Weston Conservation Commission

- Commission Roles and Responsibilities
- Laws that protect Wetlands
- What residents can do to protect wetlands and open space
Conservation Commission

- Made up of 7 volunteer residents (members)
- 1 staff (Conservation Administrator)
- Generally meets every other Tuesday
- Experience with stormwater, engineering, landscaping, and wetland laws
The Commission’s Three-Part Mission

- Open Space Management
- Wetland Protection & Permitting
- Public Education and Engagement
Open Space Protection & Management

- Commission owns approx. 2,000 acres of fields, forests, and wetlands
Promote Passive Recreation

Trail Maps available at Town Hall
Open Space Management

Collaborate with Weston Forest and Trail Assoc. & Land’s Sake to maintain trails
Open Space Management

• Mow Fields
• Preserve Field Edges
Open Space Protection & Management

Survey and Identify boundaries

Identify and address encroachments
Why Protect Wetlands?

- Wetlands **protect our groundwater**
- Wetlands **store floodwater** and release it slowly downstream preventing storm damage
- Wetlands **absorb excess nutrients and trap many kinds of pollutants**
- Wetlands **provide vital habitat** for wildlife.
Wetland Permitting

Anyone wishing to **work** within 100’ of a **wetland** or 200’ of a perennial stream **MUST** get a permit from the Conservation Commission.
What is considered “work”?

- Cutting trees and shrubs
  - To expand a lawn, let in more light, etc.
  - To “clean up” the woods, improve safety, etc.
- Grading
  - To rebuild a lawn or driveway, etc.
  - Improving drainage
- Building
  - New construction, additions, etc.
  - New paving
  - Sheds
What “wetland resource areas” are protected?

- Rivers, brooks & streams
What “wetland resource areas” are protected?

- Ponds & lakes
What “wetland resource areas” are protected?

- Banks of waterways & water bodies
What “wetland resource areas” are protected?

- Vegetated Wetlands
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What “wetland resource areas” are protected?

- Land within 200 feet of streams & rivers
- 100-year Floodplains
What “wetland resource areas” are protected?

- Vernal Pools
What “wetland resource areas” are protected?

- Work within 100’ Buffer Zone must also be permitted
How Do I Know If Wetlands Exist Near My Property?

- Call the Conservation Office
Wetland Permitting Process

- Applicant submits an **Application**
- Commission **reviews the application** & performs a **site visit**.
Conservation Permitting Process

- The Commission holds a **public hearing**
- If the project will not impact the functions of the wetland, the Commission **issues a permit**
What Happens if You Don’t File?

- **Enforcement Order** requiring restoration of buffer zone and/or wetland
- Landowner may be required to hire a wetland scientist to prepare a *restoration plan* and monitor site for 2 years
What Happens if You Don’t File?

- Restoration of illegally altered areas
What Happens if You Don’t File?

- Restoration of stream and wetlands
Other Local Laws That Protect Wetlands

- Proposed Stormwater Bylaw
  - Land clearing / Earth removal
- Illicit Discharge Bylaw
Conservation Challenges We Face

- Educating residents about wetland values of wetland laws
- Assisting residents through the permitting process
- Addressing wetland violations & bringing sites back into compliance
- Protecting and Managing Weston’s Open Space
Public Education and Engagement

■ **Homeowners:** assist with permit applications

■ **Prospective buyers & realtors:** provide maps and information

■ **Special groups:** mail issue-specific outreach letters to neighborhoods, landscapers, and pond abutters
Thank you for protecting Weston’s Natural Resources

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