

# Wetland Compensation

## What's Required and What Are My Options?

### BECAUSE WETLANDS ARE A VALUABLE PART OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, WE MUST PROCEED WITH CAUTION WHEN CONSIDERING A PROJECT THAT MAY ALTER A WETLAND

You must have approval from your local Nova Scotia Department of Environment field office before you alter a wetland. The approval, if granted, will set out the requirements for compensation.

### PURPOSE OF COMPENSATION

The purpose of compensation is to create a healthy and sufficiently sized wetland to make up for the loss of habitat and the role the wetland played before being altered for development. Whenever Nova Scotia Environment grants an approval to alter a wetland—such as draining, filling, flooding, or excavation—it also requires a wetland to be restored, created, or enhanced elsewhere to balance any loss during the alteration process.



Restoring ATV damage in a bog near Lake Charlotte

## TYPES OF COMPENSATION

Determining the type of compensation depends, in part, on the details of each situation. It usually involves restoring, enhancing, or creating wetland habitat, but may also be provided in other forms (see types of compensation below):

**RATIO**  
**2:1**

### RESTORATION

Restoration is the preferred method of compensation. This involves reestablishing wetland where it previously occurred. Studies show this method has the highest rate of success.

Compensation ratio for restoration is 2:1 — for every hectare of wetland altered, two hectares must be restored.

**RATIO**  
**≥3:1**

### ENHANCEMENT

Enhancement is a management activity conducted in existing wetlands that increases one or more wetland functions, such as sediment retention, flood control, and wildlife support.

Compensation ratio for enhancement at least 3:1 — exact amount depends on the specific type of enhancement undertaken.

**RATIO**  
**4:1**

### CREATION

Creation is the construction of wetland where none existed previously.

Compensation ratio for creating new wetland is 4:1.

**RATIO**  
**2:1**

### EXPANSION

Expansion of an existing wetland into adjacent areas. There is a lower ratio requirement for this type of compensation because it has proven to be more successful than creating new wetland.

Compensation ratio for expanding an existing wetland into adjacent areas that were not originally wetlands is 2:1.

## OTHER TYPES OF COMPENSATION THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED INCLUDE

- ◆ protecting an existing wetland or adjacent buffers that have special ecological significance
- ◆ constructing naturalized stormwater or wastewater retention wetlands
- ◆ conducting studies to identify potential restoration sites
- ◆ creating public access facilities and interpretive centres
- ◆ publishing public education materials
- ◆ funding research to support improved wetland policy

These options are typically only approved when included along with restoration, enhancement, or creation efforts, which have provided a ratio of at least 1:1 replacement of wetland on the ground. The options can be discussed with a Nova Scotia Environment administrator while the proposal is being developed.

## COSTS OF COMPENSATION

Costs vary depending on the complexity of the project and the landscape setting. Recent restoration projects have cost between \$3 and \$10 per square metre of restored wetland, or \$30,000 to \$100,000 per hectare.

## WHEN HIRING A SPECIALIST

Hire a wetland restoration specialist that can meet your compensation requirements. Discuss your specific needs with the wetland consultant to determine if they have the skills required before you hire.

Download a list of available consultants at

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.professional.resources.asp>

## REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL

Before receiving approval to complete a project that will alter a wetland, you must take one of two approaches. Both approaches, described in detail on the right side of this page, must be developed and finalized in consultation with Environment staff.

## CONSULT NOVA SCOTIA ENVIRONMENT STAFF to determine how best to develop a compensation plan

### APPROACH 1:

Develop a comprehensive plan that describes all aspects of the compensation project.

### APPROACH 2:

A letter of understanding or contract confirming you have retained the services of a wetland restoration specialist to provide an acceptable compensation project. The letter of understanding should include:

- basic information about the approach that will be taken
- general description of the amount, type, and location of the wetland to be restored, enhanced, or created
- a timeline for completion of different phases of the project (within two years)
- basic commitment to monitoring success (details to follow before project begins)
- agreement to keep Nova Scotia Environment informed of project progress
- signatures from the applicant and consultant on the agreement

## LINKS For more information

- ◆ Contact Nova Scotia Environment's Wetland Program at **902-424-2117** or [wetlands@gov.ns.ca](mailto:wetlands@gov.ns.ca)
- ◆ Visit Nova Scotia Environment's website for links to additional information [www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland)
- ◆ Nova Scotia Environment field office information [www.gov.ns.ca/nse/dept/division.emc.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/dept/division.emc.asp)
- ◆ Application for approval to alter a wetland [www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.alteration.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.alteration.asp)
- ◆ Wetland Specialists [www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.professional.resources.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.professional.resources.asp)

### FACT SHEETS ALSO AVAILABLE:

- *Wetlands in Nova Scotia*
  - *Wetland Checklist*
  - *Development & Wetlands*
  - *Farms & Wetlands*
  - *Woodlots & Wetlands*
  - *Wetlands Policy Fact Sheet*
- [www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/)

