

What Projects are Included

The following are examples of included projects:

- Tree removal or other vegetation clearing
- Grading or excavation, including work on roads and driveways
- New landscaping
- Construction of homes, additions, or outbuildings
- Installation of new or replacement septic systems or wells
- Almost any work done near Lake Wyola

The complexity of the approval process is commensurate with the type and scale of the activity proposed. Minor projects such as removing a few trees may be handled by a simple approval letter, while a large construction project may require a detailed application and evaluation during one or more public hearings. A site visit is always the first step.

Keep in mind that the Conservation Commission must sign off on all Building Permit Applications when digging is required

Before signing a building permit application, you must schedule a site visit to determine whether the project is in or near a wetland. If there are wetlands near your proposed project, you will be asked to file a **Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA)** or a **Notice of Intent (NOI)** before a signature is given. The process can take several weeks, so **don't wait until your contractor is ready to start** your project to request the Commission's signature!

Do not assume your contractor will pull all necessary permits. If you do need approval for your project, the Conservation Commission is ready to answer your questions and help guide you through the application process.

Wetland "Do's and Don'ts"

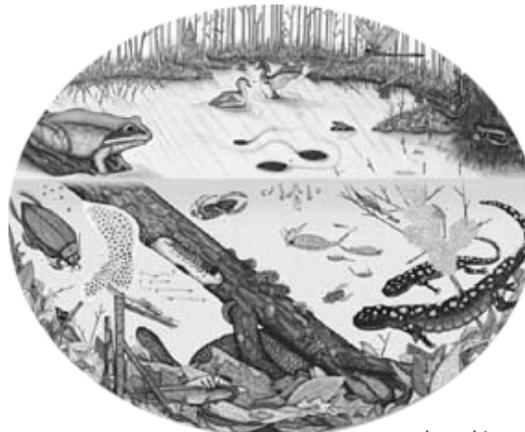
Many activities near wetland resource areas **are allowed** and do not require Commission approval, including:

- Mowing an existing lawn
- Working in an existing garden
- Pruning and maintaining existing landscaping
- Planting native vegetation
- Hiking, horseback riding, and other passive recreation
- Routine maintenance of existing culverts

Other activities **are prohibited** in wetland resource areas or buffer zones and are subject to fines (some are allowed, but only with a permit):

- Dumping yard waste such as leaves, grass, or other waste products, including manure
- Constructing animal paddocks
- Dumping dirt or other fill
- Draining or pumping water from a wetland, pond, or stream
- Building dams or removing beaver dams

Wetlands function best in a natural state. Do not clear them or "clean them up." Wildlife often thrives in areas with brush piles, rotting logs, and other things some might consider "untidy."



vernal pool in spring

What are Wetlands?

The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act protects wetlands and their buffer zones on both public and private property. In Shutesbury, the **most common wetland resource areas are wooded wetlands and shrub wetlands**. These can easily be overlooked, as they may be dry part of the year. Shutesbury's Wetlands Protection Bylaw protects small wetlands that are not protected under the state regulations.

Other examples of wetlands include **cattail marshes, open water ponds** (including man-made ponds) and **lakes, rivers** that generally flow throughout the year, **intermittent streams** that dry up during part of the year, low-lying **flood plains**, and **vernal pools** (which also dry up).

These wetland resource areas are surrounded by **100-foot buffer zones**. These buffer zones around wetlands protect them from human impacts and provide valuable wildlife habitat. In riverfront areas, the buffer zone is 200 feet on both sides of the river.

Why are Wetlands Important?

Wetland resource areas provide essential **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
- Pollution prevention

All Shutesbury residents benefit from these services because of our reliance on natural settings for property values, wells for drinking water, and septic systems for waste disposal.

A Few Words about Lawn Care

The chemicals that come out of your weed killer bottle can be harmful to humans, pets, wildlife, and non-targeted plants. And the lawn care products you use do a lot more than make your lawn green. If you live next to a lake or pond, lawn fertilizers can also cause excessive plant growth in the water, harming both the environment and aesthetics. If you must use fertilizer near a water body, make sure a buffer strip of grass that has not been fertilized lies between the area of application and the water body. This will help prevent unwanted nutrients from running into the water body.



In Emergency Situations

- If you observe a violation on a site with a posted DEP file number (286-###), call the Conservation Commission at 413-259-3792
- If you observe a violation of Town Regulations (such as dumping on a roadway), call the Shutesbury police at 413-259-1279
- If you observe a violation of wetlands regulations (such as destroying a beaver dam), call the Environmental Police Emergency Dispatch at 1-800-632-8075

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The Role of the Conservation Commission

The Shutesbury Conservation Commission is a volunteer group, appointed by the Select Board and dedicated to protecting the community's natural resources and open space.

The Commission is the local arm of the Department of Environmental Protection and is responsible for administering:

- the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Ch. 131 §40)
- Shutesbury's General Wetlands Protection Bylaw and
- the accompanying regulations

The Commission wants to help property owners proceed with their projects while simultaneously protecting the valuable wetland resources that benefit all of us.

How to Contact the Commission

- 1) Visit Town Hall during the office hours of Linda Scott, Conservation Commission Clerk:
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10 am - 12 noon
- 2) Come to one of our meetings on Thursdays at 7 pm. Our schedule varies with the season:
March - October, on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays
November - February, on the 2nd Thursday
- 3) Leave a message:
Phone: 413-259-3792
Email: concom@shutesbury.org
- 4) Write to us:
Shutesbury Conservation Commission
Town Hall
Box 276
Shutesbury, MA 01072

For additional information on the Shutesbury Conservation Commission and links to Department of Environmental Protection's wetland NOI & RDA forms, visit our website at www.shutesbury.org/concom

BEFORE Starting a Project, Contact the Shutesbury Conservation Commission



Many Shutesbury residents have wetlands on or near their property. Some are large and obvious (like Lake Wyola), while others are small and often go unnoticed (such as vernal pools and intermittent streams that dry up in the summer).

If you plan to do any work

- in a wetland (resource area),
- within 100 feet of a wetland (wetland buffer zone),
- within 200 feet of a river, or
- any other activity that might alter wetlands or their protective buffer zones,

you must contact the Conservation Commission before you begin.