

Please call 1-800-565-2224 or
the Halifax Regional Police or RCMP detachment at
902-490-5020
to report illegal activities in our watershed areas.

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Lake Major Watershed Newsletter

To learn more about Halifax Water's
Source Water Protection Program please visit:
halifaxwater.ca/protected-water-areas or call our
Customer Care Centre at 902-420-9287.

Summer 2024

Update: Protected Water Area Regulation Review



As described in the last 3 issues of the Lake Major Newsletter found here: [Summer 2022](#), [Winter 2023](#), and [Summer 2023](#), the *Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area (PWA)* Regulations underwent a public review process between 2021 and 2023.

Halifax Water submitted the proposed *PWA* regulation changes to the provincial Department of Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (ECC) in July 2023. ECC has since distributed them to the applicable provincial agencies for further review. Please note, while the proposed new regulations are being reviewed, the current Regulations have not changed and are **still in force** (see existing regulations at <https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/envpwlmr.htm>).

The rest of this newsletter issue describes where and what other regulations apply in the *PWA*.

Protecting Source Water Supplies

All land and water activity within any watershed area affects water quality to some degree. It all comes down to water. Through the [Environment Act](#), the province is responsible for regulating watershed activities to protect drinking water supply sources from impacts presented to a water utility's source water supply, before the water enters the plant, is treated and distributed to customers.

There are three designated protected water areas (*PWAs*) that Halifax Water is responsible for managing; they include the lands, lakes and watercourses around Lake Major, Bennery Lake and Pockwock Lake. Lake Lemont, the emergency back-up for the Lake Major water supply, located next to the Lake Major watershed area and depicted by the orange boundary on the Map on the back of this newsletter is also a managed watershed area.

Further, section 25 of the [Halifax Regional Water Commission Act](#) (*HRWCA*) provides additional protective measures to these and the 8 other drinking water supply areas managed by Halifax Water.

The Lake Major watershed area, depicted by the red boundary on the Map, covers 6944 ha. It was Designated as the *Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area (PWA)* by the Province of Nova Scotia on April 8, 1986. The water within this Designated area drains into Lake Major, the primary drinking water supply source for the communities of North

Preston, Westphal, Dartmouth, Eastern Passage and Cole Harbour, among other communities. This Designation authorizes the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (ECC), through the [Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area \(PWA\) Regulations](#) under the *Environment Act*, to regulate any activity that may impair water quality. Halifax Water is responsible for managing enforcement of the *PWA* and *HRWCA* regulations.

Other Regulations in PWA

There are many other provincial acts and legislation, some with their own set of regulations, that apply within the *PWA*. The *Waverley-Salmon River Long Lake Wilderness Area* and the *Waverley Game Sanctuary* (together depicted by the crosshatched area on the Map and described in more detail on the next page) are designated areas with specific regulations attached to each of them. These regulations have significant influence on what activities are permitted or not in the *PWA*, besides what is stated in the *Lake Major Watershed PWA* Regulations.

The total area of the [Waverley-Salmon River Long Lake Wilderness Area](#) (*Wilderness Area*) is 8663.25 ha, of which 2448.2 ha covers 35% of the Lake Major Watershed *PWA* (including surface water). This area is regulated through the [Wilderness Areas Protection Act](#) (*WAPA*) and managed by ECC.

The total area of the [Waverley Game Sanctuary](#) (*Game Sanctuary*) is 5232.33 ha, of which 2530 ha covers 36% of the *PWA* (including surface water). This area is regulated through the [Wildlife Act](#) and enforced by the NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR).

Which Regulations Apply Where?

Where the Game Sanctuary and *Wilderness Area* overlap with the *PWA*, so do all of their regulations. This causes confusion as to which regulations apply where in the *PWA*. To help clarify which regulations apply where, the key thing to remember is that where there is overlap between regulations or any other enactment, the most stringent applies.

With respect to recreational activities in the *PWA*, Table 1, in conjunction with the Map, helps to sort out which regulation applies in a given area. For example, where only the *Wilderness Area* overlaps the *PWA*, hunting is permitted; however, within the Waverley Game Sanctuary (inside or outside the *PWA*) hunting is **not** permitted per the regulations found at <https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/wiwavley.htm>. Therefore, wherever the Game Sanctuary lies, including where it overlaps with the *PWA* and/or the *Wilderness Area* (indicated on the Map by the right leaning diagonal line **and** cross hatched areas), no hunting is permitted. Everywhere else in the *PWA*, hunting is permitted. Anywhere hunting (and fishing) are permitted, a license is required and all applicable regulations, seasons and bag limits must be adhered to per [Department of Natural Resources and Renewable \(DNRR\) regulations](#).

Boating is a more complicated example: in Table 1, in the row labelled “canoes, kayaks (or any other vessel)” regulations vary widely depending on where you are in the *PWA* and what size boat motor you have. In the *Wilderness Area*, motorized boats are not permitted without a permit; otherwise, boating is restricted to canoes, kayaks and row boats in the *Wilderness Area*. However, in Long Lake*, boats of any kind are not permitted. Please refer to “*Governing Agency (Legislation)*” in Table 1 for which provincial agency’s regulations apply where in the *PWA*.

*The Long Lake (LL) Subwatershed Area is within the *PWA*, indicated by the purple boundary on the Map.

Landownership within the Protected Water Area (PWA)

The total area (including water) of the *Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area (PWA)* is 6944 ha. [Crown land](#) areas (excluding surface water areas), depicted on the Map in dark green, cover 2814 ha (41%) of the *PWA*. Approximately 2122 ha of the Crown land area (31% of the *PWA*) is dedicated as *Wilderness Area*, which is regulated under the *WAPA* (see previous page) and managed by Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (ECC). The remaining 692 ha of Crown land is managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR) either through the *Wildlife Act*, which applies to Waverley Game Sanctuary lands owned by the Crown, or the *Crown Lands Act*, for Crown

lands that fall outside the *Wilderness Area* and Game Sanctuary.

The light green areas on the Map depict other provincially-owned lands in the *PWA*, including public highways and roads, community housing and provincial buildings (1% of *PWA*), which are not considered Crown land and are managed by other departments. These and other government agency (federal and HRM) and private lands (46% of the *PWA*) are also depicted on the Map in light green. The remaining 12% of the *PWA* is water.

It is important to consider that no matter who owns, or is responsible for managing these lands, everyone is responsible for respecting and protecting our watershed areas.

Municipal Regulations in the PWA

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) has zoning bylaws that apply to Plan Areas (indicated by the dotted line boundary areas on the Map), which also regulate land use activities in the *PWA* that help to mitigate land use impacts to water supply areas. These land use bylaws are enforced by HRM. However, similar to other regulations, bylaws may affect or be affected by the application of provincial regulations. Typically, a provincial regulation supersedes a municipal regulation. For example, if the province applies a 30 m watercourse setback, HRM cannot approve a setback of 20 m in the same area. On the other hand, through the planning process, HRM can adopt more stringent regulations, which would supersede a less stringent provincial regulation in that area. To summarize, HRM can adopt more stringent regulations but not relax provincial regulations.

Other municipal powers provided by the province that may also apply to *PWA* lands include the [Halifax Regional Municipality Charter](#) and the [Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Drinking Water](#). Table 2 below outlines the *PWA* HRM Plan Areas and includes links to each Plan Area’s Planning Strategy, Land Use Bylaws and Area Maps. **HRM’s 311 Customer Service number** is another resource available to those with any land use questions.

Table 2: HRM Plan Areas in Lake Major PWA

Plan Areas	Cole Harbour/ Westphal (CHW)	North Preston, Lake Major, Lake Loon, Cherry Brook and East Preston	District 14/17 (Shubenacadie Lakes)	Planning Districts 8&9 (Lake Echo Porters Lake)
Plan Area (ha) in Lake Major PWA (%)	1482 (21%)	938 (14%)	4026 (58%)	497 (7%)

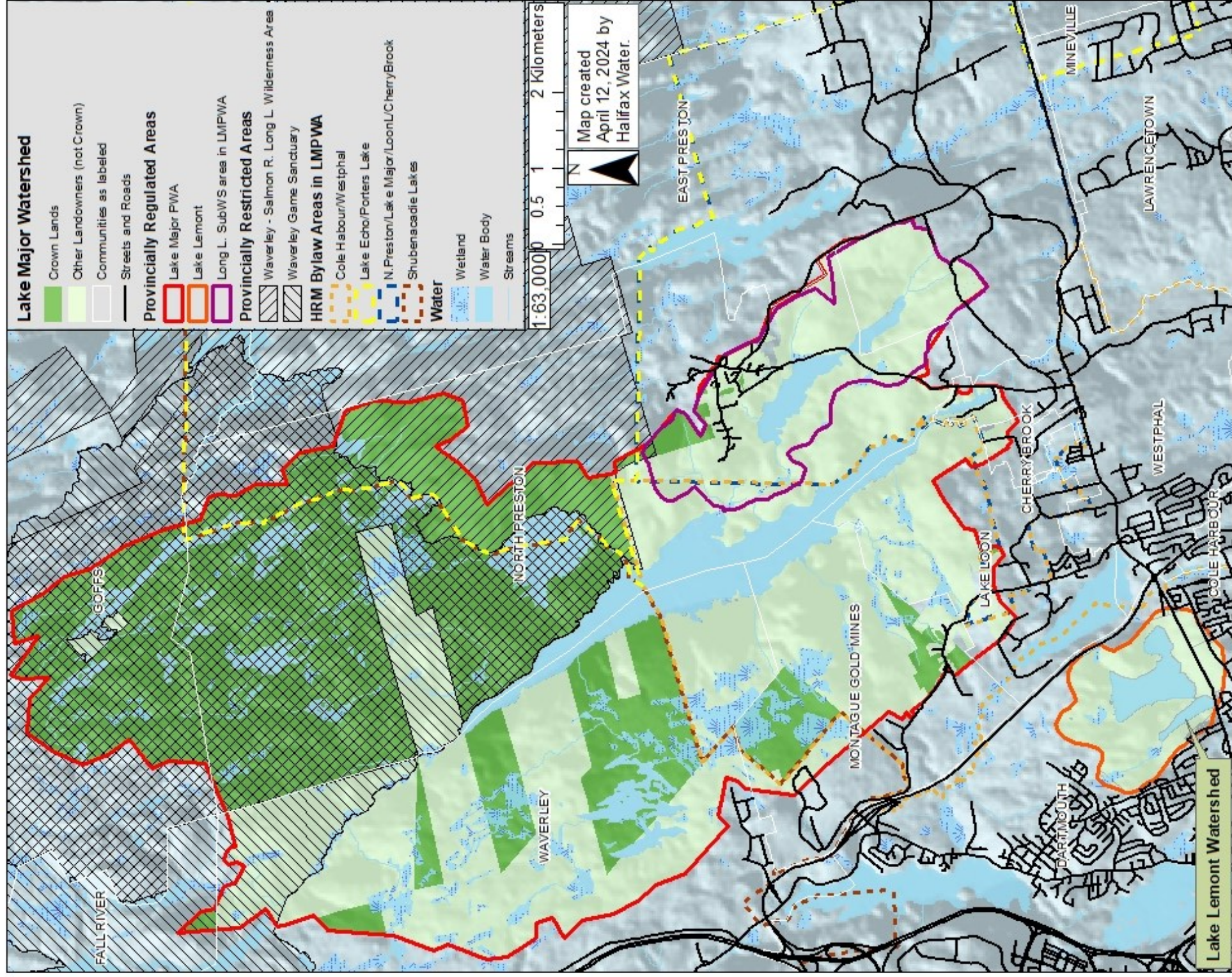
Table 1: Recreational Activities Prohibited, Restricted and Permitted in Lake Major Protected Water Area

Regulated Area	Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area		Waverley Game Sanctuary	(WA) Waverley-Salmon River Long Lake Protected Wilderness Area
Governing Agency (Legislation)	Halifax Water (<u>Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area Regulations</u> and <u>Halifax Regional Water Commission Act</u>)		NS Dept. Natural Resources & Renewables (DNRR) (<u>Wildlife Act</u>)	Dept. of Environment and Climate Change (ECC) (<u>Wilderness Areas Protection Act</u>)
Recreational Activity	Watershed Areas			
	Lake Major	Long Lake	Lake Major	Lake Major
Boats, Canoes, Kayaks (or any other vessel)	 Boat motors are restricted to 9.9 hp or less.			 No motorboats without permits
Fishing	 Restricted to beyond 100 m of Lake Major water supply plant intake.	 Only at water's edge (no boats)		
Hunting				
Swimming	 Restricted to beyond 100 m of Lake Major water supply intake.			
Docks/Wharves	 Requires Approval from Department of Environment and Climate Change			
Vehicles (e.g., ATVs & snowmobiles)			 Exceptions—requires permit	
Camp Fires	 March 15 to October 15—DAILY BURNING RESTRICTIONS APPLY			
Dogs	 ON LEASH ONLY			
Trail Building			 Requires permit	

 Prohibited  Restricted  Permitted

For details, please visit <https://www.halifaxwater.ca/protected-water-areas> or Call Customer Care at (902) 420-9287.

Lake Major Watershed Protected Water Area Regulated Areas



* This map is for informational purposes only and should not be used for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.