

# **Conservation Administrator's Report**

**Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator**

October 2017

I am excited to be the new Conservation Administrator for the Town of Ayer. At the end of September I began the new job with a few days of overlap with Kaitlyn Rimol, the interim administrator for the Conservation Commission. Thanks to Kait and the Commissioners, I am getting up to speed on a very busy set of on-going projects and am working through an equally busy set of new applications for wetland permits!

**Pond Weed Control:** Last summer, several of Ayer's ponds were treated for nuisance aquatic weed growth. The Conservation office is waiting for the final report from the treatment company so the Commission can assess the program and make recommendations for work going forward.

**Community Preservation Act Funds:** Ayer is a Community Preservation Act (CPA) town and has been diligently setting aside funds for use on open space acquisition, housing initiatives, and historic preservation. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) oversees these funds. At the fall Town Meeting residents voted to establish a fund to accept some of the open space acquisition monies in the CPC coffers. This new fund will be overseen by the Conservation Commission and will allow the Commission to enter into and to complete land purchases in a timely manner. The new fund will also be able to accept financial donations which can be used to purchase land for open space use. The town voted to move of \$500,000 from the CPC account into the new open space fund.

**Land Use Team:** The new town planner, Mark Archambault, set up a Land Use Team comprised of members from departments in town whose function includes oversight in the area of land use, including Conservation. The weekly meetings brings us together for discussion about ongoing projects upcoming projects, and round table discussions with the result that everyone is aware of other land use projects in town. The Land Use Team brings a collaborative approach to land use in Ayer.

The Conservation Commission will begin planning for next year's initiatives in the months ahead.