

Association of Canada  
Lands Surveyors



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING ON  
DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2024

# Association of Canada Lands Surveyors



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## Introduction

The **Association of Canada Lands Surveyors (ACLS)** is the national licensing body for professionals that practice surveying on Canada Lands, which are mainly the three Canadian Territories, the National Parks, First Nations Reserves, and including above and below the surface of Canada's oceans. The exclusive title attributed to these professionals is that of a Canada Lands Surveyor (CLS).

The *ACLS 2024 Annual Report* was produced digitally, with printed copies available upon request. Additional information about our team and what we do is available on our website [acls-aatc.ca](https://acls-aatc.ca).

We encourage the public to follow our social media accounts, including LinkedIn and Facebook, for public posts and interesting events and announcements.

Should any of the links in this year's Annual Report fail to lead you to the correct web page, please visit the main page of our [website](https://acls-aatc.ca) and search by specific interest or contact us directly for assistance.

To obtain a printed copy of the *ACLS 2024 Annual Report*, please submit a request by email to [communications@acls-aatc.ca](mailto:communications@acls-aatc.ca) or contact us by telephone at 613-723-9200.

Ce rapport est également disponible en français. Veuillez nous contacter à l'adresse [communications@acls-aatc.ca](mailto:communications@acls-aatc.ca) pour recevoir ce rapport en français, sous forme numérique ou imprimée.

## Executive Summary

Association of Canada Lands Surveyors (ACLS) entered 2024 with a clear mandate: protect the public interest by maintaining high professional standards for cadastral surveying on Canada Lands. Over the past year, the organization continued to meet that mandate through sound governance, rigorous practice review, effective self-regulation and ongoing professional proficiency.

ACLS' robust Practice Review work continues to show positive findings that demonstrate consistent consultation with Indigenous partners, well-recorded quality control procedures, good business communications, and health and safety protocols continue to be commendable among the majority of members reviewed. In 2024, 23 members were reviewed, including 15 Atlantic members and 8 members from the Prairies who had work recorded in the CLSR over the past three years. In addition, seven full field inspections were conducted in Atlantic Canada—identifying only minor issues for the most part, and confirming client satisfaction and reliable work. Almost half of the plans reviewed were larger than usual, involving areas of between 4-50 hectares, and between 4 to 17 parcels surveyed.

The Standards of Practice Committee delivered two new best-practice modules—Field Records Retention and Field Work Supervision—which Council has already approved; a third module on First Nations Approvals is now before Council for review.

A deliberate tightening of the examination window by the Board of Examiners—from seven years to five—reduced the pool of active CLS candidates from 130 to 76, but it also ensured that those who remain engaged are progressing with current knowledge and sharper focus. On-demand testing now requires regular candidates to finish in four years and labour-mobility candidates in two, accelerating the journey to licensure without lowering standards.

Eleven new commissions were awarded, and sixteen provincial surveyors applied for CLS status in 2024. Continuing professional development remained strong: members logged 9,061 hours in the GeoEd portal, nearly one-fifth of them in GeoEd courses, demonstrating sustained appetite for skill enhancement.





## Executive Summary (cont'd)

Offshore competence advanced as well. The International Hydrographer Certification Scheme now counts eleven certified professionals, ten trainees, and five new applicants; the Canadian Hydro-graphic Services' decision to require certified hydrographers on federal offshore contracts beginning in 2026 is expected to accelerate demand, further safeguarding the public interest.

Governance improvements kept pace. The By-Laws and Legislation Committee completed a comprehensive draft by-law, secured legal vetting, and set the stage for a national bilingual consultation in late 2025 or early 2026. In parallel, ACLS continued to press for the re-introduction of the amendments from Bill S-6, which would modernize the Canada Lands Surveyors Act and help to better support increased labour mobility.

The organization also deepened its commitment to reconciliation and inclusion. An Indigenous Relations Steering Committee hosted dedicated sessions at the National Surveyors Conference and established a liaison to the new Truth & Reconciliation Taskforce, which is mapping TRC Calls to Action and UNDRIP principles to ACLS operations. The 2024 conference, co-hosted with Professional Surveyors Canada in Prince Edward Island, brought together national and First Nations participants under the theme "Adaptation: Water and Fire," underscoring the profession's role in climate resilience and community safety.

Looking ahead, ACLS will concentrate on launching the By-laws consultations, monitoring the im-pact of the new candidate timelines, expanding its Best Practices web resources, considering options for practice-review coverage to include unrecorded work, supporting hydrographer certification growth, and advancing Truth & Reconciliation initiatives. Through these priorities, the ACLS will continue to uphold public confidence, foster professional excellence, and ensure Canada Lands Surveyors are prepared to meet the evolving needs of Canadians—both onshore and offshore.



The ACLS office is located on the ancestral lands of the Omà̀m̀winìwag (Algonquin) First Nation.

## Association of Canada Lands Surveyors (ACLS)

ACLS is the national licensing body for professionals that practice surveying on Canada Lands, which are mainly the three Canadian Territories, the National Parks, First Nations Reserves, and including above and below the surface of Canada's oceans. The exclusive title attributed to these professionals is that of a Canada Lands Surveyor (CLS).

### Mandate of the Association

The mandate of the Association of Canada Lands Surveyors (ACLS) is to regulate and govern the practice of surveying on Canada Lands and private lands in the territories, for the protection of the public interest, in accordance with the *Canada Lands Surveyors Act*, SC 1998, c. 14.

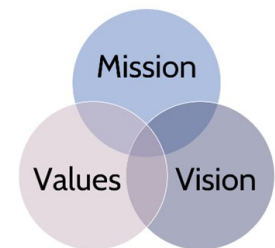
The practice of the ACLS membership is monitored through a practice review process, while professional conduct and competence are held to high standards and subject to investigation and adjudication when called to question. Mandatory professional development, licencing & permitting requirements, minimum insurance requirements and strong Council oversight over the regulatory aspects and association operations, all contribute to the mandate of protecting the public interest.

### Who We Are

The Association was created through an Act of Parliament in 1998 bringing full self-regulation to the ACLS through powers of regulation over its members, a clear duty to always serve the public interest and clear governance oversight of the association through its Council.

The current Association is the continuation of the previous Association of Canada Lands Surveyors, namely one established in 1985 to enhance the practice of professional land surveying and related spatial disciplines, through establishing standards of qualification, knowledge, skill, ethics and conduct among its members. This Association was itself the continuation of previous organizations that existed from time to time since the early days of surveying in Canada.

Today, under the powers delegated through The Canada Lands Surveyors Act, SC 1998, c. 14, (the Act), which is under the authority of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, as a self-governed professional association and a regulatory body, the ACLS' mandate ensures members are competent in providing the services that society has entrusted to them and to elevate, within the public's interest, the value the profession brings to those reliant on the professional services of our members.



#### Vision:

Instilling public confidence in the regulation of Canada Lands Surveyors.

#### Mission:

Remaining true to our mandate, we build trust and mutual respect through strong governance, effective self-regulation and individual proficiency.

## Values:

**Integrity:** We can be trusted to protect the integrity of Canada Lands and land tenure while remaining fair and impartial.

**Accountability:** We follow through on our commitments and own our actions.

**Competence:** We are professional, knowledgeable and maintain ongoing competency through practice review and continuing professional development.

**Innovation:** We keep pace with new and emerging technology, transforming and changing as required to bring the greatest value and efficiency to the general public and our members.

**Excellence:** We are committed to quality and continuous improvement. We strive toward high performance, setting high standards for our members and ourselves.

## How We are Governed

The ACLS Council is comprised of elected members and appointed members of the public. As the governance entity for the ACLS, the Council ensures that all manner of regulatory requirements are approved and monitored for Association admission, member's practice activities, conduct & competency, licensure requirements, investigation & discipline and more.

The Council has ultimate oversight of the ACLS with respect to managing the affairs of the Association, acting on behalf of the Association, regulatory oversight, setting the organization's strategy, managing risk, meeting statutory objectives and being accountable to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources who holds ultimate oversight over the Act.

## How we Measure Success

The ACLS is successful and the profession itself succeeds, if through appropriate regulatory standards, member's ethics, and strong oversight, we are able to elevate society's trust and esteem for the profession. We succeed if we meet our objectives in a fair, transparent and just manner.

## Welcome to the Land of Surveying

Cadastral Land Surveying involves measurement for the creation of new boundaries or the retrace-ment of existing boundaries between contiguous (or adjacent) parcels of land.

Surveyors apply mathematics, property law and the latest measurement technology to real-life situations. These professionals are enablers of industries that invest billions into the Canadian economy annually. Because of their expertise, land surveyors are required whenever there is a need to establish boundaries of new parcels of land, establish boundaries of tenure on parcels of land or to re-establish these boundaries.



As per Section 6 of the *Canada Lands Surveyors Act*, the objects of the Association are:

- (a) to establish and maintain standards of qualifications for Canada Lands Surveyors
- (b) to regulate Canada Lands Surveyors
- (c) to establish and maintain standards of conduct, knowledge and skill among members of the Association and permit holders
- (d) to govern the activities of members of the Association and permit holders
- (e) to cooperate with other organizations for the advancement of surveying; and
- (f) to perform the duties and exercise the powers that are imposed or conferred on the Association by this Act.



## Council Members 2024-2025



**REID EGGER**  
President



**MAX PUTNAM**  
Past President



**CHRIS DE HAAN**  
Vice President



**ANDREW LEYZACK**  
3rd Year Councillor



**MARYNA HANNA**  
2nd Year Councillor



**VERONICA MEISTER**  
1st Year Councillor



**GORDON MACINNIS**  
Lay Councillor



**ANGIE DERRICKSON**  
Lay Councillor



**JEAN GAGNON**  
Surveyor General



**CHRISTINA NICHOLS**  
Executive Director





## Board of Examiners

The Board is responsible for approving candidates for a CLS commission. Active candidate registrations dropped to 76 in 2024, from 130 in 2023, after the Board tightened the exam window from seven to five years. With on-demand online exams, the adjustment to five years is both practical and motivating: it keeps candidates' skills current, maintains momentum, and helps them complete the requirements sooner.

### The following examinations were written in 2024:

Regular CLS candidates wrote 17 examinations, and five obtained commissions.

Labour Mobility candidates wrote 23 modules and six obtained commissions.

### Commissions Recommended:

In accordance with the Act and Regulations, the Board notifies Council when candidates meet all CLS requirements and recommends they be granted a commission. Council then issues the commissions.

### In 2024, the following persons received a Commission:

Ababio, Joseph Osei	2058	2024-02-01	Thunder Bay	ON
Cadoret, Corine	2059	2024-02-01	Baie-Comeau	QC
Frederick, Jonathan	2060	2024-02-22	Edmonton	AB
Rousseau, Rémi	2061	2024-02-27	Québec	QC
Buxton, Claire	2062	2024-03-07	Vancouver	BC
Schroh, Serianna	2063	2024-04-18	Whitehorse	YT
Fortin, Mathieu	2064	2024-04-22	Gatineau	QC
Ruest, Mireille	2065	2024-05-08	Carignan	QC
Oseni, Ayo	2066	2024-05-13	Thunder Bay	ON
Symonds, David	2067	2024-12-10	Duncan	BC
Rudyy, Maksym	2068	2024-12-10	Fort St. John	BC

### Other Board Activities:

In addition to meeting its obligations for examining Candidates and recommending successful Candidates for a Commission, the Board maintains the examination syllabus, syllabus study materials, and quality control for the bank of questions for online professional examinations. The Board also grades any required projects and makes recommendations to the Registrar with respect to an applicant's required experience.

## Practice Review

Section 39 of the Canada Lands Surveyors' Regulations reads as follows:

*A review of the surveying activities of members of the Association to ensure the maintenance of minimum standards of surveying shall consist of a review of survey plans, documents and drawings pertaining to surveys made by those members, and may include any of the following:*

- (a) a field inspection of the work depicted in the survey plans, documents and drawings;*
- (b) an examination of files and other documents pertaining to the production of survey plans, documents and drawings of the members of the Association and permit holders; and*
- (c) a written report of each plan review, field inspection and examination conducted under this section.*

The ACLS set up its Practice Review Department in 2004. Licensed Canada Lands Surveyors who have performed CLS work for the public are subject to review on a three to four years cycle. Some site examinations are usually performed annually in different regions of Canada, at the discretion of ACLS Council. A committee of volunteers provides support to the practice review department manager. If issues come up, the Practice Review Committee will recommend that the ACLS Continuing Professional Development Committee to either present an educational webinar or in person seminar at the National Surveyors' Conference.

## Practice Review Committee

The Practice Review (PR) Committee met five times in 2024 (January, April, August, September and November). All meetings were held via Zoom/ Microsoft Teams. The PR Manager provided written reports to the committee prior to each meeting.

The PR Committee spent time completing the required annual review and update of the Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR). As part of a larger restructuring of ACLS committees, near the end of the year, Executive Director, Christina Nichols presented the committee with proposed changes to the PR Committee's Terms of Reference to address duplication and overlap of responsibilities for continuing professional development activities. Moving forward the PR Committee will make recommendations to the Continuing Professional Development Committee (CPDC) for professional development topics. PR Committee members may be asked to participate in development and delivery of educational seminars, workshops, courses, articles, or publications.

Overall, reported issues declined again this year. The new issues observed were only minor oversights, not widespread or systemic problems. A handful of recurring minor concerns, such as independent checks and data-format consistency, have been addressed in ACLS professional development sessions and will continue to be reinforced during 2025-2026. We also addressed surveys of water boundaries completed without a survey report in the 2024 ACLS Summer Communiqué newsletter (published in August), which reiterated the relevant requirements for members.

### **Role of Permit Holders in Practice Review:**

The PR Committee explored the Permit Holder's role in Practice Reviews. Until now, results were given only to the individual member whose work was assessed, leaving the Permit Holder unaware of any findings and unable to act if necessary. This link is crucial because, in most cases, the Permit Holder carries the professional-liability insurance and should be aware of any concerns that could affect coverage. The PR Committee therefore recommended that ACLS also notify the Permit Holder once a review has been completed of a CLS in their firm. The licensed CLS would be responsible for sharing the PR Review outcomes with their employer. Council has accepted this recommendation and will monitor its implementation.

## Practice Review Manager's Report

Twenty-three members were reviewed in 2024, including eight Prairie-region members carried over from 2023. The remaining fourteen were from the Atlantic region; seven of them received a full site inspection.

The Atlantic region had forty regular members in 2024. Fifteen had filed work in the CLSR during the previous three years, though one review was discontinued because the member was on sick leave. Two others worked only in Nunavut; they will be reviewed in 2026 when the Northern region is scheduled.

Of the plans reviewed, ten required amended checklists—eight rated “A” and two rated “B.” Several had issues with digital signatures, spatial files, or area calculations. One plan needed resubmission due to a scope change, and another required additional field work.

Most submissions were Plans of Lots, along with a few Addition-to-Reserve plans, one field-note plan, one pipeline survey, and one pad-site survey. Almost half exceeded the usual size, covering 4–50 hectares and 4–17 parcels. The corresponding digital files were large and took longer to prepare; eight members needed multiple reminders or deadline extensions.

### **Findings**

Members showed excellent communication with First Nations and generally produced plans that met professional standards. Minor issues included two plans with typographical errors, two that omitted nearby features, and three missing monument notations. Most field records were very good, but four raised more serious concerns—missing redundant checks, unrecorded utilities, or incomplete monument data. A few members are still not keeping all digital field data in a reviewable format.

In 2024 the Practice Review Manager sat on the Standards of Practice Committee and chaired the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors' Survey Review Department Committee. ACLS Standards of Practice Committee received approval from Council for two new Best-Practice pages—**Field Records Retention** and **Field Work Supervision**—to address the more serious issues noted in the 2024 findings.

### **Field Sortie:**

A Field Sortie was conducted in the Atlantic Region May of 2024. Seven sites were reviewed in Atlantic Canada: two in PE, one in NS, four in NB. In all, except one case where a large amount of construction had taken place, it was evident that monuments had been set and marked as shown on the plans. In discussion with the homeowners, they had indicated that they were aware of the locations of the monuments and were satisfied with their surveys. All First Nation staff that were consulted expressed their satisfaction with the surveyors.

### **Records Not Recorded in Canada Lands Survey Records (CLSR):**

At the 2024 AGM, a non-binding motion asked Council to examine the issue of Practice Review and survey work carried out by Canada Lands Surveyors that is not recorded in the Canada Lands Survey Records (CLSR). Discussion centered around four key questions:

- **Notification:** How will the Practice Review Manager learn about these projects?
- **Standards:** Which technical standards apply when many deliverables may follow provincial, rather than federal, requirements?
- **Mandate:** Does this work fall within ACLS' scope for practice review?
- **Effort:** How much time should the Practice Review Manager devote to such files?

The Practice Review Manager prepared a report addressing these points. Acting on the preliminary recommendations, Council has decided that effective with the 2025 membership renewal every member would be required to declare any public-facing work conducted under a CLS licence that will not be entered in the CLSR. The aggregated results from 2025 will guide future decisions on how practice-review files are selected.

## Indigenous Relations Steering Committee (IRSC)

The Steering Committee met nine times during the year for regular meetings.

The Registry Working Group continued developing materials to address the areas of need with regards to the knowledge and use of the three Indigenous land Registries (ILRS/FNLRS/SGFNLRS). There are five working groups addressing the areas identified at NSC 2022.

The committee developed and facilitated a half day of seminars at NSC 2024 in P.E.I. Topics included:

- Improving our communication skills to ensure there is a common understanding with our clients.
- Explaining common misconceptions, a conversation with Terry Leblanc.
- A surveyor's role to ensure Indigenous clients' needs are met.

As requested by Council, the committee reviewed and provided feedback on several documents including:

- ACLS Guidelines for land acknowledgement,
- Terms of Reference Indigenous Youth Engagement Task Force
- Standards of Practice
- Best Practices
- First Nations Approvals

## ACLS Truth and Reconciliation Taskforce

After centuries of colonial practices of dispossession, assimilation, and oppression of Indigenous peoples and their ways of life, ACLS believes it is essential to help create a space for Indigenous knowledge and presence within the work of Canada Lands Surveyors. Integrating reconciliation into land surveying and reports in Canada is long over-due and it is a multifaceted task that requires careful consideration, sensitivity, awareness, and inclusivity. To assist with this work, Council struck a Taskforce in summer 2024 to consider Recommendations 3 and 4 within the ACLS Stakeholder Survey Taskforce Report (2023):

- *Recommendation 3: ACLS should commit to an ongoing process of reconciliation by undertaking a review of the 94 recommendations within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and determine a pathway for ACLS and its members to work collaboratively with Indigenous organizations, communities, and stakeholder groups, to ensure we undertake appropriate and meaningful actions on the TRC calls to action.*
- *Recommendation 4 - Members and stakeholders share an array of concerns about actions to support Indigenous communities and the work of Canada Lands Surveyors. Council should share the relevant feedback and information with the IRSC and ask that they share their advice and recommendations with Council, to better address the feedback from the survey.*

Further, the Taskforce will consider other ACLS produced documentation including the *TRC Reconciliation Brainstorming Ideas* (author: A. Derrickson) and the *ACLS Guidelines and Information for Land Acknowledgements and More*.

The Taskforce met three times, during fall 2024 and confirmed their mandate and workplan and Mapped TRC calls and UNDRIP principles to ACLS operations and individual practice. Next steps include identifying initiatives for Council to consider later in 2025.



## Membership Momentum!

While the annual intake levels for the CLS candidates ranges from 12% to 25% per year, candidate attrition rates also vary from 4% to 25% annually. Factors for candidate attrition include changing career interests, life circumstances that shift priorities, personal challenges such as family obligations or financial constraints, and the demanding nature of the certification process. **Despite these challenges, the net result remains positive, with a steady number of candidates annually progressing toward completing the requirements for a CLS commission.**

2024 Results:

- 16 provincial land surveyors have applied for CLS commission in 2024.
- 6 new regular candidates were welcomed in 2024

## Accelerated Timeline for Candidates

Leveraging the flexibility of the on-demand online examination platform, the Board of Examiners has updated the *Candidate Handbook* to accelerate progress toward a commission:

- **Regular candidates** must now complete all examinations within **four years** (reduced from seven).
- **Labour-mobility candidates** have **two years** to finish the four-module examination.

These revisions encourage timely advancement while maintaining rigorous professional standards.

## ACLS Membership Statistics

### ACLS Numbers

Membership	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Regular members	336	340	354	377	388	397	396	414
Retired members	83	94	102	85	89	90	98	79
Associate	9	11	10	7	7	7	6	5
Honorary Life members	12	12	12	13	11	11	10	9
Students	154	137	120	122	120	131	141	117
Honorary members	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>565</b>



## 2024 Scholarship Recipients

The ACLS Scholarship Foundation exists to nurture the next generation of geomatics professionals by providing meaningful financial support to students in post-secondary programs.

These scholarships are funded through the generous donations of Canada Lands Surveyors, contributed during annual membership renewals and fundraising events held in conjunction with the annual National Surveyors Conference.

Each year the Foundation awards **four scholarships of \$2,000**. Recipients are chosen primarily on academic achievement, with one award reserved for an Indigenous student and another for a female student, underscoring our commitment to diversity and inclusion in the profession.

**We extend our sincere thanks to every CLS whose contributions make these awards—and a stronger future for geomatics—possible.**



**Laurance Tremblay**  
Laval University



**Tavish Comrie**  
University of Calgary



**Jordan Rees**  
Marine Institute



**Reece Richmond**  
SAIT

*"I am incredibly grateful to have been awarded [through] the ACLS Geomatics Scholarship program, which will support me as I continue pursuing my Master's in Applied Ocean Technology, specializing in Ocean Mapping. This scholarship will help alleviate some of the financial pressures as I balance my studies, a full-time job, and raising two young children. This opportunity strengthens my commitment to advancing hydrographic surveying and to mentoring future professionals in the field."*

Jordan Rees CLS, PMP, BTech

## Complaints and Discipline

Complaints received by ACLS generally fall into one of eight categories:

1. **Survey Errors or Omissions:** Mistakes or missing information in completed surveys
2. **Failure to Meet Professional Standards:** Not adhering to established technical, procedural, or regulatory standards
3. **Contractual or Communication Issues:** Disputes or failures related to service agreements, billing, or client communication
4. **Ethical Breach** - Including but not limited to: Conflict of interest, Misleading or false advertising, Breach of confidentiality, Failure to comply with the ACLS Code of Ethics
5. **Professional Misconduct:** Behaviour unbecoming of a professional, including disrespectful conduct, harassment, or abuse of authority
6. **Negligence or Incompetence:** Consistent failure to perform duties to an acceptable standard, risking public safety or trust
7. **Unauthorized Practice:** Practicing without a valid licence or outside authorized jurisdictions
8. **Invalid or Vexatious Complaint:** Complaints determined to be unfounded, frivolous, or outside the jurisdiction of the Association

## ACLS received two complaints in 2024

**Complaint 24-01** on June 11, 2024. The complaint was related to Professional Misconduct. The complaint was dismissed by the Complaints Committee on September 4, 2024.

**Complaint 24-02:** Received Oct 11 2024. The complaint was contractual/communication related – Dismissed Nov 26 2024.

## Standards of Practice Committee

Over the past year, the Standards of Practice Committee convened nine times, advancing both policy development and operational support for members. A primary objective has been to draft content for the forthcoming Best Practices webpages, which will serve as a single point of reference for authoritative guidance.

### **Core best-practice modules work:**

- **Field Records Retention** – Finalized and formally approved by Council, establishing clear retention timelines and documentation standards.
- **Field Work Supervision** – Finalized and approved; sets out supervisory responsibilities to ensure quality control and statutory compliance.
- **First Nations (FN) Approvals** – Draft completed and now before Council for review; addresses consultation protocols and approval pathways.
- **Title Searching** – Development paused pending the 2025 launch of new titling services that will affect ACLS jurisdiction.

### **Auxiliary initiatives**

- Drafted **amendments to the National Standards** to reflect evolving professional requirements.
- Collaborated with Surveyor General Branch (SGB) on **MyCLSS platform enhancements** to improve user functionality and data integrity.

# ACLS International Hydrographer Certification (IHCS)

As the national, bilingual, self-regulated, non-governmental, professional organization which holds jurisdiction over cadastral surveys on Canada Lands, including the offshore, ACLS serves as Secretariat for the IHCS, providing effective administration to support the national certification model.

By the end of 2024, there were 11 certified hydrographers, 10 more in training.

Starting in 2026, providers of contracted hydrographic surveying services under the *Public Services Procurement Canada* (PSPC) *Hydrographic Survey Supply Arrangement* (HSSA) will be required to employ and task a Hydrographer in Charge or Hydrographic Project Manager holding a valid Certified Hydrographer Certification (Level 1) issued by the *Association of Canada Lands Surveyors* (ACLS) under the International Hydrographer Certification Scheme (IHCS).

This directive is expected to have a favourable impact on the number of certified hydrographers in Canada, thus increasing public protection and enhancing the capacity and competitiveness of Canadian businesses involved in this work.



## Certified Hydrographers in Canada — 2024

Certification	2024	Retired
Level 0	1	1
Level 1	8	1
Level 2	2	0
In Training	10	n/a

Projected Labour Force Requirements:  
87 Certified Hydrographers  
Including 22 CHE (Executive)  
& 65 as CH (Level 1) and CH Tech (Level 2)

Source: *Considerations for the Future of IHCS, 2024*,  
ACLS Offshore Committee Taskforce





## IHCS Partners: Certifying Excellence in a Critical Field

Canada is home to the longest coastline in the world, and with more than a third of our territory covered by water, hydrography is not just important—it's essential. From safe navigation and environmental protection to offshore development and coastal resilience, hydrography underpins vital services that Canadians rely on every day.

Since the Canada Lands Surveys Act was amended in 1978 to include offshore lands, the ACLS has played a leading role in advancing hydrographic and offshore surveying excellence. Through the International Hydrographic Certification Scheme (IHCS), ACLS certifies professionals by rigorously assessing their education, training, and experience against internationally recognized standards. This process ensures public confidence in the competence and integrity of certified hydrographers and offshore surveyors.

Meeting the demands of Canada's vast and complex marine environments requires more than technical expertise—it requires strong partnerships. ACLS is proud to collaborate with CHA and CHS, whose leadership and dedication continue to shape the future of this critical profession.

Together, as partners, we're charting a course for safer, smarter, and more sustainable use of Canada's waters.



Association of Canada  
Lands Surveyors

Website: [acls-aatc.ca](http://acls-aatc.ca)



Canadian Hydrographic  
Association

Website: [hydrography.ca](http://hydrography.ca)



Canadian Hydrographic  
Service

Website: <https://www.charts.gc.ca/help-aide/about-apropos/index-eng.html>

## Which Organizations Around the World May Certify Hydrographic Surveyors?

Only four organizations are currently permitted by the IBSC to certify individuals to become Certified Hydrographic Surveyors, although others may apply for such recognition:

**Geospatial Council of Australia (GCA)** Australasian Hydrographic Surveyors Certification Panel (AHSCP) Certification Scheme, recognized since 2012 and renewed in 2019.

<https://geospatialcouncil.org.au/hydrographic-certification/>

**Association of Canada Lands Surveyors (ACLS)** International Hydrographer Certification Scheme (IHCS) for Certifying and Recognizing the International Competency of Individuals as Hydrographic Surveyors, recognized since 2016 and renewed in 2022.

<https://www.acls-aatc.ca/students-home/canadian-hydrographer-certification-program/>

**International Federation of Hydrographic Societies (IFHS)** Hydrographic Professional Accreditation Scheme (HPAS), recognized since 2022.

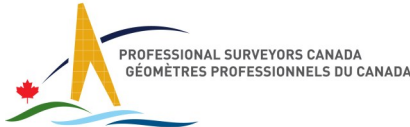
<https://hydrography.earth/hpas/> // <https://ths-uki.org/hpas/>

**National Society of Professional Surveyors in association with The Hydrographic Society of America (NSPS-THSOA)** U.S. Hydrographer Certification program recognized since 2022.

<https://www.nsps.us.com/page/Certification>

## Collaboration with other geomatics related Organizations

In addition to providing administrative support and Registrar services to the Canadian Board of Examiners for Professional Surveyors, the ACLS collaborates with the following organizations:



Professional Surveyors Canada (PSC): Every year since 2019, the ACLS and PSC host a joint National Surveyors Conference.



Canadian Hydrographic Association (CHA): since the beginning of 2021, the ACLS has been providing administrative support and web site maintenance for the CHA, which does not have staff.



Canadian Institute of Geomatics and the Canadian Remote Sensing Society do not have a physical office space, so ACLS provides them with a secured space to store their files and both organizations use ACLS postal address for mail.

## Association Partners/Provincial Regulators



## National Surveyors Conference

The National Surveyors Conference (NSC) annually brings together seasoned and new professional surveyors from across Canada, local First Nations community members, leading industry experts, academics, and researchers, to build capacity, share insights and expertise.

New commissions are honoured, surveying projects that exemplify the innovation and extraordinary contribution to society are celebrated, members are engaged and cooperate on issues and solutions, representatives from surveyor regulators from across Canada assemble and collaborate, and the business of the ACLS Annual General Meeting is conducted.

**NSC 2024** - In collaboration with *Professional Surveyors Canada*, the 2024 edition was held in Cardigan, Prince Edward Island from May 21st to 24th. The conference was presented in a hybrid format, with simultaneous interpretation. The theme was “Adaptation: A Requirement in today’s environment” with the sub-theme “**Water and Fire: How do these elements affect the surveying profession?**”.

### Future Dates & Locations

- **NSC 2025** — Victoria, British Columbia, May 6-9, 2025.
- **NSC 2026** — Whitehorse, Yukon, May 25-28, 2026
- **NSC 2027** — St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, May 2027

## Canadian Board of Examiners for Professional Surveyors (CBEPS)

ACLS continues to serve the whole Canadian surveying profession by providing the secretariat and registrar services for the [Canadian Board of Examiners for Professional Surveyors](#) (CBEPS).

CBEPS establishes, assesses and certifies the academic qualifications of individuals who apply to become land surveyors and/or geomatics professionals in Canada, except for Quebec.

CBEPS examinations are graded by Special Examiners. The Special Examiners are recommended by the CBEPS Examination Committee and appointed by the Board of Directors.



### CBEPS Candidates

There are 336 active candidates registered with CBEPS, including 44 new candidates in 2024.

**32 Certificates of Completion were issued in 2024, for individuals who applied to become land surveyors and/or geomatics professionals.**

# David Thompson National Geomatics Awards

Celebrating excellence in the field of geomatics in Canada, this award was introduced in 2006-2007 to recognize projects that exemplify the innovation and contribution to society that surveyors make every day, for the betterment of all Canadians. This award was named after David Thompson, an explorer and surveyor who almost single-handedly mapped Canada's vast, unknown interior 200 years ago.

There were three submissions for non-cadastral and four submissions for cadastral.

The chosen recipient of the 2024 David Thompson Awards:

Challenging non-cadastral survey project: **Andrew Healy, Measurement Science Inc.**



## KHCP4 HIGH DENSITY LIDAR SLOPE MONITORING

Located east of Golden, BC, the Kicking Horse Canyon stands out as one of the most rugged and picturesque stretches along the Trans-Canada Highway. Initiated in early 2021, the fourth and final phase of major construction endeavors to cover the final 4.8 kilometers of the canyon. This ambitious project aims to enhance safety by upgrading the highway through its most challenging segments. Plans include realigning thirteen curves, widening the highway to four lanes, installing median barriers and expanding shoulders to accommodate cyclists. Additionally, measures to mitigate hazards such as rock falls and avalanches will be implemented through the construction of bridges and rock catchment ditches.

Challenging cadastral survey project: **Micheal A. Thompson, GeoVerra**



## Survey of the Exterior Boundaries of Blood Indian Reserve No. 148 – Alberta

A portion of the exterior boundary of Blood Indian Reserve No. 148 is defined by the St. Mary River. The river course has been significantly altered by flood events, upstream dam construction, and ammonite mining operations. A significant area of the Reserve currently lies across the St. Mary River from the remainder due to avulsive events. The survey involved research of flood records dating back to the early 1900's and aerial photography dating back to 1922. The Reserve boundary location was determined through matching flooding events and mining activities to photographic records. The boundary is a combination of the present ordinary high-water mark, thalweg of dry channels, former riverbank determined from photographs and ground conditions, and lines of excavation from ammonite mining.



## Modernization of the Canada Lands Surveyors Act

Bill S-6, An Act respecting Regulatory Modernization proposed much needed amendments to strengthen the complaints and discipline processes and streamline the regulatory regime under the Canada Lands Surveyors Act. The bill passed the Senate and was referred to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry and Technology after second reading on 19 June 2024. The committee, however, did not complete its study before Parliament was prorogued on 6 January 2025, and Bill S-6 died on the Order Paper in both chambers.

For progress to continue, the government would need to reintroduce the bill or incorporate its provisions into another. The amendments from Bill S-6 would deliver critical updates to the Canada Lands Surveyors Act.

Re-introducing these amendments—or incorporating them into new legislation—would modernize governance for Canada Lands Surveyors and improve public protection through more robust and transparent complaints and discipline processes, aligning with efforts to enhance labour mobility, while also contributing to critical infrastructure, resource, and Indigenous-land projects nationwide.

ACLS respectfully urges the Government of Canada to prioritize this file so Canada Lands Surveyors

can continue to serve Indigenous Communities and other Canadians under a clear, efficient, and nationally harmonized regulatory framework.

## By-Laws and Legislation Committee

In anticipation of the amendments proposed in Bill S-6, the By-Laws and Legislation Committee completed a multi-year effort that culminated in comprehensive vetting of the draft By-Law by legal counsel in the last quarter of 2024. A national, bilingual consultation was to follow the legal review and was originally scheduled for 2025 so that members, stakeholders, and the public could provide feedback before the draft is adopted. The consultation was deferred to late 2025 or early 2026.

The proposed By-Laws reorganizes roughly twenty existing regulatory provisions into two sections. The first retains matters that the membership must continue to approve or amend, while the second groups administrative items that Council can revise with greater agility. Moving these provisions from regulation to By-Laws reduces red tape for operational matters, shortens amendment timelines, and equips ACLS to respond more quickly to the evolving needs of the public, stakeholders and labour force.

At the close of 2024, anticipating possible further delays to Bill S-6, Council asked the By-Laws and Legislation Committee to review and, if necessary, update some of ACLS' existing By-Laws on urgent matters related to dues, fees, penalties, and other administrative affairs. These interim adjustments would ensure ACLS' financial and operational procedures remain current and effective until the broader legislative amendments are enacted and the more robust By-Laws adopted.

## Continuing Professional Development

ACLS' **Continuing Professional Development Committee**, together with the Registrar, identifies and evaluates professional development opportunities in response to the requirements of the By-laws, Council and members, and with the approval of Council, prepare, have prepared, or acquire professional development training opportunities for members.



The committee met nine times during the 2024, to discuss continuing professional development training opportunities and assist with planning content for the National Surveyors' Conference.

The committee continued its work adapting and customizing the **Getting it Right** workshop for online and classroom delivery. This workshop will be offered over four consecutive half days and will include approximately 14 hours of learning for each participant. It will focus on quality control and working as a team on a survey project, taking the participants through the whole cycle of the survey from field through office work to submission, with

an emphasis on how each role and each step of the process fits into the overall quality of the survey product. The material also encourages all members of the survey team to adopt a quality mindset as well as a supportive mindset so that each member of the team is looking out for the others and encouraging good work. In addition to several other webinars, we are looking forward to being able to offer this workshop, in English, to our members in 2025.

In addition to courses offered online, webinar or hybrid format, ACLS circulates information in analogue form to the membership for knowledge and skill updating. In 2024, analogue CPD information included: Practice Review guidance on surveying water boundaries and features close to water boundaries, referencing section 1.11 and 2.2.4 of the National Standards. As well, other important updates to members were circulated on behalf of the Surveyor General Branch (SGB) including issues with MyCLSS digital signatures and Modification of Sections 3.3 and 5.1.4 of the National Standards for the Survey of Canada Lands.

### Webinars

October 15th, 2024— Water Boundaries

Number of Attendees: 159

A key role of a land surveyor is to re-establish property lines. Determining a boundary along the edge of a water body can be one of the most challenging parts of boundary re-establishment. The edge of a water body can be influenced by many factors over time, and it is the land surveyor's responsibility to sort out whether or not the physical characteristics at a site represent the property line. This webinar provided insights from three experienced land surveyors from different parts of the country. They share their experiences and provided some guidance on key elements to look for on site that can help identify whether the water body has been influenced by natural or human changes that do not alter the location of the boundary and also changes such as natural erosion and lawful accretion that may change the location of the property line over time.



## GeoEd

Recognizing the geographically dispersed nature of our membership, ACLS continues to enhance the offerings available for continuing professional development through our distance learning portal, GeoEd. This includes courses offered through partnerships with sister associations, academic institutions, government, and private organizations.

GeoEd is a collaborative initiative that includes ACLS and several provincial surveying associations across Canada that continue to promote accessible continuing professional development. The initiative was conceived and developed by the ACLS, and it is financially self-sufficient. ACLS continues to maintain the portal and shares resources and expertise towards the development of national learning.

The courses posted on the GeoEd distance learning portal are available to surveyors of all jurisdictions of Canada. In addition, both the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors and the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association members also use the GeoEd mandatory CPD tracking system.

Courses include webinars, online-learning modules, recorded conference sessions, and interactive content, however, most courses are self-guided learning opportunities with recorded video and other digital support materials. Login is personal and secured, with content available to surveyors to complete at their leisure. The portal is bilingual and includes a CPD Tracking System to help members report professional development hours to their respective regulators. Over 3500 users are currently registered to GeoEd, from surveyor regulators across Canada.

GeoEd now has 394 courses listed; 6 of which were new courses added in 2024. Several NSC 2024 CPD sessions were added and each viewed by a minimum of 141 individuals.

- ◇ Surveying; Laying a foundation for governance
- ◇ Climate change: We're Screwed, It's Our Fault, It's Going to Get Worse, and There's Nothing We Can Do About It!
- ◇ Prince Edward Island Coastal Hazards & Avulsion on Interior Rivers
- ◇ Impacts of boundaries as a result of natural disasters
- ◇ Abegweit First Nation – A candid discussion
- ◇ Improving our communication skills to ensure there is a common understanding with our clients

**Demonstrating strong engagement and commitment to their profession, in 2024 ACLS' 291 licensed members recorded an impressive 9061 hours of continuing professional development within the GeoEd CPD Tracking System,** of which nearly 20% were GeoEd hosted courses. Licensed members also tracked CPD hours for courses taken at academic institutions, seminars and workshops with other professional organizations, attendance at committee and taskforce meetings, governance participation, presentations and academic papers, and professional practice research.





**ASSOCIATION OF CANADA LANDS SURVEYORS / ASSOCIATION DES ARPENTEURS  
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