

R-0298-4-01
May 10, 2016

Melanie A. Bachman
Acting Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
Ten Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

**Re: Woods Hill Solar, LLC – Petition No. 1224
Supplemental Vernal Pool Evaluation Report**

Dear Ms. Bachman and Council Members:

On behalf of Woods Hill Solar, LLC (Woods Hill Solar), Tighe & Bond is providing the results of the supplemental vernal pool evaluations conducted at the project site. The information is provided in support of Petition No. 1224, currently under review by the Siting Council.

In the winter of 2015 Davison Environmental, LLC conducted a *Natural Resource Assessment* in support of Petition No. 1224. The results of the Natural Resource Assessment were provided in the original Petition. That report was based solely on field investigations conducted during the winter, a period in which vernal pools cannot be definitively identified. Those investigations identified two potential vernal pools based on the presence of hydrology suitable to support vernal pool wildlife. These were cryptic vernal pools embedded within Wetland 5. The location of Wetland 5 is depicted on the attached figure.

In order to confirm those findings, a breeding season vernal pool survey was conducted during the spring of 2016. On March 31 and May 2, 2016, biologist Eric Davison surveyed the site's wetlands for the presence of vernal pools. Survey methods included visual, audial and dip-net surveys.

On March 31, 2016 all site wetlands were surveyed for the presence of egg masses under optimal sunny conditions. Both of the previously identified potential vernal pools were confirmed as active pools. No other vernal pools were found on the site.

Two vernal pool indicator species were confirmed breeding in both Pool 1 and Pool 2, the wood frog (*Lithobates sylvatica*) and spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*). Both pools also supported an uncommon invertebrate indicator species, fairy shrimp (*Anostraca*). The total egg masses observed in each vernal pool are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Egg mass totals observed March 31, 2016

Pool	Total Egg Masses	
	Wood Frog	Spotted Salamander
1	202	70
2	38	8



Pool 1 is part of a large wetland system that continues offsite to the south. Davison Environmental investigated approximately 100 feet south of the property boundary and not beyond. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that additional breeding areas occur beyond the areas of investigation. Vernal Pool 2 contains areas of very dense buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) and reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), which made search conditions difficult. Based on these noted limitations, the egg mass totals listed for this pool should be considered conservative and not comprehensive.

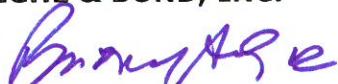
Both Pool 1 and Pool 2 supported two breeding indicator species and therefore are Tier 1 vernal pools according to the assessment methodology described in Calhoun and Klemens (2002). Both pools have a long hydroperiod (both were deeply flooded to a maximum depth of over one foot). Green frog (*Lithobates clamitans*) and spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*) were also observed in the pools.

Due to the fact that Wetlands 1 and 2 are wooded swamps, which most commonly support vernal pools, these wetlands were closely surveyed for areas of standing water that might be vernal pools. No areas of standing water were found within either Wetland 1 or Wetland 2. These observations were consistent with previous predictions made by Davison Environmental based on the December 2016 field work. The lack of standing water in these wetlands is due primarily to the fact that they are steeply sloping. As a result, surface water is restricted to seasonal or storm driven flows in shallow channels and rills. The hydrologic condition of these wetlands is illustrated in the photos taken in March which are appended to this report. Only two-lined salamander (*Eurycea bislineata*) and green frog were observed within Wetland 1. Both were observed in the western portions of the wetland where the headwater stream develops and drains northwest off the site.

Both Vernal Pools lie greater than 1,000 feet from the limits of clearing or other site activity. Therefore, this development is fully compliant with the BDP manual as no development is located within either the Vernal Pool Envelope (VPE) or the Critical Terrestrial Habitat (CTH) management zones that surround these pools. Therefore, no negative impact to vernal pools is anticipated from the proposed development.

Enclose please find a Photo Log documenting the location of resource areas on the site. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach me by email at bangus@tighebond.com, or by phone at 413-875-1302.

Very truly yours,
TIGHE & BOND, INC.

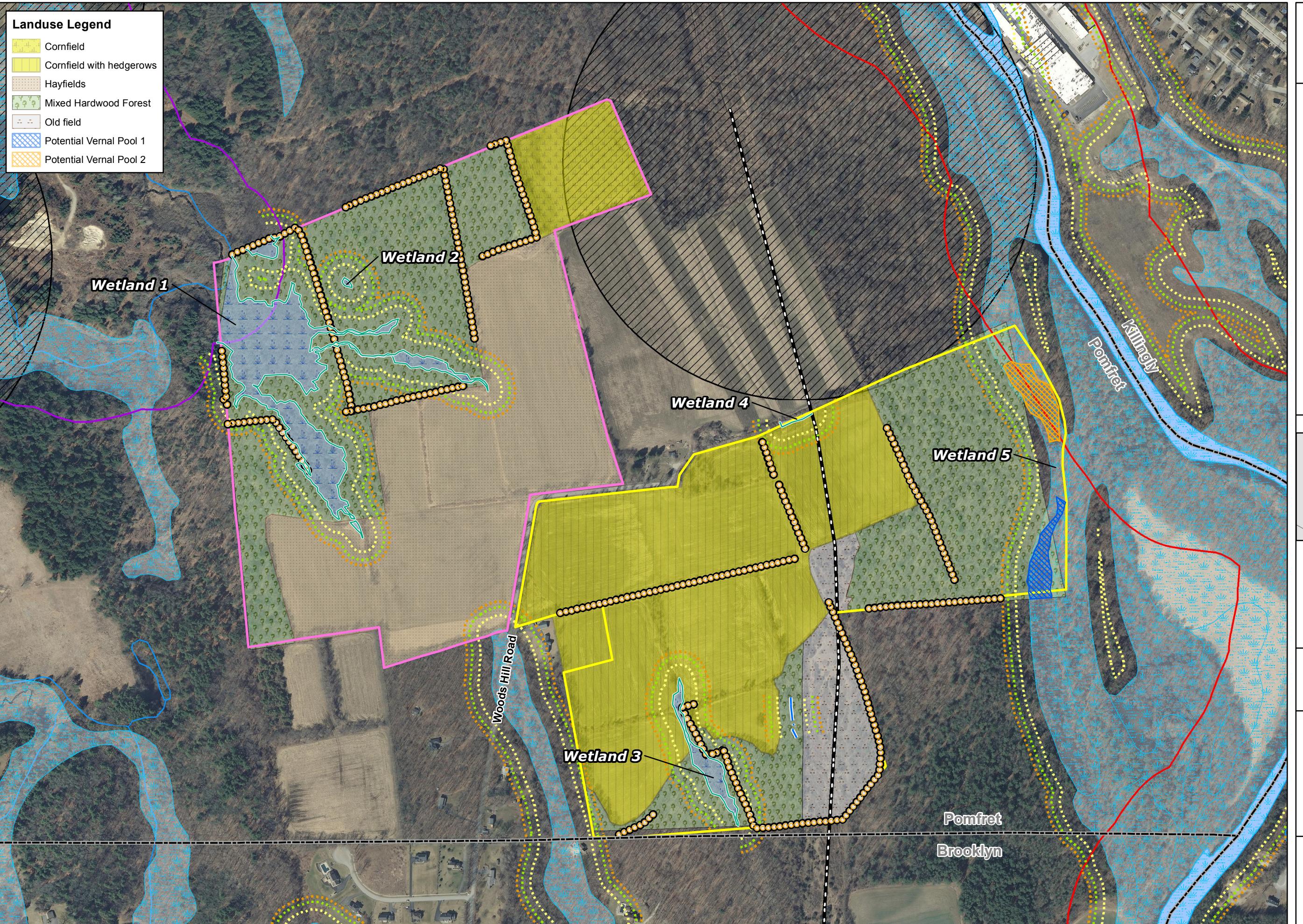


Briony Angus
Senior Project Manager/ Associate

Enclosures: Figure 3 – Habitat Cover Map
Photo Log

Copy: Dan Boyd, Woods Hill Solar, LLC
Lee D. Hoffman, Esq., Pullman & Comley
Eric Davison, Davison Environmental, LLC





**Photo Log
Woods Hill Road, Pomfret
Spring 2016 Vernal Pool Survey**



Photo 1: Wetland 1



Photo 2: Wetland 1



Photo 3: Wetland 1



Photo 4: Wetland 1



Photo 5: Wetland 2



Photo 6: Vernal Pool 1



Photo 7: spotted salamander egg masses in Vernal Pool 1



Photo 8: Vernal Pool 1



Photo 9: Vernal Pool 2 (south side of pool)



Photo 10: Vernal Pool 2; note dense reed canarygrass and buttonbush