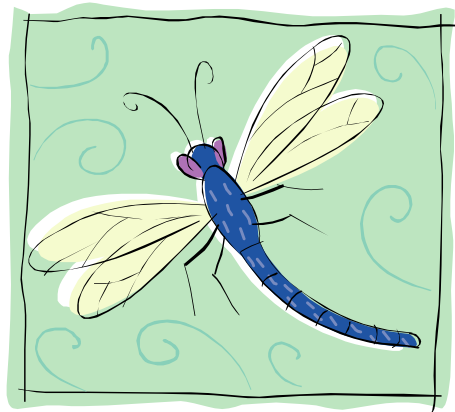


Homeowners Guide to the Nature of Sudbury



Including:

- **Protecting Wildlife Habitat**
- **Wetlands—When do You Need A Permit? How Do you Get One?**
- **Public Conservation Lands**

**Sudbury Conservation
Commission
275 Old Lancaster Road
Sudbury MA 01776
978-440-5470**

Sudbury Conservation Commission

MISSION STATEMENT:

To preserve and protect the Town's valuable water, land, animal, and plant resources for the benefit of present and future generations (under the legal authority granted by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Sudbury Wetlands Administration Bylaw); to educate the community on the benefits of resource protection and to encourage community participation in all town resource issues; to promote enjoyment and stewardship of our open spaces and natural resources.



PIPER FARM OVERLOOK

The Sudbury Conservation Commission was established in 1962 to protect local natural resources and features and to act as stewards of the town's conservation properties.

One of the Conservation Commission's most important responsibilities is protecting the ecological integrity of Sudbury's wetlands and the surrounding landscape. The Commission is responsible for implementing and enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Sudbury Wetlands Administration Bylaw.

WHEN DO I NEED A WETLANDS PERMIT?

The Sudbury Conservation Commission was established in 1962 to protect local natural resources and features and to act as stewards of the town's conservation properties. One of the Conservation Commission's most important responsibilities is protecting the ecological integrity of Sudbury's wetlands and the surrounding landscape. The Commission is also responsible for implementing and enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Sudbury Wetlands Administration Bylaw.

The Conservation Commission is comprised of a seven Sudbury residents who are appointed by the Town Manager and approved by the Board of Selectmen. Like all of the other members of town boards and commissions, they serve as volunteers and are not paid for their duties.

**We are your partner in protecting our natural resources.
If in doubt—CALL US. We love questions! 978-440-5471**

Mass. Wetlands Protection Act

The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) was enacted in 1972 and prohibits any filling, excavation or other alteration of the land, surface, water levels or vegetation in wetlands without a permit from the local Conservation Commission.

Sudbury Wetlands Administration Bylaw

In April 1994 Sudbury's Town Meeting approved a Wetlands Administration Bylaw by nearly unanimous vote. The Bylaw went into effect on July 27, 1994, and was subsequently amended at Town Meeting in April 1998. It incorporates many of the provisions of WPA but adds some more restrictions. It states that no person shall remove, fill, dredge, build upon, degrade, pollute, discharge into, or otherwise alter the following resource areas: any freshwater wetland; marshes; wet meadows; bogs; swamps; vernal pools; banks; reservoirs; lakes; ponds; rivers; streams; creeks; lands under waterbodies; lands subject to flooding by ground water, surface water, or storm flow; (collectively the "wetland resource areas protected by this bylaw"); and certain adjacent upland areas (collectively "the adjacent upland resource areas protected by this bylaw") without a permit from the Conservation Commission, or as provided by this bylaw. The adjacent upland resource area is 100 feet for all resource areas except for rivers and perennial streams where it is 200 feet.



How the Act and Bylaw Affect You

The Town of Sudbury may be covered by more wetland resource areas than nearly any other community in Massachusetts as we have multiple rivers, streams, vernal pools and ponds. Your property may fall under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission even if the resource area is not directly within your property lines, but you reside next door or across the street. The laws are strict in allowing any work within the resource area and adjacent upland resource areas, including what is listed above and any cutting of trees or removal of flora without permission.

Some wetlands, such as streams, ponds, bogs and cattail marshes are easily recognizable. Looking at the some maps will also provide you with a good indication. An excellent site is <https://www.mapsonline.net/sudburyma/index.html>. Please note that that GIS mapping is not acceptable for permitting due the scale of the information. If you wish to develop your land, the wetlands on or near your property must be mapped and this can be done by a professional engineer or wetland scientist. If you have any doubt or questions, the Commission encourages you to contact our office at 978-440-5470 and to look at our website which can be found under Committees at www.sudbury.ma.us/. The Commission's office maintains a list of individuals who can provide help to you.

It is important to know that, if you do not comply, you may be fined by the State as well as the Commission. The fines are substantial! **When in doubt, please contact the Commission--we are here to partner with you.**

Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife habitat is where animals find what they need to survive: food, water, cover from predators and weather, breeding and rearing sites and over-wintering areas. The two most important components of wildlife habitat are the plant community structure and plant species composition.

Plant

refers to the vegetation: the sapling (young trees). Each of these layers differs in temperature, species of insects that live there, and food sources produced. Because of these differences there are specific



community structure vertical layers of herbaceous, shrub, trees), and tree layers. Each of these vegetative layers differs in amount of sunlight, insects that live there, and food sources produced. Because of these differences there are specific animals that inhabit the

different vertical layers. When a vertical vegetative layer is removed from a site, this removes a specific habitat for specific wildlife species. In general, the more diversity of vertical layers within an area, the more feeding, nesting, and cover opportunities are available for wildlife. So, providing a diversity of vertical vegetative layers on your property will go a long way in providing wildlife habitat.

Wildlife and animals have evolved over millions of years. Animals learned to utilize native plants for nesting and cover on their property or indigenous plants on their property. One of the best ways in which to protect and provide wildlife habitat.



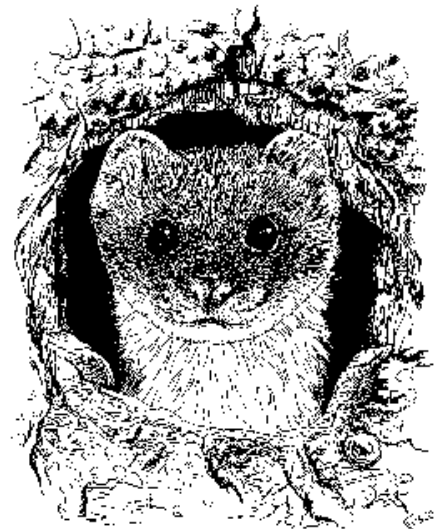
native plants have co-evolved over millions of years. Animals learned to utilize native plants for nesting and cover on their property or indigenous plants on their property. One of the best ways in which to protect and provide wildlife habitat.

Ways you can protect and provide wildlife habitat on your property:

- Protect or restore vertical vegetative layers. For example, if you have trees but no shrubs, plant native shrubs where possible under the trees. Use attractive native plants for the herbaceous layer - bear-berry, wintergreen, low-bush blueberry. [Note: Lists of native species for the Sudbury area can be found on our website.]

- Plant native species that provide food and cover for wildlife. Mast (nut-producing) and berry-producing native plants can provide significant food sources for wildlife even on small lots. Examples of good food source species: red cedar, white and pitch pine, red and scarlet oak, high bush blueberry, red chokeberry, pin cherry and arrow wood.

- Prune limbs and trees conservatively. Many species feed, find cover and nest in the mid-canopy. Some species nest or feed in the canopy when the mid-canopy is intact, but are reluctant if the cover provided by the mid-story limbs is gone.



- Use herbicides and pesticides thoughtfully or go organic. Chemicals can be toxic not only to humans, but to wildlife. Spraying pesticides on trees in the spring can have harmful and fatal impacts on young nesting birds and mammals, and on insectivore food supplies. Little is known about the impacts fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides have on the microbes and other invertebrates that live in our lawns. These species are all part of the food chain and large scale removal of them can mean a loss of food supply for species like robins who eat worms, and catbirds who are ground gleaners.



Domestic pets prey on small mammals and ground nesting bird species. Cats and dogs can reduce local populations of white-footed mice, chipmunks and young squirrels which are important food sources for the native wildlife such as hawks, foxes and coyotes.

Predation by cats of ground nesting birds such as Bob-whites and ruffed grouse is of national concern. Keep your pets restrained or at least put

bells on your cat to give wildlife a warning of its presence.

- Structures such as fences can block and impede wildlife movement. Place fences one and one-half feet above the ground in order to allow wildlife passage.

- Leave some dead wood on your property. Dead standing wood (snags) and dead down wood (logs) are important wildlife habitat features. They provide breeding habitat for cavity nesters such as woodpeckers, black-capped chickadees and owls. They are also important food sources for insectivorous birds and provide important perching sites for raptors. Logs provide over-wintering habitat for salamanders, cover for rodents, and nutrients to the soil. So leave some dead wood and you will be rewarded with excellent wildlife viewing in return.

These are just a few ways you can retain bio-diversity in your community. Wildlife is a major component of every ecosystem; each species plays a role. Protecting a healthy ecosystem is our responsibility as stewards of the land. And it enables wildlife to enhance our lives on a daily basis.



(Thank you to C. Diane Boretos of **CALL OF THE WILD CONSULTING**)

FAQ's

Are there poisonous snakes in Sudbury?

NO!! Although most snakes in our area have tiny needle-like teeth and will bite if handled, none are poisonous. Some people erroneously believe that the black snakes they see basking around ponds and streams in the summer time are "water moccasins." They are merely Northern Water Snakes.

What are Vernal Pools?

Vernal Pools are small temporary bodies of water that form in woodland depressions. They may only hold water for several months -- usually April through June -- and appear to be little more than insignificant "wet spots."



In fact vernal pools play a vital role in our local ecology. They provide breeding habitat -- the only breeding habitat -- for a wide range of amphibians, such as spotted salamanders and wood frogs. They serve as aquatic oases providing food, water, and shelter -- for a wide range of amphibians, reptiles, mammals, birds, and invertebrates that travel through our woodlands.

Why Should I Use Native Plants in My Yard?

There are two principal reasons people decide to use native plants in their yard: one is practical and the other philosophical.

Native plants are easier and less costly to grow and maintain. They are adapted to conditions in New England and, once established, need less attention in terms of soil amendments, water, fertilizer and so on. They are already experienced in dealing with the variable New England climate and stand up better to snow, ice, and freezing than non-native plants. Particularly important, they co-evolved with native insects and other pests and therefore need less help in fighting them off.

From a more philosophical point of view, many people want to create a garden that is in harmony with their natural surroundings and which gives back to the landscape

Notes & Questions for the Commission:



**The Sudbury Conservation Commission is YOUR
Partner in Protecting OUR Natural Resources**

QUESTIONS? 978-440-5471

