

Watercourse, wetland or buffer zone 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, wetland or buffer zone activities, with the belief that it is much less expensive and more effective to prevent or minimize the impacts of an activity at the design stage, rather than trying to control or mitigate the harmful effects of a poorly planned watercourse, wetland or buffer zone activity.

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

Every permit application is carefully evaluated to ensure that the potential effects of a watercourse, wetland or buffer zone activity 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, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity 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 activity 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 a watercourse, wetland or buffer zone activity.

Section 3 pertains to guidelines for specific activity 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 activity.

Each activity will have different **application requirements**. These documents are an important tool for the Watercourse, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity 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 activity 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, Labour and Justice*. 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, Labour and Justice*, the *Prince Edward Island Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development*, 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, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity 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, wetland and buffer zone activity permits are issued with strictly enforced conditions in order to control activities that fall under the definition of watercourse, wetland and buffer zone activities in an effort to preserve and protect Prince Edward Island watercourses, wetlands and buffer zones.

Fee Schedule

Effective June 1, 2012 there is a fee associated with obtaining a Watercourse, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity Permit. Applicants should refer to the fee schedule included in the Watercourse, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity Permit Application for a list of permitted activities and the fee associated with each activity. The fee for a water withdrawal for irrigation purposes permit remains at \$300 per permit. Fees are payable upon receipt of application and payable to the *Minister of Finance, Energy and Municipal Affairs*.

How to Apply for a Watercourse, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity Permit

Application forms for Watercourse, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity Permits can be obtained from:

Watercourse, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity Program
PEI Department of Environment, Labour and Justice
PO Box 2000, 11 Kent Street
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7N8

Direct inquiries to: Watercourse, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity Program Supervisor
Telephone: 368-5052
Fax: 368-5830

Application forms can also be downloaded on-line from www.gov.pe.ca or attained from one of the *Access PEI* offices in Alberton, Charlottetown, Montague, O'Leary, Souris, Summerside, Tignish or Wellington.

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 and Buffer Zone Activity 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, Labour and Justice*, explaining why the proposal was not approved.

Using a Licensed Contractor

The Contractor Licensing Program allows licensed contractors (contractors who have successfully completed a training program with the Department of Environment, Labour and Justice) to perform the following activities without requiring a specific permit or direct supervision from the Department: shoreline stabilization, landscaping in a buffer zone, operation of machinery on a beach or shoreline, minor bridge repairs, and wharf construction and repairs on a Federally owned property approved by a Federal department. Landowners who utilize a Licensed Contractor for carrying out any of the eligible activities listed above will not have to contact the Department and wait for a Watercourse, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity Permit application to be processed. However, the Licensed Contractor must register the project with the Department and wait for a faxed acknowledgement of project registration from the Department. This process generally takes less than 24 hours. For additional information on the Contractor Licensing

Program and eligible activities please contact the Department of Environment, Labour and Justice. A list of Licensed Contractors is available online at www.gov.pe.ca.

The watercourse, wetland and buffer zone activity 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 2009) of Prince Edward Island, the 1995 and 2006 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, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity Guidelines has been prepared on an activity or project-type basis. Review and revision of these guidelines will be required from time to time to reflect any changes in:

- activity 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, Wetland and Buffer Zone Activity 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 activity's planning and construction phase.

