

Read the **[plan to safely reopen Ontario \(https://covid-19.ontario.ca/plan-safely-reopen-ontario-and-manage-covid-19-long-term\)](https://covid-19.ontario.ca/plan-safely-reopen-ontario-and-manage-covid-19-long-term)** and continue to follow the **[restrictions and public health measures \(https://covid-19.ontario.ca/public-health-measures\)](https://covid-19.ontario.ca/public-health-measures)**.

Wetlands evaluation

Learn about the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System and how you can become an evaluator.

Wetland Evaluation System

The wetland evaluation system was created to inform Ontario's land use planning process.

We evaluate wetlands to help municipalities, conservation authorities and others with land use planning. We also provide manuals describing how wetlands are evaluated and offer annual training for professionals wishing to become qualified wetland evaluators.

Who uses the system

The Wetland Evaluation System is used primarily by:

- municipal governments as part of the planning process
- the Ontario government to develop and implement policy, legislation and incentive and stewardship programs
- conservation authorities that regulate wetlands under the Conservation Authorities Act
- conservation organizations

Evaluation process

The wetland evaluation process defines, identifies and measures wetland functions and values.

Wetlands are assessed based on their perceived values in maintaining natural processes (ecosystem values). They are also assessed on the benefits provided to society (human utility values).

Ecosystem values

Ecosystem values include:

- groundwater storage and release
- provision of habitat for wildlife species, including species at risk
- ecosystem productivity and biological diversity

Human utility values

Human utility values include:

- flood damage prevention
- harvestable product provision
- improved water quality
- recreational opportunities

The system ranks wetlands relative to one another.

Wetlands can only be evaluated by trained evaluators. The evaluations, along with the evaluators course completion certificate, must be submitted to the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry for review and approval.

Manuals and guides

These manuals are technical guidance documents that use scientific criteria to quantify wetland values and allow comparisons among wetlands.

The manuals provide the “evaluation procedures” referred to in the Provincial Policy Statement. They are used to determine wetland significance under Section 2.1 of that document. Great Lakes coastal wetlands are evaluated using these manuals.

There are 2 evaluation manuals, each used for different regions:

- the Southern Ontario Wetland Evaluation System manual is used for all wetlands located in Ecoregions 6 and 7.
- the Northern Ontario Wetland Evaluation System manual is used for all wetlands located in Ecoregions 2, 3, 4 and 5.

[Ontario Wetland Evaluation System Southern Manual](#)

<https://files.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/parks-and-protected-areas/ontario-wetland-evaluation-system-southern-manual-2014.pdf>

[Ontario Wetland Evaluation System Northern Manual](#)

<https://files.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/parks-and-protected-areas/ontario-wetland-evaluation-system-northern-manual-2014.pdf>

[Ontario Wetland Evaluation System Manuals Executive Summary \(/document/executive-summary-ontario-wetland-evaluation-system\)](#)

Find a wetland evaluator

To find a qualified wetland evaluator that successfully completed the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System Course:

1. Conduct your own web search for consulting companies that do wetland evaluations or
2. Please visit the [Wetland Evaluators List](#) (<https://learningcompass.learnflex.net/Upload/Public/WetlandEvaluatorsPublicList.mht>). These evaluators have agreed to share their contact information through this website.

Become qualified to evaluate wetlands

To become a qualified wetland evaluator in Ontario, you must:

1. take an Ontario Wetland Evaluation System course
2. pass an exam

We deliver the courses or authorize someone else to teach you.

Who can take the course

This course is required if you conduct wetland evaluations (for example, conservation authorities, municipalities, wetlands consultants, environmental groups, Ontario Public Service).

While the course is open to anyone, due its technical nature, it's best if you have specialized skills and understand technical information about:

- wetland ecology
- wetland functions
- plant identification
- the use of field guides and keys
- geographic information systems

The course is only available in English.

What the course covers

The course covers:

- how to evaluate wetlands and determine their provincial significance
- the southern and northern manual

How to register

There's a waiting list to register for the OWES course.

To get on the waiting list:

1. log in or create an account on the [Learning Compass](https://learningcompass.learnflex.net/include/login.asp?url=/users/index.asp) (<https://learningcompass.learnflex.net/include/login.asp?url=/users/index.asp>) website
2. select "Wetland Courses"
3. select "OWES Certificate Course"

Courses are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. You'll get an email when there's a spot available for you.

The course registration fee is \$2000 (not including accommodations).

If you have any questions about registration, or upcoming courses, please see the [Nipissing University webpage \(https://owes.nipissingu.ca/\)](https://owes.nipissingu.ca/), or contact:

Dr. Dave Hackett

Nipissing University

Email: daveh@nipissingu.ca (<mailto:daveh@nipissingu.ca>)

For more information

To find out about a specific evaluated wetland, contact your local [Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry \(/page/ministry-northern-development-mines-natural-resources-and-forestry-regional-and-district-offices\)](/page/ministry-northern-development-mines-natural-resources-and-forestry-regional-and-district-offices) office.

For digital mapping information, visit Land Information Ontario's [Metadata Management Tool \(https://www.javacoeapp.lrc.gov.on.ca/geonetwork/srv/en/main.home\)](https://www.javacoeapp.lrc.gov.on.ca/geonetwork/srv/en/main.home) and search for the "Wetland" data class, or navigate to Ontario's [Make a Natural Heritage Map \(/page/make-natural-heritage-area-map\)](/page/make-natural-heritage-area-map) web application.

Updated: November 24, 2021

Published: October 19, 2021

Related

[Wetland Conservation \(/page/wetland-conservation\)](/page/wetland-conservation)

[about Ontario \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/about-ontario\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/about-ontario).

[accessibility \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility).

[news \(http://news.ontario.ca/newsroom/en\)](http://news.ontario.ca/newsroom/en).

[privacy \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/privacy-statement\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/privacy-statement).

[terms of use \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/terms-use\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/terms-use).

[© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2012–21 \(https://www.ontario.ca/page/copyright-information-c-queens-printer-ontario\)](https://www.ontario.ca/page/copyright-information-c-queens-printer-ontario).