
RVCA News Release

CHANGES TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION REGULATIONS

MANOTICK, October 6, 2005 —The Ontario government has directed Conservation Authorities to amend their local flood plain regulations to include protection for wetlands, valleylands and lake shores within their watershed jurisdictions. The amended regulation is being referred to as the Generic Regulation because it takes the previous 36 different sets of local regulations and streamlines them into a more uniform set of rules for use across Ontario. The changes come into effect in May 2006 in all areas of the province.

The move to a set of Generic Regulations started almost 10 years ago with former Premier Mike Harris' Red Tape Commission and the enabling Red Tape Reduction Act which was responsible for bringing clarity and consistency to provincial government acts and regulations. A primary objective was to maintain legislation that protects public health, safety and the environment.

The Red Tape Commission process identified a need to make amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act*. A process of public consultation resulted in amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* in 1997. The development of the Generic Regulations and the local regulations to implement them are a direct consequence of the amended *Conservation Authorities Act*.

The Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alteration to Waterways Regulation, Ontario Regulation 97/04 is the full name of the Generic Regulation. The main objective of the amendment is continued protection of public safety and the environment. Stream valley systems, wetlands and watercourses are the primary types of supplementary land affected by the regulation. New maps are being prepared by the Conservation Authorities to define the areas that fall under regulation.

The Generic Regulations will provide: a fair and accurate basis upon which sound environmental decisions can be mutually made; updated natural hazard mapping based on current standards and information; consistency with the Planning Act and the Provincial Policy Statement relating to natural hazards and natural heritage; consistency for regulated areas across Ontario; and generally won't affect current existing land uses.

The Mississippi Valley and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authorities are holding Public Information Meetings to inform municipal staff, development interests and landowners about the new areas of regulation and the process of review related to applications for work in regulated areas. The meeting schedule is on the MVC and RVCA websites at www.mvc.on.ca or www.rideauvalley.on.ca. Meetings will be held in Ottawa (Nepean Sportsplex, October 18), Perth (Arena Community Centre, October 19), Kemptville (North Grenville Municipal Centre, October 25), and Kinburn (West Carleton Client Services Centre, October 27).

Ontario's Conservation Authorities have regulated development in flood risk and other natural hazard areas since shortly after Hurricane Hazel devastated southern Ontario in 1954. Controlling development on a watershed basis has long been recognized as the most effective way to consistently manage the risk associated with these hazards.

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