



December 5, 2007

Jack Appelmans
4 Spring Hill Road
Concord, MA 01742

RE: Spring Hill Road, Acton

Dear Jack:

This letter is a summary of my observations from a site walk conducted on the Harvey property, which abuts the 8 Spring Hill Road development site, on November 26, 2007. Upon receipt of verbal permission from the Harveys, I inspected the large shrub swamp wetland on their property. Given the time of year, I could not conduct surveys for any reptile or amphibian species in the wetland, and could only assess the habitat within the wetland and adjacent uplands for its *potential* to provide one or more of the necessary life history functions for any rare or endangered species.

The water level of the wetland was lower than its mean annual high water level, as evidenced by the exposed bases of hummocks and exposed mucky substrate present. I determined that suitable (in fact ideal) breeding habitat exists for the state-listed four-toed salamander (*Hemidactylum scutatum*): numerous hummocks in the wetland were covered with *Sphagnum* moss, in which the salamanders lay their eggs during the months of April and May. I also determined that the wetland has the potential to contain vernal pool habitat, and thus breeding habitat for "obligate vernal pool indicator species" such as wood frogs (*Rana sylvatica*), spotted salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*), and potentially, the state-listed blue-spotted salamander (*A. laterale*).

All of these amphibian species inhabit forested habitat surrounding their wetland breeding habitat for the majority of the year, and studies have documented migratory movements of individual salamanders and wood frogs in forested habitat as far as 1000 feet from their known breeding location. I believe that this wetland should be surveyed for the presence of four-toed salamanders and vernal pool obligate amphibians during the spring of 2008.

Sincerely,

Daniel Wells, M.S.
President
Hyla Ecological Services, Inc.

Rec'd 12/5