

# **Wetlands Water Coastal**

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**Presentation to the Minister's Roundtable on the  
Environment**

**John Brazner, Environment**

**David Briggins & Jessica Paterson, Environment**

**Justin Huston, Fisheries and Aquaculture**

September 29, 2009

# Outline

- Context
- Timelines
- Updates
  - Water
  - Coastal
  - Wetlands
- Integration across initiatives
- Discussion

# Context

**Wetlands:** EGSPA commitment...(2009)

**Water:** EGSPA commitment...(2010)

**Coastal:** Coastal Management Framework announced in June 2008, which committed the government to develop a *Sustainable Coastal Development Strategy* by 2010.

# Context

Also, related **Natural Resources** strategy:

- Biodiversity
- Parks
- Forestry
- Mining

## **Climate Change Action Plan**

- Adaptation: coastal hazards, water planning

# Timelines

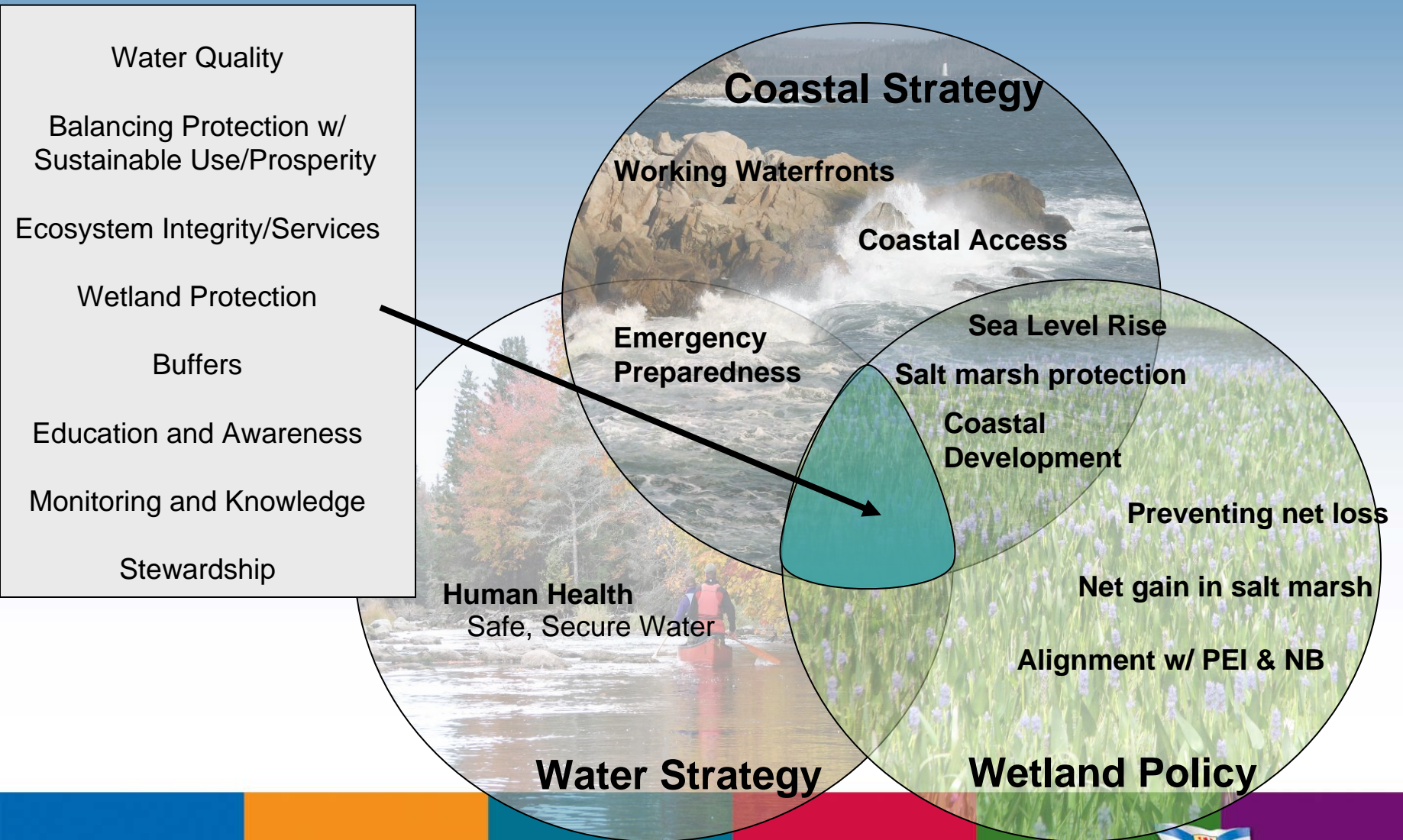
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Wetlands																
Water																
Coastal																

Wetlands – December 31, 2009

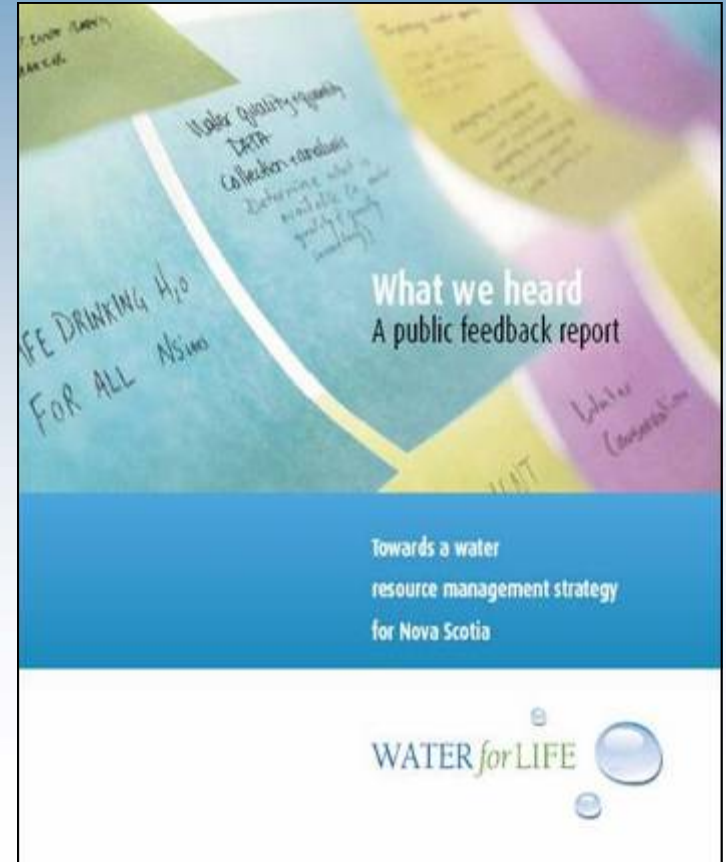
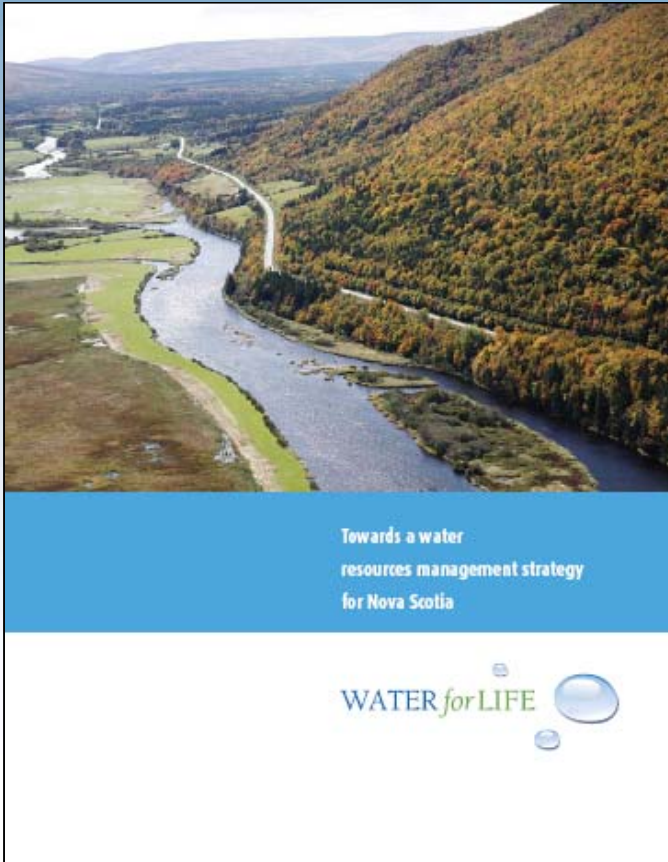
Water – March 31, 2010

Coastal – December 31, 2010

# Connections



# Water Resource Management Strategy



# Strategy Oversight

- Interdepartmental Water Management Committee
- 12 provincial depts/agencies
- 4 federal depts (observers)
- Chaired by NSE Deputy Minister

# Strategy Development Process

- **Step 1: Scoping and issue identification**
- **Step 2: Consultation and Review** (2008-09)
- **Step 3: Draft Strategy** (2009-10)

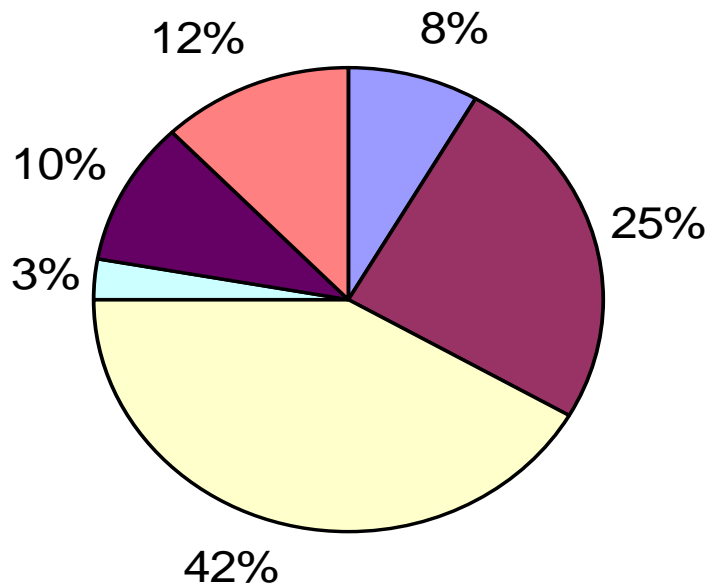
# 1<sup>st</sup> Consultation: Jan 30 – June 1 / 08

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# Participation in consultation

## Participant Perspectives (Workshop + Written)



- Business (26)
- Community Group or Organization (77)
- Individual (129)
- Other (8)
- Water Professional (31)
- Municipalities (38)

# Principles for the strategy

- Sustainability
- Partnership and collaboration
- Stewardship
- Informed decision-making
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities

# Vision

- Water is essential for life -- to be valued, kept safe and shared.

# Water Strategy Goals

- Human health
- Ecosystem integrity
- Economic prosperity
- Emergency and hazards preparedness
- Strengthened knowledge

# Human Health

- Safe, secure water for consumption, recreation and livelihoods

# Economic Prosperity

- Sustainable and beneficial use of water resources

# Ecosystem Integrity

- Protection, conservation and enhancement of water resources and dependent ecosystems

# Emergency & Hazards Preparedness

- Minimization of impacts from water-related emergencies and hazards

# Monitoring and knowledge

- Strengthened knowledge about water resources

# Next Steps for the water strategy

- Draft strategy (now)
- Consult on draft strategy ()
- Revisions and prepare submission to Executive Council ()
- Final strategy (Mar 10)

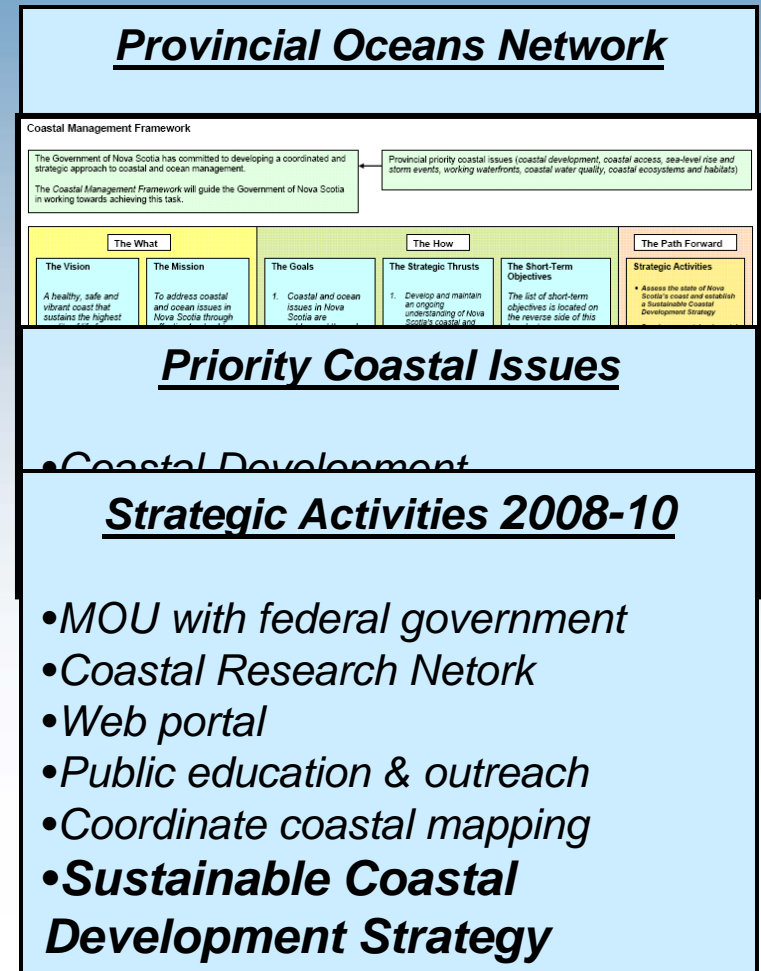
# COASTAL UPDATE

## Background:

- 30+ years of efforts to establish integrated coastal management (ICM) program in Nova Scotia
- Longstanding participation in various ICM initiatives (e.g. Gulf of Maine Council, ESSIM, etc.)
- Provincial Oceans Network formed in 2002 in response to national *Ocean Strategy / Oceans Act*
- 2006 Deputy Minister directive to develop a “coordinated and strategic” approach to coastal management in Nova Scotia

# Progress-to-Date

- Provincial Oceans Network
  - 15 departments and agencies
  - Nationally recognized model
- Coastal Management Framework
  - Outlines commitment and approach to coastal management
  - 1<sup>st</sup> of its kind in Canada
  - Defines what we're focusing on, and how we'll do it
- Priority coastal issues
  - Focuses efforts on complex, cross-cutting issues
- Strategic Activities
  - First steps
  - Coordinate and accelerate



# Sustainable Coastal Development Strategy

## What might this strategy look like?

- time-bound (10 years)
- focused on priority issues
- measurable objectives
- defined actions
- lead departments
- collaboration with government and stakeholder partners

**Priority Issue:** Coastal Water Quality

**Goal:** Swimmable and fishable coastal waters

**Objective 1:** By 2020, 100% of ocean beaches are safe for swimming

Action 1a:

Action 1b:

**Objective 2:** By 2020, there will be a 25% reduction in shellfish closures

Action 2a:

Action 2b:

# Sustainable Coastal Development Strategy

## Key Steps

1. Communicate baseline information
  - State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report
2. Gather opinions
  - Public input
  - Stakeholder input
3. Draft the Strategy
  - Provincial Oceans Network
  - Input solicited from issue experts
  - Government consultation

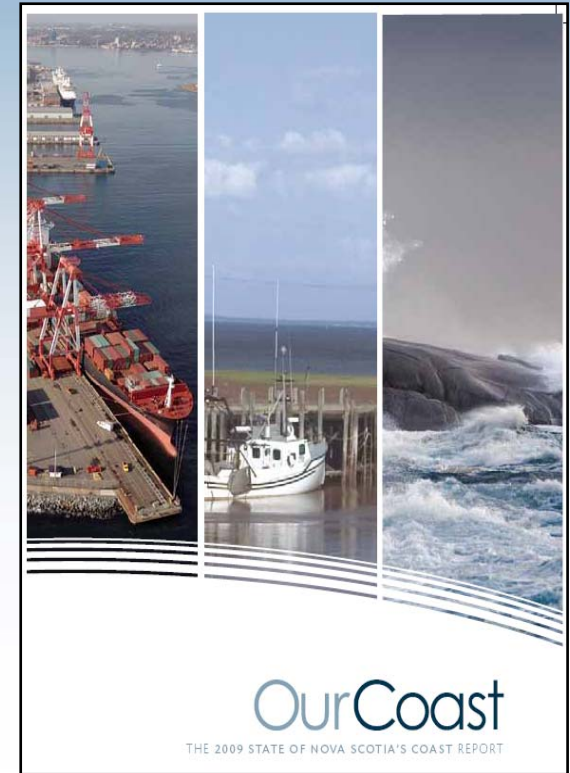
# 1. State of Nova Scotia's Coast Report

**Objective:** to inform and engage – establish common platform for dialogue

- Drafted by multi-disciplinary team at CBCL Ltd.
- Input and review by PON depts. & Fed. partners
- Detailed information on the 6 priority issues
- Trends and information gaps
- Inventory of existing leg/policy/programs

## 3 Products

- Summary report, fact sheets, technical report



## 2. Gather Opinions

**Public and stakeholder input will focus on priorities and ideas for the Strategy.**

- **This input will help us to:**
  - Ensure the Strategy reflects public priorities
  - Further focus coastal management priorities
  - Assess competing priorities
  - Position coastal management – not solely a Govt. problem/solution
- **Possible Methods:**
  - Regional open houses
  - 1-day “Coastal Summit” building on Coastal Nova series
  - Website
  - Sector-based meetings (industry, NGOs, municipalities, academia, etc.)
  - Phone surveys

### 3. Draft the Strategy

- **PON develops draft Strategy**
  - Goals, objectives, and actions for each priority issue
- **Engage multi-disciplinary issue experts to provide input on draft Strategy**
  - Targeted focus groups for each priority issue
  - Representing different sectors and regions
- **Seek government input on draft Strategy**
  - municipal, federal, First Nations
- **Meetings with interest groups and impacted stakeholders**
- **PON revises draft Strategy**

## 3. Draft the Strategy

### Consult on the Strategy

- Targeted formal consultation with municipalities, federal government and First Nations

### Cabinet Approval

### Public Release

# Wetland Policy Update

- EGSPA mandate – *policy to prevent net loss of wetlands by end of 2009*
- “*net loss of wetlands*” means net loss of wetland area and function [EGSPA 2(e)]



- HOME
- TOPICS
- RESOURCES
- DEPARTMENT
- CONTACT

### Wetlands

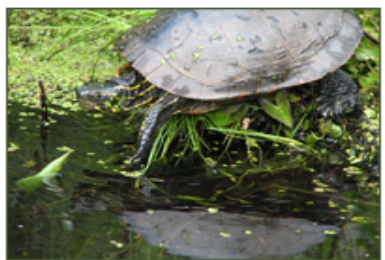
## Wetland Conservation Policy – Draft for Consultation

- Wetlands**
- Home
- Wetland Conservation Policy**
- > Comments
- Wetland Alteration

Nova Scotians are invited to comment on a draft of government's new Wetland Conservation Policy.

[Nova Scotia Wetland Conservation Policy - Draft for Consultation](#) (PDF: 2mb)

The draft policy was developed in response to the 2007 Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act mandate that government establish a policy to prevent the net loss of wetlands by the end of 2009.



# Policy Background

- Existing Regulatory Tools
- Ecosystem Services and Functions
- Historic Loss
- Consequences of Wetland Loss
- Current Inventory
- Wetland Management

# Policy Goals

- To prevent the net loss of wetland in Nova Scotia through wetland conservation practices that balance the need for wetland protection with the need for sustainable economic development, now and in the future.
- Streamline delivery of existing legislation, regulations and operational policies that protect wetlands in Nova Scotia

# Policy Objectives

- Manage human activity in or near wetlands in a manner that will ensure **no loss of ecologically significant wetland** area or function and **prevent net loss of other wetlands**.
- Promote wetland **stewardship** and increase **awareness** of the importance of wetlands in the landscape
- Promote a **long-term net gain** in wetland types with high historic losses across the province (e.g., salt marshes)
- Encourage the use of **buffers** to better ensure integrity
- **Align** NS wetland conservation tools w/ those in PEI and NB

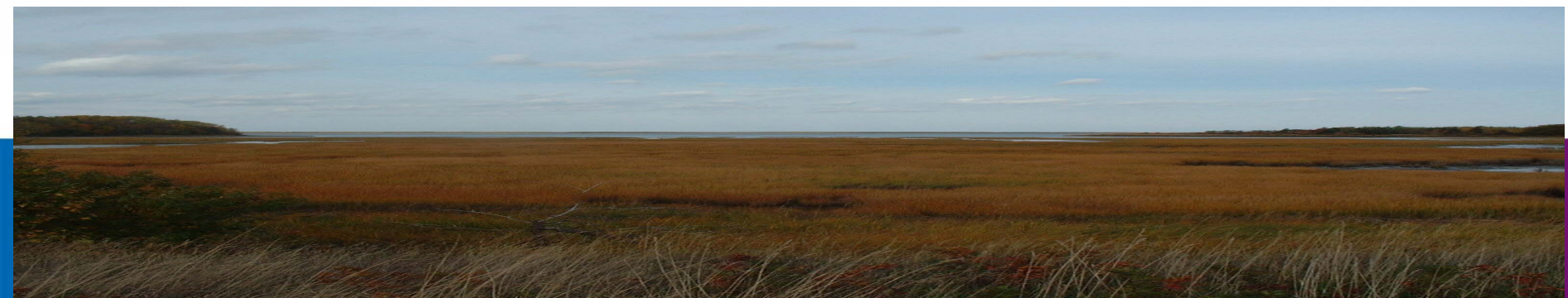
# Scope and Application

Draft policy applies to all wetlands in Nova Scotia with the following exceptions:

- Wetlands that are less than 100 m<sup>2</sup> in total area
- Former salt marshes designated under the Agricultural Marshland Conservation Act as agricultural land
- Wetlands constructed specifically for the purposes of wastewater or stormwater treatment
- Wetlands that develop within drainage ditches for roads or agriculture
- Wetlands that develop as the of result of construction projects
- Wetlands created on upland habitats not for the purposes of compensation
- Linear developments less than 60m long and 10m wide in shrub and wooded swamps

# Ecologically Significant Wetlands

- “No loss” (exceptions for “necessary public function”)
  - Salt marshes
  - Wetlands known to have designated species-at-risk
  - Areas with special designation (e.g., Parks/Protected Areas)
  - Compensation sites
  - Protected water supply areas
- Streamlines approval process – reduces resource requirement
- Provision so that we can add ESW categories/sites in the future



# Other Wetlands

- Preventing net loss through mitigation sequence
- Wetland Alteration or EA Approval required for projects that will alter wetlands
- Centralized decision-making to improve consistency
- Improving accuracy of wetland inventory a priority
- Establish and maintain a *Proponent's Guide to Wetland Conservation* to clarify expectations

# Two-Pronged Approach

## *Provincial Policy*

- Government-wide
- Big-picture
- Lays foundation and direction
- Identifies/suggests tools needed for future advances
- Requires cabinet approval

## *NSE Proponent's Guide*

- Departmental
- Implementation details (regulatory program)
- Increases certainty and clarity, streamlines process
- Flexible to develop with NSE program capacity

# Proponent's Guide Components

- 7 Step Approach to Determine Requirements
- Application Process
- Compensation Options and Requirements
- Environmental Assessment Requirements
- Requirements for Forestry and Cranberry Operations

# Stewardship and Awareness

- Secure wetlands through variety of strategies
- Retain ownership of all ESWs on Crown land
- Work with municipalities to incorporate wetland conservation in planning efforts
- Promote and assist in wetland education
- Facilitate the exchange of information on wetlands among various departments and levels of government

# Long-term net gain

- Focus on wetland types w/ high historic losses
- Salt marshes
- Need to replace key ecosystem services
- Environmental Trust Fund could be a key tool

# Encourage Buffer Use

- Known to be a key factor in determining health of wetlands and watercourses
- Already exist for forestry operations for some wetland types
- Need to educate stakeholders on BMPs
- Can be part of approval conditions in EAs

# Next Steps

- Targeted and General Consultations – through Nov. 6
- Revise Draft based on Consultations – by early December
- Government Approval – before Christmas
- Release Nova Scotia Wetland Conservation Policy – by Jan. 1 2010
- Release Proponent's Guide – early 2010

# Integration across initiatives

## Process

- Regular meetings between “strategy coordinators”
- Interdepartmental committees
- All initiatives report through DM Forum on Sustainable Competitiveness

## Content

- Watercourse buffers/setbacks
- Information management / GIS
- Water quality
- Wetland / Saltmarsh conservation
- Education and awareness

# Discussion

- What are some of the ways that the Roundtable could be engaged in the future?
  - Advisory?
  - Reporting/Accountability?
  - Champion?
- Focused on specific strategies and/or how they integrate?

# Thank you



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