

## **Section 6.16 Best Management Practices for Duck Blinds, Fences, Catwalks, Docks**

Pursuant to Section 6.16 of the Vermont Wetland Rules, the following Best Management Practices have been developed for this allowed use in order to prevent discharges to Waters of the State, and to maintain the integrity of wetlands and associated waters:

### **6.16 The placement, maintenance or removal of duck blinds, ice fishing shanties, fences, catwalks, footbridges, observation decks, docks exempt similar structures, in compliance with Best Management Practices developed by the Secretary.**

Please read this document carefully in order to determine whether your activity qualifies as an allowed use, to perform the activity in compliance with the best management practices, and to determine if other permits may be necessary.

1. Does the proposed activity qualify for an Allowed Use under Section 6 of the Vermont Wetland Rules?
  - a. This use shall not alter the configuration of the wetland's outlet or the flow of water into or out of the wetland, and no draining, dredging, filling or grading shall occur.
  - b. The placement, maintenance or removal of the structure shall not result in discharge to Waters of the State;
  - c. No clearing of woody vegetation without wetland permit or approval of wetlands office;
2. Best Management Practices
  - a. Construction, siting, installation and removal methods shall be those which have the least impact to the protected wetland:
  - b. Structures such as boardwalks and catwalks shall be sited to avoid impacts to sensitive natural areas:
    - i. Utilize existing structures and pathways, wherever possible.
    - ii. Not all wetland areas can support all types of walks while maintaining wildlife values. If this can't be accomplished, it may be necessary to downsize the project or look for an alternative route.
    - iii. If crossing a sensitive habitat or creating a new trail, keep the crossing as narrow as possible. Skirt sensitive wetland areas, and provide for views from the periphery (lookouts and overlooks) instead of bisecting wetlands.
    - iv. Preserve and enhance existing tree cover and shrubs. Where possible, consider weaving walks around existing trees to help maintain canopy cover and to preserve large diameter trees.
  - c. For the construction of boardwalks, catwalks and similar structures the construction schedule shall account for environmental and habitat conditions:
    - i. Schedule all construction adjacent to or within wetlands during dry periods - or at least not immediately prior to during rain events.
    - ii. Avoid work during the breeding and migratory seasons of sensitive wildlife.
  - d. For the construction of boardwalks, catwalks and similar structures installation activities shall minimize impact to soils, hydrology and vegetation:
    - i. Install structures that do not require fill such as those mounted on posts or floats: No

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concrete footing, masonry, earth or rock fill, sheet piling, bulkheading, cribwork or similar construction.

- ii. The structure shall not significantly alter the flora or fauna of the wetland either with the initial installation or ongoing use:
    - (1) Allow light and water to flow through and underneath the structure by adjusting the height and spacing the travel surface;
    - (2) Height should allow for animal passage over or under structure;
    - (3) Boardwalks in wetlands should not be wider than 3-5 feet;
  - iii. No heavy equipment is allowed to enter the wetland for the installation.
  - iv. The structure shall be constructed of appropriate materials that are recommended for aquatic use: untreated lumber (e.g., cedar, tamarack, locust, redwood, yew, cypress, and hemlock), composite lumber, plastic lumber, or metal. Other materials may be used with prior approval from the Vermont Wetlands Program
  - v. Keep surface waters clear of discharge or turbidity.
  - vi. Construction shall take place so that sawdust or other debris is not discharged into the wetland or surface waters.
- e. Invasive species should be prevented using the following methods:
- i. Any equipment should be cleaned so as to contain no observable soil or vegetation prior to work in wetlands and buffer zones to prevent the spread of invasive species;
  - ii. If removed material contains invasive species, care should be taken to dispose of the material in a manner that does not spread the invasive species to new areas.
3. Additional permit considerations:
- a. Docks, walls, boathouses, bridges, water intakes, cables, dredging, or fill, may require a Shoreland Encroachment Permit under 29 V.S.A. Chapter 11, while certain small projects or activities do not require a permit.
    - i. Docks shall be no greater than 50 feet in length and the combined surface area of multiple non-commercial docks, mounted on posts or floats within 100 feet of each other which are owned/controlled by one person does not exceed 500 square feet without approval from the Lakes and Ponds Program.
  - b. Structures in wetlands, streams and lakes may be subject to additional state, local and federal regulations.