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**Press Release
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Inland Wetland Violations Are on the Rise - Ask Before You Do Work

Wilton's Department of Environmental Affairs is seeing a significant increase in Inland Wetland violations. In addition to delays, violations can result in fees and possible legal action.

Residents with a watercourse or wetlands on or near their property are encouraged to contact the department before beginning work, as a permit may be required. Even if residents have engaged a contractor, it is always best to check with the department before starting work.

Wetlands are a valuable part of Wilton's ecosystem and are woven into the fabric of the landscape. They provide areas that filter stormwater runoff, serve as aquifer recharge points, and provide unique habitats for wildlife. The Inland Wetland Commission is responsible for protecting and preserving wetlands and watercourses in our community. The Commission reviews proposed land disturbance activities that may occur in a wetland or within 100 feet of a wetland or watercourse and issues permits to allow projects in regulated areas.

What is a wetland?

A wetland is land where the soils are designated as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial or floodplain. Wetlands are often slow to drain after heavy rain storms and often where water is present permanently or seasonally. Wilton has red maple swamps that hold surface water all year but there are other wetlands such as vernal pools that dry up completely in the heat of the summer months.

Wetlands are important to protect for water quality purposes and environmental balance for many species to survive. Ponds and watercourses are easily identifiable as wetlands as water is almost always present however, wetlands are delineated based on soil type and not necessarily visibly wet throughout the year. A Certified Soil Scientist may need to be hired by the property owner to delineate the soils on properties prior to a permit being issued.

What is a watercourse?

Watercourses are bodies of water such as rivers, streams, brooks, lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, and bogs. They include natural and artificial water bodies and can be permanent or intermittent.

How do I find out if my property has wetlands or watercourses?

The Department of Environmental Affairs may have a historical file with wetlands information for your property from a past permit request. If you are planning any work on your property, you can contact the department staff to help determine if wetlands exist on or adjacent to your property.

What type of work requires a permit?

Any site work within 100 feet of a wetland or watercourse requires a wetland permit. Homeowners most frequently request permits for projects like installing a generator or air conditioner unit, putting up a shed or playground set, clearing a forested area to increase lawn space and excavation or site grading work.

For assistance in determining what type of work may require a permit and for help navigating the process contact the Department of Environmental Affairs by email at mike.conklin@wiltonct.org or by phone at (203) 563-0180. Office hours are Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. For more information, visit the department's website at [Department of Environmental Affairs](#).