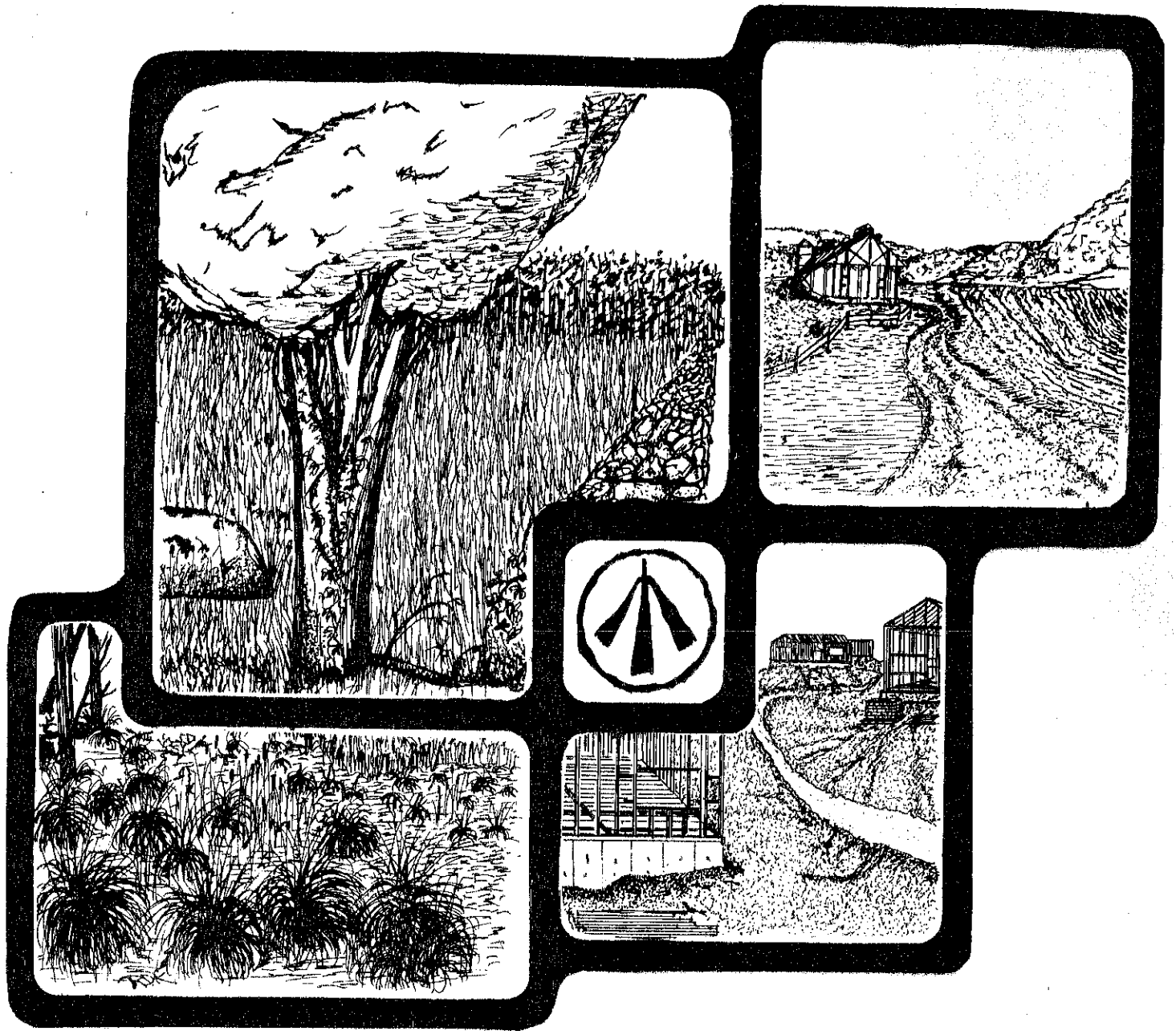
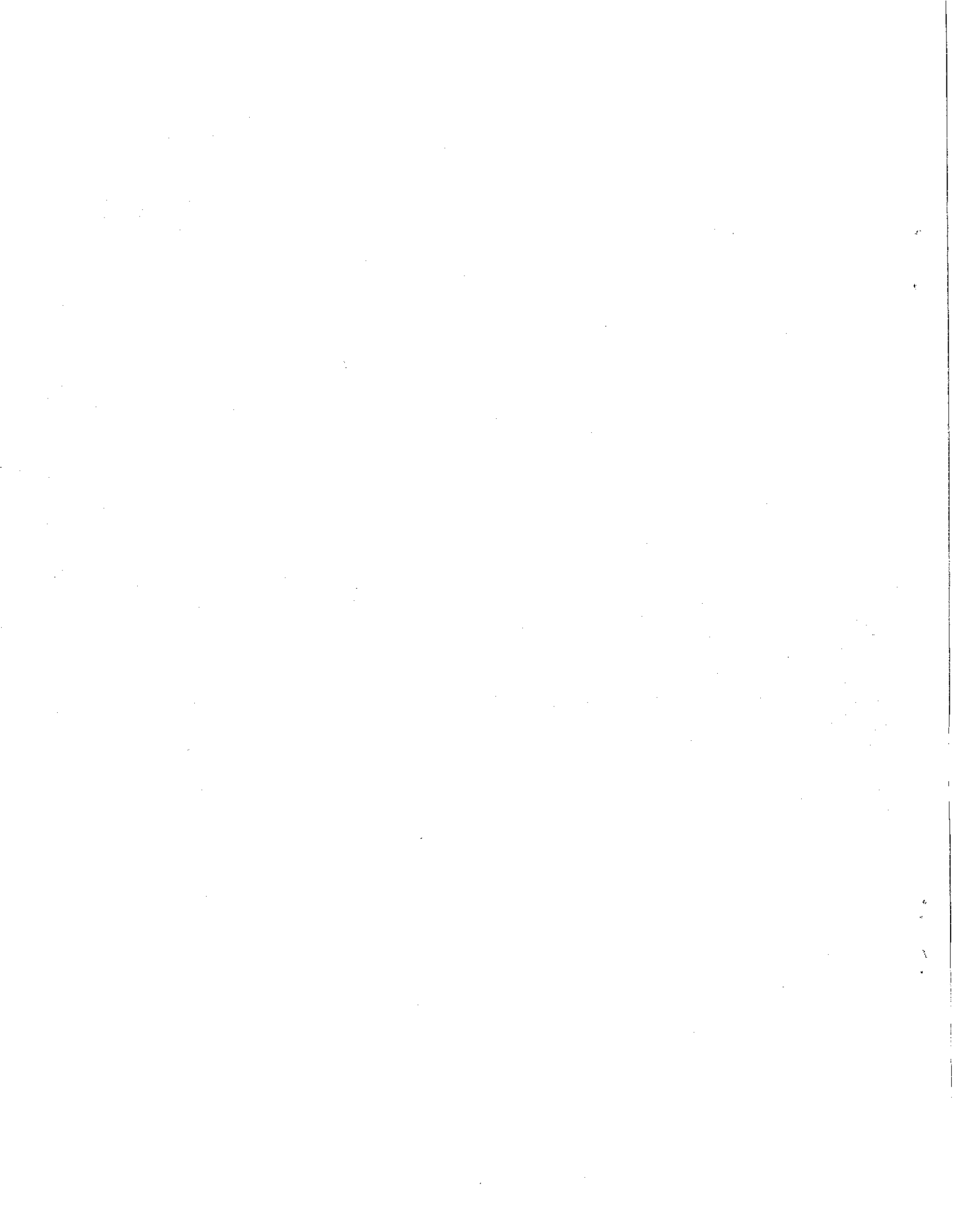


ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT



FAY - HEILIG PROPERTY
NORTH BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT

Ⓜ KING'S MARK
RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AREA



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The King's Mark Environmental Review Team operates through the cooperative effort of a number of agencies and organizations including:

Federal Agencies

U.S.D.A. SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

State Agencies

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Local Groups and Agencies

LITCHFIELD COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NEW HAVEN COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

HARTFORD COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FAIRFIELD COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

LITCHFIELD HILLS REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

CENTRAL NAUGATUCK VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

HOUSATONIC VALLEY COUNCIL OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

AMERICAN INDIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

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Stanley J. Pac, Commissioner

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KING'S MARK RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AREA

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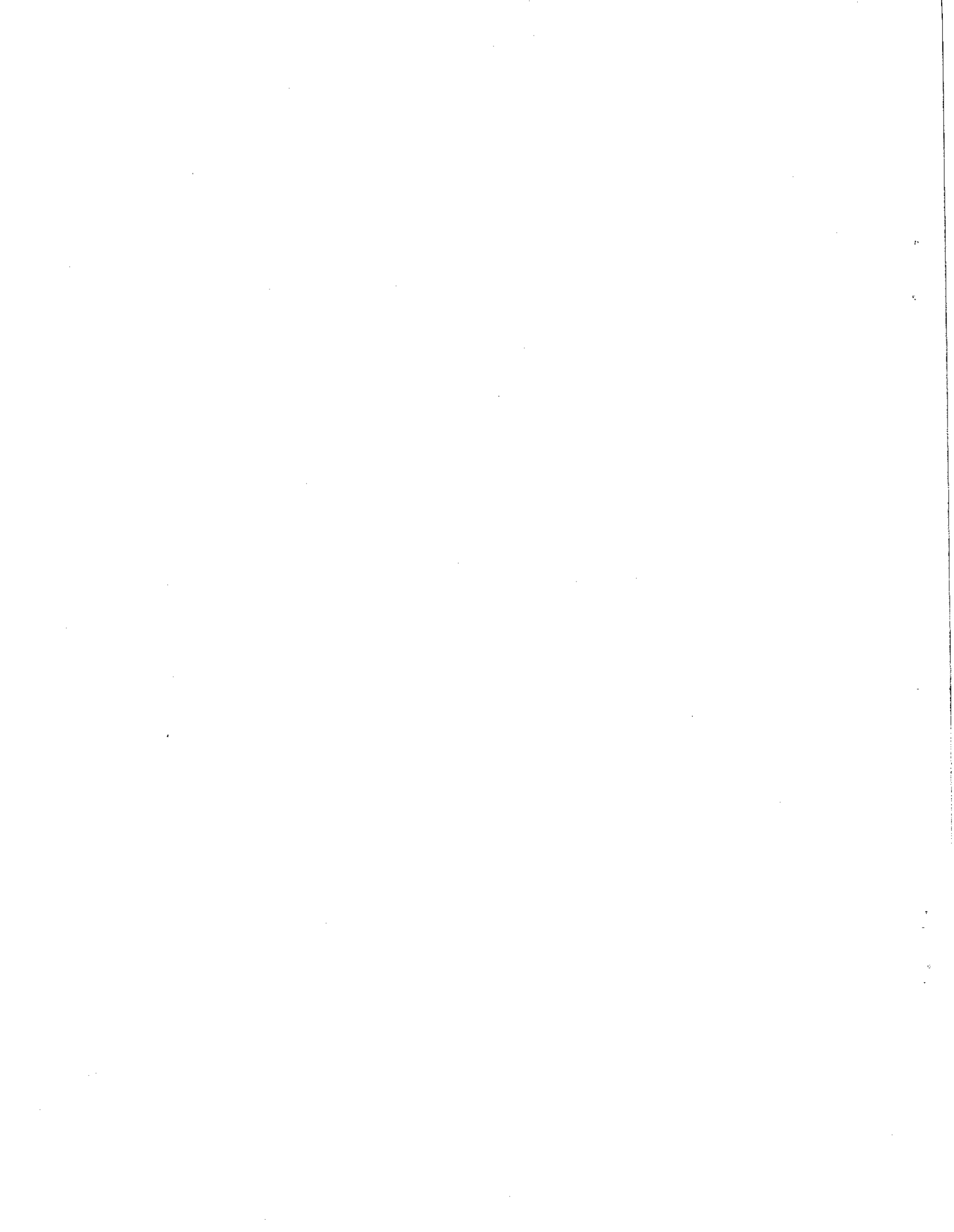


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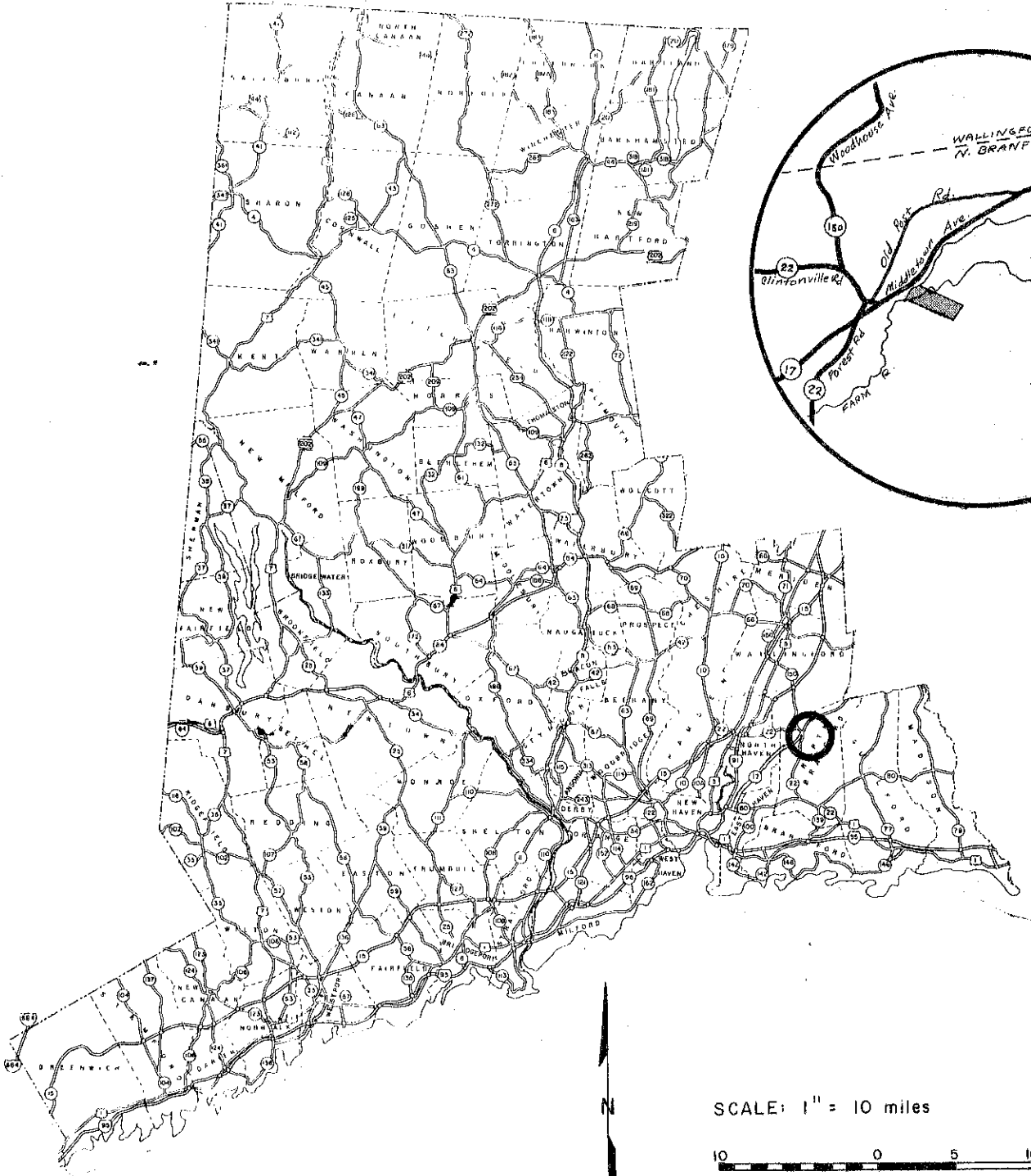
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LOCATION OF STUDY SITE

FAY-HEILIG PROPERTY NORTH BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT



ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT
ON
FAY/HEILIG PROPERTY
NORTH BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT

I. INTRODUCTION

The Planning and Zoning Commission from the Town of North Branford, Connecticut is presently considering a zone change of a + 31 acre parcel of land in the northern portion of Town. The proposal is to re-zone the subject site, known as the Fay/Heilig property, from I-3 (Industrial) to R-40 (Single family residential, 1 acre minimum lot size). Such a re-zoning would be consistent with the Town Plan of Development.

The Planning and Zoning Commission from the Town of North Branford requested the assistance of the King's Mark Environmental Review Team to help the Commission in analyzing the proposed zone change. Specifically, the ERT was asked to identify the natural resources of the site and to comment on the suitability of the site for residential development.

The ERT met and field reviewed the site on July 3, 1979. Team members for this review consisted of the following:

- Gregory Bonadies.....Sanitarian.....State Dept. of Health
- Frank Indorf.....District Conservationist.....U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service
- Erin O'Hare.....Environmental Planner.....South Central Regional Planning Agency
- Stephen Sasala.....Transportation Planner.....South Central Regional Planning Agency
- Michael Zizka.....Geohydrologist.....State Dept. of Environmental Protection

Prior to the review day, each team member was provided with a summary of the proposed project, a checklist of concerns to address, a detailed soil survey map, a soils limitation chart, and a topographic map. Following the field review, individual reports were prepared by each team member and forwarded to the ERT Coordinator for compilation and editing into this final report.

This report presents the team's findings and recommendations. It is important to understand that the ERT is not in competition with private consultants and hence does not perform design work or provide detailed solutions to development problems. Nor does the team recommend what ultimate action should be taken on a proposed project. The ERT concept provides for the presentation of natural resources information and some preliminary land limitation considerations. All conclusions and final decisions rest with the Town. It is hoped the information contained in this report will assist the North Branford Planning and Zoning Commission in making environmentally sound decisions.

If any additional information is required, please contact Richard Lynn
(868-7342), Environmental Review Team Coordinator, King's Mark RC&D Area, P.O.
Box 30, Warren, Connecticut 06754.

* * * * *

II. SETTING, TOPOGRAPHY, LAND USE

The \pm 31 acre Fay/Heilig property under consideration for a zone change is located in the north central portion of Town off Route 17 (see Figure 1). Abutting the property on the east is private water company land; on the north and south is wooded land zoned for residential use; on the west is the Farm River. Just west of the Farm River is a \pm 4 acre triangular shaped parcel of land, also owned by Mr. Fay and Mrs. Heilig but zoned for commercial use. This parcel, not presently being considered for re-zoning, provides access from Route 17 to the subject site via a private drive.

The property being proposed for re-zoning has been extensively mined for sand and gravel in the past with little reclamation of the surface disturbed land. Only a very narrow strip along the northern and eastern boundaries remain in a natural condition. Relief on most of the property is level to undulating but slopes rise steeply on the northern, eastern and southern borders of the excavated area as a result of the mining operation.

The central portion of the site contains an area that was excavated below the groundwater table. This has resulted in the creation of a \pm 1/2 acre pond (see Figure 2). Just south of this ponded area is a wetland area which may also have water ponded during the wet seasons of the year. The northern portion of the property contains areas of exposed bedrock.

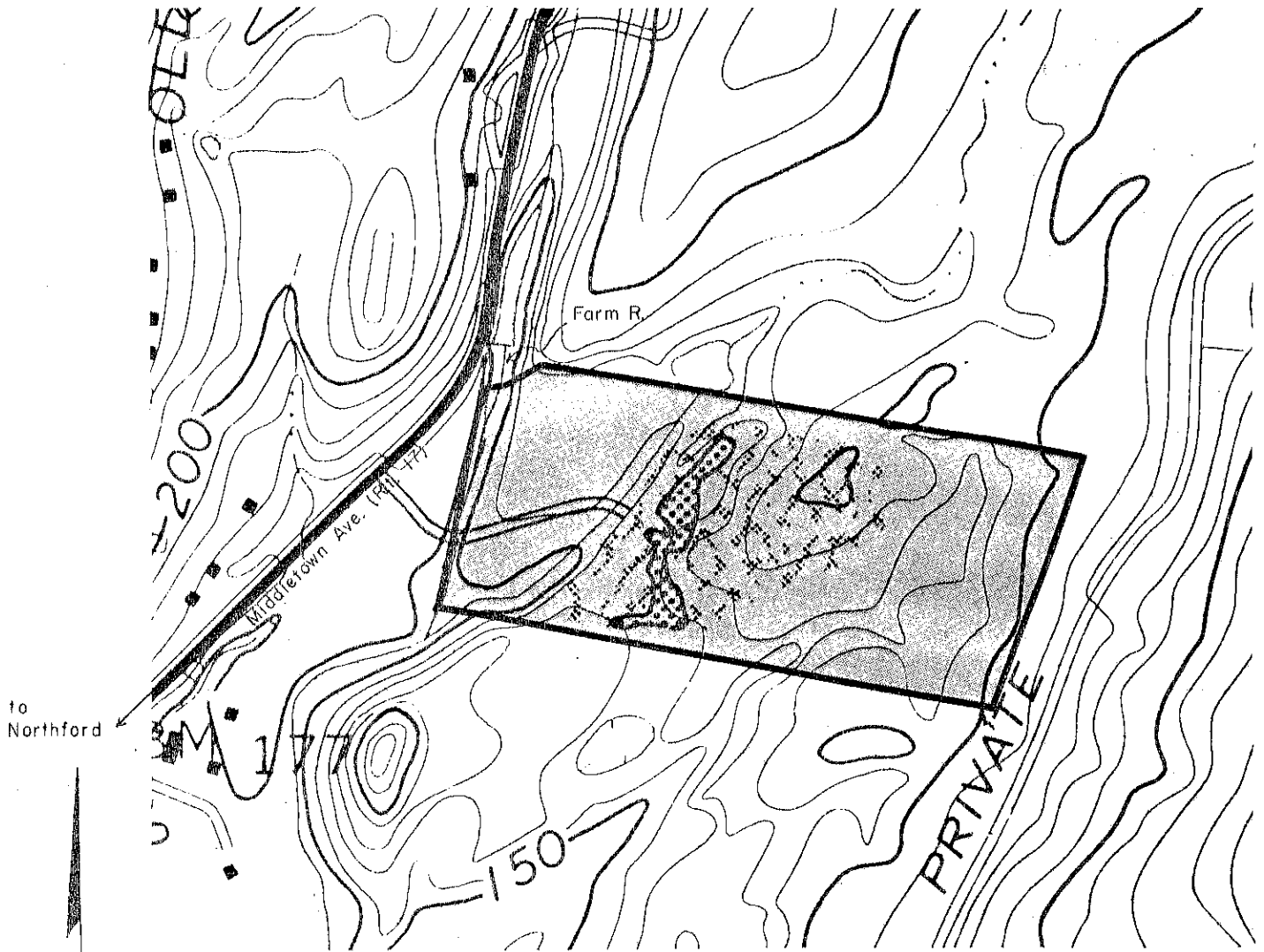
Two watercourses transect the parcel. These include the Farm River and a smaller watercourse which is tributary to Farm River. The Farm River is tributary to Saltonstall reservoir, a public water supply reservoir in the Town of East Haven and Branford.

Most of the vegetation on the site is characteristic of the pioneer species which invade surface disturbed land in Connecticut. Grasses, common reed, and an assortment of shrub and wildflowers dominate the open field portions of this property. The wooded portion of this property contains a variety of hardwood tree species including maple, ash, and birch.

III. GEOLOGY

The Fay/Heilig property is located within the Wallingford topographic quadrangle. The surficial geology of that quadrangle is mapped and described in Quadrangle Report No. 10 of the Connecticut Geological and Natural History Survey, by Stephen C. Porter (1960). Most of the site originally was underlain by substantial deposits of sand, gravel, and silt. These materials were laid down by glacial meltwater in and around wasting masses of ice. Recent excavation of the site has stripped away much of this glacial cover. In one large area in the center of the property, exposed bedrock with a very thin veneer of unconsolidated materials form a conspicuous knoll. West of the knoll, excavation below the groundwater table has resulted in the creation of a pond. South and east of the knoll, wet and dry areas alternate along the irregular floor of the excavation. At the eastern boundary of the site, the sand and gravel deposits thin out and are replaced by till, a nonsorted, nonstratified collection of rock debris. Till was deposited directly by glacier ice without substantial reworking by meltwater. Figure 3 shows the surficial geology of the site.

FIGURE I.
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP



NOTE • CONTOUR LINES DO NOT REFLECT THE PRESENT "SURFACE DISTURBED" CONDITIONS OF THE SITE.

SCALE: 1" = 500'

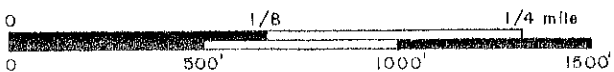


FIGURE 2.
LAND USE MAP

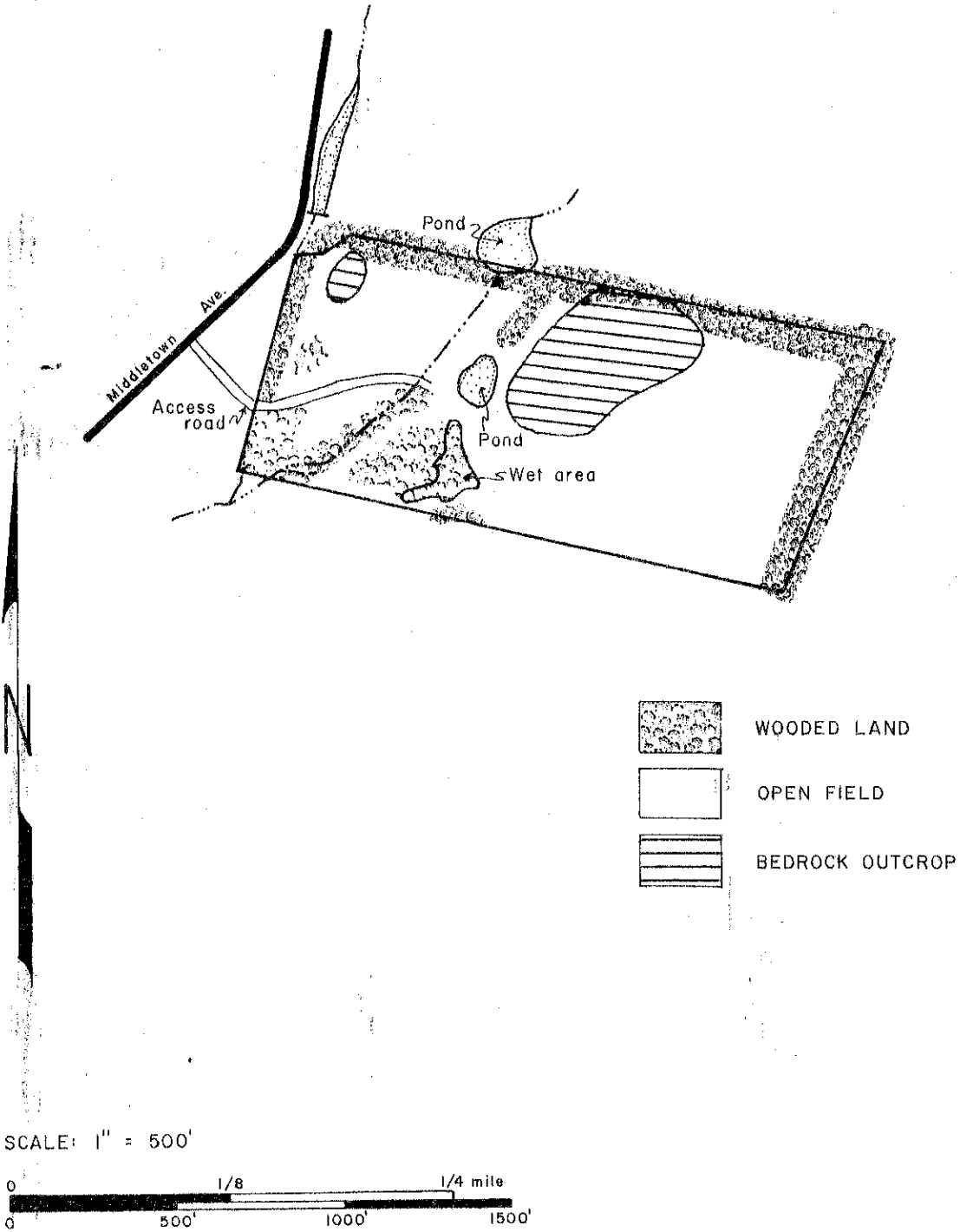
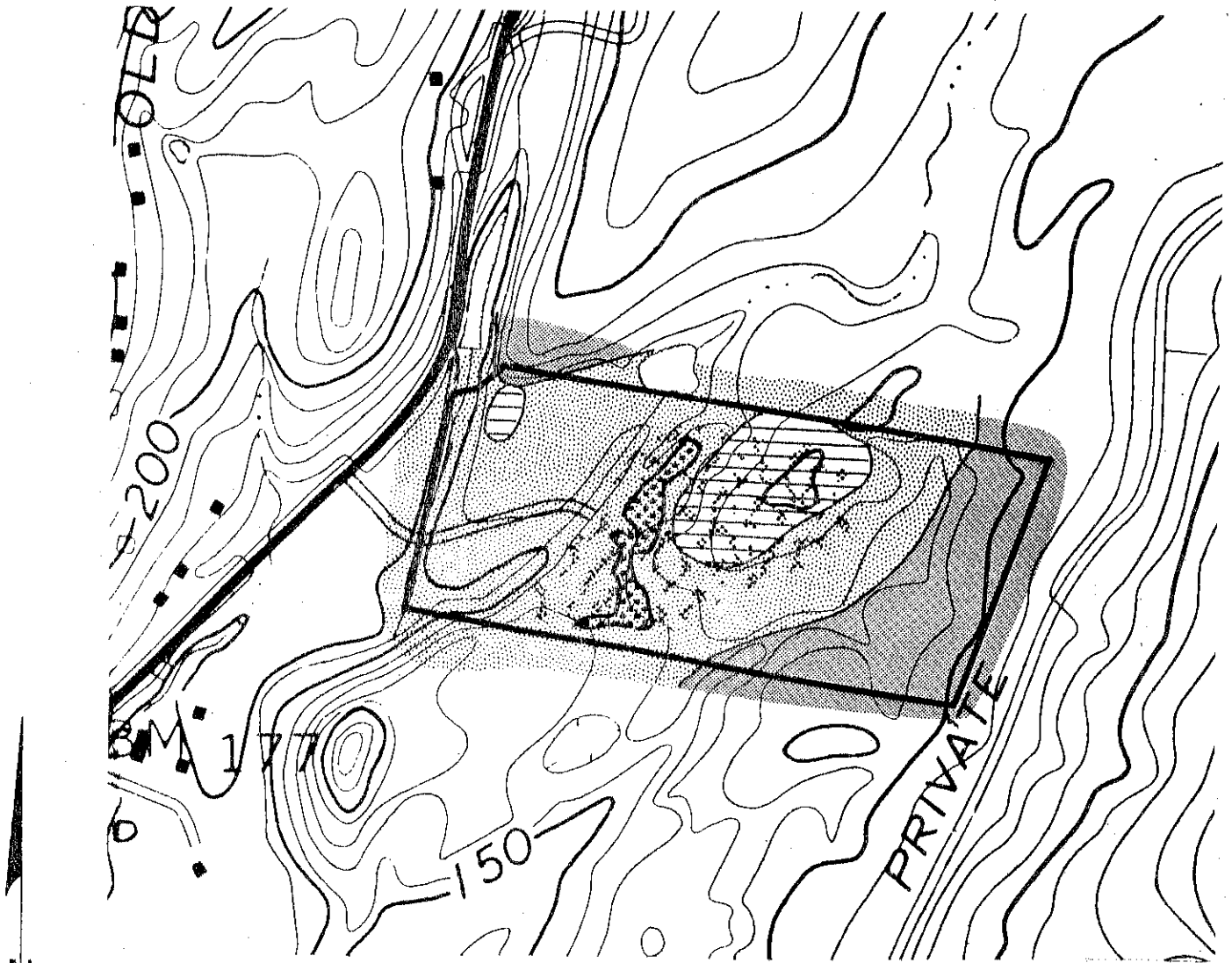
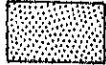


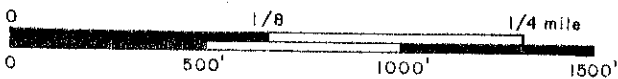


FIGURE 3.
SURFICIAL GEOLOGY



-  SAND AND GRAVEL, PARTIALLY OVERLAIN BY FILL
-  BEDROCK OUTCROPS WITH VERY THIN COVER OF UNCONSOLIDATED MATERIAL
-  TILL

SCALE: 1" = 500'



Bedrock exposed on the site (within the knoll area) is composed primarily of highly feldspathic (arkosic) sandstone and conglomerate, the parent material for the reddish sands and gravels. Basalt, a rock formed by solidification of lava, was exposed in a small area near Farm River. Basalt is locally known as trap rock.

IV. HYDROLOGY

One major watercourse, Farm River, flows southward at the western boundary of the site. A very small stream that originates on the western flank of Totoket Mountain also flows southward through the site. Both watercourses have been partly channelized.

Much of the property has been excavated to within a few feet of the groundwater table. As mentioned above, a shallow pond was created by the excavation. Elsewhere, minor differences in elevation of the stripped land has led to an irregular distribution of wet and dry areas.

It is very difficult to predict the nature and extent of changes that would occur in the runoff pattern on the site following residential development. Although sand and gravel is normally highly absorptive, the excavation has reduced considerably the storage capacity of the surficial materials. During periods of heavy rainfall, water that normally would have been stored will begin to accumulate at the surface. If the local topography is basin-like, temporary ponding would occur. On a sloping surface, the same water would run off. Hence, the excavation probably has already resulted in a slight runoff increase in comparison to former natural conditions.

Development of the site may either decrease or increase runoff, depending upon final site conditions. Addition of fill and topsoil in presently shallow-to-groundwater areas will provide more soil storage capacity and thereby decrease direct runoff. However, establishment of roads, roofs, driveways, or other impermeable surfaces would increase runoff. Assuming a conventional type site design of one acre house lots, residential development of the parcel should not cause a runoff increase that would add measurably to the peak flood flows in Farm River. The present floodprone area along the river, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Insurance Administration, is shown in Figure 4. It is not known whether excavation on the site has increased the extent of the floodprone area as mapped.

V. SOILS

A soils map of the property is presented in Figure 5 of this report. As portrayed in that map, the dominant soil type present on the property is classified as an "Udorthents" soil. Present in lesser amounts along the northern border of the property are the following soil types; Rumney, Cheshire, Manchester, and Ludlow. Each of these soils is described below.

UDORTHENTS (map symbol: UD) This map unit consists of a well drained to excessively drained soil. It is composed of cut or borrow areas, filled areas, and areas consisting of both cut and fill. The slopes are mainly less than 15 percent, however there are steep escarpments at the edges of some borrow areas.

FIGURE 4.
100-YEAR FLOODPRONE AREA

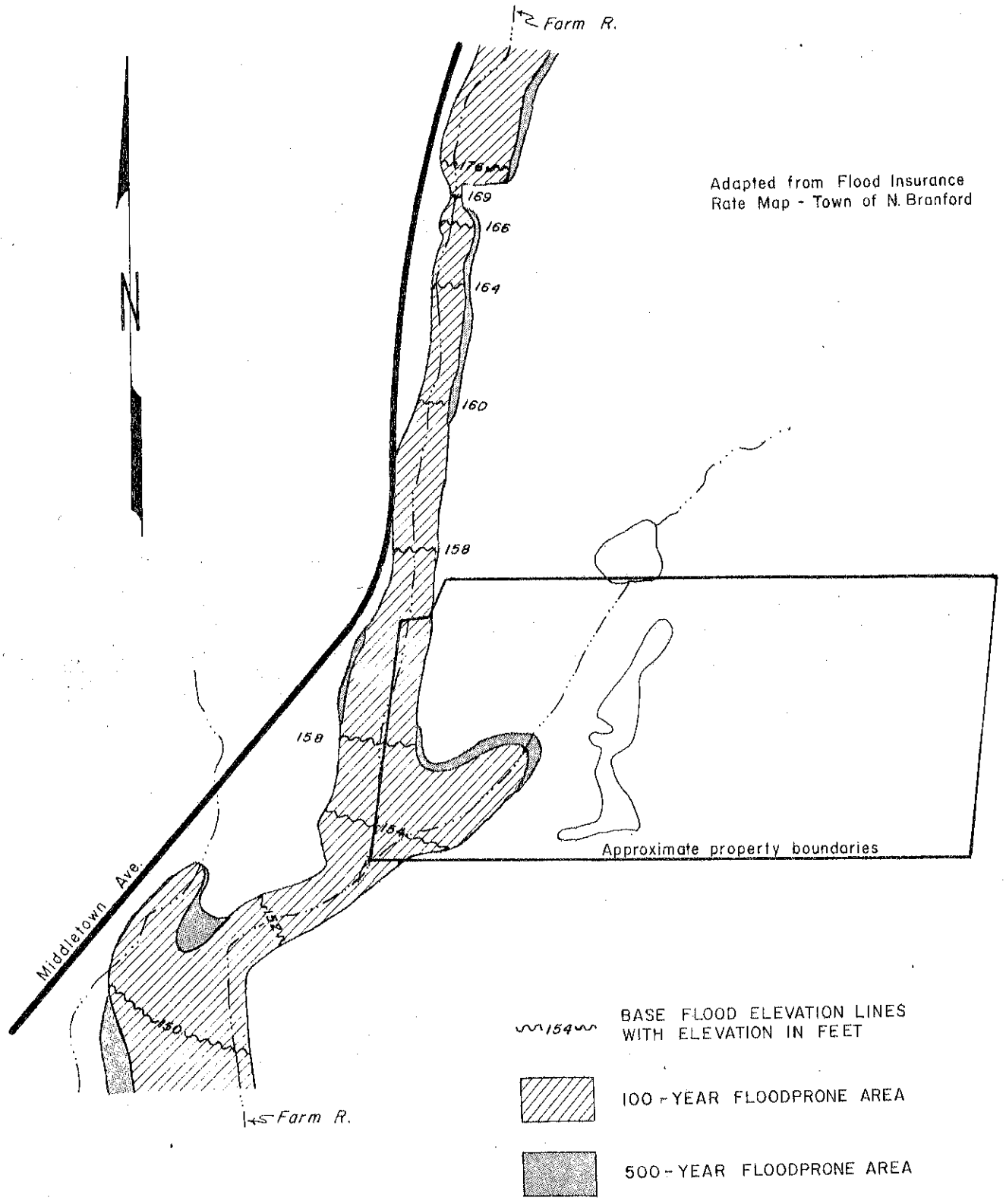
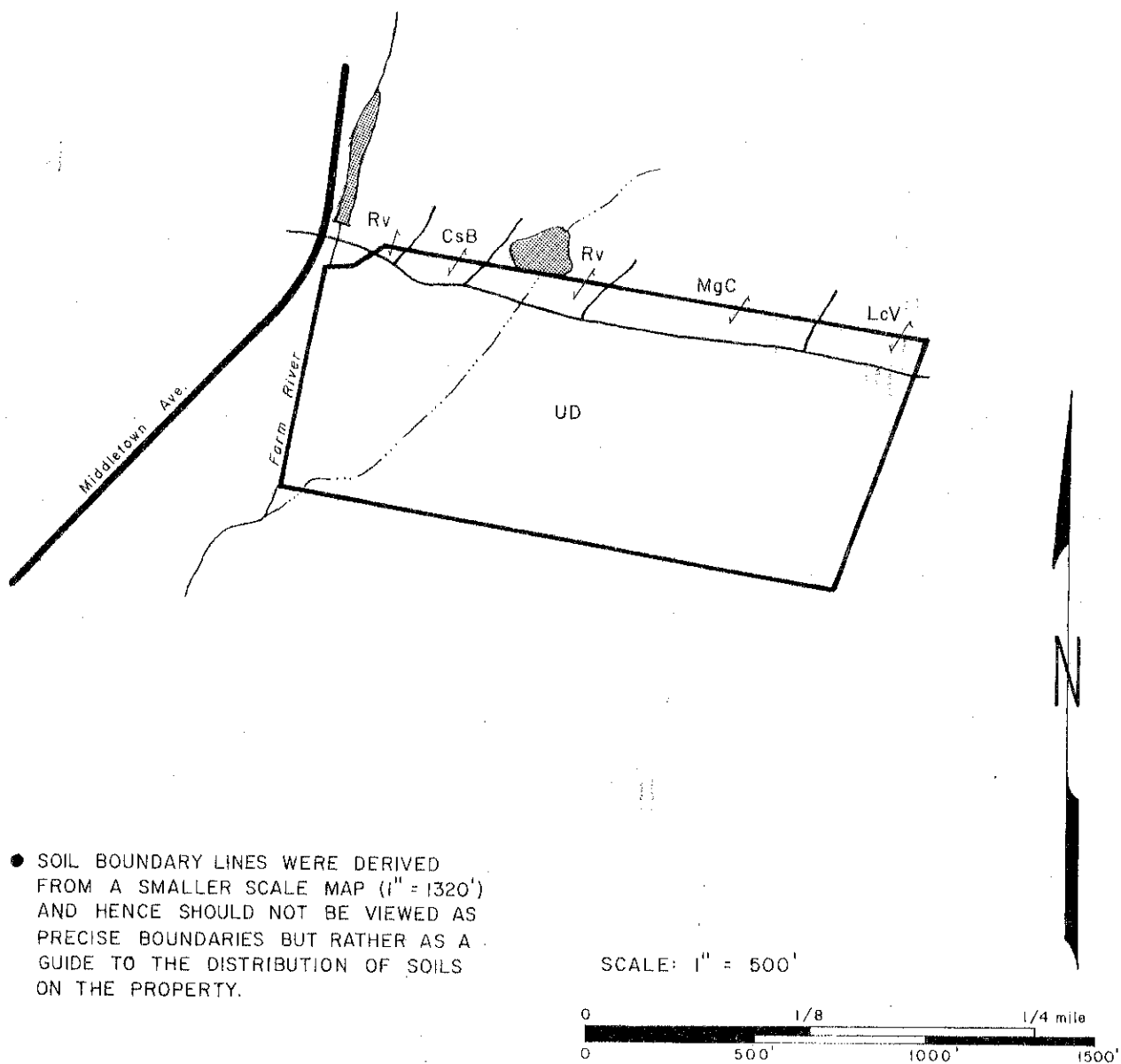


FIGURE 5.
SOILS MAP

ADAPTED FROM NEW HAVEN COUNTY
SOIL SURVEY · U.S.D.A. - S.C.S



- SOIL BOUNDARY LINES WERE DERIVED FROM A SMALLER SCALE MAP (1" = 1320') AND HENCE SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS PRECISE BOUNDARIES BUT RATHER AS A GUIDE TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF SOILS ON THE PROPERTY.

The cut or borrow areas consist of places where the surface layer and the subsoil have been removed. In filled areas, more than 20 inches of soil material has been placed on the surface. In many places, the landscape has been smoothed, and the cut and fill areas occur in an intricate and complex pattern.

Included in mapping are areas up to 3 acres in size of undisturbed soils. Bedrock outcrops in a few areas. In a few places, the water table is at or near the surface.

The soil in this unit has a wide range of characteristics. Texture ranges mainly from sandy loam to silt loam or the gravelling analogs. Consistence ranges from loose to very firm. Permeability ranges from very rapid to slow.

This unit requires onsite investigation and evaluation for most uses because the characteristics of the soil are so variable.

CHESHIRE SERIES (Map Symbol: CsB) These are reddish colored well drained soils. They have developed in glacial till derived principally from reddish colored sandstone and conglomerate. The surface and subsoil textures to a depth of 24 to 30 inches are very friable to friable silt loam or fine sandy loam. The underlying material is variable in texture and permeability. The Cheshire soils were naturally stony and bouldery. Part or all the stones have been removed in places so surface stoniness varies from essentially nonstony to very stony. Stones are present in varying amounts below the surface and will be encountered in excavation. Slopes are in the 3 to 25 percent range. Cheshire soils are favorable for residential development.

LUDLOW SERIES (Map Symbol: LvC) These are reddish colored moderately well drained soils. They have a fragipan developed in reddish colored glacial till at about 3 feet in depth. Surface and subsoil horizons are friable to very friable. The fragipan is very slowly permeable, but the horizon above it is moderately permeable. Mottlings at 15 to 20 inches indicate waterlogging in wet seasons and after heavy rains. Ludlow soils are on slopes ranging from nearly level to gently undulating or sloping. Slope gradients are generally in the 2 to 8 percent range. Surface stoniness varies from essentially stone free to very stony. Ludlow soils present severe limitations for residential development due to wetness and slow percolation rate.

MANCHESTER SERIES (Map Symbol: MgC) These are reddish colored, excessively drained, shallow, gravelly soils. They have developed in stratified sandy, gravelly and cobbly deposits from reddish colored rocks. Textures range from gravelly fine sandy loam or gravelly sandy loam to gravelly loamy sand. Manchester soils are generally of irregular, broken and pitted topography, but some areas are nearly level. These soils are generally favorable for residential development.

RUMNEY SERIES (Map Symbol: Ru) These nearly level, poorly drained soils are found on the lower flood plains of major streams and their tributaries. Typically this soil has a 2 inch layer of decomposed and partially decomposed litter on the surface. The surface layer is dark brown silt loam 9 inches thick. The subsoil, which is 22 inches thick, is reddish brown and dark reddish brown, mottled silt loam. The substratum, to a depth of 60 inches, is gray loamy sand and fine sand.

This soil has a seasonal high water table at a depth of about 8 inches from late fall until mid-spring. It is subject to frequent flooding, mainly from fall through spring. Permeability is moderate in the surface layer and subsoil and rapid or very rapid in the substratum. This soil has a high available water capacity and runoff is slow. This soil dries out and warms up slowly in spring and has a low shrink-swell potential.

This soil has poor potential for residential development. It is limited mainly by its hazard of flooding and the seasonal high water table.

Soils vs. Residential Land Use

The majority of the site in its present condition presents severe limitations for conventional subdivision development. These limitations are described below.

. Flood Plain - The western part of the site is prone to flooding by the Farm River and the intermittent stream that transects the site (see Figure 3). Under the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program, any and all residential construction in the area of the 100-year flood must have the lowest floor (including basement) elevated to or above the level of the 100-year flood. Special precautions would also be necessary in regards to the bridge that crosses the Farm River and any access roads to the property.

. High Water Table - Site inspection verified that much of the site is subject to a high water table. This has been caused by the removal of considerable sand and gravel from the area. A high water table presents severe limitations for the proper functioning of septic systems and the construction of housing foundations. Limitations caused by a high water table may be overcome with fill material, but the cost of such fill is high. Even with the addition of fill, pollution of the groundwater regime remains a possibility. Delineation of the extent and severity of high groundwater conditions on the site will require more intensive soil investigation than was possible by the ERT.

. Shallow to Bedrock Conditions - As shown in Figure 2, the northern portion of the property contains two areas of exposed bedrock. There may be other areas on the property which are also shallow to bedrock. This kind of soil condition presents severe limitations for the construction of roads, building foundations, and septic systems. According to the State Department of Health Code, on-site septic systems require at least 4 feet of soil between the bottom of the leach field and bedrock. As with a high water table condition, this limiting factor can be circumvented by adding substantial amounts of earthen fill material to the site, but this alternative is expensive.

VI. WATER SUPPLY

Perhaps the most crucial question in terms of water supply is the extent to which site development could contaminate the local groundwater. Excavation has exposed or come within a few feet of the water table on much of the site. Hence, the establishment of septic systems may be impractical--even if the system can be made to work mechanically by addition of fill or other special design, the risk of groundwater contamination would be considerable. The risk would of course be aggravated by the creation of a large number of individual septic systems and wells as in a conventional residential subdivision.

In terms of well yields, the remaining gravelly deposits on the site, if sufficiently thick, probably could afford substantially greater supplies than the underlying bedrock. In coarse-grained stratified drift (glacial meltwater-

sorted deposits), yields of 200-2000 gallons per minute are common. Wells drilled into sedimentary bedrock, such as that which underlies the site, normally produce much smaller yields. According to Connecticut Water Resources Bulletin No. 27, only about 20 percent of the wells which were drilled into sedimentary bedrock in the Quinnipiac River basin and which were surveyed for that bulletin yielded 15 gallons per minute or more. However, 80 percent of those wells yielded at least 4 gpm and 90 percent yielded at least 2 gpm. Well yields in the 2 - 4 gpm range are generally satisfactory for the domestic water supply needs of most families.

If a development requiring many individual wells and septic systems occurs on the site, bedrock would probably be the safest and most practical water source. If a cluster residential development, requiring large water supplies, was ultimately located on the site, testing should be done in the sand and gravel deposits to determine whether high yields are possible. Any high-yield well should be sited as far as possible from septic systems or other sources of contamination.

It should be noted that wells drilled into sedimentary bedrock or into stratified drift derived from it commonly supply hard water. Shallow wells are more likely to supply such water than deeper wells.

VII. SEPTIC SYSTEMS

As previously discussed, major portions of the Fay/Heilig property are characterized by shallow to bedrock conditions and/or a high water table. Both of these conditions represent severe limiting factors for the proper placement and operation of subsurface sewage disposal systems.

A definitive statement on the suitability of the area for septic systems would depend upon the results of numerous deep observation pits dug on the property. Such pits would allow the observation of soil conditions in selected areas of the property and permit an evaluation as to the suitability of localized areas for subsurface sewage disposal. For proper evaluation of the suitability of the site for leaching fields, deep observation pits at various locations should be dug during the wet season of the year in order to observe the ground water table, bedrock elevations, mottling and other limiting soil conditions (if they exist). Preliminary analysis of surface conditions indicate that the site, with areas of high groundwater and shallow soils, has severe limitations for on-site sewage disposal. Although these conditions may not preclude residential development of the property, they do indicate that extensive and costly measures would probably be required to avoid environmental harm.

VIII. LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

THE TOWN PLAN

"The North Branford Plan of Development: A Guide for Change and Growth from 1970 Toward the Year 2000," adopted in 1971, originally recommended the subject area for "Industrial Development" (on Plan Map "A" - Land Use and Circulation). In December 1978, Plan Map A was amended so that the front 4 acres of the Fay/Heilig property (west of the Farm River) was changed to "Business Development" and the remaining area (east of the Farm River) was changed to "Residential

Development". The proposed zone change, Industrial (I-3) to Residential (R-40), would hence be in accordance with the current town plan.

REGIONAL AND STATE PLANS

The Regional Plan--Proposed Land Use Plan--2000, South Central Connecticut Planning Region, adopted 1968, recommends the area in question as a residential area (1-2 families/acre).

The "Locational Guide Map" in the State of Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan 1979-1982, indicates the area in question as a "conservation area". Although the Policies Plan guidelines are specifically directed to State action, in keeping with the concept of "conservation area", the area should remain essentially in its natural state. There should be no investment of public funds and a low intensity use should be retained to conserve the character of the area and minimize degradation of its natural resources such as stream-belts, groundwater, scenic areas, and inland wetlands.

The Fay/Heilig property is in the Farm River watershed and is classified as Class II water supply watershed land under the criteria of the Council on Water Company Lands. The Farm River is diverted to Lake Saltonstall for public drinking water supply purposes. The State Plan provides specific guidelines for State or State-supported plans and projects on Class II lands (see page 66 of Plan). The guideline that would likely be most difficult to adhere to in development of the land in question would be the prohibition of subsurface sewage disposal systems in areas with soils of 20 inches or less, or poorly or very poorly drained soils. As discussed in the soils portion of this report, the site has areas of exposed bedrock and shallow soils, plus areas of high water table. Both of these conditions present severe limitations for satisfactory subsurface sewage disposal.

Although R-40 zoning could be seen as a low intensity use in conformance with "conservation area" designated uses, the limitations of the soils on the site remain the critical factor.

ADJACENT LAND USE

The land use in the surrounding area would be compatible with the proposed residential use. The area across Route 17, which forms the western border of the property, is low density residential. The land adjacent to the property is undeveloped wooded land and farmland. South of the site is the center of Northford, an area of mixed residential, commercial and institutional uses. The building most proximate to the site on the east side of Route 17 is the Northford Post Office.

SUMMARY

The proposed zone change from I-3 (minimum lot requirement 120,000 square feet) to R-40 (minimum lot requirement 40,000 square feet) is in accordance with local, regional and State plans. The appropriateness of this site for residential use, however, hinges on its physical limitations for development into lots for single family residences. As discussed throughout this report, the former use of the land for sand and gravel extraction has severely limited its suitability for residential development.

IX. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

SITE ACCESSIBILITY

Approximately 2.5 miles northeast of Northford Center in North Branford, the site is accessible from Route 17--a two-lane, two-way roadway. While Route 17 is generally in need of improvement (deteriorating shoulders, cracked pavement, etc.), the proposed re-zoning should have minimal impact upon the existing roadway network (Route 17 and nearby local roads).

Comments on internal circulation are not included since a complete site plan depicting placement of the residential units, new roadway and so on is necessary for comment. Circulation on the existing network is via Route 17 and this is dealt with in the following discussion.

EXISTING/PROJECTED CONDITIONS

Along with other field studies, existing traffic volumes were measured and roadway capacities calculated in order to permit an evaluation of traffic impact from an R-40 development at this site on existing access roads.

Volumes are currently in the 4,000 - 5,000 ADT (Average Daily Traffic) range (source: ConnDOT Traffic Counts, 1977) on Route 17--which is the sole access road to the site. Since Route 17 is the major access road in the area, it must be assumed that local roads in the area carry a significantly lighter volume of vehicles daily.

ConnDOT forecasts for the region's major road network indicate that even ten years hence (1987), the volumes in this area will increase at a rate of only one to two percent a year yielding ADT volumes in the range of 5,500 - 6,500 vehicles.

These volumes need to be compared however with roadway capacity calculations to assess the impact of present and projected traffic on the existing roadway network. Utilizing the Highway Capacity Manual, a nationally accepted handbook for such purposes, Route 17 is capable of carrying a vehicle capacity of some 12,000 - 13,000 vehicles per day. Thus, only 50 percent of the roadway's capacity is expected to be consumed ten years hence and this creates no problem for the existing network.

The introduction of 31 new residences in the area (assuming subdivision of the 31 acre parcel into 1 acre units) will add, perhaps, 12 to 16 additional vehicle trips per dwelling unit into the traffic stream. This converts to a maximum of 500 (approximate) additional trips or vehicles per day. This additional traffic constitutes an 8 percent (approximate) increase in traffic above and beyond that projected by ConnDOT for the year 1987. Most importantly however, this results in a mere 5 percent additional consumption of capacity (55 percent)--a negligible impact.

REGIONAL PLAN IMPACT

From a regional transportation planning and traffic engineering perspective, the proposed re-zoning to R-40 would have no appreciable positive or negative impact:

- . The subject site is in a low density area and of a sufficient small size that residential development into 1 acre lots could not support public transportation--no impact with R-40 re-zoning.
- . The property is along a State road (Route 17) of adequate width and condition--no appreciable impact with R-40 re-zoning.
- . The property is in an area where the air pollution problem (carbon monoxide only) has been assessed to be below the regional average--no appreciable impact at the site.

* * * * *



ABOUT THE TEAM

The King's Mark Environmental Review Team (ERT) is a group of environmental professionals drawn together from a variety of federal, state, and regional agencies. Specialists on the team include geologists, biologists, foresters, climatologists, soil scientists, landscape architects, recreation specialists, engineers, and planners. The ERT operates with state funding under the aegis of the King's Mark Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area - a 47 town area in western Connecticut.

As a public service activity, the team is available to serve towns and developers within the King's Mark Area --- free of charge.

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 the review of a wide range of significant activities including subdivisions, sanitary landfills, commercial and industrial developments, and recreation/open space projects.

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 an administration agency such as planning and zoning, conservation, or inland wetlands. Requests for reviews should be directed to the Chairman of your local Soil and Water Conservation District. This request letter must include a summary of the proposed project, a location map of the project site, written permission from the landowner/developer allowing the team to enter the property for purposes of review, and a statement identifying the specific areas of concern the team should address. When this request is approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District and the King's Mark RC&D Executive Committee, the team will undertake the review. At present, the ERT can undertake two reviews per month.

For additional information regarding the Environmental Review Team, please contact your local Soil Conservation District Office or Richard Lynn (868-7342), Environmental Review Team Coordinator, King's Mark RC&D Area, P.O. Box 30, Warren, Connecticut 06754.

