

Coventry Inland Wetlands Agency
Mindy Gosselin, Wetlands Agent
Todd Penny, Town Engineer

March 7, 2022

Thank you for your prompt and thorough review of our application. I've provided additional information to address Staff Comments, some of which was submitted previously but apparently hasn't been associated with the wetlands/subdivision applications. Some of this information isn't relevant to Inland Wetlands Regulation but is provided as a courtesy.

Bob Kortmann

Coventry Staff Comments (Bold) regarding Application 22-07W - 430 Talcott Hill Road and Applicant Reply (not bold).

- **Depict the proposed wetland enhancement/invasive plant management on the site plan.**

The wetland enhancement/invasive plant management plan was developed for three 25 ft wide zones from the field-cited wetland boundary. Those 25ft wide URA Zones are being added to the site plan. The wetland enhancement/invasive plant management activities are defined for each 25ft zone in the following table (previously submitted):

Proposed Activities within the Upland Review Area and Flagged Wetland	
The small isolated wetland currently provides little habitat function. An important wetland function is infiltration of off-site runoff directed to the wetland.	
Within Designated Wetland: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Ground Disturbance or removal of detrital material.• Selective Removal of Trees for Solar Exposure and Dead Ash Removal• Selective Removal of <i>Invasive Plants</i>• Selective Introduction of <i>Native Wetland Plants (OBI, FAC)</i> to increase diversity, forage, and competition with invasive plants.• Occasional brush cutting around trees and introduced wetland wildlife plantings to control invasive plants.
Nearest 25 Feet of Upland Review Area: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal Grading Disturbance to repair erosive gulying caused by the Town-excavated drainage swale and to facilitate annual mowing.. No fill.• Selective Removal of Trees for Solar Exposure and Dead Ash Removal• Selective Removal of Invasive Plants• Selective Introduction of <i>Native Wetland Plants (FAC)</i> to increase diversity , forage, and competition with invasive plants.
25 to 50 feet from Flagged Wetland: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum Ground Disturbance to Repair Erosive Cuts caused by the Town-excavated drainage swale and to facilitate annual mowing.• Selective Removal of Trees for Solar Exposure and Dead Ash Removal• Selective Introduction of Plants to increase diversity, competition with invasive plants, and wildlife forage.
50 to 75 feet from Flagged Wetland: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential backyard uses, lawn alternative (mini clover/wildflower), gardens, etc. No structures. Minimum fill needed for residential use
Plant Source: New England Wetland Plants Inc.	

- **Provide more details on the drainage swale and plunge pool proposed for the roadside drainage. Include dimensions and materials to be used.**

The details of driveway, culvert, dimensions, and materials to be used are included on the site plans. The exact location of the driveway culvert will be field sited to preserve stone walls (likely to be approximately 8 ft further downhill). The location of the wide, low gradient, mowable, flow path from the culvert outfall to a graded plunge pool is also shown on the site plan and typical grading has been added. The small plunge pool at the bottom of the drainage swale will be lined with round river rocks. The outflow side will have a small stone berm with hand-set stones to divide total outflow of larger runoff events into several smaller braided flows into the upland review area and ultimately the wetland. Lower flows will percolate through the small stone berm. All of the drainage work is outside of the Upland Review Area. Drainage will follow the existing path until the new flow path is stabilized by vegetation, then runoff flows will be redirected to the new vegetated drainage path.

Those proposed activities were reviewed by staff and approved for implementation in September 2021 (see copies of email communications appended). Since given the go-ahead to start the drainage improvements last September, we consulted with several excavation contractors and have initiated implementation, field staking etc. The drainage work would have been completed last Fall but for COVID.

- **Detail how the wetland enhancement and invasive plant management will take place, will machines be used? What is the proposed timing of this work?**

Small equipment will be used to grade/repair gullying caused by the drainage swale constructed by the Town of Coventry. Experienced contractors will determine necessary equipment needs- it is anticipated that a small Bobcat skid steer, followed by York rake, will be required to restore the gullying. That work is anticipated to be performed following wetland permit approval Spring 2022 (Seed already in hand).

Plantings of native vegetation will commence following the grading to correct gullying, including:

- New England Wetmix (Wetland Seed Mix)
- New England Conservation/Wildlife Mix
- New England Wildflower Mix
- Wildlife Forage Plantings

A “conceptual plan” is provided (Appendix C). Planting of native vegetation is not an activity regulated under the IW Act. Fully mature floristic composition is expected to take several years of growth. Long-term invasive plant management will involve occasional mowing with a brush cutter around cover/forage plantings and retained trees (likely annual brush cutting after first frost).

- **Provide detail of the restoration for the existing logged area on the upland area outside of the upland review area.**

Our forested property was harvested by a licensed arborist/forester last year (Hull). The harvest plan was reviewed in the field by the Contractor and Town Staff. Timber harvesting is an agricultural activity, albeit the harvest only takes place every 25-35 years. The harvest in 2021 was important for the removal of dead and dying Ash (occurring all over Town) and to harvest select timber. We weren't thrilled by how the forester left the forest- our idea of "tops and branches" is very different from theirs-many reject logs were left behind.

Our plan for the restoration of the harvested area includes:

- Recovery of firewood from the (many) larger logs left behind.
- Some tops and smaller branches will be chipped and used for mulch.
- Some tops and smaller branches will be organized into brush piles to serve as wildlife cover while decomposing and returning to the forest floor.
- The pre-existing logging paths will be restored by yolk raking and seeding with a logging path seed mix.

It should be noted that none of those activities are regulated under the IW Act, especially outside of the Upland Review Area. This information is provided for information only, as a courtesy.

Appended Materials

APPENDIX A Email train regarding drainage improvements August-September 2021

From: Bob Kortmann <bob@ecosystemconsulting.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 31, 2021 8:35 PM
To: Todd Penney <tpenney@coventryct.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Town consulting for Wetlands Agency

Hi Todd,

I am working on a site plan to split off a 1.5-1.8 acre lot off our 22 acres to build our retirement home. I'm working with Andrew Bushnell, had the wetlands flagged, etc. I have a plan to upgrade the drainage ditch the town excavated many years ago in a manner that keeps the off site runoff from impacting the new house site. I plan to make the new swale able to be mowed during dry weather (it only flows after significant rainfall) and to terminate it in a small plunge pool surrounded by stones to create a braided flow into the upland area that then drains to the wetland. It is a small, isolated wetland that exhibits significant infiltration into groundwater, so I want to maintain an open conveyance.

I've discussed the concept with Jimmy Galey and Andrew and both concur.

Do you want to meet on the site to see what I'm planning before I put Andrew's pen to paper? If so let me know what might be convenient for you.

From: Todd Penney [<mailto:tpenney@coventryct.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, September 01, 2021 7:35 AM
To: Bob Kortmann
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] RE: Town consulting for Wetlands Agency

Good Morning Bob,

Are you sure you want to retire in CT?? Just kidding.

Sure we can take a site walk I would like to do it with Mindy as I am really trying to get her to do the lion share of wetlands. That said she is home in quarantine due to "you guessed it". Can it wait until the end of next week? How does Friday 10th work?

If you keep the foundation out of the 75-foot upland review and keep the stormwater improvements at least 25-feet (more would be better) we can qualify the activity as minimal impact based IWA thresholds. In concept I am a proponent of your plan.

Let me know if you want to get out sooner than the 10th.

Todd M. Penney, P.E.
Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent
Town of Coventry
860-742-4078

Hi Bob,

Thank you for meeting me on site today. I spoke with Todd and due to the fact that all of the drainage work would be outside of the URA and that the water is still ending up in the same place (the wetland down gradient), you are able to start that work before your wetland permit.

For your wetlands permit, do you know if you are eligible to do a free split? Or do you have to go for a normal subdivision approval? This may determine whether or not you need to go to the Agency for review.

Best,
Mindy Gosselin
Town of Coventry Wetlands Agent & Erosion Control Officer
P: 860-531-2886 | E: Mgosselin@coventryct.org

Appendix B: Plantings to be used for wetland enhancement and invasive plant management (Previously Submitted)

Plant Source: New England Wetland Plants Inc.

Example of Plants to be used in the Upland Review Area

New England Wetmix (Wetland Seed Mix)

The New England Wetmix (Wetland Seed Mix) contains a wide variety of native seeds that are suitable for most wetland restoration sites that are not permanently flooded. All species are best suited to moist ground as found in most wet meadows, scrub shrub, or forested wetland restoration areas. The mix is well suited for detention basin borders and the bottom of detention basins not generally under standing water. The seeds will not germinate under inundated conditions. If planted during the fall months, the seed mix will germinate the following spring. During the first season of growth, several species will produce seeds while other species will produce seeds after the second growing season. Not all species will grow in all wetland situations. This mix is comprised of the wetland species most likely to grow in created/restored wetlands and should produce more than 75% ground cover in two full growing seasons.

New England Conservation/Wildlife Mix

The New England Conservation/Wildlife Mix provides a permanent cover of grasses, wildflowers, and legumes. For both good erosion control and wildlife habitat value. The mix is designed to be a no maintenance seeding, and is appropriate for cut and fill slopes, detention basin side slopes, and disturbed areas adjacent to commercial and residential projects.

New England Wildflower Mix

The New England Wildflower mix provides a selection of native wildflowers and grasses to insure that a variety of species will survive in conditions from dry to moist. It is an appropriate seed mix for roadsides, commercial landscaping, parks, golf courses, industrial sites and areas undergoing ecological restoration. The mix can be applied by hydroseeding (no tackifiers), by mechanical spreader, or by hand. Lightly rake or roll after sowing to increase seed-to-soil contact. Apply on a clean, weed-free seed bed. Best results are obtained with a Spring or late fall dormant seeding.

Example of Plants to be used in the Upland Review Area

Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)

A holly that loses its leaves in the fall, winterberry is loved by humans and birds alike for the brilliant red berries that light up the winter landscape. Sure, cut some branches for decoration but leave most for the birds that rely on them. Winterberry needs a male planted nearby for the female to produce berries.)

Origin: Native to the eastern United States

Where it will grow: Hardy from -40 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit (USDA zones 3 to 9)

Water requirement: Moist to wet soil

Light requirement: Full sun to partial shade

Mature size: 3 to 12 feet tall and wide

High Bush Blueberry

This blueberry species is a 6-12 ft. high and wide, deciduous shrub with numerous upright stems and twiggy branches forming a rounded, compact outline. Reddish-green spring leaves turn blue-green in summer and red, yellow, orange and purple in fall. White or pink, bell-shaped flowers in drooping clusters are followed by edible, blue fruit. A multi-stemmed shrub with green, or often red, twigs and terminal clusters of small, urn-shaped white flowers. These plants are very important to wildlife: their berries are relished by songbirds, game birds, bear, and small mammals; the twigs and foliage are eaten by deer and rabbits. Because of their food value and spectacular red fall foliage, these shrubs are excellent for naturalized landscaping.

Water Use: Medium Berries are relished by most birds and mammals. Browsers eat foliage.

Light Requirement: Sun , Part Shade , Shade **Soil Moisture:** Dry , Moist , Wet **Soil pH:** Acidic (pH<6.8) **CaCO3 Tolerance:** Low

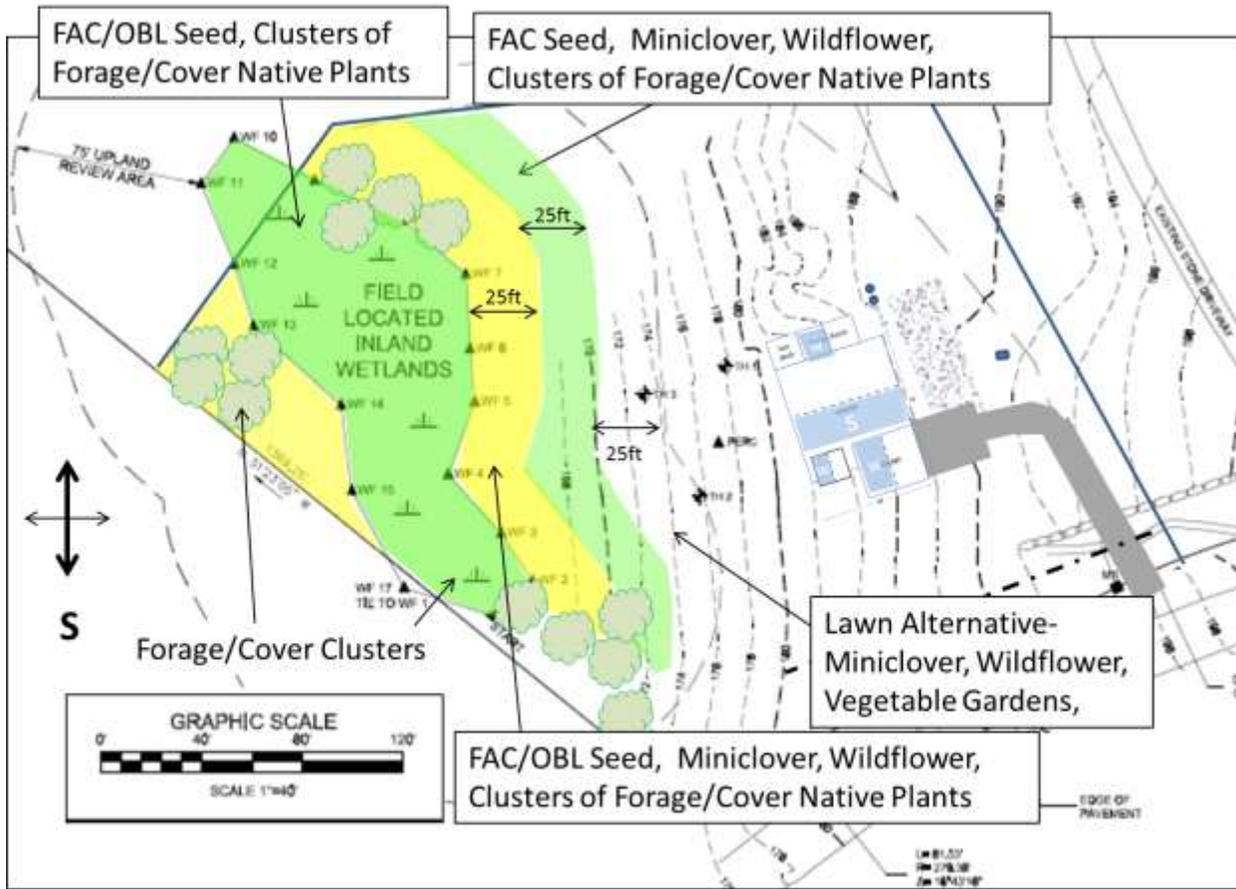
Soil Description: Wet to dry, acid, rocky soils to organic peats.

Miniclover is very low maintenance and it helps to carry this characteristic to what ever it may be planted with. Miniclover will flower once a year in the summer for about 1 month if it is not mowed. Great lawn alternative!

Other white clovers looks considerably different to turf grass as the leaf blades are twice the size and may stand out like a sore thumb. **Miniclover®** and microclovers have such tiny leaves when mowed and short stems, that from a distance it **blends in very nicely in to the appearance of your lawn.** It does well in partially shaded areas that receive at least some direct sunshine during a day. Miniclover® is evenly distributes itself in lawns; therefore, it doesn't have the patchy and weedy appearance as seen with ordinary white clover.

Wildflower Mix for the pollinator population in your own backyard with our Northeast Pollinator Mix. This easy-to-grow blend is designed to provide food and habitat to northeastern pollinators throughout the length of the growing season. Annual and perennial wildflowers like New England Aster, Black Eyed Susan, Milkweed, Coreopsis and Cosmos provide pollen, nectar and shelter for hundreds of important species, including Monarch butterflies and native bees. Contains only 100% pure, non-GMO and neonicotinoid-free seeds, best for planting in CT, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, WV, QC and the Eastern Townships.

APPENDIX C- Conceptual Plan:



Conceptual Plan: Wetland enhancement and invasive plant management