

INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT (IWM)

What is IWM in principle?

The basis of Nova Scotia's water strategy is a concept called Integrated Water Management (IWM). IWM is a comprehensive approach to managing water resources, including human activities and their effects on watersheds and ecosystems. It aims to ensure sustainability of water resources and their functions today and into the future.

Integrating management of water means that we can work closely with other government departments and levels, stakeholders such as researchers and businesses, and other organizations. By working in partnership and pooling our knowledge, we can ensure that water resources are managed most effectively.

Using the watershed as a unit for analysis provides context so we can understand how impacts from both human and natural activities are felt and how they can accumulate. For example, sediment from a development upstream can affect salmon habitat downstream. To understand any potential effects of development, we need to examine the bigger picture. That requires easier access to data from water monitoring to research.

Many different communities share a single watershed. IWM brings people together to make decisions that will ensure communities have enough water of good quality and quantity. We must all understand water's value and role, and we must protect and engage in its care.

What does IWM mean in practice?

Integrated water management means thinking and re-thinking how we do business. This strategy will guide all of government in its decision making and activities with respect to water. It will help us to pool resources, and to identify where and how to best invest in our people, our communities, and our economy.

We must ensure that government and stakeholder actions are consistent when they relate to water and its dependent ecosystems. We also want to encourage and support better integration of multiple interests, users, and their concerns. In other words, we need to look at all sectors of the province to ensure that society's total needs for water are met. This will allow us to sustainably manage the resource, both environmentally and economically.

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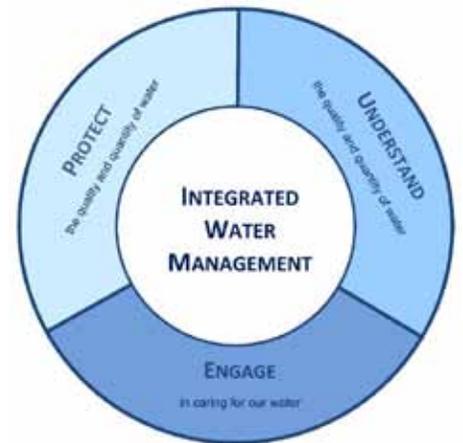
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The government plans to integrate water resource management by

- building capacity within its water programs to support a provincial commitment to integrated water resource management
- sharing resources and information while working with partners to manage water
- establishing a Nova Scotia Water Advisory Group (NSWAG) to work in partnership with government and advise it on the implementation of Integrated Water Management and the strategy
- considering the economic, social, and environmental value of water in government decision making
- renewing its policies as appropriate to enhance capacity for integrated water management

Integrated water management (IWM) requires a commitment from everyone. It uses three complementary areas of action—protect, understand, and engage—to manage water resources. By following this approach, we will strengthen partnerships across government departments, with other government levels, and with people outside of government.

The following actions of the strategy are organized according to three areas, understand, protect, and engage, as shown in the accompanying diagram.



The central role of IWM is shown surrounded and supported by the areas of action including understand, protect, and engage.

NOVA SCOTIA WATER ADVISORY GROUP

The Nova Scotia Water Advisory Group (NSWAG) will help the government to adopt a strong IWM approach. It will advise us on how to carry out the strategy, making sure we are held accountable. It will provide a strong voice for the many interested and vital parties outside the provincial government. These groups, including First Nations, municipalities, businesses, non-governmental and watershed organizations, have a role to play in managing our water resources.