



PEI Watershed Alliance's submission to the Land Matters PEI online survey

Summer 2020

6. Do you believe that there are issues with current land -related legislation and/or policy?

YES

7. If yes, please identify these issues

PEI's environmental health is being compromised by our current land- use, legislation and policy.

Farms are getting larger, forests are being lost, habitats are being destroyed and fragmented, and water resources are being compromised.

There are loop-holes which means larger corporations or holding companies can hold or manage more land than outlined in the Acts.

8. What are your top three priorities for land-related legislation and/or policy?

Priority #1: *Protection of our water resources*

Priority #2: *Stop converting forests to agriculture and/or development*

Priority #3: *Encourage sustainable agriculture and development practices across PEI*

9. For your chosen priority #1, what three key actions do you feel are most important to move this priority forward?

1) *Provide increased buffer zones for riparian and environmentally significant areas (e.g., 60 m buffer zone)*

2) *Determine important groundwater recharge/discharge areas and protect these from development and land-use pressures, enact the Water Act*

3) *Involve watershed groups and watershed management plans in land-use planning process*

10. For your chosen priority #2, what three key actions do you feel are most important to move this priority forward?

- 1) *Protect and restore old-growth mixed stand Acadian forest on PEI. These forests provide numerous ecological services including: carbon storage sequestration, habitat for wildlife, water and air filtration, soil building, and spiritual connection for PEI residents. Ecologically, old field white spruce stands are not equivalent to deciduous mixed stand Acadian Forest.*
- 2) *Ensure connectivity between forest stands and reduce habitat fragmentation. Plan development to use existing roads and discourage activities that divide existing forested areas.*
- 3) *Encourage re-planting and re-forestation using a mix of native Acadian species. Encourage habitat rehabilitation of existing forests to improve habitat resiliency.*

11. For your chosen priority #3, what three key actions do you feel are most important to move this priority forward?

- 1) *Enact policies and programs to encourage mixed crop farms and discourage intensive mono-cropping operations.*
- 2) *Include a climate change lens on all policies, programs and actions*
- 3) *Include more transparency about land-holdings as outlined in the Carver Report.*

12. Why did you identify these priorities?

The environmental health of our island is threatened. PEI ecological issues include (but are not limited to): decreased amounts of forested landscape, poor water quality in streams and groundwater, decreased amounts of groundwater, sedimentation of watercourses, decreased soil quality, loss and fragmentation of important wildlife habitat areas, damaged environmentally sensitive areas, loss of native biodiversity, anoxic estuaries, and significant coastal erosion.

We are connected to our ecosystems and environmental issues put a strain on the entire PEI population and economy. Farmers are under pressure to increase yields often causing immense strain on rural economies and local environments. Farms and fields are getting bigger.

Climate Change is further complicating these issues. We need to be pro-active in our land-use decisions as healthy environments are the most resilient to climate change impacts.

13. Do you have any other comments or input you would like to provide with respect to land-related legislation and/or policy?

Watershed groups are intrinsically linked to their management areas, they work with local stakeholders to find solutions to environmental issues. If we deal with the priorities we listed, we will help our watershed groups achieve their goals and ultimately improve PEI's overall

ecological health. Watershed groups should be active participants in the land-use planning and management.

PEI Watershed Alliance

P.O. Box 701, Souris, PE. C0A 2B0
Peiwatershedalliance@gmail.com
[www. Peiwatershedalliance.org](http://www.Peiwatershedalliance.org)