



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK  
SELECTMEN'S OFFICE

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**MEETING MINUTES OF THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE**

**December 14, 2018**

9:00 A.M.

**Town Hall – First Floor Conference Room**

- I. CALL TO ORDER-All members present (Will Hochholzer and Carl P. Fortuna, Jr.): Staff: Ray Allen, P & R Director was also present. Three members of the State of Connecticut DEEP Bureau of Natural Resources Wildlife Division were present. One member of the Essex Land Trust, OSPD Chief Michael Spera and Lt. Jeffrey DePerry, and Chris Cryder Kathy Connolly and Susan Esty from the Preserve ad hoc committee were present.**
- II. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC- Held for now until the presentation from the Hunting Review Team Report.**
- III. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE-None at this time.**
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES-9/21/18; Moved and approved.**
- V. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD**
  - A.** Receipt and review of the Preserve Hunting Review Team Report (report attached as Exhibit 1)- Ann Kilpatrick, Tom Donlon and Howard Kilpatrick were present to discuss. A State of CT environmental office was also present. The presentation stated that based on a 2015 review of the property, and looking at all structures in and around the property, The Preserve should be available for hunting and trapping, but not waterfowl hunting. The rules for hunting would follow the standard hunting/trapping guides that are put out to the public by DEEP. Bow hunting in the fall and shotgun and muzzle loader for limited times in November and December. Small game hunting is year round as is trapping. There is a turkey season in May. DEEP finds hunters to be responsible as a group. There is typically no modification of the hunting seasons. Ms. Esty stated how the Town parks do not allow for hunting. She is concerned with distinguishing between The Preserve and Town land that abuts The Preserve. It will not likely be marked clearly. DEEP also responded that hikers and mountain bikers are not an unusual combination with hunters. The average shot is relatively close range (90 feet). There is little long range shooting. Hunters with guns must bring their guns into a hunting area unloaded. The Chief of Police is against hunting in The Preserve and

stated that his Department will arrest anyone who violates “No Hunting” ordinances on Town land. He also believes that Town ordinances would take precedence over State hunting regulations and laws. Mr. Hochholzer (WH) and Mr. Fortuna stated that The Preserve is not a park, but rather a forest and that has been the stated purpose from day one. As forests go, this area is big enough to support all activities including hunting. However, hunters may be deterred from coming in by the heavy use of the property by bikers and hikers. As a forester, WH stated that bow hunting is not effective enough to kill enough deer so that desirable forest stands can re-grow. Shotgun hunting is the only effective means. Chris Cryder stated that hunting does occur now and has for decades on this property but he is concerned because the borders of this property are not marked well. Lastly, it was mentioned and was made clear that federal funds from a gun tax were used to assist with the purchase of The Preserve and for that reason, hunting may have to be allowed. Mr. Fortuna stated he would look at the conservation easement held by TNC to determine if there is mention of hunting or no hunting. The Hunting Review Report is a recommendation to the CMC. In the meantime, we await the GEI report. Lastly, WH submitted for the record a concurrence by Susan K. Whalen, Deputy Commissioner-Branch of Environmental Conservation that hunting be allowed (Exhibit 2).

- B. Update on the Preserve Parking Lot- The Preserve parking lot on Ingham Hill Road is nearly fully designed and Jacobson has submitted to NDDB.
- C. MOU between State, Old Saybrook and Westbrook: Discussion and possible action. Mr. Fortuna previously addressed.
- D. The Preserve Forest Stewardship Plan- Stand review has been completed. GEI is approximately 40% through the Natural Resource and Public Recreation study. Conversation arose from the CMC and the public wondering whether GEI has dedicated enough resources to this project as it has been delayed extensively. WH will contact TPL to express concern with this delay as TPL is paying GEI.
- E. Update on Invasive Species Control Efforts-not discussed.
- F. Update on Eversource work in ROW- There was a recent meeting at which Eversource had 5 employees in the field with members of The Preserve ad hoc committee. We are awaiting GPS points regarding rare and endangered species from botanist William Moorhead and his submission to NDDB. WH stated that Eversource is willing to be a partner in re-planting in their ROW, as well as helping with invasives.

**VI. OTHER BUSINESS – Next meeting March 15, 2019, 9am, Old Saybrook Town Hall First Floor Conference Room.**

**VII. ADJOURNMENT at 10:30**



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
BUREAU OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
WILDLIFE DIVISION

**THE PRESERVE**

**HUNTING REVIEW TEAM REPORT**

**Prepared by: Michael Gregonis, Wildlife Biologist II**

**April 2018**

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**Purpose of Review**

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has established procedures and guidelines to determine whether or not land managed by the Department shall be utilized for hunting. These guidelines pertain to: 1) initial consideration of newly acquired parcels, 2) reviews of existing DEEP lands previously closed to hunting, 3) DEEP lands currently open to hunting where the Department has received a public safety related complaint or request for closure, and 4) in-house review of current hunting policy on a parcel of DEEP land.

The Hunting Review Team (HRT) is comprised of representatives from DEEP's Divisions of Wildlife, Forestry, Environmental Conservation Police, and Parks. Members of the team conduct a thorough field inspection, evaluate aerial photography and topographical maps to identify important features including residences, nature of the terrain, roadways, trails and review historical law enforcement information to determine whether or not hunting activities may present an unreasonable risk to public safety. This hunting review was undertaken to answer the question: "Can hunting take place in a safe and prudent manner consistent with other outdoor recreation?"

**Site Description**

The Preserve property is jointly owned by DEEP and the Town of Old Saybrook. The 890± acre parcel was acquired in April 2015 and is managed by a Cooperative Management Committee with a representative from DEEP and a representative from the Town under the terms of a Cooperative Management Agreement. The Nature Conservancy also holds a Conservation and Public Recreation Easement on the property to ensure it will be maintained predominantly in its natural, scenic, forested, and/or open space condition, and to provide opportunities for public recreation. The overall goal is to manage the property as a multi-use forest to support public recreation and education, to maintain important natural communities and habitats, to protect threatened plant and animal populations, and to increase forest and habitat diversity.

The Preserve property may be categorized as principally an upland mixed hardwood/conifer forest with a variety of wetlands and watercourses, including vernal pools, intermittently scattered across the site. The understory is composed of mountain laurel and blueberry with spicebush in the more mesic areas. Several special concern plants and wildlife species have been identified on the property. The property is one contiguous wooded parcel with few bisecting roads and a limited number of residences, existing primarily on the south side of the property.

### **Site Evaluation**

On November 4, 2015, a hunting evaluation was conducted on-site by the following DEEP personnel: Michael Gregonis, Wild Turkey/Deer/Small Game Biologist; Paul Rothbart, Supervising Wildlife Biologist; Ann Kilpatrick, District Wildlife Biologist; Thomas Donlon, Conservation Education/Firearms Safety Program Coordinator; Laurie Fortin, Wildlife Biologist; Matthew Stone, Environmental Conservation Police Officer; William Hochholzer, Supervising Forester; and Alexander Sokolow, Parks and Recreation Unit Supervisor.

### **Key Findings**

Based upon the evaluation process, which included a review of aerial photographs, topographic maps and the on-site inspection, the HRT found:

- Nearly the entire property is wooded with the exception of Pequot Swamp (approx. 17 acres) and smaller wetland complexes.
- The majority of residences occur on the south side of the property with a small number on the northwest and northeast corners. Approximately 130 acres of the property is subject to the 500-foot firearms restriction regulation (Attachment A).
- An abundance of hiking trails (interim) are available throughout the property and on the adjoining property owned by the Essex land Trust (Attachment B).
- An increase in the use of The Preserve by the public has been observed by DEEP Environmental Conservation Police in recent years, including the use of un-blazed hiking/mountain biking trails that seem to be growing in numbers. A recent Eagle Scout project has clearly marked the trailheads and major trails, however, it appears that mountain bikers are creating additional unauthorized trails off of the existing trails.
- The Preserve is located in Deer Management Zone 12, one of two zones in the state where deer-human conflicts are common. Hunting regulations are designed to reduce conflicts in this zone. Further, deer populations on properties of this size must be managed in order to prevent deer from impacting habitat.

## **Conclusion**

Regulated hunting as described in the following recommendations can be conducted safely and compatibly with other planned outdoor uses of the property.

## **Recommendations**

- The area should be open to all forms of deer hunting including archery, shotgun, and muzzleloader, which follow the regulations established for state-managed lands.
- The area should be open for all types of small game hunting, excluding waterfowl. The one wetland area suitable for waterfowl hunting is in close proximity to a housing development, reducing its viability as a suitable hunt area.
- The area should be administered for spring, fall firearms, and fall archery wild turkey hunting under the existing state land regulations.
- Signs (similar to those shown on Attachment C) should be posted at each trailhead and along the property boundary to inform the public that hunting may be occurring on the property.
- A map similar to Attachment A showing The Preserve boundaries, parking areas, and 500-foot firearms restriction areas, should be posted at each trailhead and made available on the Town's and DEEP's websites.



# The Preserve Property

Westbrook/Old Saybrook, CT

Hunting Review Team Report  
Attachment A



Symbols: Preserve Boundary Essex Land Trust parcels 500 Ft. Firearms Restriction



Meeting Location:  
1288 Westbrook Road (Rt 153),  
Westbrook, CT  
11:00 AM, November 4th

Map Date: 11/2/15; Ortho 2012 NAIP

1,500 750 0 1,500 Feet

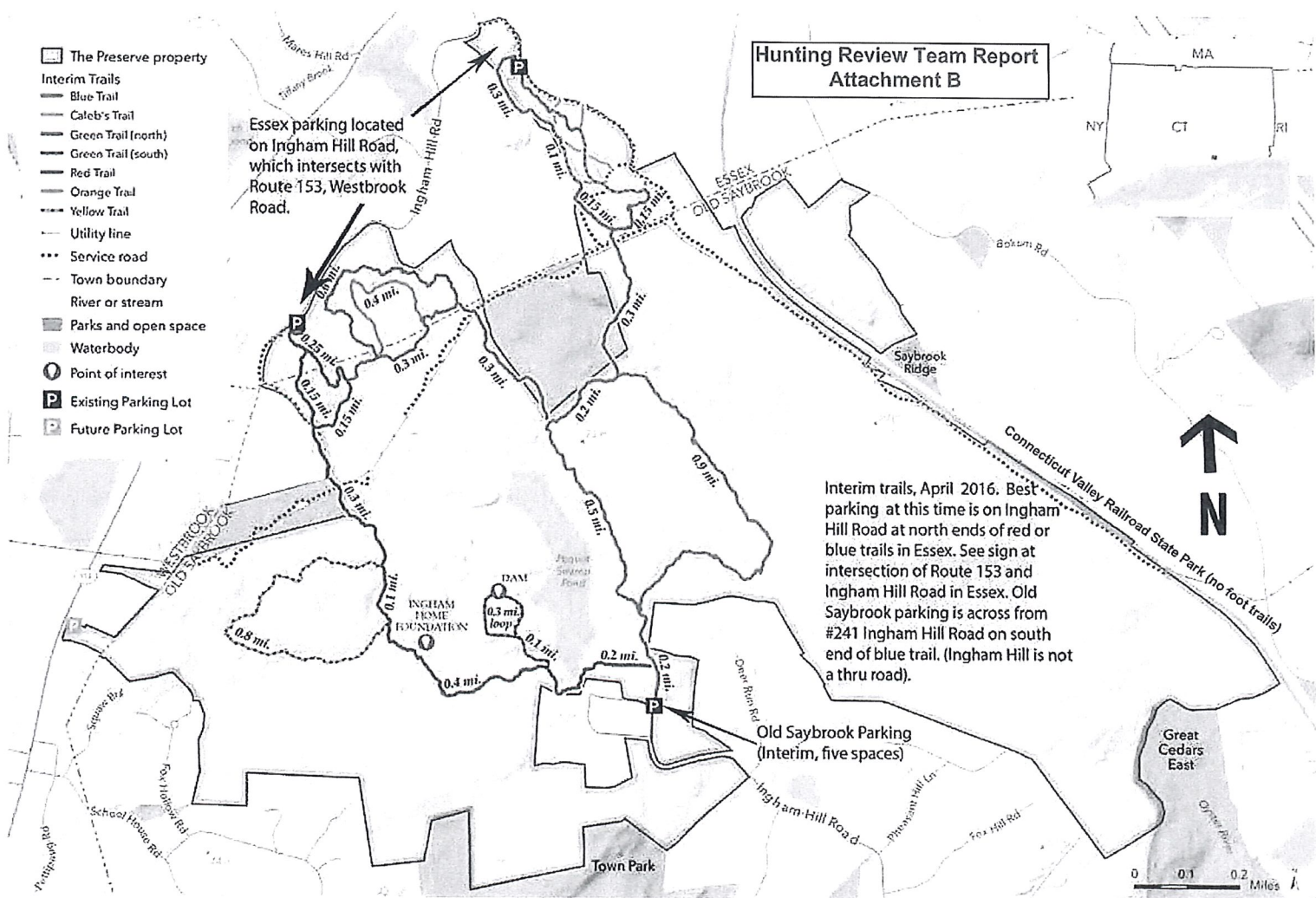
-  The Preserve property
- Interim Trails**
-  Blue Trail
-  Caleb's Trail
-  Green Trail (north)
-  Green Trail (south)
-  Red Trail
-  Orange Trail
-  Yellow Trail
-  Utility line
-  Service road
-  Town boundary
-  River or stream
-  Parks and open space
-  Waterbody
-  Point of interest
-  Existing Parking Lot
-  Future Parking Lot

Essex parking located on Ingham Hill Road, which intersects with Route 153, Westbrook Road.

**Hunting Review Team Report Attachment B**

Interim trails, April 2016. Best parking at this time is on Ingham Hill Road at north ends of red or blue trails in Essex. See sign at intersection of Route 153 and Ingham Hill Road in Essex. Old Saybrook parking is across from #241 Ingham Hill Road on south end of blue trail. (Ingham Hill is not a thru road).

Old Saybrook Parking (Interim, five spaces)



# The Preserve

INTERIM TRAILS

Please: Pack out all trash. Stay on trails. No unauthorized motorized vehicles. No camping. No fires. Take only pictures, leave only footprints.  
[http://www.oldsaybrookct.org/Pages/OldSaybrookCT\\_CC/CC\\_trail\\_maps](http://www.oldsaybrookct.org/Pages/OldSaybrookCT_CC/CC_trail_maps)



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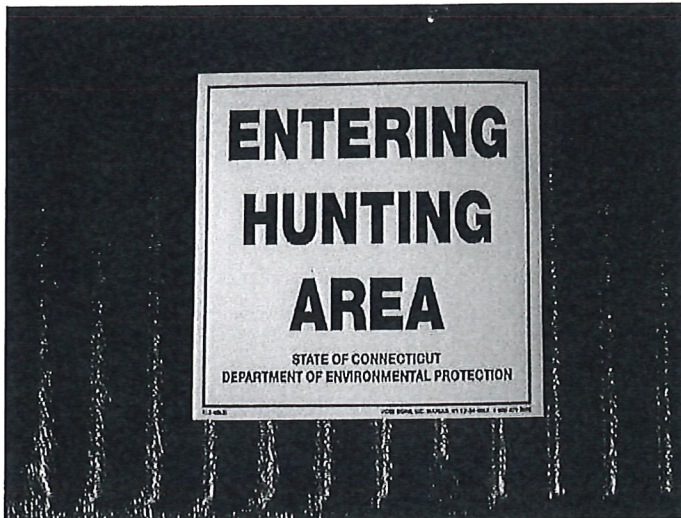
Attachment C

Hunting Review Team Report – The Preserve, Old Saybrook

Example - Sign for posting at trailhead kiosk



Example - Sign for posting along property boundary





Ex 2



Connecticut Department of  
**ENERGY &  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

## Internal Memorandum

**Date:** October 18, 2018  
**To:** Susan K. Whalen, Deputy Commissioner – Branch of Environmental Conservation  
**Cc:** Mike Lambert, Jeff Samorajczyk  
**From:** Rick Jacobson, Acting Chief – Bureau of Natural Resources  
**RE:** The Preserve, Old Saybrook

I am seeking your concurrence (by signature below) that the property known as The Preserve, located in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, is suitable for opening to all forms of regulated hunting and trapping, with the exception of waterfowl hunting, and that a recommendation be made to The Preserve management committee incorporate those findings into the management plan being developed for the property. More specifically, that recommendation will be that all forms of regulated hunting and trapping, except for waterfowl hunting, be established as permitted uses.

The Department, in partnership with the Town of Old Saybrook and others, acquired the approximately 890 contiguous acre property in 2015. As part of the acquisition, a management committee was established with representatives from the Town, The Nature Conservancy and DEEP (Will Hochholzer). That committee is charged with, among other things, adopting and implementing a management plan for The Preserve that will, among other things, establish permitted uses.

A Hunting Review Team was convened in the fall of 2015 to conduct an evaluation of the suitability of the site for public hunting (see attached report). From a public safety perspective, the report concluded that the area is suitable for all types of hunting. Additionally, members of The Preserve management committee have been consulted and there is reason to believe the recommendations included here will be accepted.

Unless you have additional questions, please acknowledge your approval by your signature:

**I hereby recommend that all forms of regulated hunting and trapping, with the exception of waterfowl hunting, be incorporated into the management plan for The Preserve, and that all forms of regulated hunting and trapping, except for waterfowl hunting, be established as permitted uses.**

*Susan K. Whalen*

Susan K. Whalen  
Deputy Commissioner

*Oct. 22, 2018*

Date