



MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581
p: (508) 389-6300 | f: (508) 389-7890
MASS.GOV/MASSWILDLIFE

Feb 3, 2022

Sarah Mellish, Chair
Zoning Board of Appeals
c/o Town Hall
10 Central Street
Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944
zbachairperson@manchester.ma.us

Re: Sawmill Brook in Manchester-by-the-Sea

Dear Chairperson Mellish:

MassWildlife was approached by Manchester-Essex Conservation Trust regarding a proposed development on the banks of Sawmill Brook in Manchester-by-the-Sea. While we have not had the chance to closely review this particular project, and thus will not comment specifically on it, we would like to take the opportunity to outline the importance of Sawmill Brook and our concerns with riverfront development in general.

Sawmill Brook is a designated Coldwater Fish Resource (CFR) under Massachusetts regulation 321 CMR 5.00. This brook is one of only a handful remaining in northeastern Massachusetts that still provide adequate water quality (e.g., temperature) and habitat to be able to support populations of wild Brook Trout. Wild Brook Trout were found in electrofishing surveys in Sawmill Brook in 2007, 2008, and as recently as 2019. Cat Brook, a tributary to the Sawmill downstream of the proposed development, is another one of these rare wild trout resources. Furthermore, the mouth of Sawmill Brook offers Brook Trout limited access to saltwater habitat thus making the Sawmill/Cat Brook system extremely rare as the only potential sea-run Brook Trout habitat known along the North Shore. Because of this rare and unique status, Sawmill Brook is being considered for inclusion into the statewide list of Outstanding Resource Waters recognized by MassDEP.

In general, allowing a large development along any wild trout stream could have potentially negative impacts on water quality, streamflow, and instream habitat with concurrent negative impacts to the wild trout population in the system. Brook Trout require water temperatures consistently under 68 degrees Fahrenheit to reproduce, grow, and survive, so any additional stressors in the system that may lead to increased water temperatures are problematic. Major concerns with any development project are loss of riparian and upland forest cover followed by conversion to impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff, and increased water use.

Sincerely,

Adam Kautza | Coldwater Fisheries Project Leader
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA 01581
adam.kautza@mass.gov

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
MANCHESTER BY THE SEA
2022 FEB -7 AM 10:20

MASSWILDLIFE