



University of
New Hampshire

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Cooperative Extension

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New London Conservation Commission
ATTEN: Robert Brown
c/o Town of New London
375 Main Street
New London, NH 03257

Dear Mr. Brown,

Leo Maslan asked if I would provide a letter of support to his request for a variance to the NH Basal Area Law that he is submitting to the NH Division of Forest and Lands for wildlife habitat enhancement work he is planning on the Low Plain Forest owned by the Town of New London.

I visited the proposed project area with Leo and Tim Fleury, the UNH Cooperative Extension Forester in Merrimack County, on April 15, 2016 for the purpose of identifying opportunities to improve foraging habitat for beavers adjacent to the existing beaver pond on the property. During the fall and winter, hardwood saplings are the preferred food of beavers and the availability of this food can determine whether beavers remain within a wetland or abandon it. Since the one of the objectives for the property is to encourage the beavers to remain in this wetland so they will continue to maintain their dam (which influences the wetland depth and thus the habitat available for many other wildlife species), creating areas with abundant hardwood saplings adjacent to the wetland is a logical objective for any timber harvest being conducted near the wetland. Creating small (1/4 to 1 acre) clearcuts in areas of flat topography, dominated by hardwoods (e.g., red maple, aspen), and immediately adjacent to the wetland is the best method for quickly enhancing the availability of hardwood saplings for beavers. Once created, these clearcuts quickly regenerate with a flush of herbaceous plants that will be eaten by beavers during the spring and summer, and the cut stumps will quickly sprout to provide abundant saplings within a growing season or two.

During our visit, Leo, Tim and I walked most of the south-western edge of the beaver pond to identify specific areas that would be most appropriate for creating these small clearcuts. We identified four different areas, each 1/2 to 1 acre in size that could be cut to create beaver food, without resulting in any expected adverse effects to the adjacent wetland. Each clearcut should extend from the forest and to the immediate edge of the water, to the extent that the logging equipment is able to remove the trees following all established best management practices for avoiding impacts to wetland soils. I expect this work will enhance habitat not only for beavers, but also provide nesting habitat for song sparrows and yellow warblers, and enhance feeding habitat for moose, deer, bears, red-backed voles, gray foxes, mink, and barred owls.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can provide any additional assistance on this project (matt.tarr@unh.edu, 603-953-4425).

Sincerely,



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