

## Andover's Lakes Protected by Shoreland Water Quality Act

### Permit required for some projects

Jenny Bodwell

Andover Conservation Commission

Andover is fortunate to have an abundance of public water resources, including lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams, some of which serve as supplies of public drinking water. Unfortunately, unplanned and uncoordinated development adjacent to these resources can threaten them by increasing unfiltered storm water runoff to them.

Today, stormwater runoff poses the greatest threat to our waterbodies because it contains the elements that accelerate the natural aging process of our waterbodies. Stormwater decreases water quality and clarity and increases the likelihood of toxic algae blooms and sedimentation. If left unchecked, this pollution could render our public water drinking supplies unfit for consumption.

Fortunately, we have the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act (SWQPA) in the state of New Hampshire to help prevent this from happening. In short, the Act seeks to protect the land around our waterbodies in order to protect water quality and provide wildlife habitat for the organisms that depend on the water and the surrounding lands.

Water quality is tremendously dependent on a natural buffer or protective area consisting of native trees, saplings, shrubs, and ground covers that aid in intercepting and filtering stormwater runoff. The more native vegetation surrounding a waterbody, the better the water quality will be. Additionally, from an economic standpoint, protecting water quality also serves to protect the value of shorefront properties.

The SWQPA protects all lakes, ponds, and impoundments greater than 10 acres; designated rivers and river segments designated under RSA 483, the Rivers Management and Protection Program; and all fourth-order and greater streams and rivers.

In Andover, the waterbodies protected by the SWQPA include the Blackwater River, Frazier Brook, Cascade (or Eagle) Brook, Highland Lake, Bradley Lake, Elbow Pond, Adder (or

Hopkins) Pond, Horseshoe Pond, and Cole Pond. Although many of Andover's smaller waterbodies are not protected by this law, they also serve an important role in filtering and cleaning our water.

All waterbodies protected by the Act are on a comprehensive list maintained by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) called the DES Consolidated List of Waterbodies Subject to the SWQPA. The list can be found at [DES.NH.gov/documents/consolidated-list-waterbodies-subject-swqpa](https://DES.NH.gov/documents/consolidated-list-waterbodies-subject-swqpa).

If you are planning any new construction, excavation, or filling, within 250 feet of a protected waterbody, a DES Shoreland Permit is required. When in doubt, call DES at 603 271-2147.

Within the first 50' from the water's edge (reference line) is where most of the regulations are focused. Within this area, also called the Waterfront Buffer, except for a 6' wide walkway to the water, existing natural ground cover and shrubs may not be removed, landscaped, or converted to lawn. Ground cover and shrubs may not be pruned to any less than three feet in height. To allow better views, the bottom third of trees may be pruned, so long as the health of the tree is not endangered. Tree and sapling removal is permissible without a DES Shoreland Permit within this area, but there are limitations. These limitations are explained in the Vegetation Management Fact Sheet.

True timber harvesting operations can occur within the protected shoreland, but they are subject to more stringent standards under New Hampshire Forestry Law RSA 227-J:9. For more information, please see the Vegetation for Water Quality Fact Sheet at [DES.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/sp-5.pdf](https://DES.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/2020-01/sp-5.pdf).

If you still have questions or want to be sure about something, you can call the DES Wetlands Bureau at 603 271-2147 or visit their Shoreland Program Permit Guidance interactive pages at [SurveyMonkey.com/r/shoreland](https://SurveyMonkey.com/r/shoreland).

Please note that this article is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to be used as a reference to the laws. 

### Redistricting from page 8

much more difficult for voters to get to know their candidates.

Voters want to make informed decisions for local representatives who represent our shared local interests, such as good local public schools, lower property taxes, and free and fair elections. The larger the districts, the more difficult it will be for townspeople to meet those

candidates in person, and the more likely that non-local media such as TV and internet will be used to influence the outcome of local elections.

As prospective legislators announce their candidacies in June, I urge voters to pay close attention and watch how these gerrymandered boundaries shift during the summer months approaching the elections. Keep an eye on future issues of the *Beacon* for updates. 

## Andover's Beaver Deceivers Attract Attention, Avoid Floods

### Devices prevent damage, save money

Vicky Mishcon

Former Select Board member

I have received inquiries about the Beaver Deceiver program here in Andover from some pretty interesting places. People from all over the country find their roads and properties are an ideal beaver habitat and are looking for ways to co-exist.

Most recently, I received a call from a limnologist (a scientist who studies the characteristics of fresh water systems, such as lakes, ponds, and streams). He had heard about our Beaver Deceivers and wanted to see some "in action." I was happy to give him a tour around the Elbow Pond Road and Emery Road areas, both very active beaver habitats.

I have also received inquiries from a person at a United States Navy training facility that was being flooded by beaver activity. Another call came from a financial administrator in a Minnesota town who was looking for a cost-effective way to cope with culvert and road damage in areas with high beaver activity.

More locally, I have given tours to officials from the town of Hopkinton and the Deputy Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. A man from a community just north of the White Mountains wanted to see our Beaver Deceivers, as his community needed a better solution for flooding caused by a small dam being blocked by beavers.

These are all people who find themselves in the same predicament: Roads and homes and businesses are built near prime beaver habitat, and the installation of small dams and culverts are like neon blinking arrows to a beaver – there's a breach in the dam, berm, road! All hands on deck to block the breach! A beaver can dam up a culvert overnight using sticks, mud, and rocks, and suddenly you have a flood or a washout.

Clearing out a culvert can be expensive, as towns often use heavy equipment to ram through the dam and sometimes there is damage to the culvert. Sometimes towns use trappers to drown the beavers, but an empty beaver habitat doesn't stay empty for long.

An effective solution for Andover has been the Beaver Deceiver. Made from heavy duty materials, this is a fencing and pipe system that basically prevents the beaver from getting inside the culvert. Any damming attempts along the fence are foiled by a pipe system that goes through the fence underwater, allowing the continued flow of water through the culvert.

Since each habitat area is unique, a system is designed specifically for that area. And since these are living and changing habitats, adjustments have to be made to keep them working efficiently.

For that reason, the Andover Conservation Commission monitors each of the town's Beaver Deceivers. If you would like to learn more about Beaver Deceivers, contact a member of the Andover Conservation Commission. 

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