

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WETLANDS PROTECTION IN BELCHERTOWN

## What are Wetlands?

“Wetland resource areas” include the commonly known cattail marsh, wet meadows, red maple swamps and open water pond, also rivers that generally flow throughout the year, 200-foot riverfront areas which border rivers or streams on both sides, intermittent streams on both sides, intermittent streams that dry up during part of the year, associated banks, low-lying flood plains and vernal/ephemeral pools. These areas (except riverfront areas) are surrounded by “buffer zones” -100ft. wide protective zones that protect wetlands from human impacts.

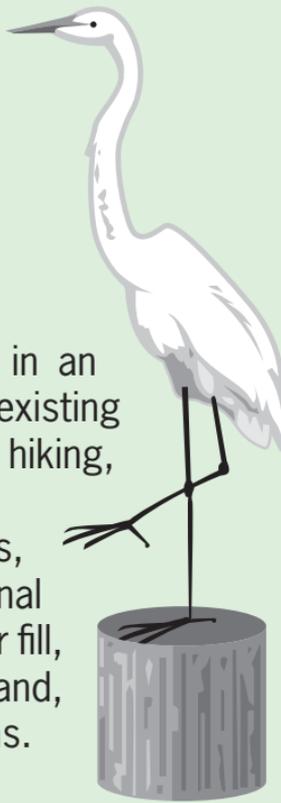


## Why are they important?

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 and storage
- Pollution prevention
- Wildlife Habitat



## Wetlands Do's and Don'ts

**Do's:** Mowing an existing lawn, working in an existing garden, pruning/maintaining existing landscaping, planting native vegetation, hiking, horseback riding, passive recreation.

**Don'ts:** Dumping yard waste, leaves, grass, manure, any work within 100ft of a vernal pool/ephemeral pool, dumping dirt or other fill, draining/pumping water to or from a wetland, pond or stream, building or removing dams.

**The Conservation Commission strongly recommends that you avoid using chemicals anywhere on your property due to the potential hazards that they pose to your drinking water, your children and your pets.**

A large percentage of Belchertown homeowners have wetland resource areas on or near their property.

If you plan to do any work in a wetland, within 100ft. of a wetland, or within 200ft. of a stream or river, such as: tree or vegetation removal or clearing, grading, excavation or paving, landscaping, construction, etc. or ANY other activity that might alter wetlands or their buffer zones, you must contact the Belchertown Conservation Commission.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO PROTECT BELCHERTOWN'S NATURAL RESOURCES

