



# The City of Westfield Conservation Department

Westfield Municipal Building, 59 Court Street 3rd Floor, Westfield, MA 01085

**Anna Meassick**

Director of Conservation

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## MEMO

To: City Council  
From: Anna Meassick, Director of Conservation  
Date: December 18, 2023  
Re: Flood Control Commission, Annual Report

Dear City Council,

I was forwarded an email from City Engineer, Allison McMordie, regarding the annual report that would typically be published by the Flood Control Commission (FCC). Part of my role as Director of Conservation is to assist the FCC with developing the annual report. In my review of past reports crafted by the FCC, they fail to provide any information that is not otherwise known from those prepared by USACE, DCR Office of Dam Safety, and other agencies of the like, which are already available to the public.

The report that will be submitted by the Conservation Department at the end of FY24 will outline permits issued, updates, and accomplishments of the Conservation Commission. As you may be aware, the Conservation Commission is the issuing authority for all work within wetlands, riverfront area, and buffer zones, including the FEMA floodplain. This is tasked to the Commission by Mass. General Law Ch. 131 Section 40 (The Wetlands Protection Act) and the Westfield Wetlands Protection Ordinance, where the floodplain is referred to as “Bordering Lands Subject to Flooding” (BLSF). The FCC is not tasked with regulating development within BLSF.

Until this report is completed, I can inform you a total of ten large scale projects have been approved by the Commission within BLSF since 2021. The city was the applicant for five of these projects and I have been the reviewer of three. Updates on those projects are as follows:

- The Conservation Commission approved the removal of trees from the Little River Levee on August 23, 2023, under DEP File #333-0839, applied for by Allison McMordie. The trees were cut in November and stumps will be removed next year. Once completed, the levee will meet USACE standards. Erosion controls remain in place to prevent erosion and runoff into the Little River.
- The Conservation Commission approved the repairs of the Little River Levee Culvert on June 21, 2023, under DEP File #333-0834, applied for by Allison McMordie. The repairs are well underway, and updates will be provided upon completion.
- The Conservation Commission worked with DPW and the Engineering department to develop a Bundle Notice of Intent to allow DPW to work within wetlands without filing for permits each time. This was approved April 26, 2023, and has sped up the process of permitting for city work which meets the requirements listed in the Order for DEP File #333-829.

All three of these projects were presented at open public hearings at the time of application and allowed ample time for questions, comments, and concerns from the public. All three projects were approved within 1 to 2 meetings, with a lack of public participation. The two other projects before my time with the city involved clearing vegetation on the 550ft section of the Little River Levee (completed) and the Multi-Use Westfield River Levee Path (now underway). Without the tireless efforts of the Engineering Department, DPW, and Conservation Department, these projects would not have made it to the starting line but now they will reach the finish line.

Should you have any questions about the above projects or any others in the flood zone, please refer to the Conservation Department's "Current Project Proposals" page where we post all active permits and current filings. I am best reachable by email to schedule a time to further discuss floodplain management, its relation to the Conservation Commission, the Westfield Wetlands Protection Ordinance, and Mass. General Law Ch. 131 Section 40.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A Meassick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Anna Meassick  
Director of Conservation