

PROTECT THE QUALITY & QUANTITY OF OUR WATER

Protecting our water is critical if we want to have a sustainable economy and way of life in this province. Protection includes addressing the needs of the natural environment as well as people, both physically and economically.

It also means finding new and innovative ways to use less water. New or larger supplies of water can become available simply by using better conservation methods. This gives new industries or other large water users the opportunity to create or expand operations.

LARGE WATER USERS

Large water users are defined by the regulatory requirement that anyone withdrawing more than 23 000 litres of water a day needs to apply for approval to do so. This applies to both surface water and groundwater.

For more information, go to www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/paal/nse/paal182.asp

Actions for Today

- Require water conservation plans from large water users.
- Develop guidance for allocating water in times of emergency, such as a drought, contamination, or where aquifer and stream health is at risk.
- Assist municipalities, First Nations, and communities with source water-protection planning.
- Continue to implement and update municipal and public drinking water standards, and municipal wastewater effluent standards.
- Assess the current and future use of setbacks from fresh and coastal water resources.
- Integrate water values in the selection, planning, and management of parks and protected areas.
- Apply Canadian Council of the Ministers of the Environment (CCME)-based water quality standards and objectives as water-use targets for fresh and coastal waters.

Actions for Tomorrow

- Update current guidance for storm water management and sediment control to improve protection of water quality from land development activities.
- Continue to update the Nova Scotia Building Code to include water conservation and encourage efficiency and reuse.
- Develop tools to promote conservation and restoration of sensitive ecosystems and watershed features, such as wetlands.
- Evaluate and improve the regulatory framework for private wastewater treatment systems, including on-site sewage disposal.
- Enhance the protection of drinking water for rural communities with our community partners.
- Work with First Nations, municipalities, and communities to pursue innovative solutions to improve wastewater and drinking water treatment.

Directions for the future

Conservation and the efficient use of water plays an important role in this strategy. Not only do we need to protect the amount of water that is available, we must also ensure that high quality water is available when and where it's needed. For example, in rural areas people depend on wells for their drinking water and can't afford for them to run dry.

We recognize that water quality and quantity can easily be jeopardized. We will continue to develop and implement programs, tools, and policies that will help protect it.