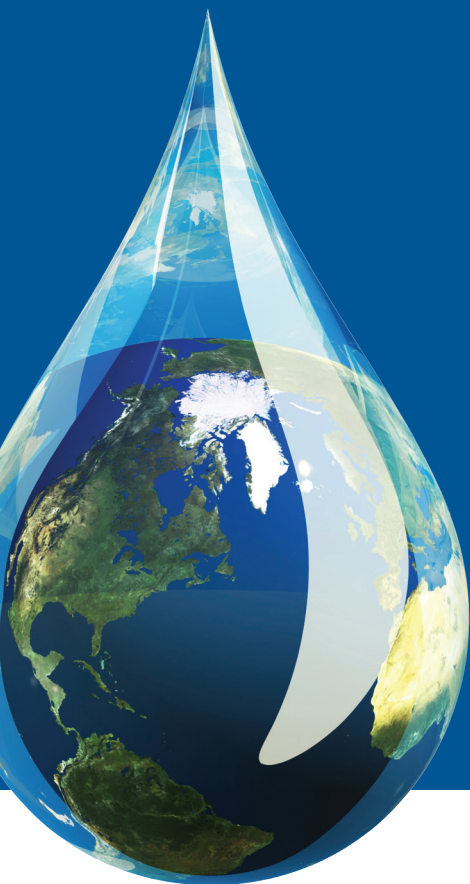


# Protect Your Water Source

A Guide to Managing  
Surface Water Drinking Sources



  
Newfoundland  
Labrador

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## A Guide to Managing Surface Water Drinking Sources

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# Introduction

Protecting source water is the first step your community can take to protect drinking water quality and quantity. This brochure is meant to be a reference guide to aid you in safeguarding your surface water drinking source.



Lets work together to protect  
Newfoundland and Labrador's drinking  
water supplies for future generations!



## What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area where all precipitation (rain, snow, etc.) will drain towards a common place, such as a pond, lake or river. **It is not just your intake pond or river.** It includes all bodies of water and the surrounding land that drain towards your water source. Watersheds are also known as catchment areas and/or drainage basins.



To see what your watershed boundary looks like,  
go to the water resources portal at:  
[www.maps.gov.nl.ca/water](http://www.maps.gov.nl.ca/water)

## What is watershed management?

Once you identify your watershed boundary, you can start to manage the watershed area. Watershed management is essentially managing the human activities and developments that occur inside your watershed. This may include regular visits to the area, posting signage, monitoring the activities inside your watershed and reporting unpermitted activities to the proper authorities.

## Why do we need watershed management?

Management of watershed areas in Newfoundland and Labrador is essential to the future of the province's water resources. Competition for resources within a watershed can have detrimental effects on water quality and quantity. Managing these activities is one way to ensure that water resources are sustained for future generations while considering the need for social and economic development.



Watershed management isn't about excluding all human activities inside your watershed, it's about a healthy balance of properly managed activities to sustain water resources.



# Protected Public Water Supply Areas

Communities can have their watersheds designated as a Protected Public Water Supply Area (PPWSA) under Section 39 of the Water Resources Act. This will add another layer of protection to your watershed as it will allow the provincial government and your community to manage activities and developments within your watershed through a permitting process.

## Application and Designation Process

To have your watershed area protected under the Water Resources Act, simply fill out the Protection of a Public Water Supply Area application found on the Water Resources Management Division (WRMD) website. You will need to include information about your watershed such as major water supply names, location, consultant information, water quality, land use information, etc.

Once your application is received, you will receive a letter of acknowledgement. An environmental scientist will analyze the application and a watershed map will be developed for review by a number of provincial departments. The process can take a few months to complete.

Once approved, a notice of designation is published in the Newfoundland and Labrador Gazette and the community will be notified in writing of the designation.



**Applications can be found here:**  
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/ecc/waterres/permits-licenses/appforms/>

If you need assistance filling out the application, call the regional environmental scientist listed on the back of this document.



## **Repeal and Amendment Process**

### **Repeal:**

If your community has a PPWSA that is no longer in use with no future plans to reactivate it, you can request that the protection status be repealed by sending a letter, including the reason, to the regional environmental scientist.

### **Amendment:**

If your community has made any changes to the existing PPWSA, for example, relocated your intake, you can apply for an amendment to the PPWSA boundary. Send a letter of request to the regional environmental scientist with an explanation of why an amendment is required. This will prompt a similar review process as a designation and may take a few months to allow for a thorough review.

## **Watershed Management Committees**

Some communities have Watershed Management Committees due to extensive, conflicting activities within their PPWSA. These committees are usually formed to oversee land use management and address conflict resolution activities amongst stakeholders. Stakeholders on such committees typically include the town, council members, representatives from industry, WRMD staff, other departmental government officials, members of environmental groups and other concerned parties.

## Watershed Management Plans

Some communities have developed comprehensive Watershed Management Plans. These plans are typically recommended when there are multiple stakeholders with various development interests within a PPWSA. A municipal guide to the development of a Watershed Management Plan is available at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ecc/files/waterres-quality-drinkingwater-pdf-municipal-guide-management-plan.pdf>

## Know your Watershed

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment is the lead agency responsible for the protection of drinking water quality. The department continues to work towards sustainable, clean and safe drinking water supplies for all residents. Departmental officials are responsible for:

- Issuing and regulating permits
- Process protection applications
- Land use conflict resolution
- Monitoring permitted activities
- Water quality monitoring
- Inspections and investigations
- Policy development

As the owner and operator of a public water supply, local service districts and municipalities play a large part in protecting their watershed areas. Communities are responsible for:

- Posting and maintaining signage (signage can be provided by the department)
- Routine surveillance
- Monitoring permitted activities
- Reporting unpermitted activities

## Posting and Maintaining Signage

It is important to let users know they are entering or are within a PPWSA. Many people are not aware of where the community water supply is located or the extent of the watershed area. Signs should be posted on common trails, paths and roads that lead into the supply and positioned where they are clearly visible. It is recommended that corrugated, plastic signs be placed on plywood before posting. Signs can be obtained from the regional environmental scientist and should be checked periodically for visibility and damage.

## Routine Surveillance

A standard operating procedure and an inspection form that your community can use when inspecting your watershed is available at:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/ecc/files/Water-Supply-Area-Monitoring.pdf>

Some questions to ask yourself when surveying the watershed area:

- 💧 Are the protection signs intact and visible?
- 💧 Are there any apparent erosion or sedimentation issues/concerns?
- 💧 Are there any new developments you were not made aware of (i.e. new cabins constructed, forestry activities, new trails/pathways, etc.)?
- 💧 Are the permitted activities following conditions outlined in the development permit?



**Don't feel your town has the capacity to do regular surveillance?** Encourage citizens to get involved. Cabin owners, for example, can make great watershed stewards. Ask them on their next hike in the area or visit to their cabin to let you know if they see anything out of the ordinary.

The department encourages communities to do monthly surveillance to allow for early detection of any water quality threats. Your particular watershed characteristics (accessibility, use, size, etc.) may determine how often surveillance is practical.

## **Monitoring Permitted Activities**

The department manages development activities inside PPWSAs via regulatory permits. Proponents may apply for a permit to conduct developments/activities within the protected watershed boundary. Communities are informed of proposed developments, provided with the application, and are given time for input before developments are approved. If there are any issues or questions that arise upon this review, feel free to contact the regional environmental scientist to discuss. Copies of issued permits are emailed to the communities.



**'Activity'** means any development or operation on, over, or under land or water inside your watershed area; examples include: construction of cabins, landscaping, tree cutting and quarrying.

Changes to previously permitted developments (building upgrades) should also be reported to the department.



Communities have the right to monitor permitted activities within their PPWSA. New and existing developments should be monitored to ensure permit conditions are being followed and not causing water quality issues. Take pictures and notes of any visits for community records.



**Be Safe!** It's important to note that different activities require different safety precautions. Construction areas, for example, have strict safety equipment requirements that need to be followed. Call proponents ahead of time, plan a monitoring visit and ask about safety measures on site to avoid dangerous situations.



## Reporting Unpermitted Activities

It is important to report any unpermitted activities inside your watershed to the regional environmental scientist listed on the back of this document. Activities that are unpermitted may pose a threat to your community's drinking water as they may not be following adequate precautionary and/or safety measures.

## Promoting Watershed Stewardship in Your Community

One of the best ways to protect your community's water supply is through public outreach and education. The department encourages and supports all communities to promote public involvement and awareness of watershed areas.

Find a printable watershed area map using the water resources portal mapping application.

[www.maps.gov.nl.ca/water](http://www.maps.gov.nl.ca/water)



Let's all help bridge the gap  
between the tap and the source!



## Community Involvement and Awareness

Here are some things that you can do at the community level to promote watershed stewardship:

- 💧 Post watershed area maps in public places such as the post office or town hall
- 💧 Brochures can be found here: [www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/publications/printed/](http://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/publications/printed/) which can be printed and made available in public places
- 💧 Post the drinking water quality reports issued by WRMD in public places
- 💧 Encourage schools in the area to teach children about local watershed management initiatives
- 💧 Water system operators and town management should attend the annual Clean and Safe Drinking Water Workshop



# Contact Information

## Environment and Climate Change

Web: [www.gov.nl.ca/ecc/waterres](http://www.gov.nl.ca/ecc/waterres)

Email: [waterandsewer@gov.nl.ca](mailto:waterandsewer@gov.nl.ca)

## Water Resources Portal:

[www.maps.gov.nl.ca/water](http://www.maps.gov.nl.ca/water)

## Eastern Region:

Environmental Scientist – 709.729.4817

## Central Region:

Environmental Scientist – 709.292.4280

## Western and Labrador Region:

Environmental Scientist – 709.637.2542

