



Town of Chatham Conservation Commission

Re-vegetation and Landscape Design Guidelines; Policy # 02-101

Date of adoption: September 2002, revised July 12, 2006

Purpose:

This policy identifies the issues that the Commission normally addresses with any proposed revegetation/landscape plan and is meant as a guideline to applicants when developing such proposals.

Rationale and Goals:

The purpose of the Chatham Wetlands Protection Bylaw is to “protect wetlands, related water resources and adjoining land areas in the Town by controlling activities deemed by the conservation commission to have an impact or cumulative effect upon wetland values, including but not limited to the following: public and private water supply, groundwater and groundwater quality, water quality in the numerous ponds of the Town, flood control, erosion and sedimentation control, storm damage prevention, prevention of water pollution, wildlife and wildlife habitat, fisheries and shellfish.”

With continued pressure on the natural resources of the Town, there is heightened awareness of the adverse impact of excess nutrients in embayments and ponds through septic systems and fertilization of lawns. A vegetated buffer between a wetland resource area and development offers several benefits: up-take of excess nutrients before they enter waterways and groundwater, serve as wildlife habitat, and reduce human disturbance to wetland resources and wildlife. The requirement of a vegetated buffer also addresses the cumulative impact of development on wetland resources.

The following goals address the purpose set forth in the local wetland bylaw.

- A) Reduction of Excess Nutrients (nitrogen, phosphates) entering the watershed: limit use of fertilizers, encourage best management practices in lawn construction
- B) Protection of Wildlife Habitat: protect and enhance naturalized vegetation offering cover, food sourcing and breeding sites, maintaining contiguous wildlife corridors
- C) Stormwater Management: protect natural percolation, control run-off using best management practices
- D) Erosion Control: protect stability of coastal and inland banks, protect against sedimentation into wetlands
- E) Control of Invasive Species: encourage biodiversity, promote indigenous plantings,



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prohibit introduction of invasive species and marginal invasive species

F) Avoidance of use of arsenic leaching construction materials such as CCA- treated wood (Copper Chromium Arsenic) by encouraging alternative material use

G) Reduction of Chemical Herbicide and Pesticide use

H) Water conservation: require sprinkler systems that conserve and limit use

Design Standards

Whenever possible, a re-vegetation or landscape plan should include the following:

1. **Vegetated buffers either created or enhanced with plantings and allowed to naturalize and/or existing natural areas sustained without disturbance between developed land and the resource area; greatest width possible -- 50 feet minimum.**
2. A list of proposed plant species - indigenous/native species encouraged (a list is available from the Conservation Office and may be found on the Town of Chatham website).
3. No introduction of invasive or potentially invasive plant species (a list of plants to avoid is available from Conservation Office and may be found on the Town of Chatham website).
4. Limited "hardscape" (e.g. patios, walkways); where necessary these areas to be dry-laid; wherever possible natural percolation is preferred. Impervious surfaces such as mortared walkways, concrete or asphalt surfaces are discouraged.
5. Drainage for patio surfaces should be addressed so as to avoid run-off resulting in erosion.
6. Use of best available alternative materials to CCA pressure-treated wood including recycled plastics, untreated wood, stone, plantation mahogany, etc.
7. Wherever possible, enhancement and/or protection of wildlife habitat; connection to other naturalized areas to maintain wildlife corridors.
8. Applicant's statement of commitment to no fertilizer use or at a minimum to use limited to slow release, low nitrogen fertilizers (low phosphorous near freshwater ponds).



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9. Water conservation efforts that include for example, plant species that require minimal watering. If an irrigation system is proposed, the applicant should be aware that the Cape has a single source aquifer and should take care to avoid unnecessary water use by fitting the system with a rain sensor and baffle in accordance with Chatham Water Department design specs. The Chatham Water Department requires a permit for irrigation systems. The Commission does not permit the installation of underground irrigation systems within 50 feet of any resource area.
10. Limited lawn area; where lawn is proposed, the use of native fescues that require minimal care is encouraged over the use of turf/sod. Any lawn area should be constructed with a base of 4-6 inches of sandy loam.
11. Commitment to avoid herbicide use.
12. Low maintenance plantings which require minimal water and fertilizers.
13. Re-grading to avoid run-off onto adjacent properties.
14. Control of any drainage from retaining walls or other areas by use of drywells or other appropriate means.
15. Minimal mulching for moisture retention and erosion control.
16. Plant species that reflect surrounding ecology.

The Barnstable County Guidelines may be referenced for size and planting density.

Supportive Literature:

- *Function and Management of Buffer Strips for Coastal Resources Protection, Proceedings of a Cooperative Extension Workshop, August 24, 1990*
- *Designing with Nature using ecological principles in Garden Design, Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Occasional Paper No. 103, June 1997*



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- *Lawns and Landscapes in Your Watershed, DEP publication, August 1998*
- *Wetland Buffers: Use and Effectiveness, Castelle, Connolly, et. al., February 1992*
- *Barnstable County Landscape Guidelines 2005*
- *IPANE*