



**Town of North Branford  
Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency  
Property Owner's Guide**

**Why are Wetlands and Watercourses Important?**

Wetlands are important features of our landscape that bring economic benefits to communities. Many people don't realize that healthy wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems on the planet. Wetlands and watercourses are part of a diverse and complex set of ecosystems that are vital to Connecticut's economy and an important part of our natural heritage.

As a property owner you play a big role in wetland protection and health. Protecting a wetland doesn't necessarily require additional effort on your part. Often times it's what you don't do that's important. Your most effective protection strategy may be as simple as guarding it from activities that will damage it. This may be as simple as maintaining a protective zone or buffer around the wetland to protect it.

**Protective Regulation**

In 1972, the Connecticut State Legislature enacted the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act which requires municipal governments to regulate activities affecting Inland Wetlands and Watercourses.

The State of Connecticut recommends the first 100-feet from a wetland or watercourse as an "upland review area" subject to review by the local municipality's Inlands Wetlands and Watercourses Agency (IWWA). The Town of North Branford IWWA Regulations adopted the 100-foot upland review area for all wetlands and watercourses with the exception of the Farm River which has a 200-foot upland review area.

Many property owners are often surprised to learn their property contains or is near protected wetlands. Watercourses, ponds, wetland plants and grasses are clearly recognized as wetlands. Some areas are not so obvious requiring soil testing and flagging by a Soil Scientist to be identified.

Permitting is required before any activities can take place within or near a wetlands or watercourse and before any work can commence. There are certain uses and activities within those areas that are regulated, such as removal or deposition of soil and vegetation. Other restricted activities include obstruction of stream flow, construction, landscape alteration,

pollution, removing trees, clearing brush and grasses within the wetland buffer area, directly in wetlands or on stream banks. The IWWA will grant a permit if it finds the activity will not cause harm to the wetland or watercourse.

North Branford's Farm River is a Public Water Source with significant ecological benefits. It is vital that the land adjacent to the Farm River be protected from disruption. As with all wetlands and watercourses it is imperative that there be no introduction of chemicals, such as pesticides, fertilizers, or septic effluent into the Farm River.

It is the intent of the North Branford IWWA to work with you to responsibly develop your property to both meet your needs and that of protecting our environment. More information can be found on the Town of North Branford website or call the **Town Planner's Office at 203-484-6010**. The Town Planner has resources available, such as a town wetlands map that might indicate if your property is potentially in a wetland or adjacent to a watercourse.

### **Protective Measures**

It is imperative that all of us work together to protect our wetlands and waterways. Wetlands and watercourses are of huge ecological and environmental significance providing protection from floods, habitats for wildlife and aquatic animals, as well as plants which act as a carbon sink, etc.

Some measures you can take to protect our wetlands and watercourses:

- **Do:**
  - Understand if your property is located within or adjacent to a wetland or a watercourse.
  - Contact the North Branford Town Planner if you intend to build an addition, deck, pool, driveway, cut trees and other vegetation within a wetlands and watercourse review area.
  - Obtain a permit for any planned activities within a review area.
  - Everything you can to protect our wetlands.
  - Enjoy the beauty of your wetland.
- **Don't:**
  - Fill in wetlands with soil, debris, leaves or grass clippings.
  - Divert or change the water flow of watercourses.
  - Cut grasses, bushes or trees in wetlands or along watercourses and river banks.
  - Use pesticides or fertilizers within the buffer area or near watercourses.
  - Dump motor oil or other chemicals into or near wetlands or watercourses.

Thank you for making North Branford a better place to live by protecting its wetlands and watercourses.