



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

Pequotsepos Brook Preserve

Property Management Plan

Maritime Drive
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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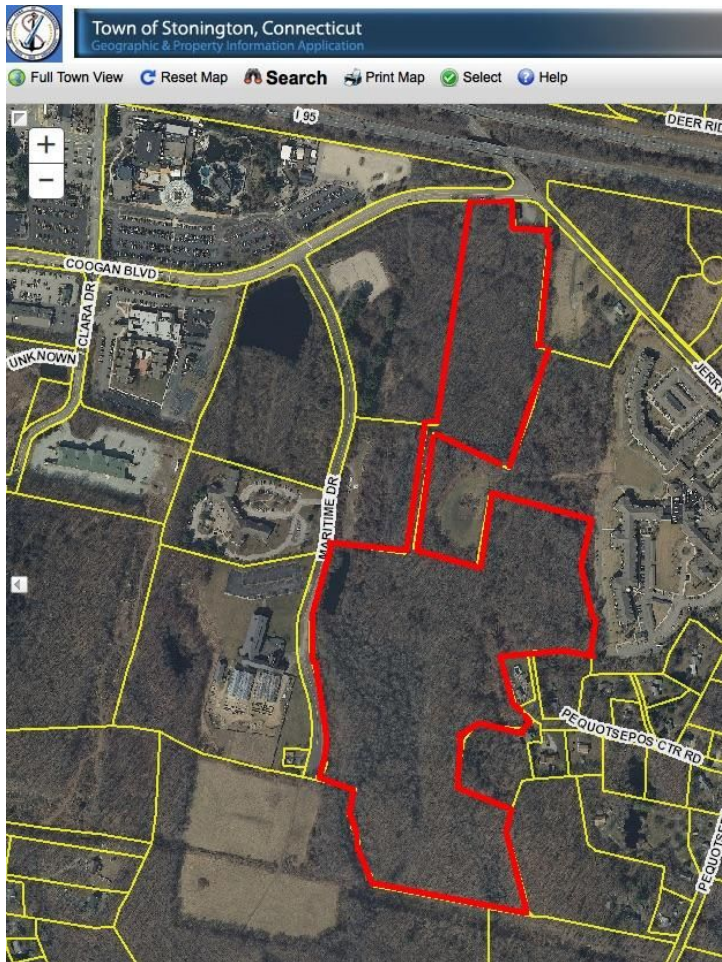
SUMMARY

This plan is for a property on Maritime Drive in Mystic, CT. This is a trailed property of woodlands and wetlands. 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 Pequotsepos Brook Preserve is located in the Town of Stonington western area of town, near the “Golden Triangle”. Commercial development and undeveloped properties surround the property. It abuts the Denison Homestead properties and property owned by the Sea Research Foundation forming an extensive open space complex of over 600 acres.



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 150/1/28C. Combined GIS acreage is 43.99 acres.

Acquisition history

Donation from developer Maritime Associates in November 1988. It was a mandatory set-aside for the Maritime Drive development.

Land use history

Historical photos show the property is fairly unchanged, except with older trees, due mainly to the large amount of wetlands. Farmland to the east and west has been developed in to commercial property and senior housing. A small lot immediately to the west owned by Sea Research Foundation contains a conservation easement on the eastern half of the property that is held by Avalonia. Property to the south is part of the Denison Homestead.

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](#).

Use the search box below to locate an address in Connecticut.

mistuxet ave, mystic, ct

Toggle map layers

☐ CT Towns

1934

Satellite

Public use resources

The property was donated to Avalonia to protect Pequotsepos Brook.

Public benefit of the protected property:

The property is not currently within a Natural Diversity Database area, but the property has not been formally reviewed in recent years. The property was formerly in a NDDDB area due to presence of White River Crayfish (subsequently taken off the CT DEEP lists). There is a NDDDB area within 400 feet to the south on Pequotsepos Brook. The property provides habitat for neighborhood wildlife and provides a buffer to the larger nature center complex.

Trails of the nature center complex bisect the property. Avalonia installed a side trail to the Stoneridge retirement community and another side trail to Maritime Drive with bridge and stairs for direct access. Employees of local businesses access the trails frequently for walks during work days. It is easily accessed by tourists visiting or staying in the immediate area.

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:

The parcel is open to the public, as are all Avalonia properties.

The majority of Pequotsepos Brook Preserve is made up of different types of wetlands. The stream flows in all but the driest periods. The surrounding areas act as buffers during flooding times with Red Maple Swamp vegetation and understory of ferns, Skunk Cabbage and Sphagnum mosses and Sweet Pepperbush and Spicebush and Winterberry as shrub component. There are several areas that are actual vernal pools suitable for breeding amphibians. The quarry usually has water year round. One retention basin pond is included on the property and has become surrounded by typical wetland plants and is home to waterfowl, and reptiles and amphibians that are typical residents of permanent freshwater ponds. Herons and Egrets and waterfowl also visit it.

As part of a larger complex of generally uninterrupted wetlands it is breeding areas for forest

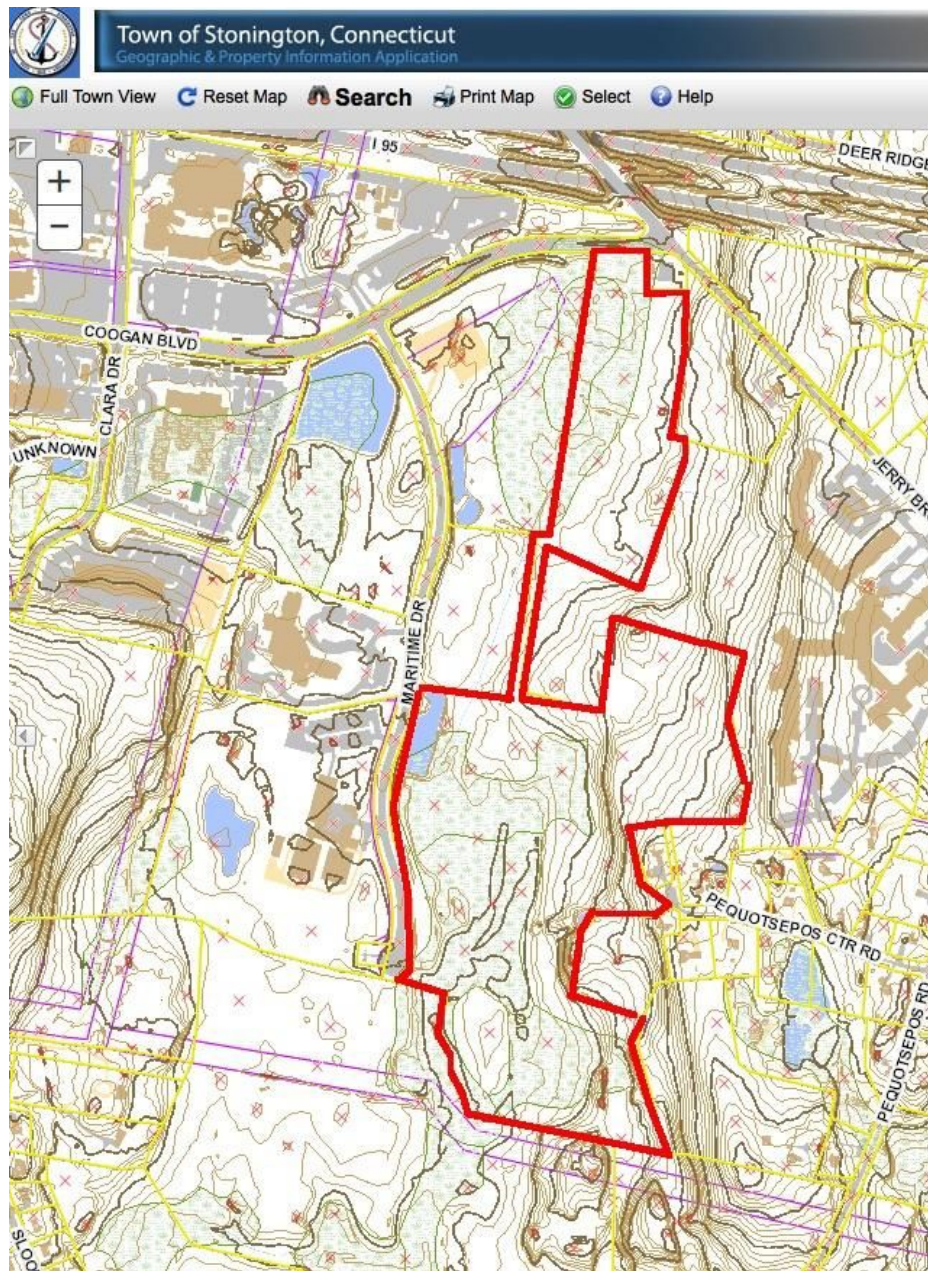
and wetland birds. Portions of the areas are drier, second growth former fields with old Cedars, Blueberries and Viburnums providing fruits and berries. Old Oaks and some Hickories provide the hard mast.

Turkeys make use of some of the more open areas. Larger mammals such as Coyotes, Foxes, Fishers and Bobcats have been reported on the property as well as a significant population of Deer.

Potential threats to conservation values: Run off and pollution from impervious surfaces continues to be a threat to the quality of the water. The natural buffering of wetlands is significant to filter the waters before they reach the larger brook and flow to Pequotsepos Cove. Over growth of invasive plants could degrade the habitat, so monitoring for significant changes will be necessary during annual surveys. The objective is to maintain the property as it was donated to Avalonia – mainly protecting wetlands and Pequotsepos Brook.

The future of Denison Homestead lands, since not held in perpetuity, may ultimately affect the quality of the larger greenway complex of protected land along the brook.

ELEVATIONS / WETLANDS



SPECIAL FEATURES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Pequotsepos Brook runs through the property. At least six historic stone bridges are on the property or adjoining properties. Old stone walls and large native trees indicate long history of agricultural or livestock usage. Old quarry site holds water year round and is surrounded by rugged quarried granite stones. Areas have been explored by historians and specialists in Native American history and several sites have been identified as potentially significant for past Native American usage.



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

Boundaries are posted though some of the signs still show Mashantucket Land Trust.

An annual walk around the boundaries of the properties is required. Yearly surveillance should be conducted to check for infringement or encroachment by neighbors. All motorized vehicles are prohibited on the properties except for maintenance.

Maintaining properties appearance

Litter control. Periodic clean up along brook lines as litter frequently washes down and lodges near stone bridges. Help maintain trails along with the nature center efforts. Work to control invasives in areas along the trails where they can become obstructed easily with over growth.

Public use

The preserve is open to the public for passive recreational use. 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. The main trail as maintained by the nature center, is blazed in purple. The Avalonia portions and side spurs are marked brightly in yellow for better visibility for the seniors from Stoneridge who use the trails.

Enhancing wildlife habitat(s)

Complete natural resources assessment. Deer over-grazing is an issue in the entire nature center complex. Avalonia generally prohibits hunting but Board of Directors may want to consider allowing culling of deer herd in the future. Monitoring water quality over time could be a good opportunity to make sure pollutants from local businesses, and run off from impervious surfaces, do not adversely affect the various wetland complexes. Removing litter that also poses hazards

to wildlife is important. Removal of dense areas of invasive species, as time and resources allows, could enhance the area for wildlife but that goal may be unrealistic.

Controlling invasive species

Removal of invasive species by manual means will be accomplished as resources permit. Property has extensive invasive plants throughout.

Erosion control and flooding

No current issues. Property flooded extensively during past storms of many inches of rain. In general the healthy wetlands absorbed much of the flooding but wooden bridges were washed away and had to be retrieved or rebuilt, which is a nature center responsibility. Stone bridges may need to be cleared of debris after flooding events.

Productive uses

Provides habitat for neighborhood wildlife and protects Pequotsepos Brook.

Scientific and educational activities

The nature center and aquarium use the property for educational purposes. The Stoneridge senior community have expressed interest in continuing guided nature walks with Avalonia volunteers .

Response to large natural disasters

Removal of any hazards will be undertaken as necessary.

Special management considerations

The areas of Avalonia trails and side spurs to Stoneridge have been marked with brighter yellow paint and blazed more frequently to provide better visual assistance to the seniors who use the trails.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Recurring and occasional requirements

Stonington Town Committee members visit the site on a limited basis. Manual and mechanical removal of invasives to maintain open trails is necessary several times during growing season.

Annual obligations

A boundary walk around the outside perimeter the property is required.

Short term plan (1 – 5 years)

Annual boundary walk. Check boundaries for signage and replace old signs where needed.

Fall 2015 – Response to complaint from commercial property neighbor regarding tree close to boundary and affecting their roof. Tree will be removed with Avalonia paying for half of the cost of removal.

Long term plan (5+ years)

Monitor site. Control invasive plants.

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>