

Conservation Administrator's Report

Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator and Agent

June 2021

John Hillier has filed a lawsuit against the Conservation Commission, in addition to appealing the Commission's Order of Conditions to DEP. A DEP analyst made a site visit to Central Avenue to hear both sides of the matter. Town Counsel is preparing a statement of the Commission's position for the record. DEP will make a decision about the appeal.

The pond treatments for invasive and nuisance aquatic vegetation are underway in Sandy Pond, Flannagan Pond and Pine Meadow Pond. 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 each treatment.

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 in hope that better stewardship and care will occur.

Increased beaver activity has been noticed along Ayer's streams and in Ayer's culverts. Two new beaver dams are being monitored for signs of possible flooding in this unusually wet summer.

Senior Work-off help has arrived in the Conservation office to assist with the backlog of office tasks caused by the increase in applications and activities.

Catania Oils' expansion project on Nemco Way has begun. The heavy rains caused some issues with water management early in the project. The site is stable now and work is proceeding.

Applications for projects continue to flood into the Commission office. A time control plan for packed agendas helps keep the Commission on track. 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 ongoing oversight.

The grid on the next page shows Conservation Commission activities by task over the last eleven years. The 2021 column shows activities year-to-date for June 24, 2021. As the rate of development increases in Ayer, Conservation Commission activities increase also. Land that has not been developed to this point in time is marginal land, often with wetland resource area and buffer zone area concerns for the Commission.

TASKS	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
DOA / RDA determinations	17	13	14	6	11	12	9	5	6	5
OOC / NOI Order of Conditions	8	11	6	13	22	9	8	12	15	6
ORAD / ANRAD Resource Area Delineation		2		1	2			2		
OOC Amendment		1	3	13	5		1			
OOC Extension	2	7	4	8	1	1	11			1
CoC – Certificate of Compliance	9	7	12	13	29	8	9	23	8	14
Enforcement Order/ Violation Notice		9	3	8	4		1		5	9
OSRD Conservation Recommendation	1	2	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Emergency Certification	5			2		1				
Conservation Restriction	2	1								
ConCom Site Walks	9	12	6							

Updated as of 7/22/2021 ConCom Agenda