

# Working towards a Water Strategy for New Brunswick:

## Programs and Approvals



In New Brunswick, environmental regulation is a cooperative effort involving various levels of government.

The task of ensuring compliance lies with provincial inspectors appointed under the Province's environmental legislation.

An Order given by an inspector has the same weight as if it had been given by the Minister.

Many municipalities have by-laws related to specific environmental concerns within their jurisdictions. The enforcement of these by-laws is the responsibility of the municipality.

### Operating Approvals

Many activities are required to be approved before they are allowed to proceed. This is done to ensure the activity on the site is environmentally acceptable. A number of operating approvals and permits relating to water are issued including:

- watercourse and wetland alteration;
- water quality;
- environmental impact assessment; and
- wastewater.

### Watercourse and Wetland Alteration

The Province administers the *Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Regulation* (WAWA) in an effort to help protect our surface water resources from the effects of construction, landscaping, forestry and the installation of bridges, culverts and similar structures.

A *Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Permit* must be obtained before undertaking activities within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland.

What may seem like a harmless project on a property may alter a watercourse or wetland and could have negative impacts on water quality, aquatic life, and could also cause property damage.

There are two types of WAWA permits:

- Provisional Permits deal with low level alterations that pose low environmental risk, and
- Standard Permits are intended for projects that are more significant in nature.

A permit can be applied for by using the Department of Environment and Local Government's on-line application.

## Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

EIA is a process where the environmental impacts that could result from a proposed project are identified and assessed at an early stage in the planning process.

Many projects have the potential to have adverse effects on water. Impacts can be caused by the size of the project, construction, road and transmission line development, infilling of wetlands, through water withdrawal, or effluent discharges from the project site.

In cases where a project could significantly affect water quality or quantity, mitigation measures must be proposed to address the concern.

Some EIA projects require a Water Supply Source Assessment (WSSA). These projects typically include construction and/or modification of municipal, industrial or community water supply sources, large scale subdivision developments, and open loop earth energy systems. WSSAs are used to evaluate the sustainability of a water supply, to assess the water quality, and to evaluate potential impacts to existing water users.

## Drinking Water Protection Programs

New Brunswick has a multi-barrier approach to protection and management of drinking water supplies through regulation.

These regulatory mechanisms provide the basis for implementation of drinking

water source protection through four program areas: Potable Water, Watershed Protection, Wellfield Protection and Water Well Protection.

### Watershed Protection Program

About 40% of the population obtains their water supply from surface water watersheds.

There are 29 protected watersheds in New Brunswick that supply municipal drinking water to 20 communities.

The Watershed Protection Program provides drinking water protection by defining the types of activities that can take place in a protected watershed.

Protected watersheds are divided up into three management zones, the water, a 75 metre buffer zone, and the remainder of the watershed. If a proposed activity is not specifically identified in the Designation Order, it is not permitted without a request for an exemption.

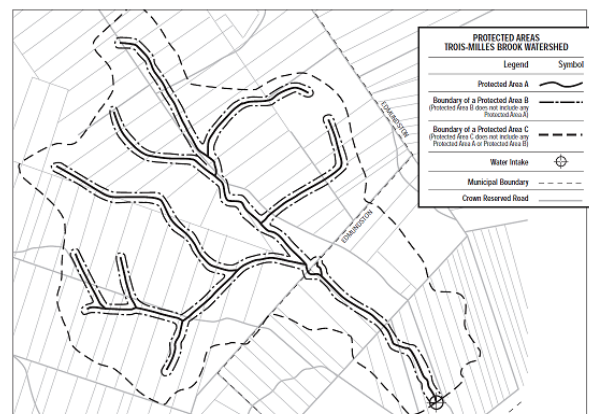


Figure 1. An example of a Watershed Protected Area.

### Wellfield Protection Program

A wellfield protected area is a defined area surrounding a water well which supplies a public drinking water supply system. In a wellfield protected area, there are limitations on chemical storage and land use activities.

Currently there are 55 municipalities in New Brunswick that rely on approximately 200 production wells as their source of potable water. These areas serve over 150,000 people with drinking water.

Sample Illustration of a Wellfield Protected Area

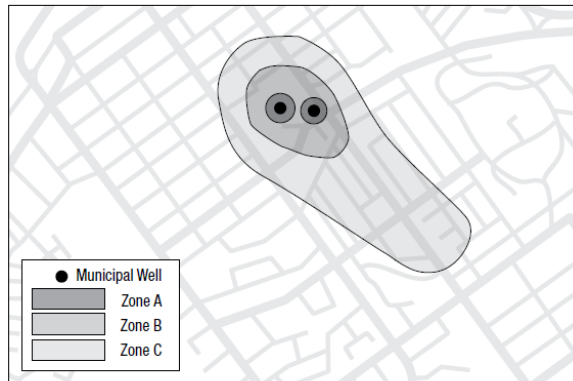


Figure 2. An example of a Wellfield Protected Area.

### Water Well Protection

Ensuring that water wells are constructed in a manner that does not compromise water quality and the environment is a critical component of providing safe potable water to New Brunswickers.

Water Well Contractors and Drillers offering water well construction and development services in the province must obtain a license each year from the Department of Environment and Local Government. This license allows

water well contractors to engage licensed drillers to construct water wells in accordance with the requirements of the *Water Well Regulation*.

For more information on departmental programs and approvals, contact:

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