

AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY, Inc.  
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[www.avalonialandconservancy.org](http://www.avalonialandconservancy.org)

WALTON MEADOW,  
RAROGIEWICZ TRACT,  
And  
MARY WALTON BEQUEST PRESERVES  
Site Management Plan

Town of Griswold, New London County, Connecticut  
**Walton Meadow Preserve**  
**Rarogiewicz Tract**  
**Mary Walton Bequest**  
Latitude: N 41° 34'13.6" Longitude: W 71° 57'25.2"

Property managed by the Avalonia Town of Griswold Committee  
Plan prepared by the Avalonia Town of Griswold Committee

Management Plan POC: Richard "Dick" Conant

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Management Plan Approval:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Site Information:**

**Property name and location:** The Mary Walton Preserve, Rarogiewicz Tract Preserve, and the Mary Walton Bequest Preserve are contiguous Avalonia properties separated by Browning Road and Terry Road. The preserves can be accessed from Browning Road, Town of Griswold, New London County, Connecticut. **See site maps located in the Avalonia Office or the Dropbox Griswold folder??**

**Directions to the property:** From Route 138 in the Town of Griswold take Browning Road south until you see Avalonia boundary signage on both sides of the road. The Avalonia preserve signage for the Mary Walton Preserve is on the right side of Browning Road along the stonewall and mown field.

**Land trust contact information:** AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY, Inc. P.O. Box 49, Old Mystic, CT 06372  
Landline #:(860) 884-3500 Website address: [www.avalonialandconservancy.org](http://www.avalonialandconservancy.org)

**Legal description from deed/survey:** See warranty deed located in the Avalonia Office or the Griswold Dropbox??

## **Description of surrounding area:**

The immediate environ surrounding the contiguous 23.7 acre Mary Walton Preserve, 1.83 acre Rarogiewicz Tract, and the 4.13 acre Mary Walton Bequest tract is a mix of mown fields, unmanaged woodlots, and wooded wetlands with some intermittent low density residential development immediately adjacent to the preserves along Browning and Terry Roads. A small pond exists on the Mary Walton Bequest Preserve.

The properties have high conservation value for native raptors, woodpeckers, woodland and open field birds, Canada geese, insectivorous birds and song birds. The wooded parcels supports a population of white-tailed deer and coyote while also providing upland woods for small mammals. The wetlands probably support an extensive amphibian population, especially the emergent wetland in the northern portion of the Mary Walton Meadow Preserve and the late successional pond on the Mary Walton Bequest property. No herpetological survey has been undertaken to date.

## **Acquisition history**

### **Date of donation or purchase:**

The Mary Walton Preserve was donated by Mary B. Walton on May 14, 1996. The Rarogiewicz Tract was donated by Rick and Kathleen Rarogiewicz on November 24, 2004. The Mary Walton Bequest was donated by Mary B. Walton on February 27, 2008. The donors' expectations for properties and any restrictions placed on property at time of gift are

included in the transfer documents. **See warranty deed located in the Avalonia Office or the Griswold Dropbox??**

## **Land use history**

The three contiguous properties, which are bisected by Browning Road and Terry Roads contains extensive maintained meadow, forested wetlands, and associated upland hard forest. The upland woods are a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> regrowth hardwood forest of approximately 75-100 years of age. The wooded and wetland areas were undoubtedly used as pasture in the past centuries and probably mirrored the open maintained field conditions that now exist on a portion of the Mary Walton Meadow Preserve. There are extensive stone walls throughout the upland areas and the wetlands. The site contains an extensive palustrine forested freshwater wetland north of the Walton Meadow with mature stands of red maple and an understory of high bush blueberry, sweet pepper bush, azalea, and viburnums. No previous structures or foundations have been noted on the property, and there is no evidence of former household dumping. Extensive stone walls extend around the perimeter and interior of portions of all three tracts.

## **Public Use Resources**

The property is open for foot access and observation, and although no established or maintained trails exist, foot access is easy through the mown meadow. . There is an old farm gate providing access to the meadow from Browning Road. No other improvements have been made on the property. Permissible activities include hiking, nature study and wildlife observation. Prohibited activities include, but are not inclusive to, camping, cutting or collection of any vegetation, hunting or trapping, disposal of trash, litter, or vegetative debris, removal of rocks and/or cultural artifacts.

Avalonia signage has been posted along the Walton Meadow property and is adequate in its extent and condition. The Rarogiewicz and Mary Walton Bequest properties are only posted along the road frontage.

**Natural Resources:** The upland and wetland vegetative communities remains relatively healthy and have limited invasive species. The wooded perimeter around the meadow and the entire Rarogiewicz Tract are extensively infested with Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, bush honey suckle, and oriental bittersweet. There has been no discernable stewardship efforts to date aside from the regular mowing of the meadow. An extensive multi-day/multi-year effort is needed to cut/treat/pull the invasives, where they occur. The upland portions of the site support mature red/white/black oak with yellow and black birch and interspersed red maple, mountain laurel, sassafras, mockernut hickory, white pine, witch hazel, and American beech. The wetland supports red maple, sweet pepperbush, azalea, and high bush blueberry and sphagnum moss.

Raccoon, eastern gray squirrel, chipmunk, coyote, and white-tail deer have been observed either directly or indirectly (tracks) on the property. The properties do not contain any habitats of special concern as defined by the Connecticut Department of Energy and the Environment.

The property has gentle rolling topography on either side of the drainage corridor that runs through the northern section of the Mary Walton Meadow Preserve.

**Cultural Resources:** None noted aside from the extensive field-stone walls exist throughout the property.

## **Management objectives**

### **Protection:**

The preserves should be protected from tree cutting/fire wood removal, hunting, dumping of brush and vegetative debris from adjacent residential neighbors, and littering along Browning Road and Terry Roads. “No Hunting” signs should be posted throughout the preserves.

### **Boundary identification and sign posting:**

Site access points and boundaries are fully posted with Avalonia boundary signage on the Mary Walton Meadow Preserve, but only posted on the road frontage of the Rarogiewicz and Mary Walton Bequest tracts. These two preserves need to be fully posted along their entire boundary perimeters.

### **Surveillance objectives:**

The site requires periodic inspection for littering, defacing/removal of boundary and access signage, illegal hunting and unauthorized ATV use.

### **Protection of special natural and cultural features:**

Monitor site access to the meadow and brush disposal

### **Public use and Restrictions:**

The site has no established and maintained trails, but is still open for public pedestrian access, especially to the open meadow, allowing the public to view passively the site’s natural and cultural resources. No camping, cutting of firewood or vegetation, encroachment by mechanized vehicles, dumping or disposal of litter or residential vegetative debris is authorized. No hunting is permitted. Public access to the preserves is from Browning and Terry roads.

## **Implementing the plan.**

### **Recurring and occasional requirements:**

Pursue annual assessment, control, and management of invasive species by mechanical and chemical strategies. Litter pick-up along property margins on Browning and Terry Roads. A herpetological study of the wetland and pond should be contemplated.

### **Annual obligations:**

Conduct a full boundary walk with GPS equipment. Install/replace/maintain signage as necessary. Produce a brief annual report capturing yearly management and stewardship work accomplished on the property and outlining management/stewardship priorities for the upcoming year.

## Floral or Faunal Species Noted On-Site

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	DATE OBSERVED	COMMENTS
<b>PLANTS:</b>			
White Pine		11/20/2015	
Hemlock		11/20/2015	
Oriental bittersweet		11/20/2015	
Lycopodium		11/20/2015	
Sweet Pepperbush		11/20/2015	
Ironwood		11/20/2015	
Multiflora rose		11/20/2015	
Japanese barberry		11/20/2015	
Red Cedar		11/20/2015	
Black Oak		11/20/2015	
Red Oak		11/20/2015	
White Oak		11/20/2015	
Yellow Birch		11/20/2015	
Black Birch		11/20/2015	
Witch-hazel		11/20/2015	
American Beech		11/20/2015	
Azalea		11/20/2015	
High bush blueberry		11/20/2015	
Mockernut hickory		11/20/2015	
Black gum		11/20/2015	
Bush Honeysuckle		11/20/2015	
<b>MAMMALS:</b>			
White-tail deer		11/20/2015	
Chipmunk		11/20/2015	
Gray squirrel		11/20/2015	
Coyote		11/20/2015	
<b>REPTILES:</b>			
Painted Turtles?			
<b>INVERTEBRATES:</b>			
<b>BIRDS:</b>			
Turkey Vulture		11/20/2015	
Bluebirds near nesting boxes		11/20/2015	
<b>AMPHIBIANS:</b>			
Expect frogs and salamanders in the pond and wetlands			
<b>FISH:</b>			
Billings Brook?			

## **Site Surveys and Mgt. Plan Progress (annual update of work accomplished)**

- 1. See 2011 and 2015 Annual Boundary Survey - Site Inspections Folder and Jotform records online??**