



## What is a wetland?

All wetlands are protected under the *Environmental Protection Act*.

Many people can identify wetlands like ponds and streams. However wetlands can include habitat that is more difficult to identify as wetlands, such as shrub swamps, wooded swamps and bogs.

## Why are all wetlands protected?

### *Drinking water*

Wetlands are an important component of the water cycle that we rely on for drinking water.

They act as groundwater recharge, discharge and storage areas.

They help purify water by trapping and breaking down contaminants like waste and sediments.

### *Stabilizing land*

Wetlands help stabilise rivers, streams and coastlines.

Disturbing or building on poorly draining soil can put your buildings and neighboring buildings at risk of flood damage.

If a wetland is disturbed, it cannot trap water, so high water or heavy rains may flow onto other properties. Run-off can negatively affect nearby streams, rivers and aquaculture operations.

### *Climate*

Wetlands like forested swamps act as carbon sinks, capturing carbon we emit which reduces greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.

### *Habitat*

Wetlands are important habitats for many species of wildlife.

If you are planning to develop land and are unsure of its wetland status, request assistance by contacting Environment, Energy and Climate Action at **902-368-5700** or email **ELM@gov.pe.ca**

[PrinceEdwardIsland.ca/WetlandID](http://PrinceEdwardIsland.ca/WetlandID)

## Developing Near Wetlands

There is more development than ever before in PEI. Properties that have not been developed previously due to drainage issues are now being considered for development.

Before you consider building, it is important to determine if there are sensitive environmental features, like wetlands.

## How do I identify a wetland?

In the planning stages, developers and property owners should walk any property being considered for purchase, subdivision and/or development to determine if the property has sensitive environmental features.

### *Some things to look for include:*

- Evidence of water, such as low spots where water collects
- Water-loving plants like sphagnum moss, cattails, sedges or rushes, shrubs like dogwood or trees like willows.
- Signs of wet soil after digging a hole down 20 inches, like dark brown or black soil, dampness and water.

### *Ask yourself these questions:*

- Are there places you wouldn't drive a motor vehicle for fear of sinking?
- Does the vegetation look different in a spot lower than the surrounding areas?
- Do you hear frogs in the spring from that wet area?

For a complete list of what to look for, download the Wetland ID checklist



Provincial maps and the Wetland ID Mapping Guide can help landowners better understand where wetlands may be located.

To determine the extent and boundary of a potential wetland, a site visit by provincial staff may be required. Depending on the extent of the identified unmapped wetland, you may be advised to hire a wetland delineator.



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