

# Rochester Wetlands

## What are wetlands?

Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, and open bodies of water (ponds, rivers and perennial streams). Some are wet year-round, while others are dry part of the year and may not appear as wetlands. Wetlands serve many important functions including: floodwater storage, filtering of pollutants, ground water recharge and wildlife habitat.

## What is a wetland buffer?

A wetland buffer is an area of land adjacent to a stream, wetland or pond which protects these sensitive resources from pollutants in stormwater or snow melt runoff.

## Rochester's

### Conservation Overlay District

The City of Rochester's Zoning Ordinance includes overlay districts that are established in recognition of special conditions which exist in these areas. Overlay districts contain additional restrictions above and beyond those of base zoning districts. The Conservation Overlay District contains regulations that are designed to protect wetlands.



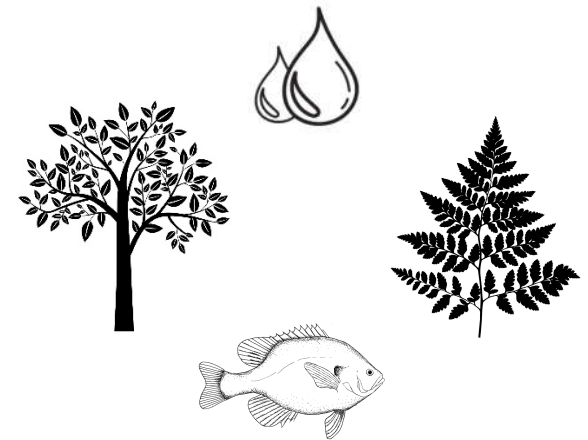
# City and State Buffer Regulations

In October 2003, Rochester adopted an ordinance requiring wetland buffers on all new developments. The ordinance stipulates a **50-foot** buffer around all wetlands larger than 1/2 acre, and along all ponds, perennial streams and vernal pools. It established a **75-foot** buffer along the Cocheco, Salmon Falls, and Isinglass Rivers. These buffers must remain largely undisturbed, although some limited activities are allowed, and the Planning Board may approve a conditional use permit which allows for development within a buffer.

In 2008, the NH Legislature enacted an updated Comprehensive Shoreline Protection Act (RSA 483-B). This Act regulates all property within a 250' "reference line" of public water bodies including; lakes, ponds, rivers, tidal waters, "designated rivers", and fourth order streams. This law sets restrictive standards for development, tree removal, logging, levels of disturbance, fertilizer use, amount of impervious surface, and other activities. In addition, the Cocheco River and Isinglass River are State Designated Rivers. Land use changes for designated rivers are subject to special review under the New Hampshire Rivers Management and Protection Program.

# Wetland buffers are important.

- Buffers serve as natural filters to absorb and contain pollutants and sediment.
- Buffers and the wetlands associated with them are important wildlife habitats.
- Buffers act as "sponges" during large storm events by helping to reduce flooding.



## How you can help protect conservation buffers.

Most local property owners are **not** affected by these regulations, but all citizens can play an important role in preventing pollution and maintaining the high quality of our beautiful rivers, streams, ponds and wetlands.

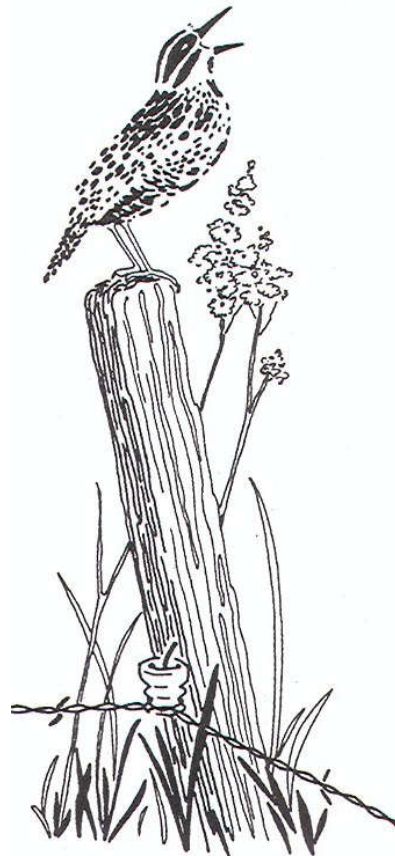
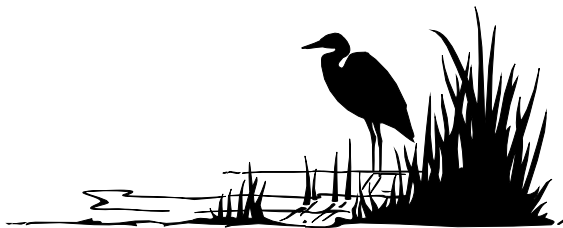
## **Please Do the following in buffers:**

- Protect existing vegetation from disturbance.
- Limit mowing to encourage wildlife.
- Replant bare or disturbed areas.
- Use erosion control measures for all construction projects near buffers.
- Install permanent markers along the wetland buffer.

## **Please Don't do the following in buffers:**

- Remove trees or other vegetation.
- Use fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides.
- Construct pools, decks, fences, or other structures in a buffer.
- Dispose of leaves or yard waste.
- Store vehicles, boats or construction materials.

**Thank you for your cooperation!**



## **Where can I find additional information?**

### **City of Rochester - Department of Planning and Development**

33 Wakefield Street  
Rochester NH 03867  
(603) 335-1338

[www.rochesternh.gov/planning-development](http://www.rochesternh.gov/planning-development)



### **NH Department of Environmental Services**

29 Hazen Drive  
Concord, NH 03302

[www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov)

#### Wetlands:

[www.des.nh.gov/water/wetlands](http://www.des.nh.gov/water/wetlands)

#### Designated Rivers:

[www.des.nh.gov/water/rivers-and-lakes/rivers-management-and-protection](http://www.des.nh.gov/water/rivers-and-lakes/rivers-management-and-protection)

#### Stormwater:

[www.des.nh.gov/water/stormwater](http://www.des.nh.gov/water/stormwater)