

TOWN OF GREENWICH MIANUS POND

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why is Mianus Pond an important natural resource?

Besides the obvious open space amenities presented by its size and condition, Mianus Pond supports a rich diversity of birds, fish and other wildlife. Ospreys, kingfishers and an array of ducks and gulls regularly utilize the Pond as a source of food and shelter. Important fish species, such as brown trout and alewife, spawn in the Pond. The forested and wetland edges of the Pond are also a critical habitat. The Pond lies downstream of the Mianus Water Filtration Plant and served as an emergency drinking-water source during the severe drought of 1980-81. It provides valuable floodwater storage during storms.

The watershed area that contributes to the Pond covers approximately 36 square miles and extends north into New York to Bedford Village. The River actually has its headwaters in a small wetland in extreme north Greenwich, south of Banksville, NY. The River then flows north towards the Town of Bedford, where it turns east through Pound Ridge, and then south through Stamford and Greenwich until it discharges into Long Island Sound.

How will this process work?

The Board of Selectmen will declare a moratorium on construction in or on Mianus Pond and the Town-owned upland edge. They also approved a resolution that directs the IWWA to contact all property owners who maintain affected structures for the purpose of submitting applications to IWWA. You will receive from us mailed information about how to file an IWWA application for the dock, float or other structure you have been using along with a specific time-period to file the application.

The Town will provide to each abutting landowner a revocable license agreement that, subject to the approval of the IWWA, may authorize you to maintain the dock, float or other structure on Town property. The Town will also request that each license holder obtain and hold certain types and amounts of liability insurance as proscribed in the proposed license.

Who must apply for a permit?

Any person who owns property abutting Mianus Pond and who uses a dock, float, patio, terrace, or other such structure on Town-owned property in or next to Mianus Pond that does not have a valid IWWA permit for that structure must apply for an IWWA permit. Any person who contemplates construction of a new dock or structure within any upland review area adjacent to Mianus Pond (typically 100 feet) will also be required to apply for an IWWA permit.

Are there any exemptions to this application process?

A dock, float or other structure built prior to December 1974 may be exempt from IWWA regulation, but modification, enlargement and maintenance of such a dock, structure or other structure made subsequent to that date must receive IWWA approval. Any person claiming this exemption must request the IWWA exemption through the IWWA review process. Any person who wishes to use a dock, float or other structure on Town-owned Mianus Pond, which dock, float or other structure was installed, erected or otherwise constructed prior to 1974, must still obtain a license agreement from the Town.

Why are you asking property owners now to legitimize these docks when you allowed people to construct them in the first place?

Persons who installed, erected or otherwise constructed docks, floats or other structures within or adjacent to Mianus Pond have never been exempt from obtaining necessary permits or permission from the Town or IWWA. The Town and IWWA are now attempting to resolve a long standing situation by bringing these structures into compliance with applicable regulations and standards.

How did you arrive at the dock standards put forth?

The standards were derived from shoreline management programs in effect throughout the Northeast.

What if my existing dock does not meet your standards?

The policy guidelines are standards for new or existing docks, floats or other structures. Each case will be examined on an individual basis to determine the effects of structures upon wetlands and watercourses. Those applications that closely meet the guidelines will likely be deemed to have a minimal impact; those that do not may require upgrade, renovation or removal.

What happens if I don't comply?

If you do not respond to the correspondence the IWWA sends to you, we will consider you in violation of IWWA regulations. Enforcement action, as authorized by the IWWA regulations, may include the issuance of violation notices and orders to correct, assessment of fines, and/or the placement of a Certificate of Violation linked to your property on the Greenwich Land Records.

What are the major sources of pollution affecting the environmental quality of the Pond?

The pond is subject to the degrading effects of untreated storm-water runoff that flows into the Pond, much of which carries quantities of nutrient and bacteria pollutants. This is commonly referred to as non-point source pollution, as it comes from many diffuse sources, not just pipe discharges. Poorly constructed structures and uncontrolled excavation may cause shoreline erosion of the bank into the Pond (sediment is another form of pollution). Also, certain building materials such as Styrofoam and pressure-treated lumber may pollute the Pond. The Pond is occasionally affected by leaking oil tanks and failing septic systems.

How does a vegetated border help the water quality of the Pond?

A buffer or filter strip of natural and native vegetation adjacent to the shoreline helps maintain water quality by providing an area where pollutants, such as house and garden fertilizers and pesticides, can be filtered prior to entering the Pond. Native vegetation along the shore helps to prevent erosion of the shoreline by binding the soil with the deeper root system of native trees and shrubs rather than turf grass.

How can I provide comments or feedback to the IWWA regarding design standards?

The Agency will hold a public meeting and informational sessions to receive your feedback and opinions regarding the design standards.

How much will this process cost me?

The direct costs of this process include the application fee (\$250) and the cost to provide and maintain the liability insurance. The application fee is a substantially reduced fee from the standard application fee of \$1,000, and will remain in effect for 90 days after you receive application information. Other costs to you will vary, but may include expenses involved in preparing any surveys that you may need to file an application, as well as expenses involved in repair or maintenance of the docks, floats and structures.

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