

THE EVOLUTION OF NOVA SCOTIA'S COORDINATE REFERENCING SYSTEMS

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Despite its rich history, the evolution of the coordinate referencing system in Nova Scotia has not been well documented. As the foundation for the property boundary fabric and land registration system for the province, it is critical that this knowledge is maintained. It is the key to being able to link surveys of the past with the present. This research strives to capture important coordinate referencing knowledge from those that have worked with the system and have since retired from the Nova Scotia provincial government or former Land Registration and Information Service.

A detailed review of documentation discussing various historical aspects of coordinate referencing in Nova Scotia was conducted. Personnel involved with the implementation of the systems were interviewed to provide first-hand accounts of operational details. This information is captured and is presented chronologically. An outlook on the future of the coordinate referencing program is also discussed.

Malgré sa riche histoire, l'évolution du système de référencement de coordonnées en Nouvelle-Écosse n'a pas été bien documentée. À titre de fondement du système d'enregistrement foncier et du canevas cadastral de la province, il est essentiel que ces connaissances soient conservées. C'est l'élément clé qui permet de relier les levés du passé à aujourd'hui. La présente recherche vise à saisir des connaissances importantes sur le référencement des coordonnées auprès des personnes qui ont travaillé avec le système et qui ont pris leur retraite du gouvernement provincial de la Nouvelle-Écosse ou de l'ancien Service du cadastre et de l'information foncière.

Un examen détaillé de la documentation traitant des divers aspects historiques du référencement des coordonnées en Nouvelle-Écosse a été effectué. Les employés impliqués dans la mise en œuvre des systèmes ont été interrogés pour obtenir des témoignages de première main au sujet des détails opérationnels. Cette information est saisie et présentée de manière chronologique. Un aperçu de l'avenir du programme de référencement des coordonnées fait également l'objet d'une discussion.

Introduction

Coordinate referencing systems help to address fundamental societal needs by providing infrastructure to answer the questions “Where am I?” and “Where should I be?” Land administration, property management, engineering, construction and mapping are examples of activities that depend on an underlying coordinate referencing system that is reliable and accurate. Well-established coordinate referencing systems enable asset management and development, which are critical components for sound governance.

Nova Scotia has a rich history in its coordinate referencing program that it has implemented and maintained since the late 1960s. There are at least three distinct coordinate referencing systems that have been implemented in the province. For over three decades, Nova Scotia Land Surveyors (NSLSs) have been regulated to connect their surveys to one

of the province's coordinate referencing systems. The practice of relating surveys to a coordinate referencing system allows for meaningful spatial relationships to be defined between parcels of property.

New coordinate referencing systems are developed as technology and knowledge advances and the needs of users become more demanding. As thousands of survey plans are created over time in a particular coordinate referencing system, it is critical that knowledge about each system be well documented and understood. Presently, several provinces in Canada have a single person managing the operations of their respective coordinate referencing system. Many of these people have accumulated decades of knowledge about the inner workings of their respective systems. This knowledge base is typically not found outside the organization. As generations