



# Wetland Crossings

Maine Forest Service, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY  
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Wetlands are areas where soils are saturated or flooded for a significant part of the year. Soils often have a significant amount of water moving on or near the surface, which is displaced when large equipment moves over it. Minimizing this disturbance is key to a successful wetland crossing. There are multiple wetland types to look out for:

**Forested wetlands** are typically dominated by trees taller than 20 feet, have relatively little or no water at the surface, and have indistinct borders. There are no permitting requirements for impacted this wetland type for the purposes of timber harvesting, but special BMP considerations should be made before they are disturbed.



**Non-forested or open wetlands** may have standing water and are dominated by shrubs and/or grasses, though they may have some scattered trees, mostly less than 20 feet tall. Non-forested wetlands are not managed for timber, and require special permitting before they are impacted.



**Vernal pools** are open water bodies that are typically forested, and typically dry up during summer months. Due to their specialized habitat and BMP concerns, it is recommended that they are avoided to the greatest extent practical. Habitat management guidelines for vernal pools are available from the Maine Forest Service.



## Temporary Crossings

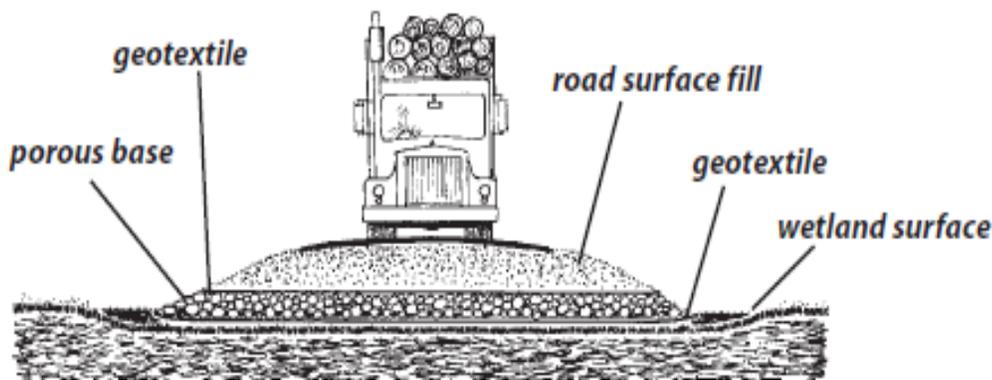


BMPs in wetlands help minimize two primary impacts: **sedimentation** and the **alteration of water flow** through the wetland soils. The following are several wetland BMPs to provide ways to increase the strength, or bearing capacity, of the soil and to maintain water movement through the wetland soil at a temporary crossing:

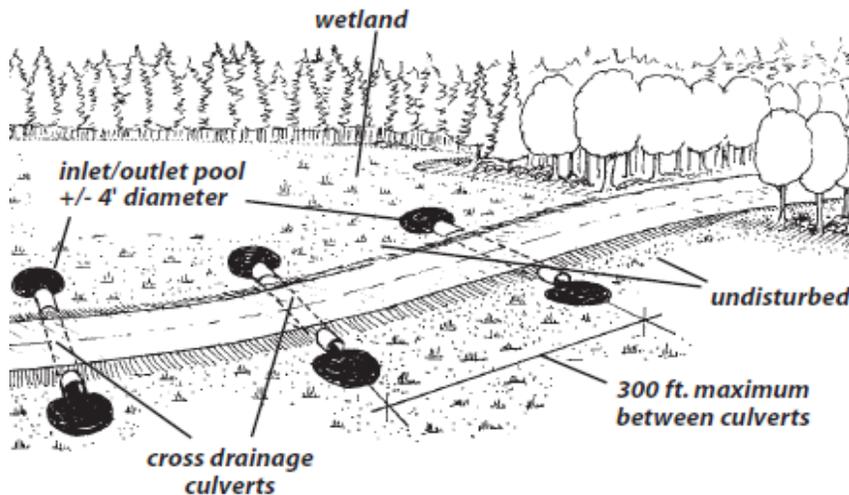
- **Cross wetlands on frozen ground if possible;**
- **Minimize the length and width of the trail within the wetland;**
- **Minimize the number and frequency of wetland crossings; and**
- **Use wooden mats, log corduroy, or similar structures to cross wetlands.**

## Permanent Crossings

Although temporary crossings are preferred, for permanent crossings, use road base materials such as corduroy, or large stone that permit water to flow through the road's sub-base. Using these materials in combination with geotextiles will keep the layers of road material and native soils separate from the stone or corduroy. This will also increase the bearing capacity of the road.



If drainage through the road base is not adequate, water may dam up, resulting in sedimentation of the waterway and potentially compromising the integrity of your road. Incorporating cross-draining culverts in your design will allow water to flow through more effectively.



For more information, please contact:  
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