

Report of the Conservation Commission
2015

The Commission continued to administer the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town Wetland Protection Bylaw, issuing 8 Orders of Conditions (no Amended Orders) and 1 Extension. Also, 6 Determinations of Applicability were issued. No projects were denied by the Commission in 2015. Regular public meetings were generally conducted bi-weekly and numerous site inspections were held during the year. Many sites were reviewed and approved for building permit application sign-offs by the Conservation Commission Agent. Also, 3 Pre-Construction Evaluation applications were reviewed resulting in the issuance of 2 Erosion and Sediment Control Permits. The following major projects were monitored in 2015: Crosswinds subdivision site work located between Plain and Station Streets, Rockwood Meadows on East Street, and many Town roadway re-paving filings. The Commission also informally resolved several other minor violations of the Wetland Protection Act. Certificates of Compliance were issued for 4 completed projects.

The Stormwater Bylaw permits were reviewed and issued by the Commission.

The Commission provided several comment letters to the Planning Board regarding applications for Large Lot Subdivisions and other development proposals.

The Commission and the Board of Health administered town funds allocated for beaver control. Funds were expended to remove a major dam build by beavers at the Southboro Road bogs. Trapping of beavers also occurred at this site..

The Commission accepted a Conservation Restriction and an Easement Deed for the Rockwood Meadows Senior Housing Community. A trail on the property will provide another access to the Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area. The Commission also accepted a Declaration of Restriction for the Crosswinds Subdivision to protect riparian habitat along Center Brook. “Pixie’s Park”, a 1.1 acre parcel on Meadow Drive was donated to the town by Mike and Lisa Ryan, and is under the care, custody and control of the Conservation Commission.

The Commission directed a 2014 – 2015 study concerning habitat use by the Wood Turtle along the Warren Brook riparian corridor. Study costs were provided by a fund established by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program as a permit condition for a recent private development project in town.

The Conservation Commission has received a Forest Stewardship Plan for the Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area and adjacent town owned land in North Upton. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and Massachusetts Audubon Ecological Extension Service will be providing supplemental material. The Town was reimbursed for the full cost of the completed plan as well as an outreach plan prepared by the ULSC, through a grant from the DCR.

The Commission has been monitoring Pratt Pond Ice-Out as an indicator of climate change since 2010. Pratt Pond Ice out is defined as first day in spring when no ice is visible in the pond from a vantage point near the intersection of School Street and North Main Street. In 2015, the pond was ice free on April 11.

With great regret the Commission accepted the resignation of our long-time agent Mathew Selby. Selby's technical expertise and dedication will be missed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Conservation Commission

Christine Scott, Chairperson

Mike Penko, Vice-Chairperson

Sandra Lajoie, Treasurer

Scott Heim, Member

Thomas Jango, Member

Alan Miano, Member

Marcella Stasa, Member

Mary Overholt, Associate member

Denise Smith, Administrative Assistant

Mathew Selby, Conservation Agent