

SUBJECT:	Contact Tony Tur to Inform the Initiation of Winter Field Surveys and to discuss the North 40 Route.
DATE:	02/20/13
AUTHOR:	Sean Meegan
PARTICIPANTS:	

SUMMARY OF DIALOGUE:

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603-223-2541 x24

Sean Meegan contacted Tony Tur to inform him that the SE Group Team (SE Group, Ecology & Environment, and White Pines) is initiating winter field surveys this week. In addition, Mr. Meegan informed him that the SE Group Team now has authorization to access the North 40 and will initiate surveys soon; Meegan mentioned that an explanatory email from the SE Group Team was forthcoming. Meegan also informed Tur that modeling efforts are ongoing as the SE Group Team is still waiting for updated snowfall data, as well as the oblique imagery and will provide this information once complete. For the North 40 field surveys, Meegan indicated that the plan was to survey the entire 40 miles, but also complete a similar modeling exercise as to the southern 140 miles.

In regards to the North 40, Tur mentioned that the primary concern was the presence of suitable denning habitat. Tur's opinion was that suitable denning habitat did not exist on the southern 140 miles, due to past land disturbance activities. Mr. Tur further indicated that denning habitat could not be assessed remotely (through habitat modeling), and therefore a complete field survey was necessary so he wanted the entire route walked. Mr. Meegan confirmed that the plan was to conduct tracking and habitat surveys along the entire Northern 40-mile route, in addition to the habitat modeling.

Mr. Tur indicated that the Winter Survey Project Agency Team could have an email exchange (versus a meeting or conference call) to come to agreement on what data would be collected in potential denning habitats. Meegan offered to have the SE Group team draft an email with the plan for denning habitat data collection, and to provide that to the NHFG and USFWS winter survey team for confirmation and review. Mr. Tur indicated that a formal consultation under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) would likely be warranted and that the impact assessment should compare the quantity of suitable denning habitat on the proposed North 40 route to available denning habitat in the state of NH. Mr. Meegan inquired if Tur was aware of such data from the USFWS efforts or the state of NH; Tur indicated he was not aware. Tur mentioned denning habitat is largely related to old growth mature forest stands.

Tur also mentioned the Karner Blue Butterfly is a federally listed species that could be affected by the Project. Tur indicated that there were two alternative routes in the vicinity of Concord, one of which goes through Occupied Karner Blue Butterfly habitat. Mr. Meegan inquired if this data was available on line from the USFWS as a shapefile. Mr. Tur indicated there was coarse data available, but that he could provide very specific locations of habitat, marked up on a map. Mr. Meegan indicated the SE Group Team would appreciate the input and would follow-up with Tur to get that information.

Action Items: Send out an email to the Winter Survey Agency Team indicating the plan for Lynx Denning Habitat data collection. Attain Karner Blue Butterfly Occupied Habitat data from the USFWS.