



# New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau

Division of Forests & Lands - DNCR  
172 Pembroke Road, Concord, NH 03301  
(603) 271-2214 [www.nhdfl.org](http://www.nhdfl.org)

**To:** Commissioner Sarah L. Stewart  
**Via:** Brad Simpkins, Director Forests & Lands  
**From:** Sabrina Stanwood, Administrator  
**Date:** June 24, 2019  
**Subject:** Update to NHB Comments on Proposed Southern Connector OHRV trail at Nash Stream Forest

On June 20, 2019, Pete Bowman conducted a site visit to assess the natural communities adjacent to the proposed trail. Most of the upland forest is **sugar maple - beech - yellow birch forest**, along with some softwood stands of white pine, red spruce, or balsam fir, high likelihood is a result of past management activities.

In addition, an uncommon natural community type (S3) was identified on the east side of the Nash Stream Road, although it is not considered exemplary. There was an extensive area of groundwater seepage at the base of a steep slope is a **northern hardwood - black ash - conifer swamp**. This area is approximately 3 acres and it has not been mapped in the state's National Wetland Inventory (NWI) layer.

From June 11, 2019 memo:

The Milan Trail Huggers ATV club submitted a request for the Southern Connector OHRV trail at Nash Stream Forest in 2018. The trail would utilize an existing segment of the Nash Stream Road and the West Side Bridge over Nash Stream.

On June 20, 2018, NHB ecologist Pete Bowman inventoried a section of the forest along the West Side Loop Trail that would be impacted by the proposed new trail. The primary forest type is the **sugar maple - beech - yellow birch forest**. The trail also passes close to small beaver wetlands supporting a **drainage marsh - shrub swamp system**. No rare plants or exemplary natural communities were identified.

On June 6, 2019, Pete Bowman and members of the Nash Stream Management Plan Technical Team met on site to discuss the trail proposal, observe the site, and review the coarse and fine filter criteria. Team members walked across the West Side Bridge and up the trail to the intersection with the West Side Trail.

If the trail is approved, this will cause an increase in the volume of OHRV traffic. NHB is concerned that an increase in the volume of traffic will increase sediment and pollutants (e.g. oil and gasoline particles) runoff into the natural communities and wetlands along Nash Stream as well as the stream itself. An increase in sediment and pollutants negatively impacts the ecological integrity of the natural communities and wetlands along the trail, as well as water quality. An increase in OHRV traffic will also increase the likelihood of invasive plant species spreading into Nash Stream forest. This reduces the ecological integrity of the forest.



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It is important to learn more about the current volume of OHRV in Nash Stream forest. NHB recommends collecting data on OHRV use during statistically significant portions of the OHRV seasons and working closely with the Technical Team during planning and collecting of that data.

Thank you,  
Sabrina