

September 24, 2004

## **New Hampshire Department Of Transportation**

### **The Native Wildflower Establishment Program Using Conservation License Plate Funds**

#### **Program Objectives**

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The enhancement of New Hampshire's roadsides with the establishment of "Native Wildflowers sites" and "Lilac planting sites" throughout the state.

Inform and educate the public on planting, care and identification of wildflowers and lilacs.

Foster a positive attitude towards the State of New Hampshire and the Department of Transportation.

#### **Program Background**

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The Department has established wildflower fields and lilac plantings along our highways for many years. The success of these plantings has enlightened the public (both residents and tourist) and caused a ground swell of support through letters of approval to many state agencies, news media, along with elected officials. Also, furthering the cause is the assistance and involvement of the Garden Clubs and Schools from around the state. The Department of Transportation also sponsors wildflower and lilac talks, which are given by the Roadside Development Section. These talks have made available the latest technology regarding the procedures for properly installing wildflower and lilac sites. In summary, there are many reasons why the wildflower and lilac program has been very successful in New Hampshire but without doubt the Department of Transportation has been very instrumental in the promotion of wildflowers and lilacs.

With the passage of HB 627 laws of 1998, funds were made available through the sale of conservation license plates for expansion of the NHDOT wildflower program. These funds are distributed annually on July 1. The NHDOT shall receive \$5000.00 of every \$100,000.00 of plate sales up to a total of \$50,000.00. On July 1, 2004, the NHDOT received \$50,000.00 for expansion of the wildflower and lilac establishment program.

## **Native Wildflower Plantings**

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Native Wildflower plantings will be unique for the Department since it will include a wildflower mix consisting entirely of “Native Wildflowers”. It is customary to find these types of flowers in areas where there is partial shade/full shade, conditions which are wetter than normal, and in wooded areas. Since the Department will be trying to establish these flowers in open areas, for the public to view, this will continue to be an experimental type planting.

The fact still remains that a lot of Native Wildflowers are difficult to locate and if located are very expensive as compared to the mixes used in the past. Therefore, the bid prices for this type of planting will most likely be higher (than the present bids of the wildflower plantings around the state) due to many factors involved (availability of seed, survivability of the flowers, and the openness of the planting areas).

Currently, the planting of wildflowers occurs in the spring of each year as this has proven to be the most successful. The Department feels it would be important to maintain this planting schedule to allow these native flowers the best possible success.

### **2001 Native Wildflower Project Site**

Presently there are a number of plants visible throughout the site. In 2002 the planting showed a 90+% success rate. The Spring/Summer of 2003 was very encouraging many flowers were in bloom and the lupines were spectacular. In 2004 the flowers were just gorgeous. Worthy of mention is the fact that the spring and summer had an abundance of rainfall, which is truly what wildflowers require. (Photo's Attached)

### **2002/2003/2004 Native Wildflower Project Site**

It was decided to forgo the planting for this year.

### **Approximate Cost of the Wildflower Project**

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In 2001, the average bids for the native wildflower site was approximately \$28,000.00 to \$32,000.00 per acre. This years bids should remain in the same category as 2001. There also will be some administrative expenses associated with these plantings (approximately \$2000.00 to \$3000.00). Below is a chart detailing the cost for the project to date.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>APPROPRIATED FUNDS</b>	<b>CONSTRUCTION COST</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATION COST</b>	<b>TOTAL COST</b>
2001	\$19,631.61	\$15,581.82	\$2,331.62	\$17,913.44
2002	\$40,000.00			
2003	\$50,000.00			
2004	\$50,000.00			

## **Lilac Project**

In the spring of 2003 Bill # 519 was passed and signed by Governor Benson. On 7/03/03 the bill became law, adding lilac plantings to the native wildflower program. Site selection criteria will be similar to the planting of the native wildflower program. Various sites are being considered throughout the state.

## **Approximate Cost of the Lilac Program**

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In 2003, the average bid for a lilac planting bed was approximately \$2160.00. The bids should remain consistent for a couple of years. A planting bed (60' X 10') consists of 24 lilac plants (3' potted container), including bark mulch. There also will be some administrative expenses associated with these plantings (approximately \$2000.00 to \$3000.00).

## **2003/2004 Lilac Project Sites**

It was decided to forgo the planting for this year.

## **Future Projects**

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The Department is now considering several different avenues for expanding the programs including the following.

1. Working with local communities, civic organizations and private entities in a partnership that garners their support and participation for enhancing transportation corridors important to a particular area.
2. Supplementing highway and bridge projects with landscaping funded out of the two programs.
3. Looking into partnerships with State and Federal public land agencies to see if opportunities exist to beautify parks, rest areas and other such areas adjacent to highways or transportation facilities.

Guy J Giunta Jr  
Landscape Specialist Supervisor  
603-271-6476