

MEDIA RELEASE

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Navigating Nova Scotia's Coastal Maze

EAC helps the public figure out how to get involved in coastal issues

Halifax, NS – The Ecology Action Centre has just released *Navigating the Maze: A Citizen's Guide to Coastal Management in Nova Scotia – 2008 Edition*. This booklet, which can be downloaded from www.ecologyaction.ca, provides an overview of which government agency or institution is responsible for implementing coastal laws and regulations. It also covers some typical coastal scenarios like public access or getting permission to build a wharf.

The Ecology Action Centre developed the first edition of *Navigating the Maze* in 2005 to provide advice and information to the public about coastal issues. "We answer a lot of questions from people who are concerned and frustrated by what they see happening in coastal areas," says Alexi Baccardax, a volunteer with the Ecology Action Centre's Coastal Issues Committee and author of the revisions to the updated *Navigating the Maze* document. "People want to know everything from who to call to report someone driving a motorized vehicle on a beach to how to you find out where it is safe to harvest shellfish. This booklet will allow us to be more effective at providing advice and information about Nova Scotia's laws regarding the coast".

A guide to figuring out coastal management in Nova Scotia is necessary because the current coastal regime is so confusing. Nova Scotia is without a comprehensive official policy, law, or regulations to manage the coastline. Instead, coastal areas are governed through various regulations, which are spread across federal, provincial, and municipal departments. The result is a maze of piecemeal regulations with frequent overlap, gaps and contradictions.

The Ecology Action Centre wants to see Nova Scotia implement a provincial coastal zone management framework that sets clear priorities and some restrictions on new activities in coastal areas. The provincial government announced it would develop a coastal management framework during the November 2007 Speech to the Throne.

Currently, government agencies are merely reacting to the various coastal problems that happen every day all over the province. "The regulations, laws and few municipal plans that exist today are not adequate to protect Nova Scotia's coasts" says Alexi Baccardax,, "Effective coastal management should be a serious priority for the Nova Scotia provincial government because the vulnerability of our coasts. The many services, and benefits that the coast provides depends on effective coastal management" adds Ms. Baccardax.

"This is a resource for the public. Is not the definitive guide to coastal law and policy in Nova Scotia," says Jennifer Graham, Coastal Coordinator at the Ecology Action Centre. " We will update the material as necessary in response to new information and the changing context"