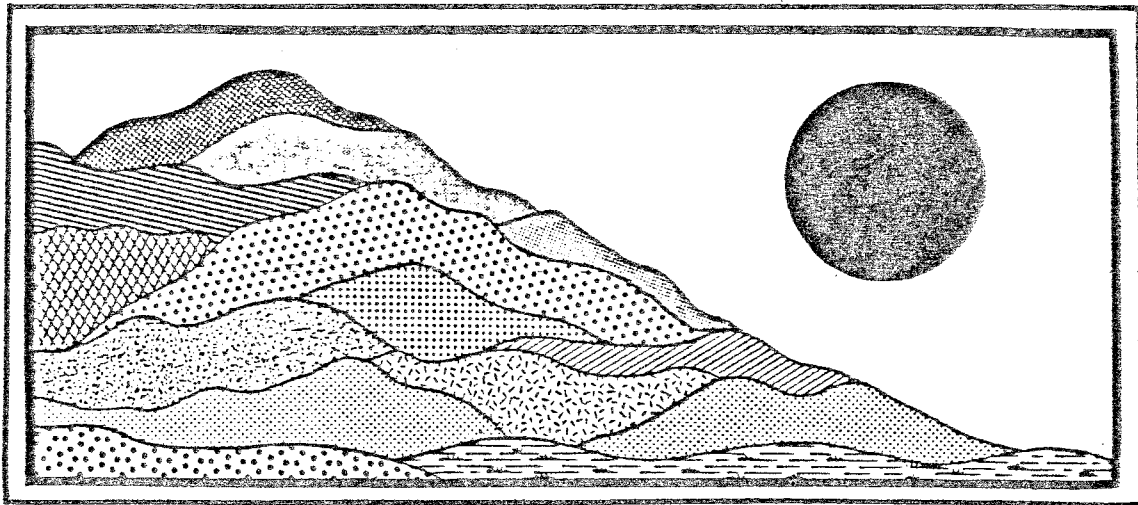


# Della Construction Co. Subdivision

Somers, Connecticut



ENVIRONMENTAL

REVIEW TEAM

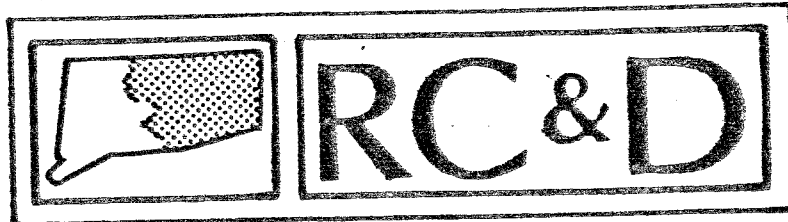
REPORT

# Della Construction Co. Subdivision

Somers, Connecticut

Review Date: FEBRUARY 23, 1987

Report Date: MARCH 1987



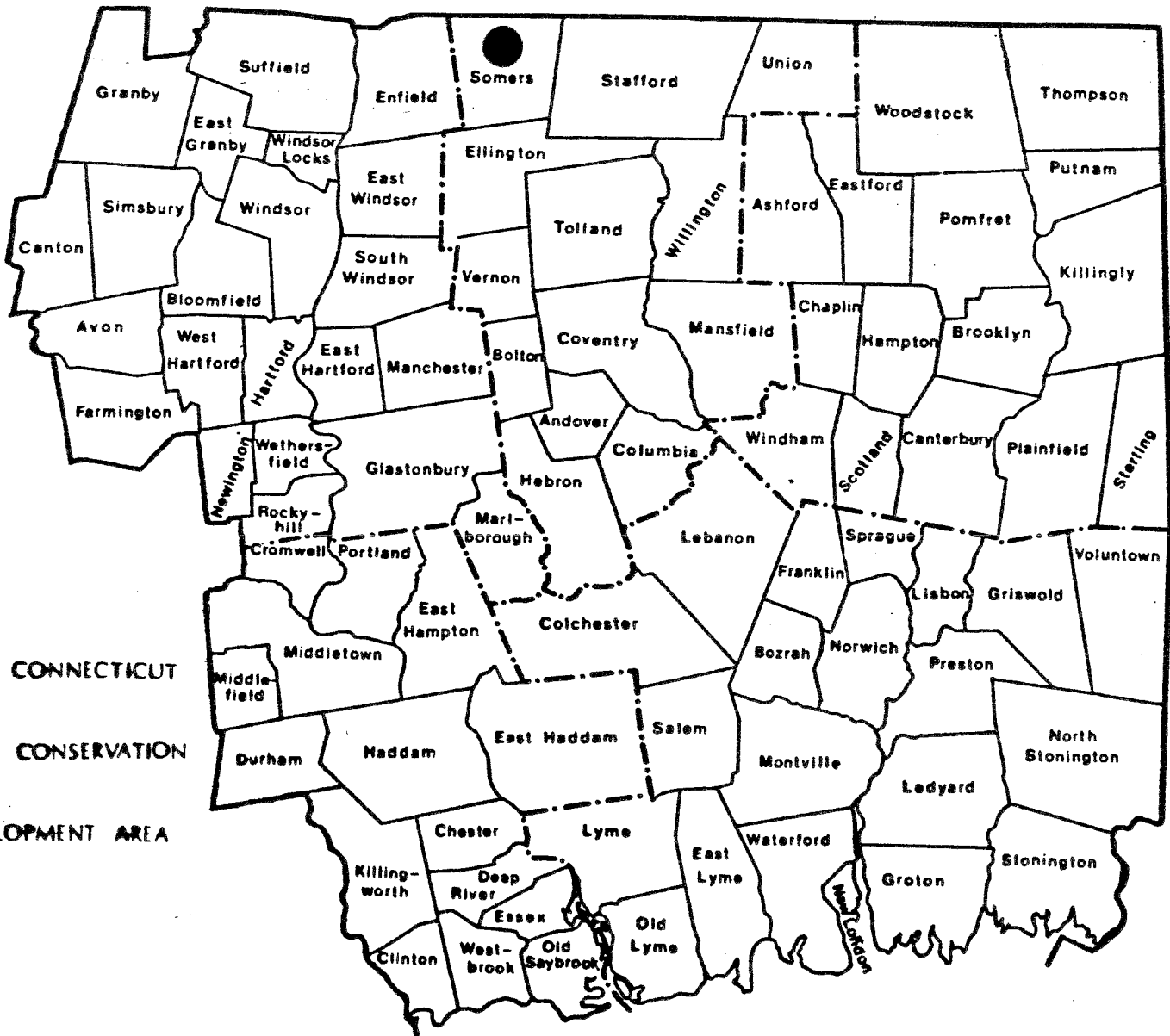
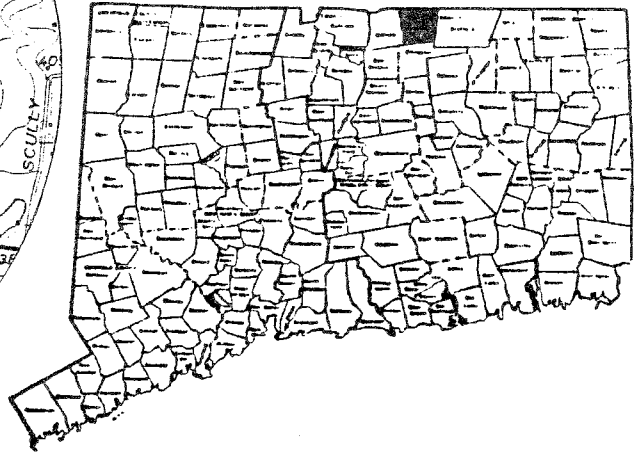
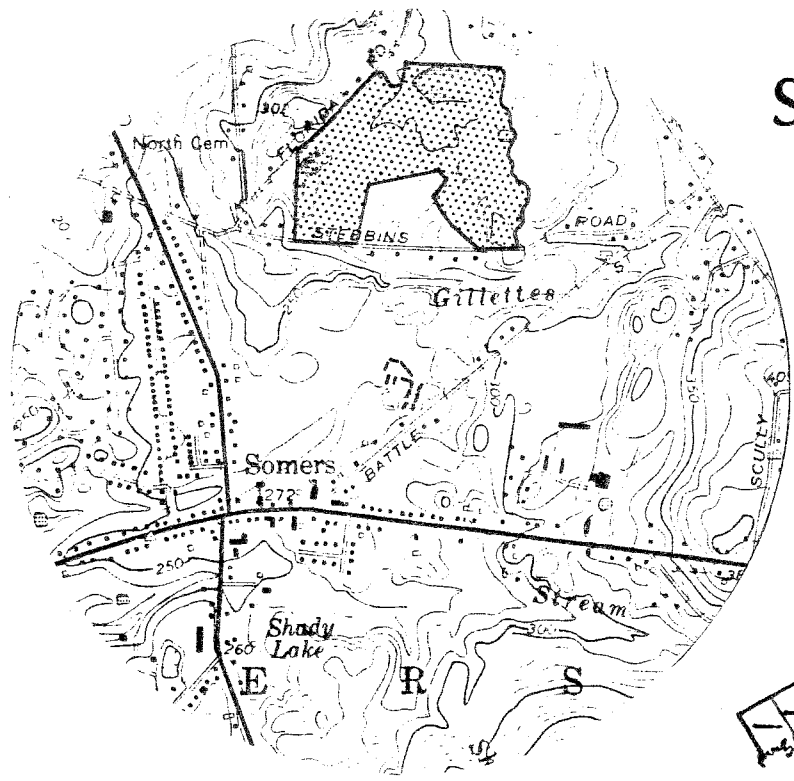
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM

PO BOX 198

BROOKLYN, CONNECTICUT 06234

# Site Location

Della Construction Co. Subdivision  
Somers, Connecticut



EASTERN CONNECTICUT  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION  
& DEVELOPMENT AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT

ON

DELLA CONSTRUCTION COMPANY SUBDIVISION

Somers, Connecticut

This report is an outgrowth of a request from the Somers Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission to the Tolland County Soil and Water Conservation District (S&WCD). The S&WCD referred this request to the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Executive Committee 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 Monday, February 23, 1987. Team members participating on this review included:

Don Capellaro	Sanitarian - Connecticut Department of Health
Nancy Murray	Biologist - DEP, Natural Resources Center
Joe Neafsey	District Conservationist - U.S.D.A., Soil Conservation Service
Al Roberts	Soil Resource Specialist - U.S.D.A., Soil Conservation Service
Anthony Sullivan	Planner - Connecticut Office of Policy and Management
Elaine Sych	ERT Coordinator - Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area
Bill Warzecha	Geologist - DEP, Natural Resource 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 site plans. The Team met with, and were accompanied by members of the Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission, the Town Sanitarian, a representative for the applicant and the applicant's engineer. 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 and conclusions rest with the Town and land-owner. 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 Committee hopes you will find this report of value and assistance in making your decisions on this proposed subdivision.

If you require any additional information, please contact:

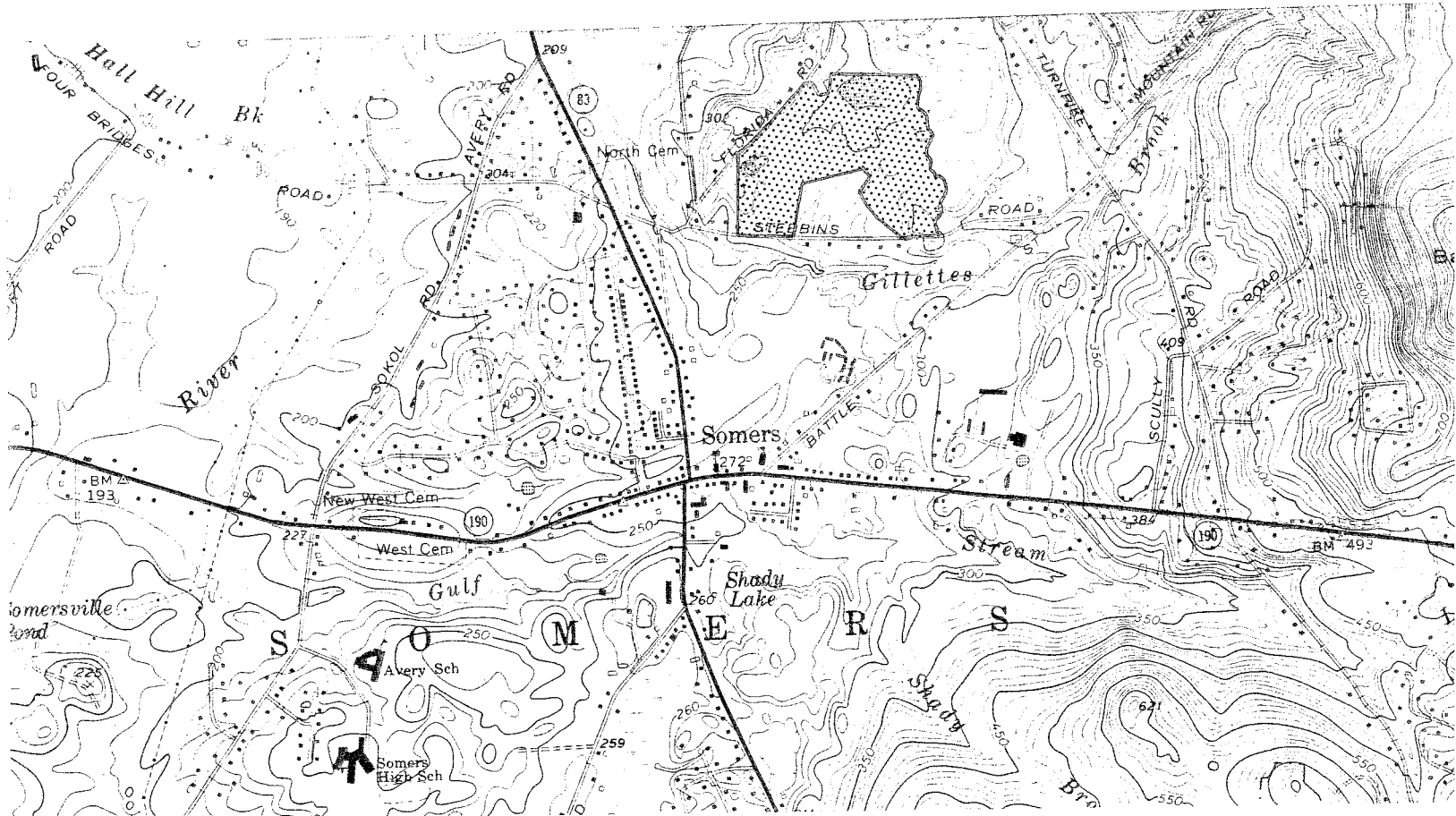
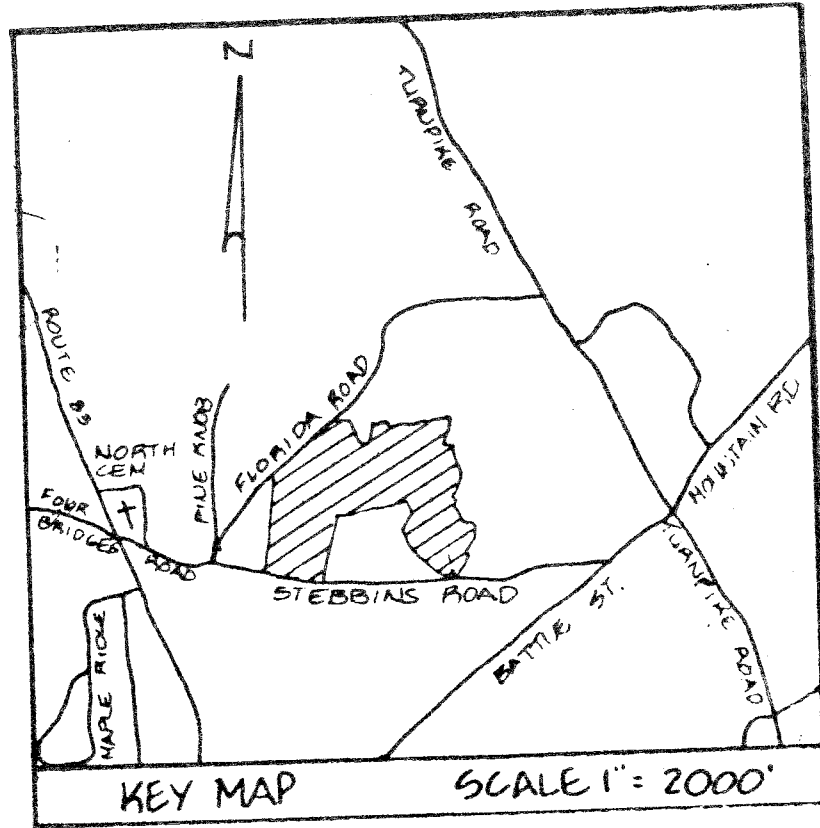
Elaine A. Sych  
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(203) 774-1253

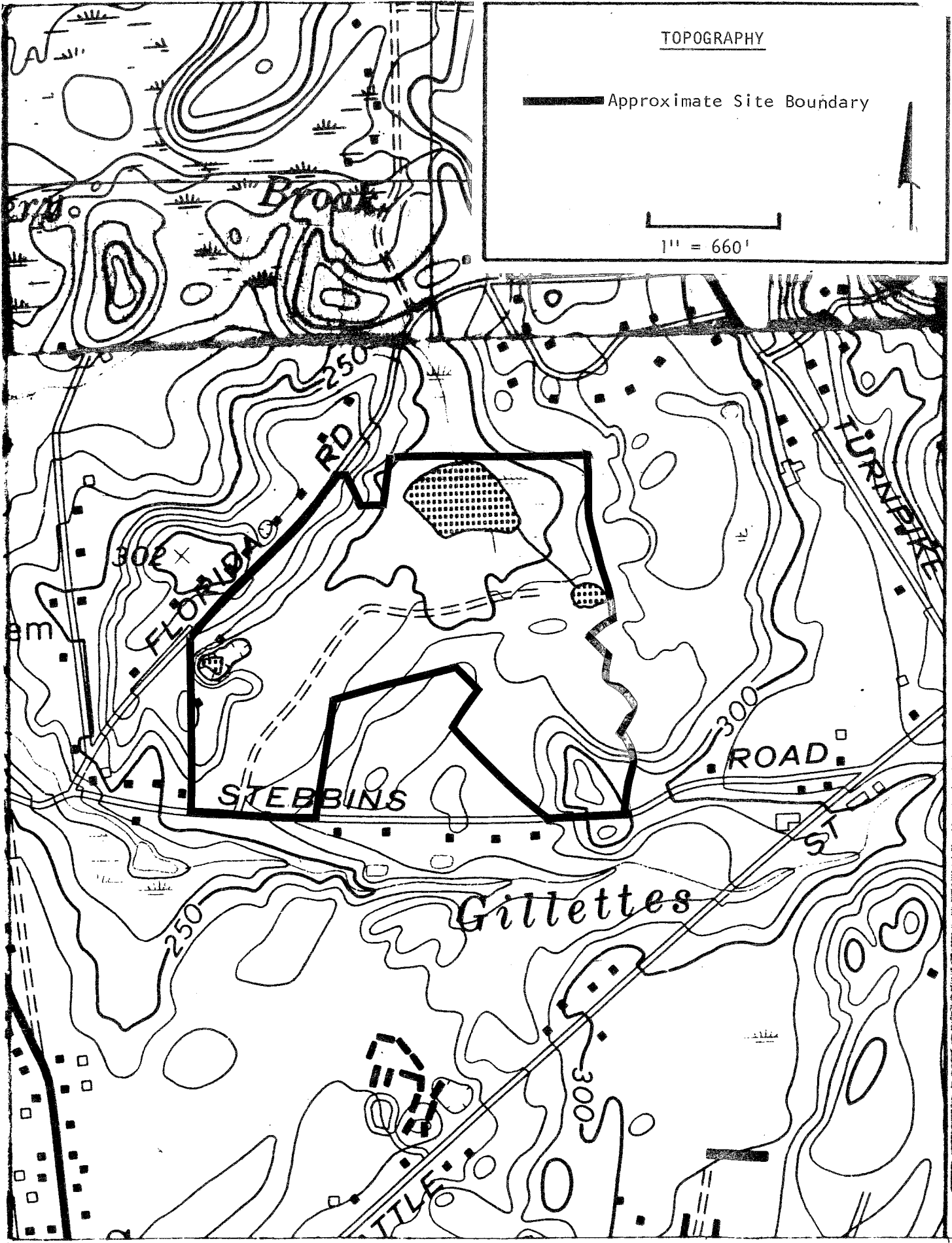
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## A. INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team has been asked to review a proposed subdivision in the Town of Somers. The Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission requested the review for the purpose of evaluating the proposal concerning the wetlands, storm water drainage, sewage disposal, site design and open space. The following sections provide this information.

## B. TOPOGRAPHY

The proposed 68-lot subdivision (site plan 12.3.86) site is located in central Somers. The site is approximately + 84 acres in size and is roughly horseshoe shaped. It has frontage on both Florida Road and Stebbins Road. Present site access is by a gravel road from Stebbins Road.

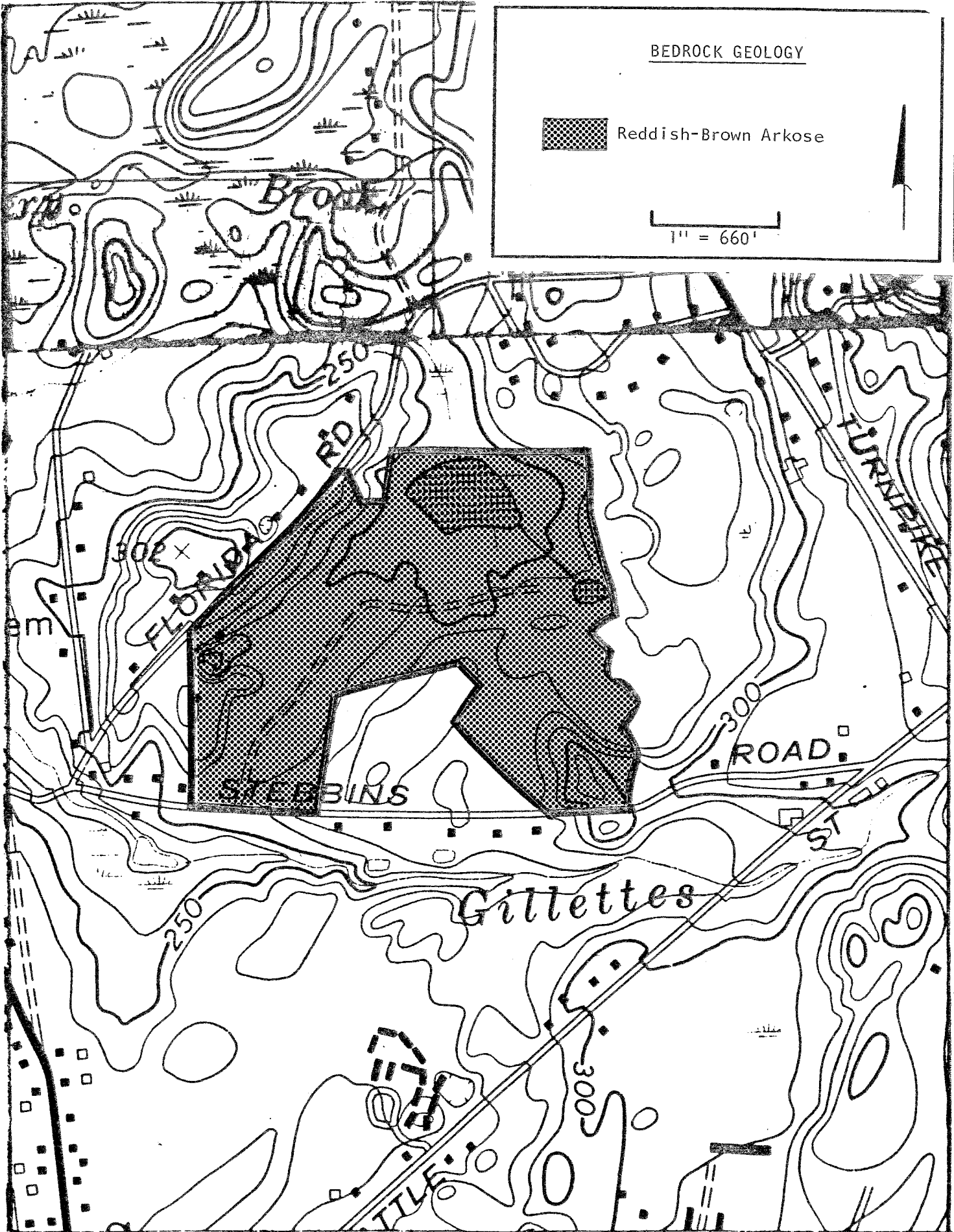
A sand and gravel mine was operated on the property for the past thirty (30) years. Most of the land surface on the site has been extensively disturbed and retains features resulting from the sand and gravel removal operation. These include ponds, poorly drained depressions, stock-piled top soil, all of which have modified the natural drainage on the site. One piece of rusting machinery from the sand and gravel processing plant remains on the site. Wooded or undisturbed areas are found mainly along Florida Road and in the southeast corner.

The land surface on most of the site is flat to gently sloping. It rises moderately to the wooded areas mentioned above.

A + 5 acre pond and + .5 acre pond are located in the northern half of the site. Both ponds are man-made, resulting from the former sand and gravel removal excavation. The water levels in the ponds are probably coincident with the local water table.

## C. GEOLOGY

The proposed subdivision site is located in the Ellington topographic quadrangle. A bedrock geologic map (map QR-4, 1946) for the quadrangle has been published by the Connecticut Geological and Natural History Survey. A surficial geologic (Map GQ-965, by Roger B. Colton) has been published by the U. S. Geological Survey.



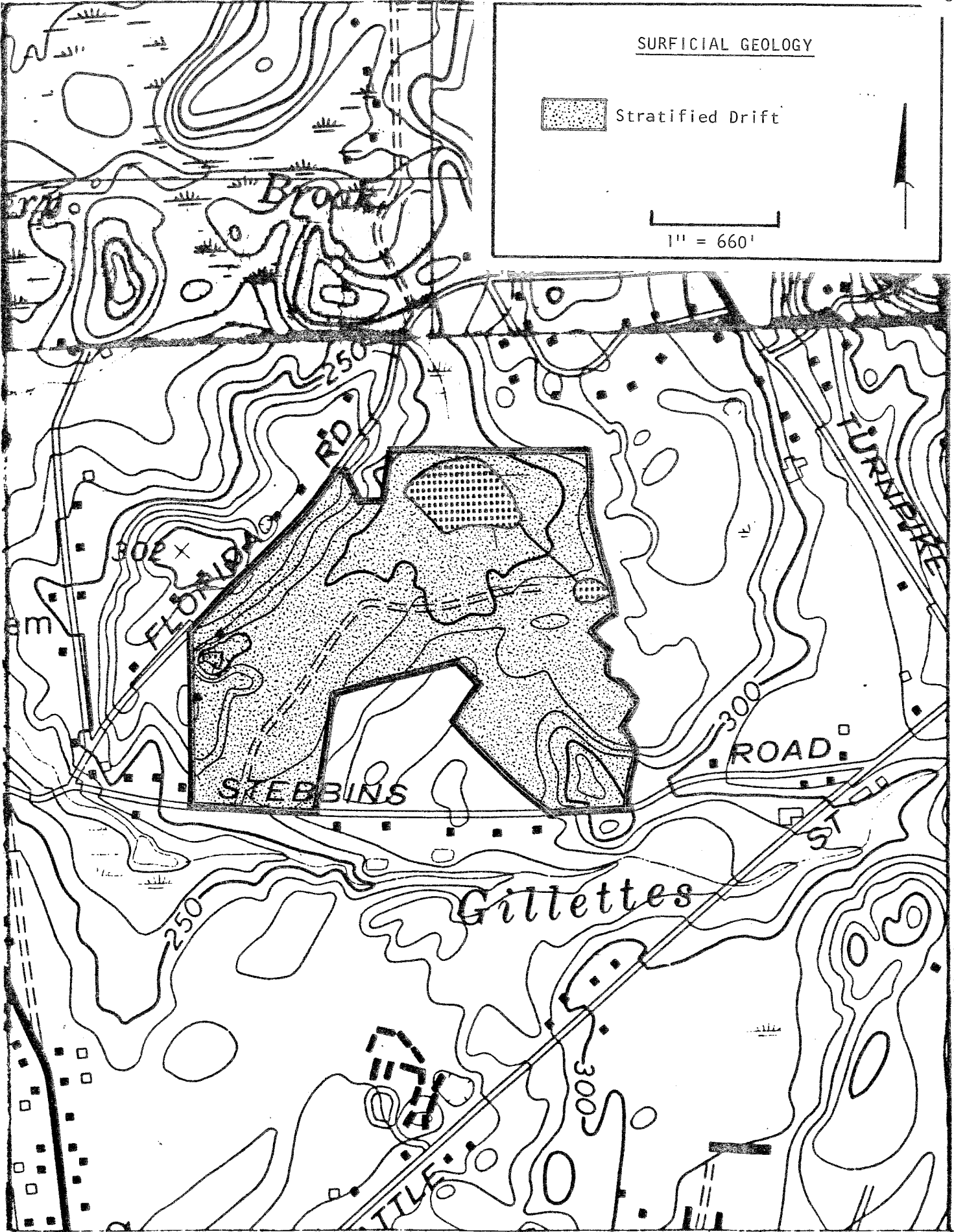
BEDROCK GEOLOGY



Reddish-Brown Arkose

1" = 660'





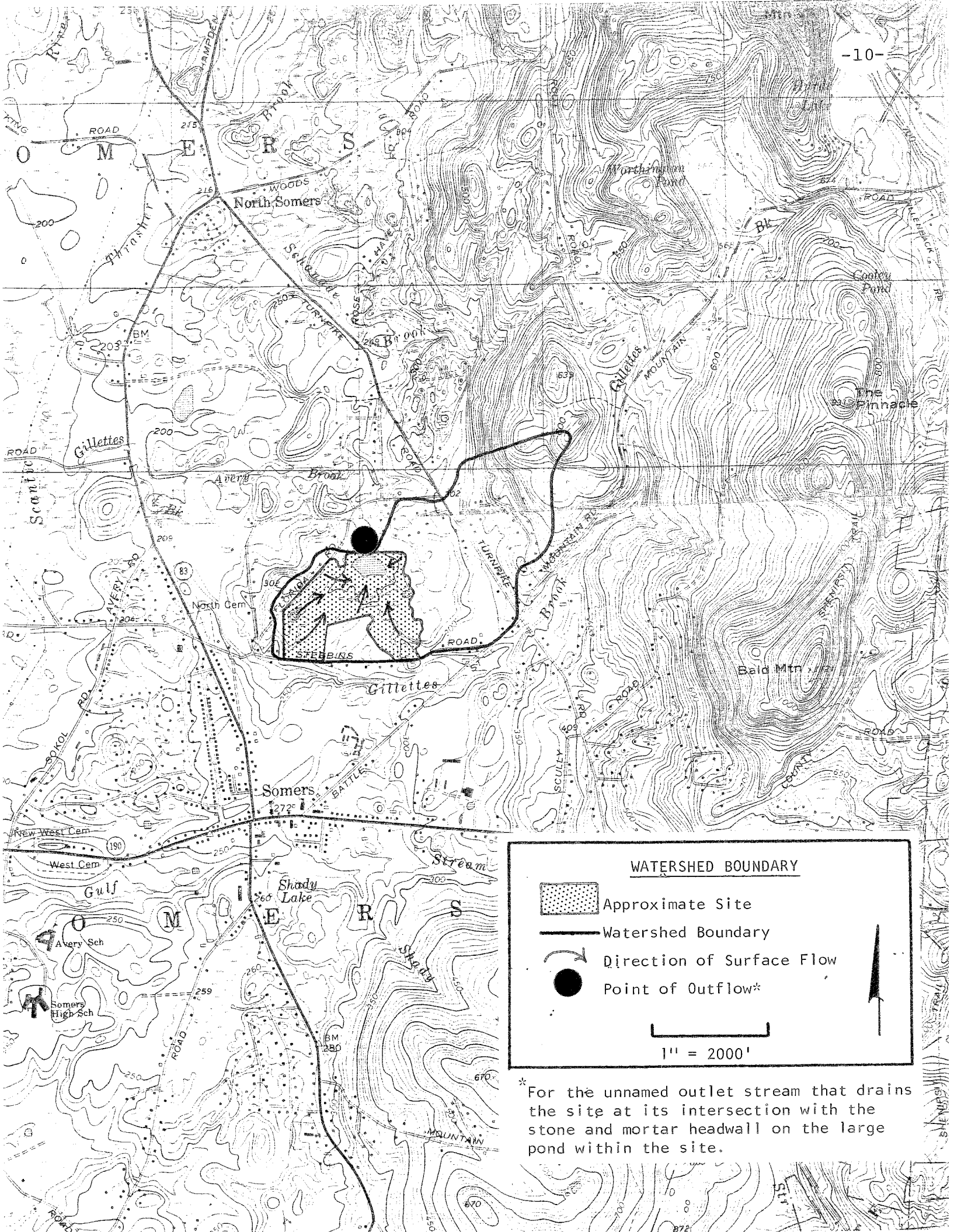
Based on available mapping, it does not appear that the bedrock surface breaks ground surface on the site. Snow covered the ground on the field review day obscuring the ground surface. Nevertheless, bedrock beneath the site has been classified as a reddish-brown arkose, which may contain layers of conglomerate. The term "arkose" refers to a sandstone and that contains a high percentage of the minerals feldspar and quartz. Conglomerates, consist of rounded water-worn rocks or pebbles cemented together by another mineral substance, e.g. hematite. These rocks were deposited during the Jurassic geologic period, approximately 144 to 208 million years ago in the central valley of Connecticut. The eastern limits of the property marks the approximate boundary of the Eastern Border Fault, which separates two (2) different rock types; sedimentary and igneous rocks in the Connecticut Valley and crystalline, metamorphic rocks comprising the eastern uplands.

The exact depth to bedrock on the site is unknown. According to information supplied by the Town Sanitarian, sixty-nine (69) deep test pits excavated on the site for subsurface sewage disposal exploration did not encounter bedrock. Depth of the pits ranged between two (2) feet and 8.5 feet. It appears that the groundwater table was encountered in the two (2) foot hole which prevented the backhoe operator from digging deeper (cut-back cave-ins).


Because the bedrock surface is relatively deep and because a public water main will serve the subdivision, the underlying bedrock should not pose any major problems in terms of the proposed subdivision.


Covering bedrock over the entire site is a glacial sediment called stratified drift. It consists of reddish-brown well sorted to poorly sorted coarse gravel, fine sand and silt. These materials were deposited by meltwater streams flowing from wasting masses of glacier ice. The deposits are generally layered, but in many places the layering is disrupted. These features indicate that the sediments were built up against the ice, and that they collapsed when the ice melted away. The sand and gravel on the site was mined by the Della Construction Company, probably for fill, road base material, etc. Undoubtedly, significant regrading will be required in the area of the former sand and gravel operation to make it suitable for residential development. Depths to the groundwater table in this section of the site will depend largely on the amount of fill brought in to regrade formerly mined parts of the site.


Overlying the stratified drift deposits mainly in the northern half and southeastern corner of the site are post-glacial sediments known as swamp deposits. These deposits consist of grayish-brown to black muck, sand, silt, clay and peat.





**WATERSHED BOUNDARY**

 Approximate Site

 Watershed Boundary

 Direction of Surface Flow

 Point of Outflow\*

 1" = 2000'

\* For the unnamed outlet stream that drains the site at its intersection with the stone and mortar headwall on the large pond within the site.

According to the applicant's soil scientist, thirteen percent (13%) or eleven (11) acres of the property is designated as regulated wetland under Chapter 440 of the Connecticut General Statutes. It should be pointed out that the above figure does not include ponds on the site nor the wetland under discrepancy on lots 57 and 58. It appears that some of the wetlands identified on the site are man-made, having been created during sand and gravel excavations.

Any proposed activity that impacts a regulated area must be approved by the Somers Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission. The Commission will need to determine the potential impacts of the proposed activity on the wetland. Wetlands serve many important hydrologic and ecologic functions such as (1) regulating stream-flow particularly during times of heavy flow (2) buffering and preventing the transmission of contaminants (sediment) arising from developed areas to areas further downstream and (3) providing habitat for wildlife and insects.

According to present plans (December 3, 1986 submission) about 20,300 square feet or .5 acre of regulated land will be encroached upon. If the Commission determines that the wetland areas to be encroached upon serve an important function and that the impact of the proposed activity will be severe, they may deny the activity altogether or, at least, require measures that would minimize the impact. In an effort to determine the importance of the regulated land on the site, they should be evaluated for (1) their ability to control floodwaters; (2) their ability to maintain water quality by filtering out pollutants before they enter a watercourse; (3) whether or not they contain soils with high percentages of organic material, which would be unsuitable for building site development; and (4) whether or not they provide habitat for waterfowl, other wildlife or rare and endangered species. (See Section G. Connecticut Natural Diversity Data Base.)

#### D. HYDROLOGY

The entire site is drained by the unnamed outlet stream from the largest pond on the parcel. This streamcourse is a tributary to Avery Brook north of the site. Avery Brook empties into Gillettes Brook about 375 feet west of its confluence with the unnamed stream mentioned above. (See Watershed Boundary Map.)

Although no drainage calculations have been prepared by the applicant's engineer to date, development of the site as proposed would be expected to increase the amount of runoff during periods of rainfall. These increases would result from soil compaction and replacement of existing vegetation with impervious surfaces, i.e., rooftops and paved roads and driveways over permeable, sandy soils.

Because increased amounts of runoff resulting from the development may cause flooding problems to downstream areas of the site, it is important that a storm water management plan be prepared for the site prior to any development. This study should include calculations for pre- and post-development runoff conditions. Consideration should be given to utilizing the existing ponds on the site as storm water retention basins. (See Section E., #6) A sound erosion and sediment control plan should also accompany the storm water management plan especially in view of the bare soil conditions present on the site.

Although the wetlands in the study area are not designated within the 100 or 500 year flood boundary, they nevertheless serve a flood storage function during stormy periods. Replacing wetland areas with roads, driveways and houses will eventually diminish this function to the point where downstream flooding may become aggravated unless preventative measures are taken.

#### E. SOILS, WETLANDS, EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL

1. The original soils information for this parcel indicates poorly (wetland) and moderately well drained (seasonally high water table) soils in a wide band through the middle of the parcel (see Soils Map). This area was extensively altered during the gravel operation. The result is a severely disturbed area consisting of made land. All of the area has either been excavated or filled and the depth to groundwater is shallow. This will require special consideration when designing homesites or homes with basements.

2. The extent of wetlands on the adjacent property (Kibbe) that abuts Lots 51, 53 and 54 as well as a watercourse should be on the plan map. The impacts of development on this wetland system should also be addressed.

3. Al Roberts, Soil Scientist, SCS, has examined the low area on Lots 57 and 58 and concluded that the area is a wetland. It should be shown as such on the plans.

4. Because of the proposed subdivision of the wetlands on this parcel, and a lack of any permanent protection scheme, the open space and interrelated natural values of the wetland parcels are potentially in jeopardy of being lost. The long term viability of the wetland areas and assurances that they will remain undisturbed following construction of the subdivision becomes the responsibility of the Somers Conservation Commission under the P.A. 155 permitting process. It is strongly suggested that the Commission insist on a permanent protection plan for the large wetland area in the southeast corner of the parcel (Lots 54, 55, 56 and 57). Transfer of this

area to a land trust may be appropriate. Negotiations may produce favorable economic benefits to the applicant. Other wetlands on the site especially the large pond should remain in single ownership. Subdividing these areas as proposed may create unnecessary disputes concerning ownership, activities and liabilities.

5. The Town of Somers should consider requiring the developer to set aside the major wetlands, watercourses and ponds as open space. This would include large portions of Lots 24, 26, 27, 34, 36, 37, 43, 55, 56, and 58 as shown on the 10-28-86 revision. The result would be a pond, wetland and streambelt zone along the drainage way. This type of system would provide excellent wildlife habitat and recreational benefits to the Town. It would also minimize the degree of wetland encroachment. As currently proposed the development will result in extensive alteration of wetlands by either the developer or subsequent lot owners.

6. Alternative to direct discharge of storm water into the large pond should be examined.

7. Plans for the drainage system were not submitted for review.

8. A detailed soil erosion and sediment control plan should be prepared for this site. The plan should consider site preparation, construction and vegetative stabilization.

9. The dike and watercourse below the large wetland on Lots 56, 57 and 58 are in poor condition. Measures to improve these should be developed and shown on the plans.

The District would appreciate the opportunity to review revised plans for adequacy prior to final approval.

#### F. SEWAGE DISPOSAL

It is understood that the proposed lots would be served by a public water main and on-site septic systems. The sandy and gravelly deposits (stratified drift) found on the site are relatively poor filters for contaminated groundwater. On the other hand, natural dilution by infiltrating rainfall will be increased.

The risk of significant groundwater contamination from sewage effluent will be reduced by the following factors; (1) lots in the proposed subdivision are at least 40,000 square feet or one (1) acre; (2) the ability of the sand and gravel to absorb more rainfall than other types of soils, hence, better dilution and (3) the availability of public water main. Without the latter, the need to reduce the number of lots in the subdivision appears evident since many of the percolation rates were faster than one minute per inch.





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Soil  
Conservation  
Service

Tolland County USDA-SCS  
Agricultural Center  
24 Hyde Avenue  
Rockville, CT 06066

SCALE 1" = 1320'

Soil Survey Sheets #7 & #8



Soils with percolation rates faster than a minute per inch require a minimum separating distance of 150 feet between on-site septic system and surrounding on-site wells.

Even though public water is available to the site, a survey of neighboring wells is warranted to ensure adequate separating distances.

#### G. CONNECTICUT NATURAL DIVERSITY DATA BASE

The Natural Diversity Data Base has a recent record for a Connecticut Species of Special Concern located within the boundaries of the proposed subdivision.

"Species of Special Concern" are classified according to number of extant populations within the state. The five (5) major categories are:

- (1) Rare
- (2) Infrequent or Declining Species
- (3) Range or Habitat limited Species
- (4) Historic Reports
- (5) Species of Indeterminate Status

Eastern Spadefoot Toad, (*Scaphiopus holbrookii*), was collected in 1982 from the area in question. According to our criteria, the Eastern Spadefoot is a category 1 species--Rare. Only 3 populations are currently known extant in Connecticut.

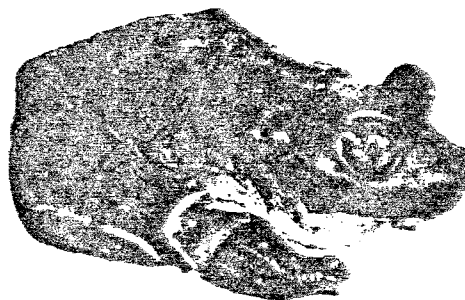
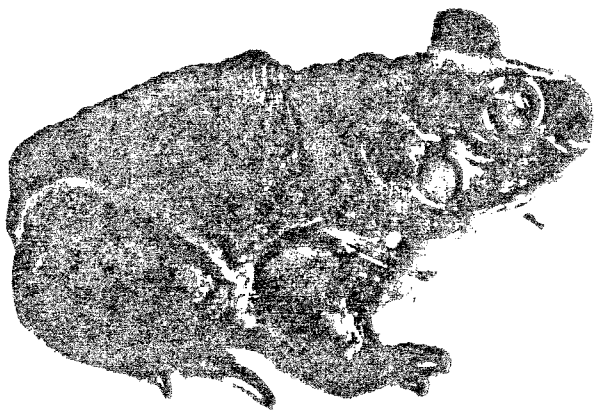
This species is found in loose to sandy soils into which it digs shallow burrows. It is typically only observed in and around April when breeding occurs during heavy rainfalls in temporary pools. It feeds on insects, worms and other small animals.

A function of the NDDB is to provide information on "Species of Special Concern" so informed land planning decisions can be made. Specific details regarding species name and location should not be made public. If development of this site is imminent, please contact the NDDB so they can attempt to identify the most critical areas within the site and make recommendations. They will be happy to work with the Town and/or developer.

#### H. PLANNING REVIEW

Despite the fact that this subdivision is on the site of a recent excavation project, it has many unique topographic features of which the proposed subdivision does not take advantage. Neither the subdivider nor the Planning Commission are making demands of

EASTERN SPADEFOOT TOAD  
(*Scaphiopus holbrookii*)



the site that will make this a neighborhood which the Town can be proud of when the project is completed.

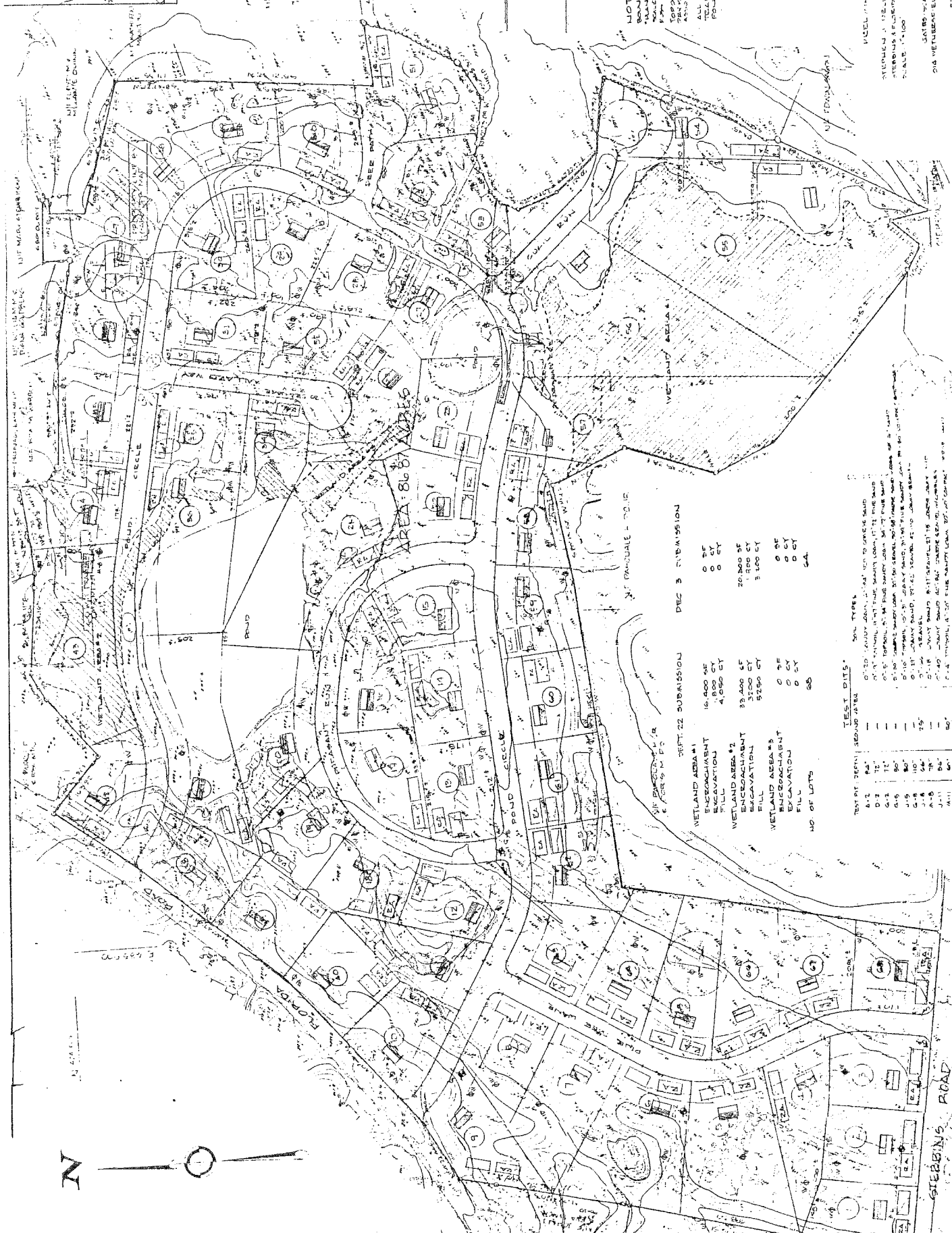
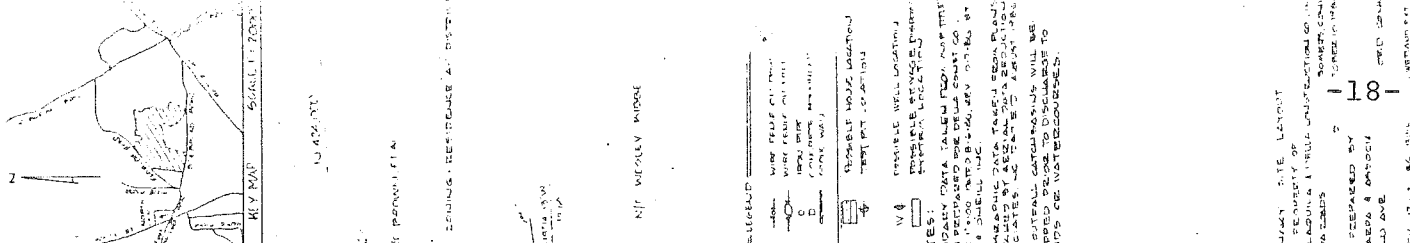
The subdivider has drawn up a plan, which simply gives them as many lots as the site can offer. The Town does not appear to be making its desires known to the subdivider. The resultant plan does not do justice to the site.

To demonstrate what could be a more attractive layout, the Team Planner has taken the liberty of making an overlay of the site to suggest what might increase the value of some of the lots and preserve some of the desirable wetlands. Although the total number of lots would be decreased, certain lots would be of a character that will appeal to individuals that have a sensitivity to the fragile nature of those sites. In turn this layout reduces the length of road the developer must build. This would be an ultimate savings to the developer.

As stated at the February 23rd meeting, the Planner feels that the ponds and the wetlands should remain in a single ownership because of the complex legal nature of any maintenance or dispute possible in the future.

It is not the Planner's intention to substitute his ideas or knowledge for that of the subdivider or his consultants. The proposed plan does not seem to make the best use of their knowledge and imagination, but appears to be a quest to find out from the Planning Commission what it is the Town would desire for this property. If the Town were to place more importance on this site, it seems that the developer would be willing to negotiate a proposal agreeable to both parties.

In his experience with planning, development and the ultimate settlement of subdivisions in the State of Connecticut, the planner has observed a truly unique character here when compared with the surrounding states. Connecticut has something to offer that those other states have not yet begun to demand of their residential developments. The opportunity to express this special Connecticut quality avails itself on this site and it is hoped that the opportunity is seized.



WETLAND DATA TABLE (NOT TO SCALE)  
 TOTAL WETLANDS TO BE MAINTAINED: 1,100,000 SQ FT  
 TOTAL WETLANDS TO BE RESTORED: 1,100,000 SQ FT  
 TOTAL WETLANDS TO BE DELETED: 0 SQ FT

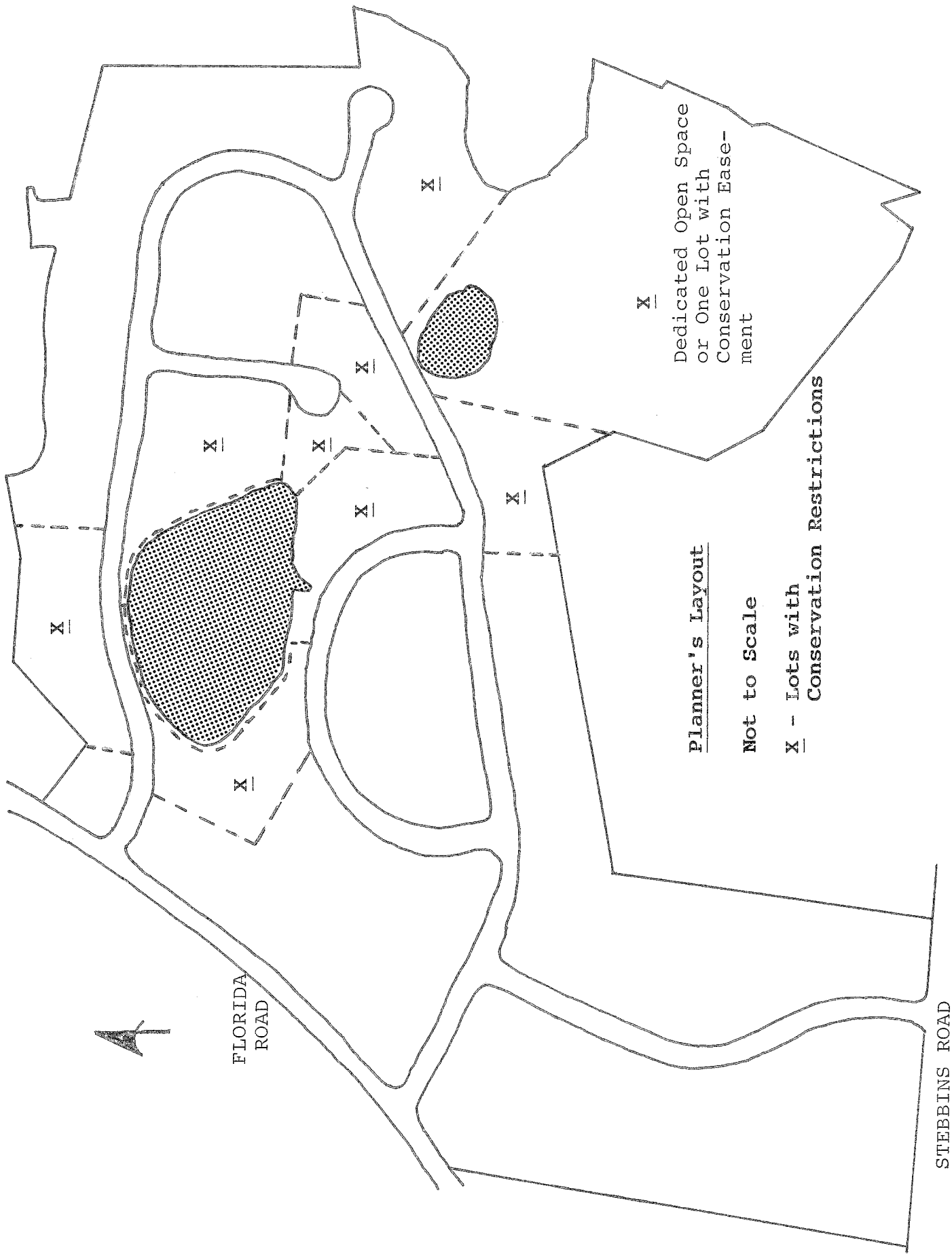
WETLAND AREA #	WETLAND TYPE	WETLAND AREA (SQ FT)	WETLAND STATUS
1	W1	10,000	WETLAND
2	W2	10,000	WETLAND
3	W3	10,000	WETLAND
4	W4	10,000	WETLAND
5	W5	10,000	WETLAND
6	W6	10,000	WETLAND
7	W7	10,000	WETLAND
8	W8	10,000	WETLAND
9	W9	10,000	WETLAND
10	W10	10,000	WETLAND
11	W11	10,000	WETLAND
12	W12	10,000	WETLAND
13	W13	10,000	WETLAND
14	W14	10,000	WETLAND
15	W15	10,000	WETLAND
16	W16	10,000	WETLAND
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92	W92	10,000	WETLAND
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95	W95	10,000	WETLAND
96	W96	10,000	WETLAND
97	W97	10,000	WETLAND
98	W98	10,000	WETLAND
99	W99	10,000	WETLAND
100	W100	10,000	WETLAND

TEST DITS

TEST DIT	DEPTH	SOIL TYPE
1	12"	W1
2	12"	W2
3	12"	W3
4	12"	W4
5	12"	W5
6	12"	W6
7	12"	W7
8	12"	W8
9	12"	W9
10	12"	W10
11	12"	W11
12	12"	W12
13	12"	W13
14	12"	W14
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75	12"	W75
76	12"	W76
77	12"	W77
78	12"	W78
79	12"	W79
80	12"	W80
81	12"	W81
82	12"	W82
83	12"	W83
84	12"	W84
85	12"	W85
86	12"	W86
87	12"	W87
88	12"	W88
89	12"	W89
90	12"	W90
91	12"	W91
92	12"	W92
93	12"	W93
94	12"	W94
95	12"	W95
96	12"	W96
97	12"	W97
98	12"	W98
99	12"	W99
100	12"	W100

LEGEND

- WETLANDS TO BE MAINTAINED
- WETLANDS TO BE RESTORED
- WETLANDS TO BE DELETED
- ROADS
- UTILITIES
- PROPOSED BUILDINGS
- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- TOPOGRAPHY
- BOUNDARIES



X  
Dedicated Open Space  
or One Lot with  
Conservation Ease-  
ment

Planner's Layout

Not to Scale

X - Lots with  
Conservation Restrictions

A  
FLORIDA  
ROAD

STEBBINS ROAD

# 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, climatologists, soil scientists, landscape architects, archeologists, recreation 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 area.

The Team is 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, sanitary landfills, commercial and industrial developments, sand and gravel operations, 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 officials 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. This request letter should include a summary of the proposed project, a location map of the project site, written permission from the landowner allowing the Team to enter the property for purposes of review, a statement identifying the specific areas of concern the Team should address, and the time available for completion of the ERT study. 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 regarding the Environmental Review Team, please contact Elaine A. Sych (774-1253), Environmental Review Team Coordinator, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area, P.O. Box 198, Brooklyn, Connecticut 06234.