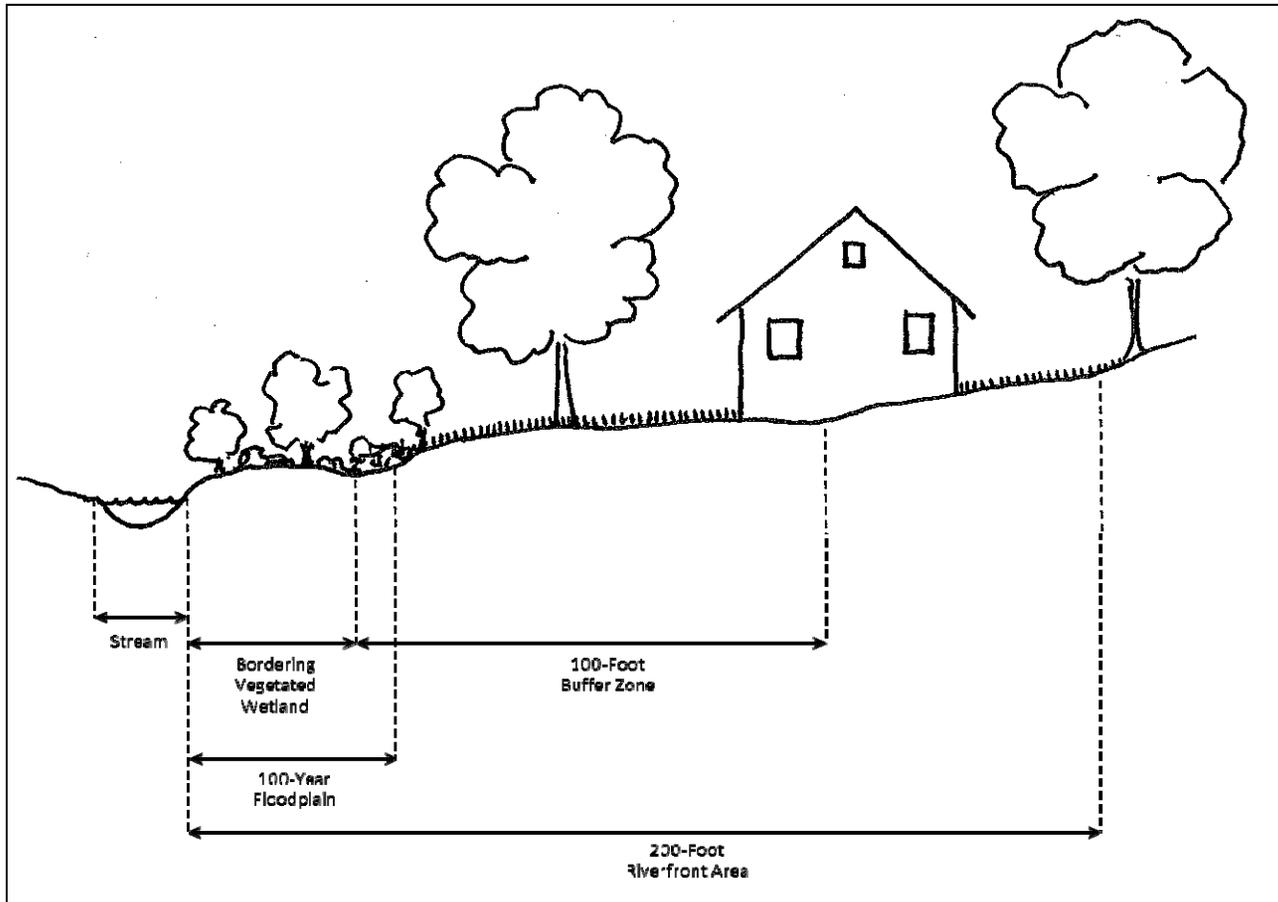


COMMON WETLAND RESOURCE AREAS AND BUFFER ZONES



Did You Know?

- Wetlands can be wooded or meadow-like; wetlands often appear dry in the summer.
- Wetlands on public and private property are regulated. Many parts of Newton fall under wetland regulations (so your property may, too).
- Homeowners are responsible for all activities that occur on their property. Before hiring a tree company, landscaper, or contractor, call the Conservation Office to determine if a permit is needed. The Conservation Commission takes enforcement action for work done without a permit.

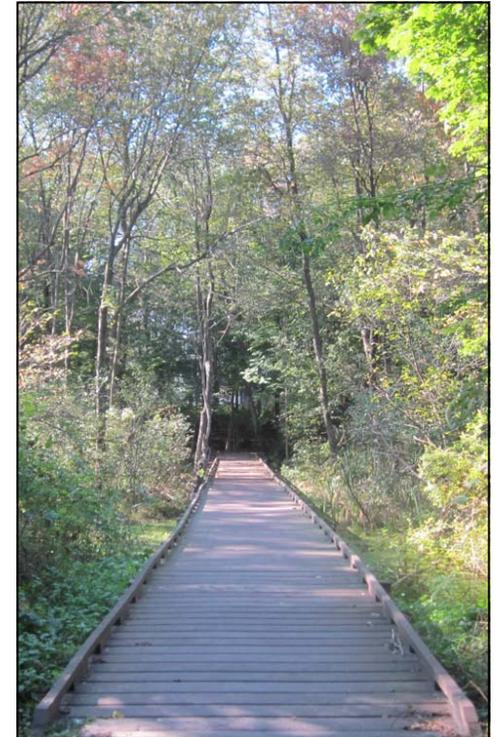


CITY OF NEWTON
Department of Planning

For more information:
Phone: 617.796.1120
Fax: 617.796.1086
City website: www.ci.newton.ma.us

Living with Wetlands:

A Guide to Wetland Protection
Laws in Newton



CITY OF NEWTON

Department of Planning and Development

Wetland Permitting

WHAT IS A WETLAND?

State law defines what is and is not a wetland. Here in Newton, wetlands include all perennial streams, intermittent streams, stream banks, land under water, bordering vegetated wetland, 100-year floodplains, isolated land subject to flooding, and vernal pools.

Wetlands are defined by the kind of plants that grow in them (such as jewel weed, red maples, or skunk cabbage) and the kind of soils that exist there. The Conservation staff or a wetland specialist can help you determine whether you live near a wetland. Wetlands may not be wet all the time. Low areas that flood in the spring may be wetlands.

WHAT IS A BUFFER ZONE?

Buffer zones, the land within 100 feet of wetlands, are critical in maintaining health and productivity of wetlands, and are protected by law. Ask before doing any work in a buffer zone. You may need a permit!

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF A WETLAND?

Wetlands reduce flooding, provide wildlife habitat, recharge aquifers, and cleanse our drinking water. Wetlands function best in a natural state. Do not “clean them up.” Wildlife thrives in areas with brush piles, rotting logs and other “untidy” things.

WHAT RESTRICTIONS APPLY?

The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act protects wetlands and buffer zones from construction, filling, landscaping, and cutting, by requiring residents to get a permit for work:

Within buffer zones (land within 100 ft. of):

- A swamp or marsh
- A forested wetland
- A vernal pool
- A pond
- An intermittent stream.

Within 200 feet of a stream that flows year round.

Within the 100-year flood zone.

WHAT DO I NEED A PERMIT FOR?

Many activities are prohibited in wetland resource areas and buffer zones unless you have a permit:

- Dumping yard waste (like leaves and grass clippings), dirt, fill, or other material
- Cutting trees or shrubs
- Reconstructing lawns
- Building structures
- Grading, excavating, or filling
- Changing stormwater discharge or drainage

WHAT HAPPENS TO VIOLATORS?

Under the Wetland Protection Act, the Conservation Commission can require illegally altered land to be restored to its original condition, and can issue fines.

WHAT CAN I DO NEAR WETLANDS?

Many activities near wetland resource areas are allowed and do not require Conservation Commission approval, including:

- Mowing an existing lawn, working in an existing garden, maintaining existing landscaping, putting on a new roof,
- Planting native vegetation,
- Removing impervious surfaces and installing vegetation,
- Cleaning out culverts, and
- Hiking and other passive recreation.



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A PROJECT IN MIND?

1. Determine if your project will occur within a wetland or buffer zone – see the illustration in this flyer.
2. Call the Conservation Office to discuss the project.
3. Complete required application materials.
4. Notify your abutters
5. Attend a public hearing, if necessary.
6. Get a permit before starting work.

ARE THERE OTHER WAYS I CAN HELP?

- Limit your use of fertilizers and pesticides
- Maximize permeable area on your land
- Encourage native vegetation to grow
- Get involved with local conservation groups.