

Town of Hingham Conservation Office

Working Near Wetland Resource Areas



Many Hingham homeowners have wetland resource areas on or near their property. If you are planning a project within 100 ft. of a wetland or 200 ft. of a perennial stream or river, you are required by law to contact the Hingham Conservation Commission for a permit.

What is a wetland?

Wetlands form where water collects or where shallow groundwater is found. Some wetlands, such as a pond or the ocean, are obvious. Other less obvious wetlands may look like a forested lot or a wildflower field. These less obvious wetlands are identified by the presence of plants that grow in wetlands and soils that form in wetlands.

Wetlands are an important part of the ecosystem that function best in a natural state. Clearing them or “cleaning them up” is harmful. Wildlife thrives in areas with brush piles, rotting logs, fallen leaves, and other things people may consider untidy.

Floodplains, located in inland or coastal areas, are also wetlands.

1. An inland floodplain is an area that experiences surface water flooding following storms, prolonged rainfall, or snowmelt.
2. Coastal floodplains are areas along coastlines that are subject to a 1% chance of major flooding during storm events. They are designated on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps as A and V flood zones.
3. Isolated Land Subject to Flooding (ILSF) is a special type of floodplain, where a landscape depression fills with water seasonally. Vernal pools may be found in ILSF.

Why does the Town of Hingham and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts protect wetlands?

Wetlands are protected by town and state law because of their importance in the preservation of clean drinking water, groundwater and flood control, the prevention of storm damage and pollution, and the protection of shellfish, fisheries and wildlife habitat. The Hingham Wetlands Protection By-Law further includes the protection of wildlife, rare species habitat, recreation and open space, aesthetics, and erosion and sediment control.

Who needs to apply for a permit?

Any proposed work or activity within 100 ft. of a wetland or 200 ft. of a perennial stream

or river likely requires permit. The Conservation Office can help you determine whether your project requires a permit and, if so, navigate the permitting process. Below are the most common applications:

Administrative Review – intended for small projects; processed by the Conservation Office.

Request for Determination of Applicability – intended for more extensive projects; requires a hearing before the Commission.

Notice of Intent – intended for large projects, especially those in close proximity to wetlands; requires a hearing before the Commission.

It is your responsibility to file. Do not assume your contractor will file for you.

NOTE: It is illegal to place any type fill, including yard waste (e.g., grass clippings and leaves), or toxins in wetlands.

Questions or Concerns? Contact us at:

Hingham Conservation Office
210 Central Street, 2nd floor
Hingham, MA 02043
781-741-1445

<http://www.hingham-ma.gov/conservation/>

Office Hours
Mon., Wed., & Thurs. 8:30am-4:30pm
Tues. 8:30am-7pm, Fri. 8:30am-1pm