

City of Keene, New Hampshire

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

CORRECTED

Monday, June 20, 2022

3:30 PM

ROOM 22, Parks & Recreation Center

Commission Members

Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair Kenneth Bergman Art Walker Eloise Clark Councilor Robert Williams Brian Reilly, Alternate Thomas P. Haynes, Alternate Steven Bill, Alternate John Therriault, Alternate

- 1. Call to Order
- 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes May 16, 2022
- 3. Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship Subcommittee Report
- 4. NHDES Standard Dredge & Fill Wetlands Permit Application Keene/Swanzey Floodplain Compensatory Storage
- 5. Work Groups reports
 - a) Outreach
 - b) Arm Fund
 - c) Invasive Species
- 6. Discussion Items:
 - d) Conservation Commission speaking events
 - e) Airport proposed wildlife control fence
 - f) Budget Discussion
 - g) NHACC 2022 Membership
 - h) Senate Bill 267 Upland Invasive Species Program
 - i) Debrief site walk of 0 Washington St. Ext. property (TMP# 229-006-000)
- 7. New or Other Business
- 8. Adjourn Next meeting date: Monday, July 18, 2022

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1 2 3	City of Keene New Hampshire CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES			
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,	Monday, May 16, 2022	4:30 PM	Room 22, Parks & Recreation Center	
	Members Present: Alexander Von Plinsky, IV, Chair Eloise Clark Councilor Robert Williams Art Walker Ken Bergman (Arrived at 4:32 PM) Thomas Haynes, Alternate Brian Reilly, Alternate Steven Bill, Alternate (Arrived at 4:34 I John Therriault, Alternate (Voting)	Mari Brunner		
8 9	Members Not Present: Councilor Andrew Madison, Vice Chair 1) Call to Order	r		
10 11	Chair Von Plinsky called the meeting to	order at 4:30 PM.		
12 13 14	2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – A	April 18, 2022		
15 16 17	A motion by Mr. Walker to approve the and the motion carried unanimously. Mr.	•		
18 19	3) <u>Introduction of Mari Brunner,</u>	Senior Planner		
20 21 22	Senior Planner, Mari Brunner, will be tal available; she expressed her appreciation to her local Commission.	_		
23 24 25 26	4) <u>Guest Speaker</u> A) Chris Casadei, Procurer	nent Forester, Hull F	orest Products, Bennington, NH	
20 27 28	Chair Von Plinsky welcomed Chris Casa	-	-	

been an active forester in Connecticut (CT) since 1999, including the Department of Environment

- and Energy Protection. Since Hull Forest Products had purchased two concentration yards—one in
- Bennington on the Antrim line and one in Bradford—he split his time between the two. Now, he
- 32 lives in Claremont. Mr. Casadei continued that Sullivan and Cheshire Counties grow the finest red
- oak in the world and the opportunities here are endless. He said this was not the last the
- 34 Commission would see of him.

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36 Mr. Casadei stated that the properties Hull purchased in Keene are gems. He began with the smaller

- 37 southern property, which Hull called Beaver Brook South. He said this is not a long-term
- ownership; Hull actively buys land and conserves it. This parcel abuts the river and, RT-9, and
- 39 Beaver Brook North, which he identified on a map. The south parcel gets a lot of traffic and he said
- 40 they would do a very conservative timber management effort. Most of what is seen and accessed
- from the old RT-9 would not be touched at all because of the streams, cliffs, and topography—they
- 42 would keep that area as a reserve as well as what is in between Beaver Brook and the road. Hull is
- 43 in negotiation with the State right now to manage that parcel and bring it out to Washington Street.
- They know the land history of this property and many others that were split by the new RT-9 in the
- 45 1970's. He showed an established access road they could have used to come out onto RT-9 to keep
- a smaller footprint. However, the State would rather they exit near to the Washington Street
- extension; where the topography dips and goes back up, they would create a temporary logging
- 48 access. He pointed out key topographical features on the map in regard to adjacent properties.

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Ms. Clark noted that the lines on the map were unclear and asked Mr. Casadei to point out where

- 51 the actual logging would occur. Mr. Casadei pointed the area out on the map. Ms. Clark expressed a
- 52 question and was interrupted, when Mr. Casadei said that the State might want to trade their piece
- 53 to thin it for health reasons. He demonstrated on the map where the topography is very steep with
- 54 streams and where the cutting would occur. He pointed out adjacent properties under contract,
- where they would do very strict management.

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- Mr. Casadei continued stating that he has spoken with Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
- Recreation, and Facilities. Mr. Casadei stated that he told Mr. Bohannon that Hull's ownership of
- 59 this parcel "would not be long-term and it's yours when the time comes." He said, "Our intention is
- to certainly sell this back to the City of Keene once we get it healthy and looking good." Mr.
- 61 Casadei continued stating that he created a foot trail into the property, which he demonstrated on
- 62 the map and called West Canyon Trail. He said Hull loves the exposure of this lot and that people
- 63 would see this. He said they take a lot of pride in conservation and what they do, and it seems the
- more people involved with what they are doing dissuades negative perceptions of logging. He said
- Hull is conservation minded and this parcel would be "weeded like a garden would be." He said the
- timber is healthy and overstocked and this would be a light treatment.

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Mr. Bergman asked where the barrier is that obstructs and ends the road you can drive on toward the falls. Mr. Casadei showed a gate on the map situated with the Washington Street Extension. He said the road is paved beautifully as a Class VI road and the gate is questionable.

- Ms. Clark asked whether Mr. Casadei knew about Keene's Hillside Protection Ordinance. Mr.
- Casadei replied that he was familiar with all of Keene's and NH's logging regulations. Ms. Clark
- said that some of the area in question is very steep and—she was interrupted—Mr. Casadei stated
- 75 that anything questionable and he considers inoperable, they will not touch. Ms. Clark noted that
- 76 the City also has serious flooding issues, and the parcel is one of the prime flood storage areas,
- 77 which was why the City wanted to buy it. Mr. Casadei said one of the things that attracted Hull to
- 78 this property was that this is the last unobstructed waterway from the north into Keene, with Otter
- 79 Brook and Surry Lake as Army Corps of Engineers flood control in Keene. He understood that
- 80 Beaver Brook was prone to a lot of flooding problems in Keene, which is why Hull does not want
- 81 to keep this property forever.

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86 87 The Chairman asked whether they were only targeting the prime red oak. Mr. Casadei said the south parcel was a hemlock, pine, red oak mix. They would remove the poorly formed, suppressed, and declining, the soft maple, and the problematic beech. He said this is not a regenerative harvest but shifting the growth potential to the growing stock. He would not have huge open spots in the canopy, but would switch to the beautiful red oak, white pine, and hemlock cover type so it can grow healthily for the next 40 years.

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Ms. Clark asked whether they would do a liquidation cut after that. Mr. Casadei said no, and Ms. Clark said that was good to hear. He did not think Hull Forest Products would have ownership of the parcel the next time it needs treatment, which was why he wanted to be very transparent with this Commission. Mr. Casadei said Hull is spending time and efforts on making the parcel healthy and they are therefore invested in the wise use of the land.

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Councilor Williams asked what makes a healthy forest; how does clearing the trees help the ecology? Mr. Casadei replied that in the wildlife timber management process they try to mimic the natural process. He said that Mother Nature in NH will place as many trees on a piece of ground as can possibly grow. Over time, he continued that the dominant trees are established, and the other trees are suppressed, perish, and are recycled on site. In a climax type cover site like this one, he said the white pine would go and hemlock and red oak would take over. He recalled that white pine has a good life of approximately 125–150 years, hemlock up to 250 years, and red oak and sugar maple up to 450 years. He called those the climax species. Because society needs wood and we are living in this forest, forest management has evolved to mimic the natural process and keep the forest extremely healthy and growing to the best of its ability. He continued that all tree health and productivity begin in the soil. He said that suppressed trees suspect to disease are not growing to their potential and are taking some sunlight and nutrients from the dominant trees. He called preservation one thing and said there would be some at small scales, but they are after conserving resources. He called that "forestry in a nutshell." Mr. Casadei said that logging is a part of NH history and "we're logging whether you like it or not. The key is doing it right and that's what I need to convey so we don't have comments like 'Oh Jesus, they are up there clear cutting the wetlands again." Mr. Casadei still thinks logging is pretty foreign in Keene. He cited typical outreach they do in CT and said the more people they can get this message of conservation out to

the better and "if we don't, I don't care, we'll just do what we do." He called this wood lot a gem because there is a lot of traffic.

Mr. Reilly said it sounded like Hull was doing this to prepare the lot for the future rather than taking commercially viable trees out of it. Mr. Casadei replied "100%." He said this is a single tree selection. Mr. Reilly asked what was in it for Hull if they would not own it in the future and log it. Mr. Casadei said they would get a fair amount of timber and pulp wood from this cut because there are still great sections of wood in there. He said it would not bode well for his company's perception to clear cut this land. He said that long-term forest management is the goal on that parcel, not liquidating what is there for a timber asset.

Mr. Bill asked what wood products they would be pulling, the minimum size trees, and how many trees in a given plot. Mr. Casadei said they are saw millers and lumber people. They also export logs and manufacture lumber. They will utilize hemlock down to 8" tips and the hard wood for logs down to 10" tips. Everything below that down to a 4" tip they sell as pulp logs for paper. They would utilize the product overall down to a 4" tip. Mr. Casadei continued addressing how intensive the cut would be. He said a forester looks at basal area and how much is covered by stump base, which gives them indications of size class, etc. If it were 100% stocked, they would likely remove approximately 1/3, focused on the dangerous and declining products. Mr. Bill asked how many logging roads would be required for that scale. Mr. Casadei pointed them out on the map without indicating a number; there would be no new roads.

Mr. Bergman asked the best estimate of how long they would be operating on the south parcel. Mr. Bergman also asked whether Mr. Casadei's assertion that he would then sell to the City of Keene was a figure of speech and Mr. Casadei replied, "Yeah, it was a figure of speech. Everything is for sale but all I said was I met with Andy."

Mr. Bergman asked how many years this would take, and Mr. Casadei stated the whole operation would be completed this summer 2022 and negotiations could begin after that. Mr. Bergman asked whether Hull Forest Products makes any commitment to favoring public purchase. Mr. Casadei stated, "Well, I shook his hand and said we were going to do it. So, I'm going to do what I said I'm going to do. I'm not going to put this out to bid unless things go awry with you folks." The logging job on the south portion would likely take five weeks. He said that Hull forest products owns thousands of acres in New England, and this is a small parcel that sold for less than timber value.

The Chairman recalled Mr. Casadei citing a 30–40% harvest and said that would not be uniform based on terrain. As the City, the Chairman said the Commission was trying to determine whether some portions of the parcel would be cleared more than 40%. Mr. Casadei said he did not care for the term "cleared." He said it is a silvicultural thinning and the treatment would be selection with group selection; he, the forester may select a tree to remove or a small group of trees. Mr. Casadei said clearing is what was happening on Timberlane Drive.

- Mr. Haynes asked whether this would be mechanical harvesting and Mr. Casadei said yes (track
- buncher, skidder, yard loader; very low impact) but there would be some chainsaw use when
- 158 needed.

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- 160 The Chairman asked whether Mr. Casadei would be open to walking through those woods with the
- 161 Commission. Mr. Casadei replied stating he needed that as the only way this would work because
- the Commission's phones would be ringing off the hook. The Chairman would work on scheduling
- a site visit.

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- The Chairman continued asking whether the details were the same for the north parcel and Mr.
- 166 Casadei said no. Mr. Casadei continued describing the north parcel, exhibiting the boundary line. It
- is a five-acre piece and he is doing a land swap. Mr. Kevin Rule and his siblings are getting a
- portion of the north parcel with deeded access, and Hull would receive the equal portion of the Rule
- property. Additionally, they would be conducting a liquidation harvest on part of the north parcel,
- which would be a 14' and up cut, meaning that those trees 14' and taller would be 80% removed.
- Mr. Casadei said that any big trees showing wildlife habitat would not be cut, and extremely large
- trees would be retained for carbon storage and seed. There would be large buffer zones along the
- Brook and vernal pools. They would be thinning the Rule property. Mr. Casadei stated that they are
- not clear cutting the north parcel, but are focusing on natural regeneration.

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- 176 Mr. Haynes asked how large the buffers would be. Mr. Casadei said it varies. Mr. Haynes asked for
- a range. Mr. Casadei said it would be easier to show the Commission. The Chair asked for more
- specifics and Mr. Casadei said, "It just depends." He said it depends on what the ground looks like
- and "if we're going to leave a footprint, we're not doing it." He said this is on the highest industry
- standard of timber harvesting. He said he was "not beating around the bush." He is focused on
- growing the trees that are there, minimizing regeneration to keep a park like aesthetic and hopefully
- getting red oak to grow. He said the objective is to get what they can within the parameters of good
- health and logging to promote regeneration. Mr. Casadei said the reason why this type of harvest
- gets a bad name is due to an example liquidation cut to the north, where they only took what was
- good. He stated that Hull takes what they can but also the unhealthy growing stock so all that is left
- is healthy.

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- Ms. Clark asked where the access is for the northern site. Mr. Casadie oriented the access on a map
- near to Timberlane drive. There is a road that goes along their boundary line to the north.

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- Mr. Haynes asked whether timber harvesting would occur on adjacent parcels as well. Mr. Casadei
- said yes. He continued stating that he is not a consultant forester but a procurement forester and
- would "go after" any private parcels on the map he showed. Mr. Haynes noted there are plans to
- sell the south parcel and asked if the same were true of the north parcel. Mr. Casadie said of course,
- this is also not a long-term holding.

- Mr. Bergman asked whether logging trucks would be traversing Timberlane Drive. Mr. Casadie
- said yes. Mr. Bergman asked whether they would be using the base or full length of the Drive. Mr.

- 199 Casadei replied that they would come down Timberlane Drive to Elm Street and turn right onto
- 200 Court Street. Mr. Bergman said Court Street is busy, and Mr. Casadei replied, "Yeah, but it will get
- 201 me out of town." Unfortunately, Mr. Casadei said there would be trucks passing homes on
- Timberlane Drive. Mr. Casadie said, "If you want to live in the forest, we need to do some
- 203 logging."

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Councilor Williams said that the City Council would hear about more potholes caused by this project. Mr. Casadie said he understood.

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Mr. Bill asked how much truck traffic was anticipated and Mr. Casadie said, "It depends on how big this gets."

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- The Chairman asked whether that would be the sole point for trucks from that north parcel. Mr.
- Casadie replied in the affirmative, stating that the State does not want them coming out onto RT-9
- and, "If you can have any leeway with the State coming out onto 9-10 there, I will do it." He said he
- has to have emergency vehicle access, and he is not crazy about the safety and exposure of being in
- 215 the neighborhoods.

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The Chairman continued and was interrupted by Mr. Casadie further explaining the exit routes out of the logging areas.

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- 220 Mr. Bergman asked whether Hull Forest Product's goal and ambitions extended outside the two
- parcels that were relevant to this Commission. Mr. Casadei said yes, because of the mobilization
- and efficiency, part of his job is meeting all adjacent landowners and trying to buy them.

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- The Chairman asked about the timeline. Mr. Casadei said they would do the north parcel first. The
- 225 Chairman asked whether they were looking at this like a decade long process. Mr. Casadei said,
- "Let's finish this meeting first and we can talk about that."

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- 228 Ms. Clark asked whether there would be a supervising forester and Mr. Casadei said he would be.
- 229 Ms. Clark knew he was procuring but was unsure—she was interrupted—Mr. Casadei said the
- beauty of being a procurement forester is that he knows what must be done there; he is not a fan of
- consulting forestry.

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- 233 Mr. Bill asked whether, before they begin logging, are they required to go for—he was
- interrupted—Mr. Casadei said it had all been permitted by the State Natural Heritage Review Board
- and nothing popped up there.

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- 237 Mr. Bergman asked whether Mr. Casadei had seen any white oak in the area and Mr. Casadei said it
- was very rare, stating it does not grow well around here. Ms. Clark said that if you go to Walpole in
- 239 the CT valley you can find—she was interrupted—Mr. Casadie said a couple white oaks down
- 240 through there, good.

- The Chairman asked whether there was anything further Mr. Casadei needed to say about the north
- parcel. Mr. Casadei said no, stating now that there was a full understanding of what he was doing
- with his parcels, the second reason he was present was because the City is an adjacent landowner.
- He said he is close personal friends and colleagues with Wayne Young, who manages timber in
- NH. Mr. Young wrote the 1991 Goose Pond Management Plan, which Mr. Casadei said he

247 reviewed.

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- 249 Mr. Haynes noted that there is a 2019 updated Greater Goose Pond Stewardship Plan as the
- 250 foundation for managing the Greater Goose Pond Forest. It is a good plan that was written by the
- consulting forester, Jeff Littleton of Moosewood Ecological, and Swift Corwin wrote the forestry
- portion. Mr. Haynes said that document is available on the Conservation Commission's website and
- 253 Mr. Casadei said, "I did all the homework I could, and this was all I found." Mr. Casadei asked if
- 254 the Commission wanted to discuss this anymore and as Mr. Haynes suggested, the Commission
- agreed that Mr. Casadei needed to review the current plan first before coming back and talking to
- 256 the Commission. Mr. Casadei asked if the Commission was happy with the plan and when the
- 257 Commission replied in the affirmative, he said that was "not good news for me, I was hoping you
- 258 had not looked at it since the 90s." He said it is remarkable forest. Mr. Bergman noted there is a
- 259 management advisory committee for the whole Goose Pond area under the Conservation
- 260 Commission supervision; Mr. Haynes is the Chair. Mr. Haynes said it is a small group using the
- stewardship plan as their base to do what they want to do—he was interrupted—Mr. Haynes was
- able to continue stating that they are working in partnership with Parks and Recreation as they
- oversee the Greater Goose Pond Forest.

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The Chairman said they would stay in touch about those two parcels.

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- Mr. Casadei initiated a next item of discussion, stating that he was interested in putting a substation
- on the north parcel with windmills in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Energy
- 269 Protection in CT. He had spoken with the TransAlta electricity generation company, which
- instructed him to work directly with Siemens and Gamesa, which owns the equipment and staffs the
- Antrim facility. He met with Siemens Gamesa (renewable energy company) and he said he would
- share notes relevant to the City of Keene because he "would not do this without a partnership, I say
- partnership, without working with you guys."

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- The Chairman asked whether he was talking about a substation—he was interrupted—Mr. Casadei
- said he was talking about where his log landing is on the north property, stating that it is perfect for
- a utility substation that would generate wind power for the City of Keene. He likes windmills
- because the timber underneath it can still be managed.

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- 280 Mr. Bergman said he could understand a large windmill operation somewhere like North Dakota,
- where Mr. Casadei mentioned, because—Mr. Bergman was interrupted—Mr. Casadei said that is
- not the model here. Mr. Bergman said North Dakota is open plains. Mr. Casadie said it is different
- than here and the difference is, "No one cares, and we care."

Mr. Casadei said there is a development company that does the whole wind project and then they 285 286 turn it over to Siemens, which runs it in perpetuity. He stated that the Canadian developer's priority 287 for this site was at least 10 windmills. The developer would be paid to prospect, convene landowners, permit with the City and State, gather the wind data for approval, figure out who would 288 buy the power, and to secure the financing for the whole project. Mr. Casadei that he already did the 289 290 prospecting and more, thus he said he and the City did not need a developer to do this. If they could get enough financing together and bought and dealt directly with Siemens Gamesa, it would be 291 much more cost effective. He asked whether the City had its own utilities and Ms. Brunner replied 292 no, Eversource is our provider. Mr. Casadei asked if the City could have its own utilities. Ms. 293 Brunner said the City of Keene is not interested in having its own utilities. The City is planning to 294 start a Community Power Program, which is a community choice aggregation group buy-in 295 program for the whole City. Ms. Brunner said she could talk to the City but—she was interrupted— 296 297 Mr. Casadei said it was all up in the air.

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The Chairman said that Mr. Casadei had shifted gears to above the Commission's pay grade. Mr. Casadei knew the City had 2030 energy goals. The Chairman said this was a conversation for another day, he was glad it was brought forward—he was interrupted—Mr. Casadei said they would not solve anything, and he was not looking for signatures, but these things take a lot of time and that would determine Hull's length of holding. Mr. Casadei stated, "That does not mean once it's all flowing that I will sell it back to the City of Keene." He said there were also a lot of private landowners very interested in this lucrative wind generation.

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Ms. Clark said there was a study many years ago at the Transfer Station near the north parcel and they did not feel there was enough wind to justify towers there, so it seemed to her studies were needed first—she was interrupted—Mr. Casadei said absolutely and cited costs. Mr. Casadei continued stating that because there is a meteorological station only 10 miles away there was a lot of meteorological data that would be pertinent to this site. Ms. Clark said not necessarily—she was interrupted—Ms. Clark continued that the topography there is different, and they chose that site specifically because of the topography—she was interrupted.

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- Mr. Casadei thanked the Commission for their time and hoped these conversations would continue. 315
- The Chairman thanked him for coming—he was interrupted. While over their pay grade now, Mr. 316
- Casadei said the Conservation Commission should have a strong say in the wind power suggestion. 317
- Mr. Casadei's future correspondence with the Commission should be directed to Ms. Brunner and 318 Mr. Bohannon.
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5) Informational

A) **Subcommittee Reports**

i) Outreach Subcommittee

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Ms. Brunner reminded the Chairman that Outreach and ARM Fund are actually working groups and not official subcommittees like the Greater Goose Pond Stewardship Subcommittee.

328 The Outreach group had nothing new to report.

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Nothing to report.

iii) Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship

ARM Fund Subcommittee

Mr. Haynes said the group would meet again on May 20, with the goal to finalize trail signs. There are two trail maintenance workshops scheduled in June and July. Those sites are ready to begin planning with the trail person, Lew Shelley. The first workshop would be about building and maintaining trails and the second workshop would focus on water issues. These workshops would teach volunteers and participants how to take care of some primary issues around the pond. Next year, the group hopes to apply for a recreation trails grant through the Division of Parks and Recreation for some spots that need major work. A bird walk was scheduled for May 21 at 8:00 AM, meeting at the new parking lot (South Trailhead). Participants could sign-up online or by calling Parks and Recreation. Walk-ins would likely be welcome.

B) Invasive Species

Councilor Williams said that the Garlic Mustard Challenge went well. While there were not many participants, it was a good group that collected eight bags of the plant, which should help reduce regrowth next year.

The next event is June 20 at 5:00 PM in Woodland Cemetery to clear Japanese knotweed. This is the same date as the Commission's next meeting because the City does not observe Juneteenth. Councilor Williams will coordinate with Chair VonPlinsky after the meeting to resolve this conflict.

Ms. Clark congratulated Councilor Williams on his great coverage of the Garlic Mustard Challenge in the Sentinel.

6) Discussion Items

Councilor Madison was not present. There would not be a June speaking event, but the Chairman hoped for one later in the summer.

Conservation Commission Speaking Events

B) Budget Discussion

The Chairman said there was \$1,500 in the Commission budget that would run out on June 30, 2022. Of this, \$150 was already committed to Steve Lamonde's honorarium for the bird walk, and that check would have to be written by June 30. Mr. Haynes emailed him the paperwork, but Ms. Marcou had yet to receive it.

Mr. Bergman mentioned the Antioch students who sought funding and the Chairman said that was last fiscal year.

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With the remaining \$1,350, the Chairman noted the dues from the NH Association for Conservation Commissions. The Commission overpaid on dues last year to make up for underpaying previous years. They seek \$774.45. Additionally, ARLAC sought their annual \$125 contribution for e-coli sampling in the watershed and the Society for the Protection of NH Forests had \$55 dues.

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With the aforementioned expenses paid, the Chairman said \$395.55 remained.

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381 Ms. Clark noted that ARLAC would always accept further assistance.

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The Chairman said that this Commission does not use the NHACC services well, but the NHACC does a lot of important lobbying for Keene in Concord, which he said was vital, and he had no problem paying the dues. Mr. Bill wondered if the NHACC could negotiate a number of workshops since the City does not use the rest. The Chair said that he would be surprised as every dollar counts. He thought it would be good to reexamine what they offer and how the Commission could better utilize those services. Ms. Clark said the luncheon workshops offered are free to members and are excellent; there are two or three each fall and spring.

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In response to Ms. Brunner, the Chair said most NHACC communications go to the City, but he gets notifications of the bill and some other things. All members should get NHACC updates of events.

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Mr. Bergman asked about the Bee City USA dues of \$200, which Mr. Therriault replied would be due the next fiscal year in March.

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The Chairman asked, if rules were no object, for what else the Commissioners saw a need for funding. Mr. Haynes said there were a few Goose Pond projects that would require more than the remaining \$395. First, he would like the Commission to co-sponsor the trail maintenance workshops with the Department of Parks and Recreation; the fee is \$600, and he hoped the Commission would contribute \$200–\$300. Second, he hoped the Commission would contribute to Peter Poanessa's trail sign costs; he hoped for a few hundred dollars. The Chairman said it made sense to try to support those efforts. Mr. Haynes wondered if they should leave some of the budget for bags and seeds for the invasives effort. The Department of Public Works has agreed to provide bags when needed. Mr. Bill suggested splitting some of these expenses between this and the next fiscal year. Mr. Haynes said the trails workshop funds were needed before June 30, but the signs

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- Mr. Therriault recalled the call for an endowment in the Greater Goose Pond Forest Stewardship
 Plan, which could make the Goose Pond work self-sustaining. Mr. Haynes said that had not
 happened and the catch was that without funding, that manay would have to come from potential
- happened and the catch was that without funding, that money would have to come from potential
- 413 timber harvesting, which was not in the Subcommittee's purview at this point.

could perhaps be \$100 this year and \$100 next year.

The Chairman suggested paying the \$125 to ARLAC, \$150 to Steve Lamonde (already allocated), \$774.45 to the NHACC, \$55 to the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, \$300 as the trail workshops co-sponsor, and the remaining \$95.55 to the trail signs work (the remainder to be paid after July 1).

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- Ms. Marcou needed to know before the end of June whether these checks would be written/cashed.
- Ms. Marcou wondered whether there could be carry-over requests, which are allowed if approved
- by the City Manager and Finance Director. She would investigate.

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- 423 A motion by Ms. Clark for the Conservation Commission to pay the NH Association for
- 424 Conservation Commissions \$774.45, the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee \$125, the
- Society for the Protection of NH Forests \$55, and Lew Shelley of SnowHawk, LLC., \$300 as co-
- sponsors of the trail maintenance workshops, was duly seconded by Mr. Therriault. The motion
- 427 carried unanimously.

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The remaining \$95 for trail signs would be decided next month. Steve Lamonde was not included in this motion because the Commission previously voted to approve dispensing those funds.

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Mr. Haynes was grateful the Commission was supporting the Goose Pond work. The Chair said the upcoming events are great work.

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C) Joint Council Meeting – Eversource Scenic Roads

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The Chairman thought the Commission had discussed this already.

Ordinance. Councilor Williams has brought it up to Staff.

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Councilor Williams spoke to the City Manager about the amount of red tape and number of meetings that these applicants must go through. He hoped there would be a more efficient way in the future. The Chairman suspected a line in the Statute must be deleted. Ms. Brunner said that it is actually in the City Code, which set-up this process. The City Council could have chosen for these matters to go only to the Planning Board for one public hearing. However, the City Council chose to have it come to them, which makes it go to multiple meetings and then the Conservation Commission was added to the process. The Chairman said it made sense that it was a City

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448 D) Instream Flow Program – Ashuelot River, May 17, 2022 in Surry; May 18, 2022

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There would be a few tests at the locations and dates listed; one in Surry off of Dort Road and one in Swanzey by the bridge at Sawyer Crossing off Matthews Road.

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E) Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP) Property Field Visit, May 25, 2022

455 456 in Swanzey

The Chairman emailed Joselyn Duffy, who agreed to walk with anyone on the Commission through the three parcels: goose pond area, part of the Shaw property, and a third. Meet at 2:45 PM on May 25 at the South Trailhead at Goose Pond (new parking lot). The Chairman said Ms. Duffy mentioned an easement on the Shaw property and they were seeking help from Staff notifying the owner of that property about the visit in the later afternoon that day.

7) New or Other Business

Mr. Bergman provided a report on the potential Airport wildlife fence to protect the runways from incursions by wildlife. The original plan was for that fence to run along Airport Road, which is used heavily daily by birders, walkers, and nature lovers, who found the idea abhorrent. Mr. Bergman began communicating with the Airport Director, David Hickling, again after one year of no contact and asked for an update on the fence. There have been recent developments at the Airport like the new solar farm near the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He said the bottom line is perhaps the most important, where Director Hickling stated, "All discussions regarding this project are now still focused on the fence being located away from Airport Road, and everyone seems to agree that is the logical placement."

 Mr. Bergman recalled first walking around the runways with the Airport Director and Mr. Bergman proposed placing the fence at the end of the shorter runway facing the main marsh, which is not acceptable to the FAA because there must be sufficient clearance. Otherwise, the fence could be placed along the margins of the longer runway but would still have to go through the marsh; if they do the work in a biologically quiet time of year like winter, Mr. Bergman did not think it would be too disturbing and that once in place, different types of wildlife would adapts.

Mr. Bergman read more from Director Hickling's letter, which stated, "No funding has been approved at this point but we have had meetings with the NH DOT to discuss the funding. We are awaiting a scope and fee proposal from our engineering firm (McFarland Johnson) for partial design, environmental and permitting. Once we have that we will submit an application for the funding of this portion of the project with the hope of receiving that funding in time to complete this phase later this year. If we are able to fund this and complete it this year, we will apply for funding for the completion of the project next summer." Mr. Bergman said that sounded like probably putting in the fence next summer.

 Mr. Therriault said that if they had not submitted for funding from the FAA yet, they would not see funds for at least 18 months. Mr. Bergman said Director Hickling was likely being optimistic. Mr. Bergman asked Mr. Hickling if they would consult during the design phase with the Commission or other user groups and the Director responded of course. Mr. Bergman was unsure if the Swanzey Conservation Commission would be involved like they were with the solar farm planning that this Commission was not involved with. He said it is odd because the City owns the land, but it is in another town. The timeline is not clear but clearly many months away; there are also other projects happening at the Airport, but this is the project of greatest relevance to the Commission.

500 Mr. Haynes said at this point we do not know where the fence will be yet. Mr. Bergman said we 501 don't know exactly, the engineers will have to mediate between the FAA, Director Hickling, and 502 the Commission. Director Hickling wants funding but to also keep people happy and he is aware of the great bird sightings occurring at the Airport. He added that water levels in the marsh are really 503 low. He was unaware of whether there was also work going on rerouting that diversion from 504 505 Wilson Pond to the Ashuelot River. Mr. Bergman wondered if there was a line for this fence in the 506 recent City Council budget approval; Councilor Williams would need to check. The Chairman would add this to future discussion items to stay abreast. 507

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- Mr. Therriault shared pollinator books that would be donated to Keene Public Library and he would be doing a reading for children in July. May 20 is world Bee Day, per the United Nations. Pollinator Week in the United States is June 20–26. Last, he shared a photo from the Parks and Recreation Department pollinator strip at the Monadnock View Cemetery. They broke ground on the 180 square foot parcel along Park Avenue fence line; Mr. Therriault delivered the seeds to the Parks Department. Ideally vegetation will grow in three to four weeks after seeded. It could be
- added to each year until it ideally spans the fence line. The Chairman said that Cheshire County
- Conservation District is doing something for Pollinator Week and suggested reaching out to
- Amanda Littleton. Ms. Clark said that was a decent size plot to start with.

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Ms. Clark continued that she liked this meeting room and Ms. Brunner would attempt to schedule future meetings at this location at Parks and Recreation.

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Mr. Haynes recalled that an alternate needs to be moved into a regular spot and that Mr. Bill is in line to be the next regular member.

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- The Chairman stated that they would likely see more of Mr. Casadei and the Chairman would reach out to schedule the site visit. He encouraged everyone to list everything else they want to ask him.

 He called it an intense presentation and he imagined lingering questions. Mr. Bill asked if the public access to Beaver Brook Falls there would be impacted by their work and the Chairman thought that was a great question to ask Mr. Casadei. Mr. Haynes wanted to bring in Matt Kelley as a consulting
- forester because it seemed like a second opinion would be helpful. The Chair would reach out to
 Mr. Kelley and Mr. Casadei to try to coordinate. Mr. Bergman wondered if residents of Timberlane
- Drive were aware of this upcoming traffic. Ms. Marcou said that Mr. Casadei would have to reach
- out to the Assessing Department because there is an application in process just like Timberlane
- out to the Assessing Department because there is an application in process just like Timberlane
 Drive and Drummer Hill clearing. She was unsure if the abutters would be noticed but she could
- look into that process. Ms. Brunner said they must file a notice to cut with the City only. There
- would be no public hearing or anything like that. Mr. Bergman suggested letters to the Sentinel. Mr.
- Haynes mentioned the Drummer Hill Association and reaching out to them. Ms. Marcou said to
- 538 mention it to Charlie Ferrando, who lives on Timberlane Drive. Ms. Brunner said that
- neighborhood has great word of mouth. Mr. Haynes would reach out about this proposed logging.

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8) Adjournment

	CONS Meeting Minutes May 16, 2022	DRAF
543	There being no further business, Chair Von Plinsky adjourned the meeting at 6:07 PM.	
544		
545	Respectfully submitted by,	
546	Katie Kibler, Minute Taker	
547	May 23, 2022	
548		
549	Reviewed and edited by,	
550	Corinne Marcou, Administrative Assistant	
551	Mari Brunner, Senior Planner	

DRAFT

Corinne Marcou

From:

Linda Admin <admin@nhacc.org>

Sent:

Monday, June 6, 2022 12:39 PM

To:

Sparky Von Plinsky; Corinne Marcou

Cc:

Brian Reilly; Eloise Clark; Ken Bergman

Subject:

Membership Renewal

Attachments:

Conservation Commission Member Update Form (2).docx

Dear Keene Commissioners,

Thank you for renewing your membership in NHACC. Together we can accomplish much more, effect change on the local and state level, and build strength in unity. Your participation in the Association makes a difference in the conservation of our wonderful natural resources.

NHACC is available as a resource to you. We offer many programs that are free for members like the Lunch and Learn workshops and regional roundtables. We keep our members informed through our E-newsletters and legislative alerts, and our useful revised edition handbook (copies still available at \$20 for members). NHACC members get a reduced rate at the annual meeting and conference in November. We are also available to consult on the often difficult issues that come before your commission.

Please fill out the attached Commission Update Form, so that we can stay current with our membership. We will add all commissioners to the E-newsletter and legislative alerts subscription. Revised handbooks are available for sale through the office - admin@nhacc.org.

Thank you again for your support and for all the good work you do to protect New Hampshire's natural beauty and resources.

Respectfully, Barbara Richter Executive Director

NHACC 54 Portsmouth Street Concord NH 03301 603-224-7867 www.nhacc.org

CHAPTER 153 SB 267-FN-A - FINAL VERSION

02/03/2022 0082s 03/31/2022 1288s 21Apr2022... 1441h 4May2022... 1779h

2022 SESSION

22-3006 08/04

SENATE BILL 267-FN-A

AN ACT establishing the upland invasive species program, program fund, and program

coordinator in the department of agriculture, markets, and food.

SPONSORS: Sen. Giuda, Dist 2; Sen. Rosenwald, Dist 13; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Gannon, Dist

23; Sen. Sherman, Dist 24; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Rep. Renzullo, Hills. 37; Rep. Pearl,

Merr. 26; Rep. Suzanne Smith, Graf. 8; Rep. Weston, Graf. 8

COMMITTEE: Energy and Natural Resources

ANALYSIS

This bill:

I. Establishes the position of upland invasive species program coordinator in the department of agriculture, markets, and food.

II. Establishes the upland invasive species remediation program and fund.

III. Makes an appropriation to the upland invasive species remediation fund.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in **bold italics**.

Matter removed from current law appears [in brackets and struckthrough.]

Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

CHAPTER 153 SB 267-FN-A - FINAL VERSION

02/03/2022 0082s 03/31/2022 1288s 21Apr2022... 1441h 4May2022... 1779h

22-3006 08/04

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Two

AN ACT

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establishing the upland invasive species program, program fund, and program coordinator in the department of agriculture, markets, and food.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

- 153:1 New Section; Upland Invasive Species Program. Amend RSA 430 by inserting after section 57 the following new section:
 - 430:58 Upland Invasive Species Program and Fund.
- I. There is established an upland invasive species program in the department which shall address invasive species infestations. The program shall be administered by an upland invasive species program coordinator. This position shall be a classified position and the coordinator shall be qualified by reason of education and experience. The upland invasive species program coordinator shall:
 - (a) Make maps statewide of invasive species infestations.
 - (b) Notify municipalities of invasive species infestations.
 - (c) Hold a valid commercial, not for hire, category B pesticide applicators license.
- (d) Maintain an active upland invasive species program that includes a combination of mechanical, cultural, biological, and chemical controls for the purpose of preventing and inhibiting the spread of invasive species.
- (e) Subsidize the purchase of herbicides by municipalities, when funding is available. Municipalities shall provide the coordinator with copies of invoices paid by them no later than November 1 of each year. Based on the invoices received, the coordinator shall, if necessary, distribute reimbursements on a pro-rata basis and make payments to such municipalities no later than December 15.
 - (f) Develop and distribute invasive species program information around the state.
- (g) Coordinate with the department of environmental services and the department of natural and cultural resources to ensure that any upland invasive species remediation efforts do not adversely impact the water quality of any municipal water supply or body of water under the supervision of those departments.
- (h) Invite the participation of state and federal agencies, municipalities, universities, the general public, or others in helping to manage, educate, and raise awareness of invasive species.
- II. Each city and town shall designate an existing employee, agency, or other designee as the contact point for the upland land invasive species coordinator in order to address local invasive species issues.

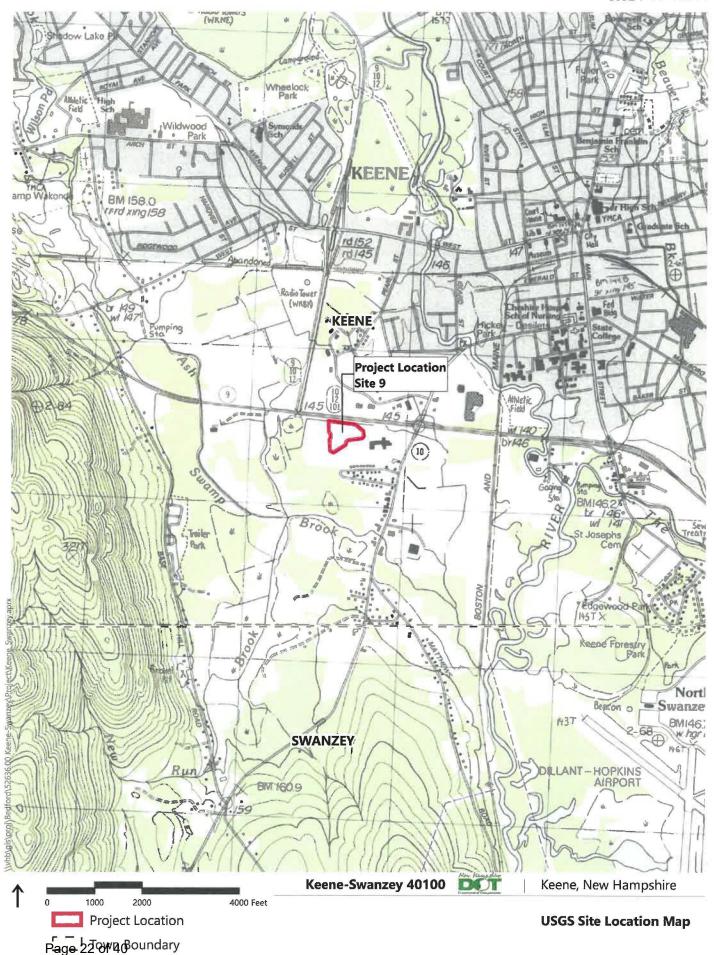
CHAPTER 153 SB 267-FN-A - FINAL VERSION - Page 2 -

- III. All state agencies shall cooperate with the upland invasive species program coordinator to develop programs and policies addressing the proliferation and spread of upland invasive species on agency-owned land.
- IV. There is hereby established in the state treasury a fund to be known as the upland invasive species remediation fund which shall be kept distinct and separate from other funds. The commissioner of the department of agriculture, markets, and food may accept funds from any federal, state, or private source, including grants, gifts, or donations of any kind, for the purpose of funding the purchase of necessary equipment and materials in support of invasive species remediation. The fund shall be nonlapsing and continually appropriated to the commissioner of the department of agriculture, markets, and food for the purposes of this section. However, the fund shall not be used for any costs associated with personnel or staffing.
- 153:2 New Subparagraph; Upland Invasive Species Remediation Fund. Amend RSA 6:12, I(b) by inserting after subparagraph (382) the following new subparagraph:
- (383) Moneys deposited in the upland invasive species remediation fund established in RSA 430:58.
- 153:3 Appropriation; Upland Invasive Species Remediation Program. There is hereby appropriated to the department of agriculture, markets, and food the sum of \$150,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 which shall be nonlapsing, for the purpose of funding the upland invasive species remediation fund established in RSA 430:58 to be used for the purpose of purchasing materials, equipment, herbicides, and securing necessary office and storage space. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sum out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.
 - 153:4 Effective Date. This act shall take effect June 30, 2022.

Approved: June 07, 2022 Effective Date: June 30, 2022

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1. Introduction

On behalf of the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT, "the Applicant"), VHB has prepared this Wetlands Permit Application pursuant to the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) Chapter 482-A, Fill and Dredge in Wetlands, and Wetland Bureau Code of Administrative Rules, Chapters Env-Wt 100 through Env-Wt 900. This application, including the appendices, were formatted to align with the NHDOT Required Order of Application Package list, dated June 2020.

This project is consistent with the intent of the Restoration/Enhancement Activities Rule (Env-Wt 525), and we therefore request that NHDES classify this project as a Minimum Impact Project. However, we note that the proposed impacts to a "tax ditch" (Tier 1 intermittent stream) exceed the 200 linear feet threshold for a Major Impact Classification in accordance with Env-Wt 407.03(a). Impacts are further detailed in **Section 8** of this **Application Narrative** below. As suggested by Karl Benedict (NHDES), we have therefore included items normally required for a major project in this application, including NHDES *Attachment A: Minor and Major Projects*.

Brief Project Background

This project involves the development of a floodplain compensatory storage site in Keene, NH to offset approximately 19.9 acre-feet (ac-ft) of floodplain impacts from four NHDOT highway construction projects completed in Keene over the last decade related to the upgrade of NH Routes 9, 10, 12, and 101, as part of the NHDOT Keene-Swanzey 10309 series of projects. Refer to the **Floodplain Impact Summary** (Figure 4) provided in **Appendix K** for the location of these projects.

Although the NHDOT has completed mitigation projects to offset wetland impacts resulting from these projects, a viable floodplain mitigation strategy has not been implemented. Since the construction of floodplain compensatory storage within the Ashuelot River watershed remained unresolved, the NHDES wetland permit for the Multi-Use Trail over NH 101 (NHDES File No. 2015-01505) required NHDOT to provide, among other measures, floodplain compensation within the Ashuelot River watershed to compensate for the impacts resulting from the completed Keene-Swanzey projects.

Wetlands and floodplains are prevalent in this low-lying valley, which is underlain by former glacial lakebed sediments and is bisected by the Ashuelot River and its several tributaries. Flooding is an important concern in the City of Keene, which has seen city-wide flooding several times over the last several decades, making this project a priority for the Applicant and the City.

As a result of a detailed site selection process that prioritized undeveloped lands (detailed in **Section 4** of this **Application Narrative** below), avoidance of wetlands and streams, and the appropriate geographic position relative to the impacted floodplain, among other factors, "Site 9" was selected as the preferred alternative of the 19 parcels evaluated. Site 9 ("the Site") is an area within NHDOT-owned right-of-way (ROW) that is located mostly outside of known wetlands and is large enough to provide the required compensatory storage area. Refer to **Figure 1, USGS Site Location Map**.



2. Site Description and Existing Conditions

The Site is underlain by former glacial lakebed sediments and primarily consists of open upland meadow habitat (that was historically an agricultural field that grew corn) which extends into early successional forest habitat that dominates the southwestern portion of the Site. Dominant vegetation observed within the open upland meadow portion of the Site includes species of clover (Trifolium spp.), broom sedge (Carex scoparia), Canada goldenrod (Solidago canadensis), common cinquefoil (Potentilla simplex), cow vetch (Vicia cracca), orange hawkweed (Hieracium aurantiacum), gray birch saplings (Betula populifolia), meadow hawkweed (Hieracium caespitosum), milkweed (Asclepias syriaca), sensitive fern (Onoclea sensibilis), interrupted fern (Osmunda claytoniana), soft rush (Juncus effusus), and white yarrow (Achillea millefolium), along with a few invasive plants including glossy buckthorn saplings (Frangula alnus) and oriental bittersweet (Celastrus orbiculatus). Dominant vegetation observed within the southwestern forested portion of the Site consists of quaking aspen (Populus tremuloides), gray birch (Betula populifolia), and some white pine (Pinus strobus) in the overstory, with Canada goldenrod, giant goldenrod (Solidago gigantea), glossy buckthorn, Virginia creeper (Parthenocissus quinquefolia), common cinquefoil, and scattered patches of interrupted fern and sensitive fern in the understory, along with various invasive species listed below. Refer to the Natural Resource Map (Figure 3) and Representative Site Photo Log provided in Appendix I. Wetland hydrology was absent from both the center upland meadow and southwestern forested area at the time of observation. Furthermore, soils sampled throughout the Site were observed to be too bright (high chroma) to meet any hydric soil indicators. Common soils observed consisted of a fine sandy loam texture and varied in color from 10YR 4/4 to 10YR 4/2 without redox concentrations.

Invasive species were identified and are categorized as NHDOT Type I and Type II based on the NHDOT's Best Management Practices for the Control of Invasive and Noxious Plant Species manual dated 2018. Type I species are plants that reproduce only by seeds, while Type II species are plants that reproduce by seeds and vegetative means (i.e., root or stem fragments) making them easier to spread. Type I invasive species observed within and along the Site include a species of honeysuckle (Lonicera sp.), multiflora rose (Rosa multiflora), oriental bittersweet, glossy buckthorn, and autumn olive (Elaeagnus umbellata). A small quantity of purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria), a Type II invasive species, was observed within the tax ditch northwest of and outside of the Site during the June 2020 field work. No purple loosestrife was observed within the tax ditch directly abutting or overlapping the proposed work during the more recent 2021 and 2022 site visits. The invasive species mapping within the Site is depicted on the **Wetland Plans** provided in **Appendix L**. Note that since the invasive species mapping was conducted in November 2021 after routine mowing of the open meadow area, no invasive species were mapped in that portion of the Site - however, Type I species may be present in small quantities.

No perennial streams are located on the Site, and the Ashuelot River is over 0.5 mile to the northeast and Ash Swamp Brook is approximately 0.3 mile south of the Site. Wetlands were delineated around the Site perimeter, as detailed in **Section 5** of this **Application Narrative** below and shown on the **Natural Resource Map** (Figure 3) provided in **Appendix I**. The wetland east of the Site is a large relatively flat wet meadow, while the wetlands along the northern and western perimeters are constructed wetland ditches known as "tax ditches."



Tax Ditches

A tax ditch system was historically established throughout the City of Keene ("the City") by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS, formerly the Soil Conservation Service or SCS) primarily to channelize/straighten and deepen streams to lower groundwater levels and drain wetlands on adjacent properties to support agricultural land uses. Today, this system of tax ditches is maintained by the City in an effort to reduce the risk of localized flooding events.

Although some of these tax ditches are, in fact, channelized streams or have stream characteristics, other tax ditches, including those within and adjacent to the Site, have characteristics of emergent/scrub-shrub palustrine wetland ditches or linear cattail marshes, as detailed further in **Section 5** of this **Application Narrative** below. The portion of this tax ditch east of the Winchester Street Roundabout in the agricultural land was determined to be a stream and given a riverine classification. This determination was made when that site was delineated during the initial site selection process due to the more typical stream channel and bed characteristics observed in that location. This is also consistent with the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) mapping of the tax ditches which does not map them at all west of the roundabout but maps them as a stream east of the roundabout. The National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) for New Hampshire published on February 11, 2022, and accessed via the online viewer, maps the tax ditches along the Site with a dashed line style to represent intermittent flow up to their southern confluence with Ash Swamp Brook, which is mapped as a solid line in this dataset indicating perennial flow. In light of this information, coupled with the tax ditch characteristics within and along the Site, we consider them to be characteristically palustrine wetlands and functionally Tier 1 intermittent streams since they were created with the intention of conveying surface water flow. Furthermore, in accordance with Env-Wt 901.03(f), if temporary crossings (in place for less than two years) are restored to pre-installation conditions when the crossings are removed, they are exempt from the requirements of Env-Wt 903 and 904.

NHDES Wetlands Permit Planning Tool (WPPT) Review

Based on a review of the NHDES WPPT, it was determined that there are no Priority Resource Areas (PRAs) within the vicinity of the Site. Furthermore, there will be no impacts to Class A waters, outstanding resource waters, impaired waters, or designated rivers.

Based on a review of the NHDES OneStop Database and PFAS Mapper, it appears that the potential to encounter contaminated soil or groundwater on the Site is negligible. The closest hazardous waste generator and underground storage tank belong to Filtrine Manufacturing Company which is located adjacent to the southern border of the Site.

Typically, all topsoil within an existing state-owned ROW is classified as Limited Reuse Soil (LRS); however, a request to refine the definition of LRS pertinent to this Site, since the ROW extends far off the road, was documented in a NHDOT memorandum dated November 25, 2020. With this approval, the LRS ROW within the Site extends approximately 92 feet off the edge of the roadway pavement instead of encompassing the entirety of the Site, as depicted on the **Wetland Plans** provided in **Appendix L**. Topsoil excavated from the LRS area may be stockpiled and reused for site restoration only within the LRS area. The remainder of the excavated LRS soil will be removed from the site for proper treatment and disposal.



3. Proposed Project Description

The project seeks to create a minimum of 19.9 ac-ft of excavated compensatory floodplain storage that is hydraulically connected to the overall Ashuelot River floodplain. The current design exceeds this goal by providing approximately 20.2 ac-ft of proposed floodplain storage connected to the existing tax ditch along NH Route 10/12/101. Although the project is focused on creating floodplain storage, some wetland habitat may develop indirectly due to the excavation of the Site close to the estimated seasonal high water table. Based on field topographic survey, boring logs, monitoring well measurements, and field observations, groundwater elevations are assumed to range from approximately 464 feet and 467 feet with a median elevation of approximately 466 feet. These elevations are consistent with observed standing water elevations in the tax ditch along the northern perimeter of the site observed during site visits and historic monitoring well readings.

Given that most of the Site is upland, the proposed jurisdictional impacts are limited, as described in the bullets below. This project is expected to be advertised from construction bids in late fall/early winter of 2022 with construction planned for 2023.

- Floodplain Compensatory Storage Grading: Since the purpose of the Project is to provide additional floodplain storage, the central component of the work will be the removal of over 32,000 cubic yards of soils from the Site. The range of elevations where storage is proposed is between elevations 465 to 470 feet NAVD88 and has a direct hydraulic connection to the floodplain. The grading plan is designed to create variation in final elevations (rather than a uniformly flat site) to support diverse vegetation communities and increase visual interest and habitat value post-construction. Narrow zones of permanent and temporary grading impacts are proposed along the southern edge of the tax ditch to tie it into the re-graded site.
- > Temporary Access: Two temporary 48-inch culvert crossings of the northern tax ditch are proposed to provide an entrance and exit onto the adjacent roadway within NHDOT ROW. It was determined that two crossings of the northern tax ditch were needed as opposed to one given the anticipated size of the construction vehicles to allow for efficient and safe entrance and exit between the Site and the adjacent public roadway (i.e., correct angles to facilitate merging, etc.).
- Restoration: The Site will be restored and planted with various herbaceous seed mixes and woody plant species that were selected for the various planting zones based on factors such as their prevalence in the adjacent plant community and their habitat preferences. Only NH native plant species are included in the planting plan. The woody plants consist of shrubs ranging in height from 1.5 to 3 feet tall and trees ranging in height from 3-6 feet tall depending on whether they are live stakes, grown in nursery containers, or balled and burlapped (B&B); a mix of plant sizes were selected within the planting zones for structural diversity. The four planting zones include:
 - Zone 1 below elevation 466 feet,
 - Zone 2 between elevations 466 and 467 feet,
 - Zone 3 above elevation 467 feet, and
 - Zone 4 the access restoration existing grades above elevation 469.

Refer to the **Planting Plan** on Sheet 10 of the **Wetland Plans** provided in **Appendix L** for planting tables (that detail the selected species, size, spacing, quantity, etc.) and notes.



- Future Management: Following construction, the current routine mowing of the open meadow portion of this Site will be discontinued to allow the planted vegetation to establish and mature into a native plant community. The Site will be monitored for a minimum of three years post-construction in accordance with the **Project Monitoring Plan** provided in **Appendix J**. In summary, this monitoring will include twice annual site visits (with annual reporting to NHDES) to:
 - o Inspect the slopes for potential erosion issues,
 - o Assess the health, survivorship, and abundance/cover of the planted vegetation,
 - Document the establishment of invasive species, and
 - Recommend general remediation measures for any identified issues (i.e., erosion, invasive species > 10-15% cover, replacement of unhealthy/dead planted vegetation, etc.).
- Deed Restriction/Conservation Easement: The Site will be placed into a deed restriction or conservation easement to ensure the Site is protected for flood storage in perpetuity. This conserved area may include a larger property contiguous to the Site and progressing south towards Ash Swamp Brook (totaling approximately 80 acres). This site was purchased in the 1970s for a proposed roadway bypass project that is no longer planned. The Monadnock Conservancy is an active project partner that has expressed interest in serving as the third-party steward for this conservation easement. The easement documentation (including a baseline documentation report, stewardship management plan, property survey, conservation easement deed, etc.) is expected to be prepared late 2022/early 2023 with the easement in place by late 2023.

4. Alternatives Analysis

A detailed site alternatives analysis - including environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - was conducted in 2019-2021 in consultation with a project Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

Site screening to identify an appropriate floodplain mitigation site started at a landscape level using geographic information system (GIS) data and other desktop resources to identify high priority floodplain mitigation sites in the City of Keene. An analysis of "Floodplain Mitigation Focus Areas" identified priority sites based on criteria that included:

- Prioritization of undeveloped lands, using data from the City of Keene and the USGS National Land Cover Database,
- Avoidance of wetland impacts, using US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) NWI wetlands, hydric soils, and
 FB Environmental Associates (FBE) delineations (NHDOT sites), and
- Determination of appropriate geomorphic position relative to the impacted floodplain, within or directly adjacent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapped floodplains elevations of 466 ft to 478 ft.

City tax parcel data identified a total of 19 parcels that contained at least 5 acres of Floodplain Mitigation Focus Area. This list was further narrowed to 10 priority sites by selecting sites that were determined compatible with adjacent land uses, were close to the impact location, and limited environmental impact such as tree clearing. Once the initial screening was completed, CAD and LiDAR topographic data was used to estimate the maximum potential compensation flood storage volume for potential mitigation sites. Each of the 10 sites were ranked



according to the potential compensatory storage available (refer to the **Priority Screening Parcels** (Figure 5) provided in **Appendix K**):

- > High Priority Sites (green, greater than 120% of target flood storage),
- > Medium Priority Sites (yellow, between 80%-120% of target flood storage), and
- Low Priority Sites (red, less than 80% of target flood storage).

Three of the 10 sites were ranked as low priority sites and were therefore eliminated from further study. On May 5, 2020, members of the TAG, VHB, and NHDOT visited the set of seven remaining parcels in the field. As a result of this site visit, two parcels (Parcels 114-021 and 114-025) were eliminated from further consideration due to their location within an active low floodplain with a mature floodplain forest community.

A total of five sites remained and were selected for field studies, which included development of an existing conditions survey (property boundaries and topography), wetland delineations, preliminary cultural resource reviews, rare species coordination, updated compensatory storage volumes, and development of 30% design plans. Refer to the **Priority Screening Parcels** (Figure 6) provided in **Appendix K**.

The wetland delineation revealed that Site 8 is primarily wet meadow, resulting in its elimination. Site 9 (i.e., the proposed Site) is dominated by open field, with an inclusion of primary succession forest in the southwest portion of the site, populated by young gray birch, poplar, and other small trees, saplings, and shrubs. The Legere (111-007) and Krif (115-010 and 115-013) sites are similar locations - both are currently farmed and have an unnamed perennial tributary running through the parcels and wetlands present along their margins. Refer to the **Priority Screening Parcels Delineated Natural Resources** (Figure 7) provided in **Appendix K**.

Conceptual 30% design plans and refined compensatory storage estimates were developed for the remaining four alternative sites. Development of these plans included a more detailed, site-specific approach than the preliminary compensatory storage estimates to reflect improved data. This more precise analysis included field verification of property lines, avoidance of grading impacts to wetlands, utilities, or other features identified in the field, and incorporation of sloped grades to ensure that water could drain out of the mitigation area as floodwaters recede. As part of this refined analysis, surface elevations for each of the four sites were mapped, along with proposed excavation depth. The Legere (111-007) and Krif (115-010 and 115-013) sites were determined to be less practicable than Site 9 due to private ownership and the presence of an unnamed tributary and wetlands. Analysis of the Legere (111-007) and Krif (115-010 and 115-013) sites also revealed that it would be difficult to achieve the target compensatory storage volume of 19.9 ac-ft, despite promising preliminary estimates for these sites. Compensatory flood storage for the conceptual designs of the Legere (111-007) and Krif (115-010 and 115-013) sites is less than 19.9 ac-ft due to the need to avoid and minimize impacts to stream channel and banks. Upon evaluation of the 30% conceptual designs, it became apparent that substantial impacts to adjacent stream banks would be required to meet the 19.9 ac-ft target for these sites.

Based on the results of screening evaluations, field data collection, conceptual design development, and feedback from members of the TAG, Site 9 was determined to be the preferred alternative for the compensatory floodplain storage site. Site 9 avoids the acquisition of private property, avoids substantial wetland impacts, and avoids historic properties. The Site is close to the Winchester Street Roundabout (Project 10309H), the largest source of floodplain fill, and is located within the same hydraulic reach of the Ash Swamp Brook floodplain. Refer to **Section 10** of this **Application Narrative** below for more information regarding the consultation with the TAG.

Application Narrative Page 6



5. Wetland Resources

VHB Senior Environmental Scientist Kristopher Wilkes (NH CWS #288) verified the previously delineated wetlands within the Site in the summer of 2020, invasive species were mapped in November 2021, and detailed wetland data was collected in March 2022. Wetlands around the Site were delineated by FBE in 2014. Wetland verification was performed in accordance with the procedures and standards outlined in the 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual and the Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Northcentral and Northeast Region, Version 2.0 (January 2012). Wetland verification and delineation also relied upon the Field Indicators for Identifying Hydric Soils in the United States, Version 8.2, published by the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Field Indicators for Identifying Hydric Soils in New England, Version 4.0, published by the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission in June 2020. Dominant wetland vegetation was assessed using the 2018 National Wetland Plant List published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Lastly, wetlands were classified using the USFWS methodology Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States (Cowardin et al. 1979, revised 1985). Wetland function and values were assessed using the Wetland Function-Value Evaluation Forms in accordance with the Highway Methodology Workbook Supplement (USACE, 1999).

Additionally, an assessment for potential vernal pool habitat was conducted within the Site in accordance with *Identifying and Documenting Vernal Pools in New Hampshire – Third Edition*, 2016, published by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program. No potential vernal pools were identified. Invasive plant species within the Site were identified and delineated in the field in November 2021 for inclusion on the general project plans to be provided to the Contractor. The invasive species mapping is also shown on the **Wetland Plans** provided in *Appendix L*.

Wetland 9-1

Wetland 9-1 (W9-1) is a series of ditches along the southern edge of NH 101 with two branches that border the western and northern boundaries of the Site. The northern portion of this wetland merges with Wetland 9-3 (W9-3) northeast of the Site. These excavated flood control ditches have developed into palustrine emergent marsh habitat with persistent emergent vegetation and scrub-shrub components, resulting in the following wetland classifications: Palustrine, Emergent, Persistent, Seasonally Flooded/Saturated, Excavated (PEM1Ex) and Palustrine, Scrub-Shrub, Broad-Leaved Deciduous, Seasonally Flooded/Saturated, Excavated (PSS1Ex). Wetland vegetation observed within these ditches includes narrowleaf cattail (Typha angustifolia), reed canary grass (Phalaris arundinacea), sensitive fern, white meadowsweet (Spiraea alba), swamp dewberry (Rubus hispidus), soft rush, marsh speedwell (Veronica scutellata), cinnamon fern (Osmundastrum cinnamomeum), and roughstemmed goldenrod (Solidago rugosa). Furthermore, numerous cut woody stems were observed along the embankments during the data collection effort in March 2022 that are likely gray birch saplings, red maple saplings, silky dogwood (Cornus amomum), northern arrowwood (Viburnum recognitum), and a species of willow (Salix sp.) based on twig/bud identification and review of past site visit notes and photos. Note that not all these species were located within the sampling area for the Wetland Determination Data Forms. Based on the wetland data collected in March 2022, wetland hydrology indicators include surface water (A1), high water table (A2), soil saturation (A3), drainage patterns (B10), and FAC-neutral test (D5). Note that the high-water table may be the result of recent rain and snow melt. Wetland soils were observed to meet the following Hydric Soil Indicators



throughout the wetland, with some areas meeting multiple indicators: A11: Depleted Below Dark Surface, F2: Loamy Gleyed Matrix, F3: Depleted Matrix, and F6: Redox Dark Surface. Refer to the **Wetland Determination Data Forms** for sampling points Wet-1, Up-1, Wet-2, and Up-2 provided in **Appendix H**.

Functions and Values

Principal functions of Wetland 9-1 include floodflow alteration, sediment/toxicant retention, and nutrient removal. These functions were largely determined based on the position of this excavated wetland ditch to the adjacent paved roadway with no curb, combined with its dense vegetation, concave topography, location within the 100-year floodplain of Ash Swamp Brook and/or the Ashuelot River, and aquifer transmissivity of less than 2,000 square feet per day according to NH GRANIT. Potential sediment/toxicant and nutrient sources include the nearby roadways, agricultural and athletic fields, and numerous commercial properties. Refer to the **Wetland Function-Value Evaluation Form** provided in **Appendix B**.

Wetland 9-3

Wetland 9-3 (W9-3) is a wet meadow located east of the Site that consists of emergent marsh and scattered scrub-shrub components resulting in the following wetland classifications: Palustrine, Emergent, Persistent, Seasonally Flooded/Saturated, Partially Drained/Ditched (PEM1Ed) and Palustrine, Scrub-Shrub, Broad-Leaved Deciduous, Seasonally Flooded/Saturated, Partially Drained/Ditched (PSS1Ed). Wetland vegetation observed within W9-3 includes reed canary grass, white meadowsweet, swamp dewberry, sensitive fern, soft rush, various species of sedge, cut woody stems of gray birch and northern arrowwood, and rough-stemmed and Canada goldenrods. Note that not all these species were located within the sampling area for the Wetland Determination Data Form. Based on the wetland data collected in March 2022, wetland hydrology indicators include high water table (A2), soil saturation (A3), drainage patterns (B10), and FAC-neutral test (D5). Note that the high-water table may be the result of recent rain and snow melt. Wetland soils were observed to meet the Hydric Soil Indicator A11: Depleted Below Dark Surface at the sampling point location. Indicators F2: Loamy Gleyed Matrix and F3: Depleted Matrix were observed elsewhere within this wetland. Refer to the **Wetland Determination Data Forms** for sampling points Wet-3 and Up-3 provided in **Appendix H**.

Functions and Values

Principal functions of Wetland 9-3 include floodflow alteration, sediment/toxicant retention, nutrient removal, and groundwater recharge. These functions were largely determined based on the position of this flat wet meadow to the adjacent paved roadway with no curb, combined with its dense vegetation, connection to the roadside drainage swales (W9-1), location within the 100-year floodplain of Ash Swamp Brook and/or the Ashuelot River, and aquifer transmissivity of less than 2,000 square feet per day according to NH GRANIT. Potential sediment/toxicant and nutrient sources include the nearby roadways, agricultural and athletic fields, and numerous commercial properties. Refer to the **Wetland Function-Value Evaluation Form** provided in **Appendix B**.

6. Floodplains

The Site is located within the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area, Zone AE Floodplain of Ash Swamp Brook (south of the Site) and the Ashuelot River (east of the Site) as shown on the effective Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 33005C0266E dated May 23, 2006. This project proposes to grade the Site to create more compensatory flood storage area within the floodplain. Refer to the **Floodplain Map** (Figure 2) provided in **Appendix C**.

Application Narrative Page 8



For context regarding the origin of this project, Executive Order 11988 (issued May 24, 1977) establishes a policy on floodplain management, and specifically directs agencies to "avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative." Consequently, the purpose of this project is to provide floodplain compensatory storage within the Ashuelot River watershed to offset 19.9 ac-ft of impacts incurred by the Keene-Swanzey highway construction projects completed over the last decade.

7. Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

The following is a discussion of rare, threatened, and endangered species identified within the vicinity of the Site by the NH Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) DataCheck tool and USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system.

7.1 Natural Heritage Bureau

A search for the occurrence of rare plant, animal, or natural communities within the vicinity of the Site was completed using the NHB online DataCheck tool. A project report provided by NHB, dated February 28, 2022, indicated that there are no recorded occurrences for sensitive species within or near the Site. However, since a negative result does not mean that sensitive species are absent, typical wildlife best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented throughout construction, as detailed in **Section 8.2** of this **Application Narrative** below. Refer to the **NHB DataCheck Report** provided in **Appendix D**.

7.2 US Fish and Wildlife Service

The Site was reviewed for the presence of federally listed or proposed, threatened, or endangered species, designated critical habitat, or other natural resources concerning the USFWS IPaC System. Results dated April 13, 2022, indicate the potential presence of the federally threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*, "NLEB") and federal candidate monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*); no critical habitats were identified. Refer to the **USFWS IPaC Report** provided in *Appendix E*.

Northern Long-Eared Bat

The proposed project is located within the federally protected range of the NLEB, which is a federally threatened species. Tree clearing activities are one of the largest threats to the NLEB. Based on the current plans, approximately 3 acres of early successional forest habitat is proposed to be cleared. The proposed project is not within 150 feet of known occupied maternity roost trees, nor within a ¼ mile of known hibernaculum. The nearest known NLEB site is in Sullivan, northeast of Keene.

Review with the USFWS was conducted during the preparation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Categorical Exclusion documentation for this project. The FHWA FRA, FTA Programmatic Consultation for Transportation Projects affecting NLEB or Indiana Bats Determination Key revealed that further consultation between NHDOT and USFWS would be required. Upon review of the Proposed Action under the 4(d) Rule, a USFWS verification letter was generated through the IPaC system on December 11, 2020. This review found that the Proposed Action may affect the NLEB in a manner consistent with the description of activities addressed by the USFWS Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) dated January 5, 2016. Any take that may occur incidental



to the Proposed Action is not prohibited under the 4(d) Rule. Therefore, the USFWS PBO satisfied the project's responsibilities under the ESA Section 7(a)(2) relative to the NLEB at that time.

However, the USFWS announced a proposal to reclassify the northern long-eared bat as endangered under the Endangered Species Act on March 22, 2022, with a final decision to be published by the end of November 2022. The proposed reclassification, if finalized, would remove the current 4(d) rule as these special rules may only be applied to threatened species. Consequently, projects that have completed the 4(d) consultation, but will be ongoing after December 2022 will likely need to reinitiate Section 7 consultation with USFWS if the lead federal agency (FHWA in this case) retains discretion over the action and anticipates impact to the species as a result of the project. The USACE will also retain discretion to decide on the Section 404 permit that would be required based on the Section 7 determination. If the reclassification is finalized, the FHWA FRA, FTA Programmatic Consultation for Transportation Projects affecting NLEB or Indiana Bats would remain in effect and its Determination Key will be used by NHDOT for consultation with the USFWS on the NLEB. The status of this decision will be monitored to ensure this project remains in compliance with the evolving standards.

Nevertheless, since the early successional forest habitat within the Site is potentially suitable summer habitat and portions of the habitat to be impacted are greater than 300 feet from any roadway, a Phase 2 Summer Presence/Probable Absence Acoustic Monitoring Survey targeting the NLEB will be conducted during the summer of 2022 in accordance with the USFWS 2022 Range-Wide Indiana Bat & Northern Long-Eared Bat Survey Guidelines.

Monarch Butterfly

Since the monarch butterfly is a candidate species but is not listed as threatened or endangered, conservation measures are not required but should be implemented when feasible to demonstrate environmental stewardship. This species can be found anywhere where nectar producing plants are present, especially in open fields or meadows. Monarch butterflies will only breed in places with milkweed since that is the primary food source for their larva. The open portion of the Site does contain open meadow habitat with nectar producing plants (i.e., goldenrods) and scattered milkweed. However, this Site is routinely disturbed via mowing and will be replanted post-construction with native seed mixes that will likely restore its potential butterfly habitat suitability. The candidate status of this species does not provide protection under the Endangered Species Act, and no further coordination with the USFWS is required at this time.

7.3 Wildlife

The NHF&G Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) identifies ranked habitat tiers that recognize the highest quality habitats in the state. Habitat tiers were created by the NHF&G Department using biological data, landscape data, and human influence information. Habitat tiers are separated into three rankings, which are 1) *Highest Ranked Habitat in the State*, 2) *Highest Ranked Habitat in Biological Region*, and 3) *Supporting Landscape*.

The southeastern portion of the Site is bordered by the Highest Ranked Habitat in the Biological Region between the successional forest area and the adjacent industrial development. The Site is also near mapped Supporting Landscape habitat to the southwest. Refer to the **Ranked Habitat Map** (Figure 8) provided in **Appendix K**. The Site mostly contains the developed or barren land habitat type with a few patches of grassland habitat. Refer to the **Habitat Type Map** (Figure 9) provided in **Appendix K**. The proposed activities will involve clearing of large portions of the early successional forest habitat (which is not represented in the WAP data) but will not adversely impact the surrounding more valuable habitat areas.

Application Narrative Page 10



8. Impact Analysis

8.1 Proposed Impacts and Avoidance and Minimization

This project proposes limited temporary and permanent impacts to Wetland 9-1 to provide construction access and to tie the graded site elevations into the existing tax ditch system, as detailed below. Refer to the **Construction Notes** and **Construction Sequence Narrative** on Sheets 7 and 9 of the **Wetland Plans** provided in **Appendix L**.

Temporary Impacts

This project involves the construction of two temporary 48-inch high-density polyethylene (HDPE) culverts along the northern tax ditch to create and entrance and exit for construction vehicles between the Site and NH 10/12/101 (Impacts B and C). These culverts would allow for flow capacity greater than the 25-year design storm. In addition to these culverts, temporary sheet piling will be installed within this wetland in two places to prevent sedimentation of the ditch during the excavation along the southern slope (Impacts B and D). The total proposed temporary jurisdictional impact is 4,631 square feet (sq ft)/583 linear feet (lin ft).

Permanent Impacts

To tie the graded site elevations into the existing tax ditch system, minimum permanent impacts along the southern edge of Wetland 9-1 are required (Impacts A and E). The total proposed permanent jurisdictional impact is 3,181 sq ft/545 lin ft. Avoidance of these permanent impacts was not possible to ensure adequate flood storage functionality of the Site by tying into the existing floodplain wetland resources.

Impact Classification

Based on the total 7,812 sq ft/1,128 lin ft of impact, this project could be classified as a Major Impact Project in accordance with Env-Wt 407.03(a) since greater than 200 lin ft of impact are proposed to the tax ditch/Wetland 9-1 (which functions as a Tier 1 intermittent stream). Therefore, we included the NHDES Attachment A: Minor and Major Projects form in this application. However, we believe this project is consistent with the intent of the Restoration/Enhancement Activities Rule (Env-Wt 525) and request that NHDES classify this project as a Minimum Impact Project.

8.2 Best Management Practices

Standard BMPs will be applied throughout project construction in accordance with applicable NHDES and NHDOT BMP Manuals to reduce the risk of erosion and sediment-laden runoff from entering the adjacent tax ditches and wetlands. Perimeter controls such as silt fence and/or silt sock will be installed upslope of the natural resources to ensure that surface water runoff from unstabilized areas does not carry silt, sediment, and other debris outside of the limits of work. Temporary steel piling is proposed within Wetland 9-1 along the proposed grading limits to prevent sedimentation of the ditch during the excavation activities. Two temporary 48-inch HDPE culverts will be installed in the northern tax ditch to convey stormwater drainage through the wetland ditches beneath the temporary construction access points during construction. All installed temporary erosion control measures shall be inspected daily and repaired/replaced as necessary. Only wildlife-friendly erosion controls composed of natural materials will be used. No photo-biodegradable plastic netting will be used. For more information, refer to the **Construction Notes**, **Construction Sequence Narrative**, and **Erosion Control Plan** on Sheets 7, 9, and 12, respectively, of the **Wetland Plans** provided in **Appendix L**.



In accordance with Env-Wt 307.12, areas remaining un-stabilized for a period of more than 3 days following final grading or temporary suspension of work shall be temporarily seeded and mulched. Erosion control blankets shall be installed on all slopes that are greater than 3 feet horizontal and 1 foot vertical (3:1). Upon the completion of the proposed work, all disturbed and graded areas located upslope of the erosion control measures will be seeded and mulched as needed. Disturbed areas that have been seeded and mulched will be considered stable once 75-percent vegetative growth has been achieved after two growing seasons in accordance with Env-Wt 307.12(f). Refer to the **Planting Plan** on Sheet 10 of the **Wetland Plans** provided in **Appendix L** for further details. Additionally, the Site will be monitored post-construction in accordance with the **Project Monitoring Plan** provided in **Appendix J** to ensure the established goals for the Site are achieved and recommend applicable remediation measures.

Since invasive plants are known to occur within the project area, all work including daily removal of plant material from construction equipment, shall be constructed in accordance with NHDOT's *Best Management Practices for the Control of Invasive and Noxious Plant Species* (2018). Only clean equipment that is free of plant material and debris shall be delivered to the project site and utilized during construction. All machinery entering and leaving any area containing invasive plants will be inspected for foreign plant matter (i.e., stems, flowers, and roots) and soil embedded in the tracks or wheels. If foreign plant matter or soil is present, the operator shall remove the plant material and soil from the machine using hand tools.

8.3 Mitigation

This project does not require mitigation as its purpose is to serve as mitigation for floodplain impacts associated with four past NHDOT projects. Furthermore, this project should be considered self-mitigating as it will improve the functions and values of resources within and along the Site through the increased flood storage space and restoration plantings and will likely lead to the creation of wetland habitat. Additionally, the Site will be placed into a conservation easement as described in **Section 3** of this **Application Narrative** above.

9. Cultural Resources

The project will not affect historic properties pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. A Phase IA Archaeological Sensitivity Assessment was prepared by Monadnock Archaeological Consulting, LLC on June 19, 2020, and submitted to the NH Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) for review on July 1, 2020. A Request for Project Review (RPR) was submitted to the NHDHR on September 29, 2020. On October 21, 2020, NHDHR responded with a recommendation of "No Historic Properties Affected" and concurred with the results of the Phase IA Archaeological Sensitivity Assessment. Documentation of the "No Historic Properties Affected" determination is provided in a Section 106 Memo, which was executed on January 25, 2021. Refer to the NHDHR Section 106 Consultation documentation provided in *Appendix F*.

10. Federal Agency and Local Coordination

Federal Coordination

The project proposes approximately 3,181 sq ft (545 lin ft) of permanent jurisdictional impacts and approximately 4,631 sq ft (583 lin ft) of temporary jurisdictional impacts to the tax ditch/Wetland 9-1 which requires Section 404 authorization under the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) State Programmatic General

Application Narrative Page 12



Permit (NAE-2016-02415). As such, Appendix B – Corps Secondary Impacts Checklist has been completed. Refer to the **USACE Appendix B Checklist** provided in *Appendix G*.

This project does not require a Section 10 permit pursuant to the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 since there are no navigable waters present within the Site.

In accordance with Env-Wt 311.06(j), this project was presented at two NHDOT Natural Resource Agency Coordination (NRAC) Meetings held on December 18, 2019, and October 21, 2020. Refer to the **Meeting Minutes** provided in **Appendix A**. USACE and EPA representatives were present for these meetings and had the opportunity to provide comments or questions.

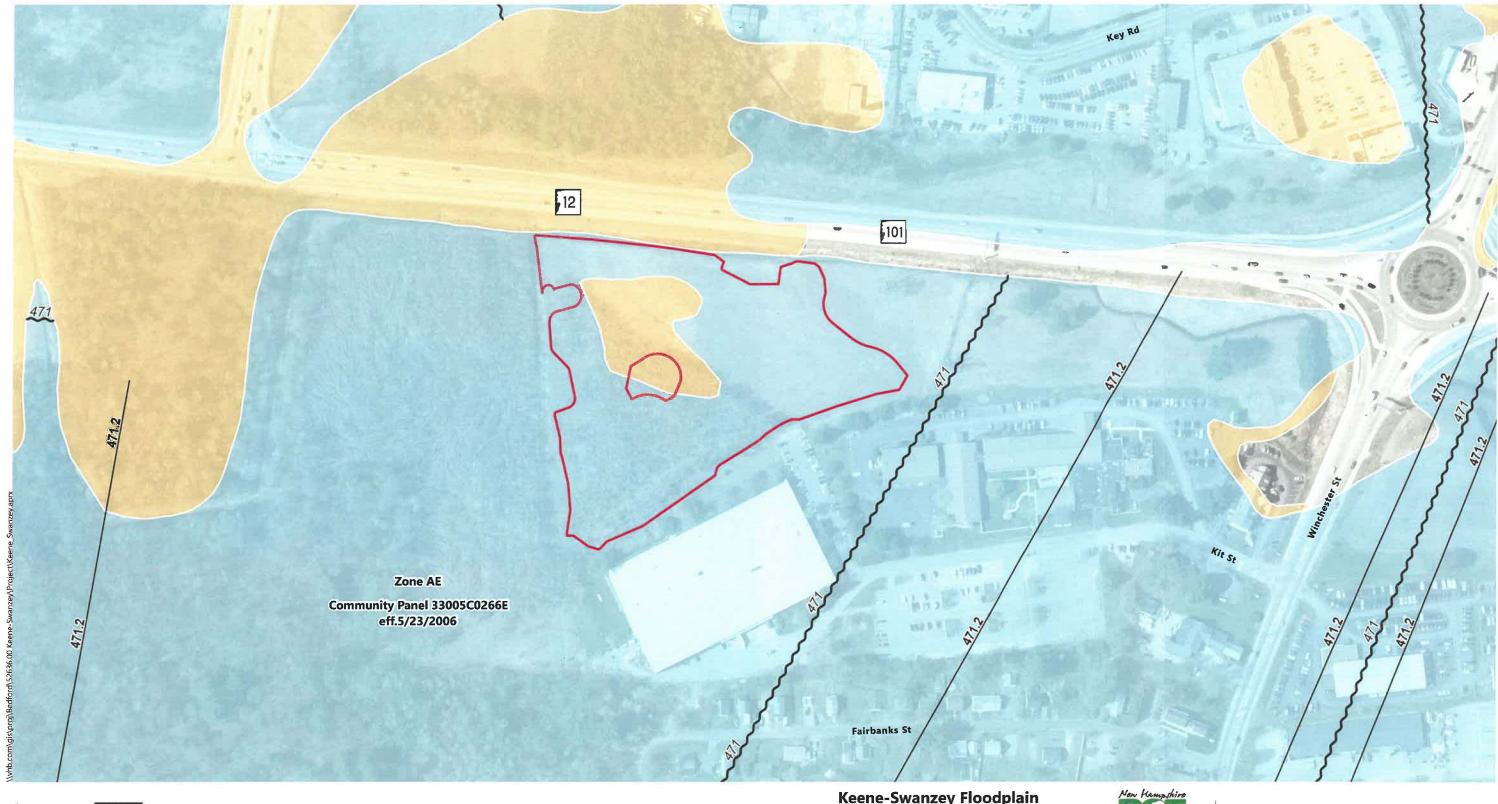
Local Coordination

In accordance with Env-Wt 311.06(h) and NH RSA 482-A:3(l)(a)(1), a complete copy of this application will be shared with the Keene Conservation Commission for their review concurrently with the NHDES and City submissions. Public Information Meetings for this project were held on January 21, 2020, and December 1, 2020. Notes from these meetings were excluded from this application package due to redundancy with the other meeting minutes included in Appendix A, but they can be provided upon request.

Technical Advisory Group Coordination

During the preliminary design and NEPA phase, NHDOT formed a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) including City of Keene staff, Town of Swanzey staff, NHDES staff, NHB staff, and Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee (ARLAC) representatives to provide detailed review of project methods, process, and results. Members of the TAG include Kirk Mudgett (NHDOT), Marc Laurin (NHDOT), Tim Mallette (NHDOT), Stephen LaBonte (NHDOT), Amy Lamb (NHB), Lori Sommer (NHDES), Barbara Skuly (Ashuelot River LAC), Rhett Lamb (City of Keene), Don Lussier (City of Keene), Michael Branley (Town of Swanzey), and Pete Walker (VHB). In 2021, Peter Throop (Monadnock Conservancy) joined the TAG. The TAG met on the following dates: March 25, 2020, May 5, 2020, September 24, 2020, and December 14, 2021. Refer to the **Meeting Minutes** provided in **Appendix A**. NHDOT will continue to coordinate with the TAG through final design for input on the project.





Limit of Grading/Disturbance

— Cross-Sections

— Base Flood Elevation

1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard

0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard

Keene-Swanzey Floodplain Mitigation Project (NHDOT #40100)



Keene, New Hampshire

Floodplain Map

Source: VHB, City of Keene, NHGRANIT, FEMA Aerial - NHGRANIT 2015

