

# Wetland Identification Checklist

## Is there a wetland on my property?

### DETERMINE IF THERE IS A WETLAND ON YOUR PROPERTY BEFORE YOU BUY OR BUILD.

#### WALK THE PROPERTY

You literally need to get your feet wet to discover if you have wetlands on your property. Put on rubber boots and bring the attached checklist along to help determine if wetlands are present.

#### ASK OUR ADVICE

You can also consult a wetland specialist to confirm your findings and identify boundaries. Once you've walked your property, consult with your local Nova Scotia Environment office. To find a Nova Scotia Environment office:

[www.gov.ns.ca/nse/dept/division.emc.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/dept/division.emc.asp)

You may also wish to hire a wetland specialist to confirm your findings and identify boundaries. Visit the department's website for a list of wetland consultants:

[www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.professional.resources.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.professional.resources.asp)

#### DO ONLINE RESEARCH

If you have technical knowledge of maps and soils, you can also use the following online tools to see if your property falls within a known wetland.

## LINKS to help determine if there is a wetland on your property

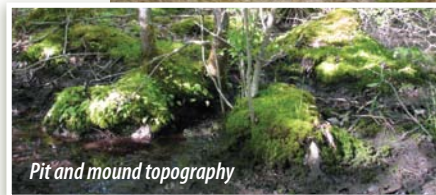
- ◆ Check the online Nova Scotia Wetland Inventory —  
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/wildlife/habitats/wetlands.asp>
- ◆ Topographic maps online —  
[www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/land/products/hardcopy1.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/land/products/hardcopy1.asp)
- ◆ Soil maps online —  
<http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/publications/surveys.html>
- ◆ Soil indicators online —  
[www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/docs/NS.Hydric.Soils.List.KKeys.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/docs/NS.Hydric.Soils.List.KKeys.pdf)
- ◆ Contact a Wetland Professional —  
[www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.professional.resources.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.professional.resources.asp)



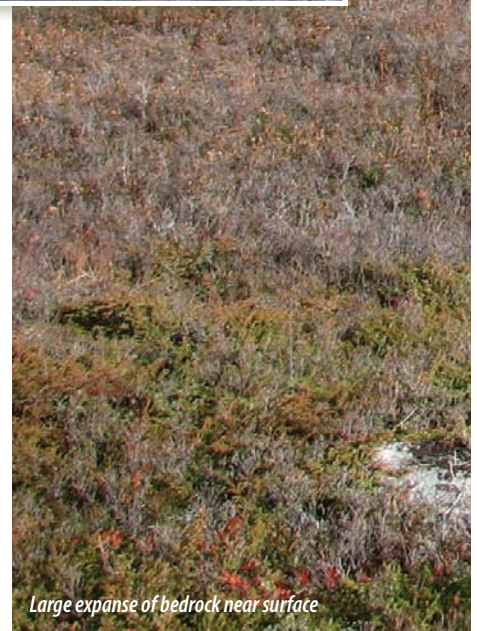
Wetland in river floodplain



Peat moss thrives in wet conditions



Pit and mound topography



Large expanse of bedrock near surface

# CHECKLIST For Wetland Visual Identification

## CHECK AREAS WHERE WATER IS LIKELY TO COLLECT

- ◆ near low spots/near topographic depressions
- ◆ on flat lands near a stream or river that experiences flooding
- ◆ near the coast
- ◆ along lake, stream, or pond shorelines
- ◆ in wide, flat areas with little or no slope
- ◆ in heavy/clay soils
- ◆ on large expanses of bedrock near the surface
- ◆ in groundwater discharge areas such as seeps or springs

## LOOK FOR SIGNS OF FLOODING NEAR THE SURFACE

- ◆ the water table is close to the soil surface— when you dig a hole, water seeps in
- ◆ water stained dark coloured leaves cover large areas of ground
- ◆ there are silt lines or water marks near the base of tree trunks
- ◆ trunks of trees are flared out near the soil surface
- ◆ roots of trees run very shallow with many above the soil surface
- ◆ patches of uneven ground exist, such as pits and mounds
- ◆ sticks, leaves, soil, and other debris have been deposited by water in a line at the base of plants and trees
- ◆ areas exist where non-woody plants have been flattened recently
- ◆ no shrubs/trees are present
- ◆ areas exist where crops won't grow after tilling and seeding

## LOOK FOR WATER-LOVING PLANTS

- ◆ peat moss/sphagnum carpet
- ◆ sedges (grass-like plants with triangular stems that grow in small mounds)
- ◆ cattails, blue flag iris, cotton grass, reed canary grass
- ◆ ferns and rushes (solid, round stems with many simple brown flowers)
- ◆ the main trees or shrubs are black spruce, tamarack, red maple, ash, elm, cedar, alder, willow, dogwood, or leatherleaf

## LOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ highly organic - dark brown or black, peaty-fibrous, mucky
- ◆ smells like rotten eggs - hydrogen sulphide present
- ◆ very wet - you can squeeze water out of soil
- ◆ water accumulates when you dig a shallow hole
- ◆ sub-surface layer is grey, grey-blue, or grey-green
- ◆ sub-surface layers have red or orange blotches



*Plants growing in hummocks*



*Stilted tree roots suggest periodically wet conditions*



*Sensitive fern is a good indicator of wet conditions*



*Wetland soil with peat near top and grey colours below*

### FACT SHEETS ALSO AVAILABLE:

- Wetlands in Nova Scotia
- Wetland Compensation
- Development & Wetlands
- Farms & Wetlands
- Woodlots & Wetlands
- Wetlands Policy Fact Sheet

[www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/)

## MORE LINKS

Nova Scotia Department of Environment regional offices

[www.gov.ns.ca/nse/dept/division.emc.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/dept/division.emc.asp)

Application for approval to work in a wetland

[www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.alteration.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/wetland/wetland.alteration.asp)

Nova Scotia's Environment Act

[www.nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/envromnt.htm](http://www.nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/envromnt.htm)

  
**NOVA SCOTIA**