The purpose of critical area regulations is to prevent property damage and to ensure that development does not harm water quality, groundwater recharge, and some types of fish and wildlife habitat.

Two basic buffer components:
- **Water quality component** — 30-125 ft for areas that are not wetlands, depending on character of site and development.
- **Tree protection zone** —
  - **For areas with trees:** 110 ft from OHWM. (plus drip line of any trees on the edge).
  - Zone 1 — first 35 ft. from water, a no-cut zone (limited pruning allowed).
  - Zone 2 — remainder of tree protection zone, some removal of trees allowed along with addition of one primary structure if minimum stocking levels met.
- **For individual trees**, runs to the water’s edge and is width of drip line.

- All new structures that are not located on bedrock need to be set back a sufficient distance to allow for natural erosive processes for at least 75 years.
- New residences may be located closer to the water if adjoining houses are closer. Impacts must be mitigated.

Don’t miss this!

Development options are available which allow for smaller water quality buffers (e.g. vegetation retention, slope avoidance, and low-impact development techniques).