

Wetlands – brief discussion issues – Virg for 1.20.21

- Wetlands serve important ecological functions including flood mitigation, slowing of climate change, prevention of biodiversity loss and provision of amenities
- State and federal permits are required for any development in Class I or Class II wetlands
- The Richmond Town Plan lists protection of wetlands as a goal (Natural Resources Goal 1 Action 1)
- Having wetland regulations in our zoning regulations signals to developers that wetlands are important to us and provides guidance early in the development process
- There may be local Class III wetlands that the state does not consider significant that we would like to have local control over protecting

Some things we could consider incorporating into our wetlands zoning regs:

- Requiring developers to be given or pointed towards *Landowner's Guide to Wetlands* pamphlet from the Vermont Wetlands Program when requesting an application
- Requiring any known or suspected wetlands to be delineated on the ground by a wetlands ecologist, and indicated on the site plan, as part of the development application
- Requiring a Conservation Commission review and recommendation to the DRB for any Class III wetland
- Having buffer standards written into the regs (Class I = 100'; Class II = 50')
- Allowing road, trail or utility line crossings of wetlands and/or wetland buffers after a feasibility study and plan for erosion and run-off control approved by the Agency of Natural Resources and the Army Corps of Engineers, while prohibiting any building, septic system, drainage, dredging, filling, alteration of water flow or storage of materials
- Requiring that any intrusion into the wetland or wetland buffer represent the least possible impact to the wetland functions and values
- Requiring that wetland and wetland buffers be maintained in their natural vegetated state
- Reorganizing the variance procedure so that a variance can be applied for if there is no possible use of a property that can take place without impacting the wetland (Ravi is working on this).
- Establish permitting process to encroachment into buffer zones (not the wetland itself) could be limited by having a maximum amount of impervious cover or maximum reduction in width of the buffer
- Require Project Review Sheets with any application that may involve wetlands per the wetlands advisory layer

Ideas taken from the Vermont Wetlands Program, and the regulations of Williston, S. Burlington and Woodstock