



STATE-LISTED SPECIES HABITAT ASSESSMENT AND SURVEY

GUIDELINES: PLANTS

The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) may request a State-listed Species Habitat Assessment & Survey for imperiled plants. The assessment can be used by the applicant and the NHESP to minimize project or activity-related impacts to state-listed species and their habitats.

PRIOR TO THE ASSESSMENT AND SURVEY

- The NHESP must pre-approve the botanist who will conduct the assessment or survey. The botanist must demonstrate the ability to locate and identify the state-listed plant species and their habitat(s).
- The assessment and survey protocol must be pre-approved in writing by the NHESP and should address the entire project site, not just the portion within the proposed project "footprint". The methods and timing of survey for each imperiled plant should also be described in the protocol. Please note that multiple visits may be necessary for larger properties, certain plant species, and throughout the time period where the target plant is most detectable.
- If a botanist and/or the NHESP believes that specimens of a state-listed species must be collected for confirmation or vouchering, a "Scientific Collection Permit" will be required. For additional details, please refer to the Guidelines for Rare Plant Collection in Massachusetts (revised 9 February 2007).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- The final document must include the following:
 - Summary of survey methodology and a map of the survey area extent.
 - Cover Type Maps: As applicable to the species being surveyed, upland and wetland portions of the project site should be subdivided into land-use/land-cover types based upon dominant vegetation and existing development.
 - Existing Conditions: The description should include important site features such as existing developed or disturbed areas and detailed observation notes with a representative list of vascular plants. As applicable to the species being surveyed, vegetation and general habitat conditions should be described as outlined in the "Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts" (Swain & Kearsley 2001). The map should be overlaid on an ortho-photo (see MassGIS) of the project site with an indication of the scale.
 - Representative Photographs of the site. Please indicate on a map photograph locations and the cardinal direction of view.
 - Summary of the survey results including representative photographs of each target plant and those easily confused with the target plant.
 - Impact Analysis: A quantification, including calculations of acreages, of the impacts of the proposed project to target plants and their habitats. Additionally, recommendations should be provided for protective measures, potential design changes that avoid and/or minimize impacts, and possible mitigation if applicable.
 - A list of botanical references, herbaria, experts, and any other resources used for identifications or during surveys must also be included.
- If any state-listed species are observed, a Rare Animal or Plant Observation Form must be submitted to the NHESP within one month of the observation.
- Please submit one (1) paper copy and one (1) copy on CD of the final report to the NHESP.
 - If the full report is less than 4MB, you may email an electronic copy to the appropriate review biologist or assistant in lieu of sending a CD. Please be sure to include the NHESP Tracking number in the email. A paper copy should still be mailed to the office.

Mail Report To:

Regulatory Review
Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA 01581