

## **Conservation Administrator's Report**

**Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator**

May 2019

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

**The Land Protection Partners** held a very successful meeting here at Town Hall on May 30. Representatives from Mass Audubon, Mass Fish and Game, North County Land Trust, Groton Conservation Trust, Nashua River Watershed Association, and the Conservation Commission discussed the merits of working together to protect and preserve land in Ayer that could add to a regional collection of preserved properties.

**The Heating Oil Spill Cleanup and wetland replication** across the street from Page Hilltop continues in a post-remediation inspection phase. The replication of the contaminated wetland entailed soil replacement and replanting dozens of woody wetland plants as well as seeding with a wetland seed mix. The cold, wet spring has been the perfect weather for establishing new plants in the wetland! The Conservation Agent has been onsite weekly and is in regular contact with our consultant, Paul McManus, as well as 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. The site as a whole is monitored not only by the Conservation Agent but also by Desheng Wang, the Sedimentation Specialist, required by EPA, before and after storm events to check the quality of stormwater. The site has responded well to implementing multiple small erosion control measures.

**Ponds' Weed Control:** The Commission has assessed the success of last summer's weed treatment and has signed a contract with Solitude Lake Management, the contractor for Ayer's pond treatments in the past. Solitude has completed a pre-treatment assessment of the ponds ahead of this summer's treatment activities. Town Meeting voted to fund the weed control program for FY 2020, for which the Commission is grateful.

**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.

**A Conservation Restriction (CR)** on land at the end of Kohler Place has been sent to the State for its final approval before being signed here in Ayer by the Commission and the Selectmen.

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](mailto:concom@ayer.ma.us), or drop by with any questions or concerns. Thank you!