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REPORT FROM SITE VISIT TO ASSESS VERNAL POOLS
NORTHERN AVE, NORTHAMPTON
AUGUST 18, 2007

On August 18, 2007 I visited the property off Northern Avenue where a development is planned. The property is owned by Doug Kohl and he accompanied me on the site visit. The purpose of the visit was to determine whether vernal pools are present on the property and if so, where they are located.

The property is mostly flat and a large portion is forested wetland. Water was absent in all of the wetland visited today. Most of the wetland includes ground vegetation such as poison ivy, royal fern and cinnamon fern. There are some areas within the wetland that are unvegetated, with only mud and a small amount of woody debris on the ground. In some of these unvegetated areas I found shells of fingernail clams (family Sphaeriidae, also known as Pisidiidae) and amphibious snails from two different families: Lymnaeidae and Planorbidae. All of these species are vernal pool indicators when found in a dry basin. Therefore these areas meet the definition of vernal pools. Besides the two mollusks, no other facultative or obligate vernal pool indicators were found.

Two of the areas where the mollusk shells were found were in discernible, though slight, depressions. Another area where they were found was a long narrow strip about two feet wide where no visible depression was observed. These areas had in common that ground vegetation was absent exposing the bare mud. There were also other areas of exposed mud where the mollusk shells were NOT found. These included the bed of an intermittent stream that runs to the culvert under the bike path.

Submitted by
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