

# **DO YOU KNOW: Eightmile River Watershed Overlay District - East Haddam, CT**

## **What is the Watershed Overlay District?**

Administered and regulated by the East Haddam Planning and Zoning Commission, the zone is a narrow strip of land along streams that provides critical protection to the Eightmile Watershed. The goal of the zone is to preserve water quality, maintain fish and wildlife habitat, filter nutrients and reduce sediment deposits.

## **Does it apply to me?**

The zone only applies to areas within 100 or 50 feet of watercourses. Go to [www.eightmileriver.org/zone](http://www.eightmileriver.org/zone) to find out if your property is in the Watershed Overlay District.

## **How does it work?**

Just like any other 'zone' in town, the Watershed Overlay District serves as a tool to limit and guide activities within 100 or 50 feet of watercourses. Within 100 ft of larger and 50 ft of smaller streams, (see maps at [www.eightmileriver.org/zone](http://www.eightmileriver.org/zone)) certain activities are *as-of-right*, and higher impact activities require a special permit. The zone respects pre-existing activities and allows uses within the overlay area consistent with the protection of riparian corridor function.

## **What does it regulate?**

All land-disturbing activities are regulated - but many as-of-right activities do not require a permit. For example, continuance of any existing activities in existing locations such as mowing and maintenance of lawns, fields, farming, footpaths, horseback riding and utility improvement are all allowed as-of-right and do not require a permit. Certain fish and wildlife conservation activities are also allowed.

## **What activities are allowed without needing a permit?**

Activities within certain limits are allowed in the zone. These include maintenance to existing structures and continuing activities such as agriculture that were legally in existence before the effective date of this regulation, as well as fish and wildlife conservation activities.

## **What about larger activities within the district like new buildings & land clearing?**

Larger activities or those with a significant potential to degrade the existing vegetative buffer require a Special Exception Permit. Among other activities, these include building new structures, alteration of a current existing activity, and stream crossings with excavation or structures.

## **How does the Zoning Commission decide what activities are allowed?**

Standards are provided to guide the commission in its decision making. Issues that are considered include will the activity have an impact on the purposes of the zone? Will strict application of the zone deny reasonable use and are there better alternatives for the buffer than proposed?

## **The Watershed Overlay District regs are available.**

If your property is in the zone and you have or are contemplating activities, [please read the entire Watershed Overlay zoning regulation document](#) available at the East Haddam Town Hall or on-line at [www.eightmileriver.org/zone](http://www.eightmileriver.org/zone). Be aware that activity in or near wetlands or watercourses requires a separate permit from Town Hall. Your understanding and cooperation will help keep the Eightmile Watershed pristine and unique for generations to come.

### **Questions? Wondering if your planned activity needs a zoning permit?**

Please contact the East Haddam Land Use Department at Town Hall: **873-5031**