



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

Marjorie Stanton Middleton Collier Preserve and Robert B. Acker Tract

Property Management Plan

Pequot Trail (Route 234)
Old 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 _____



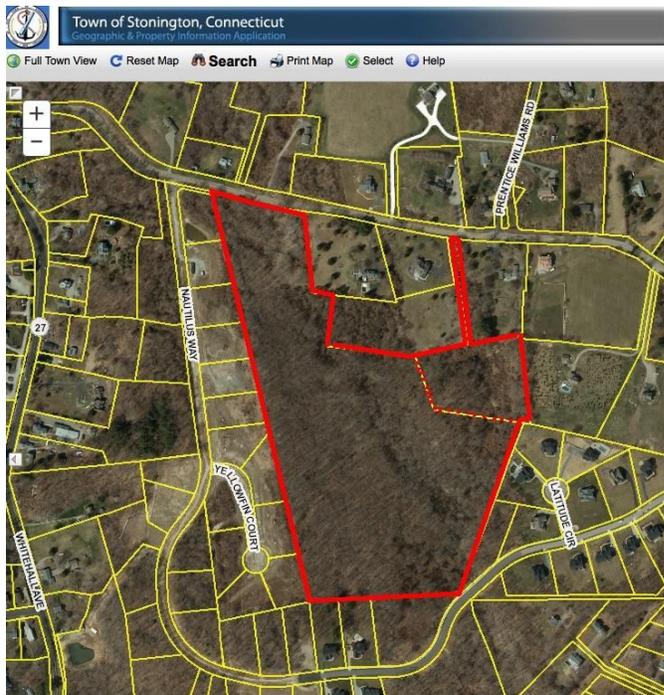
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SUMMARY

This plan is for two abutting properties Pequot Trail (Route 234) in Old Mystic, CT. This is a non-trailed property. Visitors are welcome. See the photos and maps that follow. 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 Marjorie Stanton Middleton Collier Preserve and Robert B. Acker Tract are located in the Town of Stonington western area of town. Residential housing and undeveloped lots bound it.



SITE INFORMATION

The property

A parcel map of the property from the Town of Stonington GIS database is shown on to the left. The properties are identified as Map/Book/Lot/Unit 148/3/7 & 148/3/7B. Combined GIS acreage is 33.82 acres.

Acquisition history

The Collier Preserve was donated by Robert S. Collier acting as trustee of the Connecticut Realty Trust (a family trust) in December 1999 and Robert B. Acker donated the Acker tract in October 2001.

Land use history

There are some stonewalls on the properties indicating historical agricultural use, probably of

neighboring properties. The Collier property is mostly wetlands and forest and has remained that way historically. Neighboring pastureland has mostly become residential housing.

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.

old mystic, ct

Toggle map layers
 CT Towns

1934



200 m Terms of Use

Satellite



200 m Terms of Use Report a map error

Public use resources

Properties provide neighborhood wildlife habitat and buffers the surrounding residential areas. The entire property falls within a CT DEEP Natural Diversity Database area.

Public benefit of the protected property:

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

These two preserves are comprised of upland woods, shrub thickets that are heavily degraded by invasive plants, a White Pine grove and a number of wetland areas. The Collier Preserve has been wooded for a longer period of time and supports some larger trees. The Acker Preserve was more recently a mowed field around the time of donation but has reverted to successional shrub land.

The entry onto property from Pequot Trail leads immediately into woodlands that are impacted by invasive plants (Multi-flora Rose, Honeysuckle and Bittersweet are dominant here) which makes travel through the preserve difficult in many areas. However, there are also areas of open understory with Maple and Oak hardwoods and several areas of large White Pine. The preserve is overpopulated with White-tailed Deer and the understory is heavily browsed. Tick infestation is severe.

The wetlands are in the central area and along the western border. There are areas of mossy, rocky seeps as well as vernal pool areas that are likely supporting amphibian populations. Japanese Barberry impacts the wetlands.

The land slopes down in the south and east with some of the wetlands merging into a small running stream before flowing out under the roadway of the surrounding development.

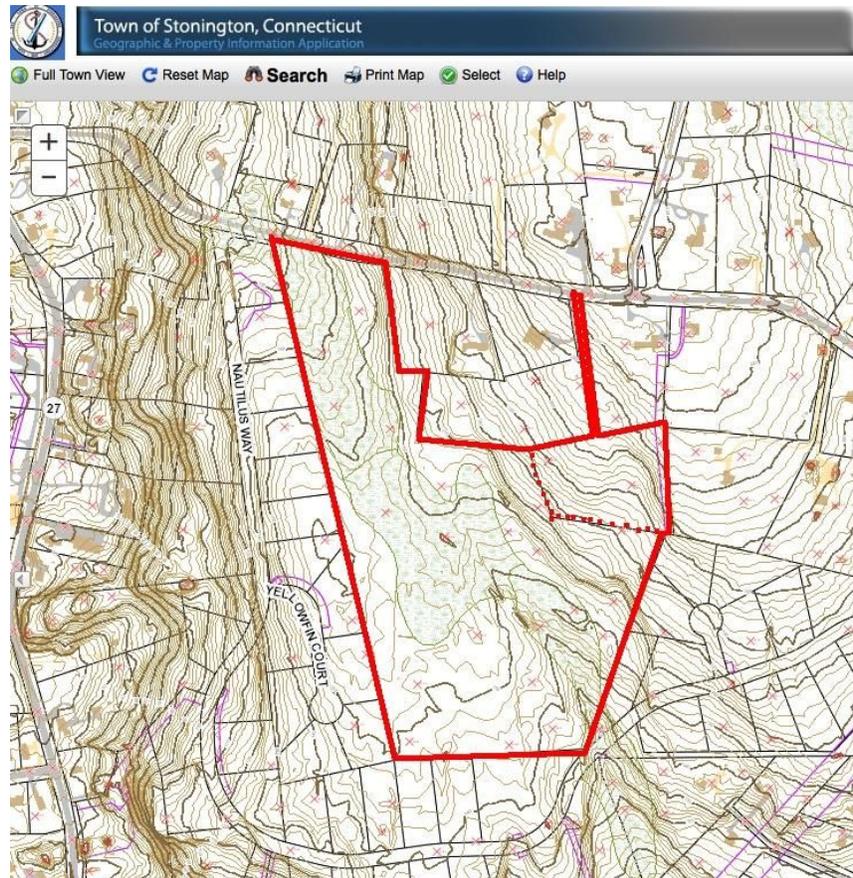
The eastern portion of the preserved area, the Acker Tract, is most severely degraded by invasive plants. It is dense thicket with only some animal trails. Wine Berry canes, Bittersweet vines and Black Swallowwort as well as native Green Brier, make access nearly impossible yet it is supportive of thicket bird species and small mammals.

As a resource it provides a green buffer to the surrounding developments and forms part of a greenway connecting other, as yet undeveloped lands. The thickets, while mostly invasive provide a valued habitat for shrub land species. It falls within the Ledyard focus area for New England Cottontail and is close to the Avalonia Peck/Callahan NEC habitat project. The wetlands are of value as vernal amphibian breeding areas.

Potential threats to conservation values: Continued degradation by invasives and overgrazing by Deer threaten the habitat. Continued development to north across Pequot trail and west,

with lawns and run off, could impact wetlands.

ELEVATIONS / WETLANDS



SPECIAL FEATURES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

There are many stone walls and an old pent-way on property. The donor families have historic roots here and an interest in maintaining connection to land. It is within the CT DEEP Natural Diversity Database area. (information needed to confirm species which may be present in area)

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

Entrance / roadside sign installed at Collier.

Maintaining properties appearance

Litter control. Roadside maintenance.

Public use

All Avalonia properties are 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. Tree stands have been noted and reported in the past. 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. As area development increases, there may be more usage.

Enhancing wildlife habitat(s)

Request NDDDB report. Depending on results of report, management may be undertaken to enhance habitat for listed species.

Controlling invasive species

Controlling invasive species will be accomplished as resources permit. There are numerous large Norway Maples on property and along Eastern pentway. It was an issue in 2013-2015 when there was a complaint that those trees were blocking a scenic view. It was decided, however, that there were too many large trees throughout the entire area to try and remove them, and not for supposed scenic rights. The trees line the pentway and were likely planted, historically, for that purpose. Removing the larger trees in any area will likely encourage growth explosion of understory invasives. Some clearing may be undertaken if trails are ultimately created but maintenance will be difficult,

Erosion control and flooding

No severe issues. Natural wetlands act as buffer during heavy rain events.

Productive uses

Neighborhood wildlife habitat and buffer around residential development.

Scientific and educational activities

None planned.

Response to large natural disasters

Response as encountered, but there is little danger from falling trees.

Special management considerations

Bob Rogers (1335 Pequot Trail, 860-536-7776) whose family donated the Acker Preserve has offered assistance to help remove invasive plants in that area. Access with machinery would be nearly impossible from any way other than through his property. Permission granted (2013) for him to remove Autumn Olive and Honeysuckle and other herbaceous invasive plants as his time and resources allow. There is a narrow deeded access to the Acker back lot along Rogers' home from Pequot Trail but there had been a verbal agreement on donation not to open it, or add signage inviting people to enter through that area. It is impassable. Access to Acker is through Collier at the main entrance sign on Pequot Trail. If maintenance entry is required, it is best to confer with Rogers himself.

Neighbor to East: Perry Sawyer (Christmas tree farm 1307 Pequot Trail, 860-572-9473) has offered us access passage into Acker with advance notification.

Neighbors to the Northeast (Quoketaug Hill Farm, Contact Elaine Bogue: 394 Forest St, Dunstable, MA) have expressed interest in helping maintain some sort of trail system on the east side and pent-way to benefit their guests to the future bed and breakfast. Oversight is needed to make sure any volunteer clearing is confined to acceptable and mutually agreed upon areas.

Issues: 2015 - Vandalism of trees, spray painted with “N” to indicate Norway Maples by family member affiliated with Quoketaug Hill Farm LLC in an attempt to convince Avalonia that they should be removed. The motivation was to improve the view from the Stone House. Vandalism was reported to police. The issue resolved by LLC agreeing to pay for graffiti removal. The trees, while non-native, will not be removed from this area as they actually serve to line the historic pent-way and also prevent overgrowth of other herbaceous invasive plants.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Recurring and occasional requirements

Stonington Town Committee members visit the site as described above.

Annual obligations

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

Short term plan (1 – 5 years)

Annual boundary walk. Implement plan as described above. If the development of area proceeds as plans, there will be greater need for monitoring western boundary for dumping or usage violations. Contacting the neighbors for Avalonia introduction may be a good plan.

Long term plan (5+ years)

Monitor site. Control invasive plants. Implement plan as described above.

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>