

**Conservation Commission
Monthly Report
December 2023**

The Commission continues its work enforcing the Wetlands Protection Act and local Bylaws and Regulation through site inspections on new and continuing projects, as well as community outreach. The Commission held one meeting in December due to the Christmas Holiday.

At the Commission's December 14th meeting the Commission reviewed a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) that was filed by the Town of Ayer Department of Public Works for the complete street improvements on Sandy Pond Road. The Commission did not request a site visit for the project and issued a Negative Determination with the condition of erosion controls be installed. The Commission also closed the Public Hearing for 71 Sandy Pond Road and issued an Order of Conditions with Special Conditions including additional tree or shrub plantings on site and the installation of no disturbance signs near the wetlands buffer on site. The Commission also reviewed and discussed the FY2025 budget proposal showing a slight increase in expenses to work on Beaver Management, Conservation Restrictions and signage and trail markers for Pine Meadow. The Commission reviewed the 2023 Pond Report for the weed treatment that was conducted by Water and Wetlands. The report has been posted to the Commission webpage on the Town's website for all residents to review.

As the weather gets colder and the Commission typically sees a slowdown in permitting requests which gives them more time to focus on possible grant opportunities and projects for the spring. The Conservation Agent will be working on drafting the RFQ for pond treatments for the upcoming season as well as continuing to investigate alternative methods for treatments. The Conservation Agent has also been working closely with the DPW and Town Engineer on reviewing private stormwater systems throughout the town and contacting the owners to ensure the systems are being maintained properly.

Submitted by Heather Hampson, Conservation Agent for the Conservation Commission