

From: Eric Jones
Sent: Friday, April 22, 2016 5:42:41 PM
To: Burack, Thomas; Eric Jones; Will Abbott-Forest Society
Subject: Wetlands NPT SEC Docket No. 2015-06

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner
New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services(DES)
29 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH
03301
[\(603\) 271-2958](tel:(603)271-2958)
thomas.burack@des.nh.gov

R. Eric & Margaret J. Jones
1416 NH Route 25
P.O. Box 64
Glenclyff, NH
03238
[\(603\) 989-5199](tel:(603)989-5199)
[\(941\) 475-1039](tel:(941)475-1039)

20April, 2016

RE: Northern Pass Transmission – Eversource

SEC Docket No. 2015-06 / Wetland File No. SEC-2-15-02817

Dear Commissioner Burack

My wife and I are Interveners in the above referenced SEC Docket.

We own more than 700 acres on either side of the Northumberland-Stark town line.
All of this land either abuts or is within the White Mountain National Forest.

The Northern Pass Project seeks to use the Public Service of NH (PSNH)-Portland Natural Gas (PNG) Right-of-Way over our land (1698' long and 150' wide) for very large and tall overhead transmission line towers.

Since June of 2015 we have been engaged with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in a transaction whereby we sell and they buy a

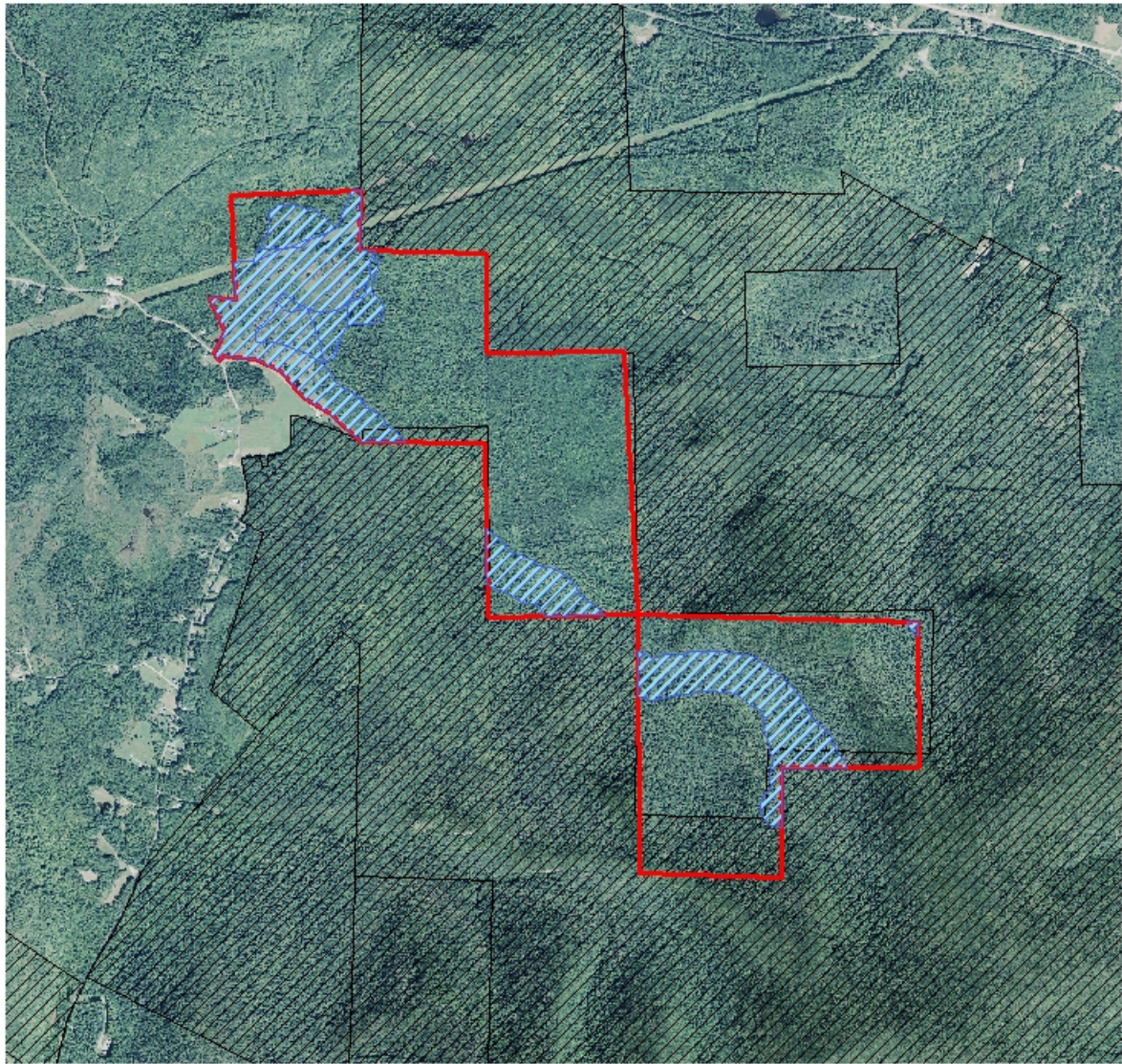
“Wetland Reserve Easement” on the entire 700+ acre tract. This process has involved the U.S. Forest Service; the NH Fish and Game Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as well. This easement is for the conservation and restoration of this wetland and is considered a significant and important transaction by these agencies and by us..

The PSNH-PNG Right-of-Way (Granted in 1946) passes over this wetland.

We request that the DES review the information which we are including in this message and add it to the other information available to you in your review of the NPT impact on the wetlands of our state.




We hope that you will, at the conclusion of your review, deem the NPT Project unacceptable in its present configuration and insist that if the Site Evaluation Committee issues a Certificate of Site and Facility, that it will be for full burial for the entire project length along state and federal highways.

Jones 2016 Proposed WRE Easement Land Eligibility



0 1,000 2,000 Feet

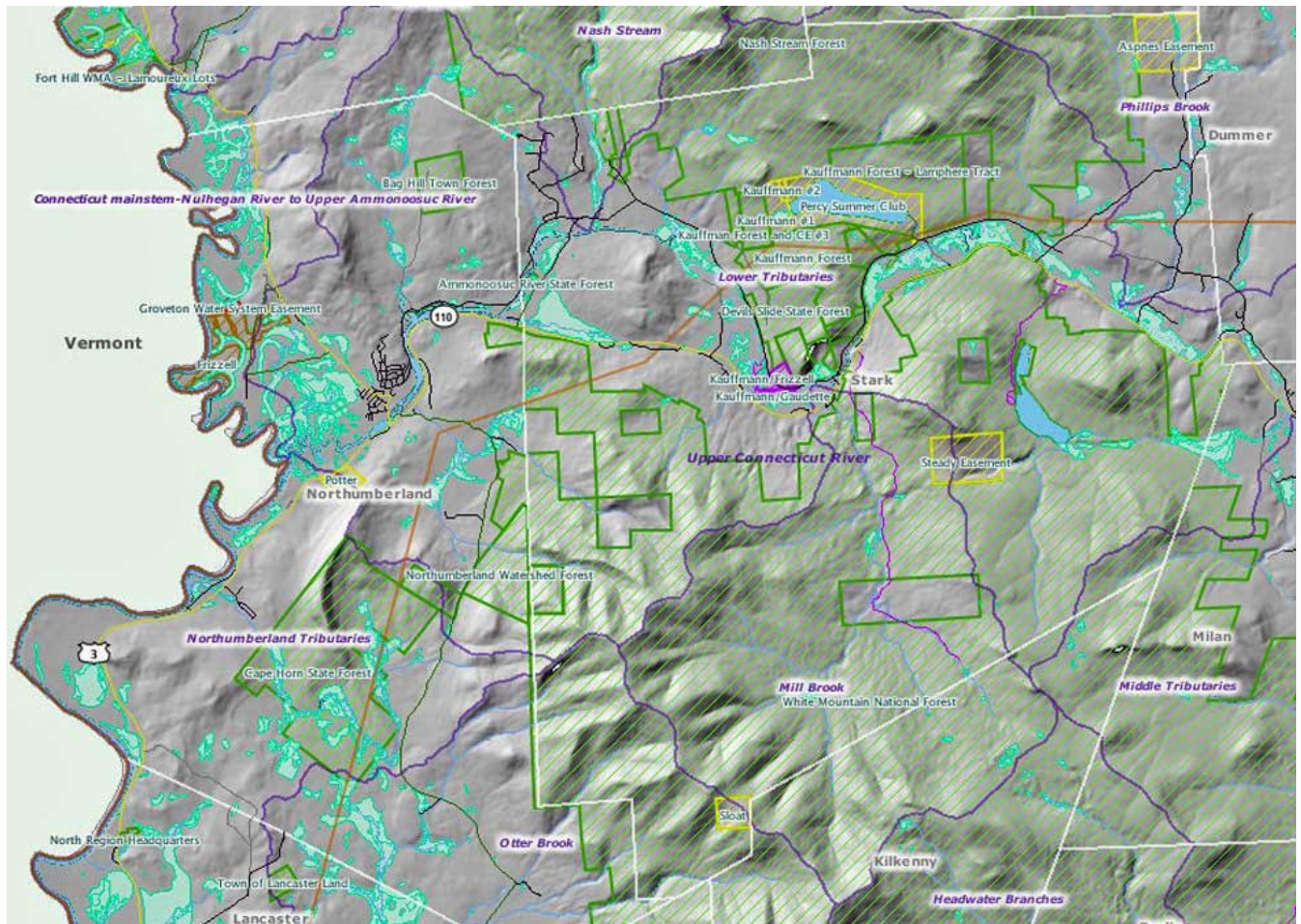
Legend

-  WRP Land Eligibility (Riparian)_Jones_2016_WRE
-  Jones_2016_WRE
-  Conserved Land



Link to Northumberland Wetland Report vis-a-vis NPT:



http://northumberlandnh.weebly.com/uploads/3/7/8/1/37817189/northumberland_np_assessment.pdf

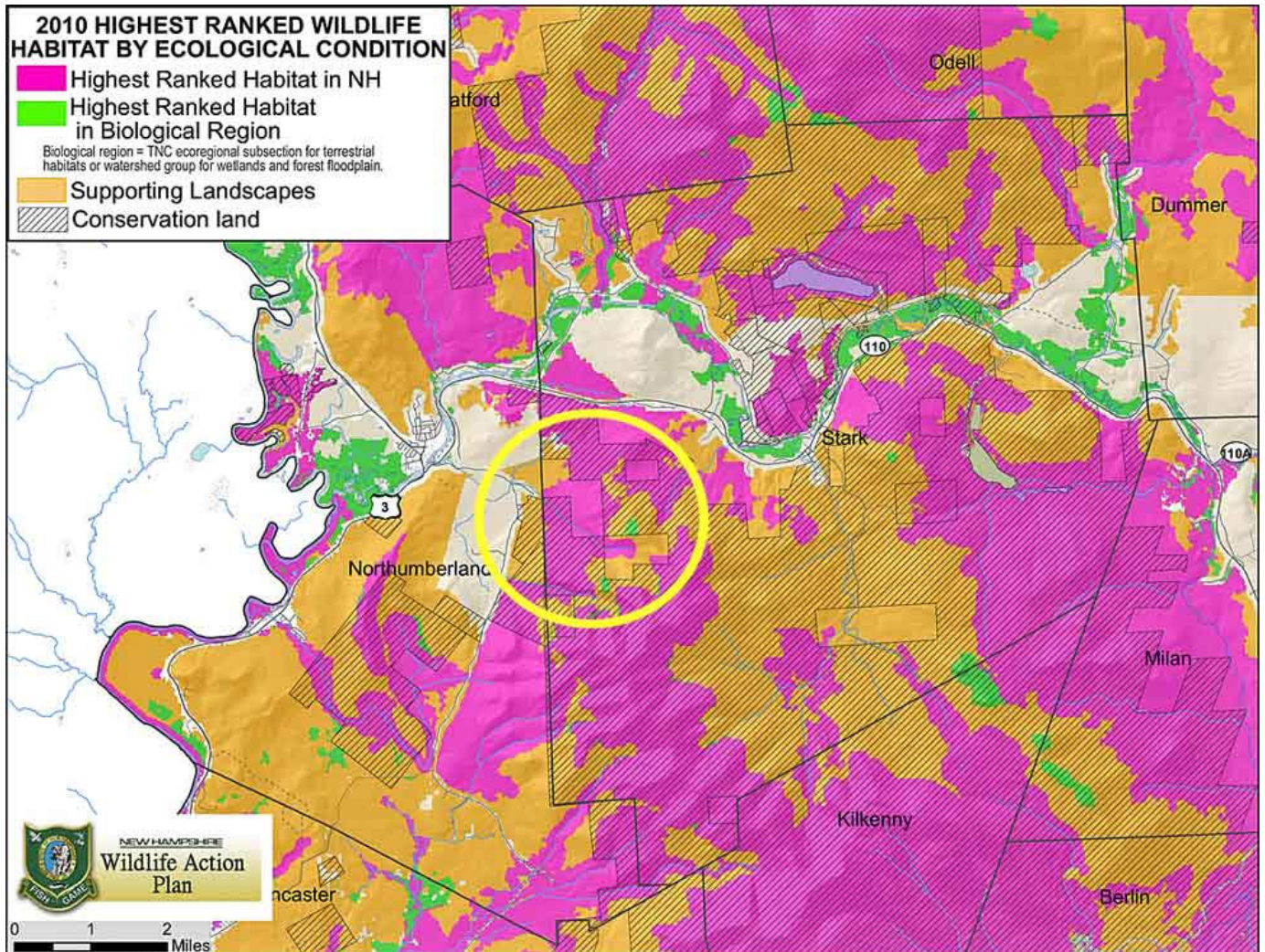


**2010 HIGHEST RANKED WILDLIFE
HABITAT BY ECOLOGICAL CONDITION**

-  Highest Ranked Habitat in NH
-  Highest Ranked Habitat in Biological Region

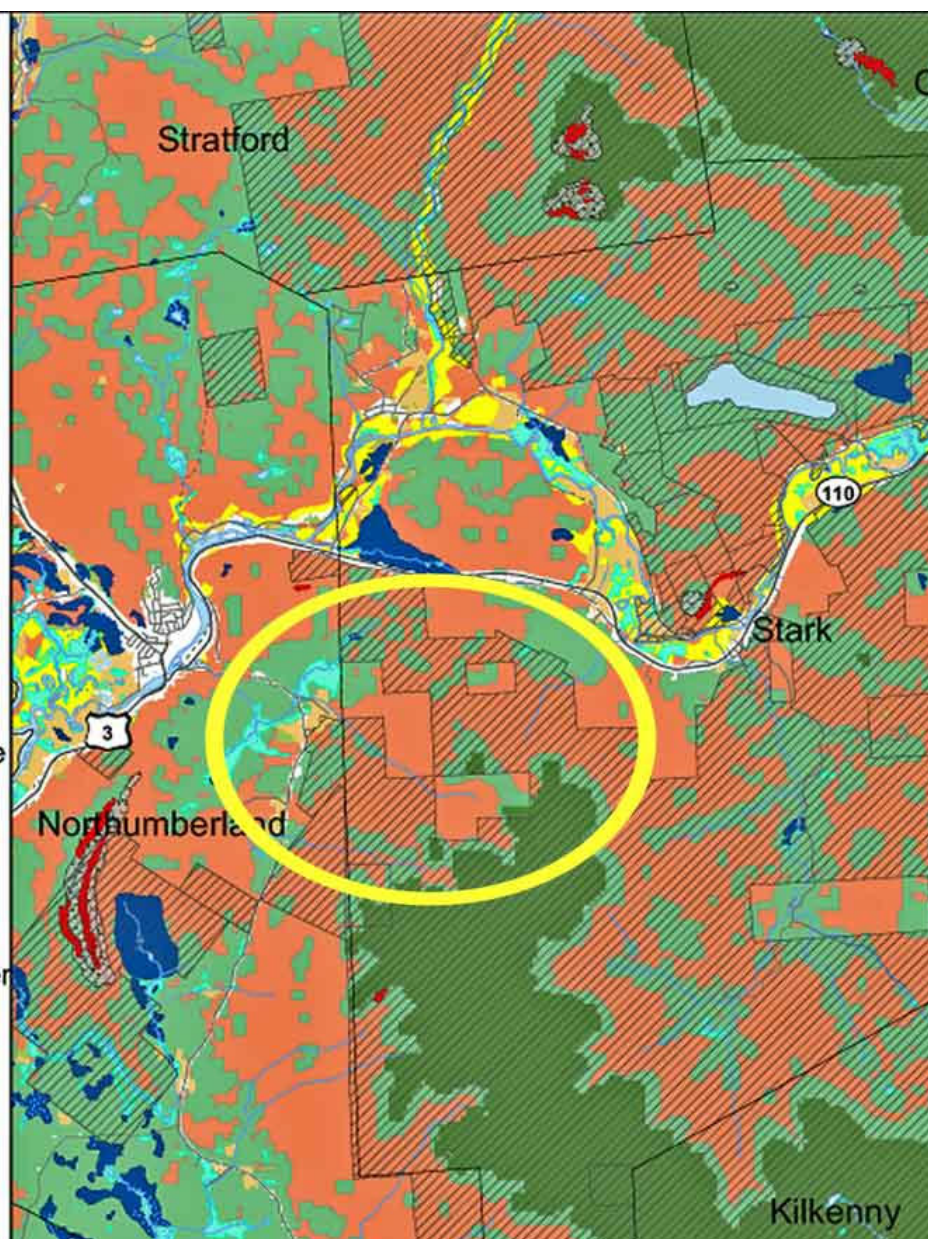
Biological region = TNC ecoregional subsection for terrestrial habitats or watershed group for wetlands and forest floodplain.

-  Supporting Landscapes
-  Conservation land



NEW HAMPSHIRE WILDLIFE HABITAT LAND COVER 2010

Locations of known and potential critical wildlife habitat in the state.





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Eric Jones

[\(941\) 475-1039](tel:(941)475-1039) (Winter)

[\(603\) 989-5199](tel:(603)989-5199) (Summer)

mrsMargaretJaneJones@gmail.com

legacyforest@gmail.com



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

New England Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301-5087
<http://www.fws.gov/newengland>

RE: Wetlands Reserve Easement Land Eligibility Waiver Concurrence November 12, 2015
Jones Property, Northumberland and Stark, New Hampshire

Jade A. Nield, Acting State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
273 Locust Street, Suite 2D
Dover, NH 03820

Dear Ms. Nield:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concurs that a waiver should be granted to increase the acreage of eligible lands for the Jones Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE) project in Northumberland and Stark, New Hampshire. Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW) staff from the New England Field Office have reviewed the project materials and support the waiver request under the provisions that are described in Title 440 – Conservation Programs Manual, Part 528, Subpart K – ACEP-WRE Application Process and Eligibility Requirements. Our determination is as follows.

The Jones property contains approximately 750 acres of mixed northern hardwood-conifer, spruce-fir, and aspen forest types, as well as beaver flowage, wet meadow, and swamp (NRCS Jones WRE Land Eligibility Map, received October 6, 2014). According to a letter from the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department dated September 18, 2015, half of the property is mapped as Tier 1 – highest ranked habitat in the State by the Wildlife Action Plan. State listed species that would likely benefit from the permanent protection of this property include American marten (state threatened) and Canada lynx (state endangered), as well as the northern long-eared bat (state threatened). Lynx and northern long-eared bats are also federally listed. Species of conservation concern that would likely benefit include American woodcock, Canada warbler, olive-sided flycatcher, ruffed grouse, rusty blackbird, wood turtle, and northern leopard frog, among many others.

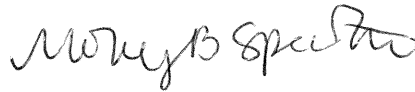
Based on the above information, PFW staff believe that the Natural Resources Conservation Service should consider waiving the one-to-one matching limitations because the project site appears to meet the qualifications under Part 528.105 I(2)(i), Enrollment of unique or critical wetland complexes.

Jade A. Nield, Acting State Conservationist
November 12, 2015

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If you have any questions regarding the assessment of this project, please contact Mr. Eric Derleth of this office at (603) 223-2541. The USFWS looks forward to working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and other interested parties on the review of future WRE projects.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas R. Chapman".

Acting
for:

Thomas R. Chapman
Supervisor
New England Field Office

What are Wetland Reserve Easements?

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) offer landowners the opportunity to voluntarily restore and protect wetlands on their property and focus on restoring hydrology and plants as well as protecting wildlife and migratory birds. NRCS provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. Floodplain forests and coastal marshes are among wetlands restored through WRE.

Protecting wetlands provides wildlife habitat, as well as enhancement of soil, water, plants, and related natural resource concerns. This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection.

Restoration Projects include:

- Invasive species management
- Installation of water control structures
- Removal of stream impediments
- Early successional habitat development and management



How WRE Works

Landowners may file an application for a conservation easement or a cost-share restoration agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture



(USDA) to restore and protect wetlands. Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land, but retain private ownership.

The Benefits of WRE

WRE participants benefit by:

- Receiving financial and technical assistance in return for restoring, protecting and enhancing wetland functions and values;
- Having technical and financial assistance to develop wildlife recreational opportunities on their land.
- Having wetlands that provide fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reduce flooding, recharge groundwater, protect biological diversity, and provide opportunities for educational, scientific, and recreational activities.

Permanent Easement

Permanent easements are conservation easements in perpetuity. NRCS pays 100 percent of the easement value for the purchase of the easement. Additionally, NRCS pays between 75 to 100 percent of the restoration costs. NRCS also pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance.

Land eligible for wetland reserve easements includes farmed or converted wetland that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. NRCS will prioritize applications based the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

NRCS enters into purchase agreements with eligible private landowners to develop and implement a wetland reserve restoration easement plan to restore, protect, and enhance the wetland.

Is My Land Eligible?

To be eligible for WRE, land must be restorable and be suitable for wildlife benefits.

This includes:

- Wetlands farmed under natural conditions;
- Farmed wetlands;
- Prior converted cropland;
- Farmed wetland pasture;
- Farmland that has become a wetland as a result of flooding;
- Range land, pasture, or production forest land where the hydrology has been significantly degraded and can be restored;
- Riparian areas which link protected wetlands;
- Lands adjacent to protected wetlands that contribute significantly to wetland functions and values; and
- Previously restored wetlands that need long-term protection.



How Do I Apply?

Applications are accepted through a continuous sign-up process. Applications may be obtained and filed at any time with your local USDA Service Center or conservation district office.



Ineligible Land. Ineligible land includes wetlands converted after December 23, 1985; lands with timber stands established under a Conservation Reserve Program contract; Federal lands; lands owned by an agency of the United States; lands owned in fee title by a State; land subject to an easement or deed restriction which provides similar protection as in WRE; and lands where conditions make restoration impossible.

For more information on WRE in
New Hampshire visit:

[http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/
portal/nrcs/detail/nh/programs/
easements/?cid=stelprdb1253556](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/nh/programs/easements/?cid=stelprdb1253556)

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NRCS and New Hampshire Conservation District Offices

NRCS Easement Team:

NRCS NH State Office
273 Locust St., Suite 2D
Dover, NH 03820
603-868-9931

Sue Knight, All Easement
Programs, x118
susan.knight@nh.usda.gov

Brooke Smart, WRE
Restoration Contact, x106
brook.smart@nh.usda.gov

Ryan DuBois, ALE Easement
Contact, x124
ryan.dubois@nh.usda.gov

Belknap County Conservation District

2 Airport Rd., Unit 1
Gilford, NH 03249
603-527-5880

Concord Field Office Merrimack County Conservation District

10 Ferry Street, Suite 211,
Concord, NH 03301
603-223-6023

Conway Field Office Carroll County Conservation District

73 Main St.
Conway, NH 03818
603-447-2771

Epping Field Office

Knightly Plaza
629 Calef Highway, Suite 203
Epping, NH 03042
603-679-1587

Lancaster Field Office Coos County Conservation District

4 Mayberry Lane,
Lancaster, NH 03584
603-788-4651

Milford Field Office Hillsborough County Conservation District

Chappell Professional Ctr.,
#468, Rte. 13 South,
Milford, NH 03055
603-673-2409

Orford Field Office Grafton County Conservation District

19 Archertown Rd., Suite 1
Orford, NH 03777
603-353-4651

Rockingham County Conservation District

110 North Road,
Brentwood, NH 03833
603-679-2790

Sullivan County Conservation District

95 County Farm Rd.
Unity, NH 03743
603-863-4297

Strafford County Conservation District

264 County Farm Rd.
Dover, NH 03820
603-749-3037

Walpole Field Office Cheshire County Conservation District

11 Industrial Park Dr.
Walpole, NH 03608
603-756-2988



United States
Department of Agriculture

Wetland Reserve Easements in NH



Natural Resources Conservation Service
Helping People Help the Land

NH NRCS 2016 AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM - WETLAND RESERVE EASEMENT (ACEP-WRE) APPLICATION RANKING SHEET

NRCS Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) were established to protect, restore and enhance the functions and values of wetland ecosystems that have been degraded as a result of agricultural/silvicultural activities.

Landowner Name:	R. Eric and Margaret Jones		
Landowner Address:	1416 NH Route 25 PO Box 64 Glencliff NH 03238		
Landowner Number:	summer - (603)989-5199 winter - (941)475-1039	(cell)	
Landowner Email:	legacyforest@gmail.com		
Parcel Town & County:	Northumberland and Stark, Grafton County		

Category	Environmental Benefit Considerations		Maximum Points	Parcel Points
Landscape Benefit Factors	1	Extent of adjacent beneficial land uses. Proposed easement has: - a direct riparian connection to protected lands=400 pts - 50% or more of boundary lines abutting protected lands=300 pts - less than 50% of boundary lines abutting protected lands=200 pts	400	400
	2	Proposed easement has occurrences of either state or federally listed endangered, threatened, species of concern, or monitored species as identified by qualified professionals and will provide the necessary habitat to meet life cycle needs (documentation required). E=300 points, T=200 pts, SC=100 pts, M=50pts	300	0
	3	Preliminary Restoration Plan includes habitat restoration measures for targeted endangered, threatened or other at-risk species. Yes = 200 pts	200	200
	4	Protection or restoration of native vegetative communities. Proposed easement area contains mapped rare (ranked S1 or S2) or exemplary natural communities/systems OR unmapped native vegetative communities ranked S1, S2 and S3 that have the potential to be restored as classified by NH NHB (documentation required). Protection = 300 pts Restoration = 200 pts	300	300
	5	Habitat diversity and complexity to be restored and protected. NH Wildlife Action Plan Tiers: Highest Ranked Habitat in NH = 50 pts for less than 10% and 50 pts for each additional 10% of proposed easement area. 200 pts maximum Highest Ranked Habitat in Biological Region = 25 pts for less than 10% and 25 pts for each additional 10% of proposed easement area. 150 pts maximum Supporting Landscape with 3 or more habitat types (mature forest, young forest, shrublands, grasslands, etc.) = 10 pts for less than 10% and 10 pts for each additional 10% of proposed easement area. 100 pts maximum	200	200
Other Priority Wetland Functions and Values	6	Attenuation of floodwater flows. 1) Extent of wetland acreage within 1000 feet of a 4th order or higher stream or within 1000 ft of a pond/lake that outlets to a 4th order or higher = 10 pts/acre 2) Extent of wetlands within 500 feet of a perennial stream (less than 4th order) = 5 pts/acre	50	50
	7	Carbon Sequestration. Extent of organic wetland soils within proposed easement area. 1) greater than 51" thick organic layer depth = 10 pts/acre 2) 18-51" thick organic layer depth = 5 pts/acre	50	50
Hydrology Restoration Potential	8	Preliminary Restoration Plan (see attached Field Assessment Worksheet) *Maximum capped at 1250 pts	1250	1250
	9	Restorable habitat acres that will provide: (1) hydrologic conditions suitable for the needs of the native wetland dependent wildlife species and (2) appropriate wetland functions and values that existed prior to degradation. restorable habitat acre. Score capped at 250 pts.	250	250
Maximum Points for Environmental Benefit Considerations			3000	2700

Category	Economic Considerations		Maximum Points	Parcel Points
Livelihood Factors	10	Partner contributions exist that will reduce NRCS easement acquisition and/or restoration costs*. 5 points for every \$1,000 contribution with a maximum of 200 points. A formal letter from the partner that indicates their level of support is required to receive ranking points. Prior to easement closing, a financial obligation in the form of a cooperative or reimbursable agreement is required to provide NRCS with the necessary financial control. *Restoration costs may include implementation expenses and/or in-kind final WRPO development by qualified professionals after APCE is signed.	200	0
	11	Easement acquisition cost per acre is less than \$2500/acre Yes = 200 pts No = 0 pts	100	200

Cost Effect	12	The total estimated restoration cost is less than \$10,000 Yes = 50 pts No = 0 pts			50	0	
	13	Cost Benefit Analysis	Environmental Benefit Points ----- x 100 Easement Value + Restoration (cost per acre) (Maximum capped at 250 pts)			250	250
	Maximum Points for Cost Effectiveness Factors					600	450
Management Effectiveness Factors	14	Potential near- and or long-term management, repair, replacement, or operation and maintenance costs. Restoration of easement area involves vegetative practices only Yes = 200 pts No = 0 pts				200	200
	15	Ownership will be transferred to a qualified third party (such as a state wildlife agency, land trust, etc.) after the easement has closed. Agreement must be documented in writing prior to ranking. Yes = 200 pts No = 0 pts				200	0
	Maximum Points for Management Factors					400	200
Maximum Points for Economic Considerations						1000	650
Category	Special Considerations					Maximum Points	Parcel Points
Priority Geographic Regions	16	NH Conservation Initiative Areas: -Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture X -NH Fish and Game Blanding's Turtle Focus Area -New England Cottontail Focus Area -NRCS/Forest Service Drinking Water Partnership X (100 pts for each occurrence - maximum 200 pts)				200	200
Special Water Quality Target Area	17	Water quality and quantity benefits through groundwater recharge and proximity to impaired waters. NH Aquifer and NH DES Impaired Water Buffers. 1) Proposed easement is within both a NH Aquifer recharge area AND a NH DES Impaired Water Buffer area. Yes = 250 pts 2) Proposed easement is within a NH aquifer recharge area OR a NH DES Impaired Water Buffer area. Yes = 150 pts				250	0
Priority Wetland Habitat Types	18	Extent of proposed easement area that contains vernal pool soils. Soil types identified by NRCS as having a high likelihood for containing vernal pools. 1 point for each percent of easement area up to 100 pts.				100	42
Other Special Considerations	19	Promoting adjacent landowner participation. Proposed easement area directly abuts an existing WRP or ACEP-WRE conservation easement. Yes = 200 pts				200	0
	20	Enhancing long-term protection of previously restored wetlands. Wetland restoration means the rehabilitation of degraded or lost habitat in a manner such that the original vegetative community and hydrology are, to the extent practical, re-established. Proposed easement area contains lands previously restored under a local, State or Federal program. Yes = 150 pts				150	0
Farmland Soils	21	Acres offered do not include prime or statewide important farmland soils. Yes = 100 points. If proposed easement area includes prime or statewide important soils, then, points will be deducted as follows: 					

2016 WRE Preliminary Restoration Plan - Field Assessment Worksheet

LANDOWNER NAME:

Targeted Species for Hydrology and Habitat Restoration: Canada Lynx

Sources of hydrologic manipulation: timber harvesting

Resource Concern Categories	Field Unit	Estimated Field Units	Points/Field Unit	Ranking Points	Restoration Practices Selected	Estimated Cost
I: SOIL EROSION AND QUALITY DEGRADATION						
Sheet, Rill & Wind	acres		50	0		
Concentrated Flow	feet		0.1	0		
Excessive bank erosion from streams, etc.	feet ²		0.02	0		
Compaction	acres		50	0		
Subsidence	feet ²		0.1	0		
Organic Matter Depletion	acres		50	0		
II: WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY						
Lowering of the water table	feet		0.1	0		
Altered surface drainage patterns	acres		50	0		
Improperly sized, placed, or degraded perennial stream crossings	each		50	0		
Incised or degraded perennial streams	feet		0.5	0		
Improperly sized, placed, or degraded intermittent stream crossings	each		25	0		
Incised or degraded intermittent streams	feet		0.25	0		
Excess nutrients in surface or ground water	acres		20	0		
Excessive sedimentation in surface waters or wetlands	acres		20	0		
Elevated water temperature	acres		20	0		
III: DEGRADED PLANT CONDITIONS						
Acres colonized by wetland invasive species	acres		25	0		
Acres colonized by upland invasive species	acres		10	0		
Riparian area buffers to be restored to native plant community	acres		25	0		
Degraded vegetative community structure and composition	acres	23	25	575	early successional habitat management - patch cuts \$501/acre	\$11,523.00
Reduced diversity and abundance of native seed banks through past plowing	acres		25	0		
IV: DEGRADED HABITAT CONDITIONS						
degraded pit and mound topography in forested wetlands	acres		20	0		
lack of large course woody debris on forest floor	acres		1	0		
lack of cavity trees	acres		1	0		
lack of instream wood	feet	2000	0.5	1000	stream habitat improvement and management	\$7,718.00

RESTORATION POTENTIAL SCORE TOTAL:
(Question #8 score capped at 1250 points)

1575

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:

\$19,241.00

RESTORABLE HABITAT ACRES	Acres	Preliminary restoration plan notes: Early successional habitat management within degraded wetlands along the riparian eligible land enhance habitat for snow shoe hare , the primary food source for Canada Lynx. Early successional habitat management will also improve habitat for many other species. Ames Brook is a 1st order stream to the Upper Ammonoosic River and is within the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture. Instream wood loading will improve habitat features to benefit native brook trout populations, other cold water fish species, macroinvertebrates, water quality and the overall ecosystem health.
Upland		
Palustrine Open Water/Unknown Bottom		
Palustrine Forested	23	
Palustrine Emergent		
Other Riparian	28	
Estuarine		
Total for Question #9:	51	



Glenn Normandeau
Executive Director

New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301-6500
Headquarters: (603) 271-3421
Web site: www.WildNH.com

TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964
FAX (603) 271-1438
E-mail: info@wildlife.nh.gov

September 18, 2015

Rick Ellsmore, State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Federal Building
2 Madbury Road
Durham, NH 03824

RE: Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE) Land Eligibility – Jones Property

Dear Rick,

I am writing to you to request a waiver to the 1:1 wetland to upland ratio for the Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE) program as it relates to the Jones property in Northumberland and Stark, NH.

The distribution of wetlands and hydric soils in New Hampshire are very different than many other parts of the country. Due to the current rules, this difference significantly limits NH's ability to enroll critical wetlands and wildlife habitat into the WRE program. As written by my former colleague, Charlie Bridges in a letter to you a few years ago,

“Our landscape is heavily populated with wetlands. They are large and small; permanent and ephemeral (vernal pools); interconnected and apart. Whatever the configuration, wetlands and adjacent uplands are often functionally dependent on one another when you consider patterns of water flow (both surface and subsurface) and wildlife activity. Wetland associated wildlife view these areas as systems, traveling between them along both watercourses and overland through upland areas. Land use activities, often some distance from a wetland, can dramatically affect water quality and flow, as well as wetland wildlife habitat features.”

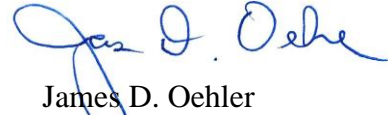
Recognizing the important relationship between wetlands and uplands the WRE rules allow the State Conservationist to waive the 1:1 acreage requirement. I encourage you to employ that waiver for this particular property.

The Jones property provides critical wildlife habitat and an important link between parts of the White Mountain National Forest. Approximately half of the property is mapped as Tier 1 – highest ranked habitat in the state by the Wildlife Action Plan. It contains northern hardwood-conifer, spruce-fir, and aspen forest types as well as beaver flowage, wet meadow, and swamp. These habitats likely support a large assemblage of wildlife including several species of

conservation concern and perhaps some state-listed species as well. State listed species that would likely benefit from the permanent protection of this property include American marten (state threatened) and Canada lynx (state endangered) as well as northern long-eared bat (state threatened). Lynx and northern long-eared bats are also federally listed. Species of conservation concern that would likely benefit include American woodcock, Canada warbler, olive-sided flycatcher, ruffed grouse, rusty blackbird, wood turtle, and northern leopard frog, among many others.

Given consideration of the points raised above I encourage the use of a WRE waiver for the Jones property. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss the matter further.

Best Regards,



James D. Oehler
State Lands Habitat Biologist