



## Vermont Wetlands Program

Mapping Guidance - VSWI

### Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory Layer

**At First Glance:** If your property has a Vermont Significant Wetlands Inventory (VSWI) mapped wetland, you most certainly have a protected wetland on your property, and it is likely **not** the exact size and configuration as the map shows.

**Recommended Next Steps:** Before you start any work you will need to know where the field verified boundary of the wetland is located. A [State Wetlands Ecologist](#) can visit the site to help you determine the general location and boundary of the wetland. A wetland boundary delineation by a [wetland consultant](#) will be necessary if the proposed activity is near the jurisdictional wetland or buffer zone. If the activity proposed remains entirely outside of the delineated wetland boundary and the 50-foot buffer zone, a wetland permit is not needed.

**What is this Layer?:** The Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory maps (VSWI) display wetlands which are Class I or II and protected by the Vermont Wetland Rules. Not all wetlands are mapped, and wetlands not mapped on the VSWI may still be considered significant. The VSWI maps are intended to denote approximate wetland locations and boundaries. They should not be relied upon to provide precise information regarding the location or configuration of wetlands. Wetland boundaries need to be verified in the field using methodology in the US Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual by a [Wetland Consultant](#) or by the [Vermont Wetlands Program](#) staff.

**Regulatory Meaning:** Vermont Significant Inventory Maps (VSWI) represent wetlands that are regulated by the Vermont Wetland Rules. These wetlands are presumed to be significant for at least one [Function or Value](#) protected by the VWR. Any work in the wetland or its jurisdictional buffer, including filling, dredging, draining, ditching, cutting woody vegetation, may require a permit from the Vermont Wetlands Program. Both Class I and Class II wetlands appear on the VSWI maps. Class II wetlands have a 50-foot buffer which is protected, and Class I wetlands have a 100-foot regulatory buffer. These buffers are measured from the edge of a delineated boundary from the wetland. Areas that are also wetland and are contiguous to the VSWI (continual wetland between the mapped area and the area in question) are considered significant and jurisdictional automatically. Section 8 of the [Vermont Wetland Rules](#) outlines the Determination process for adding or removing Class II wetlands to the VSWI maps. A Rulemaking petition is required to add Class I wetlands to the VSWI maps.

**Origin:** Vermont Significant Inventory Maps (VSWI) were originally adopted from National Wetland Inventory maps. These maps were created by the Fish and Wildlife Service from aerial photography, some dating back to the 1970's. Several updates have been made to both the National Wetland Inventory and VSWI as bulk edits in the early 2000's, and these were adopted as map updates to the VSWI. The Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory Maps have been updated on a more regular basis after 2010 as a result of regulatory Wetland Determinations where wetlands found to be significant

have been added. In the ANR Atlas you can click on the map polygon to learn what year the wetland was added to the VSWI map.

**Accuracy:** The probability that there is a wetland nearby is high, about 93% of areas mapped on the VSWI are determined wetlands when field-verified. However, the boundaries shown are often inaccurate. Because VSWI maps originate from aerial photos, they have a higher accuracy picking up wetlands with strong water features (ponds and marshes), and a lower accuracy picking up forested wetlands (cedar or hemlock swamps). Because the original aerial photos were from the 1970's, boundaries may have changed significantly. For this reason, areas within 300 feet of VSWI maps will also show up in this model. Where VSWI are near hydric soils and advisory wetland mapping, the probability of there being a wetland increases.

**Links of Interest:**

[Landowners Guide to Wetlands](#)

[Wetland Classification Guidance](#)

[Vermont Wetland Rules](#)

[Contiguous Wetland Guidance Document](#)

[VSWI Maps](#)

[Wetland Permit Information](#)

[National Wetland Inventory](#)

[What is a Wetland?](#)

[Wetland Classification](#)

[Wetland Function and Values](#)

