



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of RESOURCES and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION of FORESTS and LANDS
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November 22, 2016

Pamela G. Monroe
Administrator
Site Evaluation Committee
21 South Fruit St., Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301-2429

Re: NH Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) **Docket No. 2015-04**
Application of Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy for
Certificate of Site and Facility

Ms. Monroe:

Please find enclosed the progress report regarding the Eversource Seacoast Reliability project
SEC **Docket No. 2015-04**.

The Natural Heritage Bureau reviews impacts to rare, threatened and endangered plants and
exemplary natural communities (RSA 217-A) and works with the Department of Fish & Game to
maintain a database of rare, threatened and endangered wildlife species.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sabrina Stanwood".

Sabrina Stanwood, Administrator
NH Natural Heritage Bureau



**NH SEC Docket No. 2015-04 Eversource Seacoast Reliability Project
NH Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) progress report**

I: NHB Recommendations for work conducted in or near Tidal Areas

1. As determined during the inter-agency meeting at DES's Pease offices on 1/12/2016, the project area will be surveyed for eelgrass in summer of 2017 prior to in-water installation of any project components.
2. As outlined in the "Temporary Impacts Restoration" text provided to NHB on 8/11/2015, any areas of fringe saltmarsh along Little Bay that will be disturbed by the project should be carefully removed prior to construction, stockpiled and maintained (provided with adequate moisture to prevent drying) during construction, and restored after construction has been completed in this area. The agreed-upon measures are as follows:
 - a. Prior to construction, all salt marsh peat will be salvaged within the impact area and stockpiled for replacement during restoration.
 - b. The stockpiled peat blocks will be protected and maintained for the duration of the installation period.
 - c. Upon completion of construction, the underlying gravel substrates will be restored to match surrounding elevations. The peat blocks will be replaced and anchored with rebar stakes driven into the gravel and/or adjacent peat. Any open interstices between the peat blocks will be filled with a mixed sand to cover exposed roots and maintain grades. The seaward face of the restored peat will be protected from ice and wave action with a coir log. This work will be completed prior to November 15 to prevent freezing of the peat blocks before restoration.
 - d. The site will be monitored monthly and after storms during the winter. Any winter erosion or storm damage will be repaired immediately or stabilized for repair in spring.
3. As stated in item 51 of **NH DES's SEC Progress Report** dated November 10, 2016, (excerpts listed below), restored salt marsh will be monitored for 5 years to determine restoration success. NHB requests that Normandeau send salt marsh restoration and monitoring plans to NHB for review when such plans are available.
4. As stated in item 46 of **NH DES's SEC Progress Report** (excerpts listed below), an environmental monitor will furnish a post-construction monitoring report to DES in the year following completion of the project. NHB requests that Normandeau send any portions of the Corridor Monitoring Report that pertain to rare species and exemplary natural communities to NHB.

II: NHB Recommendations regarding Rare Plants

1. A population of crested sedge (*Carex cristatella*) was identified within the project area, with plants occurring in four locations. An access road will impact approximately 60 square feet of the population at one location. If use of the access road will occur during the growing season, elevated timber mats should be used to minimize impacts to the plants.
2. Any tree clearing in the vicinity of rare plants should occur between November 1 and March 30, preferably during frozen ground conditions. If tree clearing must occur outside of this time period, or during this time period but when the ground is not frozen, work in rare plant areas should be completed by hand.
3. Rare plant areas impacted by the project (access road use or tree clearing) should be monitored during the growing season following work activities to determine if the work impacted the population.
4. Data collected should include approximate area occupied by plants, approximate numbers of flowering/fruitlets stems, plant vigor, and any signs of disturbance/impact from tree clearing or matting use.

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5. Prior to any work in the vicinity of crested sedge (*Carex cristatella*) during the growing season, a preconstruction survey should be completed to flag out and/or fence off the 4 locations so that they may be avoided.
6. If additional plants are found during the preconstruction survey, and/or rare plants are located in areas that would be impacted by the project (beyond temporary tree clearing impacts), NHB should be contacted for recommendations.
7. On project plans, areas containing rare plants should be noted as "Sensitive Resource Areas" to alert construction contractors to their presence while retaining confidentiality in public documents.
8. Any areas of disturbed soils adjacent to rare plant populations should be allowed to revegetate naturally (within 20 ft. of crested sedge populations). NHB recommends using seed from native, non-aggressive plants to reseed the areas farther than 20 ft. but within 200 ft. of the crested sedge populations. Any mulch used within 200 ft. of crested sedge populations should be free of weed seeds.

Relevant NH DES Permit Conditions from NH DES's SEC Progress Report, dated November 10, 2016.

Also included are the following permit conditions referenced from **NH DES's SEC Progress Report**, dated November 10, 2016:

4. Prior to construction the Applicant shall notify and coordinate with NH Natural Heritage Bureau ("NHB") and NH Fish & Game Department ("NHFGD") to the satisfaction of the agencies, to establish protocols for encounters with any rare, threatened, or endangered species during the project, and shall submit the protocols to DES. Applicant shall then implement the approved protocols.
5. NHB and NHFGD shall be notified in writing immediately upon encountering any rare, threatened, or endangered species that are found within the project area during construction.
32. Prior to construction, project specific BMP's described on page 6-17 of the wetlands application shall be developed in coordination with NHB and NHFG and submitted to DES for review and approval, and implementation, for the following activities:
 - a. construction mat use in areas identified as sensitive
 - b. ground-based construction techniques and use of smaller, lighter, or low ground pressure equipment for sensitive areas
 - c. fenced exclusion zones and wildlife survey areas
 - d. on-site construction monitoring for protection of resources.
37. Prior to construction, the Applicant shall coordinate with NHB, NHFGD, NMFS, and US Fish and Wildlife Service ("USFWS") to produce a report which examines time of year restrictions for all rare, threatened, endangered, or EFH species found to be associated with the project, and which provides the best resource protection timing requirements practicable as agreed to by the agencies to the agencies satisfaction, in consideration of the construction temperature, logistics, and desired schedule for this project. This report shall be submitted to DES for approval. Applicant shall then implement the approved timing restrictions.
46. The Applicant shall retain an environmental monitor to assure compliance with permit conditions during and after construction activities, including one year of post-construction corridor monitoring after one full growing season and preparation of appropriate compliance reports for submittal to NHDES. The monitoring shall include a site inspection, vegetation cover estimates in restored freshwater wetlands, salt marsh, and uplands, including tidal buffer zone and protected shoreland, by species in random plots, photographs, and wildlife observations. Areas with less than 80% cover at the end of the growing season will require additional seed or other appropriate enhancements.

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Areas with erosion shall be repaired immediately. Invasive species shall be removed from restoration areas and disposed of in a manner and location to preclude their survival and spread. A monitoring report shall be submitted to NHDES by November 1 of the year following construction impacts.

51. The living shoreline and salt marsh restoration shall be monitored for a minimum five (5) years. Performance standards to evaluate the project shall be established and approved by DES and the Corps.