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Picture source: <http://www.des.state.nh.us/wetlands/> March 9, 2001

*Wetlands are a valuable environmental asset.
They must be protected.*

On the Road in New Hampshire

Obtaining a Wetlands Permit

To protect New Hampshire's wetlands the Department of Environmental Services (DES) requires a permit when dredging or filling or constructing a structure in a wetland area. If a permit is not obtained the municipality is susceptible to fines. This article describes how Goffstown works with DES. Another article on pages 6-7 describes the permitting process in general terms.

The Town of Goffstown has a workable process to obtain a wetlands permit. They began working with the Wetlands Board by attaining a "Multi-year" permit for routine work such as culvert repair and ditch maintenance. They request separate permits for construction.

A permit can be in effect for 5 years. The multi-year permit in Goffstown is 3 years old. To obtain this permit, the town submitted a Minimum Impact Expedited Application. It was accompanied by a tax map marked, with areas of the town where expected work would occur. The permit applica-

tion included photographs of typical areas of proposed work. Photos were identified as typical and included outfall pipes, overgrown ditches, and detention ponds. Each photo included notes describing what maintenance work would occur in the area.

The Town Clerk forwarded the application package to DES, after the local conservation commission approved it. DES responded with questions that were addressed by the staff in Goffstown. The application was approved. The entire application process took three months at DES.

According to Carl Quiram, Director of Public Works, application for non-routine work permit is relatively simple. The plan and application are submitted for approval. "The hardest part," notes Carl, "is creating the plan" The application is 2 pages long and takes "only about 20 minutes to complete."

Carl and his staff have established a good working relationship with DES. He says, "if you work with them, then they will work with you." If a question comes into DES about work in progress in Goffstown, he receives a phone call from DES rather than seeing an enforcement officer.

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