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The Hine's Emerald (*Somatochlora hineana*) dragonfly—one of North America's most endangered dragonfly species—depends on rare, groundwater-fed wetlands, including the fens and seepage areas found in places like Cedarburg, Wisconsin. These habitats provide the cool, slow-moving, calcium-rich water necessary for the dragonfly's larvae to survive for two to four years before emerging as adults. Because the species' entire life cycle is tied to these delicate hydrological conditions, even small alterations to water flow, soil composition, or vegetation can have irreversible consequences. Protecting these natural wetlands is therefore not only about conserving a single species, but also about maintaining the ecological integrity of a unique and biodiverse system.

Removing natural wetland habitat to install an artificial lake would severely disrupt the hydrology that sustains the Hine's Emerald. Artificial lakes often lead to altered groundwater patterns, changes in water chemistry, increased habitat loss and displacement, and biodiversity loss—conditions incompatible with the seepage-fed wetlands the species relies on. Once these natural systems are lost, they cannot simply be recreated. Preserving Cedarburg's wetlands ensures the survival of the Hine's Emerald and safeguards an irreplaceable ecosystem that supports countless other plants and animals while providing flood control, water purification, and natural beauty for the community.

Insects worldwide are facing unprecedented pressures, with many species experiencing sharp population declines due to habitat loss, climate change, pollution, and the spread of invasive species. Although insects are often overlooked in conservation planning, they are absolutely foundational to ecosystem health: they pollinate crops and wild plants, recycle nutrients, support food webs, and help maintain soil and water quality. The loss of insect diversity can trigger cascading and sometimes severe ecological consequences, reducing ecosystem resilience and threatening the stability of natural and agricultural systems alike. Protecting sensitive habitats—such as the specialized wetlands required by the Hine's Emerald—is therefore a critical part of a broader effort to preserve insect biodiversity and the essential ecological services these species provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Amanda Whispell".

Amanda M. Whispell, PhD