CHAGRIN RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERS

WHY WETLAND SETBACKS?

Wetlands are areas inundated or saturated by water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, including swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

Wetland setbacks are a local government tool to maintain wetland functions during development. Wetlands and their associated setbacks limit streambank erosion, reduce flood size flows, filter and settle out pollutants, and protect aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Setbacks are necessary to ensure wetlands continue to provide these functions after a parcel is developed. Draining, dredging, filling, and excavating in wetlands and their associated setbacks removes the **flood control, erosion control, and water quality protection** services provided by these resources and requires local governments to absorb stormwater infrastructure that is costly to construct, operate, and maintained.

The relationship between wetlands and wetland setbacks is summarized as follows:

- Setbacks are a zoning or subdivision design tool for local governments.
- Setbacks limit development and encroachment in wetlands.
- By limiting disturbances, setbacks maintain wetland functions for flood control, erosion control, and water quality protection.
- These functions directly affect public health and safety, establishing the legal linkage for local governments to exercise their zoning or subdivision authority.
- The loss of wetland functions often requires significant investment in engineered structures to partially replace the lost services. These engineered structures generally do not provide the same level of low cost, low maintenance flood control, erosion control, and water quality protection provided by functioning wetlands.

To assist communities in establishing wetland setbacks, CRWP developed a model regulation that the City of Aurora adopted. This regulation details that wetland setbacks:

- Range from 75 feet to 120 feet depending on the functional use of the wetland.
- Are minimum distances and apply to around the wetland.
- Conform to community development patterns and natural resource management goals.

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