

CONTACT REPORT

ORGANIZATION: NH Fish & Game

PERSON
CONTACTED: Lindsay Webb, Wildlife Diversity Biologist

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FROM: Blythe Mackey, E&E

TO: Dan Belin, E&E / Angela Gardner, E&E / Travis Beck, SE Group

DATE: February 2, 2012

SUBJECT: Northern Pass Transmission Line – Discussion of survey methodology.

On February 2, 2012, the SE Group Team hosted a conference call with NH Fish and Game to discuss survey methodology for winter surveys, sensitive species, and sensitive ecological resource surveys for the Northern Pass Transmission Line Project. The following people participated in the conference call: Lindsay Webb, NHFG; Travis Beck, SE Group; Dan Belin, E&E; Angela Gardner, E&E; and Blythe Mackey, E&E.

Dan Belin began the call with a general introduction of the project overview and project team. In December 2010, the SE Group received Normandeau agency correspondence as part of a data package. Within that correspondence, it identified the agency request for winter surveys for Canada lynx, American marten, and wintering deer yards and moose concentrations yards.

Lindsay Webb gave an overview of the relevant contacts at NHFG. Webb is coordinating all of the Canada lynx monitoring, which is a new project for NHFG and, therefore, she has had several conversations with other agencies and organizations involved in Canada lynx surveys in NH and surrounding states. Mike Marchand is a wetlands specialist and herpetologist and coordinates the siting database with the NHNHBB. Carol Henderson is involved with large projects and best contact for information such as wintering deer yards and moose concentration yards. Jillian Kilborn is a wildlife biologist that and specialist with American marten and her contact information is (603) 788-3164 Region 1 Office, Lancaster.

In fall of 2011, there was confirmation of lynx kittens in Pittsburg which has triggered the start of formalized surveys in Canada lynx surveys by NHFG.

Angela Gardner gave an overview of E&E's proposed survey methodology. E&E contacted To-

ny Tur with USFWS and will be using the Maine protocol and USFS 1995 protocol.

E&E reviewed their proposed survey methodology for Canada lynx which included walking both sides of the transmission line right-of-way (ROW) for track intercepts, documenting tracks, noting characteristics of the tracks. Gardner discussed that teams will not be backtracking because of lack of access off the ROW. E&E proposes to collect scat and hair, use game cameras, and use a habitat suitability model to target field surveys. Webb noted that NHFG is interested in the proposed camera use and have had excellent success with this approach with Martin.

Webb discussed the methodology that NHFG used for their recent surveys and discussed the use of the Hoving model, a higher elevation model, as a GIS suitability model with factors such as high elevation spruce fir and snow pack to target their surveys. The NHFG is also using their biologist's general knowledge of the area and familiarity of the area such as observation of snowshoe hare habitat and young growth forest created from forestry activity.

E&E proposes to use the Wildlife Action Plan habitat types including the high elevation spruce-fir as well as low-elevation to be conservative, as well as snowpack data. The current protocol does not include repeat visits due to the study area of the project and limited survey window.

Webb offered to provide assistance if NHFG can help in the case there are questions need to be answered or follow-up is necessary. She also offered to re-survey areas that E&E is not able to return to. Because some sitings are on private land, NHFG can't send all recorded siting data, but they can send E&E lynx sitings at the town-level. E&E will send the ROW shapefile for the Project and NHFG offered to send siting information (incidental tracks) within 5-mile from the ROW and the NHFG Canada lynx survey protocol. E&E is formalizing our winter survey work plan and will send to NHFG next week. Once E&E has finalized the areas for targeted surveys, they will send to NHFG to receive comments.

Lindsay asked if winter surveys would be conducted for only one year. E&E responded that has yet to be determined by the project schedule.

E&E will be in contact with Carol Henderson regarding wintering deer yards and moose concentrations areas surveys and additional surveys.