

Conservation Administrator's Report

Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator

January 2018

The Conservation office remained busy in January keeping up with ongoing projects and turning attention to future projects. The arrival of winter weather has not really slowed construction, and the rounds of site visits by the Conservation continue to be an important undertaking in order to uphold the requirements of the Wetlands Protection Act here in Ayer. A fish kill in Pine Meadow Pond was reported by a Commission member and the incident was referred to the fishery biologist at Mass Fish and Wildlife. Jo-Anne has been involved in editing the Resources section of the Master Plan and has attended the Open Space and Recreation Committee's public forum.

Pond Weed Control: The Commission has created a Request for Quote (RFQ) for the 2018 round of ponds' weed control. The RFQ was issued at the end of January in order to give weed control companies a chance to provide the Commission with their plans and bids for weed control and maintenance of two of Ayer's ponds. The deadline for receipt of proposals is February 22nd and we are looking forward to reviewing them. The 2017 round of treatments was very successful, and the hope is for more of the same this coming summer.

Conservation Fund: The Commission will be starting to draft Policies and Procedures for the newly established and funded Conservation Fund. The Town Planner and the Conservation Administrator have applied for a grant with Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) which would provide a regional look at prioritizing conservation land for possible acquisition using the Conservation Fund. MRPC would create a series of maps and help the Town prioritize parcels for consideration. We have received preliminary good news on our grant application and will share more as time goes by.

Land Use Team: The Land Use Team continues to meet weekly. Staff keeps current with each other's projects and offers insight, information, and advice. This meeting is an excellent way for the staff involved in land use issues in Ayer to connect with large and small projects.

The Conservation Commission is planning for next year's initiatives. Public meetings are in the planning stages for resource management plans for Ayer's Great Ponds and the issues of dock licenses. The DEP Circuit Rider, Judy Schmitz, will be attending the February 22, 2018 Conservation Commission Meeting with information about the dock license process for ponds in Ayer.

Please contact the Conservation office at 978-772-8249 with any questions or concerns. Thank you!