



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

# Stony Brook Preserve

## Property Management Plan

Sommers Lane  
Stonington, New London County, Connecticut

Stonington Town Committee is responsible  
for the stewardship of this property

Plan Prepared by:  
Richard Newton & Beth Sullivan  
Spring 2013

Approved by Stonington Town Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Stewardship Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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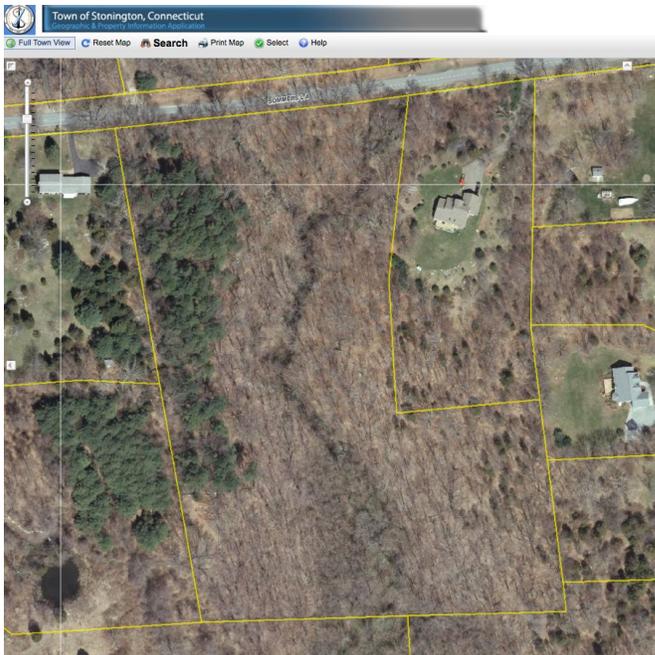
## SUMMARY

This plan is for one property on Sommers Lane in Stonington, CT. This is a non-trailed property with Stony Brook running through the property. See the 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](mailto:avalonialc@yahoo.com), by phone at 860-884-3500, and has a website at <http://www.avalonialandconservancy.org>.

## HISTORY

The Stony Brook Preserve is located in the Town of Stonington in the northern, more rural area of town. It is bounded on all sides by residential housing. Jane Preston donated the property to Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc. in 1996 as open space set aside for the “Preston Subdivision”.



## SITE INFORMATION

### The property

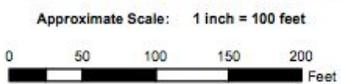
A parcel map of the property from the Town of Stonington GIS database is shown on the next page. The property is identified as Map/Book/Lot/Unit 85/1/1D/. Combined GIS acreage is 9.12 acres.

The north, west and most of the southern boundaries are bounded by private homes in the GBR-130 zone. This zone is located on “fragile aquifer, watershed, stream belt, inland wetland and significant adjoining areas so as to preserve them for the future and present needs’ [Source – Town of Stonington Zoning Regulations].

# Town of Stonington, Connecticut - Assessment Parcel Map

Parcel: 85-1-1D

Address: SOMMERS LA



Revised To: October 2011  
Map Produced: April 2012

Disclaimer: This map is for informational purposes only. All information is subject to verification by any user. The Town of Stonington and its mapping contractors assume no legal responsibility for the information contained herein.

### Acquisition history

Open space set aside donation in 1996.

### Land use history

Open space protection of Sandy Brook. Former farmland or grazing land (see photo in Appendix).

### Public use resources

While there is no formal designated entry onto the preserve, it can be accessed through an opening at the west end of the stonewall on Sommers Lane. This is the entrance of a right of way to access the Davis Cemetery located along the western wall of the preserve. There are no trails but the understory is open enough to allow relatively easy walking in most upland areas. Passive recreation is allowed: hiking, nature study. No recreational motorized vehicles are permitted. Dogs must be on leash at all times. Standard Avalonia boundary marking signs have been posted in accordance with management principals, but there are no maps of the property nor are there any immediate plans for signage at entrance. Neighboring property owners have active deer stands, so visitors should be cautious during hunting season.

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

This property is approximately 9 acres of mixed habitat: upland woods on either side of Stony Brook which runs north to south through the center low land areas and spreads into a significant red maple swamp wetland at the southern portion of the preserve.

The western upland portion includes a pine grove habitat. Significant damage is visible after windstorms of 2012. This area also contains the greatest amount of invasive species including: bittersweet, privet, Japanese honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, euonymous, and multi-flora rose along hedgerow by cemetery and SW corner.

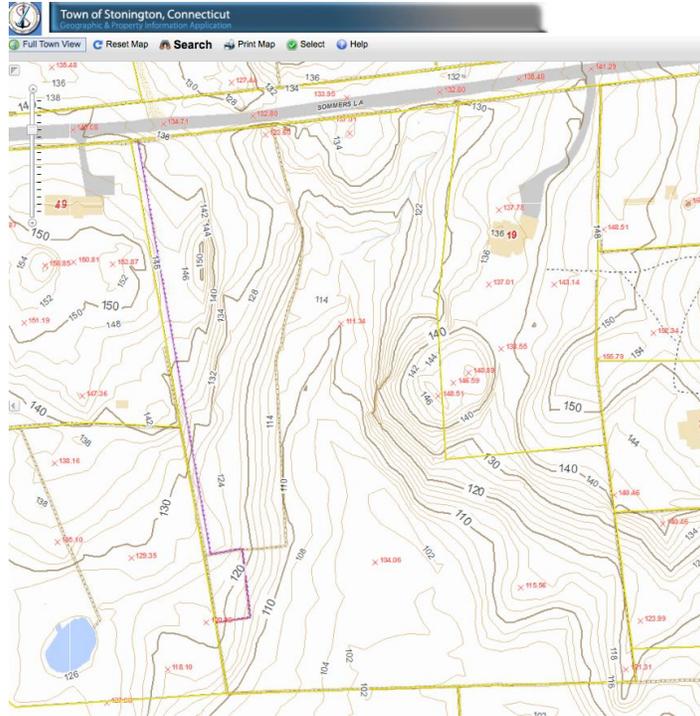
Central to the preserve is the clear flowing Stony Brook that is mostly contained within defined banks with gravel bottom and rocky cobble. (Cress species noted in flowing stream indicates good water quality). It spreads into a wide wetland with sphagnum hummocks, moss, skunk cabbage and ferns with spicebush and winterberry as understory to red maple and some yellow birch. Fish have been observed in the brook. The area shows signs of significant seasonal flooding of the brook over its banks. The area would be good habitat for numerous amphibian species.

The eastern portion of the preserve rises significantly to rocky outcrops and a central ridge with good views to brook below. Upland trees include oaks, black birch. Understory is generally open but there are areas of brier as well as high bush blueberry.

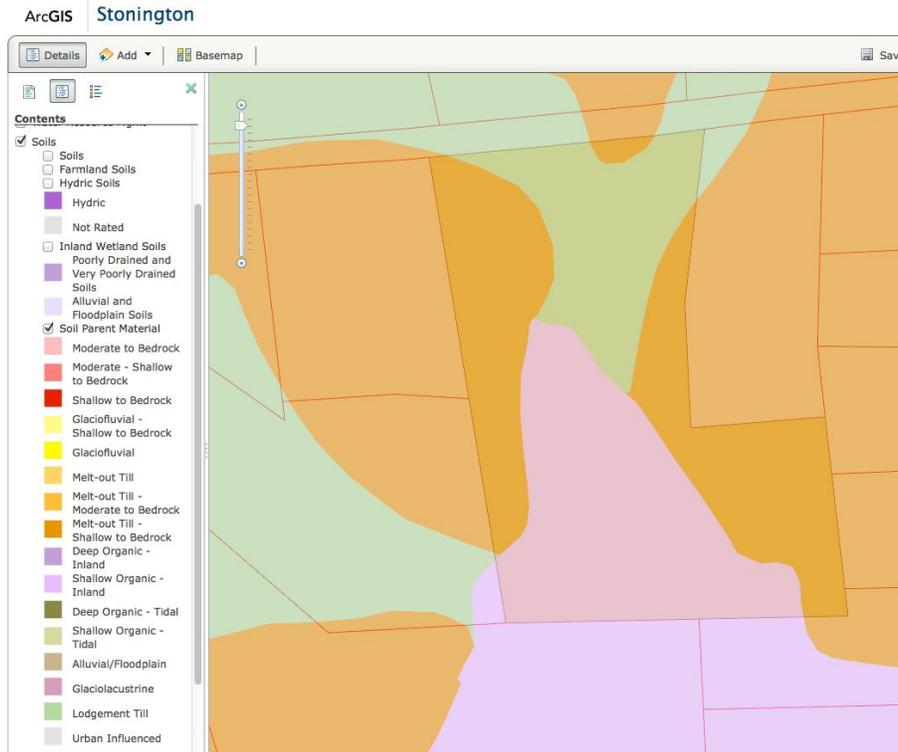
The area is good habitat for typical woodland species, especially since it connects to other woods and wetland areas to the south. Deer signs were noted. Raccoon prints noted along stream bed. Gray squirrels noted and signs of small mammal tunnels present.

Bird species noted were also typical woodland species: chickadees, nuthatches, titmice, cardinals, downy woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, blue jays, American crow, and robins. It would likely support wood warblers and thrush species during breeding season.

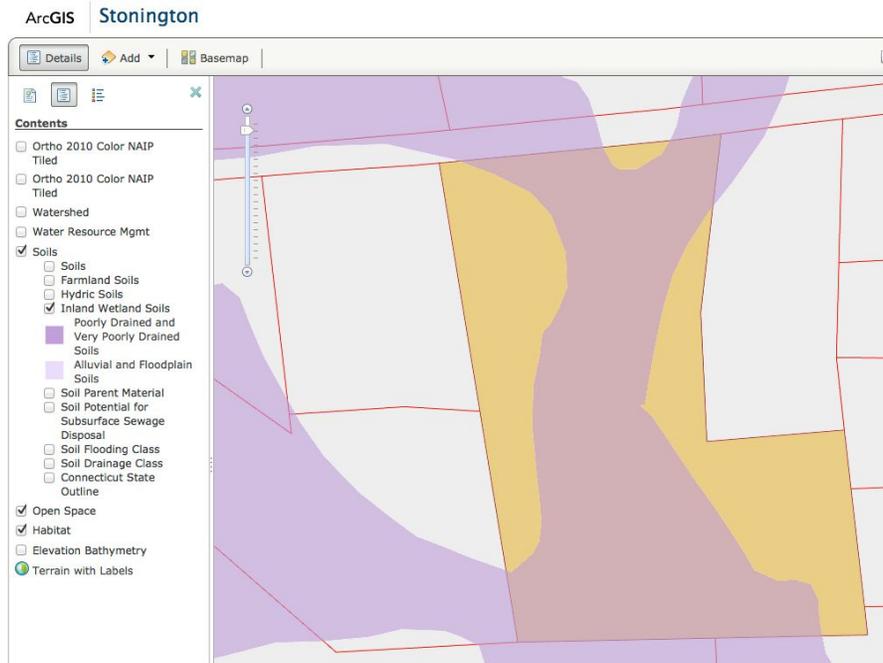
## ELEVATIONS



# SOILS



# HYDROLOGIC FEATURES



## SPECIAL FEATURES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Davis Family Cemetery dates from mid 1800's and is located along the western edge. The preserve is entirely bounded by stonewalls and has several large piles or cairns of small rocks and stones, notably at intersection of walls. This would indicate early clearing and cultivation. There is an area along the eastern edge that shows evidence of former excavation and also signs and remnants of an old farm dump. Piles of rock and stone cover small metal items and glass.

## 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

No entrance / roadside sign at present.

The management objective for this property is to leave it in its natural state as protected open space, with special attention paid to protecting the stream as a valuable water resource and headwaters for other downstream bodies of water.

Special attention should be paid to development upstream from the preserve in order to maintain and protect the water quality of Stony Brook. While separated by Sommers Lane and a few other properties, there is a 100+ acre undeveloped forested parcel (86/1/1) to the north owned by an out of state landowner that might be a target for conservation.

An annual walk around the boundaries of the properties is required to ensure that boundary signs are in place and that there are no intrusions. Yearly surveillance should be conducted to check for infringement or encroachment by neighbors depositing yard waste over the walls and to continually monitor the presence of the tree mounted hunting stands located just outside boundaries. (Sites were documented and photographed in 2012). All motorized vehicles are prohibited on the properties except for maintenance.

### Maintaining properties appearance

Litter control.

### 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 endangered or threatened species or species of concern are present.

### Controlling invasive species

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

### Erosion control and flooding

Seasonal flooding has not caused any issues. No control planned.

### Productive uses

None.

### Scientific and educational activities

None planned. This property would be a good project for a college student for study (botanize, bird and amphibian identification etc.)

### Response to large natural disasters

Removal of any hazards will be undertaken as necessary.

### Special management considerations

None.

## IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

### Recurring and occasional requirements

Stonington Town Committee members and an occasional neighbor visit the site on a limited basis. The property owner across the street, Joseph Henry, has Avalonia contact information if

needed.

Annual obligations

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

Short term plan (1 – 5 years)

Annual boundary walk (completed January 2013).

Long term plan (5+ years)

Monitor site. Control invasives.

Schedule for revising this plan

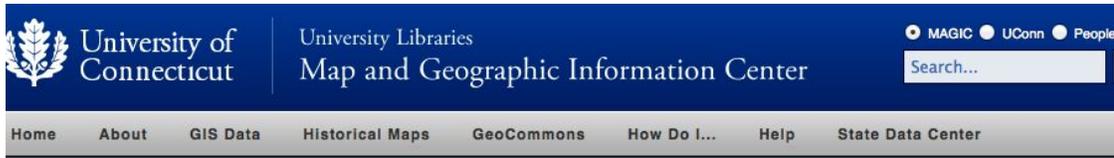
This plan shall be reviewed at least every five years and updated as necessary.

## APPENDICES

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

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

II. Historical photos



### Neighborhood Change in Connecticut, 1934 to Present

Prefer to use the previous version of the 1934 Fairchild Aerial Photography map mash-up? [View Previous Version of this Interface](#)



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

The image shows a web-based interactive map interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Use the search box below to locate an address in Connecticut." and a "Find Address" button. The search bar contains the text "Sommers Lane, Stonington Ct". To the right of the search bar is a "Toggle map layers" section with a checkbox labeled "CT Towns". Below the search bar and toggle section are two side-by-side map panels. The left panel shows a historical aerial photograph from 1934, with a scale bar indicating 100 meters and 200 feet. The right panel shows a satellite view of the same area, with a scale bar indicating 100 meters and 200 feet. Both panels have a "Google" logo and a "Terms of Use" link. The right panel also has a "Map Data - Terms of Use" link and a "Report a map error" link. The interface includes zoom in (+) and zoom out (-) buttons for both maps, and a person icon for location services.

