



Wildlife Habitat Features Report
Eversource Transmission Reliability
Project
Sudbury, Massachusetts

JUNE 2023- DECEMBER 2023

PREPARED FOR

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**WILDLIFE HABITAT FEATURES REPORT
EVERSOURCE TRANSMISSION RELIABILITY PROJECT
SUDBURY, MASSACHUSETTS**

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Eversource Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project (the “Project”) consists of a new, approximately 9-mile-long transmission line between Eversource’s existing Sudbury substation in Sudbury, Massachusetts and the Hudson Light & Power Company’s (HL&P) substation in Hudson, Massachusetts. The new underground transmission line will be installed in the municipalities of Sudbury, Hudson, Stow, and Marlborough, Massachusetts. Approximately 4 miles of the Project are located within Sudbury, with portions of the work located within jurisdictional resource areas.

As part of the Project, and to ensure the work will not result in the loss of important wildlife habitat features, a habitat mitigation plan was proposed for the work within wetland impact areas along the Project route. The final Habitat Mitigation Plan, initial pre-construction report, and Monitoring Report 1 (December 2022 to May 2023) for Habitat Mitigation were previously submitted to Sudbury Conservation Commission.

Under Special Condition Part II(l) of the Sudbury Order of Conditions for DEP# 301-1287

The Applicant’s wildlife biologist or other qualified individual document the location of all important habitat features that will be removed (such as brush piles, snags, overhanging trees, logs within or near the water, large woody debris, etc.) to quantify the number of features removed and provide confirmation that the work did not result in the loss of important wildlife habitat features. It also requires that brush, woody debris and logs be replaced within or near water, generally in the location they were removed, and that reports be provided to the Sudbury Conservation Commission every 6 months for the life of the Order, documenting the wildlife habitat removal and restoration effort, including monitoring of vernal pools.

SWCA Environmental (SWCA) has developed this report on behalf of Eversource as per Special Condition Part II (1). This is the second monitoring report and shall serve as the June 2023- December 2023 monitoring period. The following sections describe the habitat mitigation effort conducted during the past six months of the Project.

2 STUDY AREA AND METHODS

The Project work within Sudbury is broken up into segments. The sections below will refer to segments by number with each segment number corresponding to a stretch of land, typically between roads. Below is the list of segments and their locations.

- Segment 7 (Sudbury Town Line to Bridge 128);
- Segment 8 (Bridge 128 to Dutton Road);
- Segment 9 (Dutton Road to Peakham Road);
- Segment 10 (Peakham Road to Horse Pond Road);
- Segment 11 (Horse Pond Road to Union Avenue);
- Segment 12 (Union Avenue to Boston Post Road/Rt. 20);
- Segment 13 (Boston Post Road/Rt. 20 to Bridge 127);
- Segment 14 (Bridge 127 to Sudbury Substation);

Where work crosses through a wetland resource area, that section of work is identified as a Wetland Impact Area (Impact Area). Within several of the Impact Areas, Habitat Mitigation was proposed, as outlined in the Final Habitat Mitigation Plan submitted in the December 2022-June 2023 Report.

The first phase of the Project, between December 2022 and April 2023, involved tree removal within the limit of work along the entire Project route. Some of the removed trees were reused as fallen logs and/or snags as proposed in the Habitat Mitigation Plan. Only Fallen logs and/or snags were installed as part of the mitigation. Since brush piles are proposed to be installed within the limit of work, it was determined that brush piles will be installed at the same time or soon after the installation of restoration/ mitigation plantings. Please refer to Monitoring Report 1 (December 2022 to May 2023) for Habitat Mitigation methodology and reference to where fallen logs/ snags were installed.

During the June 2023 to December 2023 monitoring period, SWCA wildlife biologist conducted monthly review of all the Wetland Impact Areas along the Project route. SWCA reviewed the condition of the Project work area, silt fence conditions, area between the work area and resource area, and noted any non-project related debris and disturbance observed beyond the limit of work. Monthly site reviews were conducted at the end of every month, specifically on 6/27/23; 7/24/23; 8/31/23; 9/28/23; 10/27/23; 11/27/23; 12/28/23.

It is important to note that from July 2023 to October 2023, the SWCA Restoration Team has conducted invasive plant managements in Segments 8 through 10 and Segment 14. In addition, the Restoration Team installed the wetland replication area in Segment 14. The work was noted, but not fully detailed in this report as the Restoration Team will be conducting their own review and monitoring of the invasive plant management and wetland replication efforts.

3 CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

Between June 2023 and December 2023, significant construction progress was made within the Sudbury portion of the Project route. Table 1 below is a summary of the work completed during this time period. The majority of the work was within Segments where fallen logs and/or snags were installed.

Table 1: Work conducted in Sudbury between June 2023 and December 2023

Month	Installation and Work on Manholes, Conduits, Bridges	Cut & Fill/Grading	Substation	Mitigation Work
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH#19 • MH#20 MH#24 • MH#25 MH#26 • MH#27 Conduit work in Seg. 11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dutton to Peakham Peakham to Horse Pond 	On-going work	n/a
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH #17 • MH#18 Conduit work in Seg. 11 Bridge 127 Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horse Pond to Union Peakham to Horse Pond Bridge 127 to Sudbury Substation 	• On-going work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invasive Plant Management- Bridge 127 to Sudbury Substation Invasive Plant Management- Peakham to Horse Pond
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH #14 • MH #15 • MH #16 Conduit between MH#15 and MH #16 (Seg. 7) Conduit between MH #17 and MH #18 (Seg. 8) Bridge 127 and Bridge 128 Work Water Line replacement-Dutton Road Crossing Water Line replacement-Peakham Road Crossing Ductbank Crossing and paving-Peakham Road Crossing 	n/a	• On-going work	• Invasive Plant Management- Bridge 127 to Sudbury Substation

Month	Installation and Work on Manholes, Conduits, Bridges	Cut & Fill/Grading	Substation	Mitigation Work
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduit between MH #14 and MH #16 (Seg. 7) • Conduit between MH #17 and MH #18 (Seg. 8) • Water Line replacement-Dutton Road Crossing • Bridge 127 and Bridge 128 Work 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive Plant Management- Segments 9 and 10
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduit between MH #14 and MH #15 (Seg. 7) • Conduit between MH #16 and MH #17 (Seg. 7) • Conduit between MH #18 and MH #20 (Seg. 9) • Conduit between MH #24 and MH #25 (Seg. 11) • Conduit between MH #25 and MH #26 (Seg. 13) • Conduit between MH #26 and MH #27 (Seg. 14) • Ductbank installation- Horse Pond Rd Crossing • Conduit and ductbank installation - Union Ave Crossing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segment 11 • Portion of Segment 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive Plant Management- Segments 8 • Wetland replication area in Segment 14 completed (planted and seeded).
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduit between MH #19 and MH #20 (Seg. 9) • Conduit between MH #20 and MH #21 (Seg. 10) • Conduit between MH #24 and MH #25 (Seg. 12) • Conduit between MH #25 and MH #26 (Seg. 13) • Conduit between MH #26 and MH #27 (Seg. 14) • Conduit between MH #28 and Sudbury Substation • Bridge 128 Work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dutton to Peakham in Sudbury • Horse Pond to Union in Sudbury • Final grading in segment 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going work 	n/a
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduit between MH #16 and MH #17 (Seg. 8) • Conduit between MH #21 and MH #22 (Seg. 11) • Conduit between MH #24 and MH #25 (Seg. 12) • Conduit between MH #25 and MH #26 (Seg. 13) • Conduit between MH #26 and MH #28 (Seg. 14) 	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going work 	n/a

4 HABITAT MITIGATION MONITORING RESULTS

Table 2 summarizes the location of the Impact Area, what mitigation efforts were proposed, and what mitigation measures were installed.

Table 2: Proposed and Installed Habitat Mitigation per Impact Area

Segment	Wetland Impact Area ID	Proposed Mitigation	Installed Mitigation to Date
7	1	Install 2 brush piles	None to date
	2	Install 1 brush pile	None to date
	3	Reuse 2 significant snags as fallen logs; Install 5 brush piles	Placed 7 fallen logs
	4	Reuse 1 significant snags as fallen log; Snag on the southern limit can be left in place	Placed 1 fallen log
8	5	Place 2 snags used as fallen logs; Work with contractor to determine if snag on the northern limit of work can be saved	Placed 2 fallen logs

Segment	Wetland Impact Area ID	Proposed Mitigation	Installed Mitigation to Date
	6	Place 2 fallen logs to be placed; Use 1 of the snags as fallen log	Placed 2 fallen logs, one of which was a snag
	7	2 fallen logs placed; Work with contractor to see if can save snags or reuse as the 2 fallen logs place by VP	Placed 2 fallen logs
9	8	Install 6 brush piles	None to date
	9	Install 6 brush piles; Work with contractor to keep snags or reuse as fallen log near VP	None to date
10	10	Install 4 brush piles	None to date
11	11	Install 2 brush pile; Work with contractor to keep snags or reuse as fallen log near VP	Placed 2 fallen logs
	12	Install 2 brush pile	Placed 2 fallen logs
	13	Install 7 brush piles	Placed 4 fallen logs
	14	None	None to date
12	15	Install 5 brush piles	None to date
13	16	Install 6 brush piles	Placed 4 fallen logs
	17	none	None to date
14	18	Place 2 fallen logs- one of the snags to be used as fallen log	Placed 2 fallen logs
	19	Install 11 brush piles; Work with contractor to keep snags or reuse as fallen log near VP	Placed 9 fallen logs
	20	Install 3 brush piles; Work with contractor to keep snags or reuse as fallen logs	Placed 2 fallen logs

Between June 1 and December 29, 2023, no project or non-project related debris was observed between the limit of work and the resource areas. Silt fences were in good condition and no sediment or erosion was observed. Previously installed fallen logs and/or snags remained in place. In some areas, vegetation has grown around the installed fallen log making it difficult to locate. Construction related work has not impacted the installed fallen logs and/or snags. No issues were observed.

5 FUTURE WORK

The placement of fallen logs for habitat mitigation is complete. Brush pile installation is proposed to occur at the same time or soon after the restoration planting, which is not anticipated to begin until Spring 2024 or after.

Vernal pool monitoring will begin again between March 1, 2024, and June 1, 2024.

6 SUMMARY

The Eversource Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project continues in Sudbury. Previously installed fallen logs and/or snags remain in place. Brush piles are pending installation. SWCA will continue with monthly inspections of the Project area until Vernal pool season during which weekly inspections will be conducted. SWCA will submit the next six-month wildlife habitat features report in June 2024.