

February 22, 2019

Jeanne Rich, Chairwoman
Zoning Board of Appeals
Lancaster Town Offices
701 Main Street
Lancaster, MA 01523

Re: Rare and Endangered Species Data for Goodridge Brook Estates site

Dear Ms. Rich,

A major concern with the proposed Goodridge Brook Estates development is the potential for rare and endangered species on the property.

A regulatory review contact at Mass Fish & Wildlife, Melanie, confirmed that the two GBE parcels on Sterling Road have not been mapped.

MassWildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program cannot provide site specific rare species information if the habitat has not been "mapped", because they rely upon on-site studies to identify state-listed plants and animals.

This supports Patrick Garner's conclusion that the environmental studies should be conducted due to the nature (undeveloped, wooded wet-lands), of the 45-acre site and the lack of knowledge regarding what's there.

According to Mass Fish & Wildlife information on rare species habitat and range, here are a few examples of what could be there:

Blue-Spotted Salamander -- Eastern Worcester County -- Near Vernal Pools -- Special Concern
Marbled Salamander -- Worcester County -- Near Vernal Pools -- Threatened

Eastern Box Turtle -- Southeastern/Scattered throughout Mass -- Special Concern
Wood Turtle -- Scattered throughout Mass -- Near Streams -- Special Concern

A search of Mass Fish & Wildlife's database for rare species reveals the following sightings in Lancaster in recent years:

Rare Species by Town Viewer (Mass.gov)

We maintain a list of all documented MESA-listed species observations in the Commonwealth.

SC - Special Concern, T - Threatened, E - Endangered

LANCASTER

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Year
Vascular Plant	Arceuthobium pusillum	Dwarf Mistletoe	SC	2018
Bird	Poocetes gramineus	Vesper Sparrow	T	2018
Bird	Ammodramus savannarum	Grasshopper Sparrow	T	2017
Bird	Caprimulgus vociferus	Eastern Whip-poor-will	SC	2017
Reptile	Glyptemys insculpta	Wood Turtle	SC	2016
Amphibian	Ambystoma laterale	Blue-spotted Salamander	SC	2011
Reptile	Terrapene carolina	Eastern Box Turtle	SC	2009
Beetle	Cicindela duodecimguttata	Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle	SC	2007
Reptile	Emydoidea blandingii	Blanding's Turtle	T	2003
Vascular Plant	Cyperus houghtonii	Houghton's Flatsedge	E	2002
Butterfly/Moth	Lycia rachelae	Twilight Moth	E	2002

Please note that 3 of the 4 salamanders or turtles thought to be present in Worcester County have been sighted in Lancaster (ie: Blue-spotted Salamander, Wood Turtle, Box Turtle).

These species tend to inhabit the uplands areas near vernal pools or streams, which makes the dense development proposed for this site particularly devastating for these species.

Because the Goodridge Brook Estates site is just 600 yards from the Sterling town line, I've included data for species of interest that have been found in Sterling, and identified two which are likely to inhabit the site.

Rare Species by Town Viewer (Mass.gov)

We maintain a list of all documented MESA-listed species observations in the Commonwealth.
SC - Special Concern, T - Threatened, E – Endangered

STERLING

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Year
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Bird	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common Loon	SC	2018
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Reptile	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	SC	2017
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Dragonfl	<i>Gomphus abbreviatus</i>	Spine-crowned Clubtail	SC	2016
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Vascular Plant	<i>Sagittaria teres</i>	Terete Arrowhead	SC	2012
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Reptile	<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	Blanding's Turtle	T	2009
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Mammal	<i>Sorex palustris</i>	Water Shrew	SC	2009
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Vascular Plant	<i>Myriophyllum alterniflorum</i>	Alternate-flowered Water-milfoil	E	2006
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Vascular Plant	<i>Potamogeton confervoides</i>	Algae-like Pondweed	T	2002
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Bird	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	Least Bittern	E	2000
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Based upon habitat and range, I would guess that Blanding's Turtles and Water Shrews might also be found on the Sterling Road parcel.

Again, the source for this information is the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program within the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife on the Mass.gov web site, considered an established/respected source.

Regards,

Corinne J. Walker

Cc: Mike Antonellis, Lancaster Town Planner