

# Department of Natural Resources

## Routine Access Policy

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Approval date:	October 23, 2003
Approved by:	Senior Management
Effective date:	October 23, 2003
Revision date:	October 23, 2004

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### I. POLICY STATEMENT

This "Routine Access" policy for the Department of Natural Resources is designed to provide persons with an opportunity to obtain certain categories of records without a formal application under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("FOIPOP Act"). It shall be administered in accordance with the following principles:

#### a) Personal Privacy

The policy shall be applied in a manner which will be considerate and protective of the personal privacy of the individuals and records subject to this policy shall be considered for release and severing in a manner consistent with the *FOIPOP Act*.

#### b) Timeliness

The Department of Natural Resources will respond to requests made under the Routine Access Policy in a reasonable and timely fashion.

#### c) Cost Recovery

Fees for the reproduction and provision of records may be charged where authorized by policies, regulations or statutes.

#### d) Transparency

This policy shall be made readily available to the public.

#### e) Reasonableness

This policy shall apply to requests for reasonable quantities of records.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

- (a) **access** may be taken to mean under this policy, either the provision of a copy of the records in question or providing a means and opportunity for the applicant to view the records, whichever, in the sole discretion of the Department, is administratively most efficient;
- (b) **active dissemination** is the periodic and proactive release of information or records in the absence of a request using mechanisms such as the Internet, libraries, etc. See attached Appendix "B" for examples of actively disseminated information;
- (c) **FOIPOP access** is the release of an existing record in response to a formal FOIPOP application made under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;

- (d) **confidential information** includes information:
- (a) that would reveal
    - (i) trade secrets of a third party, or
    - (ii) commercial, financial, labour relations, scientific or technical information of a third party;
  - (b) that is supplied, implicitly or explicitly in confidence; and
  - (c) the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to
    - (i) harm significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the negotiating position of the third party,
    - (ii) result in similar information no longer being supplied to the public body when it is in the public interest that similar information continue to be supplied,
    - (iii) result in undue financial loss or gain to any person or organization, or
    - (iv) reveal information supplied to, or the report of, an arbitrator, mediator, labour relations officer or other person or body appointed to resolve or inquire into a labour-relations dispute;
- (e) **record** “includes books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, papers and any other thing on which information is recorded or stored by graphic, electronic, mechanical or other means, but does not include a computer program or any other mechanism that produces records”. (clause 3(1) (k) *FOIPOP Act*);
- (f) **personal information** means recorded information about an identifiable individual including the individual’s name, address or telephone number; race, national or ethnic origin, colour religious or political beliefs or associations; age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or family status; an identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual; fingerprints, blood type or inheritable characteristics; the individual’s health-care history, including a physical or mental disability; educational, financial, criminal or employment history; and anyone else’s opinions about the individual and the individual’s personal views or opinions, except if they are about someone else;
- (g) **routine access** is the release, in full or in part, of certain types of administrative or operational records as a matter of course in response to a request without the need for a formal application for records under the *FOIPOP Act*.

### 3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy reflects the spirit of openness and accountability of the *FOIPOP Act*. The objective is to provide a reasonable alternative for access to the records listed in Appendix “A”.

Procedures under this policy are intended reduce the administrative burden involved in processing FOIPOP applications for certain types of records. The approach is not intended to create more demands on resources than the current system of processing requests under the formal FOIPOP application process.

#### 4. APPLICATION

- a. This policy applies to:
  - all Department employees;
  - Resources-Corporate Services Unit (RCSU); and
  - all agencies, associations, boards, commissions reporting to the Minister of the Department.
- b. This policy applies to records listed in Appendix "A".
- c. This policy is effective after October 23, 2003.
- d. A request under this policy applies only to the records listed in Appendix "A" that were created after October 23, 2003.
- e. This policy shall apply only to requests for reasonable quantities of records and shall not apply to a request for more than 50 pages of records in a particular category and /or time period. Repetitive requests by an individual for significant volumes of records or the separation of a request into several small requests resulting in a large volume or significant demands on the resources of the Department, as well as requests that are not sufficiently specific shall not be subject to the policy. It is important to ensure that the application of the Routine Access policy of the Department not unduly interfere with the day-to-day operations of the Department.
- f. Requests made under Routine Access do not apply to information subject to exemptions under the *FOIPOP Act*.
- g. Personal and/or confidential information shall be severed from the records being accessed under this policy, using the same criteria and in the same manner as requests made under the *FOIPOP Act*.
- h. Nothing in this Policy shall be taken to mean that the Department may reproduce or distribute any materials protected by Copyright law.
- i. Nothing in this Policy shall be taken to mean that the Department is required to create or maintain records that it would not normally have in its custody or control.
- j. The kind and content of records identified under this Policy, shall be of sufficiently standardized or consistent format, that they would not normally need to be pre-screened for compliance with FOIPOP principles.
- k. This policy shall be consistent with the *Government Records Act* and policies under the *Act*.

#### 5. POLICY DIRECTIVES

- a. This policy is applicable throughout the Department of Natural Resources, its agencies, boards and commissions.

- b. The policy will be posted on the Website or made available in hard copy upon request.
- c. All staff will be advised of the policy coming into force.
- d. Requests for information under this policy will be handled by the FOIPOP Administrator or the persons designated as having the responsibility of responding to Routine Access Requests.
- e. A tracking system will be kept for compliance and auditing purposes.

## **6. POLICY GUIDELINES**

- a. Requests may be made by phone, mail, fax or e-mail.
- b. A person making a request under this policy, will be required to provide the following: name, contact information including mailing address, phone number and the specific reference to Appendix "A".
- c. Once a request for "Routine Access" to a particular record, or set of records, has been received by the FOIPOP Administrator or a designated person, it shall be reviewed to determine if the records are listed in Appendix "A".
- d. If the policy applies to the request, the records are provided to the applicant within a reasonable period of time, and no later than 30 days from the receipt of the request.
- e. If the policy does not apply to the request, a response to the requester shall be provided promptly and shall indicate what other avenues may be available to obtain the information, (ie. already provided through active dissemination, filing a FOIPOP request, or referred to another department or agency).
- f. Fees for the reproduction and provision of records may be charged where authorized by policies, regulations, or status.
- g. Individual who apply under the *FOIPOP Act* for records available under the Routine Access Policy will have their application fee returned and the records provided.

## **7. ACCOUNTABILITY**

- a. The Deputy Minister shall be accountable for the implementation of this policy.
- b. Senior Management is responsible for the annual review and approval of this policy.
- c. Senior Management is responsible for ensuring that employees follow the policy directives, guidelines and procedures.
- d. Employees are responsible to follow the policy directives, guidelines and procedures.
- e. The FOIPOP Administrator is responsibility for:

- establishing guidelines and procedures for administering this policy in conjunction with the Information Policy Committee.
- playing an advisory role in establishing such mechanisms for the rapid and effective access to the information, monitoring that action has been taken, and obtaining information on how these mechanisms are working.
- A listing of all records subject to routine disclosure and active dissemination shall be available to all employees of the Department. They shall receive training on assisting the public when a request is made for records that fall within these categories and on where to refer members of the public when it is unclear whether or not the information may be released.

## **8. COMPLIANCE / EVALUATION**

The FOIPOP Administrator of the Department shall be responsible for ensuring the compliance with this policy and shall evaluate the policy at regular intervals.

## **9. REFERENCES / AUTHORITY**

This policy must be read in conjunction with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, 1994.

*Government Records Act*

Corporate Records Management Policy

Department of Natural Resources Records Management Policy

## **10. INQUIRIES**

FOIPOP Administrator

1701 Hollis Street

P. O. Box 698

Halifax, NS B3J 2X1

Tel: (902) 424-1580

Fax: (902) 424-7735

E-mail: [dnrroutineaccess@gov.ns.ca](mailto:dnrroutineaccess@gov.ns.ca)

The Department's website at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/>.

## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix "A" - Routine Access Records

Appendix "B" - Actively Disseminated Records

## **Appendix “A”**

### **Routine Access Records**

This appendix provides the list of records that the Department will routinely release within the scope of this policy. Requests for records will be handled by the Department’s FOIPOP Administrator or within the Divisions, as indicated, where procedures already exist.

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#### **Resources Corporate Service Unit**

##### **Financial Information**

- Audits of Programs (final audit)
- Expense Claim (individual monthly travel expense claims for a three month period within the current fiscal year and for a maximum of three individuals in one department at any one time)
- Detailed expenditure reports, by main categories, (e.g. salaries, travel, etc.) for a maximum of three per fiscal year
- Ministerial monthly expense summary (provided to Executive Council Office)
- Cost of contracts for goods and services
- Overtime expenditures (current year-to-date) for specific Branches or Divisions
- Cost of sending a delegation out of the province or the country
- Cost of special or specific events (i.e. conferences, luncheons, workshops, training, etc. within three months of event having taken place)
- Contracts for construction and/or renovations of Natural Resources facilities
- Cost of renovations for specific offices carried out within the previous six months

*(note: detailed analysis of budget codes not included for routine access)*

##### **Human Resources Information**

- Organizational charts (without names and subject to security issues)
- Generic information of benefits and hours of work
- Position job descriptions, pay scale, classification of positions
- Union v non-unionized positions
- Secondment agreements, both within government and outside government (excluding personal information)
- Personal service contracts of individuals not appointed pursuant to the Civil Service Act [excluding personal information and trade (service or product) trade secrets]
- Department attendance management statistics (excluding personal information)
- Hiring process:
  - ▶ # of applicants per competition
  - ▶ # of persons interviewed / eligible for interview
  - ▶ Identity of selection panel (to persons interviewed only)
  - ▶ Screening criteria contained in the job posting
  - ▶ Name of successful candidate, once offer has been accepted

## **General** (*Contact: Specific Branch*)

- Statistics: The Department of Natural Resources, through its various divisions, will provide readily available statistics upon verification that the information does not have personal information
- Annual Reports
- Policies
- Licence, Permits and Approvals (confirmation only, that a person (includes a corporation) has a current licence, permit or approval)
- Records submitted by a third party in response to or as part of a formal public consultation process
- Public surveys
- Publically tendered contracts
- Speeches by Minister or Deputy Minister (with a check against delivery statement)

## **Land Services Branch**

- Grant Petition Papers (20 years) (*Contact: Provincial Crown Lands Record Centre*)
- Land Purchase Files: Appraised Values and Certificates of Title for completed land purchase files (*Contact: Land Services Branch*)
- Licence, Permits and Approvals (confirmation only, that a person has a current license, permit or approval) (*Contact: Land Services Branch*)

## **Mineral Resources Branch**

- Mineral, Petroleum, Treasure Trove & Underground Hydrocarbon Storage Tenure Status (*Contact: Mineral and Petroleum Titles*)
- Historic Mine Plan information (*Contact: Mineral Development and Management Division*)
- Index of Registered Agreements on Mineral, Petroleum, Treasure Trove & Underground Hydrocarbon Storage (index available for viewing only) (*Contact: Mineral and Petroleum Titles*)

## **Planning Secretariat**

*(see Appendix B - publically available information is actively disseminated)*

## **Regional Services Branch**

- Warnings / Summons (personal information severed)
- Flight Logs (enforcement and personal information severed)
- Inspection Reports (personal information severed)
- Forestry lease agreements
- Current stumpage rates

## **Renewable Resources Branch**

### ***Parks and Recreation***

- Completed Park Management Plans (less than 10 years old)
- Operating Standards
- Design Standards
- Parks Property Database (contains information on size and designation of each property)

### ***Wildlife***

- Circus Inspections
- Monitoring Results from Wildlife Habitat and Watercourse Protection Regulations
- Annual Data Collected and Summarized (not otherwise indicated in Appendix A)

## **Appendix “B”**

### **Actively Disseminated Records**

The following is a list of records that the Department actively disseminates. This list is not intended to be an exhaustive list and does not capture the range of information that may be provided through other avenues. A number of these records are readily available through the Department’s various divisions or can be viewed at the Department’s website:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/> or in the Department’s Library, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Founders Square, 1701 Hollis Street, Halifax, NS (902) 424-8633.

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#### **General**

- Acts & Regulations for the Department of Natural Resources
- Publications / Maps / Digital Data / Brochures / Fact Sheets / Newsletters
- Restricted and Limited Use Land Use Database
- Licence, Permit and Approvals - application forms and general information
- Awards, Grants
- Statistics
- Policies
- Program Information
- News Releases
- Seminars

#### **Land Services Branch**

##### ***Land Administration***

- Documents which are a matter of public record - Leases, Deeds, Easements, etc.

##### ***Crown Land Record Centre***

- Property Maps (index sheets, Jackson sheets, Church maps, county portfolios (on microfilm))
- Letters of Transfers of Administration and Control between Departments
- C-Files: letters to municipalities advising that Crown claims a parcel of land

#### **Mineral Resources Branch**

- Release Notices
- Publications List
- Conference Information
- Reports, Papers, Memoirs, Bulletins, Economic Geology Series, Brochures
- Maps: Geology; Mineral Occurrence; Geochemical; Mineral Land Use; etc.
- Databases: NOVASCAN (On-line searchable, bibliographic geoscience database), Mineral Occurrence, Drillholes, Regional Geochemical Datasets, Claim Reference Map Grid, Abandoned Mine Openings, Claim, Mining Tract & Petroleum Reservation Grids

- for Claim Reference Maps
- Digital Data
- Quarterly Newsletter: Minerals Update
- Mineral Tenure Maps through Registry of Mineral & Petroleum Titles
- Abandoned Mine Openings Database
- Inventory of Provincial Drill Core
- Active Mine Operations Lists

## **Planning Secretariat**

- Outcome Measures and Accountability Reports
- Approved Business Plans
- Integrated Resource Management (IRM)
  - IRM Planning Process
  - Committee Minutes
  - Summary of Public Comments from IRM Public Information Sessions
  - IRM Land Use Categories
- Quarterly Newsletter: Nature's Resources

## **Regional Services Branch**

- Youth Education Program Information
- Hunter Education Course Schedule
- NS Hunting Regulations Summary
- Newsletter: News from Becoming an Outdoor Woman, Nova Scotia
- Review, Valuation and Allocation of Crown Timber Resources

## **Renewable Resources Branch**

### ***Forestry***

- Published Forest Inventory Maps and Reports
- Forest Research Reports
- Nova Scotia's Code of Forests Practice
- Registry of Buyers of Primary Forest Products
- Ecological Land Classification Map
- Silviculture Assistance Opportunities Program

### ***Integrated Pest Management***

- Information Sheets

### ***Parks and Recreation***

- Campground Host Program
- Parks are for People Program
- Shubenacadie Provincial Wildlife Park information
- McNabs and Lawlor Island Provincial Park Draft Management Plan

### ***Wildlife***

- Biodiversity Programs
- Large Mammals Programs
- Terrestrial Habitat Programs
- Wetlands & Coastal Habitat Programs
- License sales
- Harvest records
- Wildlife Harvest Summary Data
- Wildlife Inventory Summary Data
- Hunting License Sales
- Species at Risk Designations
- Nuisance Wildlife Fact Sheets
- Successful Applicants for the Habitat Conservation Fund
- Successful applicants for the Species at Risk Conservation Fund