

MEMORANDUM

Maine Natural Areas Program

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
State House Station #177, Augusta, Maine 04333

Date: October 30, 2019

To: Jim Beyer, DEP

From: Kristen Puryear, Ecologist

Re: Rare and exemplary botanical features, New England Clean Energy Connect, Beattie Pond Alternative Corridor, Merrill Strip Twp, Maine.

I have searched the Maine Natural Areas Program's Biological and Conservation Data System files for rare or unique botanical features in the vicinity of the proposed line alternative for Beattie Pond in Merrill Strip Twp request received October 3, 2019 for our agency's comments on the project.

According to our current information, there are no rare botanical features that will be disturbed within the project site. This finding is available and appropriate for preparation and review of environmental assessments, but it is not a substitute for on-site surveys.

Comprehensive field surveys do not exist for all natural areas in Maine, and in the absence of a specific field investigation, the Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) cannot provide a definitive statement on the presence or absence of unusual natural features at this site. However, MNAP concurs with TRC (see page 7 of Mark Christopher's 20-page letter to Gerry Mirabile) that it is unlikely that there are rare natural communities along the Alternative Corridor in Merrill Strip Twp. One minor note is that MNAP data (rare plants and rare and exemplary natural communities) were not included in the GIS database search mentioned on pages 1 and 2, as these features are not part of the MDEP or MDIFW databases that were searched. Also, the title for Table 1 on pages 2 and 3 should be changed to say, "Rare Plants and Rare and Exemplary Natural Communities Documented..." (vs. RTE & SC Flora).

The Maine Natural Areas Program is continuously working to achieve a more comprehensive database of exemplary natural features in Maine. We welcome the contribution of any information collected if a site survey is performed.

Thank you for using the Maine Natural Areas Program in the environmental review process. Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have further questions about the Natural Areas Program or about rare or unique botanical features at this site.