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

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

Deer in a shrub swamp
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

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
- 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/