

STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Town of Old Saybrook



November 2006

CONSERVATION AREAS

Stewardship Plan

The Stewardship Plan is intended to document the goals, policy recommendations and priorities that will guide the management of all of the Conservation Areas of the Town of Old Saybrook. Following the guidance presented in the Stewardship Plan will ensure consistent and effective management of the areas. Following the guidelines presented in the Stewardship Plan will result in the preservation and protection of the natural resources of the Conservation Areas while promoting public access to the areas for the purpose of education, research, and enjoyment.

STEWARDSHIP GOALS

- Long term public accessibility while protecting and preserving the habitat, biological diversity and aquifer protection provided by the Conservation Areas
- Environmental responsibility and interaction between the community and Land Use/Conservation organizations through the public's recreational and educational use of the Conservation Areas.
- Safe public environment in the Conservation Areas.
- Documentation of the inventory (flora/fauna & specific natural areas) of the Conservation Areas.
- Annual documentation of the current use (frequency and type of activities) of the Conservation Areas.
- Prioritized management recommendations by identifying threats (decline of value, potential fragmentation, invasive species, adverse use), areas requiring protection and site improvements (trail construction, parking facility signage).
- Methods or indicators that show the success or failure of stewardship plan (to be reviewed periodically, at least every 3 years, to implement appropriate policy and management changes).
- Determination of financial and management implications/obligations and establish method of raising funds needed to monitor and enforce easements.

STEWARDSHIP POLICIES

- To enforce all rules, regulations and by-laws of the Town relating to the use of the Conservation Areas.
- To advise visitors and users of Conservation Areas to comply with Town rules, regulations and by-laws.
- To require users of the Conservation areas shall pack out their garbage rather than to provide garbage cans at trailheads.
- To require group use (more than 50 people) of the Conservation Areas for educational, recreational or interpretive purposes to obtain prior written approval by the Parks & Recreation Department. Group activities must be consistent with the policies set for the Conservation areas and the management prescriptions for each area.
- To require competitive sporting events in the Conservation Areas to obtain prior written approval from the Parks & Recreation Department. Competitive sporting events must be confined to trails and appropriate warning signs erected before the event and removed upon completion of the event.
- To prohibit motorized vehicles in the Conservation Areas except for emergency and authorized maintenance purposes.

STEWARDSHIP PRIORITIES

Border Encroachment

- ☐ Delineate conservation area and easement borders. Borders should be marked at a minimum of 300 ft. intervals.
- ☐ Initiate and maintain annual contact with abutters through letters and/or newspaper announcements of annual boarder walks. New grantors/ owners will be made aware of monitoring / land use policies.
- ☐ Annually walk conservation area's boundaries to monitor the borders and easements.
- ☐ Enforce easement terms and prosecute illegal encroachments, violation of easement terms and illegal actions. The legal steps required to ensure violators can be prosecuted should be develop and documented.

Documentation

- ☐ Annual documentation of the current uses of the Conservation Areas will be accomplished by "Annual Conservation Area Status Report" form, as presented in this document. The Park and Recreation Departments will prepare the form, filling out a separate "Annual Conservation Area Status Report" form for each conservation area. The report form will include information regarding projects and issues relating to the Conservation areas.

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- ☐ Standardize “Conservation Area Monitor Report” forms and develop a volunteer monitoring group. (A suggested “Conservation Area Monitor Report” form is presented in this Stewardship Plan.)
 - ☐ Prepare procedures with respect to access routes for emergency vehicle and personnel use in the case of accidents and wildfires.

Public Use

RECREATION

- ☐ Increase accessibility to at least some of the Conservation Areas for persons with disabilities.
- ☐ Evaluate the trail systems including determination of maintenance requirements, need for new trails and the extension of existing trails, connectivity with other trails. Assess parking needs.
- ☐ Monitor the amount and impacts of recreational use to ensure protection of the environment, the availability of high quality recreational experiences, and to guide management.
- ☐ Provide signs and publications to advise Conservation Area users and visitors of the relevant Town by-laws and regulations. Input on the use of Conservation Areas, the maintenance of trails, organizing the interpretive events and fund raising activities for the benefit and promotion of the Conservation areas shall be promoted.
- ☐ Encourage programs for volunteers to undertake conservation work in the Conservation Areas.

RESEARCH

- ☐ Encourage research that takes advantage of the special attributes of the Conservation Areas and contributes to their protection and management.
- ☐ Research must be consistent with the policies for the Conservation Areas.
- ☐ Proposals for research in the Conservation Areas must be submitted to the Open-Space Committee for review and recommendation. Written permission for the research must be granted by the Town of Old Saybrook Park and Recreation Department. Upon completion of the research, two printed reports and an electronic file (adobe format) must be given to Conservation Commission.
- ☐ The Conservation Commission shall maintain a file of the reports generated by the research carried out in the Conservation Areas.

EDUCATION

- ☐ Encourage use of Conservation Areas for use by schools, colleges and organizations for environmental and outdoor education and research.
- ☐ Develop signs to educate and inform the public on environmental and historical topics unique to the Conservation Area.

MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Establish the Open-Space Committee to perform reviews of and make recommendations for the management and use of the Conservation Areas. The Committee will be made up of representatives from the Conservation Commission, Park and Recreation Department and the Old Saybrook Land Trust.
- ☐ Consultation with a Forester or other professionals is encouraged, when required.
- ☐ Establish and document enforcement procedures to take in the event of a violation of those Conservation Area regulations not covered under the Park and Recreation regulations. Penalties for illegal encroachment onto Conservation Area boundaries, violations of easement terms and illegal actions taken on Conservation Area lands will not be limited to the fines or penalties stated in the Park and Recreation Area Regulations
- ☐ Wildfires will not be allowed to burn in the Conservation Areas due to the potential danger they pose to Town facilities and adjacent private property. For the same reason, prescribed burning will be only employed as a management tool under the strictest supervision and safety precautions. If required, other forms of vegetation management that perform some of the natural functions of fires should be employed to achieve environmental objectives.
- ☐ Use of specific Conservation Areas or parts of Conservation Areas may be discouraged or even prohibited if overuse is biologically or physically degrading the area. Identified sensitive areas, e.g. areas especially vulnerable because of their species composition, such as the presence of endangered species, geomorphologic or hydrologic conditions will be given special protection, which may include restrictions on human entry.
- ☐ Actions required controlling animals (beaver, deer, etc.), disease and insect infestation are allowed, when required.
- ☐ Environmentally degraded areas may be restored as funding permits. Restoration of an area, when required, will be undertaken only with indigenous species and environmental manipulation will be minimized. Programs for the removal/eradication of invasive plant species must be evaluated for cost-effectiveness.
- ☐ Cutting wood or removal trees and vegetation for forest management, educational, or research purposes may be allowed. The Open-Space Committee must review the request. Permission must be obtained in writing from the Old Saybrook Parks & Recreation Department.
- ☐ Other than to create and improve approved trails, buildings or infrastructure, there should not be substantial modifications of the terrain, hydrology or vegetation.

BASED ON THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE
STANDARDS & PRACTICES GUIDEBOOK APPENDIX 15.3

Sample Stewardship Monitoring Form

TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK

Open Space Annual Status Report

(NAME OF OPEN SPACE)

I. Open Space Use

Conservation Area is: ☐ Open to Public ☐ Seasonally Closed ☐ Permission only

Estimated annual # visitors: ☐ 0 -10 ☐ 10 – 100 ☐ 100 – 1000 ☐ 1,000+

Users: ☐ Conservation Groups ☐ Civic Organizations

☐ Individuals ☐ Schools ☐ Scientist/Researchers

Special Events: _____

Problems:	Action Taken?	☐ Yes	☐ No
☐ Picnicking		☐	☐ Safety Hazards
☐ Over-browsing		☐	☐ Trespass
☐ Introduced Species		☐	☐ Erosion
☐ Off-road Vehicles		☐	☐ Access
☐ Stray Animals		☐	☐ Litter
☐ Camping		☐	☐ Fire
☐ Siltation		☐	☐ Hunting
☐ Pollution		☐	☐ Other:
☐ Vandalism			

Comments: _____
(USE BACK SIDE FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS)

II. Legal

Legal Problems: _____

III. Stewardship

Are Open Space boundaries posted? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Partially

Have the Open Space boundaries been walked during the past year? ____ Yes ____ No

Are trails cleared and marked? _____

What work was done in the Open Space this year? _____

What needs to be done? _____

Number of Monitor Reports used for compiling this Annual Status Report: _____

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____
(PARK & RECREATION REP.)

COMPLETED FORM SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO
THE OLD SAYBROOK PARK & RECREATION DEPARTMENT.

Open Space Periodic Monitoring Report

(NAME OF OPEN SPACE)

Date: _____ Time: _____

A. Visitor Use: _____ # individuals estimated/observed: _____

Name and size of Organized Group(s): _____

B. Did you observe any hazards or potential liability factors? _____
Please Explain: (attach photo if possible)

C. Are the signs and boundary markers intact? If not please identify where and what maintenance is needed:

D. Trail Condition: _____ Good _____ Average _____ Poor

Problem area needing attention: (attach photo if possible)

E. Fauna Noted: _____

Flora Noted: _____

F. Are any of the following items a problem now or pose a problem in the future?

____ Over-browsing
____ Introduced Species
____ Off-road Vehicles
____ Stray Animals
____ Camping
____ Siltation
____ Pollution
____ Vandalism
____ Safety Hazards

____ Trespass
____ Erosion
____ Access
____ Litter
____ Fire
____ Hunting
____ Timber Theft
____ Flooding
____ Community Relations

Explain any of the above that need action beyond the scope of your responsibilities: _____

G. Note any particularly interesting or unusual observations: _____

H. Future Management Considerations: _____

Are there any projects or actions that should be considered to improve public access, education/recreation opportunities, management capabilities, etc? _____

I. This report was determined by observation of:

_____	Part of boundary area	_____	Entire boundary area
_____	Part of Interior	_____	Entire Open Space

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____
(PARK & RECREATION REP.)

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