



Outstanding Public Service Award



Michele Grzenda

As described by the Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals (MSMCP), “Michele exemplifies a collaborative spirit and genuine desire to assist her colleagues, commissioners, municipal coworkers, applicants, residents and friends. She is exceptional in organizing materials, events and people; she appears to be physically incapable of keeping herself from sharing information, tips and tricks, methods, documents, google forms and efficient processes; and so generous with her time and expertise.” As MSMCP Vice President for the past six years, Michele has played a significant role in furthering the collective knowledge of the team.

As the Conservation Administrator in Weston, she works tirelessly to care for more than 2,000 acres of conservation land and 90 miles of trails, and she manages land protection projects, field restorations, sustainable forestry operations, and trail improvements. In the past two years alone, she has written a Climate Change Adaption Plan for open space, helped to complete a new handicapped-accessible trail network, lead a successful land protection effort for Wellington Farm, and conducted a study on the ecological needs of Weston’s more than 30 conservation fields.

Michele also worked with MACC to revise the Fundamentals for Conservation Commissions training series. In addition to providing valuable contributions to all aspects of the Unit, she drafted a new section describing the activities of conservation commissions beyond wetland permitting. Michele’s graphics, photos, and text provide an inspirational look at the many way in which commissions can carry out their overall mission of protecting natural resources. The materials convey the same passion for that mission that Michele demonstrates every day. She is always furthering the collective knowledge of the conservation community.

This past year, Michele out did herself. At the onset of the pandemic, she coordinated weekly Zoom meetings to help Conservation Agents navigate the rapidly changing regulatory landscape. She brought



representatives of the MassDEP, MACC, and legal experts to the table to provide weekly updates and detailed information on processes and legal requirements to field the questions and concerns from agents and commissions. In coordination with other Conservation Agents and MassDEP, Michele hosted over 13 weekly Zoom meetings with nearly 100 participants each, serving as a lifeline for so many.

Michele's dedicated professional involvement spills over into her personal time as well. She leads birding classes and hiking trips for municipalities, teaches evening continuing education courses and leads hiking trips for the Appalachian Mountain Club. She has also served as the Stewardship Chair of the Sudbury Valley Trustees for over 10 years!

Throughout her career, Michele has displayed unparalleled energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to her profession. Her blend of professionalism and approachability has allowed her to educate, involve, and positively influence so many residents, applicants, colleagues, and friends. "MSCMP is so grateful for, and proud of Michele's accomplishments and the many, many ways she has created and contributed to the greater sense of having a Massachusetts environmental community. We will be eternally grateful for her contributions to MSMCP as well as the many ways she contributes to other organizations" – Jennifer Carlino, MSMCP Vice President.