

COASTAL AND INLAND WETLANDS

(Adopted 1997, Revised 1998, 2012)

The League of Women Voters of Westport supports the Town's current policy to preserve inland and tidal wetlands as resources. As stated in the 2007 Town Plan of Conservation and Development, "Some resources are so important to environmental quality or community character that alterations to these areas should continue to be avoided to the extent feasible and the land preserved in its natural state." In addition, the League supports strong regulation and review of development activities affecting Westport's wetlands.

Explanation:

1. Implementation and Enforcement of Wetlands Regulations.

We support:

- a. a fee and fines system strong enough to ensure compliance;
- b. performance bonds for all projects with potential for significant impact on wetlands;
- c. a requirement that the applicant provide an environmental consultant to monitor and report regularly to the Commission for all projects with potential for significant impact on wetlands;
- d. frequent inspections by Commissioners and staff to ensure compliance with the regulations;
- and
- e. a program of public education to include printed information widely available in locations such as town offices, real estate offices and the Library.

2. We support the Commission's inland wetland regulatory responsibilities and, in addition, urge the Commission to focus on its mission of conservation.

3. We urge the Town to continue to improve the Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of the Town's wetlands.

4. We support regular review of the Town's current wetland setback requirements.

5. Application and Hearing Process.

To train Commissioners we support:

- a. town-supported training of Conservation Commissioners and Planning & Zoning Commissioners on coastal and inland wetlands through Connecticut's DEEP workshops and videos, training in the field or similar training services;
- b. the inclusion, when applicable, of Conservation Commissioners in the Town's current Planning & Zoning land use training.

To provide sufficient background information to Commissioners, we support:

- a. neighbor notification and oral and written public input at hearings, in Summary as well as Plenary cases;
- b. the expectation that Commissioners walk properties prior to hearings; and
- c. the expectation that agenda and background information will be received by Commissioners in a timely fashion.

*Please refer to the League of Women Voters of Connecticut's position on Natural Resources (Wetlands, Watershed, Flood Hazards) appended to the LWV Westport positions.