

## **2024 Report of the Conservation Commission**

The Commission administered the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, the Town Wetland Protection Bylaws, and the Town Stormwater Bylaw. Regular public meetings were generally conducted bi-weekly and numerous site inspections were held by the Conservation Administrator. Meetings were held remotely and hybrid. Many sites were reviewed and approved for building permit application signoffs by the Conservation Commission Administrator. Major projects that were reviewed and permitted included Governors Landing Sewer, Grove St. Bridge Repairs, and 47 Main St. 40B project. Projects under construction monitored by the Commission in 2023 included: Preserve at Dean Pond subdivision, and Cobbler's Creek Senior housing. Upton Ridge received its certificate of Compliance. Three enforcement orders were issued. The Commission resolved several other violations of the Wetland Protection Act and/or the town wetland bylaw.

Department Specialist Grace Brownell left for another job in Rhode Island in August. She has been greatly missed. She kept the minutes and finances, website and many other details up to date effortlessly. As of yet this position is still open.

Commission member David Szczebak stepped down this fall because of time constraints. The Board greatly appreciated his support and specifically his help with GIS and mapping. David served on the Board for a total of three years.

The Board transitioned to hybrid meetings in April. The board had been meeting virtually since the beginning of COVID in 2020.

The Open Space Committee is a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. See the Open Space report for more details of their activities.

The Land Stewardship Committee (LSC) filed a NOI for the installation of a parking lot and trail bridges at the District 9 Schoolhouse property on Mechanic St. Work on building the trail infrastructure has been moving steadily along in conjunction with Sudbury Valley Trustees. The parking lot has been constructed and trails laid out. Some of the stream crossings are almost complete as well. See the Land Stewardship report for more details.

### Decisions/Actions issued by the Commission:

- Order of Conditions (OOC) issued = 19
- Determinations = 17
- Order of Resource Area Delineation (ORAD) = 1
- Certificate of Compliance = 7
- Order of Conditions Extension = 4
- Enforcement Orders = 3
- Emergency Certifications = 0
- Erosion Control Permits = 3
- Stormwater Management Permits = 0
- Amended Orders of Conditions = 2
- Minor Modifications to plans for OOC = 0

In April, the Conservation Commission held a public hearing for the proposed updates to the Town of Upton Stormwater Management Bylaw Chapter 242 Sections 1-17 and Regulations Chapt. 325 Sect.

1-7. This proposed replacement of the existing bylaw is required to come into compliance with the state MS4 permit. The new bylaw and regulations were approved at the May Town Meeting.

Beaver control activities in town have been undertaken by the Animal Control Officer. (See separate report).

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 winter or spring when no ice is visible in the pond from a vantage point near the intersection of School Street and North Main Street. In 2024, the pond was ice free on Jan 1 and intermittently until February 29 when the final ice-out occurred. Ice-In, defined as first day in fall or winter when Pratt Pond is entirely ice covered from a vantage point near the intersection of School Street and North Main Street, occurred on December 14.

#### General

- Office is located in Town Hall, **Room 201** Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday: 8:00 a.m.- 4:00p.m.; Tuesday: 8:00 a.m.-6:00p.m. Phone number: (508)-529-6286 or (508)-529-1010
- E-Mail: [concomm@uptonma.gov](mailto:concomm@uptonma.gov), or [moverholt@uptonma.gov](mailto:moverholt@uptonma.gov)

The Conservation Commission meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesday each month at 7:00 pm; meetings are hybrid; in person and via Zoom.

We would like to thank the various Town Boards, Commissions, Departments, and the citizens of Upton for their continued cooperation, participation and support during the year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Conservation Commission

Christine Scott, Chairperson  
Mike Penko, Vice-Chairperson  
Sandra Lajoie, Treasurer  
Thomas Jango, Member  
Alan Miano, Member  
Marcella Stasa, Member  
Mary Overholt, Conservation Administrator