

Inland Wetlands Application Attachment
Jeffrey Graves
40 Saltbox Lane, Uncasville

Narrative of Proposed Activity - Boulder Wall on Buffer Zone Approval - June 2024

In August of 2021, I purchased the above-mentioned property and began the process of building a new home on the lot (it was a pre-approved building lot for the construction of a single family home). Part of this process was to have the land surveyed, and a zoning compliance survey was completed. This survey included information about the wetlands that are located on the property, as well as the upland buffer zone of 50 feet from the wetlands boundary. We applied for and received an Inlands Wetlands Permit (issued 11/18/21) which granted us permission to have our driveway constructed so that a portion of the driveway would pass over the upland review area.

In the months that followed, my family and I found ourselves in the horrible situation of having our contractor leave our job, stealing approx. \$80,000 of our construction loan money, and providing us with little more than a framed shell of a house.

In the process of everything, during the excavation and site-work stage, our property was constructed with a boulder wall which, completely unbeknownst to us, is located within the upland review area of our property. Essentially, medium- to large-sized boulders which were pulled out of our property during excavation and land-clearing were placed in a wall-formation along the side of our house and yard as a means to have a place to put them instead of removing them from the property. This wall does NOT sit on the wetlands themselves, but is located approximately 22-25 feet from the wetlands boundary in the buffer zone/upland review area, covering approximately 8,800 square feet. While silt fencing was used during the construction of the wall to protect the wetlands area from erosion, our contractor apparently either disregarded or misread the site map provided to him which indicated the location of the buffer zone. When we had the as-built survey completed and submitted to the Planning and Zoning department for their Certificate of Occupancy approval in June of 2024, this issue came to light and was a shock to me, as I assumed things had been constructed within the proper boundaries.

I am hereby requesting a permit for this boulder wall, which has already been constructed, and asking for this wall to be approved as-is. This request is with the understanding that the proper permitting process was not previously undertaken by my contractor, who has been off of our job for approximately 2 years and is **not available** to be contacted regarding this matter; contacting him or anyone associated with him to rectify anything on our property is absolutely out of the question, as both he and our site contractor have shown themselves to be dishonest, irrational, and unsafe. We are pursuing action against our contractor via the Department of Consumer Protection and holding him responsible in this way. We currently have an investigation open against him and have been told by our investigator at the DCP that we have a valid and strong case, but in the meantime, we have been struggling for about 2 years finish this house and have a home for our family, which includes our four young children. We lived in a small camper for 21 months, then with friends for 8 months, and a rental house for 5 months, all while paying a full mortgage and taxes on this house that we could not live in. We have needed to take out a second mortgage loan to have the funds to complete it, and those funds have been exhausted in the work necessary to obtain a certificate of occupancy.

We do not have the funds necessary to remove this retaining wall or make any modifications to it, and doing so would be more of a disturbance to the wetlands at this point than simply letting it be. The wall is stable, and there is grass growing on the wall which provides erosion control. Please again note that I, as the homeowner, was trusting that my contractor was doing things appropriately, and this discovery has come as a shock to me. I ask that this matter not be made into more of an issue than it needs to be, so as to not create an additional burden to my family who has already suffered greatly as a result of my contractor's irresponsibility.