

Please add this letter to the official record for the public hearing on Ledyard Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission permit application (IWWC#25-19SITE) ("Lambtown Road Ext. culvert replacement with new custom inlet control structure at Ed Lamb Brook")."

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November 14, 2025 Land Use Department

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission
Town of Ledyard
741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339

Re: IWWC Application #25-19SITE ("Lambtown Road Ext. culvert replacement with new custom inlet control structure at Ed Lamb Brook").

Dear Commission Members:

We oppose this application and urge you to DENY this permit application (IWWC#25-19SITE) for the reasons explained below.

The James C. Lamb Family Trust (Lamb Trust) owns 40 and 60 Lambtown Road, properties that are adjacent to Lambtown Road Extension (the Road), a colonial-era dirt road which runs through wetlands at the application's proposed work area. The town proposed project will (1) insert a new, additional drainage device into the open water of 40 Lambtown Road's 38-acre watercourse, (2) excavate an 800 SF area, depth unspecified, hole into an earthen dam and wetlands, and (3) drain and discharge large quantities of water from this watercourse onto 60 Lambtown Road wetlands and into Ed Lamb Brook. Part of the 38-acre Marsh Complex (i.e., open water, aquatic beds, vernal pools, emergent marsh, and bog (a CT Critical Habitat, "twenty-five rare and specialized wildlife habitats in the state")) and the wetlands complex are owned by Lamb Trust, with the Avery Farm Nature Preserve portion owned by Groton Open Space Association (GOSA). We are not merely adjacent landowners. We are the landowners from whose land this project is designed to drain water and onto whose land this project is designed to discharge water. Since at least the 1950's, and decades before beavers populated the area, (1) the Marsh Complex has had a huge open water area, and (2) water levels in the Marsh Complex have been feet higher than the level of the existing culvert invert (floor) – in order to provide habitats for birds and wildlife. For decades, local residents used the open water area every winter for ice skating and hockey. Water has been available for the Ledyard Fire Department to fight fires. Water has also been used for farm irrigation.

The application is incomplete and inaccurate. It fails to include required critical information about the risks and significant negative impacts to a privately-owned 38-acre Marsh Complex and associated wetlands.

IWWC Regulations require the IWWC to take into consideration all relevant facts and circumstances including the **environmental impact of the proposed regulated activity on wetlands or water courses**; the applicant's **purpose for the proposed regulated activity**; the **maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity** of such wetlands or water courses; **irreversible and irretrievable loss of wetland or water course resources** caused by the proposed regulated activity, and **mitigation measures for impacts of the proposed regulated activity on wetlands or water courses outside the area for which the activity is proposed**, the possibility of further **avoiding reduction of the wetland's or water course's natural capacity to support desirable biological life**, measures which would mitigate the impact of any aspect of the proposed regulated activity include, but are not limited to, actions which would avoid adverse impacts or lessen impacts to wetlands and water courses and which could be feasibly carried out by the applicant and would **protect or enhance the wetland's or water course's natural capacity to support fish and wildlife**. (IWWC Regulations section 10.2). Watercourses include brooks, marshes, bogs, vernal pools, and ponds (IWWC regulations section 2.1).

The IWWC can **deny** an application for a regulated activity in an area outside wetlands or water courses on the basis of an impact or effect on aquatic, plant, or animal life if such activity will likely impact or affect the physical characteristics of such wetlands or water courses (IWWC Regulations section 10.5). This project will likely affect the physical characteristics of the 38-acre Marsh Complex and associated wetlands.

A licensed civil engineering firm has determined that the proposed project will drain water from and permanently lower the water level in the 38-acre Marsh Complex on our property by as much as 3 feet. Using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology, the civil engineers estimate that dropping the water level by only 0.5 feet will decrease the surface water area of the Marsh Complex from the current approximately 21.0 acres (17 acres of open water, plus 4 acres of standing water on adjacent watercourses/wetlands) to 11.5 acres (a 45% decrease). The application fails to state that the purpose of this project is to drain water from the 38-acre Marsh Complex on our property and discharge the water into wetlands on our property. The application does not include water surface elevations before, during, and after the project. A licensed civil engineering firm, H+H Engineering Associates (Mystic, CT) (HHEA), reviewed the application and conducted a site visit. They determined that the current surface elevation of the Marsh Complex water (199.5 feet) is approximately 3 feet above the invert (floor) of the proposed pipe (196.4 feet) and above the invert of the existing culvert pipe (196.4 feet). The town's claim that this project will not affect water levels in the Marsh Complex is not

credible. The town's claim appears to be based on the plans showing the proposed discharge culvert as having a size, pitch, and elevation equal to the existing culvert. However, as discussed above, the town's failure to include surface water elevation data causes the application to be seriously misleading.

The amount of water that the town plans to drain from and discharge onto our property may be staggering. HHEA estimated the current water surface area in the Marsh Complex using LiDAR map technology. Their estimate of the current surface water elevation in the marsh is 199.5 feet, with an estimated 21.0 acres of water surface area (17 acres of open water plus 4 acres of standing water on adjacent wetlands/watercourses). By decreasing the current water elevation by only 0.5 feet to 199.0 elevation feet, the estimated water surface area would drop by 9.5 acres, from 21.0 acres to 11.5 acres – a 45% decrease! (9.5 acres of water dropping by one-half foot results in 1,547,794 gallons drained and released!) The town's application would cause a drop in surface water elevation of approximately 3 feet, to 196.4 feet (level of new culvert invert (floor)). The civil engineers cannot estimate how much, if any, open water surface would exist at 196.4 feet because the application does not include marsh bottom elevations or bottom contours. The engineers cannot determine the volume of water that would be drained and discharged because the application does not include enough information. However, it appears likely from the information that we do have that much more than 1.5 million gallons of water would be drained and discharged by this project. Therefore, the proposed project will cause a significant impact on the Marsh Complex and associated wetlands by permanently lowering the water level by approximately 3 feet, and severely decreasing, if not eliminating altogether, the open water area.

Because the application does not provide for coffer dams, the water levels will be lowered significantly more during construction. The engineers concluded that unless a coffer dam is installed to minimize seepage and maintain marsh water, the construction will result in the temporary lowering of the marsh water surface elevation to the marsh bottom. This water will be drained from the Marsh Complex on our property and discharged onto wetlands on our property.

The application does not include marsh bottom elevations, bottom contours, and flow rates. Because of this lack of information, HHEA was not able to determine the volume of water to be drained and discharged during construction. However, because the application does not include this information and does not include plans for coffer dams to protect water levels during construction, water levels would drain to the marsh bottom, which would drain and discharge huge volumes of water. Would this drain and discharge 1.5 million gallons, 10 million gallons? More? The application does not provide the critical information needed to know. While the application's failure to include critical information prevents the engineers from determining

exact amounts, it is clear that the amount of water drained and discharged will be staggeringly large. The town's claim that the project will not result in changes in water levels, water drainage, or water discharge is not credible. The surface water area of the Marsh Complex could be decimated and decreased from its current 21 acres to perhaps as little as zero (and marsh bottom during construction). The risks to the Marsh Complex and effects of the project cannot be determined and properly evaluated because the applicant has not provided the required information necessary.

A large release of water from the Marsh Complex may cause flooding of downstream properties. Houses at 57 Lambtown Road Extension (Ledyard) and 50 Quaker Farm Road (Groton) appear to be at highest risk. Our property at 60 Lambtown Road will flood. Even if the project relocates Ed Lamb Brook to discharge water onto GOSA-owned property, the water will flow the few feet downhill onto our property.

A licensed civil engineering firm (HHEA) determined that the proposed project will impact a significantly larger area of wetlands and watercourse than stated in the application. The application does not include soil samples to show whether wetland soils exist in the excavation area. The application does not include a complete rendering of the proposed device and ancillary structures to be installed. The application contains only a drawing of certain disassembled concrete pieces to be manufactured by a concrete company. The application does not include information about ancillary structures and devices, does not contain sufficient information to view the device and ancillary structure as a whole to determine how the watercourse and wetlands will be affected. For example, HHEA has determined that excavation upstream, structure wing walls, channel excavation into the marsh, and reconfiguring of the discharge area may be required. The application does not include information about these issues. HHEA also determined that erosion control measures are warranted. The application does not include erosion control measures, saying none are necessary. The application does not state what will happen to the existing 30-inch culvert after the project is completed (remain in place causing two 30-inch drainage pipes – doubling the existing drainage – or be removed, causing more work to occur in wetlands and watercourses). Because the application fails to contain sufficient information on these critical issues, the risk to and impact on watercourses and wetlands cannot be determined. More research and information from the applicant are needed to provide a complete and accurate application and to allow the IWWC to make the required "best possible fair and informed determination."

Summary of issues identified by licensed civil engineering firm (HHEA) in its letter and in discussions:

1. Application does not contain current surface water elevations, which show that the existing water level is approximately 3 feet above the proposed pipe invert (floor).

Device will cause the surface water elevation in the Marsh to decrease by approximately 3 feet.

2. LiDAR study shows that even a decrease of 0.5 feet from the current water surface elevation will cause the Marsh's water surface area to decrease from its current approximate 21.0 acres to 11.5 acres – a 45% decrease.
3. Application does not include an engineering report, calculations, or a wetlands impact report.
4. Application does not contain determination of flood water surface elevation, through hydrologic and hydraulic analysis of the watershed and hydraulic structures (culvert, etc.), which are typically completed to size the structures for a selected design storm.
5. Application does not contain coffer dam required to retain the marsh from draining to the marsh bottom and to minimize seepage into excavation.
6. Application does not state that Lambtown Road Extension acts as a dam. The application does not state that project seeks to install a water drainage device within a dam.
7. Application does not contain suitable discharge location and erosion control measures for dewatering of excavation, which will most likely be required.
8. Application does not contain information regarding base (e.g., crushed stone) for this structure, which will add an additional 0.5-1.0 feet of excavation depth.
9. Application does not contain outlet protection in accordance with CTDOT standards. The plan shows a different location from the existing culvert for the new discharge location, which implies that reconfiguration of the outlet area is required. This resulting earthwork warrants erosion control measures.
10. Plan does not identify the engineering firm or individual that designed the drainage project.
11. Plans are not signed or stamped by a licensed professional engineer.
12. Plan contains out-of-date information (from 2010).

This application seeks permission:

- to install a partially described, incomplete drawing of an unspecified and undetailed device,
- in a location to be determined (we have been told that Steve Masalin has said that he may move the device to a different location than shown on the application),
- to figure out what will be needed for the project after it is underway, in a manner to be determined (Steve Masalin has stated that he doesn't know what soils are in the location, so he will determine that and what support materials/structures are required after the project is underway),
- at a depth to be determined (no information given in application),

- with associated structures to be determined (the application does not show a completed device, only pieces to be manufactured by a concrete company),
- with a base depth and construction material and methods to be determined,
- with construction dewatering location and erosion control and discharge locations to be determined,
- with the project's effects on the water levels and water flow in the Marsh Complex, amount of water drained from and discharged onto our private property to be determined after project completion,
- without a method for establishing a solid foundation to prevent sinking of the nearly 10-ton structure into the wetlands and Marsh Complex edge, e.g., will town use fill, structural support, pilings? It is our understanding that the applicant has stated that he will devise a plan for the base after the project begins.
- with whether the project will be installed in wetlands soil to be determined,
- with the size of the project disturbance area to be determined,
- with whether this is a "replacement" of the existing culvert or an addition to the existing culvert (doubling the size from one 30-inch pipe to two 30-inch pipes) to be determined.

The application needs to include water level and flow rate studies to prove that the Marsh Complex will not suffer significant irreparable harm or be destroyed by draining large quantities of water from the Marsh Complex both permanently and during construction. We are not aware of any law or regulation that would allow the IWWC to accept an unsupported statement from an applicant to satisfy the requirement of showing no significant impact. It is important to note that, as with any IWWC application, the applicant cannot also serve as an expert to the Commission. This would be a conflict of interest (for example, see the Town Charter). An independent wetlands expert must be consulted by the Commission.

The Road is a dam as defined by Connecticut law. The Road is therefore subject to exclusive DEEP jurisdiction, and a DEEP permit application must be filed. The application does not state whether a DEEP permit application has been filed. The application does not state what measures will be necessary to protect the dam's structural integrity when a very large excavation into the side and base of the dam occurs. (Conn. General Statutes section 22a-401: "All dams, dikes, reservoirs and other similar structures, with their appurtenances, without exception and without further definition... which, by breaking away or otherwise, might endanger life or property shall be subject to the jurisdiction of [DEEP]..." The proposed device is a weir (small dam or water regulation device). The application proposes to install this weir inside the existing dam. CGS sec. 22a-403(a) requires that "Before any person constructs, alters, rebuilds, substantially repairs, adds to, replaces or removes any such structure, such person shall apply to the [DEEP] commissioner for a permit to undertake such work." DEEP

environmental permitting fact sheet webpage states “Any person or agency proposing to construct a dam, dike, reservoir or similar structure, or to repair, alter or remove an existing dam, dike reservoir or similar structure, must first obtain either a permit from the commissioner or a determination that such permit is not required. A permit is required if the structure, by breaking away or otherwise might endanger life or property. **Additionally, any other work that may affect the integrity of such a structure, such as excavation adjacent to the dam, may require a dam construction permit.**”

The Road is a colonial-era road created by dumping fill into wetlands. The USDA and CT DEEP soil maps show inland wetlands soils in the entire construction area of the proposed project. Because the application does not include soil types, it must be assumed that wetlands lie under the surface of the Road and will be disturbed by this project.

The proposed project area on Lambtown Road Extension runs through and acts as the edge of a 38-acre Marsh Complex (i.e., open water, aquatic beds, vernal pools, emergent marsh, and bog) on the west side and a large wetlands complex on the east side. The Road envelops and contains Ed Lamb Brook, which runs through the existing culvert at the proposed site. This project will drain water from the Marsh Complex watercourse, discharge a very large quantity of water onto adjoining wetlands, and change the course of Ed Lamb Brook watercourse. The project is scheduled from July to October. A registered soil scientist and ecologist has stated that “Summer draining is very disruptive. It allows colonization by woody plants of facultative wetlands, including red maple, whose shade will completely alter unique open bog communities. Impacts to fauna are also manifold.”

The application does not meet the requirements of the IWWC Regulations:

- The application does not contain information necessary for a fair and informed determination by the IWWC (IWWC Regulations section 7.3)(see discussion herein).
- The application does not include the impacts of draining a 38-acre watercourse and discharging the water onto wetlands. The IWWC must consider the “impacts of the proposed regulated activity on wetlands or watercourses outside the area for which the activity is proposed” (IWWC regulations, section 10.2). Therefore, even if the IWWC accepts the town’s claim that all work is to be within the town right-of-way, the IWWC is required to consider the negative impacts of draining water from a 38-acre Marsh Complex and discharging the water onto wetlands.
- Regardless of where the proposed device is located, its purpose and function are to drain water from Lamb Trust 40 Lambtown Road watercourses and discharge water onto 60 Lambtown Road Lamb Trust wetlands. Water does not observe property lines or road right-of-way lines created by humans. The town’s claim that no wetlands or watercourses will be affected by this proposed project is not credible (application states

zero feet of wetlands or watercourses will be affected). The town's claim that this proposed project will only impact the town road right-of-way is not credible.

- The application does not include all property owners' names (IWWC Regulations section 7.3.4). The proposed project and its significant impacts will occur on land not owned by the applicant. The project and/or its impacts will extend well beyond any town road right-of-way. Therefore, Lamb Trust and GOSA should have been notified of this application and have been allowed to submit materials and speak to the application. They are not simply adjacent landowners.
- The application lacks written consent of the landowners and conservation easement holders on which the activities are proposed (IWWC regulations, section 7.3.5). The Lamb Trust does not consent to any actions which would result in the temporary or permanent lowering of the water level in the Marsh Complex. The application does not include consent from DEEP and the United States, holders of conservation easements.
- The application does not include area in acres or square feet of the wetlands or watercourses to be disturbed (IWWC Regulations section 7.3.8(b)). As discussed above, the project will drain water from a 38-acre Marsh Complex, with 21 acres of open water. The project will discharge water onto private wetlands. The application states that 0 feet of wetlands, 0 feet of wetlands decrease, and 0 feet of disturbed area will be altered. This seems impossible since the Road is IN the Wetlands and IS the edge of the Marsh Complex (see Exhibit D, photo) and the Road surrounds Ed Lamb Brook at the culvert. The application claims seem impossible – given the large scope of the proposed project. In fact, at least 38 acres of wetlands/watercourses and Ed Lamb Brook could be altered by this proposed project.
- The application does not list soil types. (IWWC Regulations section 7.3.8(c)). See discussion above.
- The application does not include the functional purpose of the proposed activity (IWWC Regulations section 7.3.8(e)), which is to drain water from a 38-acre Marsh Complex and discharge it onto wetlands.
- The application does not include wetland vegetation (IWWC Regulations section 7.3.8(d)) that will be negatively impacted by draining the Marsh Complex and flooding wetlands.
- The application does not include proposed erosion and sedimentation controls (IWWC Regulations section 7.3.8(f)). HHEA has determined that erosion control measures are warranted and should be included.
- The application does not include a site plan showing activities associated with, or reasonably related to, the proposed regulated activity which may have an impact on wetlands or watercourses. (IWWC Regulations section 7.3.9(b)). The application does not show the planned permanent draining of water from a 38-acre Marsh Complex and the discharge of large amounts of water onto wetlands.
- The application does not include a completed DEEP reporting form (IWWC Regulations section 7.3.13).

- The application does not request permit approval to drain water from a 38-acre watercourse (the Marsh Complex) owned by Lamb Trust and GOSA.
- The application does not request permit approval for discharging quantities of water onto land owned by Lamb Trust and GOSA.
- The application does not request permit approval to change the current flow of a watercourse, i.e., Ed Lamb Brook, which runs through the road via the current culvert.
- The application does not address how the town will prevent this project from draining the 38-acre Marsh Complex watercourse, discharging a very large quantity of water onto adjoining wetlands, and changing the course of Ed Lamb Brook watercourse. (See Exhibit A, photo of Marsh Complex and Exhibit B, wetlands map.)
- The application erroneously describes the area on the west side of the Road in the proposed project area as a “pond” (plan submitted with application). In fact, that area consists of a Marsh Complex with areas of open water, aquatic beds (see Exhibit C, photo of aquatic beds), emergent marsh, bog, and vernal pools. (The vernal pools are located on the western edge and are not visible from the Road.) (See definitions in IWWC regulations section 2.1) This type of marsh complex is increasingly rare in CT and should be protected.
- The application does not state whether the existing culvert and beaver deceivers installed by the town will be left in place or removed. (Remain in place causing two 30-inch drainage pipes – doubling the existing drainage – or be removed, causing more work to occur in wetlands and watercourses).
- The application does not identify a method for establishing a solid foundation to prevent sinking of the nearly 10-ton structure into the wetlands and Marsh Complex edge, e.g., will town use fill, structural support, pilings?
- DEEP, US Fish and Wildlife (NAWCA), and Army Corps of Engineers permits may be required for the proposed project. NAWCA easements protect wetlands from negative impacts and degradation. The town’s proposal may cause negative impacts to the wetlands and watercourses that may violate this federal law. Federal law supersedes both state and local law. These permits should be applied for and approved before the IWWC considers the application in order to provide the IWWC significant and necessary information on which to base its deliberations and decision.
- The application does not specify what actions will be taken to minimize and mitigate environmental damage during the proposed project.
- The application does not include the number of gallons of water that the applicant proposes to drain, the rate at which the drainage would occur, and how long it would take for the Marsh Complex to refill (based on the flow rate and capacity of the tiny Ed Lamb Brook). This information is necessary to determine environmental impacts of the proposed project.

- The application does not contain sufficient detail to determine what the stream stabilization (shore stabilization) activities would include and how dirt roadside and native vegetation would be impacted and restored.
- It is important to note that the existing culvert has not “failed” as stated in the Oct. 7, 2025 IWWC meeting. It carried water from the 38-acre Marsh Complex and discharged it into the wetlands before, during and after the minor repair mentioned by the town. It continues to function now.

We submit that the proposal meets the criteria for “significant impact” (IWWC Regulations section 2.1).

We urge the Commission to deny this application because it lacks critical information required for a “fair and informed determination” by the Commission (IWWC Regulations, section 7.3). If complete and accurate information had been provided, it would be evident that this project:

1. Involves depositing or removing material which will or may have a substantial effect on the wetland or water course or on wetlands or water courses outside the area for which the activity is proposed. The HHEA findings clearly show that the planned excavation and installation will cause a devastating drop in watercourse size and depth, plus a huge discharge of water from a watercourse onto a wetland.
2. Will change the natural channel of Ed Lamb Brook.
3. Will substantially diminish the natural capacity of an inland wetland or water course to: support aquatic, plant or animal life and habitats; or perform other functions. See HHEA findings. The Ledyard Fire Department can use water in the Marsh Complex to fight fires. This ability will be diminished or destroyed with less or no water in the marsh.
4. Will likely cause substantial diminution of groundwater levels of the wetland or water course. See HHEA discussion.
5. Is likely to cause or has the potential to cause pollution of a wetland or watercourse because erosion controls are not included. See HHEA discussion.
6. Will damage or destroy unique wetland or watercourse areas or such areas having demonstrable scientific or educational value. This project will significantly lower the existing water level in the Marsh Complex permanently by approximately 3 feet, and down to Marsh bottom during construction. It will decrease the water surface area by more than 45%, the open water area perhaps down to zero. It will cause the discharge of huge quantities of water from watercourses onto wetlands.

These are all significant negative impacts to the Marsh Complex and wetlands located on our property. It is clear from the information provided by licensed civil engineers and wetland scientists that the proposed project will have a significant negative impact on wetlands and watercourses. The applicant’s failure to provide relevant information resulted in a finding of no

significant impact by the IWWC. For that reason, we submit that the application should now be denied.

There are feasible alternatives to this project, e.g., use the culvert design used by DEEP in other watercourses in the state that have beavers; hire a civil engineer and wetlands scientist to conduct the required research necessary to determine the appropriate design, depth, grade, placement, pipe invert, installation, and water flow measures to replace the existing culvert while protecting the Marsh Complex, water levels, and associated wetlands; using coffer dams during construction.

The Marsh Complex and associated wetlands are ecologically valuable, unique, and support abundant species and numbers of birds, turtles, amphibians, animals and plants. Every day, many people from Ledyard, the region, and beyond enjoy the environmental, recreational, and educational value of this increasingly rare type of area. Protecting these wetlands and watercourses is supported by:

- **The state of CT**, which gave GOSA a \$611,000 grant to buy the Avery Farm Nature Preserve protecting it forever, and placed a permanent conservation easement on the property.
- **CT's Natural Diversity Database** (which shows "locations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species and significant natural communities in CT") covers the Road and surrounding areas of Marsh Complex, wetlands, and bog (see Exhibit E, Diversity Database map).
- **The United States**, which through its Fish and Wildlife Service's North American Wetlands Conservation Act (dedicated to the conservation of wetland habitats for migratory birds), gave GOSA a grant to buy the Avery Farm Nature Preserve protecting it forever, and placed a permanent conservation easement on the property to protect the wetlands and watercourses forever. "Projects made possible through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act will protect, restore and enhance wetlands, providing habitat for migratory birds and many other species of wildlife, improving water quality and providing recreational opportunities for all." (8-4-2025 Dept. of Interior press release)
- **The Ledyard IWWC Regulations**, which state "... the purpose of these regulations [is] to protect the citizens of the state by ... preventing loss of fish and other beneficial aquatic organisms, wildlife and vegetation and the destruction of the natural habitats thereof; ... protecting the quality of wetlands and water courses for their conservation, economic, aesthetic, recreational and other public and private uses and values; ... in order to forever guarantee to the people of the state, the safety of such natural resources for

their benefit and enjoyment and for the benefit and enjoyment of generations yet unborn.” (section 1.1)

- **Open Space Conservation Plan** for the Town of Groton CT (revised June 2024) states that local and state agencies have been advised to ensure that Haley Brook Watershed (which covers the Marsh Complex, Ed Lamb Brook, and associated wetlands) receive protection status.
- **Town of Ledyard Plan of Conservation & Development**, (approved by the Ledyard Planning & Zoning Commission on 2/13/2020; Effective Date: 2/27/2020). The presence of wetlands ... contributes to a rural characteristic that **residents express a desire to protect and preserve** (p. 11); protect high value open space to protect and sustain habitats, natural resources, and recreation areas; encourage passive recreation areas, and wildlife corridors; **protect watercourses, wetlands and vernal pools**, which benefits both natural habitat as well as critical water supplies; **Vernal pools and their surrounding habitat are key to maintaining biodiversity**. Flood plains are integral in conveying water during times of heavy rain and depletion of their flood conveyance capacity will have a negative impact on downstream properties. Landowners and developers **should be encouraged to protect these areas** as much as possible. (p.55). Preserve streams, ponds, and other wetland areas to perform natural functions of conveying, storing and filtering stormwater as a natural stormwater management system. The health of surface waters is affected by water diversions and wetlands alterations. (p.59)
- **CT Audubon Society’s 2024 CT State of the Birds**, which states that: Habitat Loss and Degradation: Land development and wetland destruction and damage result in an untold number of bird deaths and cause lasting changes to bird habitat. Scientists have identified that habitat loss is the biggest overall driver of bird declines, according to the American Bird Conservancy. (p. 5)
- **The Ledyard Conservation Commission** advocates protecting the high-quality wildlife habitat in this general area under all circumstances by providing adequate water levels. (May 24, 2011 letter to Steve Masalin from Conservation Commission)

Area Background and Wetlands Information

Lambtown Road Extension is a valuable and unique resource for Ledyard, the state, and the US. It truly is a Scenic Road, so designated by the Planning Commission in 1984. The habitat on each side of the road, the Marsh Complex, and the wetlands create a remarkable, diverse, and sensitive wildlife, bird, and plant habitat. The Marsh Complex is part of the Haley Brook Watershed (flows into Long Island Sound).

Since at least the 1950's the Marsh Complex has been managed by the Avery and Lamb families to maintain high quality wetlands and watercourses to benefit the many people who enjoy the Marsh Complex area and the many birds, animals, and plants that depend on it for survival. The water levels were regulated to maintain levels higher than the invert (floor) of the existing culvert – in order to provide maximum habitat for birds and wildlife.

The value in protecting the Marsh Complex and its water levels for human recreation is evidenced by the many people who use the Road daily, the area's inclusion as a hot spot on Cornell University's National Birding Hotspots Website, and inclusion of the Road in the national hiking website AllTrails.

The wetlands (through which the Road runs) and the Marsh Complex (adjacent to a portion of the Road) have unique wildlife value. For example, more than 168 bird species have been identified, 19 of which are on the state list of endangered, threatened, or special concern species. Numerous turtles, beavers, local and migratory birds, ducks, amphibians, fish, vernal pool species, reptiles, insects and other mammals depend on this wetland, and would be harmed if the 38-acre Marsh Complex is drained.

Numerous vernal pools, sensitive to any decreases in marsh water levels, occur near the Marsh Complex. The CT DEEP and the US Army Corps of Engineers consider vernal pools a "high conservation concern," a special and sensitive wetland type that requires extra protection. A series of vernal pools occur along the fringe of the Marsh Complex as well as in the adjacent areas abutting the northwesterly boundary of the Marsh Complex. These vernal pools were confirmed breeding sites for obligate vernal pool amphibians including the Spotted Salamander and Wood Frog. "These pools are hydrologically connected via surface water and groundwater to the overall marsh system surrounding Ed Lamb Brook. ... [A] marsh [water] drawdown has the potential to decrease the vernal pool hydroperiod (i.e., depth and duration of standing water). A prolonged and annually consistent hydroperiod is critical to the development and survival of vernal pool amphibian larvae. If the hydroperiod is shortened, the vernal pool may dry too early in the season, before amphibian larvae can fully develop. This can result in extirpation of individual breeding pools over time." Water drawdowns also negatively affect aquatic vegetation and may cause outbreaks of invasive plants. Consequently, for any project involving lowering water levels in the Marsh Complex, an impact analysis should be conducted to assess impacts to wildlife, plants, and habitat from this proposed project. Such an analysis cannot be conducted without a detailed site plan illustrating clearing limits, wetland impacts and existing and proposed water surface elevations.

The Marsh Complex contains five habitat types: open water, aquatic beds (e.g., pond lilies and other hydrophytic vegetation), vernal pools, bog, and emergent marsh. Marshes of this size and character are "less common and increasingly rare" in CT. This is a pristine area with very limited

invasive plants and no purple loosestrife – very unusual in CT in this type of habitat. Dr. Robert Askins, Katherine Blunt Professor of Biology (retired), Connecticut College has stated “Based on my experience, I judge the site in and around [the proposed project area], with its extensive marsh system and mosaic of upland forests, fields, and wooded wetlands, to be one of the most biologically diverse and valuable sites for conservation in eastern Connecticut.”

The Ed Lamb Brook, which feeds this large wetland/watercourse system, is a tiny stream. Consequently, the recovery of such a large 38-acre Marsh Complex and wetland would take months or years – if they ever recovered. Many animals that cannot walk or fly away would likely die – either from killing by predators that would no longer be stopped by the water, or from freezing due to removal of the protective layer of water that keeps them and the mud from freezing.

It is important to note that Lambtown Road Extension is a Town Scenic Road, and any alterations must be approved by the Planning Commission (see Ledyard Scenic Road Ordinance). In a 2012 Planning Commission public hearing regarding the road, almost all of the nearly 100 people and organizations that commented requested that the water level in the Marsh Complex be maintained.

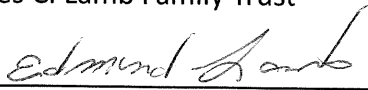
We could support the idea of replacing the existing culvert, BUT ONLY IF the new culvert and associated structures appropriately maintain the levels of water in the Marsh Complex and wetlands (during construction and permanently) evidenced over recent years, do not cause additional water to be drained from the Marsh Complex, do not cause additional water to be discharged onto wetlands, contain appropriate protections for the Marsh Complex, wetlands, and Ed Lamb Brook, and comply with IWWC Regulations and all other applicable laws.

For all of the reasons discussed above, we urge the Commission to deny this application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James C. Lamb Family Trust

By: 
Edmund Lamb, co-trustee
47 Lambtown Road, Ledyard, CT 06339

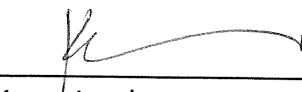
By: 
Karen Lamb, co-trustee
34 Lambtown Road, Ledyard, CT 06339

Exhibit A : 38-acre Marsh Complex (partial view)

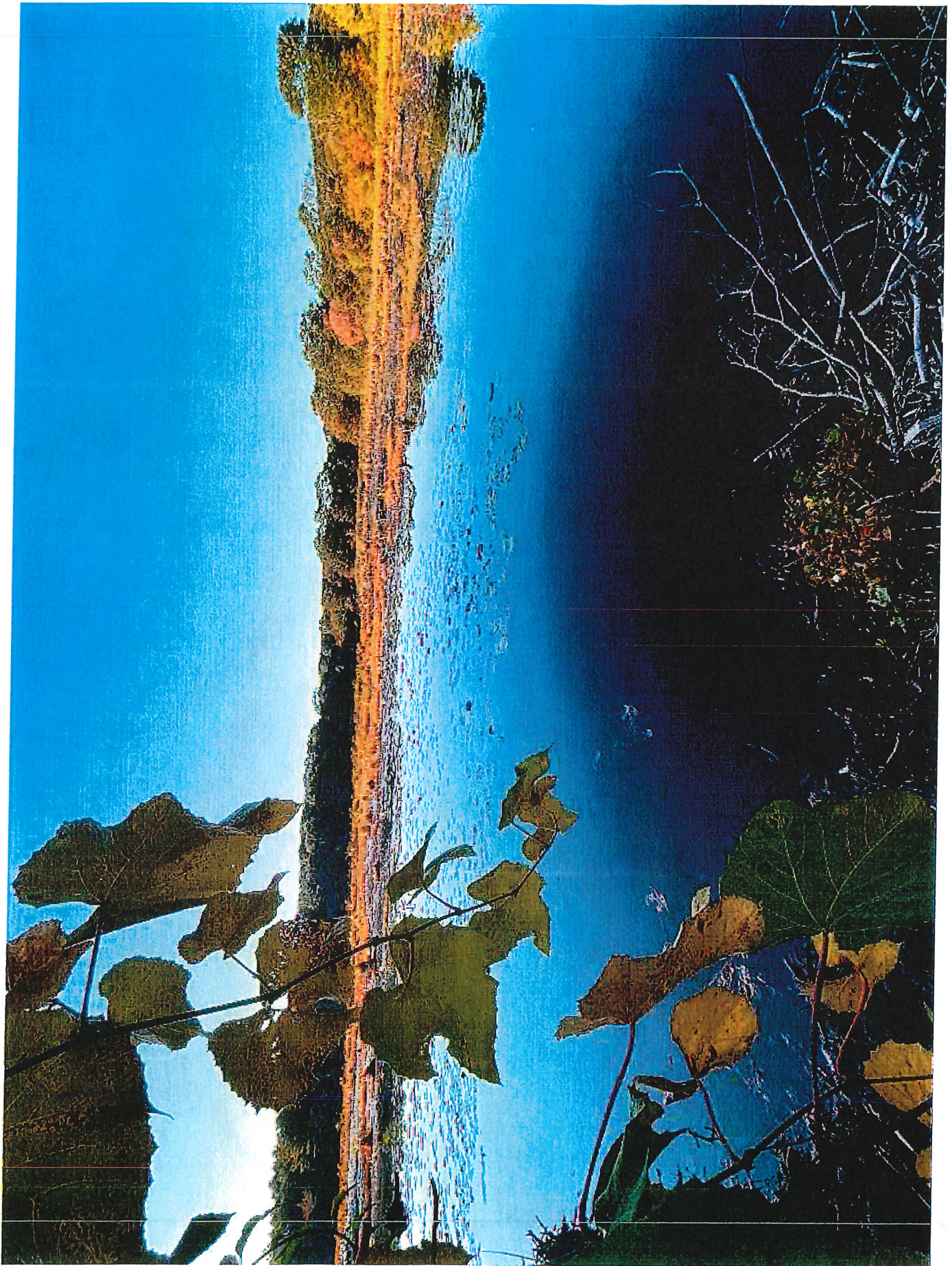


Exhibit B: Wetlands Map



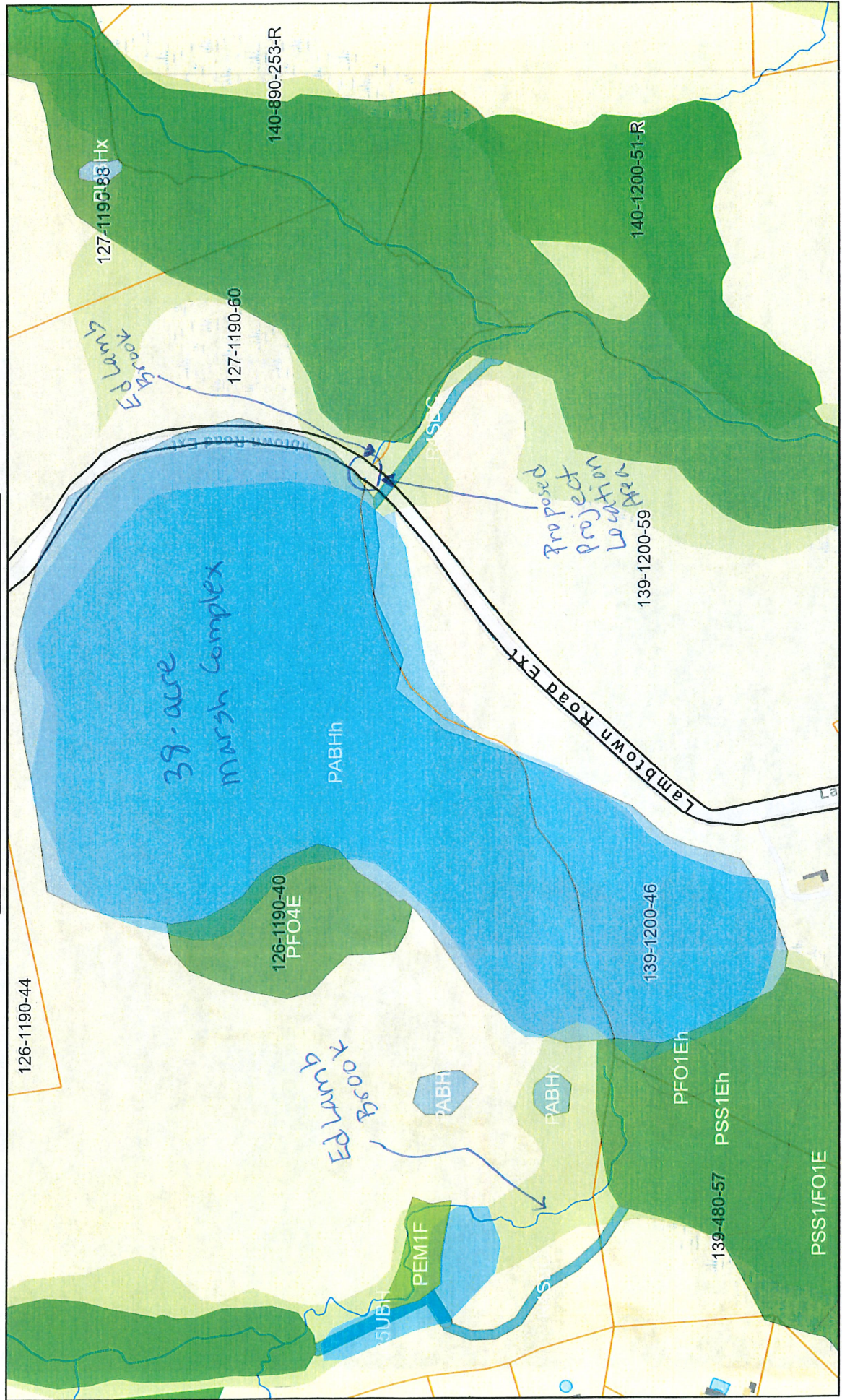
October 7, 2025

Ledyard, CT

1 inch = 283 Feet



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Exhibit C: Water lilies growing in 38-acre
marsh complex

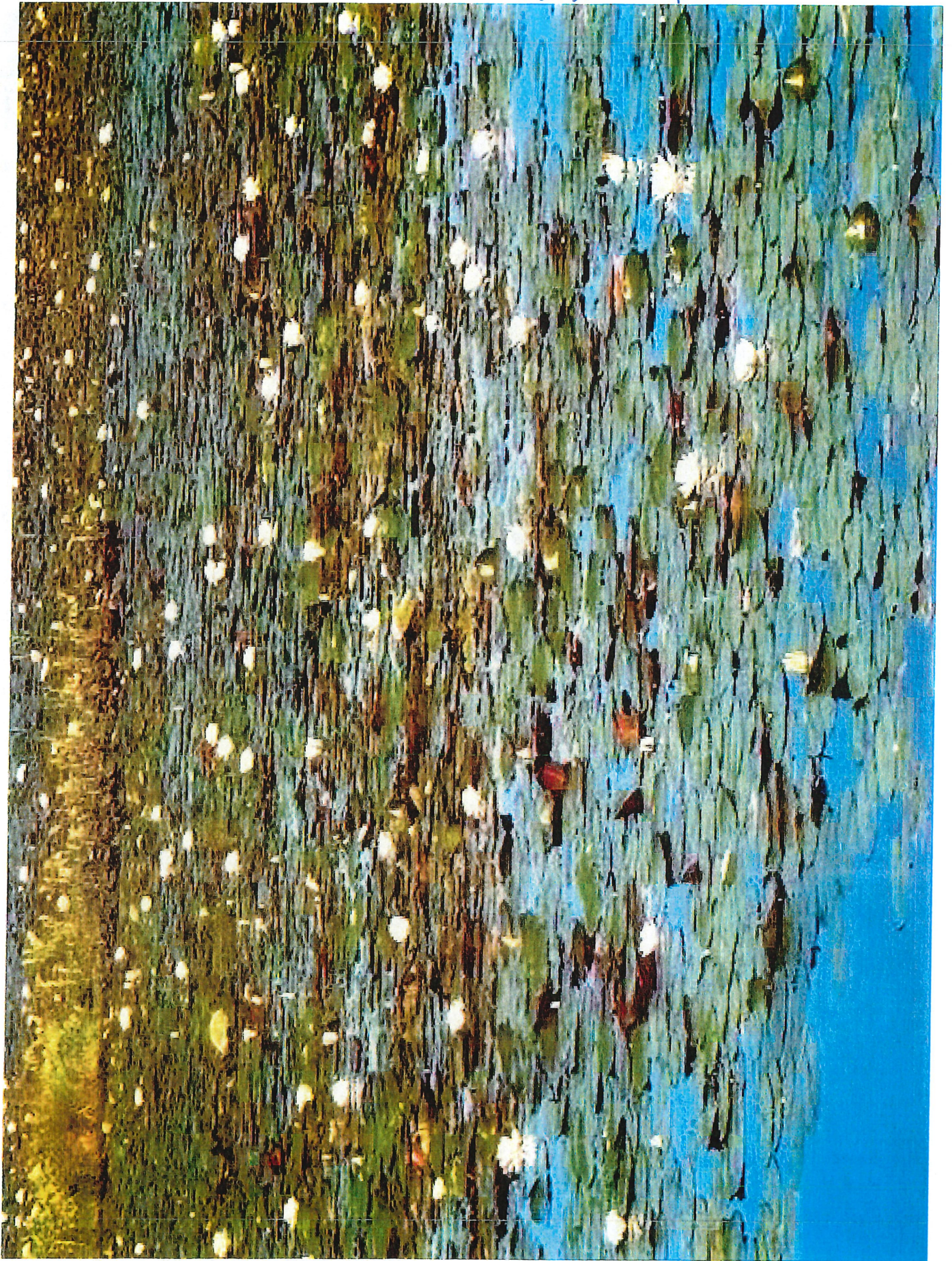


Exhibit D : Edge of 38-acre Marsh Complex
abuts Lambtown Road Extension (dirt road)






October 7, 2025

Ledyard, CT

1 inch = 283 Feet

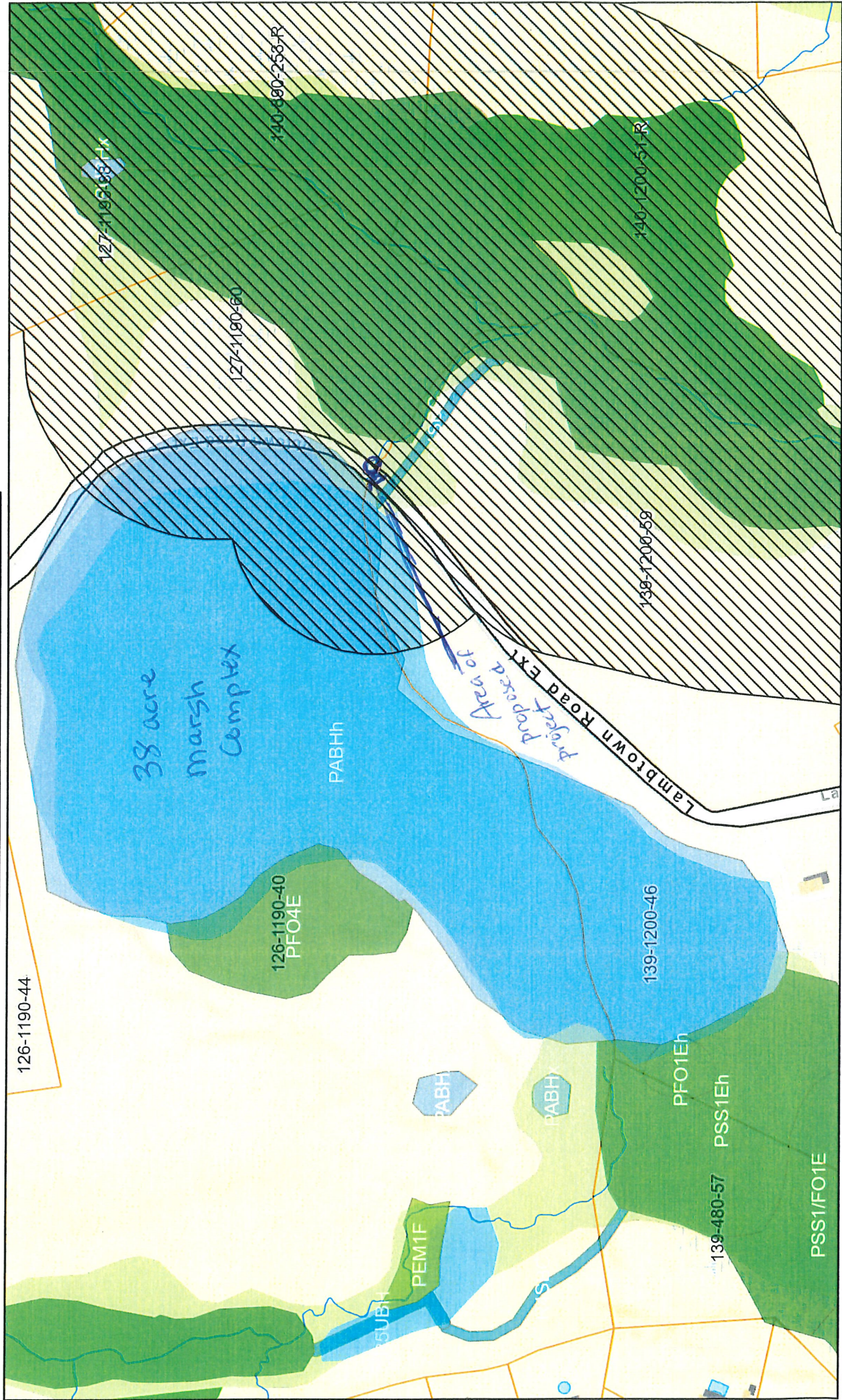


 = area included in CT Natural Diversity Database



Precision Mapping, Geospatial Solutions

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Exhibit E: CT Natural Diversity Database Map

