

Conservation Administrator's Report

Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator

March 2019

The Conservation Office continues to be busy with policy work, applications, permits, inspections, and oversight.

The Heating Oil Spill Cleanup and wetland replication across the street from Page Hilltop has moved onto a post-remediation inspection phase. The high density mats, roll-off containers, security fencing, and frac tank have all been removed from Trevor Trail. The concern with this phase of the project is the stability of the 700-plus tons of new wetland soil that was used to replace the contaminated soil which was removed. Woody wetland plants have been planted in the wetland and a wetland seed mix has been spread on the new soil. Hopefully both will establish themselves well in the coming spring weather. The Conservation Commission engaged the consulting services of Paul McManus, principal of EcoTec, Inc., to assist in providing oversight for the project. The Conservation Agent has been onsite and in regular contact with the Licensed Site Professionals overseeing the cleanup of oil-impacted stream channels and wetlands.

The Pingry Hill subdivision requires continual monitoring for compliance with the Wetland Protection Act regulations for stormwater standards. The site as a whole is monitored not only by the Conservation Agent but also by the Sedimentation Specialist, required by EPA, before and after storm events to check the quality of stormwater. Weekly site visits by the Conservation Agent continue to be important in maintaining the fragile stability of the development.

Ponds' Weed Control: The Commission has assessed the success of last summer's and has made a decision about how to approach the pond treatments for the upcoming year and has signed a contract with Solitude Lake Management, the contractor for Ayer's pond treatments in the past. We are awaiting word about when Solitude will begin this year's work in Ayer's ponds.

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 both large and small projects.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan was approved by the State. The completed Plan puts the Town in a position to apply for grants to fund acquisition of open space, trail work, and other recreation needs.

As a way to keep up with Commission projects, the Conservation Commission hears applications for permits on the first meeting of the month, and reserves the second monthly meeting for Commission business. Work has begun on creating a local wetlands protection bylaw, and a large land conservation project is underway. Please contact the Conservation office at 978-772-8249, by email at concom@ayer.ma.us, or drop by with any questions or concerns. Thank you!