

# Water for Life:

NOVA SCOTIA'S WATER STRATEGY  
PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2013

The Province released *Water for Life- Nova Scotia's Water Resource Management Strategy* in December, 2010. This long-term strategy is structured around "Integrated Water Management" (IWM) - a comprehensive approach to managing water resources, including human activities and their effects on watersheds and ecosystems. By working closely with other government departments and levels, researchers, businesses and other organizations, we can ensure the sustainability of our water resources today and into the future. We will achieve this through understanding the quality and quantity of our water, protecting the quality and quantity of our water, and engaging in caring for our water. Here are some of the accomplishments of the Water Strategy from 2012:

### **Understand the Quality and Quantity of our Water**

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- In partnership with Dalhousie University, we developed the Nova Scotia Watershed Assessment Program (NSWAP), which is a provincial scale summary of the status of watershed health in Nova Scotia. A simplified assessment has been completed, and in 2012 a series of maps describing the relative risks facing watersheds in Nova Scotia were released. An accompanying discussion paper provides more details.
- The Nova Scotia Well Logs Database is a searchable electronic database of location, depth and water quantity yield from wells dug or drilled in Nova Scotia. In 2012 the database was updated to include 2011 wells, bringing the total number of wells in the database up to 116,000.
- The Nova Scotia Groundwater Observation Well Network is a series of observation wells that monitor groundwater quantity and quality on an hourly basis across the Province. In 2012 a new observation well was added at Rainbow Haven Beach, bringing the total number of active wells to 38.
- The Nova Scotia Wetland Conservation Policy (established 2011) states that there will be no loss of Wetlands of Special Significance in Nova Scotia. In 2012, all known Wetlands of Special Significance, as defined in the wetland policy, were mapped.

### **Protect the Quality and Quantity of our Water**

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- The Province issues approvals for the construction and operation of water treatment and distribution facilities. One of the conditions of these approvals is that a municipality or water utility must develop a Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) for their drinking water source area. In 2012, the number of municipalities required to have a SWPP that had a draft or complete plan in place was increased to 80%.
- In 2012, the number of municipal drinking water systems that met Nova Scotia's treatment standards was increased to 86% (and those municipalities serve 98% of the population that receives municipal water).
- In 2012, the number of wastewater treatment facilities with at least primary treatment was increased to 91%.

## Engage in Caring for our Water

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- The Province provided in-kind and financial support to the Community University Research Alliance H2O (CURA H2O) at Saint Mary's University. CURA H2O is a five-year project focused on increasing community capacity for integrated water monitoring and management. In Nova Scotia, WET-PRO © field kits and training were provided to 16 community groups. This will enable community groups to collect information about the health of their watershed in a consistent and scientifically accurate manner.
- In 2012, two workshops were held to train teachers and non-formal educators in the use of Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) - curriculum linked educational activities to teach students from P-12 about water and water stewardship.
- The Province supports the Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps, a program delivered by Clean Nova Scotia that provides young Nova Scotians with opportunities for hands-on experience in environmental projects. In 2012, 14 of 23 community partners had students working on projects related to water.
- In 2012, 480 environmental home assessments and 88 septic repair grants were provided to Nova Scotians through the Environmental Home Assessment Program (EHAP). This program is designed to inform Nova Scotians about the importance of their on-site water wells and septic system, as well as their home heating oil tank. It is delivered through community partners, with funding and training provided by government.
- Work continued toward meeting our goal in the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* to protect at least 12% of the province's land by 2015. Kelley River and Raven Head Wilderness Areas were announced – the largest addition to protected areas since 1998. Protecting our ecologically and socially important natural spaces also protects water sources and combats climate change, benefitting all Nova Scotians.

