

Conservation Administrator's Report

Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator and Agent

August 2021

The pond treatments for invasive and nuisance aquatic vegetation are coming to their conclusion for this season in Sandy Pond, Flannagan Pond and Pine Meadow Pond. The final treatment will be conducted in September. Water and Wetland LLC is our aquatic vegetation control contractor this year. Notification of the date of pond treatments will be posted by the contractor ahead of each treatment.

Waterways signs are being designed by a graphic artist and locations for the signs have been chosen by the Conservation Administrator and the Town Engineer. We hope to have the 10 signs installed by mid-October. The funding for this project is being provided by a grant from the Wild and Scenic Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Stewardship Council as part of a National Park Service program.

A beaver deceiver installation estimate has been received by the Commission for the inlet at Bennett's Brook/Shaker Mill Pond. The deceiver will be installed as soon as the beavers rebuild their dam. The Commission is working with the Town Engineer on a comprehensive, Town-wide beaver interaction plan for an increasing number of beaver/human interaction sites in town.

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. We are very grateful for the help! The Commission is also working toward funding a temporary, part-time assistant for the Conservation Administrator using funds generated by Wetlands Protection Act application fees.

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

Ayer Solar II B, a large-scale, ground mounted solar installation off Washington Street, is starting construction activities. The erosion and sediment controls are being installed as well as barriers for endangered turtles. This project is being constructed in an environmentally sensitive site and will be closely monitored by Conservation and an environmental monitor.

A draft Fertilizer Use Bylaw is being reviewed by the Commission for inclusion on the warrant for fall town meeting. A public hearing will be held regarding the proposed bylaw on September 23, 2021.

Applications for projects continue to flood into the Commission office. The amount of new development coming to Ayer, in addition to homeowner projects, that requires Conservation Commission permits is straining our capacity to manage a large number of permit applications and ongoing oversight.

Please contact the Conservation office with any questions at concom@ayer.ma.us or 978-772-8220 x143