

Resources

- [Nova Scotia Wetland Conservation Policy](#)
- [Nova Scotia's Wetland Alteration Application's Guided Template](#)
- [Submission Checklist for Wetland Alteration Application](#)
- [Wetland Approval Application form](#)
- [WESP-AC datasheets & WESP-AC Interpretation Tool](#)
- [US Army Corps of Engineering methodology](#)
- [NSLF Wetland Inventory map](#)
- [NS SAR Conservation and Recovery](#)
- [Wetland Fact Sheets](#)
- [Regional NS ECC Office Locations](#)
- [Nova Scotia Wetland Conservation Policy](#)
- [ACCDC Data Request](#)

Looking to hire a wetland evaluator?

Professional wetland evaluators are located throughout the province. NS ECC is developing a list of wetland evaluators to be included on the provincial website. Until that is available, an internet search for "wetland and environmental services within Nova Scotia" will bring up several options.

When is a Wetland Alteration Approval Required?

Natural wetlands are important to the health and prosperity of our province and are regulated by the *Environment Act* and *Nova Scotia Wetland Conservation Policy*. **Alterations** to a wetland require approval through the Wetland Alteration Approval or Environmental Assessment process. This process applies to all wetlands in Nova Scotia except those listed as **exemptions** under the *Nova Scotia Wetland Conversation Policy*.

Wetland alteration involves any activity that may affect wetland function and habitat, including, but not limited to, infilling, draining, flooding or excavating.

Alterations to a wetland classified as a **Wetland of Special Significance (WSS)** will not be supported by NS ECC unless work is being completed as a **Necessary Public Function** or to maintain, restore, or enhance the wetland.

Interested in learning more? How a Wetland of Special Significance is determined can be found in the [Nova Scotia Wetland Conservation Policy](#) along with a list of exemptions that do not require approval. Definitions can also be found within the policy.

Application Type

Any wetland alteration that is less than two hectares of impact to a single wetland or affects multiple wetlands or wetland complexes by less than two hectares each will require a **Wetland Alteration Application** to be completed.

Impacts that are greater than two hectares to a single wetland or wetland complex will require an **Environmental Assessment** application to be completed.

Before Your Application

Prior to applying, applicants are asked to complete the following:

Desktop Wetland of Special Significance Screening: Review of NS ECC's 'Potential WSS' GIS layer to determine whether any potential WSS have been identified on your project site. The NS ECC Wetlands Program can provide this data on request to assist in project planning.

Desktop Species at Risk Screening: Acquire and review a Rare Species Data Report from the Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre (ACCDC). Based upon this report, answer the following questions:

- (1) Are there any Species at Risk identified within a 5 km radius that have a life-history dependency on wetlands?
- (2) Are any of the 'Location Sensitive' species identified in Section 4.3 of the ACCDC report known within the 5 km radius of your project area (i.e., Black Ash, Peregrine Falcon, Wood Turtle, Blanding's Turtle, Bat Hibernaculum)?

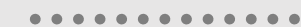
If the answer is yes to either of these questions, contact the NS ECC local Inspector to determine whether additional surveys or studies may be required to accompany your application. Applications may not be accepted if these studies/surveys are not provided.

Additional information about WESP-AC

Wetland Ecosystem Service Protocol for Atlantic Canada (WESP-AC) is a standardized method for rapidly assessing natural wetland functions and benefits in tidal and non-tidal wetlands in Atlantic Canada. WESP-AC has been regionally calibrated for each province in Atlantic Canada.

WESP-AC has both a field and an office component in which resulting assessment variables are entered into a computer model. The model uses a logic-based algorithm to generate scores and ratings for the listed wetland attributes.

The WESP-AC Interpretative Tool is included within the Nova Scotia WESP-AC model. This tool takes the information inputted into the WESP-AC model and provides a classification based on functionality and has the potential of identifying WSS.



Application Package

By following the structure of the guided template and submission checklist, and using the WESP-AC Interpretation Tool, applications are delivered in a standardized way.

The guided template document is available in MS Word format, the WESP-AC model in MS Excel format, and the submission checklist is in a PDF format. See the resources section for links to each.

What Steps are Involved in a Wetland Alteration Approval?

Step 1. Before you apply get in contact with your [local NS ECC Inspector](#)

Your local Inspector will work with you to determine if a Wetland Alteration Approval is needed. If an application is required, they will provide you with the necessary information to move forward.

Step 2. Hire a professional wetland evaluator

Ensure your application is prepared by someone with the training and experience needed to complete reliable wetland delineations and functional assessments. They can also complete the required documentation listed in Step 3.

Step 3. Prepare your application package

For a valid application package, all required documentation must be completed in full. The three main documents are listed below, however, additional appendices and files may be required. Please read all instructions for filling out the required documentation.

- [Submission Checklist for Wetland Alteration Application](#)
- [Wetland Approval Application](#) form
- Wetland Report using the [Nova Scotia's Wetland Alteration Application's Guided Template](#)

Step 4. Submit application package with fee to the local NS ECC office

Once submitted, your application takes approximately 60 days to be processed. Keep in mind that this timeline is subject to change depending on site specifics and requirements of other departments.

Step 5. Hearing back

Your submission can have three possible outcomes – approval with terms and conditions, request for additional information or rejection.

If approved, all terms and conditions issued must be followed. If detailed plans or agreements for compensation have not been submitted with application, they must be submitted within six months after approval.

Note: It is expected that all functional assessments be completed using the WESP-AC. Wetland delineation should be completed using the US Army Corps of Engineers methodology. All wetland evaluations should be conducted during the growing season (June 1 to Sept. 30) and completed within the same year as the application is submitted (within 12 months). However, out of season and use of older wetland evaluations may be submitted for consideration.