

Ver.	Date	Description
1.0	2013-09-23	Initial release
1.1	2026-05-19	Amended

**James River Watershed Stewardship Board:
Source Water Protection Advisory Committee Policy**

1. Purpose

The James River Watershed Stewardship Board (JRWSB) plays a vital and enduring role in safeguarding one of the community's most essential public assets - its drinking water source. By bringing together municipal leaders, provincial agencies, utilities, land-based interests, and community representatives, the JRWSB provides a trusted, collaborative forum for identifying risks early, balancing diverse interests, and advancing practical, locally informed solutions. Its consensus-based approach strengthens decision-making, builds shared understanding, and fosters accountability across jurisdictions and sectors.

Looking to the future, the work of the JRWSB will become increasingly important as pressures on water resources evolve due to climate change, land-use change, wildfire risk, and growing infrastructure demands. Through ongoing monitoring, inclusive planning, and adaptive management, the JRWSB ensures that both existing and future water sources are protected proactively rather than reactively. In doing so, it supports not only regulatory compliance, but also long-term community resilience, and stewardship of the watershed for generations to come.

- 1.1. The James River Watershed Stewardship Board (JRWSB) is established as the Source Water Protection Advisory Committee ("the Committee") for the James River Watershed to provide consensus-based advice to the Town of Antigonish and partner authorities on:
 - a) protection of public drinking water sources;
 - b) water quality, quantity, and flows; and
 - c) activities and risks affecting current and future municipal water supplies.

This purpose reflects Nova Scotia's multiple-barrier approach to drinking water protection, which requires early stakeholder involvement and local collaboration.

2. Authority and Official Recognition

- 2.1. The Committee is formally recognized by the Town of Antigonish as an advisory committee under:

- a) the Nova Scotia Water Act,
- b) Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change's (NSDECC) Source Water Protection framework, and
- c) Town of Antigonish's "Town Council Advisory Committee Policy"

2.2. The Committee is advisory only; final decision-making authority remains with the Town of Antigonish, consistent with NSECC guidance.

3. Mandate

The Committee shall:

- 3.1. Provide advice on the development, implementation, and review of Source Water Protection Plans.
- 3.2. Review and comment on:
 - a) water quality and quantity monitoring,
 - b) risk assessments and studies, and
 - c) land-use, infrastructure, and resource activities affecting source water.
- 3.3. Facilitate coordination between municipal, provincial, utility, and community stakeholders, where required, and
- 3.4. Promote public education and stewardship related to drinking water protection.
- 3.5. Shall meet a minimum of twice per year and shall complete an annual report to Town of Antigonish Council as outlined within this policy.

4. Consensus-Based Approach

- 4.1. The Committee shall operate using a consensus-based decision-making process, as recommended by NSECC.
- 4.2. Consensus is defined as an outcome all members can accept and support, even if it is not their preferred option.
- 4.3. Where consensus cannot be achieved, any member may put forward a motion for a vote, or differing viewpoints may be documented and forwarded with recommendations, while maintaining respect for all stakeholder interests.

5. Membership

5.1. Composition

Membership reflects the range of interests that may affect or be affected by source water protection, consistent with NSECC guidance on stakeholder representation.

Municipal (Voting)

- d) Town of Antigonish Mayor or designate
- e) Town of Antigonish Deputy Mayor or designate
- f) Municipality of the County of Antigonish Warden or designate

Municipal (Non-Voting)

- g) Town of Antigonish Chief Administrative Officer or designate
- h) Town of Antigonish Director of Infrastructure and Engineering or designate
- i) Municipality of the County of Antigonish Chief Administrative Officer or designate

Provincial Government (Non-Voting)

- a) Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change
- b) Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources
- c) Nova Scotia Department of Public Works (Transportation)
- d) Nova Scotia Department of Emergency Management
- e) Nova Scotia Department of Municipal Affairs

Community and Land-Based Interests (Voting)

- a) Major watershed land or water users, as applicable and appointed by Council (i.e. Nova Scotia Power Inc. (NSPI) and large forestry operations)
- b) Up to two (2) Members at Large representing residents, landowners, agriculture, forestry, or environmental interests within the watershed as appointed by the Town of Antigonish Council.

5.2. Terms

- a) Provincial Government representatives serve at the discretion of their department.
- b) Major watershed land or water representatives serve at the discretion of their organizations; organizational appointments are subject to review within one year of a general Municipal Election.
- c) Members at large serve two-year or three-year renewable terms, as appointed by the Town of Antigonish Council. Terms may be renewed once at the discretion of Council and may be extended if no applications are received to fill a pending vacancy.

6. Roles and Support

Chair and Vice-Chair

- c) The Chair shall be the Mayor or designate.
- b) The Vice-Chair shall be the Deputy Mayor or designate.
- c) The Chair acts as the Committee spokesperson.

Administration

- d) Administrative support shall be provided by the Town of Antigonish.

7. Meetings and Operations

- d) The Committee shall meet a minimum of twice per year, and more frequently as required.
- e) Quorum is a majority of the voting membership.
- e) Information meetings may occur without quorum, but no formal recommendations shall be issued.

8. Special Advisory Subcommittee – New or External Water Sources

8.1. Establishment

Where a new or potential drinking water source is being considered outside a provincially designated Protected Water Area, the Committee may establish a Special

Advisory Subcommittee to ensure early and appropriate source water protection planning.

8.2. Purpose

The Subcommittee shall:

- a) assess risks and land-use considerations,
- b) receive feedback from affected jurisdictions and land-based stakeholders,
- c) advise the Committee on protection measures consistent with NSECC source water planning principles.

8.3. Membership

In addition to Committee members, the Subcommittee may include up to three (3) invited members:

- d) Eastern District Planning Commission,
- b) One local landowner representative from the affected source area,
- c) One agricultural representative, where agriculture is present or relevant.

Information Sharing

The Committee shall:

- a) share available watershed information among members,
- d) receive information from non-member agencies such as health, fisheries, and emergency services.

9. Reporting and Annual Review

The Committee shall report to the Town of Antigonish Council. An annual report shall include:

- a) activities and recommendations,
- b) source water risks and emerging issues, and
- c) stakeholder feedback received.

Recognizing wildfire as a risk to drinking water quality and infrastructure, the annual report shall also include a review of wildfire prevention and suppression considerations, in consultation with:

- a) Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources,
- b) Nova Scotia Department of Emergency Management,
- c) Provincial Regional Emergency Management Office,
- d) The Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Office, and
- d) Local Fire Departments.

10. Review and Amendment

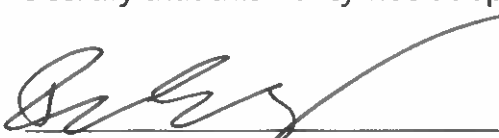
This policy shall be reviewed at least every five (5) years, or sooner if required. Amendments require approval by the Town of Antigonish Council.

11. Previous Policies

The 2013 James River Watershed Stewardship Board Policy is hereby repealed.

12. Effective Date

This policy takes effect upon approval by the Town of Antigonish Council.

CAO's Annotation for Official Policy	
Date of Notice to Council Members Intent To Consider (Minimum 7 Days):	<u>May 5, 2026</u>
Date of Passage of Current Policy:	<u>May 19, 2026</u>
I certify that this Policy was adopted by Council as indicated above.	
 _____ Chief Administrator Officer	<u>2026-06-02</u> Date