

**Conservation Administrator's Report**  
**Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator and Agent**  
**December 2020**

**The State of Emergency** instituted by the arrival of Covid-19 continues to effect work in the conservation office. The Commission continues to meet remotely. Town Hall is closed to the public. The Commission no longer has discretion regarding opening public hearings during the State of Emergency and is required to adhere to the timelines in the Wetlands Protection Act regulations open a hearing within 21 days of receipt of an application.

**The Enforcement Orders against John Hillier** for work done in a Resource Area and the buffer zone without a permit on Central Avenue is coming to a resolution after nearly two years. The Commission voted to proceed with drafting an Order of Conditions for the Notice of Intent submitted to the Commission in resolution of the Enforcement Orders.

**The MBTA's Vegetation Management Plan (VMP)** was submitted to the Commission for renewal as a Request for Determination of Applicability. The VMP is renewed every five years. The use of mechanical and chemical methods to manage vegetation along the MBTA rail lines triggers review by the Commission where the rail lines cross wetland resource areas and their buffer zones. The Commission voted to issued a Negative Determination with the condition that any earth disturbance would require a Notice of Intent.

**Weed Treatments** for Ayer's ponds are completed for the year and the Commission has received the year-end report from Solitude Lake Management. In reviewing and analyzing the report, the Commission will continue treating weeds with a maintenance-level program pending approval of the warrant article at Town Meeting for funding this work.

**The February 2018 heating oil spill at Page Hilltop School** accidentally delivered 800 gallons of heating oil directly to an extensive wetland system between Washington Street, Nashua Street, and Trevor Trail. The contractor for the cleanup of the oil and replication of the impacted wetlands filed a Request for Certificate of Compliance with the Commission. Careful analysis and review is being undertaken by the Commission as they work to determine whether the site is sufficiently recovered to proceed with issuing a Certificate of Compliance.

**Commission meeting agendas** continue to be full to over flowing. Time control plans have been put in place to fit agendas into time-limited Zoom meetings. The amount of new development coming to Ayer that requires Conservation Commission permits is straining our capacity to manage a large number of permit applications and oversight.

Please contact the Commission office with any questions at 978-772-8249 or [\*\*concom@ayer.ma\*\*](mailto:concom@ayer.ma)