




PUBLIC WORKS – ENGINEERING DIVISION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bloomfield Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

FROM: David Peter Castaldi, Civil Engineer and Wetlands Agent 

DATE: January 7, 2026

RE: **Wetlands Boundary Amendment Application, 1151 Blue Hills Avenue
First Cathedral Site, Unique ID# 7895, formerly map 179-2, lot 2074**

Applicant and Property Owner:

First Baptist Church
c/o LeRoy Bailey, III
1151 Blue Hills Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Soil Scientist:

Ethan Sneesby, RSS
BSC Group Inc.
655 Winding Brook Drive
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Wetlands File #75-2025-29

This application was officially received at the November 17, 2025 regular meeting and is scheduled for a Public Hearing at the January 20, 2026 regular meeting.

The proposed Wetlands Map amendment is for the wetlands in the central and southerly portions of the overall site. The application is complete and ready for the Public Hearing. Sufficient information has been submitted for the Commission to make an informed decision on the application.

It is recommended that the Commission open the Public Hearing and hear testimony from the applicant, and take questions and comments, at the January 20th Public Hearing. The Commission may continue the Public Hearing if additional information is requested and table the application to the next meeting February 17, 2026, OR the Commission may close the Public Hearing and proceed to a vote on the application.

This application to amend the Official Map of Inland Wetlands and Watercourses has been filed in accordance with Section 15. of the Wetlands Regulations. This amendment is based on the Soil

Scientist's field delineation and flagging of the wetland soil limits and a survey of the wetlands flags. The Official Map is not based on a Soil Scientist's delineation and the limits of the wetlands on the Official Map are approximate only.

The subject property is bounded on the east side by Blue Hills Avenue (CT Rte. 187) and on the west side by Wintonbury Avenue (CT Rte. 178). The Official Map indicates extensive wetlands in the southerly and central parts of the overall property, including several intermittent watercourses, swamp areas and an open body of water (pond). Please refer to the appendix of this memorandum and the GIS plot for additional background information.

The Soil Scientist identified significantly more wetlands in the southerly part of the site than are shown on the Official Map. The Official Map indicates 12.74 acres (555,000 SF) of wetlands, a 3.60 acre (156,800 square feet) pond and 1800 linear feet of watercourses on the property. The Soil Scientist flagged 17.27 acres (753,300 SF) of wetlands on the property; a 1.46 acre (63,600 square feet) pond and 1207 linear feet of intermittent watercourses.

The Official Map indicates some uplands along the south property line but this area was included in the flagged wetlands. The isolated wetlands area shown on the Official Map, north of the southerly parking lot, and near Blue Hills Avenue and was found to contain no wetlands.

In accordance with Section 15.4 of the Wetlands Regulations the plans and supporting documentation have been reviewed. A one-sheet map amendment plan prepared by BSC Group, at 1" = 50' scale, undated; and a two-sheet property survey, also prepared by BSC Group, at 1" = 60' scale, dated July 3, 2025 and revised to 11/13/25, were submitted with the application. The information on these two submittals will need to be combined. Technical revisions are needed for the map amendment plan and were communicated to the applicant with this memorandum.

A Wetlands Delineation Report was submitted with the application, prepared by Ethan Sneesby, Soil Scientist, dated November 13, 2025. An NRCS Soils report, dated November 13, 2025 was also submitted with the application.

The site was inspected in the field on November 18 and 19, 2025. Several test cores were dug with a hand auger and compared with the Delineation Report. The edges of the wetlands at the flagged line are topographically defined at the toe of existing slopes and were fairly dry. The pond was holding water and the watercourses had observable flow. The limits of the wetlands delineated by the Soil Scientist appear to be accurate. No vernal pools were identified in the field. There are some discrepancies in the flag numbers between flags W1-167 and W1-161 a field meeting with the Soil Scientist to resolve this discrepancy has been requested.

The wetland soils identified by the Soil Scientist include the Shaker, Scitico, Maybid series of poorly and very poorly drained, silt loams. This agrees with the wetlands soil designation (9/Bf) on the Official Map. The submitted NRCS Soils Report is not accurate for this property and appears to represent the soils on the site prior to development.

If this application is approved as presented then the Soil Scientist's flagged wetlands line will be resolved with the Official Map where the flagged line crosses the Official Map line between flags W1-268 and W1-269 on the west side, and between flags W1-101 and W1-102 on the east side.

It is recommended that the Commission approve this application to amend the Official Map of Inland Wetlands and Watercourses with the following recommended conditions of approval:

Recommendation and Conditions of Approval

1. The permittee shall submit a separate Wetland Map Amendment plan which incorporates all technical plan revisions. Final plans are subject to the approval of the Wetlands Agent.
2. The permittee shall submit three (3) sets of paper prints and one (1) set of fixed lined mylars of the final Wetland Map Amendment plan, signed and sealed by the Surveyor and Soil Scientist, for signing by the Commission. The final plans shall be submitted in a digital form that is compatible with the Town of Bloomfield GIS.
3. The permittee shall file the Commission signed mylars of the final Wetlands Map Amendment plans on the Bloomfield Land Records.
4. The Official Map shall be modified to include the Soil Scientist's flagged wetlands line where it crosses the Official Map line between wetland flags W1-268 and W1-269, and between flags W1-101 and W1-102; and the surveyed watercourses.

Appendix

A. This site is located on the west side of Blue Hills Avenue and southeast side of Wintonbury Avenue. Its total area is 40.5 acres and according to the 2023 Official Map of Inland Wetlands and Watercourses there are 12.74 acres of wetlands, 1800 feet of watercourses and 3.6 acre pond on the site. See GIS plot of the Official Map data attached.

B. The on-site wetland and watercourse resources are located in the central and southerly parts of the property. The pond is located on the west side near Wintonbury Avenue. The flow through the wetlands and the watercourses is from east to west and they drain under Wintonbury Avenue to the northwest. All of the wetlands, except the pond, are forested. There is also a created wetlands in the southwesterly corner of the property.

C. The topography of the site is varied and includes two large, paved parking areas. The north parking lot is around the church building and the south parking lot is connected to the north lot with a timber bridge. The parking lots are 3-8 feet above the surrounding wetlands, and there is also a baseball/basketball/tennis court area in the southwest portion of the site with access from Wintonbury Avenue.

D. The church building and north parking lot were constructed in the late 1990's. The south parking lot and timber bridge were built in the early 2000's.

E. There are several storm drainage systems within the site and some additional storm systems drain into the on-site wetlands from Wintonbury Avenue and Blue Hills Avenue.

F. The on-site wetlands and watercourses were identified as Wetlands 34 in the 1985 Inwoods Environmental Consultants Evaluation (see copy of report attached).

G. The wetland soil identified on the Official Map is:

Glaciolacustrine – Soils formed in old glacial lakebed deposits of silts and clays:

H *Maybid* VPD loam [Bf]

H. The on-site wetlands and watercourses are a part of a larger wetland system that extends onto the abutting properties to the south and northwest. The on-site wetlands and watercourses drain from east to west and flow under Wintonbury Avenue to the large wetland/watercourse system in the Blue Hills Flood Water Retention Reservoir on the northwest side of Wintonbury Avenue.

I. This property is located within the local watershed of Beaman Brook and is tributary to the North Branch of the Park River. A FEMA Flood Hazard Zone exists around the pond in the westerly part of the property.

J. There are existing Conservation Easements surrounding the wetlands on the property.

Wetland # 34

Wetland location Blue Hills Reservoir

MDC # 178,179,235,236,300,301,373,374

Hydrolgic Functions

groundwater exchange MEDIUM

flood control HIGH

sediment trapping MEDIUM

pollution reduction MEDIUM

Biologic Functions

wildlife habitat HIGH

rare/endangered species n/a

uniqueness this is an excellent birding area, as well as a large and
diverse wetland ecosystem

Cultural Function

recreation/education HIGH

Disturbances

upstream impacts roads

manmade structures/disturbances flood impoundments

Wetland # 34

Wetland location Blue Hills Reservoir

MDC # 178,179,235,236,300,301,373,374

This wetland encompasses a variety of wetland classes and extends over a large area. For purposes of description, this large wetland is broken down into three main sections: the areas to the north and south of the Reservoir, and the Reservoir itself.

The northern wetland sections consist of narrow strands of floodplain soil flanking the tributaries entering the Reservoir. These northern wetland sections include open grassy sedge tufts in standing water, open Juncus meadows with small patches of cattail and Phragmites, and a thickly-wooded streambelt wetland. The tip of one of these northern streambelt wetlands is composed of deep peat, and is dominated by cattail and tufts of Juncus. This patch of deep peat, although very small, is ecologically important; these organic soils are able to absorb and later slowly release many times its weight in water, as well as bind and immobilize pollutants. Sections of these streambelt wetlands show signs of heavy streambank erosion, indicating that large volumes of water pass through these sinuous, deep stream channels during times of floods. Spicebush, arrowwood, and tufts of sedge and sensitive fern are frequent under the taller canopy of red maple, yellow birch, and american elm. Phragmites accentuate the fringe of encroachment (along Southwood and Northwood Drive), where fill has altered the local ecology of the wetland. Raccoon tracks are frequent in the streambed and along the stream banks.

The area of wetland within the Blue Hills Reservoir is diverse; wooded swamp, shallow marsh, open water, as well as sections of upland all occur within this large area. These sections of upland are reflected by patches of dryland vegetation such as white pine, white birch, and ironwood. The open herbaceous areas are well-saturated throughout the year, and are dominated by thick stands of purple loosestrife, cattail, and sedge and Juncus hummocks. Buttonbush, winterberry, highbush blueberry, and Phragmites occur in clumps in the wetter sections of the wetland. The wooded, less wet, areas are dominated by red maple and white oak and have a highbush blueberry, spicebush, sensitive fern understory. This area houses a diversity of wildlife; a number of small birds were sited during the field study including thrushes, yellow-throated warbler, wrens, jays, brown creeper, and a variety of sparrows. Pileated woodpecker holes were evident in the forested section of the wetland. Deer browse was also present.

The southern sections of this wetland are composed of the somewhat poorly drained Scantic soils, which include the open fields behind the Wintonbury School, and the farmland across Wintonbury Avenue. Where this road transects the wetland, a small shallow marsh has formed as a result of the impounded water. Purple loosestrife, cattail, and Scirpus are abundant in this small patch of shallow marsh.

The area north of Wedgewood Avenue is a post-agricultural field, dominated by young red maples. This section has a variety of species interspersed among the maples such as arrowwood, American elm, dogwood, Phragmites, and purple loosestrife.

1983
A few errors occur in the town's official wetlands map. Patches of Elmwood (EnA) Agawam (AbA) and Ninigret (NnA) soils (not marked on the town

map) are scattered in the Reservoir. These three soil types are classified as upland, not wetland, soils.