

EX.6: Agency Correspondence



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

New England Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-5087



RE: Environmental Analysis on Northeast Utilities
CT Rights of Way

July 20, 2004

Stephen Wood
ESS Group, Inc.
401 Wampanoag Trail, Suite 400
East Providence, RI 02915

Dear Mr. Wood:

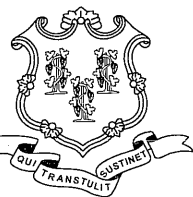
I have reviewed your request for information on endangered and threatened species and their habitats for the above-referenced project. My comments are provided in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

I have searched our database and found no occurrence of species of federal concern along the approximate proposed transmission routes or approximate alternative transmission routes. Based on the project description and location, it appears that no impacts to federally-listed species will occur. Should project plans change, or if additional information on the distribution of listed or proposed species becomes available, this determination may be reconsidered.

Thank you for your cooperation and please contact me at 603-223-2541, extension 23, if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Michael J. Amaral
Endangered Species Specialist
New England Field Office



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



ENVIRONMENTAL & GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION CENTER
79 Elm Street, Store Level
Hartford, CT 06106
Natural Diversity Data Base

July 20, 2004

Ms. Karen Hanecak
ESS Group, Inc.
401 Wampanoag Trail, Suite 400
East Providence, RI 02915

re: Proposed Construction of a 38 Mile
Electric Transmission Line From Lebanon,
Connecticut to the Rhode Island Border along
a Northeast Utilities Right of Way

Dear Ms. Hanecak:

I have reviewed Natural Diversity Data Base maps and files regarding the area delineated on the map you provided for the proposed construction of a 38-mile electric transmission line from Lebanon, Connecticut to the Rhode Island border along a Northeast Utilities right-of-way. According to our information, there are known extant populations of state-listed species that occur within the vicinity of both the proposed route and the alternative route for this project. Nancy Murray (DEP-EGIC, 860-424-3589) our program botanist will write to you directly with her comments regarding state-listed plant species and significant natural communities that may be impacted by this project. Please direct your questions on the plants and communities to Ms. Murray.

I have sent your letter and map to Julie Victoria (DEP-Wildlife; 860-642-7239) for further review. I highlighted areas along the two routes that intersect with populations of state-listed animal species for her. Ms. Victoria will determine and identify which populations of state-listed animal species along this new transmission may be impacted by this project. She will write to you directly with her comments.

Natural Diversity Data Base information includes all information regarding critical biological resources available to us at the time of the request. This information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the Natural Resources Center's Geological and Natural History Survey and cooperating units of DEP, private conservation groups and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultations with the Data Base should not be substitutes for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations of species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated into the Data Base as it becomes available.

Please contact me if you have further questions at 424-3592. Thank you for consulting the Natural Diversity Data Base. Also be advised that this is a preliminary review and not a final determination. A more detailed review may be conducted as part of any subsequent environmental permit applications submitted to DEP for the proposed site.

Sincerely,

Dawn M. McKay
Biologist/Environmental Analyst

Cc: Julie Victoria, NDDDB # 13319



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
ENVIRONMENTAL AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION CENTER

79 Elm Street, Store Level
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-5127
Natural Diversity Data Base



September 24, 2002

Karen Hanecak
ESS Group, Inc.
401 Wampanoag Trail, Suite 400
East Providence, RI 02915

Re: Northeast Utilities Connecticut
Right of Way, (various towns)

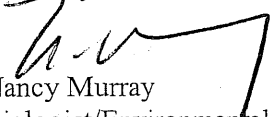
Dear Ms. Hanecak:

I have completed the state listed plant species review of the proposed and alternate route for the proposed construction of a 38 mile electric transmission line from Lebanon, CT to the Rhode Island border. Based on Natural Diversity Data Base information, there is one sensitive plant area on the proposed alternate route. I have attached a map showing the location of Threadfoot, *Podostemum ceratophyllum*. This aquatic plant species is listed as State Special Concern and had been documented growing in the Mt. Hope River. I have indicated the sensitive river crossing where I recommend that best management practices be implemented to control/prevent erosion and siltation into the Mt. Hope River. There are no known locations of State listed plants that would be affected by the proposed route.

Natural Diversity Data Base information includes all information regarding critical biologic resources available to us at the time of the request. This information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the Environmental & Geographic Information Center's Geological and Natural History Survey and cooperating units of DEP, private conservation groups and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultations with the Data Base should not be substituted for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations of species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated into the Data Base as it becomes available.

Please contact me if you have further questions (424-3589). Thank you for consulting the Natural Diversity Data Base.

Sincerely,

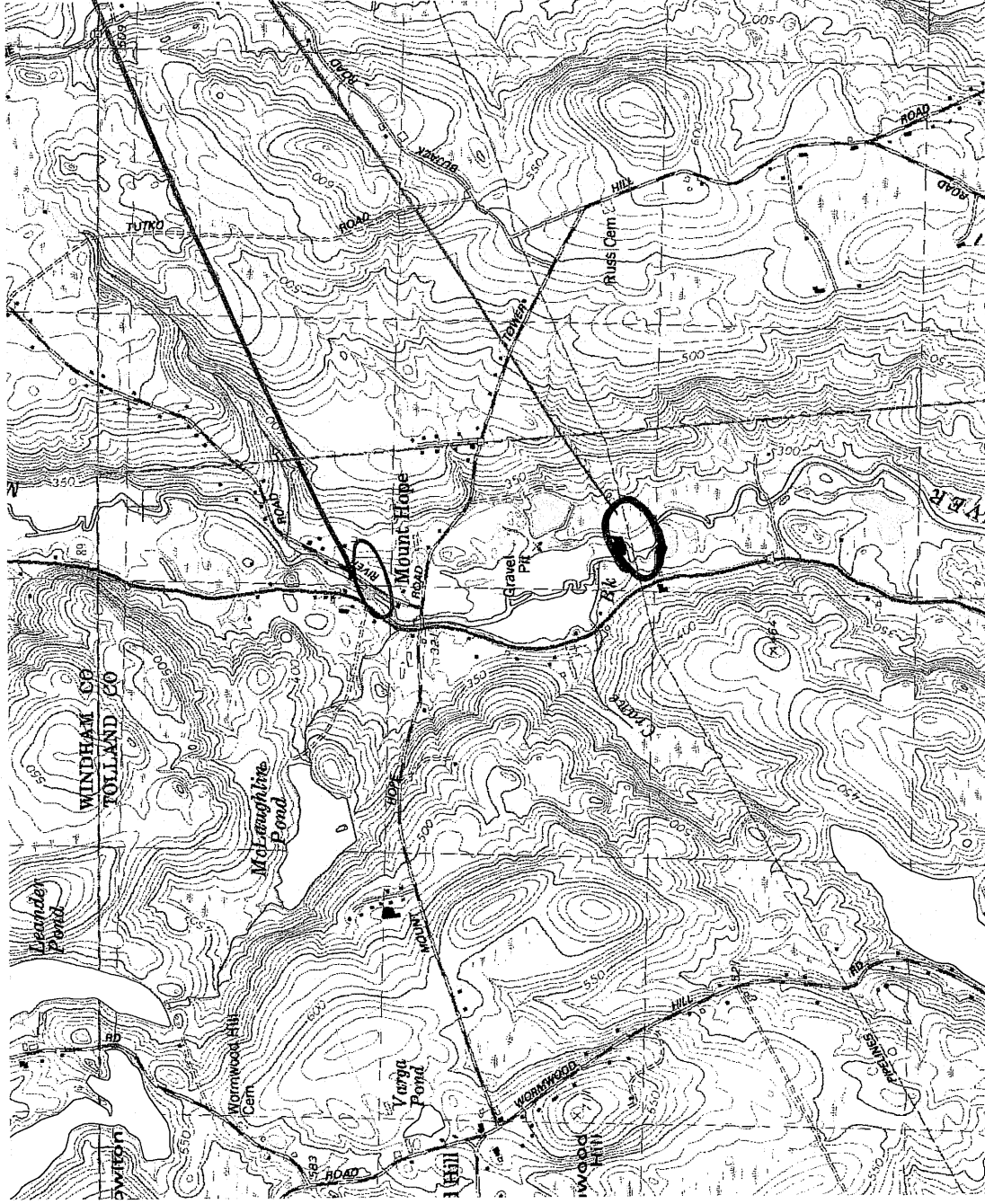


Nancy Murray
Biologist/Environmental Analyst III

NMM/md

Attachment: map

Mount Hope River Site



state listed plant
location

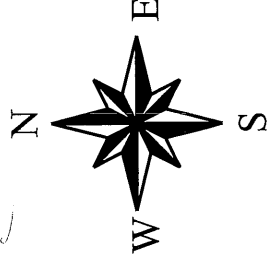
sensitive River
crossing

EO Point Reps - All Attributes

- Animal Assemblage
- Coastal/Marine Community - Other Classification
- Freshwater Community - Other Classification
- Invertebrate Animal
- Nonvascular Plant
- Other (Botanical)
- Other (Ecological)
- Terrestrial Community - Other Classification
- Vascular Plant
- Vertebrate Animal
- No Data

EO Source Polygons

- Animal Assemblage
- Coastal/Marine Community - Other Classification
- Freshwater Community - Other Classification
- Invertebrate Animal
- Nonvascular Plant
- Other (Botanical)
- Other (Ecological)
- Terrestrial Community - Other Classification
- Vascular Plant
- Vertebrate Animal
- No Data
- ▤ Named Stream.Lines
- ▤ Named Lake.Polygons
- ▤ Town.Polygons
- ▤ Towns.Longisland.Polygons
- ▤ Annotation.Points



1.6 Miles

0.8

0

0.8



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL & GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION CENTER

79 Elm Street, Store Level
Hartford, CT 06106
Natural Diversity Data Base



October 6, 2004

Ms. Laura Ernst
ESS Group, Inc.
401 Wampanoag, Suite 400
East Providence, RI 02915

re: Northeast Utilities, Connecticut to Rhode Island
Project, Additional Route Alternatives- Mansfield
Overhead and Mansfield Underground – that cross
Lebanon, Windham and Chaplin, Connecticut

Dear Ms. Ernst:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Northeast Utilities Connecticut to Rhode Island Project with two additional route alternatives, Mansfield Overhead and Mansfield Underground, that cross Lebanon, Windham and Chaplin, Connecticut. I have enclosed a map that indicates three areas along these two alternative routes that may have conflicts with state-listed wildlife species and significant natural communities. I have designated these areas as A, B and C on the map. The following state-listed species and significant natural communities occur in these areas:

- A. Poor Fen, a significant natural community
State Endangered *Williamsonia lintneri* (banded bog skimmer)
State Special Concern *Lycaena epixanthe* (bog copper)
- B. Atlantic White Cedar Basin Swamp, a significant natural community
State Special Concern *Gyraulus circumstriatus* (aquatic snail)
State Special Concern *Hetaerina americana* (American rubyspot)
State Special Concern *Callophrys henrici* (Henry's elfin)
- C. State Threatened *Callophrys irus* (frosted elfin)
State Threatened *Gomphus adelphus* (moustached clubtail)

Our program ecologist, Mr. Ken Metzler (DEP-EGIC; 860-424-3585) recommends that direct impacts to the poor fen and Atlantic White Cedar Basin Swamp along your route should be avoided at all costs. If you have additional questions regarding these communities or methods to avoid direct impacts to these significant communities, please contact Mr. Metzler. Ms. Julie Victoria (DEP-Wildlife; 860-642-7239) will assess the impacts of your alternative routes for the state-listed wildlife species, all of which are invertebrates. You may contact Ms. Victoria directly if you require further details on these species.

Natural Diversity Data Base information includes all information regarding critical biological resources available to us at the time of the request. This information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the Natural Resources Center's Geological and Natural History Survey and cooperating units of DEP, private conservation groups and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultations with the Data Base should not be substitutes for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations of species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated into the Data Base as it becomes available.

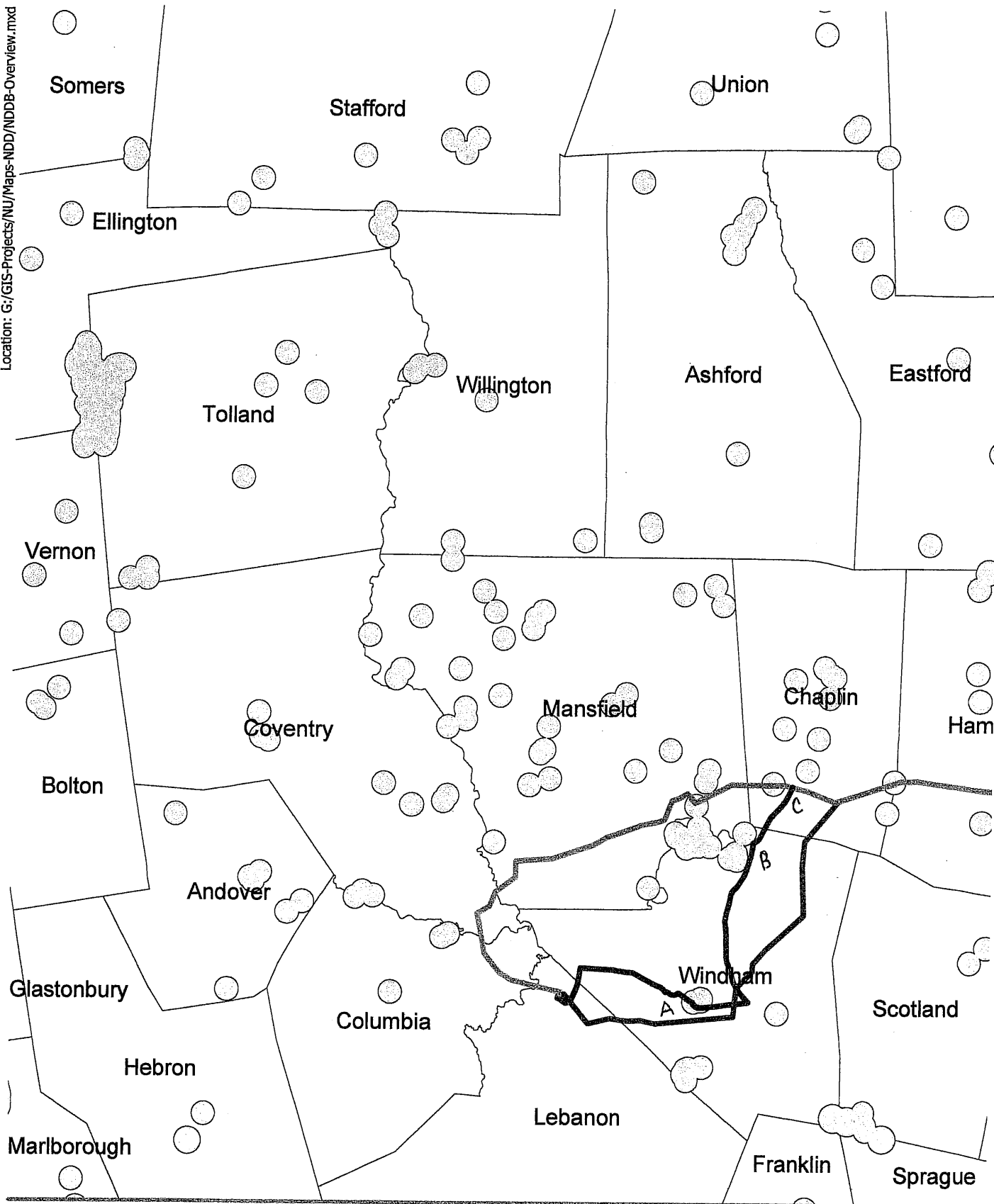
Please contact me if you have further questions at 424-3592. Thank you for consulting the Natural Diversity Data Base. Also be advised that this is a preliminary review and not a final determination. A more detailed review may be conducted as part of any subsequent environmental permit applications submitted to DEP for the proposed site.

Sincerely,



Dawn M. McKay
Biologist/Environmental Analyst

Cc Julie Victoria, NDDB # 13447



Engineers
Scientists
Consultants



Northeast
Utilities System

Connecticut to Rhode Island Project

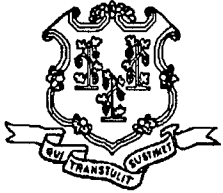
Scale: 1" = 15,000'

Source: 1) CTDEP, Towns, 1998 2) BMCD, Alternative Routes, 2004

3) CTDEP, Natural Diversity Database, 2004 4) RIGIS, Town Boundaries, 1997

LEGEND

- Existing ROW Alterr
- Mansfield OH Alterr
- Mansfield UG Alterr
- Rhode Island Towns



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
FRANKLIN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

391 ROUTE 32
NORTH FRANKLIN, CT 06254
TELEPHONE: (860) 642-7239



February 25, 2008

Mr. Donald D. Biondi
Transmission Siting and Permitting
Northeast Utilities System
107 Selden Street
Berlin, CT 06037

re: CL&P CT Interstate Reliability Project Brooklyn to Windham, CT

Dear Mr. Biondi:

Your request for information was reviewed on 1/9/08 with Dawn McKay of the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Natural Diversity Data Base. Their records indicated the following map by map.

Mapsheet 02 of 15 near the Perkins Corner area of Mansfield

Special Concern: Horace's duskywing (*Erynnis horatius*) butterfly is more restricted to xeric rocky areas and barrens north of southern New Jersey.

If this habitat will be impacted by this project, the DEP Wildlife Division recommends that a lepidopterist conduct surveys for these species. A report summarizing the results of such survey should include habitat descriptions, invertebrate species list and a statement/resume giving the lepidopterist's qualifications. The Wildlife Division does not maintain a list of lepidopterists in the state. The results of this investigation can be forwarded to the Wildlife Division and, after evaluation, recommendations for additional surveys, if any, will be made.

Mapsheet 03 of 15 near Mansfield Hollow area

Endangered: Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) and Grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*)

Threatened: The Frosted elfin (*Callophrys irus*), Sleepy duskywing (*Erynnis brizo*), and the American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*).

Special Concern: a noctuid moth species (*Zale obliqua*), the Pine Barrens Noctuid moth (*Zanclognatha martha*), Horace's duskywing (*Erynnis horatius*), Eastern hognose snake (*Heterodon platirhinos*), an aquatic snail (*Gyraulus circumstriatus*), Scribbled sallow (*Lepidolys perscripta*), four noctuid moth species (*Apamea burgessi*, *Chaetagnathaea cerata*, *Eucrotopcnemis fimbriaris*, and *Shinia spinosae*), and Shrub euchaena (*Euchaena madusaria*), Savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) and Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)

The Savannah Sparrow is a bird that nests in open, grassy areas. Its breeding season is approximately from May through August and it is during this period that the species is most susceptible to disturbances in its habitat. Minimizing impact to open fields, meadows, marshes, and other grassy areas during this time period will likewise minimize impact to this species.

The Grasshopper Sparrow nests in open, grassy areas. Their breeding season is approximately from May through August and it is during this period that these species are most susceptible to disturbances in their habitat. Minimizing impact to open fields, meadows, marshes, and other grassy areas during this time period will likewise minimize impact to these species.

The Eastern meadowlark is a bird that nests and forages in large open, grassy areas (typically fields that are 15 acres or greater). Its breeding season is approximately May through August. It is during the breeding season that these birds are most susceptible to human disturbance. Minimizing impacts to open grassy fields and meadows will likewise minimize impacts to this species.

The noctuid moth (*Apamea burgessi*) favors xeric, sandy sites. The host plant of *Schinia spinosa* is not known, however, the caterpillars of this moth are associated with the host plant – jointweed. Protection of these host plants will benefit this species. The noctuid moth species (*Zale obliqua*) and the Pine Barrens

noctuid moth are associated with pitch pines (*Pinus rigida*), dry grassy or sandy fields with remnant pine barrens and scrub oak barrens. Protection of their host plants will benefit these species.

The aquatic snail (*Gyraulus circumstriatus*) will be affected by activities that degrade the water quality, particularly the dissolved oxygen and dissolved salts. In addition, activities that affect the water depth will affect this species which prefers shallow areas less than 3 meters deep where its food supply is abundant. They feed on the coating of living algae that covers most submerged surfaces. Fluctuations in water depth of 3 feet or more at one time will be too much for a slow moving invertebrate species to respond to.

Numbers of Frosted elfin, are declining nationally. This moth species is associated with the plant species *Lupinus perennis* but that may not be its only food plant. Sleepy duskywing (*Erynnis brizo*), another butterfly, has a listed habitat of oak or oak-pine scrub, chaparral, barrens; on well-drained sandy or shaly soils. The caterpillar hosts are oak or oak-pine scrub, chaparral, barrens; on well-drained sandy or shaly soils. Horace's Duskywing butterfly is more restricted to xeric rocky areas and barrens north of southern New Jersey.

The Scribbled sallow moth favors disturbed sandy soil habitats with the host plant *Lineria canadensis*, Blue Toadflax. The noctuid moth species *Euclyptenemis fimbriaris* is associated with pitch pines (*Pinus rigida*), dry grassy or sandy fields with remnant pine barrens and scrub oak barrens. The noctuid moth (*Apamea burgessii*) favors xeric, sandy sites. The host plant of *Schinia spinosa* is not known, however, the caterpillars of this moth are associated with the host plant – jointweed. Protection of these host plants will benefit this species. The noctuid moth *Chaetoglaea cerata*, favors pitch pine-scrub oak barrens and heathlands on sandplains.

American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) nest in late March - April in open areas like woodland edges, parks, and open field habitat. They are cavity nesters and seek out abandoned woodpecker or flicker holes to nest. They catch and eat mice, voles, shrews and insects. They winter over much of the nesting range. If kestrels are nesting then I recommend that work not be done near the nest during the nesting season (February - July) and that a sufficient buffer zone be left around the nest to minimize disturbance. This buffer should be determined after the nest is located.

Kestrels are cavity nesters and will nest in artificial nesting boxes that are placed in the area. Artificial nesting box plans will be provided at your request. The Wildlife Division would welcome the opportunity to work with your company to put up kestrel nesting boxes on your property in good habitat. Nesting boxes and silvicultural practices that maintain high densities of nesting and roosting cavities in trees with a minimum diameter of 30.5 cm will benefit this species.

Eastern hognose snakes favor dry sandy areas with well drained gravelly soils. This species is dormant from November 1 to April 1. It has been negatively impacted by the loss of suitable habitat. Construction should be done during the dormant season.

The nesting season for horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) extends from the end of March to the middle of August. Construction should be done during the non-breeding season.

All these species have been negatively impacted by the loss of their associated plant species and habitats. If favored plants are going to be impacted by this project these species may be affected. The DEP Wildlife Division recommends that a lepidopterist conduct surveys for these species. A report summarizing the results of such survey should include habitat descriptions, invertebrate species list and a statement/resume giving the lepidopterist's qualifications. The Wildlife Division does not maintain a list of lepidopterists in the state. The results of this investigation can be forwarded to the Wildlife Division and, after evaluation, recommendations for additional surveys, if any, will be made.

Mapsheet 04 of 15 south of Sherman Corner area

Threatened: The Frosted elfin (*Callophrys irus*), Harris' checkerspot (*Chlosyne harrisii*) and the Moustached clubtail (*Gomphus adelphus*)

Special Concern: Horace's duskywing (*Erynnis horatius*),

Numbers of Frosted elfin, are declining nationally. This moth species is associated with the plant species *Lupinus perennis* but that may not be its only food plant. The Harris' checkerspot (*Chlosyne harrisii*) butterfly is

This species has been negatively impacted by the loss of their associated plant species and habitats. If favored plants are going to be impacted by this project these species may be affected. The DEP Wildlife Division recommends that a lepidopterist conduct surveys for these species. A report summarizing the results of such survey should include habitat descriptions, invertebrate species list and a statement/resume giving the lepidopterist's qualifications. The Wildlife Division does not maintain a list of lepidopterists in the state. The results of this investigation can be forwarded to the Wildlife Division and, after evaluation, recommendations for additional surveys, if any, will be made.

Mapsheet 09 of 15: yellow hatched circle to left of route

Special Concern: Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)

Wood Turtles require riparian habitats bordered by flood plains, woodlands or meadows. Their summer habitat includes pastures, old fields, woodlands, power line cuts and railroad beds bordering or adjacent to streams and rivers. They hibernate submerged in tangled tree roots along the river banks or in deep pools from November 1 to April 1. Wood turtles can use areas up to 1500 feet from the streams/rivers where they are found. This species is dormant from November 1 to April 1. They have been negatively impacted by the loss of suitable habitat. If wood turtle habitat is present, the Wildlife Division recommends that work be done during the dormant period, which is November 1 to April 1, to avoid affecting wood turtles.

Mapsheet 10 of 15: yellow hatched circle to the north and right of the route

Special Concern: Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*)

Whip-poor-wills favor forest habitat with an open understory, often adjacent to areas of shrubby, herbaceous habitat. These ground-nesting birds are found in Connecticut during the breeding season (late May through July) and spend the winter in South America. If timber harvesting is an activity that will be considered for this open space parcel, whip-poor-wills may ultimately benefit from the earlier forest growth stages created. Any forestry operation should be conducted outside of the breeding season, so that the potential for destruction of nests, eggs, or young is reduced.

Mapsheet 11 of 15: yellow hatched circle that intersects route

Special Concern: Eastern Ribbon snake (*Thamnophis sauritus*)

Eastern ribbon snakes inhabit areas with shallow water, grassy or shrubby areas bordering streams and wooded swamps. They also prefer sunny areas with low dense vegetation near shallow water areas. Their diet consists of insects, fish, frogs, salamanders and toads. If Ribbon snake habitat is present, the Wildlife Division recommends that work be done during the dormant period, which is November 1 to April 1, to avoid affecting Ribbon snakes.

Mapsheet 14 of 15: near Plains Road

Endangered: Banded Bog Skimmer Dragonfly (*Williamsonia lintneri*)

Special Concern: Bog Copper butterfly (*Lycaena epixanthe*)

The Bog Copper is a fairly conspicuous butterfly that is associated with sphagnum bogs in Connecticut. Activities that alter the physical or chemical nature of the aquatic habitat, cause siltation or any source of pollution will be detrimental. Any work that will detrimentally impact the associated sphagnum bog will affect this species. The Banded Bog Skimmer dragonfly is associated with fen/bog habitat. Again, activities that alter the physical or chemical nature of the aquatic habitat, cause siltation or any source of pollution will be detrimental. Any work that will detrimentally impact the associated sphagnum bog or wetland will affect these species.

Standard protocols for protection of wetlands should be followed and maintained during the course of the project. Additionally, all silt fencing should be removed after soils are stable so that reptile and amphibian movement between uplands and wetlands is not restricted.

Please be advised that the Wildlife Division has not made a field inspection of the project nor have we seen detailed timetables for work to be done. Should state permits be required or should state involvement occur in some other fashion, specific restrictions or conditions relating to the species discussed above may apply. In this situation, additional evaluation of the proposal by the DEP Wildlife Division should be requested.

found in moist areas like marshes, bog edges, pastures and meadows. The host plant is flat-topped white aster (*Aster umbellatus*). The adult females lay eggs in clusters under host plant leaves. The caterpillars feed on leaves communally in a web and partially-grown caterpillars hibernate at the base of the host plant. Horace's Duskywing butterfly is more restricted to xeric rocky areas and barrens north of southern New Jersey. Moustache Clubtail dragonfly (*Gomphus adelphus*) is found on chest high vegetation along river banks.

All these species have been negatively impacted by the loss of their associated plant species and habitats. If favored plants are going to be impacted by this project these species may be affected. The DEP Wildlife Division recommends that an invertebrate biologist/ lepidopterist conduct surveys for these species. A report summarizing the results of such survey should include habitat descriptions, invertebrate species list and a statement/resume giving the biologist'/lepidopterist' qualifications. The Wildlife Division does not maintain a list of biologist'/lepidopterists in the state. The results of this investigation can be forwarded to the Wildlife Division and, after evaluation, recommendations for additional surveys, if any, will be made.

Same map - on the lower branch Blue Route

Threatened: Harris' checkerspot (*Chlosyne harrisii*)

Special Concern: American Rubyspot damselfly (*Hetaerina americana*)

American rubyspot damselfly is found on sunny riverbanks with plants or grasses along the banks or on emergent rocks in the river.

The Harris' checkerspot (*Chlosyne harrisii*) butterfly is found in moist areas like marshes, bog edges, pastures and meadows. The host plant is flat-topped white aster (*Aster umbellatus*). The adult females lay eggs in clusters under host plant leaves. The caterpillars feed on leaves communally in a web and partially-grown caterpillars hibernate at the base of the host plant.

If any wetland habitats are to be altered, it may affect this species and the DEP Wildlife Division would recommend that a invertebrate biologist conduct surveys for this species. A report summarizing the results of such survey should include habitat descriptions, invertebrate species list and a statement/resume giving the biologist' qualifications. The Wildlife Division does not maintain a list of biologists in the state. The results of these investigations should be forwarded to the Wildlife Division and, after evaluation, recommendations can be provided.

Mapsheet 05 of 15: yellow hatched circle near Merrick Brook

Special Concern: Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*)

Whip-poor-wills favor forest habitat with an open understory, often adjacent to areas of shrubby, herbaceous habitat. These ground-nesting birds are found in Connecticut during the breeding season (late May through July) and spend the winter in South America. If timber harvesting is an activity that will be considered for this open space parcel, whip-poor-wills may ultimately benefit from the earlier forest growth stages created. Any forestry operation should be conducted outside of the breeding season, so that the potential for destruction of nests, eggs, or young is reduced.

Mapsheet 06 of 15: yellow hatched circle that intersects route

Special Concern: a noctuid moth (*Apamea burgessi*)

The noctuid moth (*Apamea burgessi*) favors xeric, sandy sites. If this favored habitat is going to be impacted by this project than the noctuid moth may be affected. The DEP Wildlife Division recommends that a lepidopterist conduct surveys for this species. A report summarizing the results of such survey should include habitat descriptions, invertebrate species list and a statement/resume giving the lepidopterist' qualifications. The Wildlife Division does not maintain a list of lepidopterists in the state. A DEP Wildlife Division permit may be required by the lepidopterist to conduct survey work, you should ask if your lepidopterist has one. The results of this investigation can be forwarded to the Wildlife Division and, after evaluation, recommendations for additional surveys, if any, will be made.

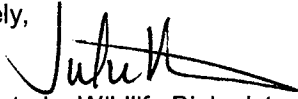
Mapsheet 08 of 15: yellow hatch circle to the left of the route

Threatened: The Frosted elfin butterfly (*Callophrys irus*)

Numbers of Frosted elfin, are declining nationally. This moth species is associated with the plant species *Lupinus perennis* but that may not be its only food plant.

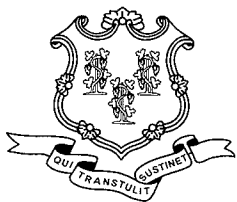
Consultation with the Wildlife Division should not be substituted for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at Julie.Victoria@po.state.ct.us, please reference the NDDB # at the bottom of this letter when you e-mail. Jenny Dickson (860-675-8130) can further assist you in the impact on the Grasshopper Sparrows, Savannah sparrows, Horned Larks, Whip-poor-wills and Eastern meadowlarks. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Julie Victoria, Wildlife Biologist
Franklin Swamp Wildlife Management Area
391 Route 32
N. Franklin, CT 06254

cc: NDDB – 15775
J. Dickson



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Bureau of Natural Resources
Wildlife Division
79 Elm Street, Sixth Floor
Hartford, CT 06106
Natural Diversity Data Base

March 17, 2008

Mr. Donald D. Biondi
Northeast Utilities Service Company
P.O. Box 270
Hartford, CT 06141-0270

re: The Connecticut Light and Power
Company Connecticut Interstate Reliability
Project in Brooklyn, Chaplin, Columbia,
Coventry, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon,
Mansfield, Putnam, Pomfret, Thompson, and
Windham Connecticut

Dear Mr. Biondi:


I have reviewed Natural Diversity Data Base maps and files regarding the area delineated on the map you provided for the proposed Connecticut Light and Power Company Connecticut Interstate Reliability Project in Brooklyn, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Mansfield, Putnam, Pomfret, Thompson, and Windham, Connecticut.

I have determined that this project will not impact any known extant population of state-listed plant species that may occur within the study corridor. A separate letter regarding the impact to state-listed animals species that may occur in this study area will be sent by another biologist within the Wildlife Division.

Natural Diversity Data Base information includes all information regarding critical biological resources available to us at the time of the request. This information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the DEP's Natural History Survey and cooperating units of Department of Environmental Protection's private conservation groups and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultations with the Data Base should not be substitutes for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations of species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated into the Data Base as it becomes available.

Please contact me if you have further questions at 424-3592. Thank you for consulting the Natural Diversity Data Base. Also be advised that this is a preliminary review and not a final determination. A more detailed review may be conducted as part of any subsequent environmental permit applications submitted to DEP for the proposed site.

Sincerely,


Dawn M. McKay
Biologist/Environmental Analyst 3

Cc: NDDDB File # 15775



**Northeast
Utilities System**

107 Selden Street, Berlin, CT 06037
Northeast Utilities Service Company
P.O. Box 270
Hartford, CT 06141-0270
(860) 665-5000

October 11, 2007

Natural Diversity Data Base/Data Request
Environmental & Geographic Information Center
Ms. Dawn McKay
Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

**Re: The Connecticut Light and Power Company
Connecticut Interstate Reliability Project
Brooklyn, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon,
Mansfield, Putnam, Pomfret, Thompson & Windham, Connecticut**

Dear Ms. McKay,

The Connecticut Light and Power Company intends to initiate planning, siting, and permitting tasks required to upgrade and expand its electric transmission facilities in portions of eastern Connecticut. The purpose of these proposed modifications, which will be required along several different electric transmission lines, is to help alleviate numerous thermal and voltage problems on the electric system. The study area includes portions of the municipalities of Brooklyn, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Mansfield, Putnam, Pomfret, Thompson & Windham, Connecticut. The attached USGS map set (CT Interstate Reliability Project Natural Diversity Map Sheets 1 through 15) show the project location in these areas.

This request specifically addresses the requirement for documented consultation in regard to compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the Connecticut Endangered Species Statutes (Title 26, Chapter 495, Sections 26-303 to 26-316 of the Connecticut General Statutes). We respectfully request correspondence from your office regarding the occurrence of any species of special concern (rare), threatened species or endangered species ("RT&E") and/or their critical habitats within the 1,000 foot study corridor as depicted on the attached USGS topographic figures. In addition, we've also included a CD with ARC-GIS shapefiles of the proposed project study area to facilitate your review.

Please note that a previous request and determination was made concerning a preliminary portion of this project in July 2004. We are requesting an update to the information previously provided by the CT NDDB. Please find correspondence and mapping related to that request included. Also, please note that not all routes referenced in the July 2004 correspondence are being considered for the current project.

Thank you for your assistance. Please forward correspondence to my attention, and, if possible, please forward copies to ENSR at the below noted address. Should you have any questions please contact me at 860-665-6716 or Timothy O'Sullivan (ENSR) at 860-429-5323 (ext. 229).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald D. Biondi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Donald D. Biondi
Transmission Siting and Permitting

Attachments

Cc: T. O'Sullivan, ENSR, 11 Phelps Way, P.O. Box 506, Willington, CT 06279
J. Durand, ENSR
S. Thornhill, Burns & McDonnell
K. Gerling, Burns & McDonnell



Connecticut Natural Diversity Data Base Review Request Form

Please complete this form *only* if you have conducted a review which determined that your activity is located in an area of concern.

Name: **Donald D. Biondi**

Affiliation: **Northeast Utilities System -Transmission Siting & Permitting**

Mailing Address: **107 Selden Street**

City/Town: **Berlin**

State: **CT**

Zip Code: **06037**

Business Phone: **860-665-6716**

ext. **14**

Fax: **860-665-2820**

Contact Person: **Donald Biondi**

Title: **Land Planning Consult.**

Project or Site Name: **Connecticut Interstate Reliability Project**

Project Location

Town: **See Attached**

USGS Quad: **See Attached**

Brief Description of Proposed Activities:

Planning, siting, and permitting tasks to upgrade The Connecticut Light & Power Company's electric transmission facilities in New London, Tolland, and Windham Counties, Connecticut.

Have you conducted a "State and Federal Listed Species and Natural Communities Map" review?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Date of Map: **June 2007**

Has a field survey been previously conducted to determine the presence of any endangered, threatened or special concern species? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, provide the following information and submit a copy of the field survey with this form.

Biologists Name:

Address:

If the project will require a permit, list type of permit, agency and date or proposed date of application:

Connecticut Siting Council Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need

(See reverse side - you must sign the certification on the reverse side of this form)

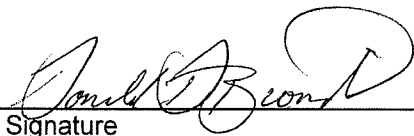
The Connecticut Natural Diversity Data Base (CT NDDB) information will be used for:

- ☒ permit application
- ☒ environmental assessment (give reasons for assessment):

Assess improvements & upgrades to CL&P's existing electric transmission system grid in eastern Connecticut.

- ☐ other (specify):

"I certify that the information supplied on this form is complete and accurate, and that any material supplied by the CT NDDB will not be published without prior permission."


Signature

10-11-07
Date

All requests must include a USGS topographic map with the project boundary clearly delineated.

Return completed form to:

WILDLIFE DIVISION
BUREAU OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
79 ELM ST, 6TH FLOOR
HARTFORD, CT 06106-5127

* You must submit a copy of this completed form with your registration or permit application.

Attachment 1: Project Location

Towns:

Brooklyn
Chaplin
Columbia
Coventry
Hampton
Killingly
Lebanon
Mansfield
Putnam
Pomfret
Thompson
Windham

USGS Quads:

Columbia
Danielson
Hampton
Putnam
Spring Hill
Willimantic



**Northeast
Utilities System**

107 Selden Street, Berlin, CT 06037
Northeast Utilities Service Company
P.O. Box 270
Hartford, CT 06141-0270
(860) 665-5000

October 11, 2007

Mr. Michael J. Amaral
Endangered Species Specialist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
New England Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-5087

**Re: The Connecticut Light and Power Company
Connecticut Interstate Reliability Project
Brooklyn, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon,
Mansfield, Putnam, Pomfret, Thompson & Windham, Connecticut**

Dear Mr. Amaral,

The Connecticut Light and Power Company intends to initiate planning, siting, and permitting tasks required to upgrade and expand its electric transmission facilities in eastern Connecticut. The purpose of these proposed modifications, which will be required along several different electric transmission lines, is to help alleviate numerous thermal and voltage problems on the electric system. The study area includes portions of the municipalities of Brooklyn, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Mansfield, Putnam, Pomfret, Thompson and Windham, Connecticut. The attached USGS map set (CT Interstate Reliability Project USGS Map Sheets 1 through 15) show the project location in these areas.

This request specifically addresses the requirement for documented consultation in regard to compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). We respectfully request correspondence from your office regarding the occurrence of any threatened or endangered species ("T&E") and/or their critical habitats within the 1,000 foot study corridor as depicted on the attached USGS topographic figures. In addition, we've also included a CD with ARC-GIS shapefiles of the proposed project study area to facilitate your review.

Please note that a previous request and determination was made concerning a preliminary portion of this project in July 2004. We are requesting an update to the information previously provided by the USFWS in 2004. Please find correspondence and mapping related to that request included. Also, please note that not all routes referenced in the July 2004 correspondence are being considered for the current project.

Thank you for your assistance. Please forward correspondence to my attention, and, if possible, please forward copies to ENSR at the below noted address. Should you have any questions please contact me at 860-665-6716 or Timothy O'Sullivan (ENSR) at 860-429-5323 (ext. 229).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald D. Biondi", written over a circular scribble.

Donald D. Biondi
Transmission Siting and Permitting

Attachments

Cc: T. O'Sullivan, ENSR, 11 Phelps Way, P.O. Box 506, Willington, CT 06279
J. Durand, ENSR
S. Thornhill, Burns & McDonnell
K. Gerling, Burns & McDonnell



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New England Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-5087



November 21, 2007

Donald D. Biondi
Northeast Utilities Service Company
107 Selden Street
Berlin, CT 06037

Dear Mr. Biondi:

This responds to your recent correspondence requesting information on the presence of federally-listed and/or proposed endangered or threatened species in relation to the Connecticut Interstate Reliability Project that will pass through the Towns of Brooklyn, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Mansfield, Putnam, Pomfret, Thompson and Windham, Connecticut.

No federally-listed or proposed, threatened or endangered species or critical habitat under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are known to occur in the project areas. Preparation of a Biological Assessment or further consultation with us under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required.

While there are no known occurrences of federally-listed species in the project area, the New England cottontail (*Sylvilagus transitionalis*) is known to occur in the Town of Lebanon. The New England cottontail is also known to occur in the Towns of Scotland and Eastford, which are in close proximity to the project. The Service announced the New England cottontail as a Candidate Species for listing on September 12, 2006 in the Federal Register (50 CFR part 17). While the New England cottontail remains an official candidate species, there is currently no legal obligation to avoid affecting the habitat of the species.

New England cottontails are considered habitat specialists, insofar as they are dependent on early-successional habitats typically described as thickets. In addition to New England cottontails demonstrating a strong affinity for heavy cover, they are also reluctant to stray from it (>5 m). Habitats of this type are typically associated with beaver flowage wetlands, idle agricultural lands, power line corridors, railroad right-of-ways, and patches of regenerating forests. In contrast, eastern cottontails (which can often be found living with New England cottontails) appear to have relatively generalized habitat requirements and can often be found in residential-type habitats, such as private lawns, golf courses, and active agriculture areas.

Vegetation management along utility right-of-ways probably has a significant impact on the New England cottontail. Long-term management that converts scrub-shrub corridors into herbaceous covers serves to eliminate habitat and hinder dispersal while short-term management of shrubs serves as a temporary impact to habitat. These short-term impacts to shrub vegetation are necessary to ensure that successional forces do not proceed to the point where habitat is no longer suitable for the New England cottontail. Given the conservation status of this species, a full federal listing in the future is probable. As such, it may be beneficial to begin a discussion about how your company could manage habitat for this species.

This concludes our review of listed species and critical habitat in the project location and environs referenced above. No further Endangered Species Act coordination of this type is necessary for a period of one year from the date of this letter, unless additional information on listed or proposed species becomes available.

Thank you for your coordination. Please contact me at 603-223-2541 if we can be of further assistance or if you would like to initiate a discussion about the New England cottontail.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony P. Tur".

Anthony P. Tur
Endangered Species Specialist
New England Field Office

CC: ENSR, Willington, CT