

Alberta Wetland Replacement Fact Sheet

What wetland replacement options are available?

The goal of the Alberta Wetland Policy is to conserve, restore, protect and manage Alberta's wetlands to sustain the benefits they provide to the environment, society and economy. Activities that may impact a wetland are expected to follow the mitigation hierarchy by first **avoiding**, and then **minimizing** and **reclaiming** impacts to wetlands.

As a last resort, and where avoidance and minimization efforts are not feasible or prove ineffective, wetland replacement is required using one 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**
- Pay a **wetland replacement fee** for the permanent loss of wetland area and relative wetland value

Figure 1 outlines the wetland mitigation hierarchy and wetland replacement options to either pay a wetland replacement fee or undertake permittee-responsible replacement.

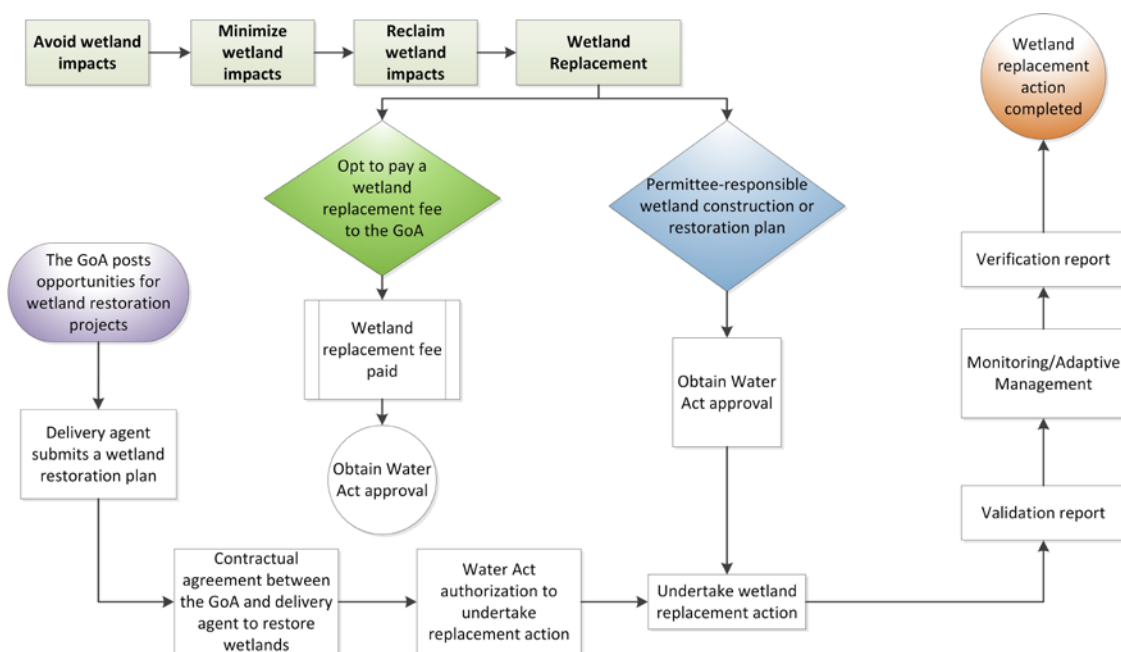


Figure 1. Overview of Wetland replacement options and wetland replacement options.

What is the updated wetland replacement fee process?

Under the interim wetland replacement process, wetland replacement fees were paid by the applicant directly to an authorized third-party wetland replacement agent (e.g., Ducks Unlimited Canada). Delivery agents allocated these funds for wetland restoration.

As of December 1, 2018, wetland replacement fees are paid to the Government of Alberta (GoA). The following bullets outline the minimal changes made to the regulatory application process for applicants opting to pay the wetland replacement fee (green diamond in Figure 1).

- The applicant follows the standard Water Act application process for wetland impacts regulated by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) or Alberta Energy Regulator (AER)
- If the regulatory body agrees in principle to the proposed permanent wetland impacts, they will direct the applicant to make a payment to the GoA
- The GoA reviews the wetland replacement fee information and sends a receipt of payment to the applicant

Wetland replacement fee payment methods

Option 1: Electronic Funds Transfer to:

Account Name: Province of Alberta, Environment Collector Account
Bank Name: CIBC
Institution Number: 0010
Transit Number: 00059
Account Number: 8632014

Option 2: Mail the completed Wetland Replacement Fee Form with the cheque payable to the "Government of Alberta" to:

Finance – Revenue
6th Floor, South Petroleum Plaza
9915 – 108 Street
Edmonton, AB, T5K 2G8

Payment Step 1. Make the wetland replacement fee payment as per one of the above options

Payment Step 2. Once the payment has been made, email the Excel-based Wetland Replacement Fee form (Do not send a scan) to AEP.Revenue@gov.ab.ca. Be sure to use the Water Act application number as the email subject line. If the applicant does not complete Step 2, AEP will be unable to issue a receipt.

What is the Wetland Restoration Program and how does it work?

The Wetland Restoration Program enables the GoA to collect wetland replacement fees and expend them on wetland restoration projects in priority areas (see purple box in Figure 1). Under contractual agreements with the GoA, delivery agents will execute wetland restoration projects in accordance with the Alberta Wetland Restoration Directive. The following steps outline the requirements for delivery agents to restore wetlands:

- AEP submits a call for proposals on the Alberta Government Purchasing Connection web page to restore wetlands in priority areas
- AEP reviews proposals and selects vendors to restore wetlands based on evaluation criteria

- A contractual agreement is formed between the delivery agent and AEP to restore wetlands
- The delivery agent submits a detailed wetland restoration plan to AEP
- The delivery agent submits a Water Act application to execute the restoration activity
- After obtaining all provincial authorizations, including a Water Act approval, the delivery agent completes the wetland restoration project
- The delivery agent submits a validation report demonstrating that the wetland was constructed according to the design plan
- The delivery agent completes four years of monitoring and submits a verification report demonstrating whether the wetland is on trajectory towards a healthy, functioning ecosystem
- After AEP reviews and accepts the verification report, the wetland replacement obligation is fulfilled

Why are these changes occurring?

This shift enables more delivery agents to participate in wetland restoration activities across a broader geographic area. This will enhance the GoA's ability to meet the Alberta Wetland Policy's outcomes and will ensure that wetland ecosystem services are restored in municipalities where wetlands have been lost or removed.

Centralizing the wetland replacement fees and providing additional guidance and standards puts greater accountability on authenticating professionals to ensure wetland replacement is successful. It also enables the GoA to monitor wetland progress, track the success of restored and constructed wetlands, and evaluate wetland policy outcomes.

What if I choose permittee-responsible wetland replacement?

The following steps outline the requirements to fulfill wetland replacement obligations by permittee-responsible replacement (see blue diamond in Figure 1):

- A Wetland Assessment and Impact Report or Form for the activity proposing to impact wetlands is submitted with a Water Act application. It includes a mitigation proposal demonstrating how wetland impacts will be avoided, minimized and reclaimed, as well as justification for permanent wetland impacts
- Once permanent impacts are reviewed, and the regulatory body agrees to the applicant's desire to complete a permittee-responsible wetland restoration or construction project, the applicant submits a detailed wetland restoration or construction plan
- All provincial authorizations, including a Water Act approval, are obtained (at this point, the applicant becomes an approval holder)
- The approval holder completes the wetland construction or restoration project
- The approval holder submits a validation report demonstrating that the wetland was constructed according to the design plan
- The approval holder completes four years of monitoring and submits a verification report demonstrating whether the wetland is on trajectory towards a healthy, functioning ecosystem
- After the regulatory body reviews and accepts the verification report, the wetland replacement obligation is fulfilled

Reference documents

The GoA has released the following guidance and policy documents on wetland construction and restoration:

- Directive for Permittee-Responsible Wetland Construction in Alberta
- Alberta Guide for Wetland Constuction in Stormwater Facilities
- Alberta Wetland Restoration Directive

These documents provide guidance and reporting requirements for offsetting wetland impacts by either creating new wetland habitat or by restoring previously drained wetlands. Other types of wetland restoration and construction will be released in the future as part of continuous implementation of the Alberta Wetland Policy.

Additional reference documents:

- Alberta Wetland Assessment and Impact Form
- Alberta Wetland Assessment and Impact Report Directive
- Alberta Wetland Mitigation Directive
- Professional Responsibilities in Completion and Assurance of Wetland Science, Design, and Engineering Work in Alberta

Questions related to this fact sheet can be submitted to:

- AEP.wetlands@gov.ab.ca