

Permitting Trail Work Under the MA Wetlands Protection Act

EXAMPLES FROM GARDNER, IPSWICH,
AND NORTH ANDOVER



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NORTH COUNTY LAND TRUST
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Most Common Issues

- Improving trails located in wet areas
- Replacing aging bridges and boardwalks
- Repairing or replacing collapsed or deteriorating culverts
- Re-routing trails (beavers, poorly sited trails, resource area damage)
- Trail clearing, resurfacing, and others?



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Things to Consider

- Is the work exempt under the MA WPA and/or local bylaw/ordinance?
- Sensitivity of the area (Location in watershed, Priority Habitat)
- Is trail/structure part of an existing mapped trail network?
- Will project improve the resource areas involved?
- Resources available (engineered plans, wetland delineation)?



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Permitting Options

- Small Project or Letter Permit
- Request for Determination of Applicability
- Notice of Intent
- Trail Management Plans (Approved with Order of Conditions)
- Enforcement Order



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Small Project Permit (under local bylaw)

Work in Buffer Zone meets WPA exemption under 310 CMR 10.02



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Request for Determination

Deteriorating Boardwalks in Willowdale State Forest – Ipswich



NDEMBA Bay Cross Trail Bridges - Project #2 Photos



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City-wide Trail Enhancement Program-Order of Conditions

- City of Gardner filed a Notice of Intent for trail work within multiple open space and recreation areas.
- Work funded by the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation, Recreational Trails Program
- Work includes the construction and installation of trails signs, maps, kiosks, foot-bridges, trails and parking area improvements.
- Several Resource Areas involved:
 - Riverfront Area
 - Inland Banks
 - Within the 100-ft Buffer Zone of Bordering Vegetated Wetlands



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Enforcement Order-Makeshift Boardwalks

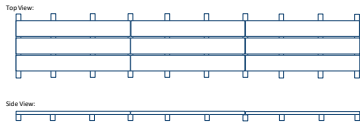


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A Tested and Trusted Design



Photographs of Trustees Bog Bridges



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New Boardwalk and Crossing-OOC



Photo Credits Michele Girard

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Lessons Learned

- Work with trail partners
- Make permitting reasonable – permit fits the project
- Can the work be done with 5 conditions (Determination) or are 50 required (OOC)?
- If possible waive local fees for volunteers and non-profits
- Work with professionals at the state and local level who can provide permitting assistance for free or at reduced cost
- Walk the trails, visit the sites, understand the scope of trail maintenance in your community



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Thank you!

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- **Liz Armstrong**, AMC Volunteer – Region 2 Coordinator, Bay Circuit Trail

Follow up questions? michele.girard@maccweb.org



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