



InterraPlan Inc.

**6055A Centennial Rd. West
P.O. Box 108 Moberly Lake, B.C. V0C 1X0
interraplan@gmail.com
250-788-9632**

Peace River Regional District Board of Directors
Dawson Creek, PO Box 810
[1981 Alaska Avenue]
Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4H8

April 15, 2025

Attention: Tyra Henderson

RE: Request for Letter of Support for Proposal Submission to the Mackenzie Basin Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative (MBFEI): Supporting Water Stewardship in the BC Peace: From the Shoreline Edge to the Policy Pledge

Dear Chair Hiebert and Directors:

As PRRD Directors and staff are well aware, water management and sustainability issues have long been a challenge and increasingly critical in the face of climate change effects over the past 20 years in the upper Peace basin. While considerable effort has been made by government agencies, First Nations and industry to better understand the hydrology of the upper Peace Basin, there is yet to exist a one-window public access resource to the various, multiple data sources and studies for proponents to understand, inform and build upon best practice. I am writing to seek a letter of support for a two-year research initiative (see attached synopsis) to investigate such water stewardship initiatives in the Peace region and develop resources to highlight the various information sources, stakeholder projects and water management policy analyses.

Since the early 1990's, my firm InterraPlan Inc. has been very active in both employment and consulting roles supporting water stewardship and resource planning initiatives throughout the Peace River Region and Treaty 8 territory. This work includes advisory and project management roles with First Nations, the City of Dawson Creek (Watershed Stewardship Program), the PRRD, community organizations and individual agricultural producers. Given this history of practice and following on referral by colleagues from the Canada Water Agency, my firm was encouraged to make application relating to the new MBFEI in addressing priorities related to freshwater protection, food security and climate change adaptation.

My efforts will include creation of partnerships for the project to engage students from both Northern Lights College and UNBC in the research consultations and documentation leading to an analysis of current water management policy and information gap report and design of a sub-contracted graphic display and compendium. I am confident this will be a valuable resource for various future water-related planning and stewardship initiatives. Applications can range from Lake riparian and agricultural water management projects to community watershed planning, educational outreach, infrastructure development or other land-use applications related to existing PRRD plan implementation.

Thank you for consideration of this request to meet the project application before May 8th.

Sincerely,

Reg C. Whiten, M.E.Des, P.Ag
President, InterraPlan Inc.

Supporting Water Stewardship in the BC Peace: From the Shoreline Edge to the Policy Pledge

Mackenzie River Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative - 2025/2026

As part of the Federal Freshwater Action Plan, the Government of Canada is taking action to restore and protect freshwater ecosystems of national significance through Freshwater Ecosystem Initiatives (FEIs). FEI investments will support actions that address regional freshwater challenges and priorities. The Mackenzie River Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative will provide financial support for eligible projects that will improve the water quality and ecological health of the Mackenzie River Basin.

Project Objectives: As this proposed project title suggests "Supporting Water Stewardship in the BC Peace - From the Shoreline Edge to the Policy Pledge", the primary goal aim of this initiative aims to address a key program goal in Advancing Science and Knowledge. This project focus on the agriculture--local government--First Nation nexus for achieving user-friendly information access to address key issues related to water supply and quality protection within the upper (BC) Peace River in the Mackenzie River Basin.

Key objectives are to:

1. research and complete an annotated summary of case study best practices for improved technical extension;
2. identify and review key policy issues affecting water/watershed supply and protection;
3. identify freshwater priorities, data and research gaps, and/or sharing of knowledge and information to support management objectives of stakeholders across a range of jurisdictions including farm producers, indigenous and First Nations, and local governments
4. develop an innovative graphic tool to share knowledge and information for informing decision-making, planning and management actions in a searchable visual atlas/compendium that presents examples of best practices, research and policy initiatives for use by stakeholders and government entities based upon traditional/local knowledge and water science.

Description: The project links primarily to the MRFEI priority related to Advancing Knowledge and Information by researching and creating an interactive graphic display with links and summaries to relevant public data sources or studies that may otherwise not be documented. This work will therefore include investigations with all key stakeholders to highlight initiatives and best-practices activities undertaken in the past 20 twenty years that may provide baseline understanding of sub-basins. Such a resource will be valuable for increased collaboration and project development for new proponents seeking to undertake initiatives on all of three MRFEI program priorities.

Since there will be research and engagement with First Nations and groups on their past and current freshwater initiatives, the project also links to the Indigenous Knowledge priority. Additionally, the process and interim outputs of the project can facilitate increased collaboration for water stewardship projects (e.g. riparian, climate change mitigation and watershed protection) that require understanding of baseline understanding where such relevant or comparative information may be lacking or not easily accesible and therefore addressing the priority of Enabling Resiliency and Adaptation.

Anticipated Outcomes:

The project is expected to generate the following results as outlined in the project workplan in the form of both interim and final deliverables for the primary priority (Advancing Science & Knowledge) for targeted interests (Agr Sector Orgs, First Nations, Municipalities, and Conservation Groups) in the Upper Peace basin:

- ✓ identification of relevant hydrology data-bases, studies and reports within the upper Peace River basin
- ✓ public awareness regarding existing resource information data sources, studies and relevant policy initiatives
- ✓ partnership development with target audiences and sectors of interest
- ✓ summary profile documentation of initiatives at varying scale and scope that address freshwater protection and ecosystem health issues
- ✓ researcher mentoring for professional development in the field of water stewardship and hydrology
- ✓ information and policy gap analysis related to freshwater stewardship in the upper Peace Basin
- ✓ creation of a digital atlas with links to relevant reports and data-bases relating to sub-basins of the upper BC Peace watershed