

Conservation Administrator's Report

Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator and Agent

May 2021

John Hillier has filed a law suit against the Conservation Commission, in addition to appealing to DEP the Order of Conditions issued by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Hillier has done in a Resource Area and the buffer zone without a permit on Central Avenue. DEP is reviewing his appeal and is in the process of arranging a site visit during which both parties will present their arguments.

The first pond treatment for invasive and nuisance aquatic vegetation is scheduled to take place on May 17, 2021 in Flannagan Pond. Two more treatments will be conducted in June. The final treatment will be conducted in late summer or early fall. Water and Wetland LLC will be working on Ayer's ponds as our contractor this year. Notification of the date of pond treatments will be posted by the contractor ahead of time.

The Wild and Scenic Nashua River Stewardship Council awarded the Commission a \$4,800 grant to complete a project placing waterways signs adjacent to waters that flow into the Nashua River. Nearly all of Ayer's surface water does flow to the Nashua, except for Bennett's Brook which flows to the Merrimack River. The signs will be designed by a graphic artist and installed so we can connect our valuable water resources to their names.

A Poetry Path in Pine Meadow Conservation Area was installed by the Commission and the Library on April 11th. The Poetry Path will consist of 10 nature-themed poems on wooden plaques along a 2-mile loop through Pine Meadow. Copy this link into your browser for the Poetry Path map and the list of poems: ayerlibrary.org/poetry-path/

Increased beaver activity has been noticed along Ayer's streams and in Ayer's culverts.

Applications for projects continue to flood into the Commission office. A time control plan for packed agendas helps keep the Commission on track for meetings with limited time due to Zoom and staff constraints. As spring approaches and an even busier agenda is anticipated, the Commission will assess how best to accommodate demand. 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 978-772-8220 x 143 or concom@ayer.ma