



AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY, Inc.
P.O. Box 49,
Old Mystic, CT 06372

Cottrell Marsh Preserve

Property Management Plan

Latimer Point Road
Mystic, New London County, Connecticut

Stonington Town Committee is responsible
for the stewardship of this property

Plan Prepared by:
Richard Newton & Beth Sullivan
Fall 2015

Approved by Stonington Town Committee: _____

Date _____

Approved by Stewardship Committee: _____

Date _____



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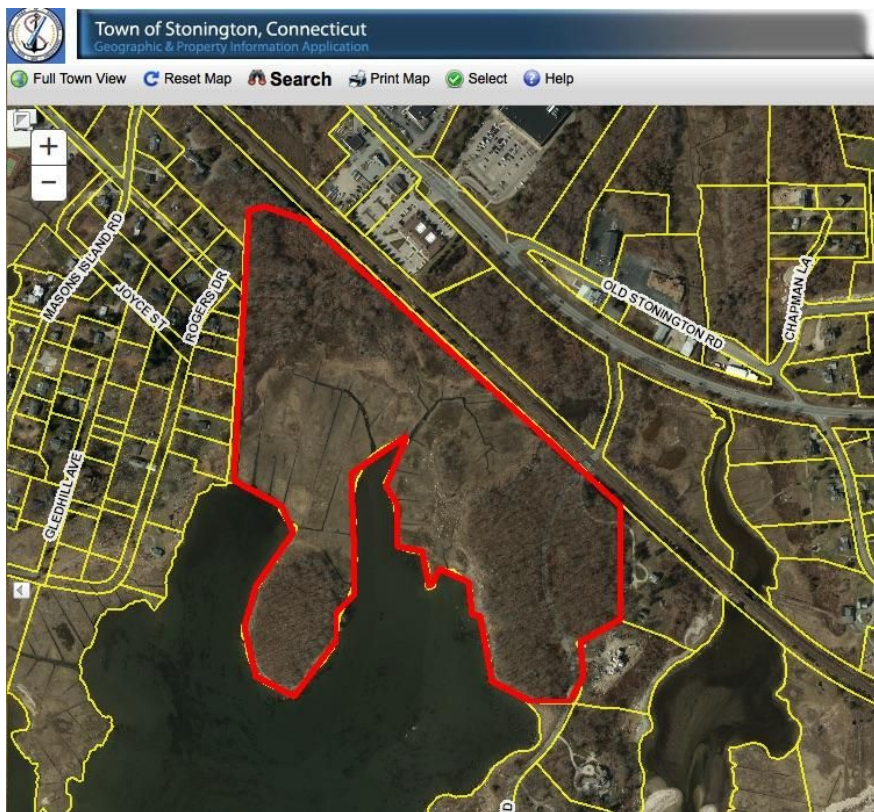
SUMMARY

This plan is one property off Latimer Point Road in Mystic, CT. This is a non-trailed property mainly consisting of salt-water marsh. Access is limited due to it being sensitive marshland. See the photos and map that follows. Visitors are welcome.

Property is owned by Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., P.O. Box 49, Old Mystic, CT 06372. Avalonia Land Conservancy (ALC) can be reached by email at avalonialc@yahoo.com, by phone at 860-884-3500, and has a website at <http://www.avalonialandconservancy.org>.

HISTORY

The Cottrell Marsh Preserve is located in the Town of Stonington southeast area of town. Residential property to the east, AMTRAK railroad to the north, residential and pastureland property to the west and Fishers Island Sound to the south about the property.



SITE INFORMATION

The property

A parcel map of the property from the Town of Stonington GIS database is shown to the left. The property is identified as Map/Book/Lot/Unit 153-3-3. GIS acreage is roughly 46.7 acres.

Acquisition history

Donation to the Mashantucket Land Trust was from Nature

Conservancy of Connecticut in July 1993. TNC purchased the property from Ester B. Cottrell in December 1968 for \$60,000.

Mashantucket Land Trust was renamed Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. in September 1995.

Right of way was granted to property to the east in 1969. Easement was granted to the Latimer Point Association in 1998 for access and responsibility for upkeep of the private road that Avalonia owns (Book 419 Page 583). A landscape license agreement was granted in September 2014 to Chateau Jaune LLC (David Kingeter) for a small portion of preserve property along the east side of Latimer Point Road (Book 732 Page 307).

Land use history

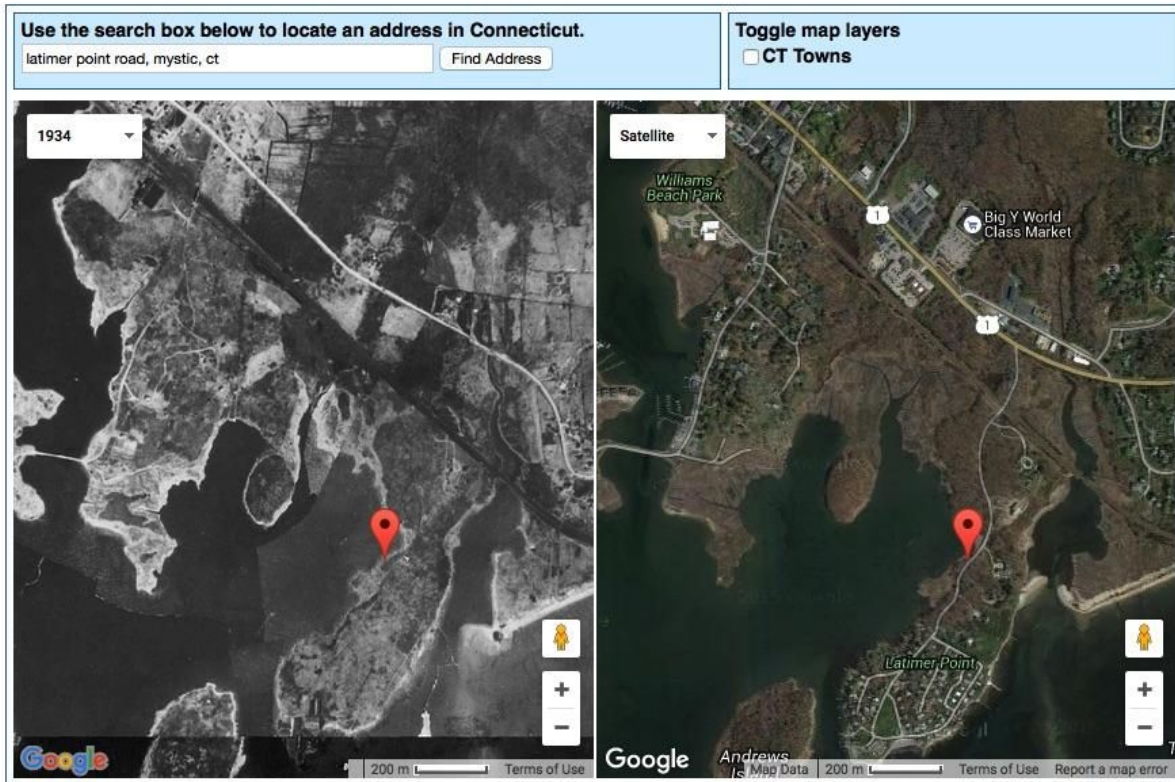
The land has mostly been marshland and the surrounding properties have been developed into a variety of uses as described above. It appears the northwest portion of the upland portion of the property may have been pastureland. Note also that there has been significant loss of marsh in the southern portion of the property east of the island.

Neighborhood Change in Connecticut, 1934 to Present

Want to compare 1934, 1990, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2012 using a transparency tool? [Check out our Connecticut Aerial Photography Interactive Map Interface](#)



Attention ArcGIS and other GIS software users! The 1934 Aerial Photography layer is available via [MAGIC's WMS](#).



Public use resources

The property is open to the public for all standard Avalonia passive recreational activities, though in practice the only activity is wildlife observation, primarily from the water, though there is a small CT DEEP Coastal Access location opposite 75 Latimer Point Road. The properties provide wildlife habitat for typical salt marsh and coastal shrub-land inhabitants.

Public benefit of the protected property:

The property falls within a CT DEEP Natural Diversity Database area and provides access to a varied coastal habitat for passive recreation. The area of the sound between the marsh and Andrews Island is a popular conditional clamming site. The island has been known to be a summer roosting site for Great Blue Herons and Egrets.

The property is a significant natural area that qualifies as being preserved for a “conservation purpose” under 26 US Code 170(h)(4):

(4) Conservation purpose defined

(A) In general

For purposes of this subsection, the term "conservation purpose" means—

- (i)** the preservation of land areas for outdoor recreation by, or the education of, the general public,
- (ii)** the protection of a relatively natural habitat of fish, wildlife, or plants, or similar ecosystem,
- (iii)** the preservation of open space (including farmland and forest land) where such preservation is—
 - (I)** for the scenic enjoyment of the general public, or
 - (II)** pursuant to a clearly delineated Federal, State, or local governmental conservation policy, and will yield a significant public benefit, or
- (iv)** the preservation of an historically important land area or a certified historic structure.

Natural resources

This property is part of one of Stonington's larger salt marsh complexes and is continuous with greater acreage of salt marsh west toward Mason's Island. Like most, it was glacially created and lies between two higher ridges on the east and west that are wooded and rocky knolls. To the north it has been impounded by the railroad tracks that will prevent marsh migration as sea level rises.

Patches of Phragmites degrade the northern edge of the marsh, directly south of the RR tracks. Salt water tidal flushing likely checks the spread of Phragmites along with periodic herbicide treatment by AMTRAK on their right of way.

The saltmarsh was extensively ditched as seen from aerial photos and with the ditching and natural tidal creeks, there is good flushing and the marsh is healthy. It supports the expected salt marsh grasses (Spartina species, Black Rush, Spikegrass, Arrowgrass) and forbs (Glasswort, Asters, Gerardia, Sea Lavender, Seaside Goldenrod, Saltmarsh Fleabane). The marsh supports healthy populations of salt marsh invertebrates (marsh crab species, snails, isopods, insects) and the ditches bring in fish, aquatic crabs and other invertebrates. The marsh peat edges hold Ribbed Mussels and are riddled with Fiddler Crab burrows. This all provides food sources for Herons and Egrets and waterfowl both in summer and winter. Glossy Ibis and American Bittern have been observed. There is often a significant roost of Great Blue Herons and Great and Snowy Egrets in the trees of the wooded island knolls. A nesting population of Yellow Crowned Night Herons is known just west of property. Cottrell Marsh has been studied extensively and the presence of nesting Salt Sharp-tailed Marsh Sparrows has been documented.

Where the elevations increase along the upland edges there is good shrub habitat of salt marsh plants including Groundsel, High Tide Bush, Bayberry, and significant stands of Poison Ivy.

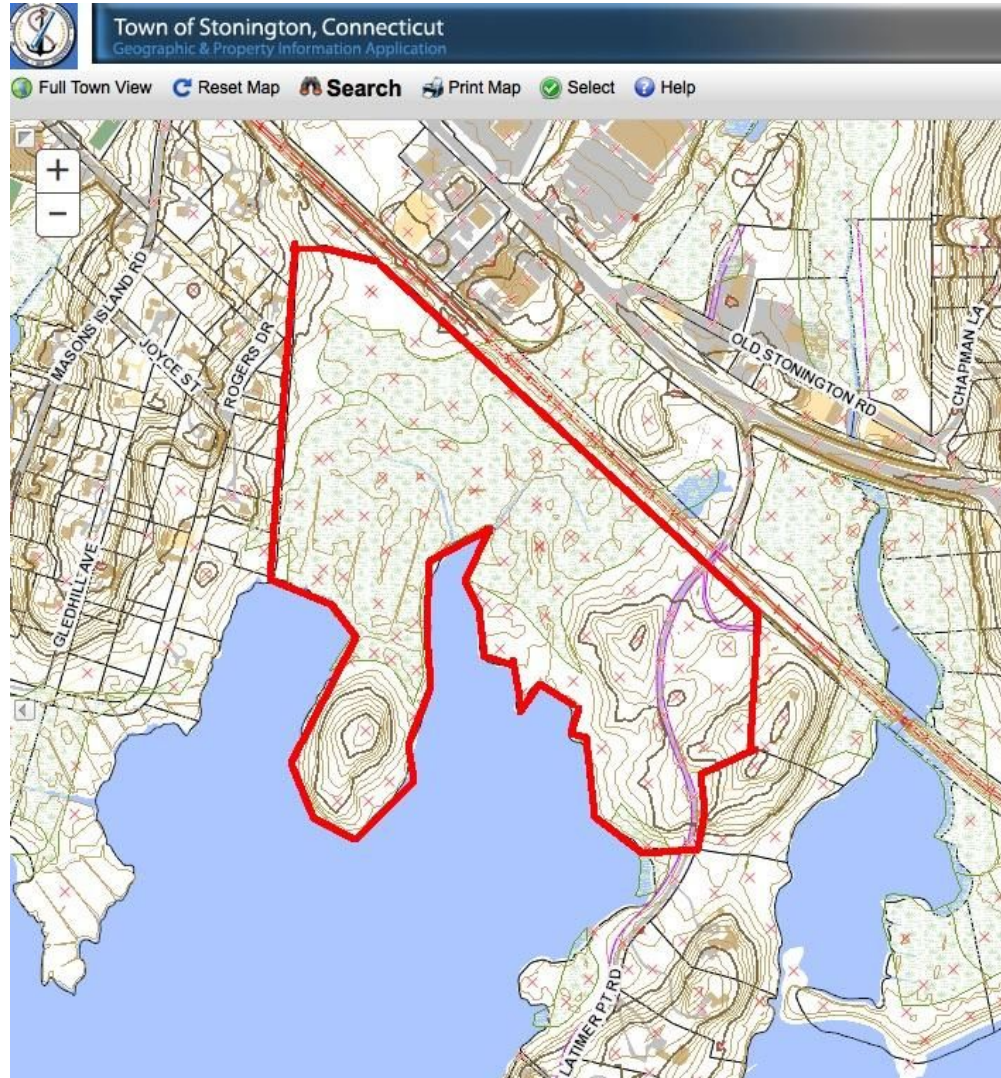
The wooded knolls are Oak dominated with Tupelo and Sassafras and with understory of Blueberries, Viburnum and Greenbrier in many areas. The diversity of habitats along the coast are important for migrating birds: warblers and song birds using the shrub-lands, shorebirds

using the saltmarsh and mud flats at lower tides, and waterfowl, particularly Black Duck, congregate along the shore.

A small portion of the preserve lies east of Latimer Point Road. It is mostly wooded upland, dominated by Oak and some Maple and an understory of Greenbrier, Viburnum, Blueberries, brambles and invasive Honeysuckle and Bittersweet spread throughout. Invasive shrubs and vines heavily impact the areas along the roadside. There are some areas of seasonal freshwater ponding along the railroad tracks. These areas often act as productive vernal pools. This eastside woodland area is a buffer for several larger homes farther east on the shore of Quiambug Cove with right-of-way driveways across the preserved land.

At the south portion of this area, along the road, is a smaller strip, 30 feet wide, that is the subject of a Landscape License Agreement with the abutting neighbor (David Kingeter 2014). See special management considerations and documentation as appendix. This area is in transition as it is being cleared and prepared for planting.

ELEVATIONS / WETLANDS



SPECIAL FEATURES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The property is in a CT DEEP Natural Diversity Database area and Critical Habitat area (see above) and two active Osprey platforms exist. As a healthy salt marsh it has been studied extensively over time and provides long term data bases.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Stewardship policies

Avalonia Land Conservancy Fee Land Stewardship Principles were approved on December 16, 2009 and the document is available at the Conservancy's office on Hatch Street in Mystic, CT. This document sets forth the general principles governing stewardship of all Avalonia properties. The document or any approved successor is hereby incorporated as part of this management plan.

Protection

Condition of Boundaries:

- ☒ Corner monuments/pins found
- ☒ Boundary signs posted

No roadside or sound-side sign has been installed. Standard boundary signs have been posted but there are limited trees on which to post in some areas. As with any property donated by The Nature Conservancy, a special sign acknowledging the donation is posted along Latimer Point Road.

The management objective for this property is to leave it in its natural state as protected open space. Management of invasives is considered, as needed, in some areas to maintain a native plant community.

An annual walk around the boundaries of the properties is required. Shoreline is assessed best by boat. Yearly surveillance should be conducted. All motorized vehicles are prohibited on the properties except for maintenance.

Maintaining properties appearance

Litter control. Storm events bring litter material up to marsh/shrub edges that also could pose danger to wildlife.

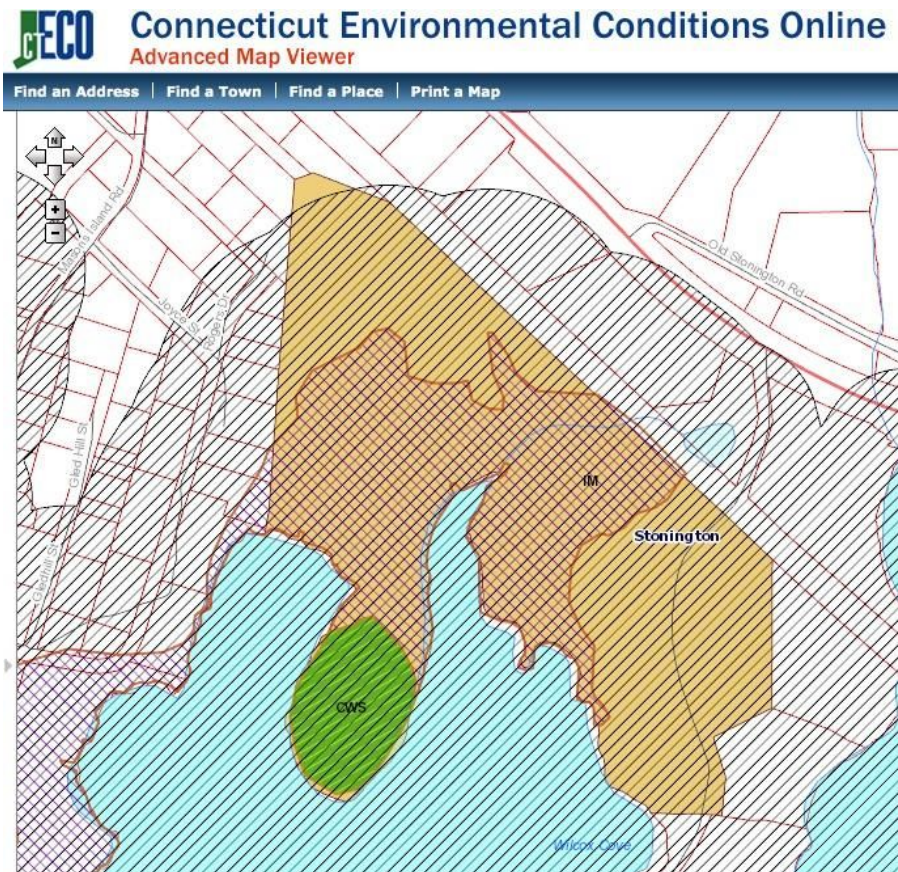
Public use

The preserve is open to the public for passive recreational use though there are no trails. Motor vehicles, bicycle riding, and horseback riding are not permitted. Hunting and the use of firearms on the property including bow hunting and target practice are not permitted. Camping is not

allowed. Dogs must be kept on a leash no longer than 7 feet long. Visitors are not allowed to pick vegetation or disturb wildlife excessively.

Enhancing wildlife habitat(s)

Need to identify if any additional endangered or threatened species or species of concern are present. A permit for one Osprey platform was approved by CT DEEP LIS office in December 2014 and erected in April of 2015 on eastern side of the marsh. Slightly to the west is a long-standing osprey platform that collapsed and then was repaired in 2015. About 80% of the property is in the CT DEEP Natural Diversity Database area. CT DEEP has labeled two Critical Habitat Communities (Intertidal Marine (estuary) and Coastal Woodland / Shrub-land (terrestrial forest) on the property. Salt Marsh Sparrows are known to nest on the property.



Controlling invasive species

Removal of invasive species by manual means will be accomplished as resources permit.

Erosion control and flooding

The property will flood with sea level rise.

Productive uses

Provides habitat for Salt Marsh Sharp-Tailed Sparrows and Osprey. Shore birds feed on the marsh and roost in the trees on the island and on the east side of the marsh.

Scientific and educational activities

The property has been used in the past for studies:

Steever, E. Z. V. (1972). Productivity and vegetation studies of a tidal salt marsh in Stonington, Connecticut: Cottrell Marsh.

Elphick Chris S., Bayard Trina, Meiman Susan, Hill Jason M. and Rubega Margaret A. (2009). A Comprehensive Assessment of the Distribution of Saltmarsh Sharp-Tailed Sparrows in Connecticut.

Bayard, Trina A., Elphick, Chris S. (2012). Testing for Conspecific Attraction in an Obligate Saltmarsh Bird: Can Behavior Be Used to Aid Marsh Restoration?

Bernhard Anne, Dwyer Courtney, Idrizi Adrian, Bender Geoffrey, Zwick Rachel (2015). Long-term impacts of disturbance on nitrogen-cycling bacteria in a New England salt marsh, *Frontiers in Microbiology*

New England Wild Flower Society, Seeds of Success program, is using the site to collect seeds of native salt marsh plants for local restoration projects, requiring local ecotypes. (begun 2015)

Response to large natural disasters

Removal of any hazards will be undertaken as necessary.

Special management considerations

Landscape License for 30-foot wide length of land along the east side of Latimer Point Road and fronting the property now owned by David Kingeter. Request by private owner to manicure and manage the strip of land was not in keeping with the deed. A counter proposal was offered to allow management to remove the invasive plants that had completely degraded the habitat and restoration of landscape with plantings that would be native and beneficial to wildlife and offer a more pleasing landscape.

The Nature Conservancy, donor of this land to Avalonia, was consulted regarding this management action and agreed with the proposal. This small area is in transition (2014-2016)

being cleared of invasive plants and replanted with native plants as part of the agreement.

Some modification of planting plan Exhibit A, was necessary due to the change of landscape contractors on the main land project and the discovery that there were more drainage issues on the strip, noted when the invasive plants were cleared.

Continued oversight is needed to ensure that the conditions of the agreement are met and that the owner does not overstep management allowances. Continued communication is necessary to maintain a good relationship.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Recurring and occasional requirements

Stonington Town Committee members visit the site on a limited basis. More frequent oversight is undertaken along Landscape easement area and frequent communication with landscape contractor and landowner are ongoing (2015)

Annual obligations

A boundary walk around the outside perimeter the property is required. Survey of outer shoreline is best by boat.

Short-term plan (1 – 5 years)

Annual boundary survey. Complete Landscape License plan.

Long term plan (5+ years)

Monitor site. Control invasive plants. Encourage continued study of location as Sea Level rises and salt marsh migration occurs.

Schedule for revising this plan

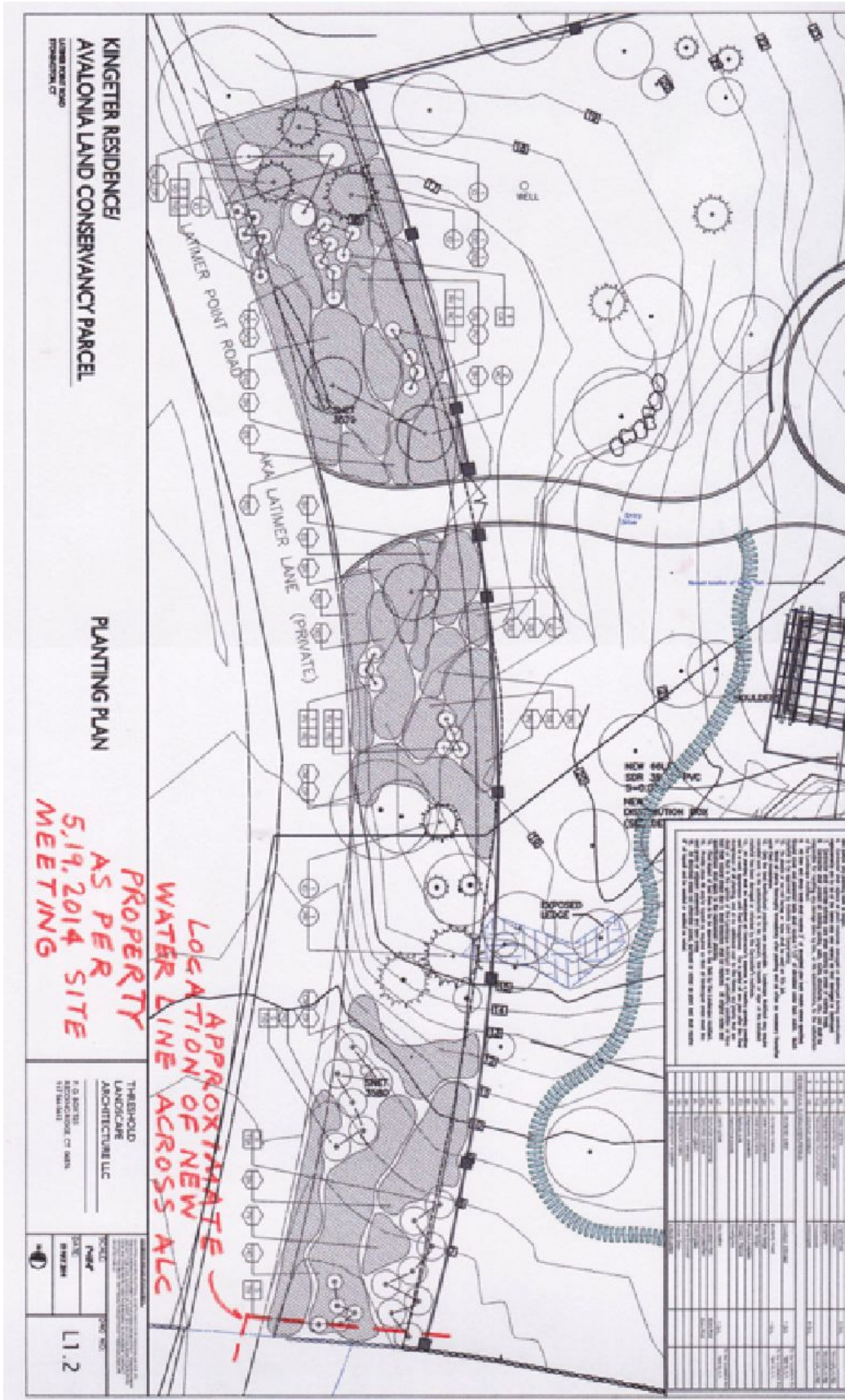
This plan shall be reviewed at least every five years and updated as necessary.

APPENDICES

I. Zoning map for property and surrounding area is available at the Stonington Town Hall or online at <http://gis.stonington-ct.gov>.

Deeds are available in Avalonia files, Stonington Town Hall and online at <https://connecticut-townclerks-records.com/User/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fIndex.aspx>

II. Landscape License Agreement documents.



LANDSCAPE LICENSE AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, the Licensors (Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc.), on behalf of itself, and on behalf of its successors and assigns, whomever, hereby grants unto the Licensee (Chateau Jaune LLC), and unto its successors and assigns, whomsoever, a license to enhance and landscape, as well as keep and maintain a landscape area more particularly shown on Schedule "A"; (a) for a minimum period of three (3) years from the date hereof, and (b) after such minimum period of three (3) years, from year to year thereafter, unless thirty (30) days prior written notice is given by the Licensors to the Licensee of termination of this license.

WHEREAS, the Licensee, and its successors and assigns, whomsoever, shall have and are hereby granted the license on the Licensors' property shown on Schedule "A", attached hereto and made a part hereof, to be used solely for the enhancement and landscaping of such property, together with rights of ingress and egress as required by the Licensee, in order to enhance and landscape same, as well as to keep and maintain said license for the term hereof.

WHEREAS, this agreement is intended to convey only a license for the aforesaid purposes, said license is limited, with all rights conveyed hereunder to cease and revert to the Licensors at such time as is provided hereinabove, and also at such time as the Licensee ceases to use said license for the purposes set forth herein or fails to comply with the provisions on its part to be performed hereunder.

WHEREAS, the Licensee shall be fully liable for any and all claims, damages, losses and liabilities, of whatsoever kind and nature, to person and/or property caused by the exercise of, or the failure to exercise, the rights granted by the Licensors to the Licensee hereunder, with the Licensee fully saving, indemnifying and holding the Licensors harmless therefrom.

LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA

Being a landscape license over a certain piece or parcel of land situated on the easterly side of Latimer Point Road in the Town of Stonington, County of New London and State of Connecticut, said License being more particularly bound and described as follows:

Beginning at a point located on the easterly edge of Latimer Point Road, said point being the northwesterly corner of the license area herein described,

Thence southerly along the easterly edge of said Latimer Point Road, a distance of 320' more or less to a point located in the northerly property line of land now or formerly Douglas and Susan MacFaddin, said point being the southwesterly corner of the license area described,

Thence easterly 35' along said land of MacFaddin and land now or formerly Steven T. and Judith B. Martin, in part by each, to a point, said point being the southeasterly corner of the license area herein described,

Thence running northerly by and along land of the Licensee, along a line located 35' easterly from, and parallel to, the easterly edge of Latimer Point Road, a distance of 320' more or less to a point, said point being the northwesterly corner of said land of the Licensee and the northeasterly corner of the license area herein described,

Thence running westerly along the westerly projection of the northerly property line of said Licensee, a distance of 35' to a point located on the easterly edge of said Latimer Point Road, said point being the point and place of beginning. (See Schedule A attached hereto).

NOW THEREFORE, for the consideration of One Dollar (\$1.00) received to its full satisfaction, the Licenser does for itself, its successors and assigns, hereby give, grant, bargain sell and confirm unto the Licensee, its successors and assigns, the right, privilege and authority to enhance and landscape the land above described as **LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA** subject to the terms and conditions provided herein.

EXCEPT as herein provided, the Licensee, for itself and for its successors and assigns, further covenants and agrees to prohibit and refrain from the following operations, conduct, and other acts unless written consent is obtained from the Licenser:

- a) The construction or placing of structures, fences, gates, signs or other improvements or facilities upon, below or above the LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA.
- b) The removal or destruction of trees, shrubs, or other vegetation (except for those species not native to the area), the application of fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides, or any other activity or use detrimental to erosion control, soil conservation, wildlife, or the natural condition of the LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA.
- c) The planting of trees, shrubs, or other vegetation within the LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA not native to the area, and not in conformity with the planting schedule as depicted on Schedule "A."
- d) The excavation or removal of loam, gravel, soil, rock or other substances within the LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA which is not in conformity with landscaping design as depicted on Schedule "A."
- e) The right to slope and re-grade land in conjunction with the construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of a single, 20' wide private driveway within the LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA, as depicted on Schedule "A." The two existing driveways to be filled in, re-graded and landscaped accordingly.

EXCEPTING and reserving herein to the Licenser, for itself and for its successors and assigns, the following operations and activities within the LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA:

TOGETHER WITH:

- a) The right to install, maintain, replace or repair above or below ground public and private utilities within the LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA.
- b) The right to once yearly mow grasses within the LANDSCAPE LICENSE AREA for the purposes of maintenance and control of invasive species.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in the presence of:

Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., Licensors

Wister A. Little BY: Michele FitzPatrick
Wister A. Little Michele FitzPatrick, its President,
duly authorized
Lynn M. Carangelo
LYNN M. CARANGELO

STATE OF CONNECTICUT)

) ss: Mystic

August 15 2014

COUNTY OF NEW LONDON)

Personally appeared, **Michele FitzPatrick, President of Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc.**, duly authorized Signer and Sealer of the foregoing instrument and acknowledged the same to be her free act and deed and the free act and deed of said corporation, before me,

Lynn M. Carangelo
LYNN M. CARANGELO

Commissioner of the Superior Court

Notary Public

EXA 9/30/2017

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in the presence of:

LICENSEE:

____ BY: _____

duly authorized

