

To: Joe Wagner, Wetlands Agent, Andover, CT

From: Hank Gruner

Re: IWWC #20-34, 110 Cone Road

Date: January 22, 2021

At the January 12, 2021 IWWC meeting the Conservation Commission recommended that the 110 Cone Road parcel be surveyed for vernal pools based on natural resource mapping that had recently been completed. This inventory indicated the potential for the occurrence of vernal pools.

Recommendations for best management practices (BMPs) regarding forestry operations around vernal pools were also submitted with this request.

On January 21, 2021 in the company of Joe Theroux, the project soil scientist, we surveyed the site.

There are two distinct intermittent stream drainages flowing through the parcel. The western drainage features several areas where water seasonally pools into shallow basins. Although confirming the presence of a vernal pool requires spring or early summer surveys that can detect the presence of an obligate vernal-pool breeding biotic community (i.e., spotted salamander, wood frog, fairy shrimp), in my professional opinion, based on the characteristics present, two of these areas likely support such a community – most likely, breeding wood frogs. The depressions are relatively shallow however, they lie within a watercourse, contained water at the time of the survey, and had scattered sedges present within their basins, indicators that they likely hold water for a long enough period of time in the spring/early summer to support breeding. The presence of sphagnum moss also raises the possibility that the four-toed salamander, a facultative vernal-pool breeding species, may occur.

The forested upland that rises to the west of the pools behind Windrush Lane likely provides terrestrial habitat for amphibians breeding within these pools. The proposed forestry operation is a selective cut which will not result in the removal of a significant portion of the canopy, however, care should be taken to minimize disturbance within this area of the drainage, and in other upland areas to the east that are within 100 feet of the pools. Operations should be completed when the ground is frozen and by March 1, prior to the onset of the breeding season. It is also essential to remove any erosion control fencing that may be installed prior to March 1.

None of the proposed temporary wetland crossings impact any of the pool depressions.

A third probable vernal pool was located within this drainage corridor just south of the town line, on the north side of an old cart road. This was a much deeper depression that likely supports breeding wood frogs and spotted salamanders. A small pooled area of water immediately adjacent to Cone Road, just south of the ROW, may also be functioning as a vernal pool, however, spring surveys would be required to determine if it holds water long enough to support breeding. No activity is planned around this pool.