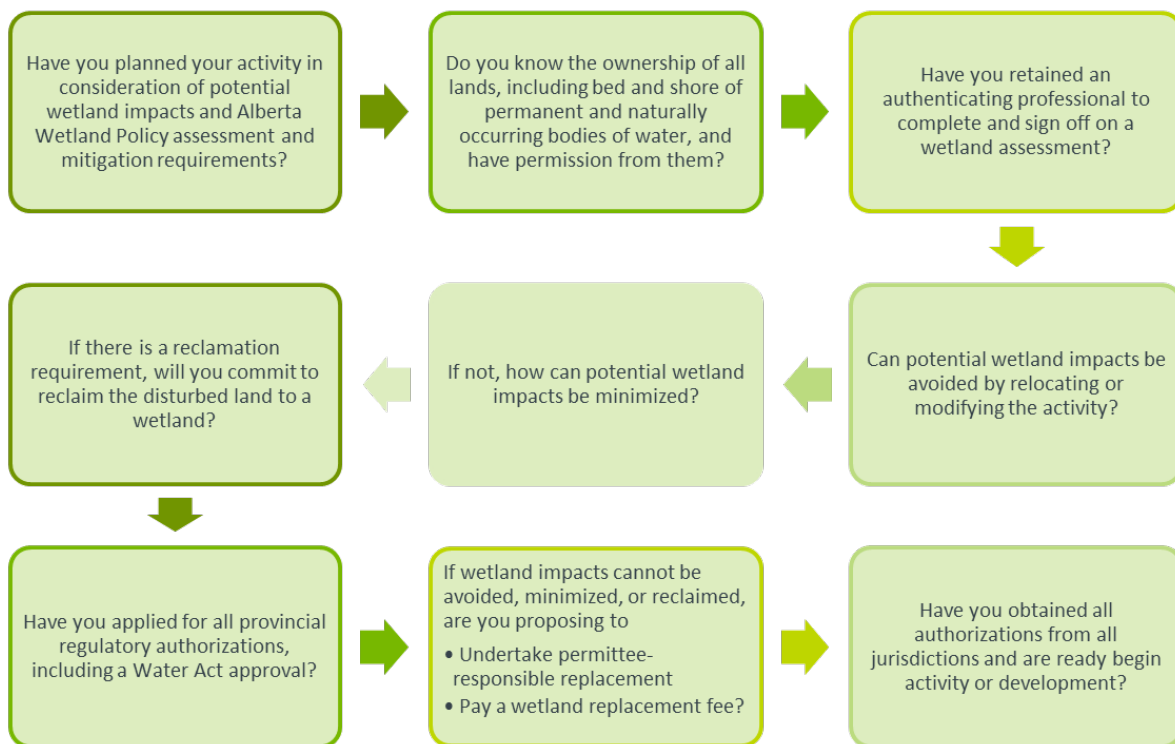


Wetland Application Checklist

Alberta Wetland Policy

This checklist is intended to assist Applicants with *Water Act* and *Public Lands Act* applications pertaining to wetland impacts, and to ensure complete and consistent application submissions.



Planning and Legislative Alignment

Preliminary Desktop Review

- Complete a preliminary desktop review to identify the presence, location and ecological extent of wetlands, according to the Alberta Wetland Identification and Delineation Directive.
- Obtain a preliminary (non-regulatory) estimate of relative wetland value (ABWRET-E) to assist with high level planning of wetland activities in the White Area of the province. This information can be accessed through:
 - [GeoDiscover Alberta](#)
- Consider how wetland avoidance can be achieved in the planning and design of the proposed activity.

Preliminary Ownership – Private

- Verify private ownership through the Land Title of lands involved.
- Obtain landowner's written consent:
 - (1) To perform the proposed activity if the land is privately owned
 - (2) If the proposed activity will affect a surrounding landowner

Preliminary Ownership – Public Land (Crown Ownership)

Section 3 of the *Public Lands Act* deems that ownership of the beds and shores of permanent and naturally occurring bodies of water belongs to the Government of Alberta.

The Guide for Assessing Permanence of Wetland Basins provides a standard methodology for assessing wetland permanence to support land ownership enquiries. Correspondence with the department's Water Boundaries technical experts must be attached to any application related to wetlands that may be permanent and naturally occurring bodies of water.

- Determine potential ownership of Public Lands wetlands identified in the preliminary ownership assessment using the Guide for Assessing Permanence of Wetland Basins.
- Submit the ownership enquiry with the preliminary assessment to the Water Boundaries Unit:
 - water.boundaries@gov.ab.ca
- Receive determination of public lands ownership from the Water Boundaries Unit.

Legislative Alignment

- Ensure legislative requirements identified in the Wetland Regulatory Requirements Guide have been met.
- Determine if wetland management objectives in the applicable Land-Use Framework Regional Plan (i.e. South Saskatchewan Regional Plan), sub-regional plan, or relevant watershed management plans have been met.
- Submit results of any applicable search enquiries, including but not limited to the following:
 - *Historical Resources Act*
 - Alberta Conservation Information Management System (ACIMS)
 - Fish and Wildlife Management Information System (FWMIS)
 - Landscape Analysis Tool (LAT)
 - The Disposition Spatial Processing Tool (DPST) which provides a central repository from which government, industry and the public can view surface activities
 - Special Areas Management System to identify restrictions, if the proposed development is within Special Areas 2, 3 and 4
- Complete a preliminary assessment to identify a duty to consult with First Nations regarding potential adverse impacts of a project on the exercise of treaty rights and traditional uses in accordance with Alberta's Policy on Consultation with First Nations on Land and Natural Resource Management, 2013.

Wetland Assessment

Applicants proposing an activity that will impact a wetland must submit a wetland assessment with their regulatory application. The activity and the proposed impacts to wetlands will determine the type of assessment:

- Wetland Assessment and Impact Form
- Wetland Assessment and Impact Report

Any wetland assessment submitted to the regulatory body must be authenticated by a qualified professional who meets the requirements outlined in the:

- Professional Responsibilities in the Completion and Assurance of Wetland Science, Design and Engineering Work in Alberta, or
- Transition Period Directive for Professional Responsibilities in the Completion and Assurance of Wetland Science, Design and Engineering Work in Alberta.

Wetland Assessment and Impact Form

The Alberta Wetland Assessment and Impact Form (WAIF) is used to support low risk activities in wetlands. See the WAIF for the list of eligible activities and detailed reporting requirements.

- Identify and delineate each wetland extent in accordance with one of the desktop pathways outlined in the Alberta Wetland Identification and Delineation Directive.
- Classify each wetland in accordance with the Alberta Wetland Classification System.
- Complete a relative wetland value assessment for each wetland using the Alberta Wetland Rapid Evaluation Tool – Desktop (ABWRET-D).
- Complete the WAIF and include all required attachments as outlined in the form.

Wetland Assessment and Impact Report

For the majority of activities that may impact a wetland, a qualified professional (or team) must prepare a Wetland Assessment and Impact Report (WAIR) for all wetlands that may be impacted. See the Alberta Wetland Assessment and Impact Report Directive checklist for detailed reporting requirements.

- Identify and delineate each wetland extent in accordance with the Alberta Wetland Identification and Delineation Directive.
- Classify each wetland in accordance with the Alberta Wetland Classification System.
- Complete a relative wetland value assessment for each wetland using the Alberta Wetland Rapid Evaluation Tool – Actual (ABWRET-A) guide and form.
- Complete all species and other surveys identified in the WAIR or as required by Alberta Fish and Wildlife.
- Provide a description of all anticipated impacts on wetlands.

Wetland Mitigation

Regulatory applicants are expected to demonstrate appropriate consideration for wetland avoidance and, where avoidance is not feasible, minimization of wetland impacts, in accordance with the Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive.

Key questions to ask when planning an activity that may impact a wetland:

1. Can the wetland impacts be avoided?

- In the Mitigation Proposal, outline rationale and evidence that a concerted effort has been made to avoid wetland impacts.

2. If avoidance isn't possible, how can wetland impacts be minimized?

Minimization is the second priority in the mitigation hierarchy when the applicant has demonstrated that avoidance is not possible.

- Submit a minimization proposal to document options considered to minimize impacts on wetlands.
- Submit mitigation measures to minimize impacts to hydrology, soils, vegetation and wildlife that utilize wetlands.

3. If there is a reclamation requirement, can a commitment be made to reclaim wetland area?

Applicants proposing wetland impacts can meet the Alberta Wetland Policy's requirements if the disturbed land is reclaimed to a wetland using appropriate reclamation techniques:

- Submit a wetland reclamation commitment and proposal
- Reference any relevant reclamation plan that aligns with the wetland replacement proposal

Important: evidence of wetland avoidance, minimization and replacement must be included in the Wetland Assessment and Impact Report or Form.

Wetland Replacement

Wetland replacement is required when wetland impacts that cannot be avoided, minimized, or reclaimed will result in permanent loss of wetland area.

- Provide a **Wetland Replacement Proposal** when the activity will result in permanent loss of wetland area. Applicants can fulfill their replacement obligations through any of the following options:
 - Undertake a wetland replacement project to restore a previously drained wetland or construct a new wetland. This option is called **permittee-responsible replacement**. The following documents support this replacement option:
 - Alberta Wetland Restoration Directive
 - Directive for Permittee-Responsible Wetland Construction in Alberta
 - Alberta Guide to Wetland Construction in Stormwater Facilities
 - Pay a **Wetland Replacement Fee** for the permanent loss of wetland area and relative wetland value

See the Alberta Wetland Replacement Fact Sheet for additional details.

Application Submission

See the Alberta Wetland Policy Implementation website for guidance on the application submission process.

Questions?

Questions related to activities within a wetland that are regulated by Alberta Environment and Parks can be submitted to:

- AEP.Wetlands@gov.ab.ca

Questions related to Alberta Energy Regulator regulated energy resource activities within a wetland, can be submitted to:

- Wetland.Reports@aer.ca