

DO YOU KNOW: Eightmile Watershed Overlay District - Lyme, CT

What is the Watershed Overlay District?

Administered and regulated by the Lyme Planning and Zoning Commission, the district is a narrow strip of land along perennial streams that provides critical protection to the Eightmile Watershed. The goal of the district 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 certain watercourses in the Eightmile Watershed. Go to www.eightmileriver.org/zone or the Lyme Town Hall 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 - in this case within 100 ft of larger and 50 ft of smaller streams (see maps at www.eightmileriver.org/zone). Certain activities are *as-of-right*, other land disturbing activities require a permit 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.

I want to do more than the as-of-right activities

Intermediate activities, within certain limits, are allowed in the zone with a permit. This includes small agricultural activities, conservation activities, forestry practices, minor land disturbing activities such as small gardens and simple stream crossings for example.

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 including 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 Watershed Overlay District and you have or are contemplating activities, [please read the entire Watershed Overlay District zoning regulation document](#) available at the Lyme Town Hall or on-line at 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 Lyme Land Use Department at Town Hall: **434-7733**