

LANTERN HILL SUBDIVISION

LEDYARD, CONNECTICUT

DECEMBER 1988

EASTERN CONNECTICUT
ENVIRONMENTAL
REVIEW TEAM
REPORT

LANTERN HILL SUBDIVISION

LEDYARD, CONNECTICUT

REVIEW DATE: AUGUST 4, 1988

REPORT DATE: DECEMBER 1988

**EASTERN CONNECTICUT RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND
DEVELOPMENT AREA, INC.**

**EASTERN CONNECTICUT ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM
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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT ON

LANTERN HILL SUBDIVISION LEDYARD, CONNECTICUT

This report is an outgrowth of a request from the Ledyard Planning Commission to the New London Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The S&WCD referred this request to the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Executive Council for their consideration and approval. The request was approved and the measure reviewed by the Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team (ERT).

The ERT met and field checked the site on Thursday, August 4, 1988. Team members participating on this review included:

Gerry Amt	Regional Planner	SE CT Regional Planning Agency
Nick Bellantoni	State Archaeologist	CT Museum of Natural History
John Hibbard	Executive Director	CT Forest & Park Association
Brian Murphy	Fisheries Biologist	CT-DEP Eastern District
Liz Rogers	District Conservationist	USDA-Soil Conservation Service
Elaine Sych	ERT Coordinator	Eastern CT RC&D Area
Bill Warzecha	Geologist	CT-DEP Natural Resources Center

Prior to the review day, each Team member received a summary of the proposed project, a list of the town's concerns, a location map, a topographic map, and a soils map. During the field review the Team members were given additional information. The Team met with, and were accompanied by the Town Planner, the Town Recreation Director, the applicant's land surveyor and soil scientist, an archaeologist from UCONN, and a representative from the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe. Following the review, reports from each Team member were submitted to the ERT Coordinator for compilation and editing into this final report.

This report represents the Team's findings. It is not meant to compete with private consultants by providing site designs or detailed solutions to development problems. The Team does not recommend what final action should be taken on a proposed project -- all final decisions rest with the Town and landowner. This report identifies the existing resource base and evaluates its significance to the proposed development, and also suggests considerations that should be of concern to the developer and the Town. The results of this Team action are oriented toward the development of better environmental quality and the long-term economics of land use.

The Eastern Connecticut RC&D Executive Council hopes you will find this report of value and assistance in making your decisions on this proposed subdivision.

If you require additional information, please contact:

Elaine A. Sych
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LANTERN HILL SUBDIVISION

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LANTERN HILL SUBDIVISION LEDYARD, CONNECTICUT

PLEASE NOTE:

The Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team prepared a report in April 1975 for a previous development (residential and pond construction), which encompassed the subject parcel. The 1975 report presents a detailed natural resource inventory of the property which covers topography, drainage, geologic history, soils, water supply, waste disposal and geologic development concerns with respect to a sand and gravel extraction operation, pond construction and residential development. The data and analysis presented in the 1975 report is not repeated herein; instead, this report focuses on the specific concerns surrounding a proposed 10 lot residential subdivision. Interested persons should reference the 1975 ERT report entitled "Romanella Property".

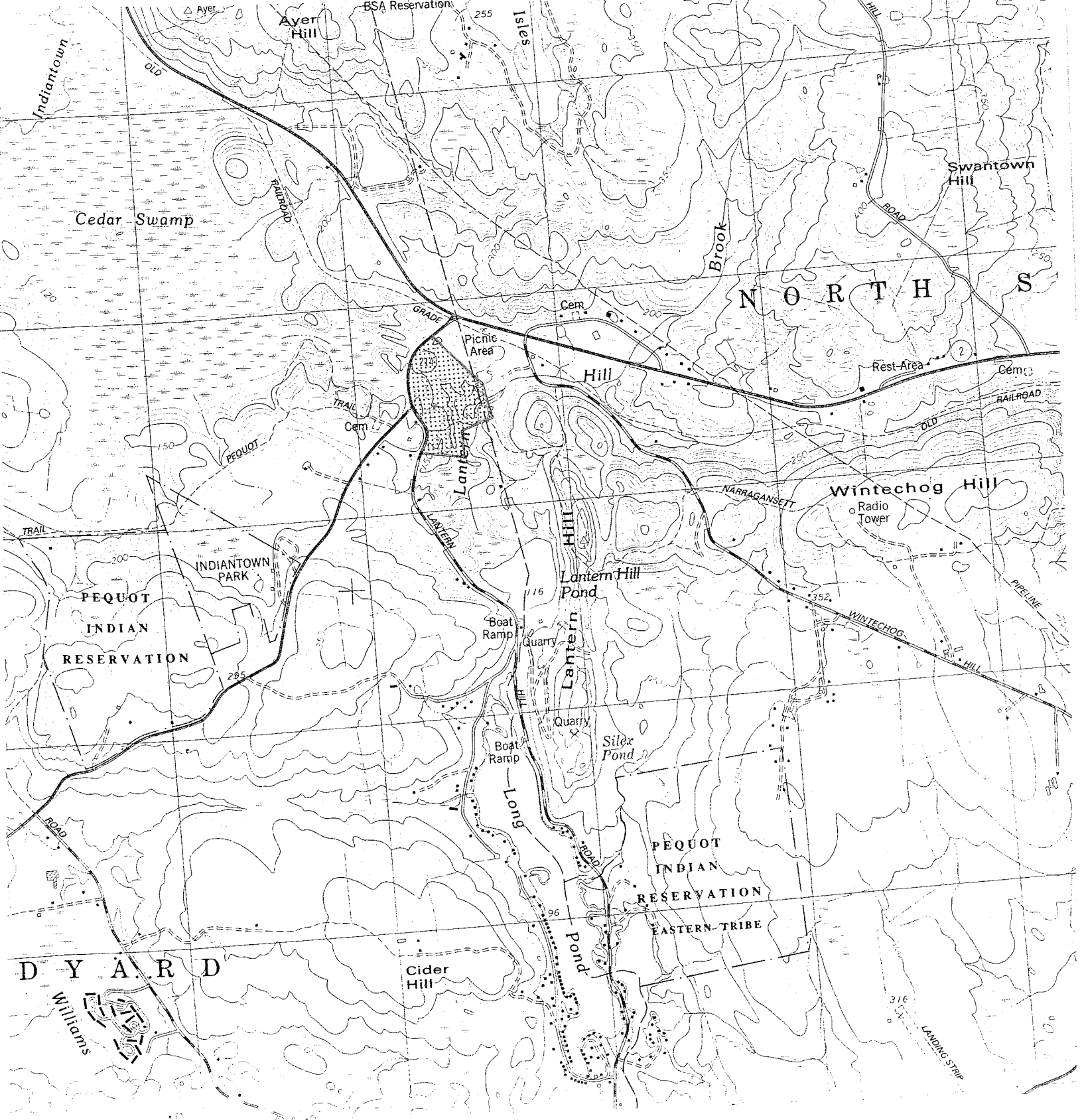
1. SETTING, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Most of the ±31 acre parcel is located in the northeast corner of Ledyard near its border with North Stonington. The eastern limits of the site lie in North Stonington. The site is bordered along the western parts by Route 214 and Lantern Hill Road. Private, undeveloped land borders the remaining parts of the site. The site is located in a R-80 zone. Permitted uses of the land include residential development with minimum lot sizes of 80,000 squares feet (about 2 acres). It is understood that the removal of sand and gravel from the site would require a "special use permit" from the town.

Based on present plans, which shows preliminary lot layouts, a moderately low-density subdivision is proposed consisting of 10 building lots. Except for one lot (Lot 2), all lots exceed 80,000 square feet. All lots would be accessed via Rte. 214 or Lantern Hill Road and would be serviced by individual wells and on-site septic systems.

The site includes three main inland-wetland areas. The first occupies lots 4 and 5; the second occupies most of Lots 8 and a small part of Lot 9; and the third consists of a relatively, narrow wetland band that parallels an unnamed tributary to Lantern Hill Brook on Lots 3 and 7. The first two wetland areas mentioned above occupy kettle holes¹ that developed in the sand and gravel deposits. Surface water in the kettle holes is held up by fine-grained sediments that have settled into the basins and an accumulation of vegetative matter. Based on nearby test wells, it appears that the water table in the wetlands is

¹Melting of buried ice blocks during deglaciation caused the sediments (sand and gravel) to collapse into irregular, often deep basins called kettles.

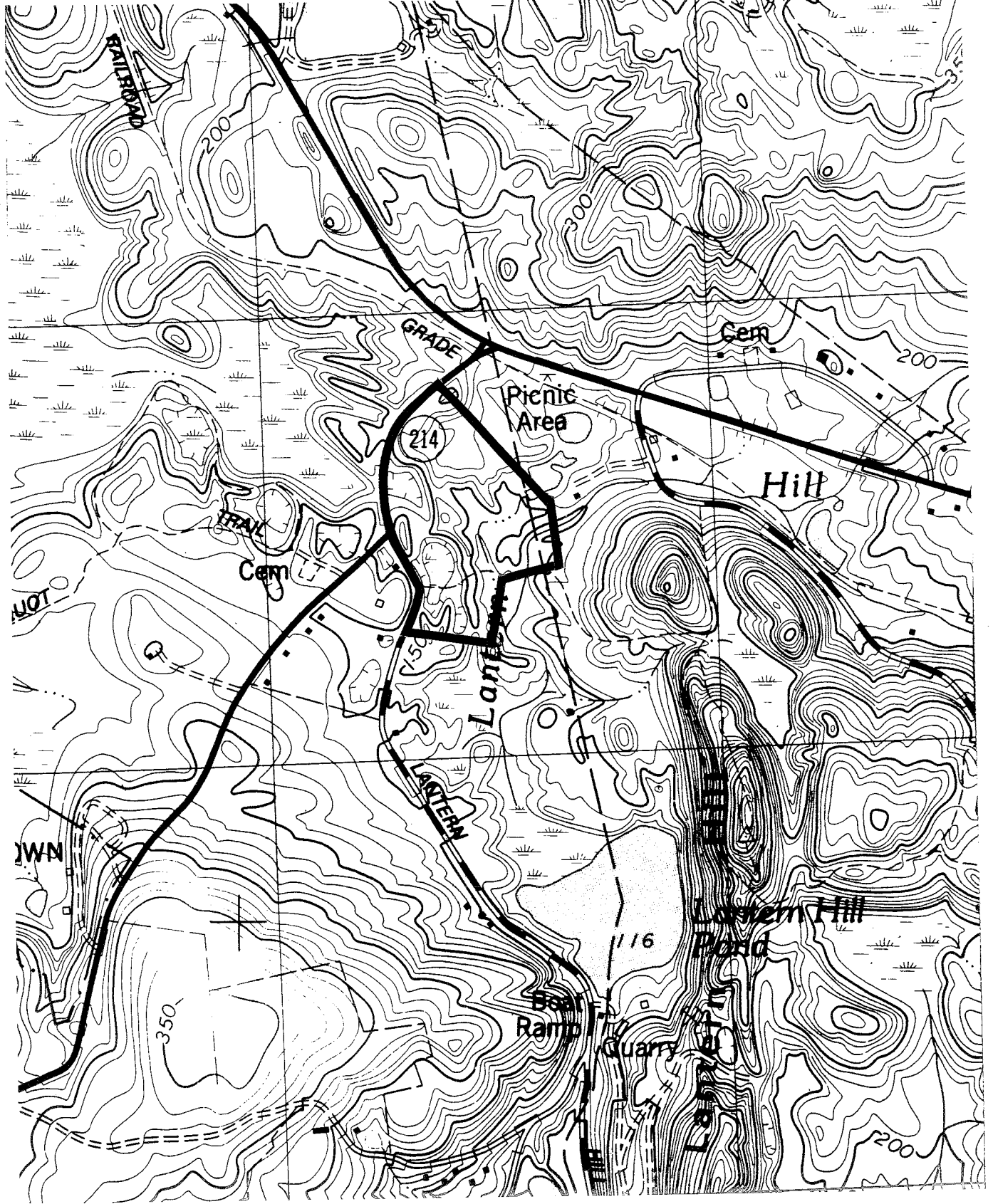


LOCATION

 Site Location

Scale 1" = 2000'





TOPOGRAPHY

————— Approximate Site Boundary

Scale 1" = 1000'



perched by the fine-grained material and organic matter and is not coincident with the true water table although both are hydraulically connected.

The parcel is located within a relatively extensive series of stratified drift deposits that occupy the Whitford Brook valley. The site itself and surrounding areas are dominated by the distinctive topography and geologic structure of ice-contact stratified drift. Topographic conditions range from flat to very steep. In general, the flattest areas occur in the northern parts, while moderate to very steep slopes characterize the remainder.

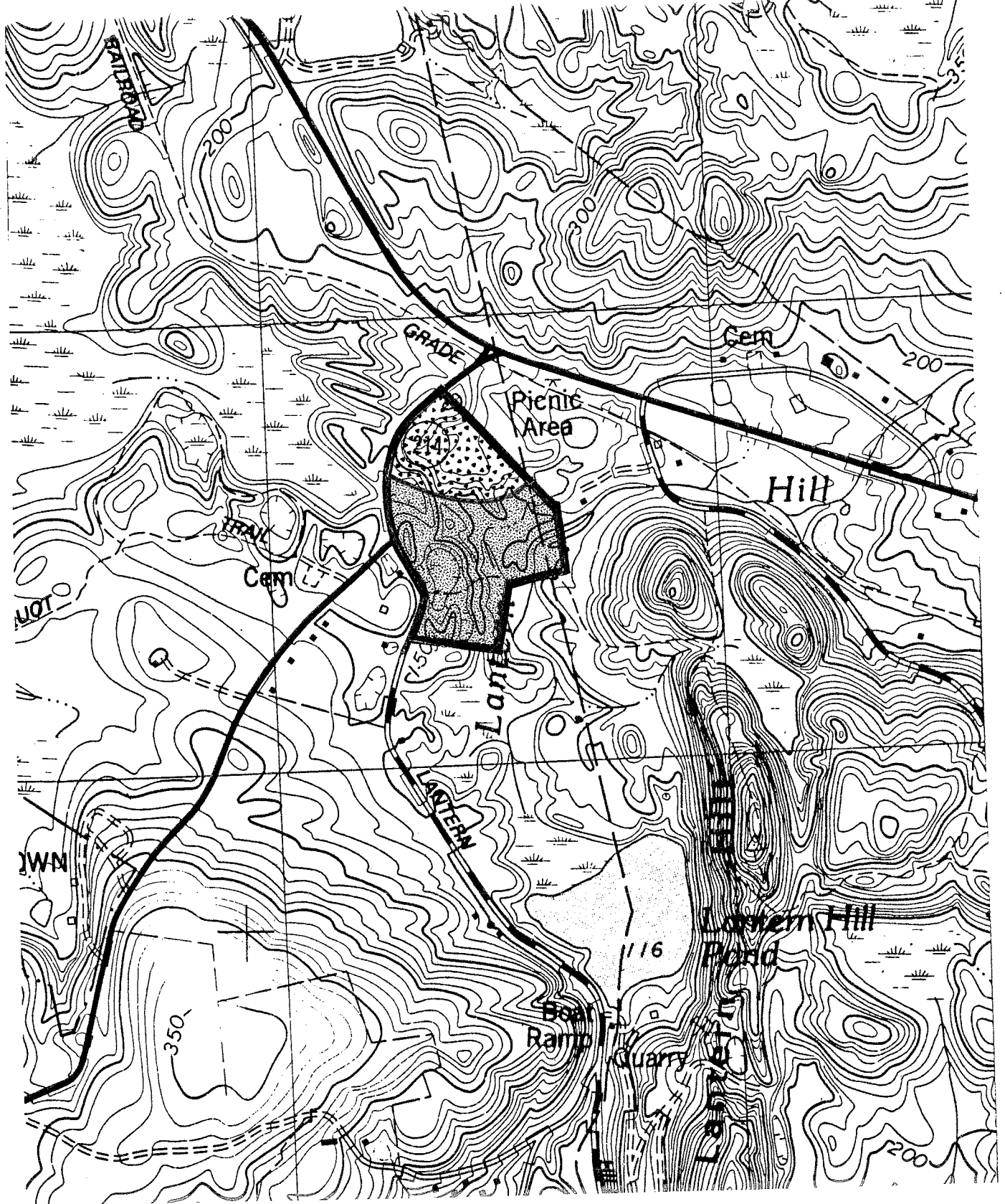
The term "stratified drift" used above refers to the typically well-layered sediments deposited by glacial meltwater streams. "Ice-contact" means that the sediments were deposited on, under or adjacent to a wasting block of glacier ice. Sand and gravel are the major components of stratified drift. It appears that sand and gravel have been mined at the site in the past.

Based on geologic mapping data, it appears that the bulk of the stratified drift covering the site is coarse grained, e.g., boulders and gravel. There are also separate beds of sand exposed in the formerly mined areas on the site.



As indicated in the 1975 ERT report, it should be kept in mind that the texture and composition of the stratified drift may vary substantially both horizontally and vertically. The exact thickness of the stratified drift on the site is unknown, but it is probably less than 80 feet in most places. Stratified drift deposits are generally highly permeable and can store and transmit water easily. Because of this they can be an important in terms of groundwater development (See Water Supply section).

The bedrock surface is deeply seated (40-80 feet below ground surface) throughout the site. It consists of east-west trending belts of crystalline, metamorphic rocks that include hornblende gneisses, granite gneisses and quartzites. Because depth to the bedrock surface is fairly deep, it should pose little or no problems in terms of the proposed subdivision. Since most house lots will need to rely on the underlying bedrock as a source of domestic water, it will have at least some impact on water quality and quantity (See Water Supply section).

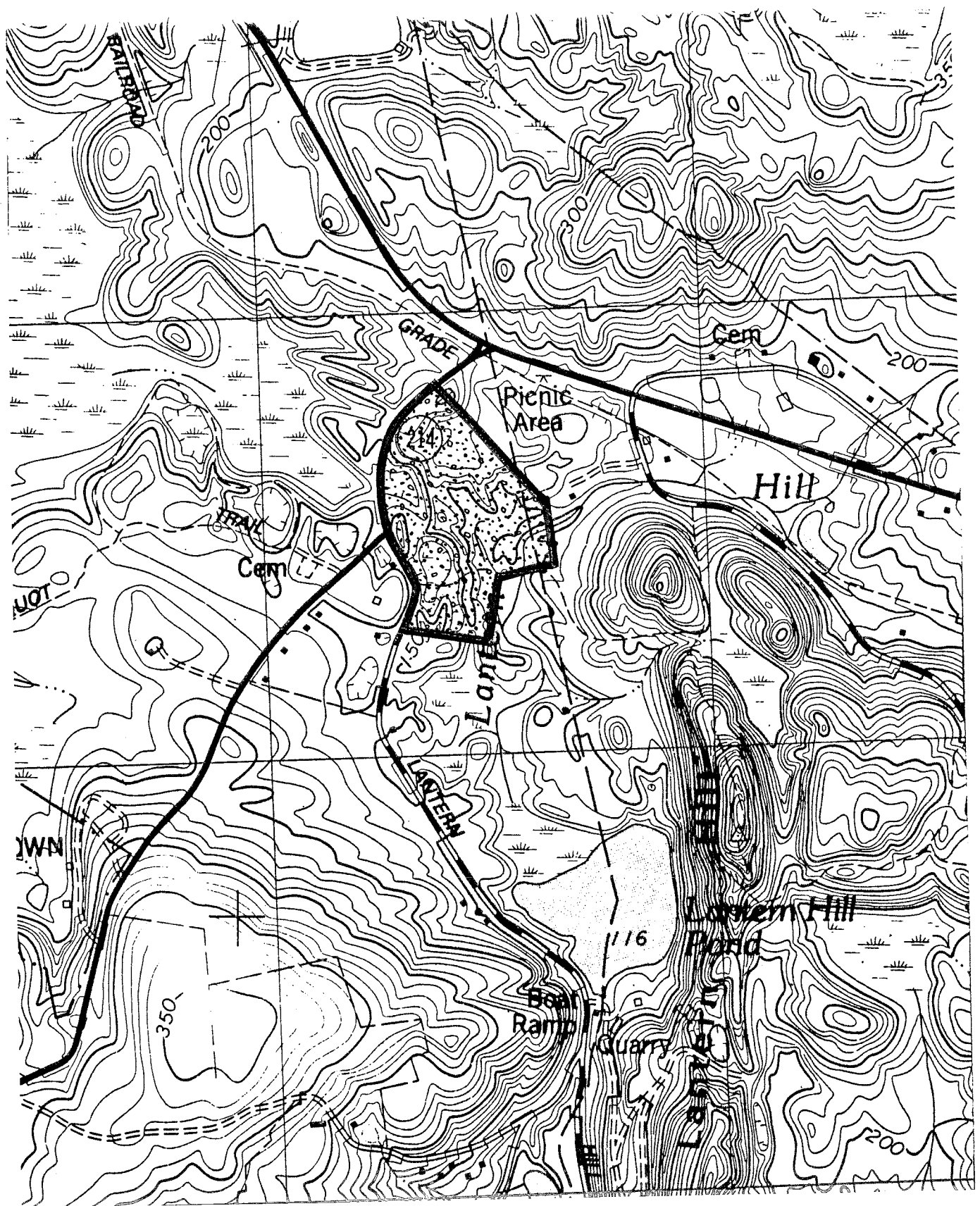
Regionally, the site is located within an area of folded rocks (anticline) and an area of bedrock shear. In addition, the site is located fairly close to a north-south trending fault that is aligned with Lantern Hill Brook Valley. Due to the site's close proximity to the fault and shear zones, it is expected that the upper few hundred feet of the bedrock is fractured and slightly to moderately weathered. As noted in the 1975 report, these fault zones and zones of rock shear are structural features that formed during the geologic past and are no longer experiencing active movement.



BEDROCK GEOLOGY

-  Interlayered light to dark gray, medium grained gneiss
-  Hope Valley Alaskite gneiss - light pink to gray, medium to coarse grained granitic gneiss

Scale 1" = 1000' -2a-



STRATIFIED DRIFT

 Stratified Drift - sand and gravel

Scale 1" = 1000'



2. SOILS

***HKC - Hinckley gravelly sandy loam, 3 to 15 percent slopes**

This gently sloping and sloping, excessively drained soil is on stream terraces, outwash plains, kames, and eskers. Typically, this Hinckley soil has a dark brown, gravelly sandy loam surface layer 7 inches thick. The subsoil is yellowish brown gravelly loamy sand 15 inches thick. The substratum is brownish yellow very gravelly coarse sand to a depth of 60 inches or more. Permeability of the Hinckley soil is rapid in the surface layer and subsoil and very rapid in the substratum. The available water capacity is low. Runoff is medium or rapid. Hinckley soil warms up and dries out rapidly in the spring. Unless limed, it is strongly acid or medium acid. This soil is in capability subclass IVs.

HkD - Hinckley gravelly sandy loam, 15 to 35 percent slopes

This moderately steep and steep, excessively drained soil is on stream terraces, outwash plains, kames, and eskers. Typically, this Hinckley soil has a dark brown, gravelly sandy loam surface layer 2 inches thick. The subsoil is yellowish brown gravelly loamy sand 20 inches thick. The substratum is brownish yellow very gravelly coarse sand to a depth of 60 inches or more.

Permeability of the Hinckley soil is rapid in the surface layer and subsoil and very rapid in the substratum. The available water capacity is low. Runoff is very rapid. Hinckley soil warms up and dries out rapidly in the spring. This soil is in capability subclass VIIs.

#MyA - Merrimac sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes

This nearly level, somewhat excessively drained soil is on stream terraces and outwash plains. Permeability of the Merrimac soil is moderately rapid in the surface layer and subsoil and rapid in the substratum. The available water capacity is moderate. Runoff is slow. Merrimac soil warms up and dries out rapidly in the spring. Unless limed, it is strongly acid or medium acid. This soil is well suited to cultivated crops. It is droughty during the drier periods in summer. This soil is capability subclass II_s.

Ts - Tisbury silt loam

This nearly level to gently sloping, moderately well drained soil is on stream terraces and outwash plains. Slopes range from 0 to 5 percent. The Tisbury soil has a seasonal high water table at a depth of about 18 inches. Permeability is moderate in the surface layer and subsoil and rapid or very rapid in the substratum. The available water capacity is moderate. Runoff is slow or medium. Tisbury soil warms up and dries out slowly in the spring. Unless limed, it is strongly acid or medium acid. This soil is well suited to cultivated crops. This soil is in capability subclass IIw.

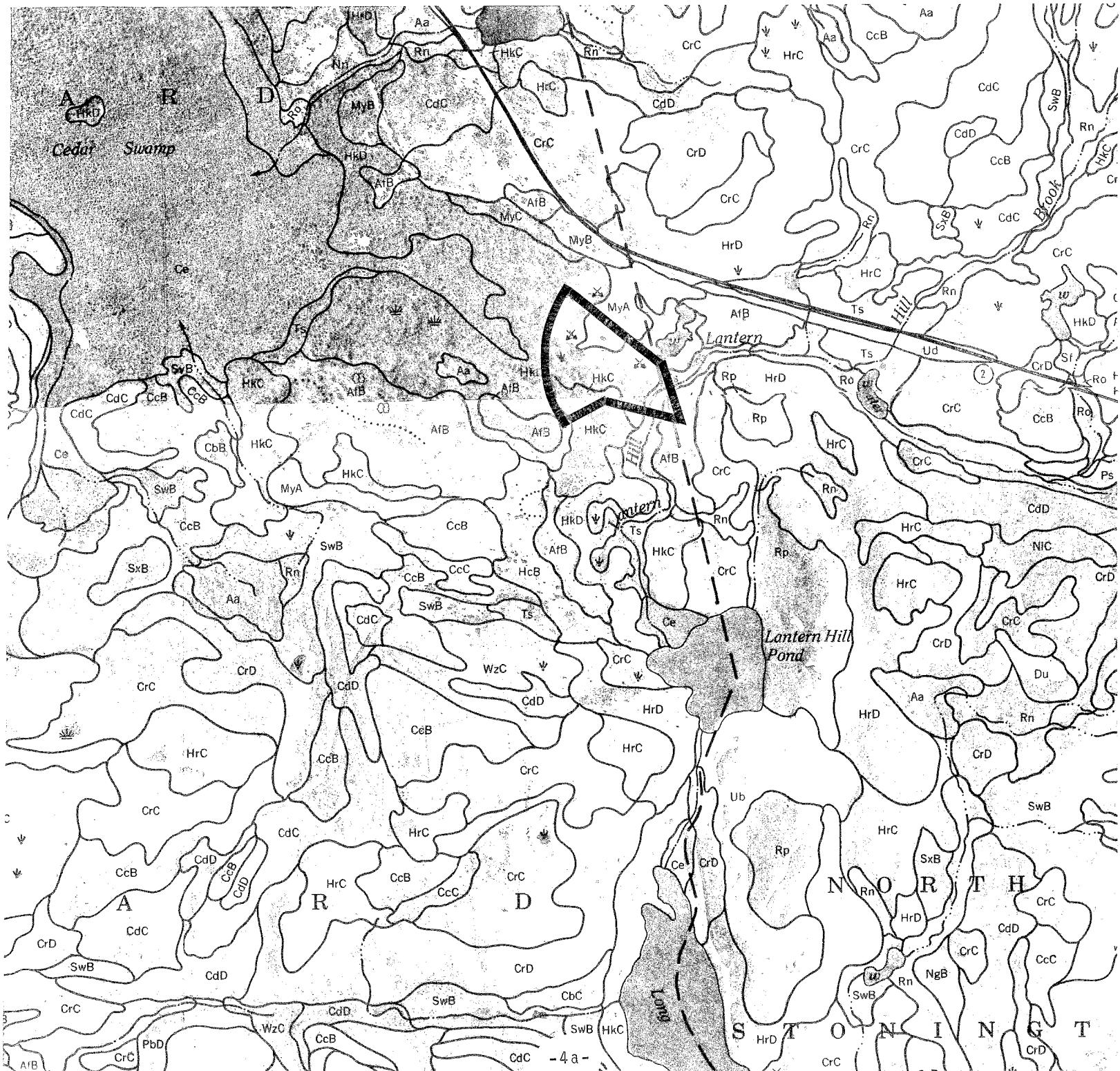
* This map unit qualifies as additional Farmland of Statewide Importance

This map unit is considered a Prime Farmland

SOILS

New London County USDA-SCS
562 New London Turnpike
Norwich, CT 06360
887-4163

Scale 1" = 1320



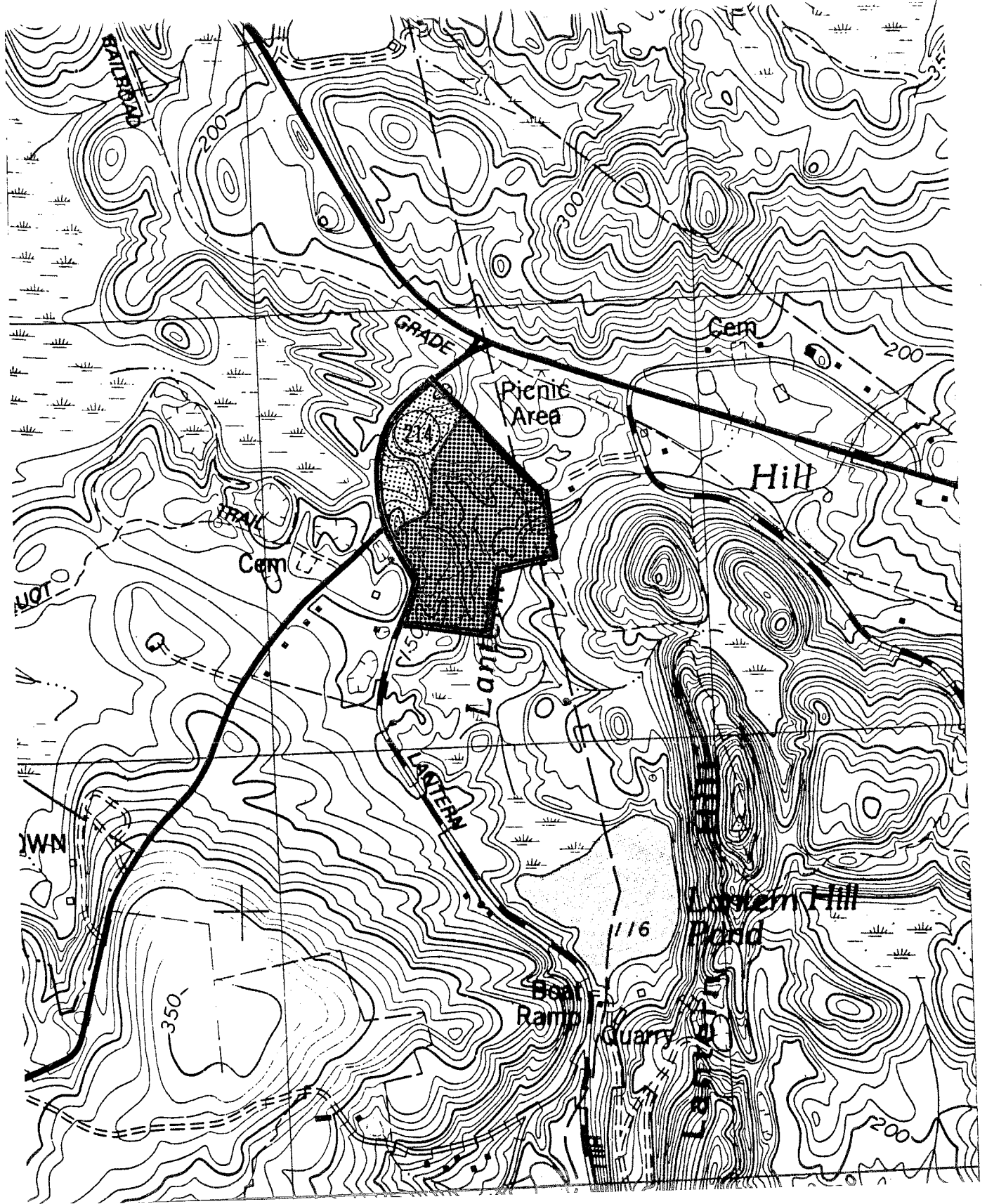
3. HYDROLOGY

Surface drainage on the site can be divided into two areas. In general, surface runoff in the western portions of site flows westward towards Rte. 214 and ultimately discharges into Cedar Swamp. Surface runoff for the remaining portions of the site drains eastward to an unnamed tributary to Lantern Hill Brook.

Generally speaking, precipitation falling on the site is quickly absorbed by the sandy and gravelly soils. Groundwater percolates downward until it reaches the water table. Once it reaches the water table it is pulled by the force of gravity to discharge points., i.e., streams, wetlands, seeps, etc. It is understood that the applicant's engineer will determine the gradient and direction of groundwater movement within the site, particularly the areas in the vicinity of the kettle holes. This information will be very helpful in terms of septic system design and well placement, as well as the protection of wetland areas on the site.

The subdivision of the property as planned followed by the construction of new homes and driveways will probably lead to minor increases in post-development runoff conditions. This is due to the relatively low density proposed and the presence of soils that can rapidly absorb the runoff. As a matter of policy, the applicant's engineer should probably check post-development runoff conditions and check all downstream culverts to ensure that they will not be overtaxed.

If sandy soils are exposed, the potential for erosion and siltation problems due to increased runoff could become a concern, particularly in view of the steep slopes. In this regard, every consideration should be given to protecting the wetlands and water courses on the site. Therefore, it is recommended that a comprehensive erosion and sediment control plan be developed and enforced for the proposed subdivision. Every effort should be made to protect the wetland areas on the site from siltation.



WATERSHED BOUNDARY



Surface drainage that flows westward to Cedar Swamp



Surface drainage that flows eastward to the unnamed Lantern Hill Brook tributary in the eastern parts

Scale 1" = 1000'



4.GEOLOGIC DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS

No subsurface data, i.e., deep test holes, percolation tests, etc., have been made available to Team members. Nevertheless, soil and surficial geologic mapping data indicates the presence of moderately thick sand and gravel deposits that are rapidly permeable. The presence of these soils suggests that conditions would be generally favorable for construction of on-site sewage disposal systems. However, because these sandy/gravelly soils are known to have rapid seepage rates, they may not have the ability to provide good filtration and renovation of septic tank effluent or other types of pollutants associated with domestic wastes. Experience has shown that groundwater pollution from sewage is more likely to occur in permeable soils than in poor soils, and sewage disposal system failure or overflow is rare in such cases. On the other hand, natural dilution by infiltration of precipitation will be increased.

In order to determine subsurface conditions, i.e., soil texture, groundwater levels, etc., and the soil's ability to handle the anticipated sewage flows, detailed soil testing must be conducted on each lot. Special attention should be given to the percolation rates of the soil. If it is too permeable, there may be a need to increase the separating distances of septic systems to water supply wells. Because lot sizes are relatively large, this can probably be accomplished without too much of a problem, if it is necessary.

Many of the ridges within the site are characterized by steep to very steep slopes. Deep cuts into droughty soils expose the layers of sand and gravel. In most cases the already droughty conditions become much drier. This offers problems in stabilizing the slope with vegetation. The chance of soil erosion on these dry slopes is greatest when fine sand is exposed. Fill slopes composed of sandy and gravelly material provide similar problems.

Another potential concern with the sandy, gravelly soils is the chance for "cutback cave-ins" in excavations deeper than 4-5 feet. Trenches excavated in these sandy and gravelly soils should be backfilled as soon as possible after excavations. Proper shoring of sides should be accomplished in the deep trenches, especially those that exceed 4 to 5 feet.

In order to minimize the potential for disturbance to the wetland areas on Lot 8, consideration should be given to a shared driveway to serve Lot 7 and 8.

As eluded to in the paragraphs above, more technical information, i.e., 2 foot contour mapping, subsurface data, well and septic system locations, etc., need to be supplied by the applicant before an accurate environmental assessment of the proposed subdivision can be made for the site. Additionally, if sand and gravel is removed or ponds constructed on the site as originally discussed, it is imperative that all pertinent information be included on the plan.

5. EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL PLAN

The plan at this time does not contain an erosion and sediment control plan and therefore is incomplete. A complete erosion and sediment plan should include the following:

- A full narrative describing development and schedule of all construction activities and the complete design criteria for all proposed erosion and sediment control measures.

- The site plan should show all natural features and project features, both existing and proposed.

- The extent of the disturbed areas, as well as the mitigating erosion and sediment control measures, should be located on the site plan.

- Design criteria for storm water management on the site.

When a complete erosion and sediment plan is prepared the the New London County SCS Office would be available to review it at the Town's request.

6. WATER SUPPLY

The Groundwater Availability Map of Connecticut Meade, 1978, suggests that the sand and gravel overlying bedrock on the site may have the potential for yielding large to very large (50 to 2,000 gallons per minute) volumes of water to individual wells. Hydrogeologic data for the area is lacking and, therefore, testing would be required to determine the aquifer potential of the stratified drift on the site. However, since most residential uses generally require about 3 gallons per minute or more (equivalent to 3,240 gallons per day for 18 hour pumping period), the underlying bedrock aquifer would probably adequately meet the needs of the proposed homes. In addition, they generally afford more protection than gravel-packed wells, provided they are cased with steel into the underlying bedrock and are deeper.

Groundwater moves through bedrock by way of an interconnected fracture system. Most wells that penetrate 150 to 200 feet of bedrock will intersect enough fractures to supply at least 2 to 3 gallons per minute. Because of the site's close proximity to a known fault zone and bedrock shear zone, there may be chances for higher than normal well yields. Some wells, however, fail to intersect any waterbearing fractures. There is no practical way, other than actually drilling the well, to predict whether a particular location will be good for drilling a bedrock well.

The quality of the groundwater would be expected to be generally good. According to DEP Water Compliance, groundwater in the are is classified as GA which means that it is suitable for private drinking water supplies without treatment.

7. FISH RESOURCES

The main fisheries concern at this site would be to protect Lantern Hill Brook from impacts due to a residential housing development. The following impacts would be expected if proper mitigation measures are not implemented:

1. Excessive soil erosion and sedimentation of Lantern Hill Brook may occur through increased runoff from unvegetated zones. Silt deposition in streams can degrade fish habitat, reduce fish and aquatic insect survival, and contribute to the depletion of dissolved oxygen.
2. Septic effluent may percolate into the brook if an individual septic system failed to operate properly. The introduction of septic effluent could result in a major threat to fish habitat, public health, and overall water quality conditions.

Lantern Hill Brook is annually stocked by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection with more than 230 yearling (6-8") brook trout. In addition to stocked trout, other species of fish expected to inhabit this watercourse are: native brook trout, blacknose dace, fallfish, white sucker, and American eel.

Impacts to Lantern Hill Brook may be somewhat minimized by implementing the following suggested recommendations:

1. Install and maintain proper erosion and sedimentation controls during site construction activities; this includes such mitigative measures as silt fences, hay bales, and catch basins.
2. Maintain at the **minimum** a **100 foot** open space **buffer zone** along the wetland boundary that borders Lantern Hill Brook; no construction or alteration of riparian habitat shall take place in this zone, otherwise the ability of the buffer zone to function properly will be reduced. Research has shown that 100 foot buffer zones will protect aquatic resources by helping to prevent surface runoff, septic leachate, and other pollutants from entering streams.
3. Properly design and locate individual septic systems; septic systems should be maintained on a regular basis. Prevent the disposal of harmful chemicals into septic systems which may negatively effect operation and possibly result in a system failure.

8. NATURAL DIVERSITY DATA BASE

The Data Base maps and files regarding the Lantern Hill Subdivision site have been reviewed. According to our information there are no Federally listed Endangered or Threatened Species known to occur at the area in question.

The Following information about nearby areas is provided for your information:

Lantern Hill Natural Area Inventory Site - According to information on file, one "species of special concern" is known to be extant and 3 "species of special concern" were historically reported from this site. This area is one of the highest points in southeastern Connecticut. The basic vegetation type is pitch pine - chestnut oak with limited black and white oak, sassafras and white pine. Talus slopes occur on both the eastern and western slopes.

Information on file indicates that Lantern Hill is also geologically significant as it is the largest silica deposit in the eastern United States. Quartzite ridges have a restricted distribution in Connecticut.

This area has historic significance since it was reportedly used to display beacons for navigation into Mystic Harbor during the 1800's.

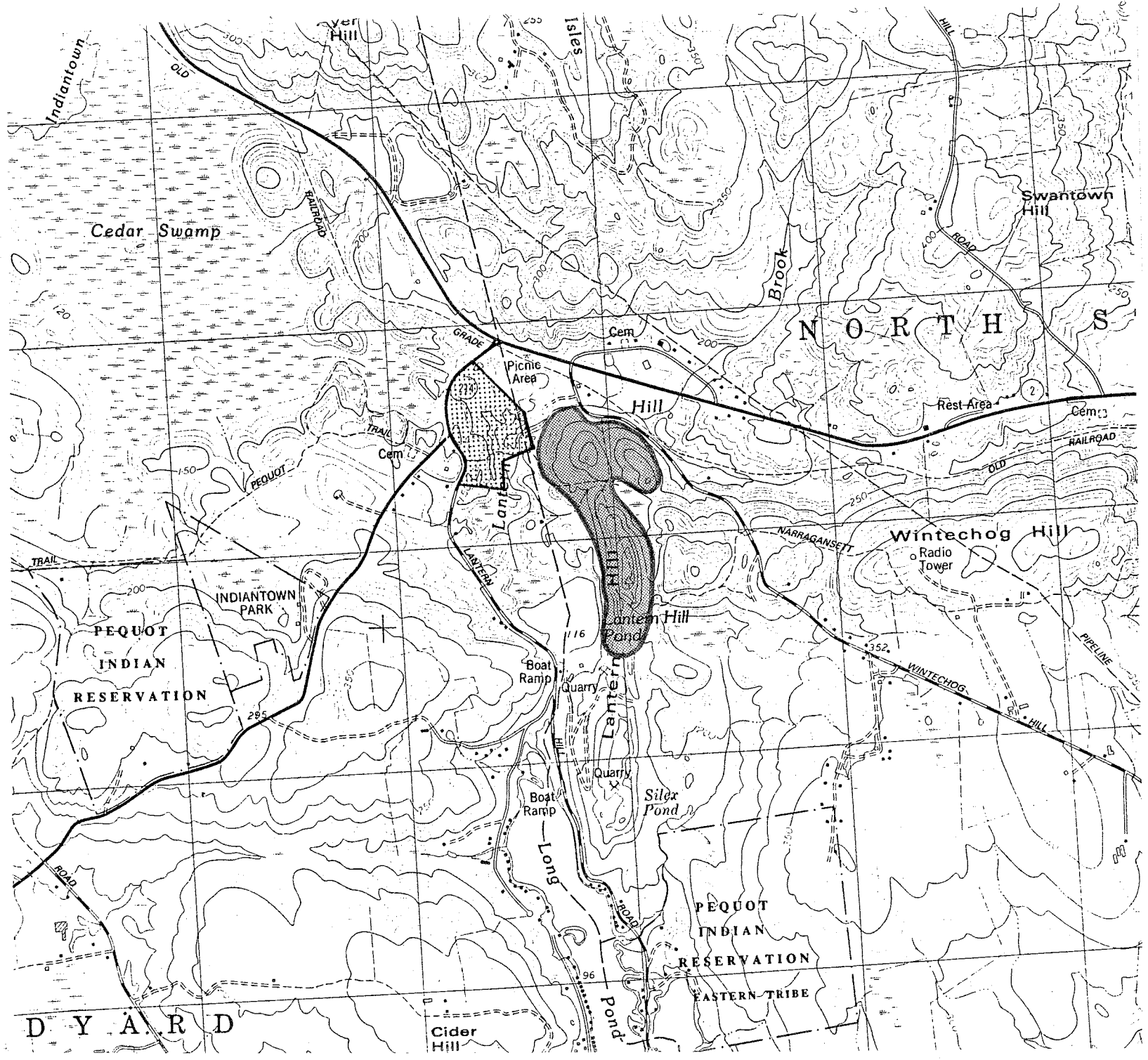
Lantern Hill has been recommended as National Natural Landmark, no decision has been made to include it on the list to date.

In addition, the area indicated on the attached map, was recommended by the Natural Diversity Data Base for consideration of acquisition by the State Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust.

Cedar Swamp Natural Area Inventory Site - One Connecticut "species of special concern" is known to be extant at this site. The population of *Rhododendron maximum*, Great Laurel, is quite extensive and serves as a high integrity example of this habitat type. For this reason, the area has been identified as a "Wetland of Special Concern". (Please note that the "Wetland of Special Concern" document is a draft document). Areas recently identified in a draft document entitled "Wetlands of Special Concern in Connecticut" was provided to DEP Commissioner Carothers in March 1988. Wetlands on this list were recommended based on their having a number of features such as 1) presence of Species of Special Concern, 2) outstanding biological productivity, 3) rare or infrequent habitat types, 4) significant concentrations of plants or wildlife, 5) rare or infrequent biotic communities, 6) critical scientific/research area. This list is intended to identify wetlands that should be protected through acquisition or through state/municipal regulation, or both.

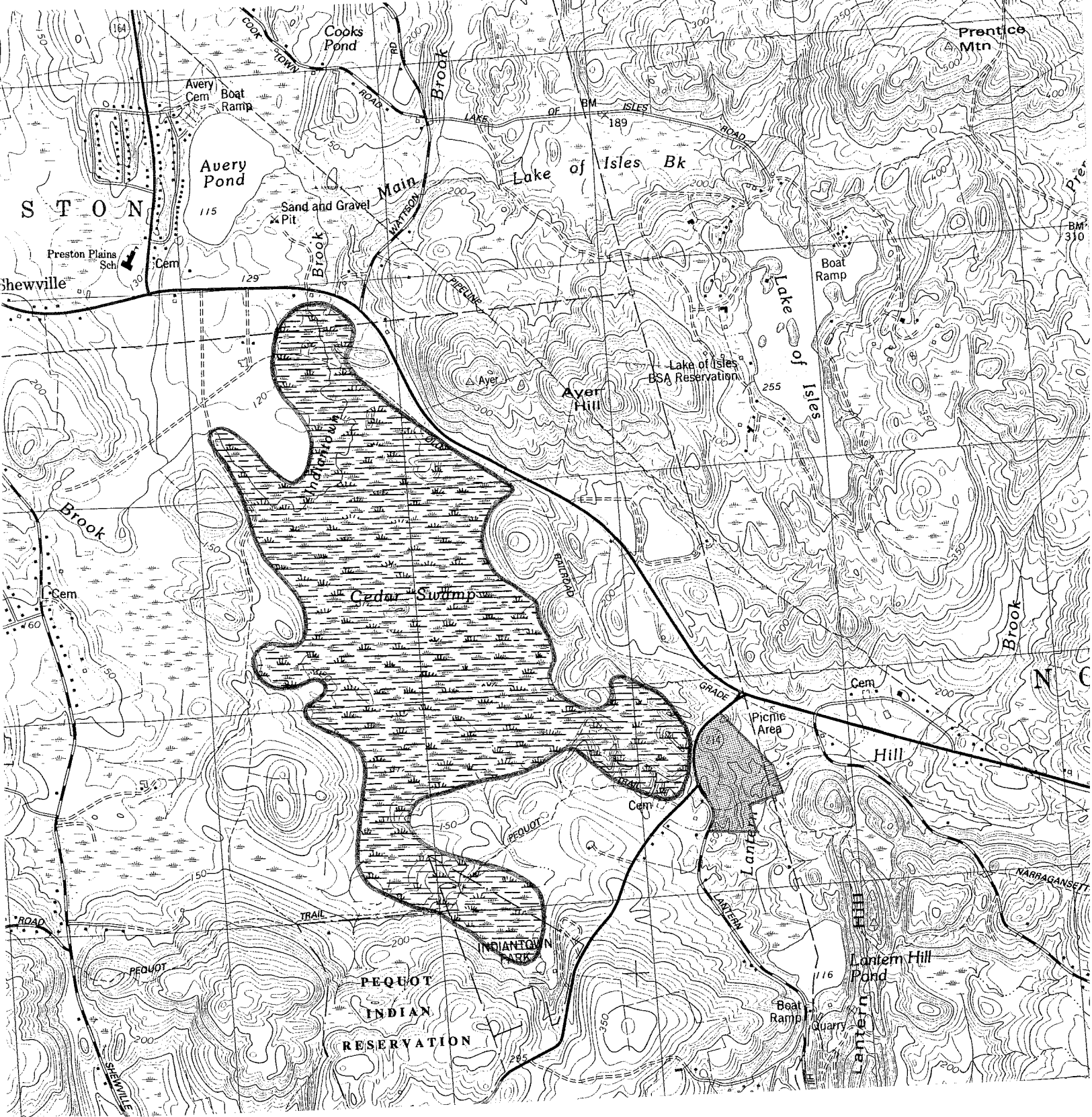
Please see attached maps for locational information.

Natural Diversity Data Base information includes all information regarding critical biologic resources available to us at the time of the request. This



LANTERN HILL NATURAL AREA INVENTORY SITE

Scale 1" = 2000'



CEDAR SWAMP NATURAL AREA INVENTORY SITE

Scale 1" = 2000'

information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the Natural Resources Center's Geological and Natural History Survey and cooperating units of DEP, private conservation groups and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultation with the Data Base should not be substituted for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations or species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated into the Data Base as it becomes available.

9. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The State Historic Preservation Office notes that the proposed subdivision along Lantern Hill Road is in immediate proximity to the Mashantucket Pequot Archaeological District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Further, additional studies are underway regarding possible National historic Landmark designation for this historic and archaeological district.

A review of the State of Connecticut's Archaeological Site Files and Maps finds no prehistoric occupations within the boundaries of the proposed project area. However, the recent excavations by Dr. Kevin McBride, Mashantucket Pequot Ethnohistory Project, have documented prehistoric and historic Native American sites on the Mashantucket Reservation. It is highly probable, given the environmental parameters of the project area and its location, that the land was used prehistorically and historically by the Mashantucket Pequots.

The proposed development project would have an adverse effect on such cultural resources. A professional archaeological reconnaissance survey is strongly recommended in order to locate and identify all prehistoric and historic resources which might exist in the project area. The current archaeological integrity should be evaluated in coordination with Dr. Kevin McBride, PAST, Inc. All archaeological studies should be undertaken in accordance with the Connecticut Historical Commission's **Environmental Review Primer for Connecticut's Archaeological Resources**.

In summary, the project area is located in a critical area of importance to prehistoric and historic Indian lifeways as well as in immediate proximity to the Mashantucket Pequot National Register Archaeological District. It is **strongly** recommended that all feasible efforts be undertaken to identify and ensure the preservation and conservation of the cultural resources in the area.

10. THE PEQUOT TRAIL, SCENIC VALUE AND ROUTE 214

The chief concern of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association in the Lantern Hill Subdivision is their desire to maintain the continuity of the Pequot Trail at its current or other suitable location. They would especially like this interest made known to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Further assistance in this matter is available from the Executive Director of the association.

A drastic change in appearance of the site from other vantage points should be considered. The property is easily seen from the slopes of nearby Lantern Hill, a feature with geologic, historic, and scenic importance to hikers. Retention of as many trees as possible may help to mitigate some disturbance of the scenic views.

Route 214 is one of the narrowest state highways in this part of the state, but it also has very low traffic volumes. The Traffic Log of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CONNDOT) indicates that the 1987 average daily traffic (ADT) at the eastern end of Route 214 is 1,100 vehicles per day, probably the lowest ADT for any state highway in the region. Nevertheless, Route 214 and Lantern Hill Road present hazardous conditions along the frontage of the site because of the tight curves and relatively short sight distances. These conditions are hazardous to both vehicle traffic and to pedestrians. Some improved sight lines may be necessary.

ABOUT THE TEAM

The Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team (ERT) is a group of professionals in environmental fields drawn together from a variety of federal, state and regional agencies. Specialists on the Team include geologists, biologists, foresters, soil specialists, engineers and planners. The ERT operates with state funding under the supervision of the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area --- an 86 town region.

The services of the Team are available as a public service at no cost to Connecticut towns.

PURPOSE OF THE TEAM

The Environmental Review Team is available to help towns and developers in the review of sites proposed for major land use activities. To date, the ERT has been involved in reviewing a wide range of projects including subdivisions, landfills, commercial and industrial developments, sand and gravel excavations, elderly housing, recreation/open space projects, watershed studies and resource inventories.

Reviews are conducted in the interest of providing information and analysis that will assist towns and developers in environmentally sound decision-making. This is done through identifying the natural resource base of the project site and highlighting opportunities and limitations for the proposed land use.

REQUESTING A REVIEW

Environmental reviews may be requested by the chief elected official of a municipality or the chairman of town commissions such as planning and zoning, conservation, inland wetlands, parks and recreation or economic development. Requests should be directed to the chairman of your local Soil and Water Conservation District and the ERT Coordinator. A request form should be completely filled out and should include the required materials. When this request is approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District and the Eastern Connecticut RC&D Executive Council, the Team will undertake the review on a priority basis.

For additional information and request forms regarding the Environmental Review Team please contact the ERT Coordinator: 203-345-3977, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area, P.O. Box 70, Haddam, Connecticut 06438.