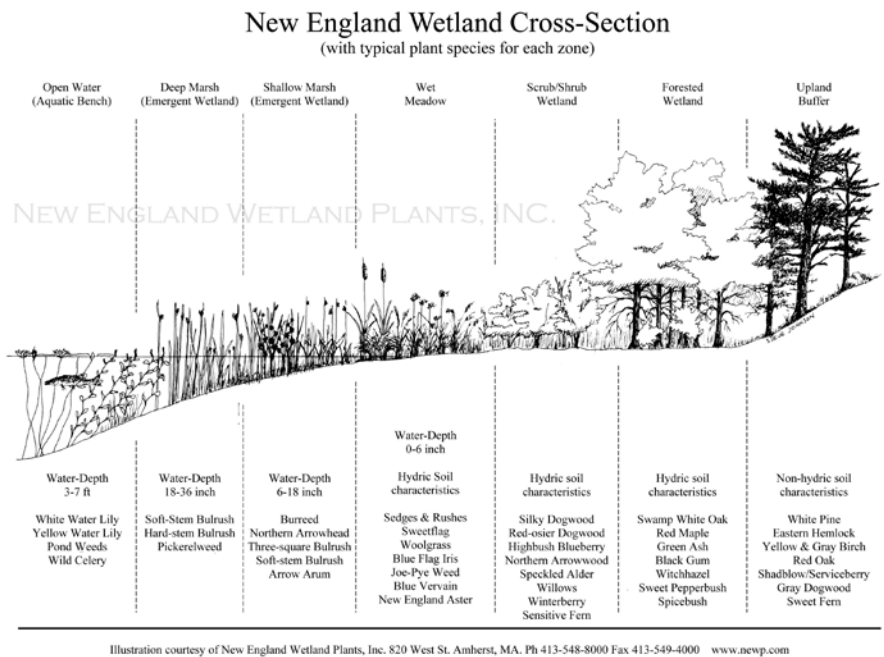




A Few Questions Answered by the Salisbury Conservation Commission

What Are Wetlands?

A wetland is an area where water meets land. When water covers the soil, or is present at or near the surface of the soil for most of the year, this causes the soil to develop certain identifiable characteristics that indicate the presence of water. Saturation of wetland areas supports specific plant and animal species that cannot live anywhere else. The abundance of water dependent plants, evidence of inundation, and hydric soils tell us when a wetland is present. Just because you don't see open or flowing water doesn't mean you're not looking at a wetland or other resource area. Resource areas protected under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act include the commonly known cattail marsh and open water pond, but also include rivers and the 200-foot riverfront areas which border rivers on both sides, small streams that dry up during part of the year, low-lying floodplains and vernal (springtime) pools. These areas (except riverfront areas) are surrounded by "buffer zones" – 100 foot wide protective zones around wetlands that protect wetlands from human impacts and provide valuable wildlife habitat. Some other resource areas that are within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission include Dunes, Beach, Salt Marsh, and Land Under Water Bodies due to their unique environmental functions.



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
- Pollution prevention
- Storm damage prevention

All Salisbury residents benefit from these services because of our reliance on natural settings for property values, wells for drinking water, and economic gains through tourism to the river and beautiful natural sand beaches. The Conservation Commission is responsible for protecting these areas through enforcement of the state wetlands protection laws and regulations. We are all stewards of these natural areas and are tasked with the responsibility to protect them through conservation and sustainable practices.

When Do I Need A Permit From the Commission?

Any activity that involves disturbance of the soil or vegetation in or within 100 feet of wetlands, streams, water bodies, lands subject to flooding, salt marsh, coastal dune or beach or within 200 feet of perennial streams, requires a permit from the Conservation Commission. Any work that disturbs the soil or vegetation at the Salisbury Beach area (from the ocean to the marsh) requires approval from the Commission. Contact the Conservation Office at (978)499-0358 for more information or see DEP regulations - 310 CMR 10.00.

BEFORE Starting a Project Contact the Commission:

A large percentage of Salisbury homeowners have resource areas on or near their property. If you plan to do any work in a resource area, within the 100 foot buffer zone of a resource area, or within 200 feet of a river, or anywhere at Salisbury Beach such as: Tree removal or other vegetation clearing, grading or excavation, new landscaping, new construction and reconstruction, seawalls, bulkheads or revetments, importing fill, fencing, installing a pool, or any other activity that might alter wetlands or their buffer zones, you must contact the Commission first.

****Do not assume your contractor will automatically pull all necessary permits for you.** If you do need approval, professional staff is ready to answer your questions and help guide you through the application process. 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 more than one public hearing.

Wetland Do's and Don'ts

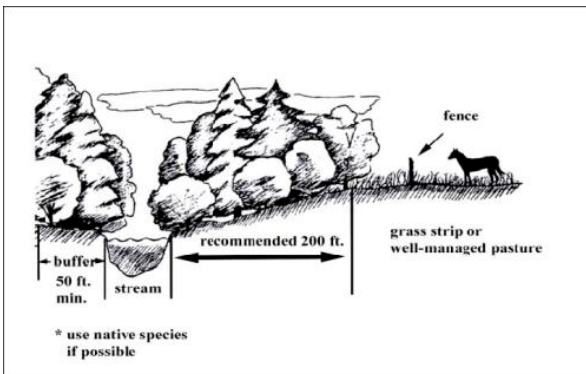
Many activities near wetland resource areas are allowed in the *riverfront area* and *buffer zone* and do not require Commission approval, including:

- Mowing an existing lawn, but not expanding it
- Working in an existing garden, pruning/maintaining existing landscaping, and planting native landscaping
- Unpaved pedestrian walkways for private use
- Hiking, horseback riding, and other passive recreation
- Cleaning out culverts
- Fencing that does not create a barrier to wildlife movement

Other activities are prohibited in wetland resource areas or buffer zones and are subject to enforcement:

- Dumping yard waste such as leaves, grass, etc, or other waste products, including manure
- Dumping dirt or other fill
- Draining or pumping water from a wetland, pond or stream
- Building dams or removing beaver dams
- Solid walls or solid fencing are not allowed anywhere *in the beach area*

Wetlands function best in their natural state. Do not clear them or remove brush or fallen logs. Wildlife often thrives in areas with brush piles, rotting logs, and other things some people might consider messy or untidy.



All projects should be designed to AVOID, MINIMIZE and MITIGATE impacts to natural habitats and wetland resource areas.

**The Town of Salisbury does not endorse or promote any particular business or company. All information provided herein is for educational purposes only.*