case studies, and existing evidence relevant to watershed and natural infrastructure investments in Alberta;
- Assess outcomes across the following broad areas, using a pragmatic, mixed methods approach:

- Economic and workforce outcomes (e.g. job creation, skills development, regional benefits);
- Environmental and watershed outcomes, including ecosystem service values;
- Climate adaptation and resilience benefits (e.g. drought and flood protection);
- Social and community outcomes; and
- Advancements related to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous participation, leadership, and governance where applicable;
- Identify relevant and credible outcome metrics, recognizing data availability and limitations;
- Incorporate qualitative insights where appropriate to complement quantitative findings;
- Translate technical findings into clear, compelling narratives and visuals suitable for government, funder, and public audiences, with a focus on strategic insight rather than project level evaluation.

Deliverables

- A major outcomes report suitable for government, funder, and public audiences;
- Concise and effective visuals to support communications of key findings.

Estimated Budget: \$35,000

Estimated Timeline: 4–6 months

C. The Case for a Sustainable Watershed Security Fund in Alberta

Purpose

The Case for a Sustainable Watershed Security Fund in Alberta will present a concrete, actionable case for establishing a Sustainable Watershed Security Fund in Alberta. Drawing on existing research, the Alberta context, and relevant examples from other jurisdictions, the paper will outline why a dedicated, long term funding mechanism is needed and how it could be structured to support watershed security, climate resilience, reconciliation, and community economic and social well-being. This Sustainable Watershed Security Fund is not meant to replace current existing funding programs, it is intended to be additional funding.

This resource is intended to support near term government relations, finance development and decision making by providing potential financing mechanisms including government, public, philanthropic, private, conservation finance, and blended approaches that are credible, practical, and aligned with Alberta's institutional and fiscal context. This work positions us to be ready to move when the right opportunity arises—whether through government alignment, anchor funders, or a catalytic partner.

Key Activities

The successful proponent will:

- Coordinate with the Coalition to collaborate throughout the project to receive feedback and guidance, including organizing monthly meetings, taking meeting notes, and documenting key inputs and outcomes;
- Build upon existing Coalition research including the *Mapping and Analysis of Watershed Protection Funding Across Canadian Jurisdictions* (anticipated completion is late March 2026 and will be provided), the Ecosystem Overview, Gap and Opportunity Analysis, and Building Resilience: Impacts of Watershed and Natural Infrastructure Investments Report;
- Clearly articulate the rationale for a Sustainable Watershed Security Fund in Alberta, including:
 - Key risks and pressures facing Alberta's watersheds;
 - Costs of inaction and missed opportunities; and
 - The role of long term, stable funding in addressing these challenges;
- Assess and present a limited set of feasible options for fund design and operation in the Alberta context, including:
 - Potential governance and accountability models;
 - Funding sources and mechanisms; and
 - Illustrative investment scales or funding ranges;
 - Assess funding needs and investment levels required (e.g. federal, provincial, philanthropic, corporate);
- Demonstrate alignment with relevant provincial priorities (e.g. water security, climate adaptation, reconciliation, rural and regional economic development);
- Translate findings into a concise, persuasive narrative suitable for inclusion in a strategy for engagement with senior government officials, funders, and partners, with a focus on clarity, credibility, and practical decision making.

Deliverables

- A concise, evidence-informed position paper (i.e. case for support) to help frame future conversations with government, philanthropic, and partner audiences. (example: [A Watershed Security Fund for British Columbia](#));
- Clear, actionable recommendations outlining feasible funding approaches, estimates, and practical models for a Sustainable Water Fund in Alberta.

Estimated Budget: \$20,000

Estimated Timeline: 2–3 months (may run in parallel with other resources)



Collective Budget and Timeline

As a charitable organization, our collective budget for this work is up to **\$90,000 (inclusive of GST)**; work to begin on or about April 1, 2026 and conclude by February 26th, 2027. The resources are intended to be completed in the order outlined above to ensure alignment and inform subsequent resources. Proponents submitting proposals to deliver all three resources, may propose altered timelines from those listed above, recognizing some components may run concurrently.

Proponent Eligibility and Approach

Proposals are welcomed from research organizations, consulting firms, academic or policy institutes, and non-profit organizations with demonstrated subject-matter expertise. Collaborative or consortium-based proposals are also encouraged.

Submission Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Proposals should include:

- Organizational background and relevant experience
- Key personnel and roles
- Subcontracting or team arrangements
- Identification of the resource(s) the proponent is seeking to develop
- Proposed approach and methodology for each resource
- Work plan and high-level timeline with key milestones outlined
- Budget breakdown aligned with the stated budget range (should include hourly rates and estimated hours)
- Examples of relevant past work (if available)

Proposals will be reviewed and assessed based on the following evaluation criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of watershed and water security issues in Alberta
- Relevant professional experience (experience delivering similar research and policy-oriented outputs)
- Proposed methodology and approach
- Aligned proposed timeline(s) and budget(s)

Submission Process

Please submit your response or expression of interest to Breanna Sayles (connect@albertawatershedsecurity.ca) by **March 10th, 2026 at 11:59 PM.** We may follow up



with conversations or meetings to learn more about your approach before making a decision.

If you have any questions about the proposal process, please contact:

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OR

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