

Report of the MARION CONSERVATION COMMISSION

*A habitat is where it's at
Keep it so the ducks can quack.
The marshes filter the water's dirt
They're home for many we don't want hurt.
Save the Wetlands*

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen,

We end the year 2001 on a note of melancholy. Wayne Asker, an eleven-year member of the Conservation Commission, has submitted his resignation. It was received with great reluctance, as Wayne has been a colleague who provided (more than anything else) a good dose of common sense in dealing with the often complex issues we are faced with. His easygoing personality and good humor will be sorely missed. It is fortunate that Frank J. Germano, Jr., a former Commissioner and a current associate member, has been appointed to complete Wayne's term and will undoubtedly contribute a great deal to our activities.

Those citizens of Marion who are out and about on the first and third Saturdays of each month may have observed Jan Mendes' silver van cruising the streets of town. It is obvious by the sign on its side proclaiming that the Conservation Commission is on its appointed rounds. During 2001 we held twenty-two meetings and conducted more than one hundred eighty site inspections in response to numerous Notices of Intent, Requests for Determinations of Applicability and requests for extensions of existing permits. We issued twenty-seven Orders of Conditions, ten Amended Orders, fifty-five Determinations of Applicability, twenty-one permit extensions, forty-four Certificates of Compliance and two Enforcement Orders. What is the point of all this activity? The simple answer is that the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act requires that anyone who wishes to undertake a project that could affect wetlands must apply for and obtain a permit before performing the work.

The permit process is administered locally by the conservation commissions of the Commonwealth's three hundred fifty-one municipalities. The underlying reason is the recognition of the importance of wetlands to our environment. Wetlands are nature's sponges,

holding up runoff to reduce the likelihood of flooding, and removing pollutants before they enter our drinking water supplies and waterways. They also serve as important habitats for the diverse species of plants and animals in our community. Birds are probably the most conspicuous wetland residents.

We appreciate the assistance of the Harbormaster and the Shellfish Officer who routinely provide comments regarding effects of proposed projects on navigation and shellfish populations, and inform us of questionable activities along the waterfront. We are grateful to The Buzzards Bay Project for continuing to have John Rockwell available for technical assistance in defining wetland boundaries.

Finally, the Commission would like to express its appreciation for the work done by our Secretary, Diane Drake, who keeps everything running smoothly and makes our job so much easier.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert J. Merlino, Chairman
Joel D. Hartley
Janice M. Mendes
Sherman E. Briggs, Jr.
G. Wayne Asker
Horace S. Kenney, Jr.
Frank J. Germano, Jr.