

Wetlands A Valuable Resource



- ❖ Wetlands provide habitat for fish, birds, mammals and other wildlife by providing breeding, feeding and nesting grounds.
- ❖ People visit NH to see moose and other wildlife. Wildlife viewing is good for the economy and tourism.
- ❖ Wetlands protect water quality- we all need clean water to drink.
- ❖ Wetlands moderate and reduce floods and runoff conditions. Wetlands are nature's flood control mechanism.
- ❖ Wetlands provide passive recreational opportunities for fishing, bird watching, hiking and canoeing/kayaking.
- ❖ Wetlands provide opportunities for all ages to learn about nature, and are outdoor classrooms for school groups and research.
- ❖ Wetlands are nature's corridor or pathways for animals to migrate.
- ❖ Wetlands support many plant species; wetland plants are used to make medicines and used in research.
- ❖ Wetlands provide a visual landscape to enjoy observing wildlife and listen to the sounds of nature.

Want More Information

Contact the planning staff for the Nashua Conservation Commission (NCC) at (603) 589-3105. The public is encouraged and invited to attend the meetings. The NCC meets the first and third Tuesday of the month. The agenda and meeting schedule are posted on the city's website.



Local Land Use Regulations

Nashua Planning and Zoning Department
(603) 589-3090

To Report Land Use Violations

Nashua Code Enforcement
(603) 589-3100

State Regulations

Department of Environmental Services (NHDES)
Wetland Bureau
(603) 271-2147

Inquires To

Nashua Conservation Commission
Community Development Division
City Hall, 2nd floor
229 Main Street, PO Box 2019
Nashua, New Hampshire 03061-2019
www.nashuanh.gov

Our quality of life depends on a balanced natural environment.

April 2011

Wetlands and Wetland Buffers

A Guide to Protecting and Preserving Nashua's Natural Resources



What is a wetland? Wetlands are defined in local, state and federal regulations. In state regulations, RSA 482-A "Wetlands" mean an area that is inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal conditions does support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. In more simple terms a wetland is a river, lake, stream, intermittent stream, tidal area, brook, bog, pond, marsh, wet meadow, vernal pool or other area that has distinctive plants, hydrologic features, and soil characteristics.

What is a wetland buffer and why are they important?

A wetland buffer is a defined area adjacent to a wetland. It is the vegetated transition zone between an upland area and the aquatic ecosystem. Wetland buffers vary in size based on factors such as adjacent land use, land ownership, topography, wetland area, and ecological functions. Buffer requirements vary depending on the wetlands they protect and vary from community to community. Wetland buffers help maintain healthy wetlands. Nashua recognizes their value and the local land use code has wetland buffer requirements.

Wetland Buffers:

- Improve water quality by trapping and/or transforming pollutants such as sediments, nutrients, pathogens, and pesticides in surface water and groundwater.
- Stabilize streambanks and help to protect infrastructure, improve safety, and reduce sediment loading.
- Provide space for flood water to spread laterally once it leaves a channel; slowing flood water velocity and unsaturated soils help provide additional temporary storage for flood water.
- Provide space for trails, and space for enjoying the wetland environment with minimal impacts.

Wetland and Wetland Buffer Requirements

In the Nashua code, wetlands are classified as prime, critical, other and vernal pool. A detailed list is provided in the Nashua Land Use Code, Article XI, Table 112-1, as may be amended. All wetlands shall be delineated in the field by a NH certified wetland scientist (CWS), per local and state regulations.

Prime Wetlands 75 foot buffers

- Merrimack River*
- Nashua River*
- Salmon Brook*
- Pennichuck Brook, Bower's Pond, Harris Pond, Holts Pond, Pennichuck Pond, Supply Pond*
- Lovewell's Pond*
- Horse Pond*
- Old Ridge Road wetlands
- Nashua Canal
- Nashua Cove

Critical Wetlands * 40 foot buffers

Boire Brook	Hassells Brook
Coburn Pond	Lincoln Brook
Cold Brook	Lyle Reed Brook
Colerain Brook	Mill Pond
Hales Brook	Muddy Brook
Harris Brook	Old Maids Brook
Round Pond	Spectacle Brook
Spit Brook	Trout Brook
Sandy Pond	

Other wetlands over 9,000 sq ft 40 feet

Other wetlands over 3,000 sq ft 20 feet

Vernal Pools 20 foot minimum buffer

* Protection extends to their wetlands

What you can do to help protect wetlands and wetland buffer areas on your property, in your neighborhood and in the city.

- Call the city and ask questions before doing any work near a wetland and wetland buffer area, including removing trees and vegetation. Your project may need review by the NCC, the Zoning Board of Adjustment or others, including the State.
- Maintain a buffer area near any wetland.
- Dispose of leaves, branches and other yard waste in cans or bags at the curb-side for free removal by the City; don't dump yard waste in the nearby wetland area. Yard waste may contain pollutants like fertilizers, pesticides, road salt, animal waste, other contaminants and invasive plant species. Remember wildlife lives in the wetlands.
- Slow-release fertilizers are recommended for lawns outside the wetland buffer.
- Minimize the use of salt and sand in the winter.
- Use landscape materials that reduce soil loss such as mulch, straw (not hay) and cover exposed areas with natural planting (not invasive or exotic species).
- Use vegetative borders or a fence which allow wildlife to move freely. Limit mowing near the edges to minimize wildlife and nesting habitat disturbance.
- Learn about best management practices (BMPs).
- Read about wetlands at the local library, on the Internet or other media sources.
- Get involved, come to a NCC meeting.
- Take time to enjoy and appreciate the natural environment, remember without wetlands we won't see beavers, moose, fish, otters, salamanders, frogs, dragonflies, heron, red-winged blackbirds, loons, turtles, crayfish and many other wonderful creatures.

