



# The Alliance for Water Stewardship

The world is facing a water crisis. Current demand for fresh water from cities, agriculture and industry is already unsustainable and is projected to increase dramatically in coming years. Nearly two billion people lack access to clean water for drinking or sanitation, yet many of the rivers and lakes that sustain us are polluted or running dry.

For human society to continue to grow and prosper we need to improve dramatically our stewardship of the world's freshwater resources.

We will not be able to avert a global water crisis unless we all agree on and undertake actions needed to improve management of our water resources. Efforts to address this critical global threat are undermined by the fact that no

common water stewardship standards exist. These standards are needed to define how to develop and manage water in a way that enables social and economic development while ensuring environmental sustainability.

## A new approach to water management

In response to this challenge, the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) has been formed to provide a global platform for the development of standards for water stewardship that will enable fair and sustainable management of freshwater resources. By recognizing through certification those water users and managers who are taking major steps to minimize their water use and impacts, we will provide powerful incentives to improve the way water is managed around the world.

AWS is creating an independent, international water stewardship program. This program will establish water stewardship standards, oversee certification, and administer a branding and marketing system that recognizes and rewards successful water stewards around the world. Water managers and users will be provided with a clear roadmap and the necessary support to improve procedures so as to meet new standards of water stewardship.

## An open forum

For water stewardship standards to address fully the complex nature of the water issues facing us, it is critical that all stakeholders—social, commercial, public, and environmental—work together to achieve agreement on the development of a new, viable approach to certifying water stewardship. AWS has been

The mission of the Alliance for Water Stewardship is to promote responsible use of fresh water that is both socially beneficial and environmentally sustainable.



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established as an inclusive, open platform that will enable international, multi-sector collaboration in a manner that has the potential to be truly transformative. It will stimulate and further a new global ethic in regard to the use of fresh water, and will stand beside regulatory processes that currently govern water issues in many parts of the world.

Communities, organizations and industries around the world now recognize clearly the value of certification efforts involving voluntary participants. Participants in other international certification businesses already in effect are able to establish transparency and accountability for their activities that go beyond mere regulatory compliance. Through their participation they also demonstrate a clear consideration of social and environmental impacts.

### A growing partnership

As of December 2008, participation in AWS included a growing coalition of business, conservation, social and water utility interests. Involved in the effort to date are the two largest international conservation organizations in the world—The Nature Conservancy and WWF;

the Water Stewardship Initiative, a business venture operated out of Brazil and Australia and supported by a wide range of water stakeholders; Water Witness International, a social-equity organization operating in the U.K. and Africa; the Water Environment Federation, a non-profit educational organization for water professionals; and the Pacific Institute, a non-profit social and environmental research organization specializing in sustainable water management issues.

AWS will continue to expand in the coming months, bringing in new organizations to reflect as fully as possible the different geographic, social, economic, and environmental perspectives of the water issues facing us. Participation in AWS is open to all, and stakeholder outreach and engagement will be involved in every aspect of the design, development, and implementation of the water stewardship program.

In the lead up to launching the world's first freshwater certification program, AWS will develop and pilot standards and verification systems for certification, working in partnership with industrial and agricultural water users, municipalities, water authorities, and others.

## Be part of it!

The Alliance's work is just beginning. Join us in our effort to change how the world views and uses our precious freshwater resources. Together we can help water users and providers adopt water management practices that help protect freshwater ecosystems and secure our water supplies for the future.

## Contacts

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