

Woodlands & Wetlands

What You Should Know Before You Harvest

WETLANDS ARE A VALUABLE PART OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

They provide important benefits for people as well as fish and wildlife. Using caution when altering or developing near a wetland will result in many benefits.

BENEFITS OF WETLANDS

WETLANDS KEEP OUR WATERSHEDS HEALTHY AND BENEFIT NOVA SCOTIANS. THEY

- ◆ moderate flood waters, purify water in rivers and streams, slow runoff rates, and minimize erosion
- ◆ remove organic waste, bacteria and excess nutrients, contaminants, and silt from surface, and ground water
- ◆ protect coastlines from storm surges
- ◆ contribute to drinking water supplies by storing and releasing surface water, and refilling groundwater reservoirs
- ◆ provide habitats for fish, wildlife, and plants, often for rare or endangered species
- ◆ support fisheries and food webs in nearby rivers, inlets, and coastal waters
- ◆ supply food, commercial products, and medicinal plants



Deer in a shrub swamp

LINKS to help determine if there is a wetland on your property

- ◆ Check the online Nova Scotia Wetland Inventory
www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/habitats/wetlands.asp
- ◆ Contact a Wetland Professional
www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.professional.resources.asp





IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR WOODLOT OWNERS

Draining, filling, flooding or excavating in a wetland is not allowed without approval from Nova Scotia Environment. Building permanent roads through wetlands also requires approval, unless the road runs through a wooded swamp, and is less than 10 metres wide and 600 m² in total area. All approvals to alter wetland require compensation.

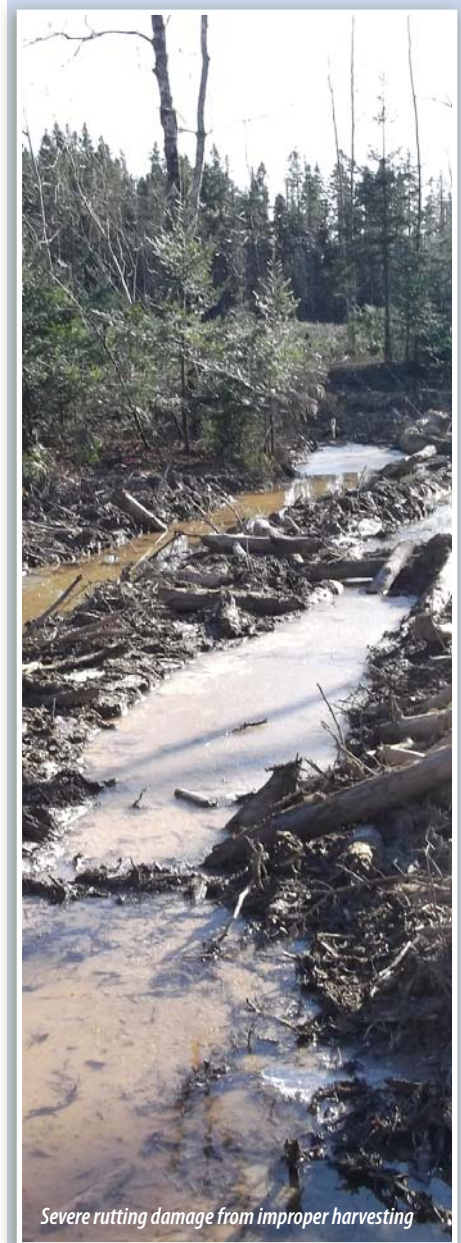
APPROVALS ARE NOT REQUIRED FOR

- ◆ altering wetlands that are less than 100 square metres (approximately 1,000 square feet) in size
- ◆ restoring and maintaining drainage systems and ditches
- ◆ harvesting trees in a wetland (best management practices should always be used to minimize impacts to the wetland)

MINIMIZING IMPACTS

Impacts in and around wetlands can be minimized by

- ◆ avoiding wetlands whenever possible
- ◆ leaving a buffer (an undeveloped zone) of at least 20 metres between wetlands, watercourses, and harvesting activities (vernal pools are especially sensitive and common within swamps)
- ◆ harvesting when the ground is frozen or during the driest part of the year to minimize, or eliminate rutting
- ◆ using temporary roads to access or cross wetlands, and minimizing road width
- ◆ ensuring proper use of culverts or drains, and/or road design to maintain flow through wetlands



Severe rutting damage from improper harvesting

LINKS For more information

- ◆ Nova Scotia Environment field office information
www.gov.ns.ca/nse/dept/division.emc.asp
- ◆ Application for approval to work in a wetland
www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.alteration.asp
- ◆ Information on road design and harvesting in or near wetlands
www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/wetlandways2009/Wetland%20Ways%20Ch%205%20Forests.pdf
- ◆ Contact Nova Scotia Environment's Wetland Program at
902-424-2117 or wetlands@gov.ns.ca
- ◆ Visit Nova Scotia Environment's website for links to additional information
www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland
- ◆ Nova Scotia's Wetland Conservation Policy
www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/conservation.policy.asp

FACT SHEETS ALSO AVAILABLE:

- Wetlands in Nova Scotia
 - Wetland Checklist
 - Wetland Compensation
 - Farms & Wetlands
 - Development & Wetlands
 - Wetlands Policy Fact Sheet
- www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/