Guidance for Bog Blog Writers

What is the Alberta WaterPortal?

The Alberta WaterPortal Society is a registered charity. Our focus is to create and grow an accessible and inclusive online environment for Canadians to better understand water, via the Alberta WaterPortal website at albertawater.com. Our strength is how we operate transparently and without bias to share factual, credible water data and information. We seek to educate audiences from various perspectives on water issues; enabling them to make informed decisions, engage in dialogue, and ultimately generate water solutions that benefit all Canadians.

We invite guest bloggers to help share knowledge, research and raise awareness on various water issues, challenges, and opportunities. To ensure efficiency and manage expectations regarding guest blogging the following guidelines are provided for all contributors.

Authorship

The arrival of generative Artificial Intelligence and large-language models has provided content creators with new tools to create that content. However, the nature of the new tools is such that they are vulnerable to "hallucinations" in which the content they generate may be false, faulty or inappropriate. Further, surveys indicate there is widespread suspicion of content generated by AI although the depth of such suspicion varies across generational age-groups with older age groups more suspicious.

Therefore, it is essential that, if AI is used, it be used in a way that produces high-quality content which has been validated by human review prior to publication.

Content

Target audience

The WaterPortal blog readership is diverse. As a result, we recommend writing your blog in a style and at a technical level suitable for comprehension by a high school level reader. Assume the reader knows nothing about your subject.

If you're interested, over the last three months of 2024, the largest single source of visitors is Alberta (50%) followed by the United States (11%). Within Canada, Alberta (57%) is the largest source of visitors followed by Ontario (25%), BC, and Quebec.

Objective

Ask yourself what the reason for writing the blog is. For instance, is it answering a specific question? Sharing research? Explaining how something works, etc. This will help keep the blog concise, especially for more technical content.

Images, graphics

Graphics are strongly recommended and we suggest at least two. We have a significant number of visitors accessing our web site via mobile devices. Try to keep the graphics clean and legible when the graphic is squashed into a mobile screen.

All images provided require the following:

- a caption
- alt-text
- attribution especially if sourced from another party / owner

Only clear, high-quality images will be included. By providing images you also provide approval for their use in the blog and WaterPortal social media.

Length

The blog content, obviously, is up to you. As for length, we recommend not exceeding 1500-1600 words.

Submission format and style

Format

We would prefer to receive your submission as a Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx). PDF or XPS files will not be accepted.

Style

We will apply our standard style (typeface, colours, sizes) to the blog for publication. However, to make it easier for us to do so, please use the following approach in your submission to us.

- Use Heading 1 as the topic heading.
- Use heading 2, heading 3, etc., for the sub-headings.
- Numbers (in numerals, not spelled out) are, apparently, helpful for search engine optimization (SEO).
- Do not insert empty rows between paragraphs – the HTML will do that spacing automatically. Hint: To make it easier for you during drafting, and assuming you are using Word, we suggest updating the Word style used to include, say, a 6pt space either before or after the paragraph.

References

Given we are focused on science-based content, relevant references are good and strongly encouraged. Even better if the reference is accessible to the general audience.

If you choose to cite references, we suggest creating a section heading called "Sources" or "References" at the end of your blog and place them there. If you're using Word, Word's "Endnote" tool makes this easy. To make it easier for the reader, we suggest inserting a space before the endnote number in the text.

Use whatever reference style you are comfortable with but keep it consistent within the document.

As a site, we tend to use a modified [APA Format](#) using Word's "Endnote" referencing in the text when drafting the document and a "loose APA" style of formatting at the end of the document consisting of "**x. Author, date, Title. URL. Date accessed.**"   For example, **x. Aaaa, B.B., ZZZZ, Title. [URL](#). Accessed YYYY-MM-DD**. where:

- "x" is the number of the reference,
- Aaaa is the surname of the author,
- B.B. are the initials of the author,
- ZZZZ is the year of publication of the reference.   Use n.d. is there is no date.
- Title is the reference title,
- URL is the linked hyperlink to the reference, and
- YYYY-MM-DD are the year, month and day of the date the link was last checked and working.

All that said, feel free to use formal APA formatting if preferred.

Process

1. Read through the guidelines and talk with the WaterPortal team if you have any questions or concerns.
2. Draft a blog and include a brief one to two sentence biography of the author/s (this will appear at the end of the blog).
3. Email the blog and images to your WaterPortal contact or info@albertawater.com
4. The WaterPortal team will review/edit your blog and send an approved version back to you. We will not promote hate speech or shameless advertising and require the content to align with our site's mandate and intent. This is not intended to limit valid argumentation.
5. Something we will do is a brief scan of keyword popularity once we see your content to see whether some subtle tweaks could make the article more SEO-friendly.
6. Review the approved version and communicate significant changes or respond to any comments/questions by the review deadline.
7. The WaterPortal team will publish the blog, including promotion via our free, weekly, subscription-based Alberta Water News and via social media channels.
8. Share and promote the blog via your networks and social media. You can mention us in your posts/tweets or provide your social media details for us to mention you!
9. If the WaterPortal receives significant feedback regarding your blog we will share it with you and work with you if a written response/update/comment on the blog is required. Please note that we do not currently enable comments on blog posts.

Timing

Whenever works for you.   If you're aware of some relevant news events coming up soon, it would be nice to aim to ride the wave of interest that might be triggered by that event.

Questions?

Reach out to your contact at the Alberta WaterPortal, or email us at info@waterportal.ca.