

**Town of Leyden Conservation Commission**  
**Meeting 07-21-25**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Commission Attendees**

Evan Abramson  
Andrea Rasmussen  
Don Sadowsky  
Karen O'Neill  
Janell Howard

**Guests:** Beth Kuzdeba, Devorah Vester, Robert Snedeker, Erica Jensen  
**By Zoom:** James O'Keefe

**Administrative matters**

- Mail: None
- Approved 6/18/25 minutes with corrected date and deleting Karen from Commission attendees
- Discussed whether the Commission should have a separate town fund, no conclusions

**Logging on West Leyden Rd**

- Site visit today
- Property owner agreed to put up the requested signage
- Property owner and logger told us they understand that they can't drive beyond limit of work but can reach out with an excavator from that point, except that matting must be removed
- Restoration plan includes sufficient planting
- Commission voted to approve an email agreeing to their workplan with these limitations

**Cowan Culvert Widening on Greenfield Rd**

- Site visit today
- Want to widen the driveway
- Logging plan already approved by the State
- Shed on the property predates the Wetlands Protection Act and therefore is grandfathered, including maintaining the area around it. They still should have asked the Commission for approval to cut down leaning trees, but we can ratify that activity

- One end of the culvert meets stream crossing standards, set into the ground, but the other is raised above the stream level, which is problematic.
- Property is in drainage area of Greenfield water supply
- Approve widening of culvert with special conditions
  - No issues with the camp itself
  - Site plan needs cross sectional drawing and narrative regarding putting in a native seed mix, wetland edge selection
  - Culvert must meet stream crossing standard (at least 25% buried)
  - Commission approved this action
  - Must be signed and sent via certified mail

### **Dam Construction on Keets Brook Rd.**

- James O'Keefe via Zoom: landowners
- Holly Perry and Jim Selzer in person, also landowners
- Dam is 95 years old, dam used to block brook for swimming, they have the right to do this
- Dam is so old that it doesn't block all the water. They put the block in and out during the year, never making drastic changes at any one time
- Usually blocked in mid June and block removed around Labor Day
- Landowners submitted an RDA for repair of the dam and operation to block the river
- Robert Snedeker attending in person
- Per DEP the work needs to be permitted in advance
- Next step could be an NOI
- Could make a decision that covers the next 3 years, or an NOI that is perennial
- DEP has drawdown performance standards that are recommended for rare species
- DEP recommends that removal be done in November, and blocked by April 1, which is not the landowners' current practice
- James O'Keefe calls it maintenance rather than repair, saying the dam is sound and the work is minimal
  - Also he maintains that doing the unblocking as early in the year as DEP recommends increases algae
  - In 2006
- Erica: Does NOI apply to both operation and maintenance of the dam? Evan: we can do either way
- Robert: the schedule the landowners use is best for preventing flooding because peak flooding is in April.
- Carol K: some years the landowner left the dam up in the summer and there was a storm
- Erica: can you walk in the river when it's part of someone's property? Evan: that would be trespassing
- Beth K: rules regarding perennial waterways need to be observed; the maintenance work resulted in washing of debris into the creek
  - Erica: the debris is from the existing dam that was being maintained/repared

- Evan: suggest that there be an order of conditions for cleaning up the debris
- Evan: work in a waterway needs ConCom permission. Robert: custodial rights allow work
- No dredging is being done; that would need a permit
- James: debris coming down the river is a problem if the dam is in operation
- Evan: next step is submission of an NOI
- Tonight the Commission could formally assert jurisdiction and indicate that an NOI is necessary
- Beth: is certification required for working in a waterway? Robert: no, but not clear
- Is installation and removal of the boards in the dam subject to the Wetlands Protection Act? Evan -- yes because the work is in a wetland. Commission sending message accordingly, requiring an NOI. Commission agreed to this
- Commission unaware of any rare species in the area; no state mapping showing any

### **Next meeting**

August 18 at 7 pm