


From: bill.weale@builderman.com 
Subject: RE: Docs requested
Date: November 2, 2022 at 10:36 AM
To:

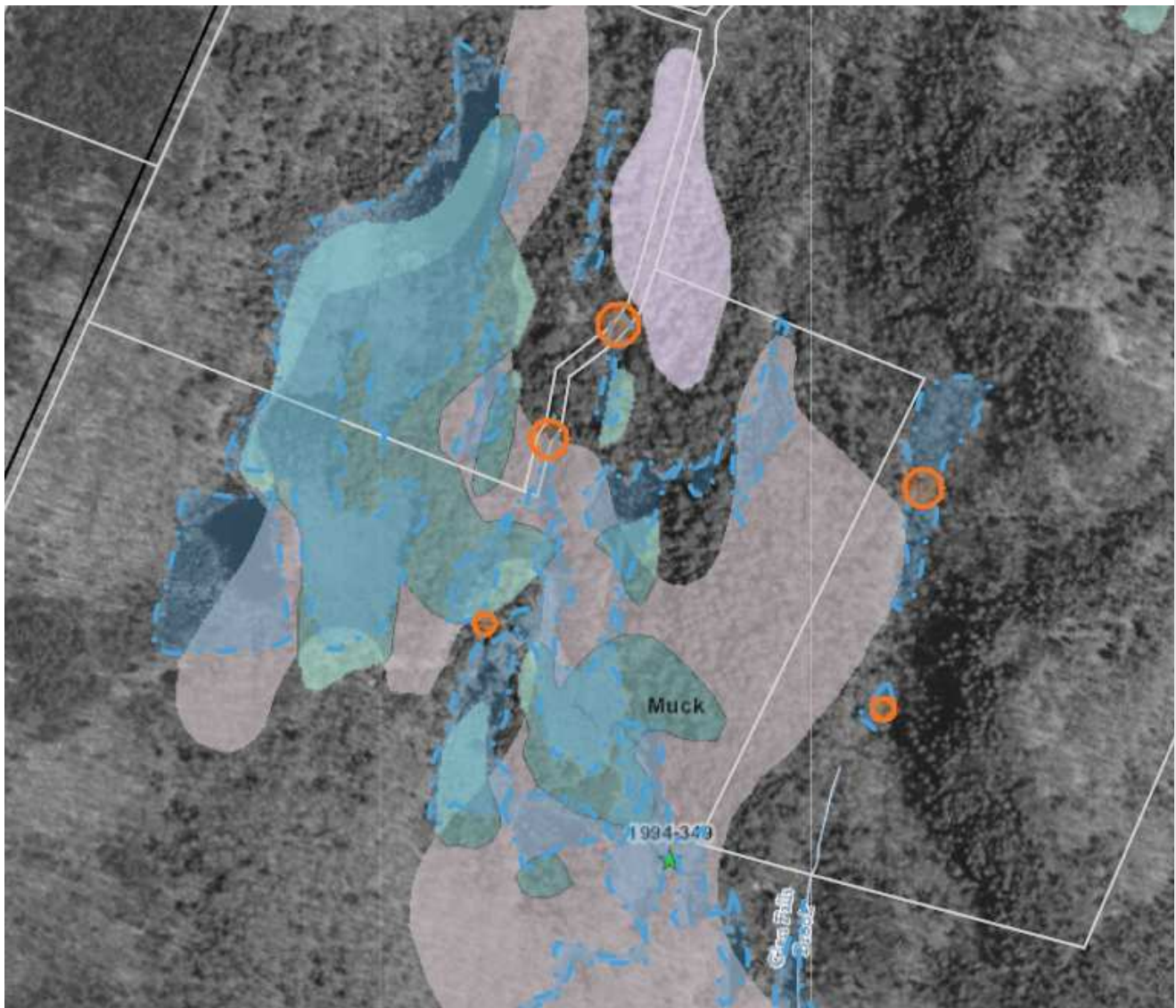


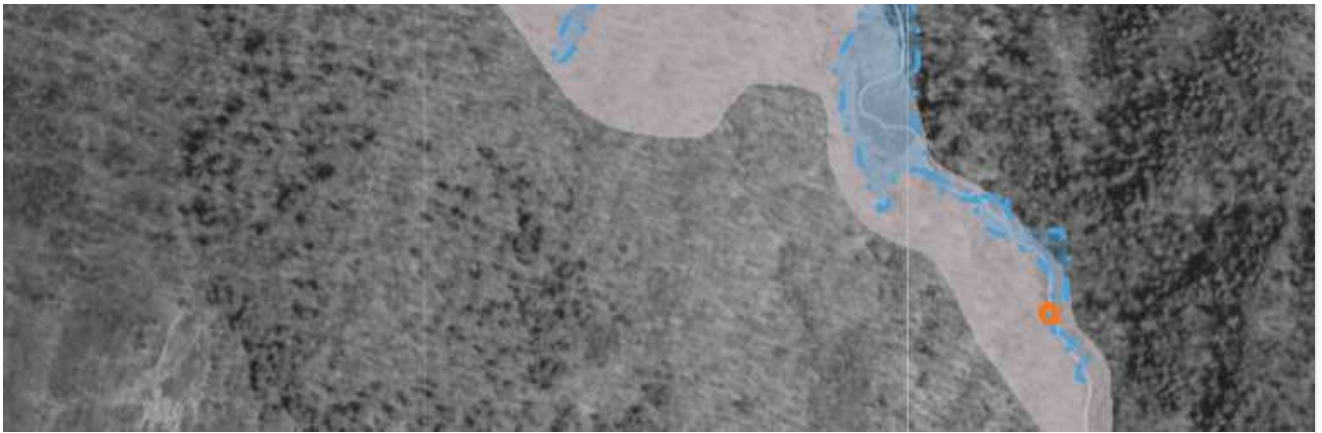
From: Follensbee, Julie

Sent: Friday, February 11, 2022 4:11 PM
To: Fairlee Town Administrator <townadministrator@fairleevt.org>
Subject: RE: Docs requested

Hello,

I visited the Fairlee Town Forest in June and August of 2021. I focused my visits on trail areas in or near wetlands. I have approximately sketched some of the Class II wetlands on the property (in blue dash) on the map below based on my visits and desktop review. The teal polygons are mapped VSW wetlands, and the light brown/pink areas are mapped hydric soils which are poorly drained soils often associated with wetlands. The orange circles represent approximate locations of trail sections that I observed going through wetlands.





Class II significant wetlands and their 50 ft buffers are protected under the Vermont Wetland Rules (VWR). Any activity in the wetland or 50ft buffer zone may need a Vermont Wetland Permit before you start work.

I observed areas where trail activities (primarily motorized traffic) are creating rutting which alters hydrology and/or sediment discharge to the wetland. I recommend that the Town consider options to prevent additional alteration to these wetlands that could include limiting motorized traffic, trail rerouting, or trail closing during some or all times of the year. I also recommend you follow the guidance provided by VT FPR staff to prevent further degradation and discharges from the steeper road sections draining to wetlands.

Our roads guidance is applicable to many of these trails and is particularly relevant in the areas that I have circled where old woods roads are somewhat indistinguishable from the wetlands. Our jurisdiction for improving roads in wetlands depends on the current condition and/or the original construction of the road. If the road is in reasonably good shape, and does not require significant improvement to use it as is (maybe just replacing culverts to maintain it) a permit may not be required. If the road is naturalized (has grown up into woody vegetation); is more of a "travel way" (no constructed road bed) vs. a constructed feature that would need to be upgraded; or if significant improvement such as fill, ditching or changing the water regime is needed for the new proposed use, these activities may require a wetland permit.

You can find more about the nuances of how roads are treated in the Vermont Wetland Rules here:

<https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/wetlands/docs/VWRRoads2017.pdf>

and about the maintenance allowed use here:

https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/wetlands/docs/VWR_6-12_AllowedUse_2020.pdf

If you are considering new trails or trail relocation, we have guidance on trail siting and construction. Low impact trails, ones that only require raking duff away, or are footpaths, may be considered allowed uses in wetlands and buffer zones. Boardwalks and cat-walks below 5-feet in width are also considered an allowed use if they follow best management practices and do not involve any dredging, draining, filling, grading within the wetland or 50 feet from the wetland. Any trail work that requires grading (such as machine-groomed mountain bike trails), filling (such as sure-matt or gravel on the surface), draining (such as ditching), or cutting woody vegetation for clearance in wetland or buffer would require a permit from our program. The first step is to determine if you have wetlands within the proposed trail system. This may require a site visit from our program or a wetland delineation from a consultant so that you can understand where wetlands are in relation to the project. You can find more here:

https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/wetlands/docs/WTI_D_TrailGuidance.pdf

https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/wetlands/docs/vt_wl_maintenance.pdf
https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/wetlands/docs/wl_catwalk_bmp.pdf

If I can assist the town by answering questions or providing guidance for specific issues, please let me know.

Regards,

Julie



Julie Follensbee | District Wetlands Ecologist

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Watershed Management Division, Wetlands Program

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