

Department of Environment and Local Government

**Watercourse and Wetland
Alteration Program**

Cat Lambert, Senior Watercourse Technician

Matthew Stocek, Wetland Biologist

Watercourse and Wetland Alterations



Purpose of the program:

- Preserve watercourses and wetlands
- Protect aquatic habitats and prevent sedimentation
- Prevent property damage
- Reduce threats to public safety from flooding





Regulatory Requirement: *Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Regulation – Clean Water Act*



A watercourse and wetland alteration (WAWA) permit is required for an alteration in and within 30 metres of a watercourse or a wetland, as per the *Watercourse and Wetland Alteration Regulation*, under the *Clean Water Act*.



What is an Alteration?

Temporary or permanent change made in or within 30 metres of a watercourse or wetland including:

- Soil disturbance, including deposit or removal of materials
- Removal of vegetation
- Disturbance in flow, including water withdrawal



Watercourse and Wetland Definitions



Watercourses and wetlands are regulated as per their presence on the ground. Maps ([WAWA Reference Map](#)) are helpful tools, but the property should be walked through to identify features.

Watercourse	Wetland
Bed, banks and sides of any incised channel greater than 0.5 metres in width that displays a rock or soil bed ; water/flow does not have to be continuous and may be absent during any time of year; or a natural or artificial basin	Water table at, near, or above the land's surface, which is saturated for a long enough period to promote wetland or aquatic processes as indicated, by hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation

Artificial Basins



A permit is not required for the following:

- Modify an **unmapped** basin located more than 30 m from a watercourse/wetland, if it is not connected to or does not discharge to a watercourse/wetland (*i.e.*, a stand-alone basin). Examples: ponds created for mining operations, sedimentation ponds, and artificial ponds (*e.g.*, fish ponds, irrigation ponds, etc.)
- Construct an inline pond in an unregulated channel (*i.e.*, less than 0.5 m in width)
- Create a pond at a seep or spring located more than 30 m from a watercourse/wetland

Watercourses in New Brunswick



Guidelines for Development Within 30 Metres of a Watercourse

Watercourses are broken down into two categories:

- Watercourses that are prone to flooding, influenced by tide, and lakes
- All other watercourses

Guidelines list what is permitted / not permitted for each type of watercourses.



What is a Wetland?

- Transitional areas between land and water
- They are wet for 2 consecutive weeks during the growing season
- Have hydric soils
- Support plant species adapted to wet conditions
- Wetland plant communities can be non-forested, forested, or shrub



Non-Forested Wetlands in New Brunswick



Bog



Fen



Freshwater Marsh



Coastal Marsh



Aquatic Bed

Forested and Shrub Wetlands in New Brunswick



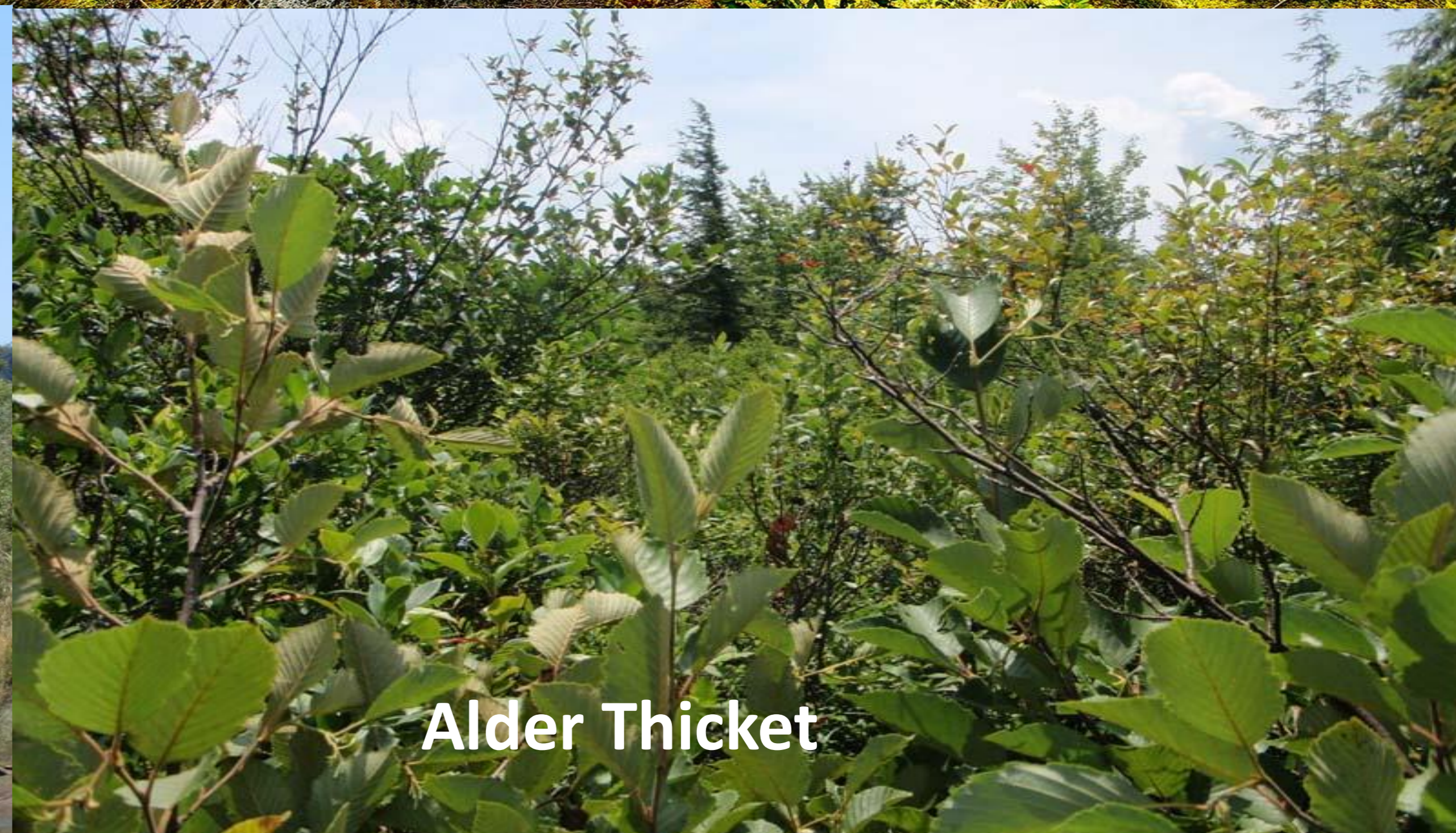
Forested Wetland Floodplain



Forested Bog



Shrub Swamp



Alder Thicket

Wetlands (cont'd)



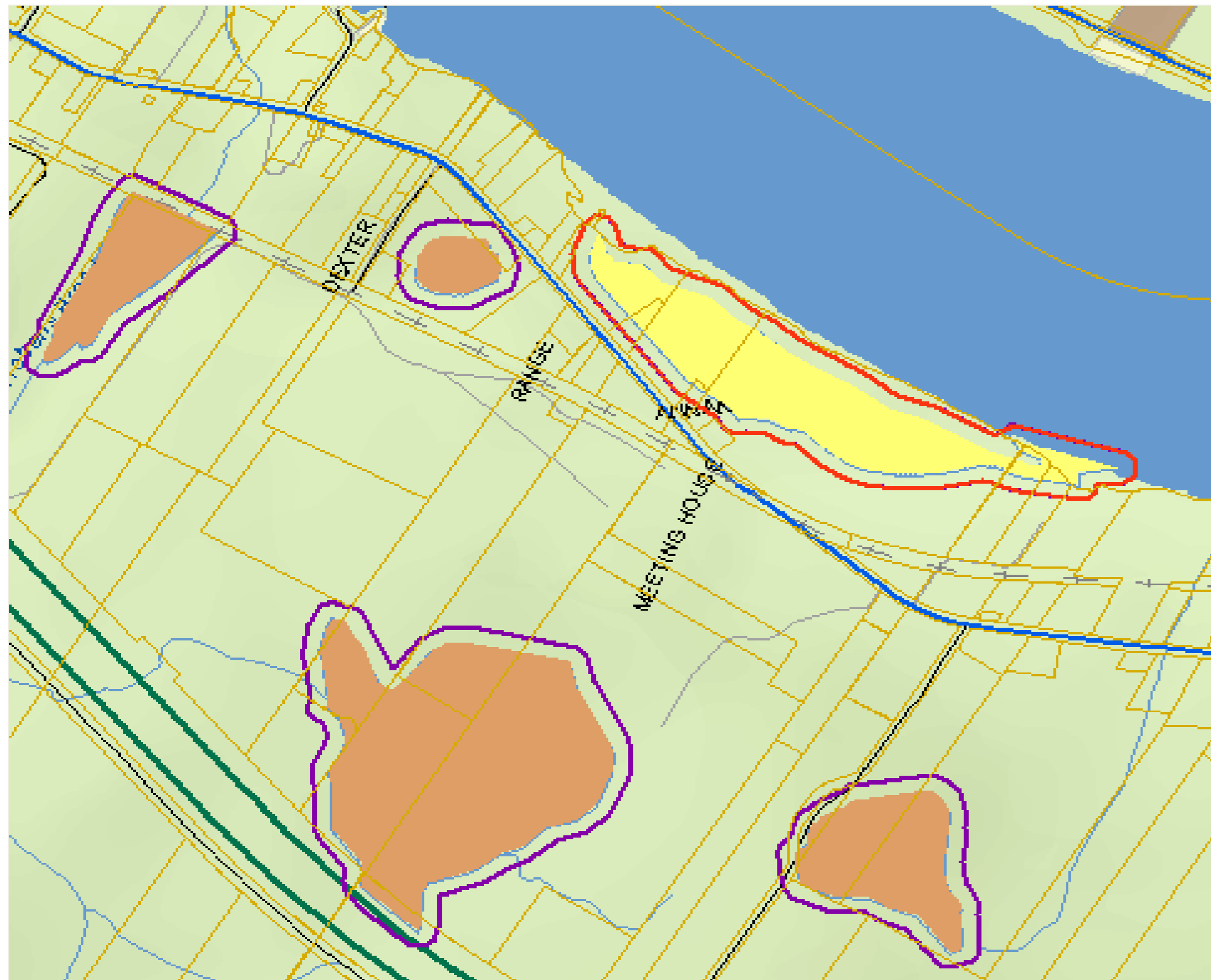
- ELG regulates all wetlands **as they appear on the ground** (*i.e.*, whether they are mapped or not) which meet the definition in the *Clean Water Act*
- WAWA Reference Map / GeoNB is a reference tool only
- Search your address or PID number on the WAWA Reference Map (<https://geonb.snb.ca/wawa/index.html>) to see if any mapped watercourses or wetlands appear on your property



WAWA Reference Map

Two main classifications of wetlands:

- Provincially Significant Wetlands (yellow)
- Wetlands (orange)



Layer List

- Property
- Wetlands
- 30 meters
- Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Wetland

Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs)



Wetlands having provincial, national, or international importance

Coastal Marshes

LSJR Floodplain Wetlands



Erosion Protection Documents



Riparian and Coastal Erosion Protection Permitting Guidelines (DELG)

- Planning considerations
 - erosion risk assessment
 - environmental impact
 - regulatory requirements
- WAWA permit application
 - certified installers / design and drawings by professional engineer
 - incomplete applications
 - potential of permit refusal (no erosion; no infrastructure at risk; infilling in/within 30 m of PSWs; infilling on a dune)
- Erosion stabilization methods (presented in order of DELG's preference based on avoiding/reducing impacts to watercourses and wetlands)

Erosion Protection Documents



[Nature-Based Riparian Erosion Protection \(CBCL\)](#)

[Nature-Based Coastal Erosion Protection \(CBCL\)](#)

- Presents different erosion protection measures, with advantages and disadvantages, suitable to specific areas and environments
- Discussion on best practices
- Costing of different methods

WAWA Permit Application Process



- All applications submitted [online](#)
- Some projects may require advise from other programs or agencies. In those cases, DELG consults directly for input (one-window approach):
 - Designated watersheds and wellfields - DELG
 - Approval to operate/construct - DELG
 - Environmental impact assessments - DELG
 - Crown Lands - Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development (DNRED)
 - Species at Risk – DNRED
 - Fish passage and fish habitat - Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)



Questions?

For more information, please contact wawa@gnb.ca or 506-457-4850.