

A CHRONOLOGY OF CONNECTICUT'S WETLAND AND WATERCOURSE PROTECTION

- Pre-1972** Connecticut's inland wetlands and watercourses are largely unprotected.
- 1972** The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act is established by the Connecticut General Assembly.
- 1973** The Act is amended to define Inland Wetlands Agency and to give the Commissioner of DEP the power to protect wetlands and watercourses in municipalities that do not exercise their regulatory authority.
- 1978** Most municipalities have established an Inland Wetlands Agency. Approximately 30 towns have not and are regulated by the Commissioner of DEP.
- 1986** Council on Environmental Quality annual report recommends adoption of legislative amendments to the Act to strengthen wetland protection efforts in the State.
- 1987** The Act is significantly amended. The amendments include: a requirement that the DEP develop a comprehensive training program for inland wetlands agency members; a requirement that the DEP establish a standardized activity reporting form to encourage systematic and accurate reporting of local agency actions; and exemptions for farming activities.
- 1990** Only 13 municipalities are regulated by the DEP. All others have established an inland wetlands agency.
- 1995** Every municipality has established an inland wetlands agency. A legislative task force is established to study issues related to the regulation of activities in and around inland wetlands and watercourses.
- 1996** As a result of the 1995 task force, the Act is significantly amended. The amendments include: a definition of feasible and prudent; factors to consider when applications come before the Agency; and provisions for delegating authority to an agent. In addition, the training program is re-evaluated and changes are made to reflect current needs of municipal inland wetlands agencies.
- 2003** First significant amendments are made to the Act since 1996 (small amendments to the Act have occurred in the interim years). Primarily, time frames for hearings and the date of receipt of applications are made consistent with Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-7d (zoning laws).
- 2004** As a result of a State Supreme Court decision, the Factors for Consideration section of the Act is amended to expressly authorize the consideration of aquatic, plant or animal life and habitats in wetlands and watercourses. The amendment also limits an inland wetlands agency's ability to consider such things outside of wetlands and watercourses.