



## Vermont Wetlands Program

Mapping Guidance – Swamp Lot

### Swamp Lot

**At First Glance:** If this property has been flagged as a “Swamp Lot” it means the property may be all wetland or buffer zone. Most activities would be regulated under the Vermont Wetland Rules. This would likely limit the development potential of this lot, and development would be costly.

**Recommended Next Steps:** Prior to investing in this property, we recommend you verify that there is sufficient upland (non-wetland) to work with. A [State Wetlands Ecologist](#) can visit the site to help you determine the general location and boundary of the wetland, or provide you with any documentation of this site on file. In general at least ½ acre of upland outside of wetland and buffer is usually needed for a single family home and associated infrastructure.

**What is this Layer?:** The Swamp Lot layer was created using all available wetland detection layers to find undeveloped lots that appear to contain less than ½ acre of upland. This layer was created to raise awareness of properties that may be limited in development potential. Wetland parcels provide functions and values like wildlife habitat and may be suitable for allowed uses like silviculture or recreation. Remote mapping was used to create the layer, so field review may reveal additional upland areas. 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. If the site is found to not be a swamp lot, the Program will remove it from the Swamp Lot layer.

**Regulatory Meaning:** “Swamp Lots” do not have a specific regulatory definition or designation. This is more of a warning label, as these areas may be difficult to develop. As part of the avoidance and minimization criteria in Section 9.5b of the Vermont Wetland Rules, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that: *“The proposed activity cannot practicably be located outside the wetland or on another site owned or controlled by the applicant or reasonably available to satisfy the basic project purpose.”* This criteria makes it difficult for new development to take place on parcels that do not have suitable upland for buildings, septic and/or associated infrastructure. The mitigation sequence requires that other properties owned **or available** be examined to fulfill a general project purpose. If you purchase a swamp lot there is no guarantee you will be able to get a wetland permit for your proposed activity.

**Origin:** This layer is comprised of Vermont Significant Advisory maps, Wetland Advisory maps, and obligate hydric soil layers (muck soils, peat soils, and/or ponded areas). These are overlain on properties that do not have existing development or infrastructure, and the acreage of area outside of these mapped areas is less than ½ acre. Check to see if there is a Wetland Project Number associated with this property (star symbology on Atlas Map), as there may be a delineation or verification of wetland presence and boundaries.

**Accuracy:** This layer was created from remote sensing, and the actual boundaries of the wetland need to be field verified to determine the amount of upland and wetland on the property. Check to see if there is a Wetland Project Number associated with this property, as there may be a delineation or verification of wetland presence and boundaries. If the model is incorrect and the site has more than a half-acre of upland, the Wetlands Program may remove the property from the layer.

### **What can I do with a Swamp Lot?**

While perhaps not appropriate for residential or commercial development, Swamp Lots are often beautiful, productive, and useful lands. Whether it's accessing excellent hunting and fishing, buffering yourself from surrounding development pressures, enrolling in the Use Value Appraisal program, or conserving land to provide wildlife habitat, clean water, and outdoor recreation space to future generations, find out what you can do with a Swamp Lot with the *What Can I do With a Swamp Lot?* link below.

### **Links of Interest:**

[Landowners Guide to Wetlands](#)

[Contiguous Wetland Guidance Document](#)

[Vermont Wetland Rules](#)

[Wetland Permit Information](#)

[VSWI Maps](#)

[What is a Wetland?](#)

[National Wetland Inventory](#)

[Wetland Function and Values](#)

[Wetland Classification](#)

[What Can I Do With a Swamp Lot?](#)

[Wetland Classification Guidance](#)