



TOWN OF HINGHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Storage of Seasonal Floats and Ramps

The Conservation Commission prohibits storage of seasonal floats and ramps on any salt marsh, mudflat, coastal beach, or coastal bank due to the negative impacts that floats have on these protected resource areas. The Hingham Wetland Regulations, Section 23.4(c)(8), require that floats be stored in an area outside of any wetland resource area and transported without causing any damage to resource areas. When seasonal floats are placed on salt marsh, temporarily or otherwise, the integrity of the marsh vegetation and underlying peat may be detrimentally impacted. Salt marshes provide a variety of important ecological functions including wildlife habitat, removing pollutants from surrounding waters, absorbing wave energy, helping to reduce coastal erosion, and providing feeding areas for marine fish and invertebrate species.

Salt Marsh is also a protected resource area under the state Wetlands Protection Act, MGL ch.131 § 40, and implementing regulations as it is deemed significant to the interests of the Act and the protection of marine fisheries. The State Division of Marine Fisheries, a review agency empowered through the MA Wetland Protection Act, also recommends all floats and ramps be removed seasonally and stored upland away from salt marsh.

Examples of the damage caused by placing floats on a salt marsh include:

- Loss of salt marsh grass productivity and reduction in the density of salt marsh grass caused by the float prohibiting the sunlight from penetrating to the salt marsh grass that is beneath the float.
- A change to the uniform tidal flow moving in and out of the marsh. This happens through the formation of small currents around the base of the float. The result is erosion occurring where the float sits. It is important to understand that a change in the tidal flow around the float could also result in an accumulation of sediment around the edges of the float, once again reducing the productivity of the marsh grass by covering it.
- Damage to the root structure and the interconnected rhizomes of the salt marsh grass that hold the grass and the peat in place. The weight of the float compresses the underlying peat, causing damage.

Thank you for your cooperation in protecting Hingham's coastal resources by storing your seasonal float and ramp off the property or in an upland area. Please contact the Conservation office if you have any questions or concerns about coastal resources or proper storage of your float.

