

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

JULY 26, 2022

1. SAVE THE DATE!

The Town of Dennis coordinated by the Dennis Police Department will hold National Night Out on Tuesday, August 2, 2022 from 4-7PM at Mike Stacy Park in Dennisport. The Town will close off Hall Street as we have done in the past, so we will have room to display trucks/equipment. Please plan to come out and join us for a night of fun activities!

2. MASSDOT ACCEPTS DENNIS COMPLETE STREET POLICY

Great news from Town Engineer, Tom Andrade! MassDOT accepted our Complete Street Policy that the Select Board endorsed at the June 14, 2022 meeting. The approved policy makes the town eligible for a grant up to \$38K to hire a consultant to put together a prioritization list. Once complete, we can request up to \$400k from the program. We are trying to get the Cape Cod Commission to work with us. The prioritization list requires multiple public outreach meeting so takes a little time to finalize but hopefully we will be in line to ask for funds next year. Complete Streets is one of the programs that the Governor recently approved to fund over the next 5 years. From simple resurfacing to major reconstruction, most roadway projects provide an opportunity to incorporate Complete Street principles into their design. All municipally-owned roadways are eligible for implementing projects through the Complete Streets Funding Program. Well done by Tom for all his efforts in getting Dennis accepted into the Complete Streets Program.

3. SUMMER LIBRARY HAPPENINGS

Starting Monday, July 25th, the Dennis Libraries present a StoryWalk® at Johnny Kelley Park in Dennis. This summer's story is called Dance Like a Flamingo: Learn to Move and Groove Like the Animals Do! Written by author Moira Butterfield and illustrated by Claudia Boldt, this friendly, motion-centered book will get youngsters – and maybe some grown-ups, too! – imitating the movements of different animals. For example, readers can stretch like flamingos, leap and bounce like lemurs, wave claws like crabs, and much more. The walk begins across from the picnic area and proceeds right along the Braille Trail. We hope readers of all ages join the fun. Afterwards, enjoy spending time in the park. The StoryWalk® concept was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT, and developed with the help of Rachel Senechal of the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. The Dennis Libraries thank these two innovative women, along with the Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works for the Town of Dennis, for making this event possible.

4. PRESS RELEASE FROM EEA – MASSACHUSETTS CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE DROUGHT CONDITIONS

BOSTON — With the majority of the state currently experiencing elevated temperatures and forecasts predicting little to no meaningful precipitation, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Beth Card today declared a Level 3-Critical Drought in the Northeast and Central Regions of the state. The Southeast, and Connecticut River Valley Regions will remain at a Level 2-Significant Drought, and the Cape Cod Region will join the Islands and Western Regions at Level 1-Mild Drought. As outlined in the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, a Level-3 Critical Drought and a Level 2-Significant Drought calls for the convening of an inter-agency Mission Group, which has already been convened, to more closely coordinate on drought assessments, impacts and response within the government. Additionally, a Level 1-

Mild Drought recommends detailed monitoring of drought conditions, close coordination among state and federal agencies, and technical outreach and assistance to the affected municipalities.

“As the state endures high temperatures and little precipitation, now more than ever it is critical that we all practice water conservation methods, particularly those communities that draw their water from the Millers and Nashua River Watersheds,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Beth Card.** “Minimizing water use now will not only allow local water supply systems and natural habitats to rebound more quickly, but will also ensure water resources are available for essential needs, such as drinking water and fire protection.”

“As the hot temperatures continue and drought conditions worsen, residents can assist by following any local water restrictions for their area and minimizing indoor and outdoor water usage,” **said Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Acting Director Dawn Brantley.** “Given the dry conditions, residents are urged to be cautious around BBQs, campfires and other outdoor activities to prevent brush and forest fires.”

Since the start of July 2022, hydrological conditions have further declined across Massachusetts, and the entire state is under experiencing drought conditions. Areas of higher concern are the Millers River Watershed in the Central Region and the Nashua River Watershed in the Northeast and Central Regions. The two watersheds are particularly impacted due to greater precipitation deficits and impacts to streamflow, and higher extent of evapotranspiration. The Month-to-date (MTD) average temperatures are near normal across Massachusetts, but temperature highs are above normal, especially across the eastern part of the state with many days near or above 90 degrees. Additionally, precipitation deficits were most significant in the eastern and north central parts of the state. Currently, streamflow has been seriously impacted with large deficits and near record low flows in some locations.

Massachusetts is also experiencing dry streambeds, ponding, and diminished extent of streams in many watersheds leading to lack of flow, increased turbidity, and increase in growth of plants and algae in the water. Furthermore, groundwater, which is a slow reacting index, is starting to be impacted in many regions. Fire activity has increased across the eastern half of the state as drought conditions have set in, and wildfires in remote areas with delayed response are now burning deep into the organic soil layers. Drought induced fire behavior can result in suppression challenges for fire resources and result in extended incidents so residents are asked to exercise caution while working with open flames.

Furthermore, farms have started to experience drought impacts on production acreage and are irrigating crops on a more consistent basis due to current precipitation deficits, high temperatures, and low soil moisture. Farms are maintaining current planting and harvest cycles and minimal impacts to seasonal yields are expected. However, this could change if drought conditions in the Commonwealth worsen over the coming weeks. Consumers are encouraged to continue to shop for fresh fruits and vegetables at local farm stands and retail stores throughout the Commonwealth.

It is important to note that the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water supply system is not currently experiencing drought conditions, as defined within its individual plan. However, private wells, local streams, wetlands, vernal pools, and other water-dependent habitats located within MWRA-serviced areas will be impacted by drought conditions while water quality in ponds can deteriorate due to lowering of levels and stagnation.

Below are recommendations for communities and individuals living and working within a Level 3 – Critical Drought, Level 2 – Significant Drought and Level 1 – Mild Drought region, including those utilizing a private well. Residents and businesses are also asked to check with their local water system in case more stringent watering restrictions are in place.

For Regions in Level 1 – Mild Drought

Residents and Businesses:

- Toilets, faucets and showers are more than 60% of indoor use. Make sure yours are WaterSense efficient.
- Limit outdoor watering to one day a week (only from 5:00 pm – 9:00 am), or less frequently if required by your water supplier – Dennis Water District has already issued mandatory water restrictions.

Taking water conservation steps now will greatly help reduce water use to ensure essential needs, such as drinking water and fire protection, are being met, habitats have enough water to support their natural functions, and to sustain the Commonwealth’s water supplies in the long-term. Additionally, the Commonwealth will continue to monitor and assess current conditions and any associated environmental and agricultural impacts, coordinate any needed dissemination of information to the public, and help state, federal and local agencies prepare additional responses that may be needed in the future. Furthermore, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will continue to provide technical assistance to communities on managing systems, including emergency connections and water supplies assistance.

“Between the lack of precipitation and the extreme heat, we are seeing conditions degrade quickly particularly in certain areas of the state,” **said MassDEP Commissioner Martin Suuberg.** “We strongly encourage all water users, including private well-owners, to take immediate steps to reduce their demands, and to follow recommendations and requirements outlined by your local public water supplier.”

The Drought Management Task Force will meet again on Monday, August 8, 2022, at 1:00PM. For further information on water conservation and what residents can do, please visit EEA’s drought page and water conservation page. To get the most up-to-date information on the drought indices, go to the state’s drought dashboard page.

Thank you everyone, have a great week!

Respectfully,

Elizabeth C. Sullivan
Town Administrator