

TOWN OF GRANBY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Living and Working near Wetlands

***Before Starting an Outdoor Project Contact the
Granby Conservation Commission***

What are Wetlands?

Wetlands are commonly thought of only as areas with standing water. However, wetlands are in fact delineated using scientific measures and are based on vegetation and soils. Some areas such as flood plains, vernal pools, and rare species habitat areas can only be identified by reviewing special maps. Some of the more common wetland areas include cattail marshes, open water ponds, wet meadows, shrub swamps, wooded swamps, rivers, brooks, and intermittent streams. Most of these areas are surrounded by 100-foot "buffer zones" to protect them from human impacts and provide valuable wildlife habitat. Land within 200 feet of a stream that flows year-round is also protected as "Riverfront Area". Work in wetlands, buffer zones & Riverfront is regulated by state law and requires approval from the local Conservation Commission.

Why are Wetlands Important?

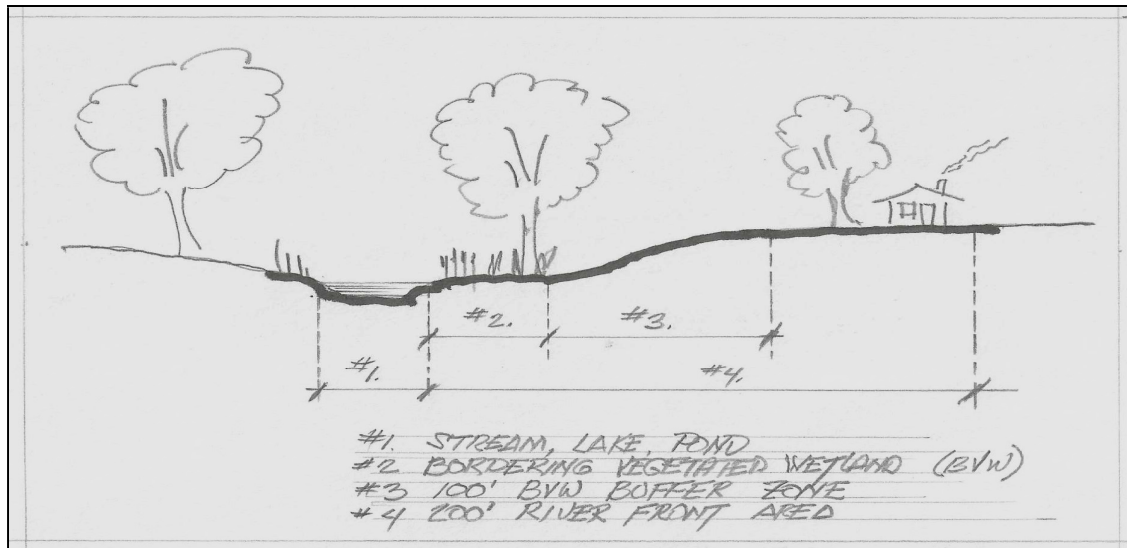
Wetland resource areas provide critical habitat to wildlife and help maintain the aesthetic beauty of our town. They also provide priceless yet "free" services including:

- Drinking water purification
- Groundwater recharge
- Flood control / storm damage protection
- Pollution prevention
- Protection of wildlife habitat

All Granby residents benefit from these services. We rely on natural settings for increased property values, to provide clean drinking water for our wells, and to further treat waste from our septic systems. The Conservation Commission is responsible for protecting these areas, by enforcing state and local wetlands protection laws and regulations. Violation of these regulations can result in monetary penalties and lengthy project delays.

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Wetland Resource Areas and Buffer Zones



Wetland "Do's and Don'ts"

Many activities near wetland resource areas are allowed and do not require Conservation Commission approval however, other activities are prohibited in wetland resource areas or buffer zones and are subject to fines. Some activities are allowed, but only with a permit issued by the Conservation Commission:

Do's

- Mowing an existing lawn
- Working in an existing garden
- Pruning and maintaining existing landscaping
- Planting native vegetation
- Cleaning out culverts
- Hiking, horseback riding, and other passive recreation

Don'ts

- Dumping yard waste such as leaves & grass, or waste including manure
- Constructing animal paddocks
- Dumping dirt or other fill
- Draining or pumping water from a wetland, pond, or stream
- Building dams or removing beaver dams
- Use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) that damage plants and disturb ground surface

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."

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Do I Need a Permit from Conservation?

A large percentage of Granby homeowners have wetland resource areas on or near their property. *If you plan to do any work in or near a wetland resource area, you must contact the Conservation Commission first.* Activities that usually require a permit include:

- Tree removal or other vegetation clearing
- Earth removing or filling activities
- New landscaping and/or fencing
- Drilling a well
- Construction - new, additions, alterations, etc.
- Septic system - new, repairs, upgrades, etc.
- Or any other activity that might alter wetlands or impact buffer zones

Do not assume your contractor will automatically pull the necessary permits, as the homeowner is ultimately responsible. If you do need approval, commissioners are ready to answer your questions and help guide you through the application process.

Everyone contemplating a project should come to one of the monthly meetings and make a short presentation of their proposed project and ask for guidance on the best method for completing any necessary reviews.

The complexity of the approval process is commensurate with the type and scale of the activity proposed. Minor projects such as removing a few trees may be handled by a simple approval letter, while a large construction project may require a detailed application and evaluation during one or more public hearings.

The Conservation Commission wants to see Granby landowners proceed with their projects while simultaneously protecting the valuable wetland resources that benefit EVERYONE.