

Planning a Home Project?

It is important that you contact the Hamilton Conservation Commission *before starting any home or landscaping project* if you are within a wetlands area.

Keep in mind that wetlands do not have to be “wet” or contain water to be protected. If you are unsure whether your property is within a wetlands area, please call us to find out.

Some projects that may alter wetlands areas are:

- Tree removal
- Brush cleanup or removal
- Grading or excavation
- New landscaping
- Construction, additions, etc.

Do not assume your contractor will pull all necessary environmental permits for your project. If you contact the Conservation Commission directly, we will gladly answer your questions and help guide you through the application process.

Getting project approval from the Conservation Commission depends on the type and scale of your project. Small projects such as removing a few trees may require a simple approval letter, while a large construction project may involve a detailed application and evaluation process.

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Hamilton Homeowner
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Wetlands and the HAMILTON HOMEOWNER



Hamilton Conservation Commission

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What are Wetlands?

Wetlands come in all shapes and sizes, and are found throughout Hamilton. Generally, wetlands include **swamps, bogs, marshes, rivers and streams, vernal pools and low-lying flood plains.**

In our town, wetlands areas are surrounded by a **100-foot wide “buffer zone.”** This buffer zone protects the wetlands from the impacts of human activity and provides essential wildlife habitat. The buffer zone increases to **200 feet on either side of a riverbank.**

Why Protect Them?

Protecting our wetlands:

- Preserves the aesthetic beauty of our town
- Provides us with a natural and free source of recreation
- Creates habitat for all kinds of life – fish, turtles, frogs, ducks, dragonflies
- Helps prevent flooding
- Gives migratory animals a place to rest and eat on their seasonal trips
- Reduces conflict among people and wildlife
- Replenishes our groundwater table
- Prevents erosion and filters pollutants
- Helps maintain property values

The Hamilton Conservation Commission is responsible for protecting these areas by enforcing state and local wetlands protections laws.

Do's and Don'ts

DO

Many activities near wetland areas do not require Commission approval, including:

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



DON'T

Some activities are quite disruptive to wetlands areas. These include:

- Dumping yard waste or brush
- Construction of animal enclosures, including paddocks
- Dumping dirt, fill, or manure
- Draining or pumping water from or to a wetland, pond, or stream
- Building dams, altering dams, or removing structures built by wildlife
- Cutting trees, shrubs, or other vegetation

Lawn Care

Do you know what comes out of your weed killer bottle? Or the truck that comes to spray your lawn?

The answer is *chemicals* – many of which are harmful to humans, pets, wildlife, and plants. These chemicals do a lot more than make your lawn green. In addition to the potential health hazard, lawn treatments contribute to the overgrowth of harmful plants in our rivers and streams.

Hamilton's Conservation By Law prohibits the use of any organic or synthetic fertilizers or herbicides within 100' of wetlands. If you live next to a pond, river, or stream, fertilizer use can also cause excessive plant growth in the water, harming both the environment and aesthetics.



The Commission also recommends you use water responsibly when maintaining your lawn and landscaping. Excessive watering contributes to the low-flow rates in rivers, which creates problems like mosquito breeding, flooding, and septic problems.

Before starting any cleanup or construction project, please contact the Conservation Commission for guidance. (978) 468-5583