

# Prince Edward Island *Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Guidelines*

*April 2006*



Environment,  
Energy and Forestry



Fisheries and Oceans  
Pêches et Océans

Watercourse or wetland alteration activities often affect our water resources. Changes made to, or near, a watercourse or wetland may result in damage to the environment, water quality, infrastructure and property. These activities if not carried out properly may place our fish and wildlife resources at risk, and could diminish the quality of our water.

It is the intent of these guidelines to provide adequate information for the planning and designing of watercourse or wetland alterations, with the belief that it is much less expensive and more effective to prevent or minimize the impacts of an alteration at the design stage, rather than trying to control or mitigate the harmful effects of a poorly planned watercourse or wetland alteration.

The guidelines contain explanatory information which is intended to provide guiding principles for planning a watercourse or wetland alteration or reviewing a proposed alteration. These guidelines should not be considered as a code or engineering standard for the design or construction of any type of watercourse or wetland alteration. They were designed with the goal of promoting/ensuring environmentally acceptable alterations.

Every permit application is carefully evaluated to ensure that the potential effects of a watercourse or wetland alteration are adequately considered. Applicants are encouraged to consider the environmental implications of their projects at the planning and design stage.

In order to meet constantly changing technologies, the Prince Edward Island Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Guidelines were designed to be a living document that can be easily accessed and revised.

The document is then laid out in easy to find sections that detail information thought to be relevant for applicants to plan and obtain the necessary alteration permits for environmentally sustainable activities in or adjacent to a watercourse or wetland.

**Section 1** outlines the purpose and scope of the guidelines, layout of the document, permitting process, as well as the revision procedure and control record.

**Section 2** outlines the mandate of the guidelines, as well as concerns, mitigating measures, and appropriate methods/equipment that should be considered while planning a project requiring the alteration of a watercourse or wetland.

**Section 3** pertains to guidelines for specific alteration types. A **purpose** and **definition** statement is provided to outline the intended outcome of the proposed work and define the activity covered. The **environmental protection objectives** section summarizes the environmental concerns being addressed by these guidelines. **Planning considerations** are meant to provide applicants with the guidelines necessary for the design and execution of each category of alteration.

Each alteration activity will have different **application requirements**. These documents are an important tool for the Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Permit review process and should accompany the original application when it is submitted. **Failure to submit required documents could result in the return of the application without it being processed.**

As noted in the **government purposes** box at the end of each section, every alteration type will require either regulatory or regulatory and advisory review. An application that requires regulatory review is reviewed solely by the *Prince Edward Island Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry*. Those which are reviewed by both the regulatory and advisory agencies, will be reviewed through inter-departmental consultation between the *Prince Edward Island Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry*, the *Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture*, and *Fisheries and Oceans Canada*. In many cases, advisory agencies are invited to comment on applications and permits which are categorized as regulatory only. Also, representatives from municipalities and other government departments or agencies are often involved in the review process.

**Section 4** provides a glossary with definitions of terminology used in the document.

The Prince Edward Island Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Guidelines also includes an appendix section that provides an overview of the applicable legislation, regulations and policies important to the process, lists contact information for applicants requiring additional information and details the behavioral patterns of some of the Island's notable wildlife and aquatic species.

Watercourse and wetland alteration permits are issued with strictly enforced conditions in order to control activities that fall under the definition of watercourse or wetland alterations in an effort to preserve and protect Prince Edward Island watercourses and wetlands.

### **Fee Schedule**

At present there is no charge to obtain a Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Permit - with the exception of water withdrawal for irrigation purposes where the fee is \$300 per permit. Fees are payable upon receipt of application and payable to the *Provincial Treasurer*.

### **How to Apply for a Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Permit**

Application forms for Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Permits can be obtained from:

Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Program  
*PEI Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry*  
11 Kent Street  
PO Box 2000  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8

Direct inquiries to: Watercourse/Wetland Alteration Supervisor  
Telephone: 368-5000  
Fax: 368-5830

Application forms can also be downloaded on-line from [www.gov.pe.ca](http://www.gov.pe.ca) or attained from one of the *Access PEI* offices in Montague, Charlottetown, Souris, Summerside or O'Leary.

The completed application form, the required documents (as listed in the specific alteration activity sections of this guideline) and the application fee (if applicable) should be submitted to the Watercourse/Wetland Alteration Supervisor at least three weeks in advance of the anticipated project start date to ensure sufficient time for review of the application.

### **If You Do Not Receive a Permit**

If the proposed works are considered to have a negative impact on the best interest of the public, the water resource, or the aquatic/wildlife habitat, a letter will be issued from the *Prince Edward Island Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry*, explaining why the proposal was not approved.

The watercourse and wetland alteration guidelines contained in this document are based on the most recent habitat protection techniques and principles. In particular, the guidelines have drawn extensively upon the Environmental Protection Act (revised 2005) of Prince Edward Island, the 1995 Prince Edward Island Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Guidelines, similar guidelines prepared/revised by the province of New Brunswick, and national operational statements developed by *Fisheries and Oceans Canada*.

The information provided within the Prince Edward Island Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Guidelines has been prepared on an alteration activity or project-type basis. Review and revision of these guidelines will be required from time to time to reflect any changes in:

- alteration practices,
- knowledge about potential impacts of the activity, or
- regulatory requirements.

As appropriate, amendments will be made to individual sections of the Prince Edward Island Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Guidelines. Upon amendment of the revisions, users should:

- read the text of the revised section(s);
- check to ensure that all pages of the revision have been obtained or downloaded;
- remove and destroy the earlier version of the amended pages;
- insert the revised pages in the proper place in the Guidelines document;
- check the Table of Contents and Revision schedule to ensure that the Guidelines are complete and current;
- enter the revision number and the date entered on the Revision Control Record; and
- take action to incorporate the revision into the alteration activity's planning and construction phase.

**Revision Control Record**

The Revision Control Record is to be used to keep track of any revisions made to each section of the Prince Edward Island Watercourse or Wetland Alteration Guidelines.

SECTION REVISED	REVISION DATE	SECTION REVISED	REVISION DATE