

Application for Minor Buffer Zone Activity at 11 Mount St Franklin MA..
March 15, 2024
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1.1 Existing conditions of the property

The wetlands on the parcel were previously disturbed during the winter of 2020 by the homeowner, Gregg Surdi. Upon receiving an order from the town he cooperated, implemented and completed a restoration plan during the summer of 2020.

The proposed MBZA work is primarily adjacent but also within the previously disturbed and restored wetlands. There is currently an open MBZA permit that includes the removal of a few trees along Mount st and replacement of a broken fence around a pasture. Trees that were permitted to be removed along Mount St. have been. It does not make sense to repair the North, South and West sections of fence while dead trees are still falling and continuing to damage the existing fence.

Excerpts below are taken from the Wetlands Survey performed by Oxbow Associates in May of 2020 as part of the restoration plan. The description of the property is as follows.

This parcel is approximately 5.6± acres in size and located north of Mount Street, west of Summer Street, east of Upper Union Street, and southeast of the cul-de-sac located at the end of Ribero Drive. The property contains a single-family home with attached garage, paved driveway, a landscaped yard, a fenced pasture, and a forested periphery. The topography on the property is generally steep, sloping from the northern property line towards Mount Street, to the south and east. Approaching Mount Street, the slope becomes more gradual, and a forested wetland system associated with two intermittent stream systems is west of the driveway.

The streams have shallow surface flow during periods of seasonal flooding, through a series of narrow channels and pools. The stream originating from the north, and associated with the A-series wetland, begins at a concrete cistern, which directs groundwater seeping from the hillside into a channel that flows to the south. The stream flowing into the Site from the west property line originates from neighboring properties. The two streams converge into a single channel and exit the property through a 36-inch reinforced concrete pipe located beneath a shared driveway. The flow is to the southeast and the water level was less than six inches in depth during our observations. The northern stream is not illustrated on the USGS topographic quadrangles associated with the Site, while the stream originating west of the property is shown as intermittent (not perennial).

*The shrub and herbaceous layers within the fenced area, including within the BVW and buffer zone, have also been cleared with mowing machinery. Identification of the shrub layer was difficult, but intact shrubs located directly adjacent to the fenced pasture, and on the neighboring properties are assumed to be similar in composition. The shrub layer most likely consisted of a variety of plants, most of them non-native, including glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*), Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), and poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*).*

Currently there are approximately 150 dead trees, primarily ash trees, that have been killed by emerald ash borers. The trees are starting to fall unpredictably and a number are hung up in other trees. The condition of the trees is a safety hazard. As noted above, the shrub layer is primarily non-native invasives.

1.2 Area of proposed work

1.3 Wetland map and buffer zones

The proposed work is to remove the dead ash trees as well as the invasive shrubs and replant with native trees and shrubs. The intention is to restore the neglected land to a more natural state as well as agri-forestry. The proposed area of work is within the property border show in the figure below (Fig. 1)



Figure 1. The area within the black line and top left border of the picture is the proposed area of work.

1.4 Vegetation to be removed and replanted

The dead ash trees as well as invasive shrubs mentioned above will be removed and replaced with native species including but not limited to oak, maple, apple, pear, paw-paw, elderberry, blueberry, grape.

1.5 Existing slopes and drainage

As mentioned in the description of the property, drainage is from the North and Northwest and exits the area through a culvert under the driveway. The culvert is located at wetland flag A1 in

figure 1. There is a steep slope from the driveway down to the wetland area as well as along Mount St.

1.6 Erosion control

The work should not result in significant erosion. 6" straw wattles may be used to prevent erosion or to prevent fill from entering the wetlands.

2 Proposed work

2.1 Description of the activity to take place

Removal of dead trees and invasive plants. Replant with appropriate vegetation.

2.2 Description of how and when the work will take place.

Ash trees will be cut down by professional arborists. The trees will be chipped, cut and split for firewood or hauled away. Chipped material may be used for mulch. The stumps will be cut close to the ground and not mechanically ground. The invasive shrubs will be manually removed or mechanically cut to ground level. Waste material will be chipped or possibly burned during legal brush burning time.

The timeline for the proposed start of work is July 2024. Except for the tree removal the work will be performed by the homeowner, Mr. Surdi. The work is not time-sensitive and will most likely take a few years.

3. Additional figures and pictures.



Figure 2: The tree in the proposed area of work is a previously unmentioned non-native Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*).



Figure 3. A view of the Westside of the pasture in 2021. The picture was taken facing West. Notice the fallen ash tree hung up. Since this picture was taken, more ash trees have fallen, damaging the post and wire fence that is planned to be replaced under the existing MBZA.



Figure 4. A current view of the area pictured in figure showing additional downed trees, including more trees that have fallen and damaged the pasture fence. Falling trees have also damaged the newer trees planted during the wetland restoration.



Figure 5. View from the North, looking South of the area North of the fenced pasture. The picture shows a large number (30-40) of dead ash trees that should be taken down. Another example of the damage caused by emerald ash borers. The majority of the understory is invasive honeysuckle, multiflora rose, glossy buckthorn and oriental bittersweet that should also be removed and replaced with native species.



Figure 6. Similar view as figure 5. The prominent dead ash tree from figure 5 fell across the driveway this past winter.



Figure 7. View is Southwest from the Northeast corner of the proposed work site. More dead ash trees as well as another unsafe hung-up tree. This hung-up tree is over a groomed portion of the property and is denying the homeowner access and use of the area below it.