

Supplemental Information

Reclassification of a Permanent Pond to a Vernal Pool

January 11, 2017

Normandeau Associates, Inc. (Normandeau) is providing updated information regarding the classification of a vernal pool occurred since the April 12 filing of an Application for a Certificate of Site and Facility by Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy for the Seacoast Reliability Project (SRP).

Based on the Applicant's continuing duty to update its Application and supporting materials as information becomes available, Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH) hereby provides additional information relating to one water resource and, as such, modifies its classification of the resource to include a vernal pool.

Vernal pool surveys began in 2013, and were conducted in April and May, the typical window for identifying vernal pool indicators in the coastal plain of New Hampshire. For delineations outside of the vernal pool season, potential vernal pools were identified, with a follow-up survey conducted in the spring of 2014 and 2015 to verify whether vernal pool indicator species were present. Based on the spring surveys, no vernal pools were found to occur within the SRP corridor. One pond in Newington, associated with Wetland NW4 contained singing wood frogs in spring 2015.

Observations in 2013, 2014 and 2015 had suggested that the deeper portion of this pond is permanently flooded year-round in most years. The permanent hydroperiod did not meet the definition of a vernal pool, and was described as such in the April 12, 2016, Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) application.

In 2016, a year with a dry period in the spring and a severe drought in the summer, the pond dried completely in August. In the spring, the pond supported fairy shrimp, wood frog and blue spotted salamander egg masses. Because of the presence of three vernal pool indicator species and the lack of fish, PSNH has reclassified the pond to a vernal pool for regulatory purposes, but recognizes its dual functionality as both a vernal pool and a permanent pond. The functional value of the water body is only moderate because its vernal pool functions are limited by its mostly permanent hydrology, and its permanent pond functions are limited because it occasionally dries up.

The high water line of the pool encompasses approximately 9,650 square feet. Proposed impacts to the vernal pool area total approximate 1,120 square feet (SF) of temporary direct impact along the roadside edge associated with timber matting for a new structure work pad. Eversource will work with the contractor to further reduce the area of matting during the construction phase of the project if at all possible. A total of approximately 1,550 SF of tree canopy clearing is also proposed over the vernal pool area.