

Conservation Administrator's Report

Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator

June 2019

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

Public Meetings for Ayer's Local Wetlands Protection Bylaw were held in June ahead of Fall Town Meeting. A working draft of the bylaw is available on the Commission's website.

The Heating Oil Spill Cleanup and wetland replication across the street from Page Hilltop continues in a post-remediation inspection phase 15 months after the spill occurred. 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 replacement wetland soil is becoming stable and the seed mix has sprouted. The woody wetland plants and struggling somewhat to adapt but I remain optimistic that they will begin to thrive soon.

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 the EPA. With constant oversight, the site has responded well to implementing multiple small erosion control measures. Construction of the last stormwater structures is underway. The Order of Conditions for the infrastructure will likely be extended for three years by the Commission.

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, but has not yet begun treatment. 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, or drop by with any questions or concerns. Thank you!