

Township of Sparta

Environmental Commission



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July 14, 2023

VIA FIRST CLASS MAIL

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Land Resource Protection
P.O. Box 420, Mail Code 501-02A
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420
Attention: Township of Sparta Supervisor

Re: Application for Freshwater Wetlands Letter of Interpretation – Line Verification
Environmental Technology Inc. (ETI)
WT-Sparta Holdings, LLC, 114 Demarest Road (Block 12002, Lot 11), Sparta Township, NJ
474-510 Lafayette Road (Block 12008, Lots 19, 20, & 21), Sparta Township, NJ
PSI Project No.: PS1402D

Dear Sparta Supervisor:

Please be advised that the Environmental Commission is in receipt of correspondence dated June 26th in the above-referenced matter and reviewed it at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 13th and submits the following information highlighting concerns and risks associated with potential development or redevelopment of the above-referenced parcels:

- 1. Wetlands:** A total of 12.2 acres, or 91.8%, of this parcel contains mapped wetland area as of 2015. This designation is confirmed by the NJ Conservation website. This parcel is 100% headwaters and in an Active River Area.
Source: NJ Highlands Council Environmental Resource Inventory and NJ Conservation
- 2. Net Water Availability - Current Deficit Status:** This parcel is located in the Sparta Junction tributaries subwatershed (HUC14 02040105040050), which has a calculated DEFICIT net water availability of -0.8 MGD.
Source: NJ Highlands Council Environmental Resource Inventory
- 3. Surface Water Quality Classification:** The selected area contains a surface waterway that is subject to the Surface Water Quality Standards (SWQS). Its classification is FW2-TP and approximately 586 feet of the waterway may be found in the selected area. The lot also contains a C1 Tributary that is .52 miles away and passes along the edge of the property. It is also classified as Medium High for Water Quality Protection.
Source: NJ Highlands Council Environmental Resource Inventory and NJ Conservation website
- 4. Wellhead Protection Areas:** A total of 13.3 acres, or 100%, of this parcel is located within a wellhead protection area for Public Community Water Supply Wells as follows:
 - Tier 2 (Five-Year Recharge Level): 0.4 acres
 - Tier 3 (Twelve-Year Recharge Level): 12.9 acres*Source: NJ Highlands Council Environmental Resource Inventory*

5. **Riparian Areas:** A total of 12.2 acres, or 91.8%, of this parcel is comprised of riparian areas, including:
- Flood Prone Areas: defined as United States Geological Survey documented and undocumented flood prone areas and Federal Emergency Management Agency 100-year floodplain
 - Riparian Soils: a soil exhibiting a shallow depth to seasonal high-water table, or alluvial soil
 - Wetlands and Streams: all mapped streams and wetlands that are adjacent to a stream as identified in the Highlands Open Water Inventory
 - Wildlife Corridors: a 300-foot corridor on each mapped stream bank or from the stream centerline if no stream bank is mapped
 - Riparian Integrity Score in this area is HIGH

Anthropogenic disturbance to riparian areas often significantly alters the movement and storage of water that is critical to ecological functions.

Source: NJ Highlands Council Environmental Resource Inventory

6. **Lack of Sewer Service Area:** No part of this parcel is located within the Sewer Service Area, as defined by N.J.A.C. 7:15.

Source: NJ Highlands Council Environmental Resource Inventory

7. **Critical Wildlife Habitat:** A total of 13.2 acres, or 100%, of this parcel contain Critical Wildlife Habitat. Endangered, threatened, and special concern species documented include the American Kestrel, Bobcat, Bog Turtle, Brown Thrasher, Great Blue Heron, Veery, Wood Thrush and Wood Turtle.

Source: NJ Highlands Council Environmental Resource Inventory; NJ DEP Nongame Species Program (NJDEP-ENSP) Landscape Project dataset (Version 3.3)

8. **Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat Cores and Corridors:** A total of 13.1 acres, or 99.0%, of this parcel contains one or more terrestrial wildlife habitat cores and corridors, or intersecting road segments that serve as a road barrier mitigation opportunities as mapped by Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ).

Source: NJ Highlands Council Environmental Resource Inventory; NJ DEP Nongame Species Program (NJDEP-ENSP) Landscape Project dataset (Version 3.3)

9. **Road Salt Pollution:** Regular testing of the stream next to the roadway has been done by the Highland Coalition and show a range of high salt content. This is a range that starts to be harmful to aquatic wildlife.

10. **Conservation Priority Areas:** A total of 12.2 acres, or 92%, of this parcel is located within a conservation priority area.

Source: NJ Highlands Council Environmental Resource Inventory; NJ DEP Nongame Species Program (NJDEP-ENSP) Landscape Project dataset (Version 3.3)

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Noel, Chairwoman

KN/mal

Cc: Sparta Township Mayor & Council
Sparta Township Planning Board
Environmental Commission Members
David C. Krueger, President, ETI
Grant Rome, Interim Township Manager