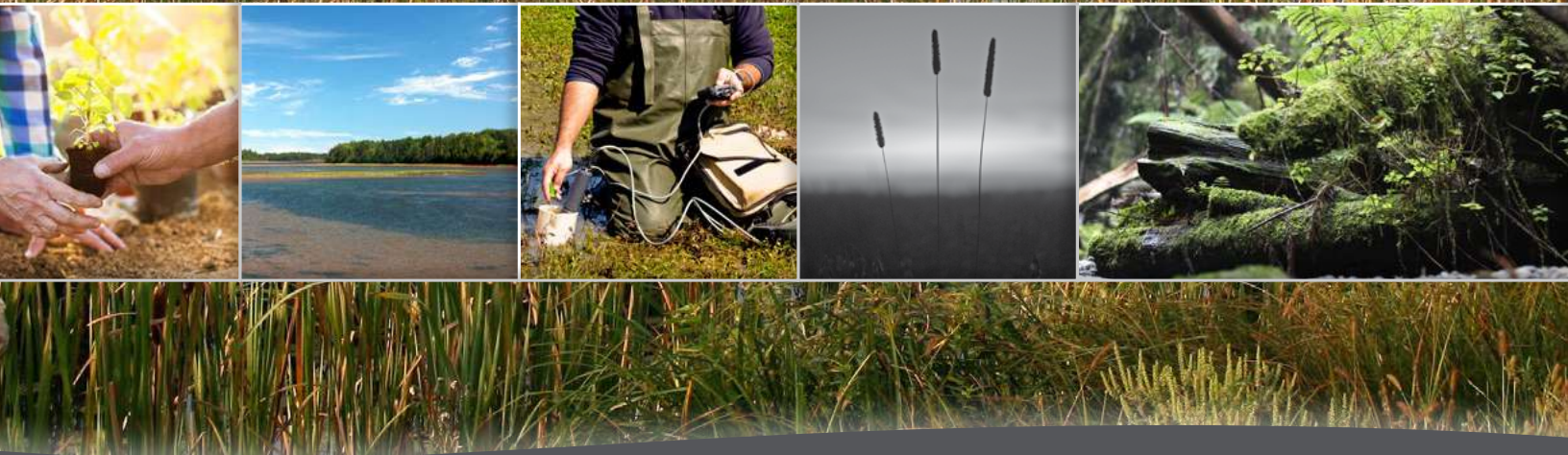
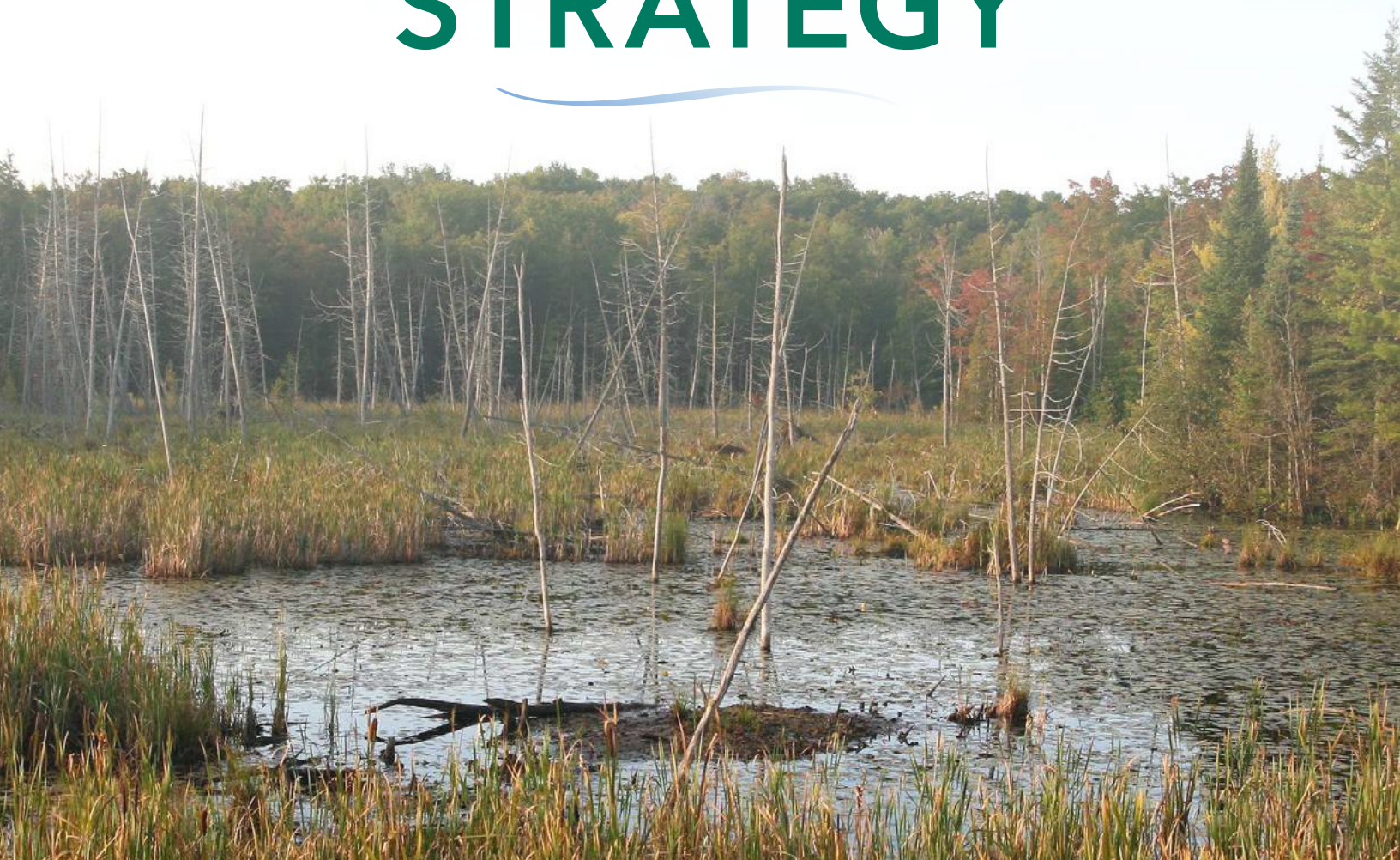


PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

WATERSHED STRATEGY



June 2015

Prince Edward Island Watershed Strategy

June 2015



Communities,
Land and
Environment

Communautés,
Terres et
Environnement



Office of the Minister

PO Box 2000, Charlottetown
Prince Edward Island
Canada C1A 7N8

Bureau du ministre

C.P. 2000, Charlottetown
Île-du-Prince-Édouard
Canada C1A 7N8

Message from the Minister

Community-based watershed planning has shown to be a highly effective approach to protecting our precious environmental resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

All of us have a role in watershed protection. Some set standards for land use and water protection, some uphold laws and regulations, some work to raise awareness and some plan and execute improvement projects.

The PEI Watershed Strategy represents the collaborative efforts of PEI watershed groups, the PEI Watershed Alliance and government. The strategy sets out 27 strategies intended to focus on partnerships and activities to improve our environment. The strategies are based on five goals:

Goal 1: Ensure that watersheds provide sustainable quantities of clean, safe water.

Goal 2: Enhance watershed ecosystems to support healthy, diverse communities of plants and animals.

Goal 3: Increase the capacity of individuals, organizations, and industries to take responsibility for protecting and managing watershed ecosystems using environmentally sustainable practices.

Goal 4: Enhance partnerships so that individuals, communities, businesses and governments will be empowered and fully engaged in watershed management.

Goal 5: Increase public awareness of the impact of the behaviours of individuals and groups on watershed ecosystems.

Government, the PEI Watershed Alliance and watershed groups have a role to play in watershed enhancement. Through active cooperation and collaboration, I am confident that we can together achieve the goal of a healthy and sustainable environment. The goals contained within the PEI Watershed Strategy will go far towards a healthy, sustainable environment.

Robert Mitchell
Minister



Fellow Islanders:

The Prince Edward Island Watershed Strategy is the product of a partnership between the Island's watershed management organizations and provincial government. The Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance contributed to the strategy's development as a representative of its member groups who, in turn, represent the will of their local community members. This strategy and its stewardship belong to every Islander. We will share both the pride of our accomplishments and the inevitable setbacks that accompany complex and difficult jobs.

Our Board of Directors is very pleased with this strategy. It presents our collective responsibilities using *will* and *shall* language to ensure that meaningful watershed improvement and protection take place. A most important and exciting part of the strategy appears in the section *Moving Forward*, which presents our tasks as *things we will do* and thus constitutes a promise of action. To keep our promise, we must –forthwith and in earnest – implement this strategy.

We must also continue to be supporting partners, committing the resources, expertise, and effort commensurate with the gravity of the problems we seek to correct. Many qualified study groups have capably examined our environmental/watershed problems and documented explicit recommendations for their resolution. Solving these problems is not simply government's responsibility. It requires active participation of groups and individuals within the entire watershed management community. With this strategy, we will implement solutions.

Join us as we roll up our sleeves and work to keep our promise.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dale Cameron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

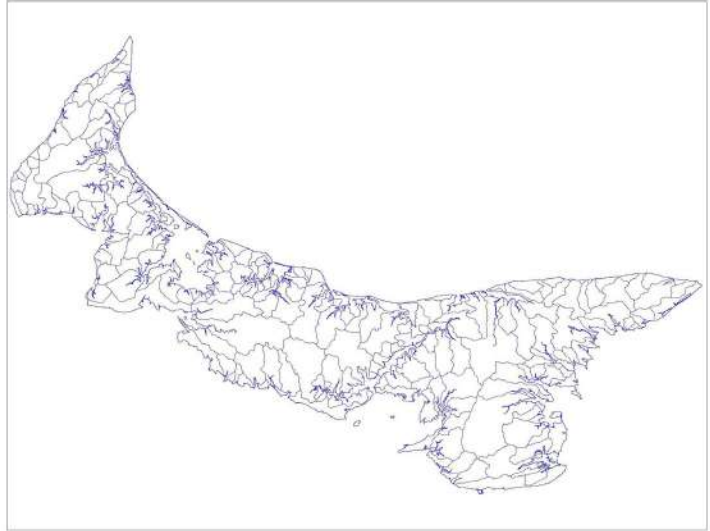
Dale Cameron, Chairperson
Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance, Inc.
June, 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	4
PEI WATERSHED STRATEGY.....	6
VISION STATEMENT:.....	6
GOAL ONE.....	6
GOAL TWO.....	7
GOAL THREE	8
GOAL FOUR	8
GOAL FIVE	9
MOVING FORWARD.....	10
APPENDIX A – Time Line of PEI Watershed Management	12
APPENDIX B - PEI Watershed Groups	13
APPENDIX C – Publication Weblinks	14

INTRODUCTION

Watersheds have long been important to the people of PEI. In 2006, the Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry published '*A Guide to Watershed Planning on Prince Edward Island*'¹ which provided step by step instructions for how watershed groups could initiate a watershed planning process. The publication of this guide coincided with a change in focus for the provincial Watershed Management Program, from an emphasis on stream enhancement to holistic community-based watershed planning. Watershed planning, however, is not new to PEI watersheds as several groups have embarked on planning activities in the past. For example, the Morell conservation zone was established by the Morell and



1 - Boundaries of PEI Watersheds

Area Land Use Steering Committee in the early 1970's. Appendix A includes a time line for watershed management on PEI. The above noted guide also provides a more detailed history of watershed management on PEI.

The change in focus of the Watershed Management Program included the move towards creating individual community based watershed management plans for watersheds across the province. The responsibility to create and implement these plans was the local watershed group. Many watershed groups embarked on this process.

Successful watershed management and planning is a community-based initiative dedicated to the protection and enhancement of natural resources, particularly water quality. In order to build community support for both the process and the final management plan, the planning process was an all-inclusive, community-driven

¹ *A Guide to Watershed Planning on Prince Edward Island* (2006) PEI Department of Environment, Energy, and Forestry. http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/eef_waterguide.pdf

enterprise designed to deal with the issues and problems in each watershed. As watershed groups focused on watershed planning across PEI, it became apparent that there was a need for an overall watershed management strategy for Prince Edward Island.

This thought evolved into a plan to create a joint strategy document that would provide guidance and cooperative opportunities between partners concerned with watershed management on PEI. The partners consist of the PEI government, represented by the PEI Department of Communities, Land and Environment, and PEI watershed groups, represented by the PEI Watershed Alliance.² Appendix B shows the current boundaries of the 25 PEI Watershed groups.

The proposed strategy document was seen as an important step towards creating a path forward for all involved in watershed management. The strategy would provide opportunities to work on cooperative projects that would lead to environmental benefits and assist the partners in their work within watersheds.

The creation of the strategy is also consistent with several recent government publications which at least partly relate to watershed management issues. For example, one of the recommendations from the *Rural Action Plan - A Rural Economic Development Strategy for Prince Edward Island* was “The government should continue work with the community-based Watershed Groups to develop a long-term plan for the development of the Provincial Watershed Program”. The development of this strategy document falls directly in line with that recommendation.

There are also countless recommendations from other related reports which provided guidance towards the need and creation of this watershed strategy, such as the following reports:

- We are all downstream, We are all upstream, We are all part of a watershed: A Report on the Public Consultations on Managing Land and Water on a Watershed Basis

² Prince Edward Island Watershed Alliance <http://peiwatershedalliance.org/>

- The Report of the Commission on Nitrates in Groundwater
- New Foundations - Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance

Appendix C provides the web links for the reports mentioned above.

The current planning process has been specifically designed to be transparent and open to participation by key stakeholders. A vision statement, guiding principles and a series of goals and strategies were developed following a series of meetings and focus group discussions held in the winter of 2010. These included:

- a facilitated session with Island watershed groups;
- several regional watershed group sessions; and
- a session with other government departments

A five member committee from the Alliance worked with Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry staff to create this strategy document which will provide government and watershed groups with a “roadmap” for the future direction of watershed management on Prince Edward Island.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A series of guiding principles were followed by the parties involved in the planning process during the development of the watershed management and planning initiatives.

The following guiding principles were used throughout the process, and are meant to be utilized during the implementation of the strategies:

- The watershed strategy document was considered a collaborative effort between the provincial government and the Alliance, which represented all watershed groups on Prince Edward Island.
- The Alliance and provincial government were considered equal partners in the process.
- Consensus based decision making was used throughout.
- Strategies were designed to be:
 - Specific
 - Innovative
 - Measurable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Time sensitive
 - Short term strategies to be implemented within 0 – 5 years
 - Long term strategies to be implemented in 5 years and over
 - Actionable, and have
 - Wide-ranging impact

This document is not intended to replace or negate any previous recommendations that have been put forth by other works that will be beneficial to our environment, rather it is intended to be a guide for all participants to move toward more sustainable practices. It is not an end goal, and should be revised as new challenges are presented and goals achieved.

In all cases, participants should strive for the best management practices as borne out by good science, the precautionary principle, and a desire to protect our environment. Any further work towards an Island wide plan must be a cooperative and respectful effort among stakeholders, via equal opportunities for representation and open communication.

One of the main expectations is that the stakeholders will be active in implementing this plan. While it is recognized that some compromises must be made in achieving the goals set out here, the intent of the plan must be preserved – that our watershed environment is a priority issue and needs to be protected.

PEI WATERSHED STRATEGY

VISION STATEMENT:

We are a partnership of informed, empowered and engaged individuals, communities, businesses and government agencies, who together are responsible for conserving and restoring Prince Edward Island's watersheds.

GOAL ONE

Ensure that watersheds provide sustainable quantities of clean, safe water.

Short-term Strategies (0-5 years)

1. Watershed groups will be proactive in assessing and documenting water quality and quantity issues.
2. The Department of Communities, Land and Environment will improve its water monitoring programs to align with and support watershed group initiatives.
3. The Department of Communities, Land and Environment and watershed groups will work together to promote practices to improve water quality.
4. The Department of Communities, Land and Environment and watershed groups will work together to encourage water conservation.
5. The Department of Communities, Land and Environment and watershed groups will work together to provide regular public reporting of local and provincial water quality and quantity.

Long-term Strategies (5+ years)

1. The Department of Communities, Land and Environment will develop a program to track contaminants in water.
2. The Department of Communities, Land and Environment will continue to stimulate research into the impacts of water extraction on fish and wildlife, and water resources.

GOAL TWO

Enhance watershed ecosystems to support healthy, diverse communities of plants and animals.

Short-term Strategies

- 1. The Alliance, the Department of Communities, Land and Environment, and non-government organizations will collaborate to describe and set targets for healthy communities of plants and animals.**
- 2. Watershed groups will actively work to restore damaged and degraded watershed ecosystems as identified in their watershed planning process.**
- 3. The Alliance will work with the Department of Communities, Land and Environment to promote ecological forestry practices and sustainable agriculture.**
- 4. Watershed groups will identify sites with sedimentation issues and work with the landowners, developers and appropriate government department(s) to correct these problems.**
- 5. The Alliance and Department of Communities, Land and Environment will collaborate to designate sensitive areas and determine the appropriate management techniques, for land under both public and private ownership.**

Long-term Strategies

- 1. The Alliance and the Department of Communities, Land and Environment will review environmental programs used to protect watersheds in other jurisdictions which could be applicable to Prince Edward Island.**
- 2. The Alliance, and the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries, and Communities, Land and Environment will collaborate to promote the uptake of sustainable practices in the aquaculture industry and freshwater fishery.**

GOAL THREE

Increase the capacity of individuals, organizations, and industries to take responsibility for protecting and managing watershed ecosystems using environmentally sustainable practices.

Short-term Strategies:

- 1. The Alliance and the Departments of Communities, Land and Environment and Agriculture and Fisheries will work with land owners and farm groups to promote the use and development of best management practices and nutrient management plans to protect watersheds and associated water courses.**
- 2. The Departments of Communities, Land and Environment, Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy, and Economic Development and Tourism will provide opportunities for watershed groups to co-manage public lands.**

GOAL FOUR

Enhance partnerships so that individuals, communities, businesses and governments will be empowered and fully engaged in watershed management.

Short-term Strategies

- 1. The Alliance and the Department of Communities, Land and Environment will establish standards for community-based watershed planning processes and watershed plans to ensure consistency, sector representation and community involvement.**
- 2. The Department of Communities, Land and Environment will provide watershed groups on Prince Edward Island with stable and adequate multi-year funding, through a transparent funding process.**
- 3. The Alliance and the Department of Communities, Land and Environment will investigate ways to provide sufficient technical expertise to watershed groups for their watershed management activities.**
- 4. Government³ and the Alliance will explore opportunities for the Alliance to participate in environmental advisory or sector-specific boards or committees.**

³ In strategies where “government” is listed as the lead organization, the Department of Communities, Land and Environment will act as the lead to engage other government departments as necessary.

5. **The Department of Communities, Land and Environment will coordinate with other government departments to inform and educate watershed groups and other interested groups in matters relating to environmental law and its regulation.**
6. **Government and the Alliance will collaborate with academic research bodies to develop research programs relevant to watersheds.**
7. **Government and the Alliance will collaborate to improve communication within and between government departments and watershed groups.**

Long-term Strategies

1. **The Alliance and Government will work together to ensure that all watersheds in Prince Edward Island are managed by high capacity, community-based watershed groups.**

GOAL FIVE

Increase public awareness of the impact of behaviours of individuals and groups on watershed ecosystems.

Short-term Strategies

1. **The Department of Communities, Land and Environment and the Alliance will collaborate with government departments and watershed groups to deliver information sessions to increase public awareness and understanding of watershed issues.**
2. **The Department of Communities, Land and Environment will provide watershed groups with information on the predicted effects of climate change in watersheds and estuaries.**
3. **The Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture and other appropriate departments will continue to develop and promote the integration of watershed-based, environmental learning in the public school system, focusing on Prince Edward Island-specific issues.**

MOVING FORWARD

The next steps in the strategic planning process are as follows:

1. Prepare a work plan for a selected strategy, to be used as a guide for the development of further work plans.
2. Strategy prioritization - As each strategy can involve more than one partner, each partner will need to prioritize their own strategies accordingly. Collaborative strategies will need to be prioritized jointly.
3. Create specific work plans for each of the outlined strategies.
4. Implement work plans.
5. Monitor and report upon the results of any work completed in support of the strategies.
6. Review the Prince Edward Island Watershed Strategy after five years and revise as necessary.

Signed by the joint partners of the Strategy



**Robert Mitchell, Minister of Communities,
Land and Environment**

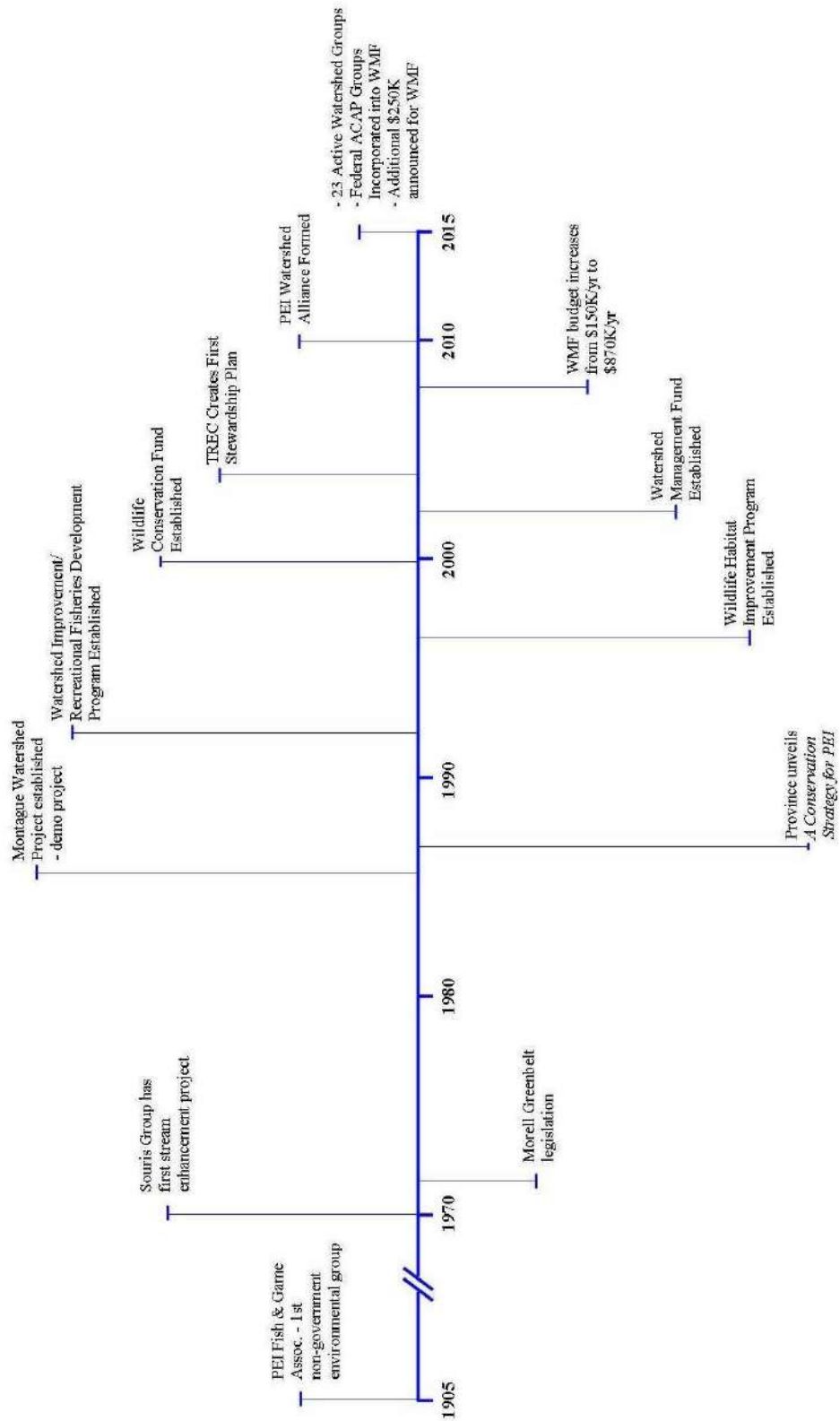
June 16, 2015
Date



**Dale Cameron, Chair, PEI Watershed
Alliance**

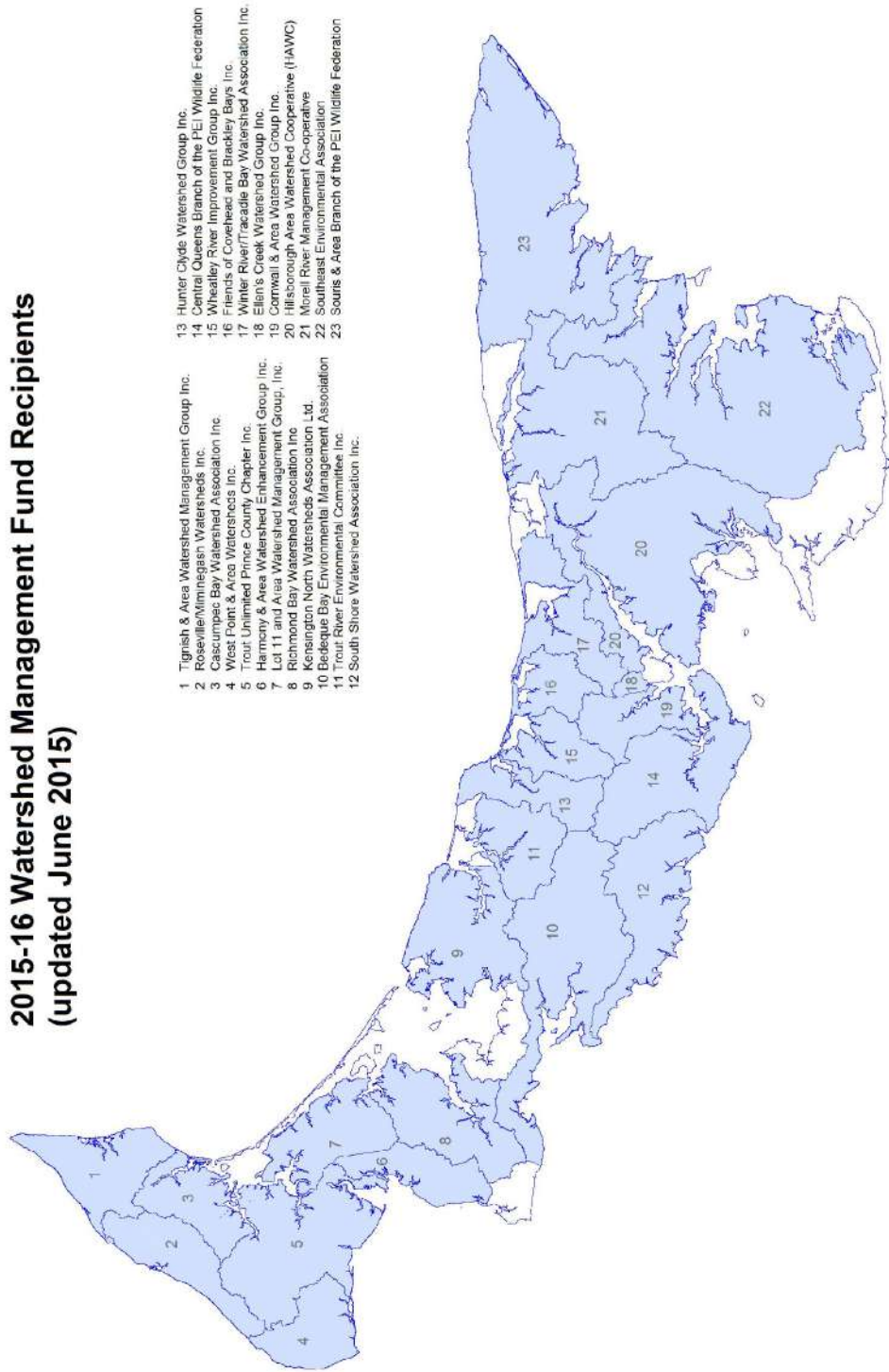
June 16, 2015
Date

APPENDIX A – Time Line of PEI Watershed Management



APPENDIX B - PEI Watershed Groups

2015-16 Watershed Management Fund Recipients (updated June 2015)

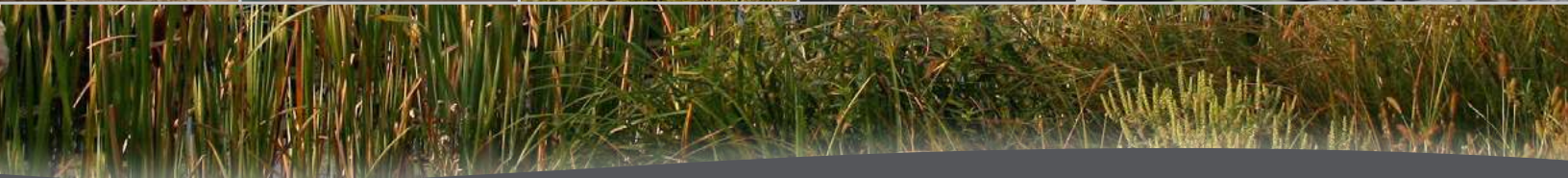
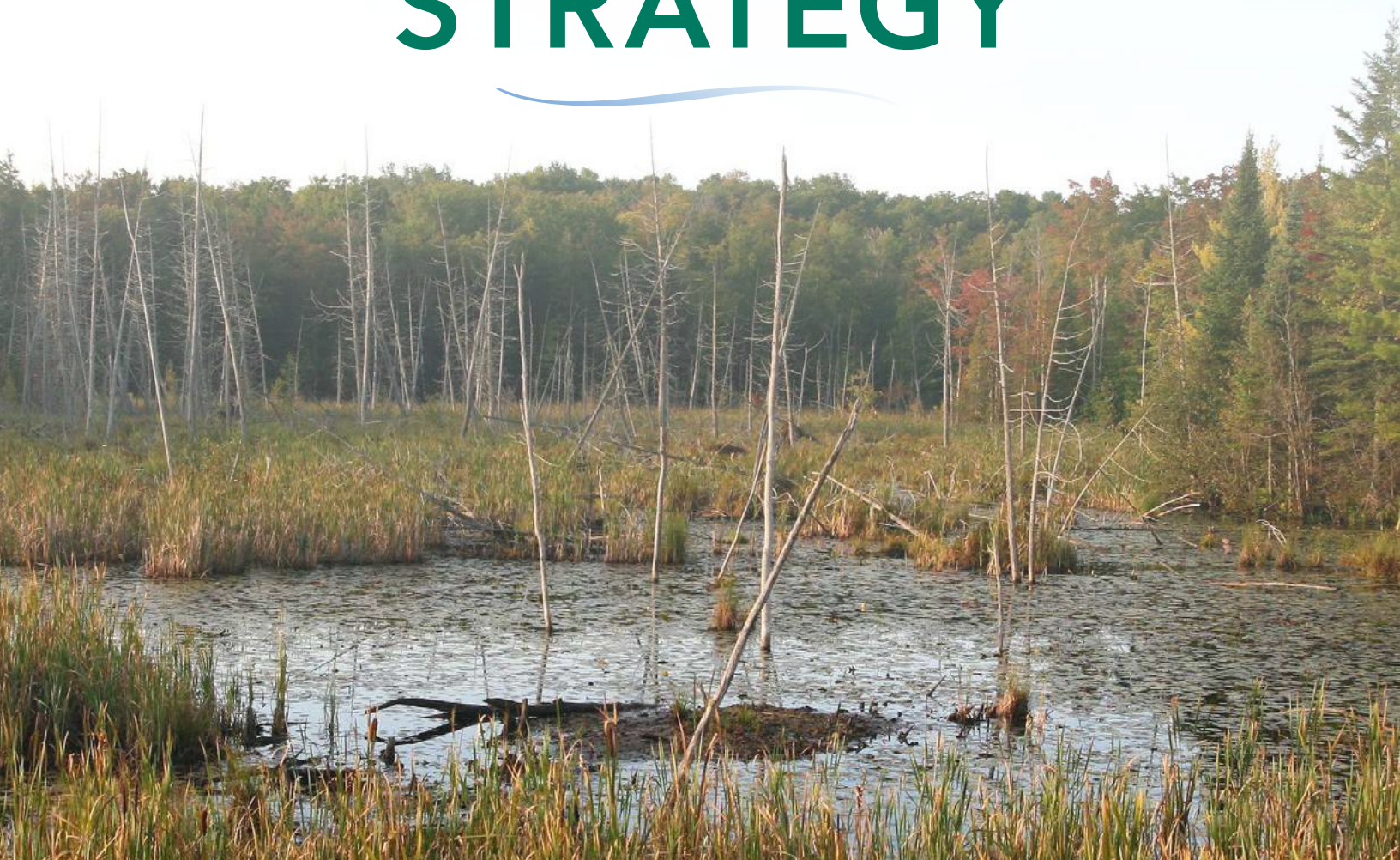


APPENDIX C – Publication Web Links

- 1. Rural Action Plan - A Rural Economic Development Strategy for Prince Edward Island**
http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/FARD_REDS.pdf
- 2. We are all downstream, We are all upstream, We are all part of a watershed: A Report on the Public Consultations on Managing Land and Water on a watershed Basis**
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/watershedreport.pdf>
- 3. The Report of the Commission on Nitrates in Groundwater**
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/cofNitrates.pdf>
- 4. New Foundations - Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance**
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/ReportEng.pdf>
- 5. Technical Manual for Watershed Management on Prince Edward Island**
http://peiwatershedalliance.org/web/?page_id=323

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

WATERSHED STRATEGY



June 2015