



Water in the Western Prairies: The Basis for Conflict

by Dr. Bill Donahue

Industrial development in western Canada in the 20th century has proceeded with neither large-scale nor long-term plans that consider environmental effects or limits. Recent studies have made it clear that our blind reliance on the seemingly stable water supplies of the 20th century is misplaced.

This lack of planning, combined with decreased funding of monitoring programs and political interference in environmental research, is endangering our freshwaters and forests and our ability to adapt in a changing world.

I will discuss my recent work on changing climate and water supply in western Canada, and how they combine to magnify the negative effects of development decisions. I also will provide a glimpse at new governmental strategies in Alberta, and what they may mean to future health of our natural environment.





Biography Dr. Bill Donahue

Dr. Bill Donahue is an independent environmental researcher in Edmonton. He investigates patterns linking human activities and changes in freshwaters and forests, to provide recommendations for improved environmental management. He has published papers in freshwater science, analytical chemistry, and environmental impacts, and has testified as an expert in environmental hearings in Alberta.

Bill was invited to provide input into development of Alberta's "*Water for Life*" strategy, and was a member of the Alberta Environment Minister's Wabamun Lake Scientific Advisory Committee. His most recent work has been on interactions between changes in climate, landuse, and water supply in western Canada, as well as their effects on Boreal Forest sustainability and carbon dynamics.

For his Ph.D., Bill studied the chemistry and ecology of boreal lakes and streams with Dr. David Schindler. Following this, as an NSERC Post-Doctoral Fellow he studied dynamics, sources, and fates of contaminants in Alberta lakes.

Since 2004, Bill has been enrolled in the University of Alberta's Faculty of Law. In the past, he also has been an Officer in the Canadian Armed Forces, and an industrial chemist.

