

East Coast Environmental Law Association
3-year Strategic Plan
January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024

PART I
MISSION AND VISION

1.0 Introduction

East Coast Environmental Law is a community-centered non-profit organization that is committed to sharing our legal skills with those who seek environmental and climate justice for all species and the natural systems that support those species. As a legal organization we have a moral and professional responsibility to improve access to justice and seek an equitable and fair justice system.

We understand environmental and climate justice through an intersectional lens, and we believe that achieving environmental and climate justice requires:

- full implementation of Indigenous rights;
- revitalization of Indigenous ecological laws;
- elimination of environmental racism;
- action to address the triple planetary crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and global pollution;
- action to protect communities most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change so that they are not disproportionately burdened by climate harms;
- a just transition from the use of fossil fuels, making sure that workers and communities that currently depend on the fossil fuel economy are cared for and no one is left behind;
- action in keeping with the responsibility to preserve a liveable world for future generations;
- recognition of the inherent value of the natural world and its biodiversity; and,
- recognition that our local actions can have global impacts, both positive and negative.

2.0 Our Vision

A future in which laws and legal systems protect ecological health and promote environmental and climate justice in Atlantic Canada.

3.0 Our Mission

Advocating for progressive environmental laws and policies for Atlantic Canada, providing public legal education, and sharing our legal skills to support individuals, communities, and organizations that are working to prevent or redress environmental harms.

PART II OUR PILLARS

1.0 Build and Maintain Strong Networks & Strategic Capacity

We work to build strong networks and strategic capacity through exceptional legal and support staff, a committed volunteer Board of Directors, and strong external relationships, including:

- Collaborative relationships with communities, coalitions, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations working in the areas of environmental law and policy.
- Productive relationships with government to advance progressive law and policy reform.
- Valued relationships with philanthropists who support public-interest environmental law in Atlantic Canada.
- Educational and mentorship relationships with law students and new legal professionals that invigorate the organization and build greater capacity for the provision of public-interest environmental law services in Atlantic Canada.

2.0 Advocate for Progressive Law and Policy

We advocate for progressive law and policy creation and law reform by:

- Monitoring the development and implementation of environmental law and policy in Atlantic Canada.
- Conducting legal research and analysis, producing legal research reports, and sharing our analyses with government, non-governmental organizations, and the public.
- Collaborating with local, regional, and national coalitions, communities, and non-governmental organizations to advance progressive law and policy campaigns.

3.0 Provide Accessible Public Legal Education

We work to provide accessible public legal education by:

- Publishing free resources on environmental law and policy in Atlantic Canada.
- Delivering free public legal education on environmental law throughout Atlantic Canada.
- Providing educational and mentorship opportunities to law students and new legal professionals.
- Partnering with schools and universities to create educational opportunities that demonstrate the value and importance of public-interest environmental law.

4.0 Support Communities Seeking Environmental and Climate Justice

We support communities seeking environmental and climate justice by:

- Advocating in the public interest to hold decision-makers to account in matters concerning environmental law and policy.
- Sharing legal expertise, information, and advice with individuals, communities, and organizations who have public-interest environmental law questions or want to participate in environmental decision-making.
- Advocating for individuals, communities, ecologies, and all species who are or may be impacted by actions or decisions with harmful environmental consequences.
- Participating in environmental decision-making processes and working to prevent harmful environmental impacts to communities throughout Atlantic Canada.

PART III
GOALS FOR STRATEGIC PLAN
January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024

1.0 Build and Maintain Strong Networks & Strategic Capacity

- 1.1 Provide staff and Board members with the training and support necessary to serve the vision and mission of East Coast Environmental Law.
- 1.2 Build new collaborative relationships with public-interest organizations and communities working in Atlantic Canada.
- 1.3 Establish stronger ties with legal professionals in Atlantic Canada and former law students who worked with East Coast Environmental Law.

2.0 Advocate for Progressive Law and Policy

- 2.1 Champion measurable law and policy progress in Atlantic Canada.
- 2.2 Support building enhanced capacity for Indigenous ecological law revitalization in Atlantic Canada.
- 2.3 Work to increase Atlantic Canadian perspectives on federal environmental law initiatives.

3.0 Provide Accessible Public Legal Education

- 3.1 Extend the reach of our public legal education services in Atlantic Canada.
- 3.2 Expand the scope of our public legal education offerings, including the Summary Series.
- 3.3 Improve the accessibility of our public legal education services.

4.0 Support Communities Seeking Environmental and Climate Justice

- 4.1 Foster restorative justice approaches to environmental disputes.
- 4.2 Support efforts to end environmental racism.
- 4.3 Advocate on behalf of citizens seeking environmental and climate justice.

PART IV
OBJECTIVES FOR STRATEGIC PLAN
January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024

1.0 Build and Maintain Strong Networks & Strategic Capacity

1.1 Provide staff and Board members with the training and support necessary to serve the vision and mission of East Coast Environmental Law

- 1.1.1 Provide Board members and staff with opportunities to learn about and engage in reconciliation and build related cultural competency, including education on Indigenous laws.
- 1.1.2 Develop a training plan for each lawyer to include training in the following areas: legal competency, legal representation, communications, fundraising, and government relations.
- 1.1.3 Review and amend board policies to reflect and intentionally support a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

1.2 Build new collaborative relationships with public-interest organizations, foundations and communities working in Atlantic Canada.

- 1.2.1 Build two new collaborative relationships with Indigenous communities or Indigenous-led organizations in Atlantic Canada.
- 1.2.2 Build two new collaborative relationships with public-interest organizations working in Atlantic Canada.
- 1.2.3 Enhance relationships with the law foundations in all four Atlantic Canadian provinces and apply for project funding or core funding from all four of those law foundations each year.

1.3 Establish stronger ties with legal professionals in Atlantic Canada and former law students who worked with East Coast Environmental Law

- 1.3.1 Build and foster relationships with law students at Dalhousie University and the University of New Brunswick.
- 1.3.2 Connect with provincial law societies and public legal information societies in Atlantic provinces where such connections do not already exist.
- 1.3.3 Create a network of East Coast Environmental Law student alumni, led by current and past students.

2.0 Advocate for Progressive Law and Policy

2.1 Champion measurable law and policy progress in Atlantic Canada

- 2.1.1 Take action on federal and provincial (Atlantic) law and policy to recognize and respond to the climate emergency, the right to a healthy environment, and environmental racism.
- 2.1.2 Advance law reform for Atlantic Canada concerning the regulation of aquaculture operations, including a transition away from open-net pen finfish aquaculture.
- 2.1.3 Advance law reform for Atlantic Canada to protect at-risk species and respond to the biodiversity crisis.

2.2 Support building enhanced capacity for Indigenous ecological law revitalization in Atlantic Canada

- 2.2.1 Support additional staff training in Indigenous legal research methodologies designed to further Indigenous law revitalization.
- 2.2.2 Engage with one or more Indigenous communities or Indigenous-led organizations to deliver a pilot project that builds capacity for Indigenous ecological law revitalization in Atlantic Canada.
- 2.2.3 Identify and use opportunities to promote Indigenous law revitalization when participating in government-initiated law reform initiatives or environmental decision-making processes.

2.3 Work to increase Atlantic Canadian perspectives on federal environmental law initiatives

- 2.3.1 Engage in regional assessments and impact assessments relevant to the Atlantic region.

- 2.3.2 Engage in coalitions and processes to bring Atlantic Canadian perspectives to national environmental and climate law initiatives.
- 2.3.3 Collaborate to develop public legal education materials on federal environmental law processes, incorporating Atlantic Canadian experiences and case studies where possible.

3.0 Provide Accessible Public Legal Education

3.1 Extend the reach of our public legal education services in Atlantic Canada.

- 3.1.1 Deliver new public legal education sessions designed specifically for youth.
- 3.1.2 Participate in events and deliver environmental law and policy presentations in all four Atlantic Canadian provinces.
- 3.1.3 Explore opportunities to develop written educational materials on environmental law and policy for young readers.

3.2 Expand the scope of our public legal education offerings, including the Summary Series

- 3.2.1 Publish a new Summary Series addressing Aboriginal and Indigenous law in environmental contexts, covering all four Atlantic Canadian provinces.
- 3.2.2 Update historical Summary Series volumes and ensure that each topic covered is addressed within the context of each of the four Atlantic Canadian province.
- 3.2.3 Publish new legal guidance materials on the Law of Protest.

3.3 Improve the accessibility of our public legal education services

- 3.3.1 Update the website to improve the organization and presentation of public legal education materials and make information more accessible and engaging.
- 3.3.2 Seek funding capacity to provide public legal education services and materials in English, French, and Indigenous languages, as appropriate.
- 3.3.3 Seek funding capacity and external support as necessary to provide public legal education services and materials in a greater variety of formats (video, website, social media, print, etc.).

4.0 Support Communities Seeking Environmental and Climate Justice

4.1 Foster restorative justice approaches to environmental disputes

- 4.1.1 Support the community of Harrietsfield, Nova Scotia as members undertake a restorative justice process.
- 4.1.2 Develop public legal education materials that consider the use of restorative justice processes for environmental disputes in all four Atlantic provinces.
- 4.1.3 Seek to engage in a restorative justice process for environmental conflicts.

4.2 Support efforts to end environmental racism

- 4.2.1 Support Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities as the Government of Nova Scotia takes action to address and redress environmental racism in Nova Scotia, per its commitment in the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*.
- 4.2.2 Collaborate with the Canadian Coalition for Environmental and Climate Justice to advocate for federal legislation addressing environmental racism and or

amendments to the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* that will help to protect communities in Canada from future instances of environmental racism.

- 4.2.3 Develop organizational policy designed to ensure that all East Coast Environmental Law work in the fields of law and policy reform is carried out consistently through the lenses of anti-racism, climate emergency, and Indigenous rights recognition.

4.3 Advocate on behalf of citizens seeking environmental and climate justice

- 4.3.1 Represent a community, organization or individual at a judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding.
- 4.3.2 Collaborate with legal partners to build more capacity in Atlantic Canada to provide legal representation.
- 4.3.3 Respond to public inquiries providing legal information and advice on environmental law to communities, organizations and individuals.

**PART V
MEASUREMENT**

The Strategic Plan is approved by the Board of Directors and the Board is accountable to the membership for its implementation. The staff of East Coast Environmental Law will engage with the Strategic Plan as part of work plan development and will report to the Board on progress under the Strategic Plan. The Board will monitor progress on an annual basis and a summary of progress will be reported to members of the public in the Annual Report.

East Coast Environmental law also recognizes its accountability to a broader community – including donors, funders, partners and to the communities and individuals with whom we work, on or whose behalf we work. Through ongoing dialogue, direct engagement and a commitment to continuous improvement, we will build-out our formal and informal accountabilities.

Reporting	2022	2023	2024
Implementation of new Strategic Plan by Board	February		
Staff prepares summary of status of SP implementation to include in Annual Report.	March	March	March
Staff prepares annual report card on SP implementation to present to Program and Planning Committee.	October	October	October
Program and Planning Committee report to Board on SP implementation.	November	November	November
Information from the report card considered in the development of the budget.	December	December	December
Preparation for a new strategic plan will be initiated by the policy and planning committee.			January

Strategic Plan January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024 approved by the Board of Directors at a virtual board meeting on 09 February 2022.