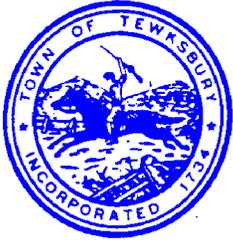


# LIVING WITH WETLANDS



## *Wetlands and the Tewksbury Property Owner*

### Planning a Project?

**Read this before you cut, dump,  
drain, pump, dig or build on  
your property  
You may need a permit.**

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#### **Town of Tewksbury Conservation Commission**

999 Whipple Road  
Tewksbury, MA 01876  
Phone: 978-640-4370

### Do You Have Wetlands and/or Buffer Zones on your Property?

A large percentage of Tewksbury homeowners have wetland resource areas on or near their property. If you plan to do any work in a wetland, within 100-feet of a wetland, or within 200-feet of a stream, river, or vernal pool it must be reviewed by the Conservation Commission.

**Keep in mind that wetlands do not have to look "wet" or contain water to be protected.**

**If you are unsure whether your property is within a wetland area or buffer zone, please call us to find out.**

If you are planning a project which involves:

- Tree, shrubs or vegetation removal or clearing
- Grading, excavation or paving
- Landscaping (except mowing existing lawn, pruning, or work in existing garden)
- Dumping leaves, brush, grass, debris
- Changing storm water discharge
- Dam construction or removal
- Construction, additions, etc.
- or any other activity that might alter wetlands or their buffer zones

**You must contact the Conservation Commission! Do not assume your contractor will pull all necessary permits.**

The Conservation Commission by law takes enforcement action for work done without a permit.

### What's the Application Process?

First, you must determine if your project will occur within a wetland or buffer zone. Our Conservation Commission is ready to answer your questions and help guide you through the potential next steps for the particular project you have in mind.

In general, you must file a permit application (we have the forms for you), potentially notify your abutters, attend a public hearing, and resolve any concerns about protecting the wetlands. Then you may receive a permit before starting the work. For additional filing guidelines and fees you can go to our town website.

**All filings completed after an enforcement order will result in double the filing fee.**

Copies of state and town Wetland regulations, bylaws (e.g., **25-foot No Disturb, and 50-foot No Build Zone**), filing guidelines, and the Commission's meeting agenda and schedules can be found on the town's Conservation Commission website.

<http://www.tewksbury-ma.gov/conservation-commission>

**BEFORE Starting a Project  
Please Contact the Tewksbury Conservation  
Commission!**

### Did You Know?

Wetlands can be wooded or meadow-like, and wetlands often appear dry in the summer.

Buffer zones, the land within 100-feet of wetlands are regulated, and are critical in maintaining health and productivity of wetlands. Laws also regulate work within 200-feet of a river/perennial stream and vernal pool.

## What is the Tewksbury Conservation Commission?

The Tewksbury Conservation Commission is the local authority charged with the protection of Tewksbury's natural resources including **wetland areas** and their **buffer zones**. Any work or activity in a wetland area or buffer zone needs to be approved by the Commission before starting.

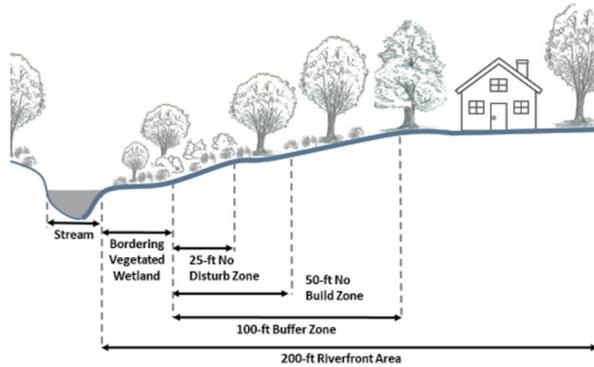
Under the Wetland Protection Act, the Conservation Commission can issue enforcement orders and require illegally altered land to be restored to its original condition, and issue fines.

## What are Wetlands?

By law, wetlands are defined by the kind of plants that grow in them and the kind of soils that exist there. Wetland resource areas generally include **marshes** (e.g., cattail), **swamps** (e.g., red maple), **bogs**, and **wet meadows** that borders ponds, lakes, and rivers/perennial streams that generally flow throughout the year, and **200-foot riverfront area** on either side of the riverbanks. Also, **intermittent streams** that dry up during part of the year, their associated **banks**, and **low-lying flood plains** and **vernal pools**.

These areas (except **200-foot areas around perennial streams and vernal pools**) are surrounded by a **100-foot wide "buffer zone"** that protect wetlands from human impacts.

Wetland Resource Areas and Buffer



## Why are Wetlands Important?

Wetland resource areas provide critical habitat to wildlife and help maintain the aesthetic beauty of our town. They also provide priceless yet "free" services including:

- Drinking water purification
- Groundwater recharge
- Flood control and storage
- Pollution prevention
- Stormwater damage prevention

All Tewksbury residents benefit from these services because of our reliance on natural settings for property values and wells for drinking water.

Wetlands function best in a natural state. Do not clear them or "clean them up." Wildlife often thrives in areas with brush piles, rotting logs, and other things some people might consider "untidy."

## Lawn Management Practices that Help Protect Wetlands!

- Do a soil test before applying fertilizer to determine the amounts necessary for managing good lawns and other turf grass areas.
- Use a slow release nitrogen fertilizer and phosphorus free fertilizer or low phosphorus fertilizer.
- Leave a 25-foot buffer strip of unfertilized grasses or other vegetation around streams, rivers, ponds, wetlands, vernal pools and drainage areas.
- No grass clippings, vegetative materials or vegetative debris may be deposited in streams, rivers, ponds, wetlands, vernal pools and drainage areas. Return clippings where practical.
- Encourage native vegetation and native wildlife, by planting native plants.

You are responsible for any work and activity that occurs on your property. Before you hire a tree company, landscaper, or a contractor call the Conservation office to determine if you need a permit.

**Thank You for Helping Protect  
Tewksbury's Natural Resources!**

\*\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*\*\*\*

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Postal Customer

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