

## WHAT WETLANDS DO STATE AND LOCAL LAWS PROTECT?

Wetlands and their buffer zones. 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.

A Commission permit is required for any work:

- Within 125 feet of a:
  - Swamp or marsh
  - Forested wetland
  - Vernal pool
  - Pond
  - Intermittent stream



- Within 200 feet of a stream that flows year round

- Within the 100-year flood zone

Wetlands may not be wet all the time. Low areas that flood in the spring may be wetlands.

Wetlands are valuable because they reduce flooding, provide wildlife habitat, help recharge aquifers, and filter polluted water.

## ARE BUFFER ZONES AROUND WETLANDS PROTECTED?

Yes! Buffer zones, the land within 125 feet of wetlands, are critical in maintaining health and productivity of wetlands.

Laws also regulate work within 200 feet of a stream.

## WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE REGULATED?

The Conservation Commission must permit activities that will alter wetlands or their buffer zones. Regulated activities include:

- Dumping leaves, brush, grass, debris
- Cutting trees or shrubs
- Reconstructing lawns
- Building or constructing structures or a septic system
- Grading, excavating, or filling
- Changing storm water discharge
- Polluting wetlands or streams

You can maintain lawfully existing (grandfathered or permitted) structures, lawns and landscapes, and you can do some limited vista pruning of trees, but cutting of whole trees, clearing understory, construction, earth disturbing activities, or drainage altering activities require a permit.

## 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 picture in this flyer.
2. Call the Conservation Office with questions.
3. Complete the required application.
4. Attend a public hearing.
5. Get a permit before starting work.



## WHAT HAPPENS TO VIOLATORS?

Under the state Wetland Protection Act and Framingham Wetland Bylaw, the Conservation Commission can require illegally altered land to be restored, and can issue fines.

Violations include unpermitted:

- Dumping of grass, leaves, brush, or debris in a wetland or buffer zone;
- Cutting of trees or shrubs within Riverfront Area, wetland, or buffer; or
- Building without a permit within Riverfront Area, wetland, or buffer.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Wetlands on both public and private property are regulated.
- You are responsible for activity that occurs on your property. Before you hire a tree company, landscaper, or contractor call the Conservation office to determine if you need a permit.
- The Conservation Commission takes action and issues fines for work done without a permit.
- Wetlands can be wooded or meadow-like; wetlands often appear dry in the summer.
- 30% of Framingham falls under wetland regulations (so your property may, too).



DO NOT BUILD



DO NOT DUMP



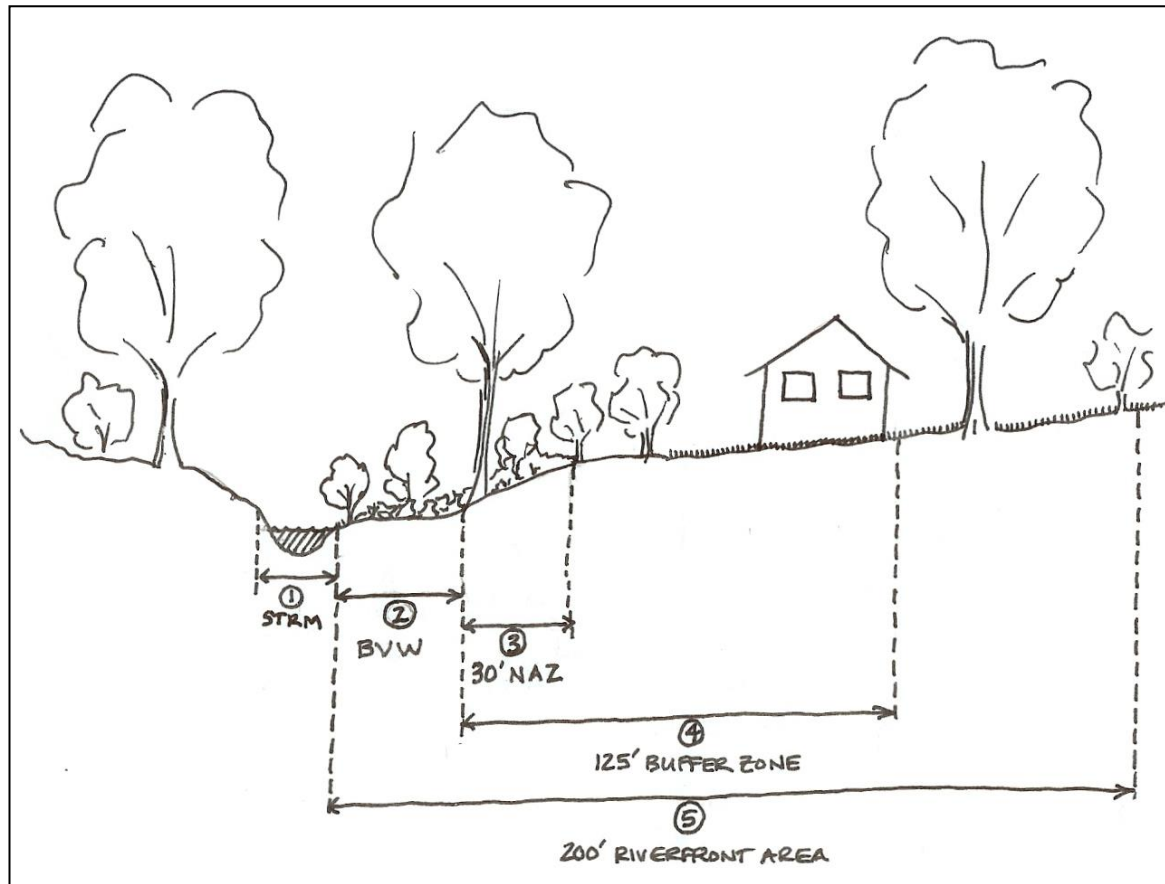
DO NOT CUT



DO NOT GRADE

WITHOUT A PERMIT

## Wetland Resource Areas and Buffer Zones



**Get a permit for any work in any of these areas!**

### General Standards for each Area

<b>STRM</b> .....	Stream .....	<b>Little to no activity</b> can be permitted
<b>BVW</b> .....	Bordering Vegetated Wetland.....	<b>Little to no activity</b> can be permitted
<b>30' NAZ</b> .....	30-Foot No-Alteration Zone.....	<b>Little to no activity</b> can be permitted
<b>125' Buffer Zone</b> .....	125-Foot Buffer Zone.....	<b>Many activities</b> can be permitted
<b>200' Riverfront Area</b> .....	200-Foot Riverfront Area .....	<b>Many activities</b> can be permitted

# LIVING WITH WETLANDS

A Guide to  
Wetland Protection Laws  
in Framingham



**BEFORE** you  
dump, cut, or build  
near wetlands – ask if  
you need a permit.

Framingham Conservation Commission  
Memorial Building, Room 213  
150 Concord St.

Hours: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Mon - Fri

**Phone: 508-532-5460**

Fax: 508-872-5616

Email: [conservationcommission@framinghamma.gov](mailto:conservationcommission@framinghamma.gov)

Web: [www.framinghamMA.gov](http://www.framinghamMA.gov)