

Zoning Ordinance

Normal High Water Line Zoning Amendments

SEC. 19-1-3. DEFINITIONS

Coastal wetland: all tidal and subtidal lands; all lands with vegetation present that is tolerant of salt water and occurs primarily in a salt water or estuarine habitat; and any swamp, marsh, bog, beach, flat or other contiguous low land that is subject to tidal action during the highest astronomical tide level which is the highest tide level for the effective nineteen year National Tidal Datum Epoch (1983-2001, made effective April 2003), plus an additional three (3) feet of vertical elevation. Coastal wetlands may include portions of coastal sand dunes. All areas below the highest astronomical tide plus three (3) vertical feet of the Portland Head Light are coastal wetlands. These areas may consist of rocky ledges, sand and cobble beaches, mud flats, etc., in addition to salt marshes and salt meadows.

Highest Astronomical Tide: The elevation of the highest predicted astronomical tide expected to occur at Portland Head Light tide station over the National Tidal Datum Epoch.

Normal High Water Line of Coastal Waters: That line on the shore of tidal waters which is the apparent extreme limit of the effect of the tides, i.e. the top of the bank, cliff or beach above high tide.

Normal High Water Line of Inland Waters: That line which is apparent from visible markings, changes in the character of soils due to prolonged action of the water or changes in vegetation, and which distinguishes between predominantly aquatic and predominantly terrestrial land. Areas contiguous with rivers and great ponds that support non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils and that are at the same or lower elevation as the water level of the river or great pond during the period of normal high-water are considered part of the river or great pond. Adjacent to tidal waters, setbacks are measured from the upland edge of the **coastal wetland**, defined herein. ~~on the shores and banks of non-tidal waters which marks normal high water, and which is apparent because of the contiguous different character of the soil or the vegetation due to the prolonged action of the water. Relative to vegetation, it is that line where the vegetation changes from predominantly terrestrial to predominantly aquatic vegetation. (By way of illustration, aquatic vegetation includes but is not limited to the following plants and plant groups—water lily, pond lily, pickerelweed, cattail, wild rice, sedges, rushes and marsh grasses, and terrestrial vegetation includes but is not limited to the following plants and plant groups—upland grasses, aster, lady slipper, wintergreen, partridge berry, sarsaparilla, pines, cedars, oaks, ashes, alders, elms, and maples). In places where the shore or bank is of such character that the normal high water line cannot be easily determined (rockslides, ledges, rapidly eroding or slumping banks) the normal high water line shall be estimated from places where it can be determined~~

~~by the above method. Areas contiguous with rivers and great ponds that support non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils and that are at the same or lower elevation as the water level of the river or Great pond during the period of normal high water are considered part of the river or Great pond. (Effective October 15, 2009)~~