



MASSWILDLIFE

## DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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January 25, 2023

Mr. Derek Brindisi, Town Manager  
Town of Plymouth  
26 Court Street  
Plymouth, MA 02360

Dear Mr. Brindisi,

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) holds a conservation restriction (Bk 34757, Pgs 115-172) over the Plymouth Town Forest, including land along Drew Road and nearby Great South Pond and Little South Pond. Over the past several years, MassWildlife has been working cooperatively with the Town, specifically the Plymouth Police Department and the Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs, as well as local residents, to address issues associated with illegal parking and other activities inconsistent with the conservation restriction that threaten the sensitive natural resources in the Plymouth Town Forest and along the shorelines of the two ponds. In the summer of 2019, we witnessed a significant increase in the illegal parking on Drew Road and other unauthorized activities in the Town Forest, especially on and around the attractive sandy shoreline at the north end of Great South Pond. In February of 2020, amidst growing concerns about the destruction of sensitive natural resources, illegal dumping, illegal fires and other unauthorized activities, I wrote a letter to the Plymouth Chief of Police (See attached) requesting increased enforcement of illegal parking along Drew Road, which is and was the primary cause of the problems in the area.

However, even considering this request, we did not observe any noticeable increase in enforcement in the area and during the summer of 2020 we witnessed the worst issues with illegal parking on Drew Road to date with often times dozens of illegally parked cars and 50-100+ people on the shoreline of Great South Pond. The resulting trash/dumping, illegal fires, human waste, erosion and destruction of vegetation was a direct violation of the terms of the conservation restriction. The issue was likely exacerbated by the pandemic, which resulted in many people out of work with more free time on their hands and reduced access to other beaches in Town, as well as the continued advent of social media used to publicize the site. MassWildlife, as well as many residents, reached out to the Town a number of times requesting additional enforcement along Drew Road over the course of the summer. Fortunately, in August of 2020, the Natural Resource Officers with the Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs were provided with necessary authorizations enabling them to issue parking citations and they began consistent/regular patrols and ticketing on Drew Road. As a result, we began to see marked improvements in the situation along Drew Road. It is my understating that the Natural Resources officers conducted routine patrols multiple times per day in the busy season, resulting in 78 citations being issued in 2020, 140 in 2021 and 116 in 2022. That dedicated and consistent enforcement was clearly the solution to this problem.

Unfortunately, I recently became aware that the Natural Resource Officers in that Department have now lost the ability to issue parking citations. MassWildlife is concerned that the situation is going to revert

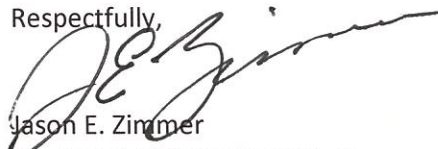
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very quickly back to the 2019/2020 condition which has the potential to result in the Town falling out of compliance with the conservation restriction and damage to sensitive and globally rare species habitat. I am writing today to respectfully request That the Town take proactive steps to avoid CR violations and damages to natural resources, including:

- Commitment for consistent enforcement of illegal parking along Drew Road, including daily patrols and citations issued to all illegally parked vehicles, especially during the months of June, July and August when activity inconsistent with the conservation restriction is at a peak.
- Commitment for consistent foot patrols of the sandy shoreline at the north end of Great South Pond during the same time period to enforce the no swimming regulation, as well other unauthorized/illegal activities (fires, dumping, public drinking, cutting of vegetation, etc).
- Improved signage along Drew Road indicating no parking aside from the two designated/official parking areas.
- Establishment of a formal tow zone for the entirety of Drew Road, with the exception of the two designated/official parking areas, which would enable illegally parked vehicles to be towed at the owner's expense.
- Continued and improved blockage of illegal roadside parking areas along Drew Road. The Town should install permanent blockades (guardrail, boulders, posts, etc) to eliminate all illegal roadside parking/pull-offs.

MassWildlife appreciates the Town of Plymouth's ongoing commitment to sound management of the Town Forest. We have established a very good working relationship with the Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs and applaud their efforts over the past two years to protect the area and bring the Town into compliance with the terms of the conservation restriction. Ultimately, we believe that the restoration of their ability to issue parking citations would ensure the area receives the protection it requires and would ensure that the Town is able to maintain their responsibilities under the conservation restriction, while not adding to the responsibilities of the likely already stretched thin Plymouth Police Department. However, we look forward to working with the Town on whatever approaches it identifies to ensure consistent and effective enforcement and upholding of the terms of the conservation restriction. I would greatly appreciate a meeting with Town officials, including the Police Department, Department of Marine and Environmental Affairs and Board of Selectmen, as well as representatives from the residents on the two ponds, to discuss this issue at length and come up with a solid action plan well in advance of the summer. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Jason E. Zimmer  
Southeast District Supervisor  
(508) 759-3406

Cc: Plymouth Select Board  
Plymouth Police Department  
Plymouth Department of Marine & Environmental Affairs  
Trina Moruzzi – MassWildlife  
Liz Newlands – MassWildlife  
Aaron Best – MassWildlife