



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

August 6, 2020

Ms. Michelle Handfield
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Project: Preservation of Bridge No. 04549, Firetown Road over Unnamed Tributary of Bissell Brook in Simsbury

NDDDB Preliminary Assessment No.: 202009103

Dear Michelle Handfield,

I have reviewed Natural Diversity Data Base maps and files regarding the area delineated on the map you provided for the proposed preservation of Bridge No. 04549, which is Firetown Road over an unnamed tributary of Bissell Brook in Simsbury, Connecticut. According to our information we have known extant populations of State Threatened northern spring salamander (*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*) and State Special Concern eastern box turtle (*Terrapene c. carolina*) in the project area.

Please be advised that this is a preliminary review and not a final determination. A more detailed review will be necessary to move forward with any subsequent environmental permit applications submitted to DEEP for the proposed project. **This preliminary assessment letter cannot be used or submitted with your permit applications at DEEP.** This letter is valid for one year.

Northern Spring Salamander: This State Threatened Species requires cold, clean, well-oxygenated springs, brooks or seepage areas. Their favored habitat is heavily forested steep rocky ravines. Any activities that decreased the forest canopy would increase the water temperature and this species definitely requires cold water.

Recommended Protection Strategies for Northern Spring Salamander:

- You are required to hire a qualified herpetologist, familiar with spring salamanders to do an assessment of the stream and provide a protection and/or conservation plan to keep this State Threatened salamander safe from project activities. The protection plan must be submitted to the NDDDB Program (deep.nddbrequest@ct.gov) and approved before this work can move forward.

In order to receive a final determination letter from our program that may be required for DEEP permits or registrations, submit the following information to the NDDDB program (deep.nddbrequest@ct.gov) for further review:

A conservation or protection plan designed to minimize adverse effects on the state threatened spring salamander known from this location. This document should be developed by a qualified biologist specializing in this species. A DEEP scientific collection permit will be required by the biologist to conduct surveys and/or conduct mitigation work; you should ask if your biologist has one.

The conservation/protection plan should include the following elements:

- a. Anticipated short term and long term impacts to these state-listed species from this project.
- b. Any planned mitigation or best management practices that will be employed to protect or avoid impacts to state listed species.
- c. Habitat descriptions of the area surveyed and assessed to prepare the protection plan. .
- d. A Statement, CV or Resume of the qualified biologist's qualifications to work with these species.

Please note that insufficient surveys and mitigation plans may not be accepted.

In addition, these are some best management practices that will help mitigate long-term impacts to spring salamanders:

- Trees should not be removed adjacent to any stream or brook.
- A no cut vegetative buffer of at least 100 feet along watercourses should be maintained to minimize any temperature or microclimate change of the riparian areas within this forest.
- A qualified herpetologist is required to be on site, during all in stream work, to ensure these protection guidelines remain in effect and prevent salamanders from being killed when moving heavy equipment. This is especially important because these particular salamanders remain active all year.

Recommended Protection Strategies for Eastern Box Turtle:

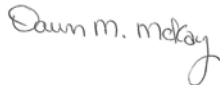
- A qualified herpetologist must be on site to ensure these protection guidelines remain in effect and prevent turtles from being run over when moving heavy equipment. This is especially important in the months of May, June and July when turtles are selecting nesting sites.
- Exclusionary practices will be required to prevent any turtle access into construction areas. These measures will need to be installed at the limits of disturbance.
- Exclusionary fencing must be at least 20 in tall and must be secured to and remain in contact with the ground and be regularly maintained (at least bi-weekly and after major weather events) to secure any gaps or openings at ground level that may let animal pass through. Do not use plastic or netted silt-fence.
- All staging and storage areas, outside of previously paved locations, regardless of the duration of time they will be utilized, must be reviewed to remove individuals and exclude them from re-entry.
- All construction personnel working within the turtle habitat must be apprised of the species description and the possible presence of a listed species, and instructed to relocate turtles found inside work areas or notify the appropriate authorities to relocate individuals.
- Any turtles encountered within the immediate work area shall be carefully moved to an adjacent area outside of the excluded area and fencing should be inspected to identify and remove access point.
- In areas where silt fence is used for exclusion, it shall be removed as soon as the area is stable to allow for reptile and amphibian passage to resume.
- No heavy machinery or vehicles may be parked in any turtle habitat.
- Special precautions must be taken to avoid degradation of wetland habitats including any wet meadows and seasonal pools.
- The Contractor and consulting herpetologist must search the work area each morning prior to any work being done.
- When felling trees adjacent to brooks and streams please cut them to fall away from the waterway and do not drag trees across the waterway or remove stumps from banks.
- Avoid and limit any equipment use within 100 feet of streams and brooks.
- Any confirmed sightings of box, wood or spotted turtles should be reported and documented with the NDDB (nddbrequestdep@ct.gov) on the appropriate special animal form found at (http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2702&q=323460&depNav_GID=1641)

Standard protocols for protection of wetlands should be followed and maintained during the course of the project. Additionally, all silt fencing should be removed after soils are stable so that reptile and amphibian movement between uplands and wetlands is not restricted.

Natural Diversity Data Base information includes all information regarding critical biological resources available to us at the time of the request. This information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Natural History Survey and cooperating units of DEEP, private conservation groups and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultations with the Data Base should not be substitutes for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations of species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated into the Data Base as it becomes available.

Please contact me if you have further questions at (860) 424-3592, or dawn.mckay@ct.gov . Thank you for consulting the Natural Diversity Data Base.

Sincerely,



Dawn M. McKay
Environmental Analyst 3