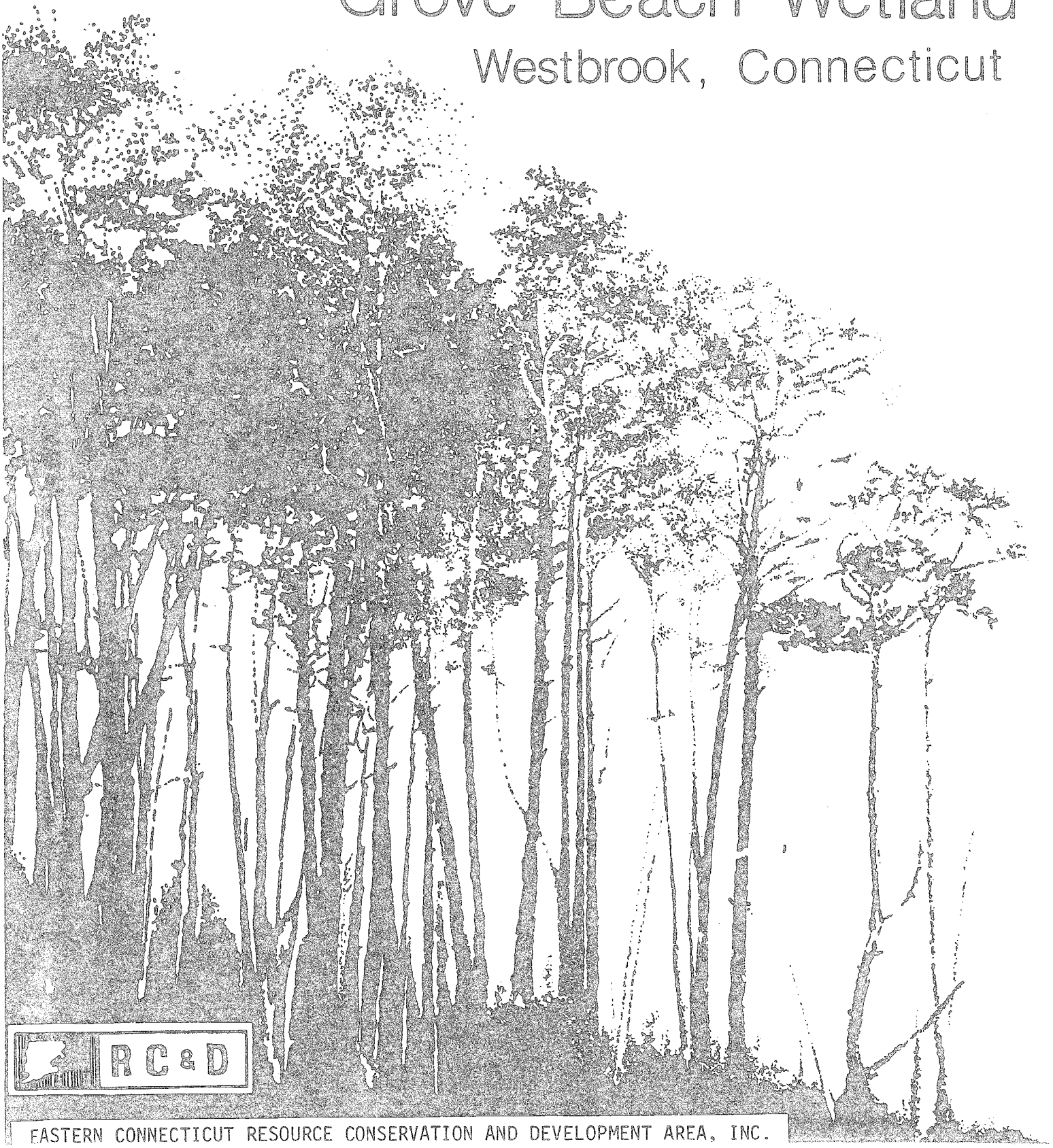
Environmental Review Team Report

Grove Beach Wetland

Westbrook, Connecticut



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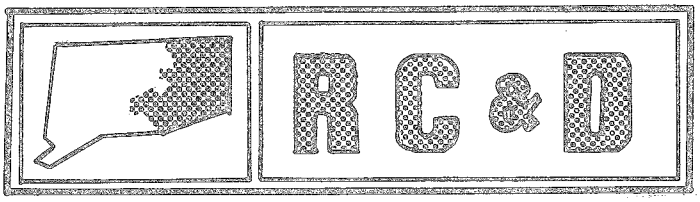
EASTERN CONNECTICUT RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AREA, INC.

Environmental Review Team Report on

Grove Beach Wetland

Westbrook, Connecticut

January, 1982

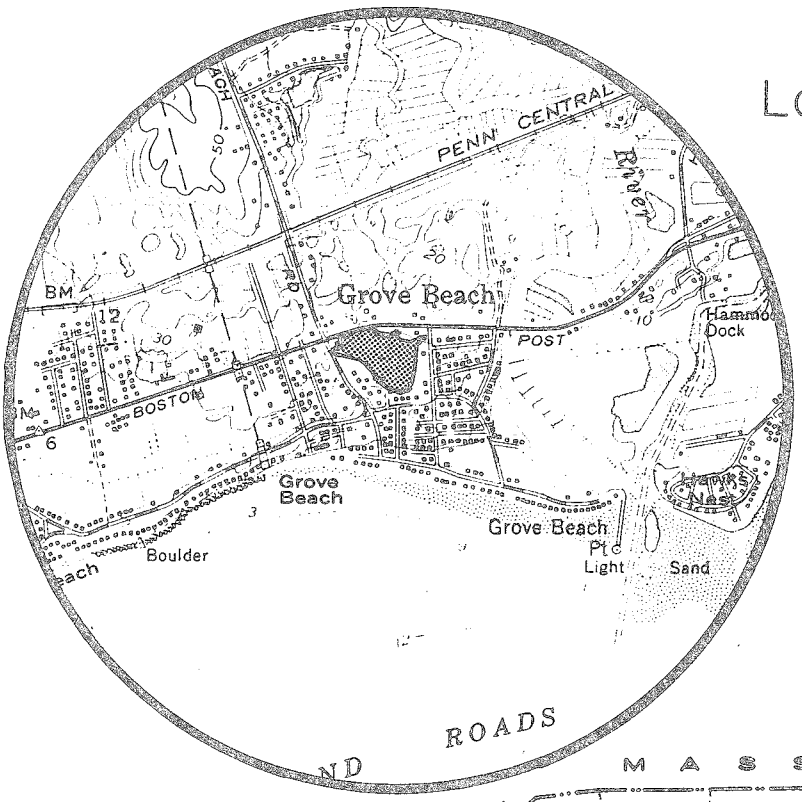


eastern connecticut resource conservation & development area

environmental review team
139 boswell avenue
norwich, connecticut 06360

Location of Study Site

GROVE BEACH WETLAND
WESTBROOK, CONNECTICUT



EASTERN CONNECTICUT
RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT
ON
GROVE BEACH WETLAND
WESTBROOK, CONNECTICUT

This report is an outgrowth of a request from the Westbrook Inland Wetlands Commission, to the Middlesex 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 as a project measure. The request was approved and the measure reviewed by the Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team (ERT).

The soils of the site were mapped by a soil scientist of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Reproductions of the soil survey map as well as a topographic map of the site were distributed to all ERT participants prior to their field review of the site.

The ERT that field-checked the site consisted of the following personnel: Barry Cavanna, District Conservationist, SCS; Mike Zizka, Geologist, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); Ron Rozsa, Ecologist, Coastal Area Management (DEP); Karl Lutz, Wildlife Biologist, (DEP); Rob Rocks, Forester, (DEP); and Jeanne Shelburn, ERT Coordinator, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area.

The team met and field-checked the site on Thursday, July 23, 1981. Reports from each Team member were sent to the ERT Coordinator for review and summarization for the final report.

This report is not meant to compete with private consultants by supplying site designs or detailed solutions to development problems. 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 of Westbrook. The results of this Team action are oriented toward the development of a better environmental quality and the long-term economics of the land use.

The Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area Committee hopes you will find this report of value and assistance in making your decisions on this particular site.

If you require any additional information, please contact: Ms. Jeanne Shelburn, Environmental Review Team Coordinator, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area, 139 Boswell Avenue, Norwich, Connecticut 06360, 889-2324.

Topography

0 660
scale

N

INTRODUCTION

The site, an eight acre freshwater wetland, occupies a depression located interior to Boston Post Road, Grove Beach Road, Riverview Road and Lilac Road in the town of Westbrook. All areas are zoned residential with the exception of land adjacent to the Boston Post Road which is zoned commercial.

Historically, the wetland occupied a larger area. In 1934, the wetland was more or less natural, the one notable exception being the trolley line which paralleled the Boston Post Road and bisected the wetland into two areas. Today, the fill for the trolley line is still a discernable feature. Also at that time, approximately six residential structures existed in the surrounding area and none appeared to encroach upon the wetland. Additionally, the wetland was connected to a small wetland on the west side of Grove Beach Road by a culvert. This connection probably preserved a natural connection between the two wetland areas, but certainly would not have relieved natural flooding patterns associated with the wetlands. Drainage was mostly internal to the wetland itself, no inlets or outlets existed. Gross structure of the vegetation occupying the wetland does not appear to have changed significantly since 1934.

By 1951, residential development made major inroads to the area, including noteworthy encroachment upon the wetland. Filling was most pronounced along the southern and southeastern perimeters. Only one commercial development existed on the south side of the Boston Post Road in that year.

There is a series of wetlands, including this one, located in southwestern Westbrook which share a number of characteristics. They all occupy a depression, presumably former kettleholes, which punctuate the encircling sandy, outwash plain; are generally devoid of inlets or outlets; have groundwater tables whose position ranged from at or near the soil surface to locally forming pools and shallow ponds; contain a similar series of soils either the organic Carlisle or sandy Scarboro or both; and support similar patterns of vegetation. Insofar as these lack distinct outlets, flooding in the late winter and early spring followed by a gradual lowering of the watertable during the growing season is the normal chain of events.

The pattern and composition of the wetland vegetation is inextricably controlled by the hydrological cycle in the wetland. Draining of the wetland either to preclude spring flooding and particularlytolower the watertable during the growing season would drastically alter the biological characteristics.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

GEOLOGY

The wetland parcel under review is located in a depression in a glacial outwash plain. The outwash consists of sand, silt, and gravel that was washed by meltwater from a deteriorating mass of glacier ice. Large blocks of ice broke free from the main ice front and were buried by the outwash deposits. As

the ice blocks wasted, the sediment around them collapsed, forming basins known as kettles. The wetland under review is probably located in such a kettle. The surficial deposits in the wetland include mixtures of partly decayed organic materials, sand, silt, and clay. The thickness of the organically rich sediments is not known, but it may be greater than ten feet in the interior of the wetland. A screw auger inserted into the wetland along the western edge retrieved about four feet of peaty deposits without encountering a firmer substrate.

In order to develop this wetland area, the organic deposits would have to be removed. The peats and mucks have virtually no structural stability. A load placed on the organic materials will slowly (or rapidly, depending up the amount of weight per unit area) compress them, causing the load to subside. At some point, the load may reach an equilibrium point and cease to subside. However, if a new load were added (such as a building on an original load of sand-and-gravel fill), the process of sinking could begin again.

If the peaty deposits are thick, as expected, the volume of fill that would be necessary to replace it may be substantial. The peat removed may have some slight or moderate commercial value as garden humus, but it probably wouldn't be enough to offset the costs of the fill.

HYDROLOGY

The Grove Beach wetland has no major inlets. Occasional surface runoff may be received during periods of precipitation or snow melt, but several of the inflowing street culverts appear to be blocked by sand or other debris. The water levels in the wetland are controlled primarily by the surrounding water table. An outlet culvert draining the wetland westward under Grove Beach Road was nearly submerged on the day of the field review. Since the field review took place during a period of relatively dry weather, it may be presumed that the outflow culvert is largely ineffective during periods of increased flows. The ultimate destination for the drainage from the wetland is Clinton Harbor via the Hammock River tidal marshes north of Clinton Beach.

The Grove Beach wetland may serve several hydrologic functions. One important fuction is floodwater storage. During periods of precipitation or snow melt, the wetland temporarily retains surface water, reducing the flows in the outlet stream. Filling all or part of the wetland would reduce the storage capacity and allow peak storm flows to increase. The filling of a small area may have no serious consequences by itself, but a series of small fills, each one premised on the idea that it will cause no serious effects, may have a collective impact of substantial proportions. Since flooding has already been recognized as a problem in the Grove Beach area, it would seem important to precede any wetland filling with a study of the consequences that such filling might entail. Certainly, the reconstruction or replacement of the outlet culvert might relieve at least some of the local problem, but it should not be assumed that this would be a total cure.

A second function the wetland may serve is surface-water purification. The wetland may trap much of the suspended pollutant load coming from nearby Route 1 and other roads. In addition, the wetland vegetation may absorb some of the

dissolved contaminants coming from local roads and residences (e.g. septic systems). Small amounts of fill placed in the wetland should not seriously affect these functions, but a large amount of fill could have an adverse impact on surface-water quality, both by reducing the area of the wetland by introducing additional sources of contamination and sediment formation.

It is unlikely that this wetland has a significant groundwater-recharge function. Since the topography of the site suggests that the water level of the wetland is controlled by the surrounding water table, the surface water ordinarily is probably either discharged through the outlet or lost through evaporation or transpiration. Nevertheless, some groundwater recharge may occur in the vicinity of local wells, where pumping reverses the normal watertable gradient and allows infiltration of water from the wetland through the soil to the well.

The discussion above had been limited to hydrologic functions of wetlands. The town should also be cognizant of the wildlife and botanical values that the wetland may have.

SOILS

A detailed soils map of this site is included in the Appendix to this report, accompanied by a chart which indicates soil limitations for various urban uses. As the soil map is an enlargement from the original 1,320 feet/inch scale to 660 feet/inch, the soil boundary lines should not be viewed as absolute boundaries, but as guidelines to the distribution of soil types on the site. The soil limitation chart indicates the probable limitations for each of the soils for on-site sewerage, buildings with basements, buildings without basements, streets and parking, and landscaping. However, limitations, even though severe, do not preclude the use of the land for development. If economics permit large expenditures for land development and the intended objective is consistent with the objectives of local and regional development, many soils and sites with difficult problems can be used. The soils map, with the publication Soil Survey, Middlesex County, Connecticut, can aid in the identification and interpretation of soils and their uses on this site. Know Your Land: Natural Soil Groups for Connecticut can also give insight to the development potentials of the soils and their relationship to the surficial geology of the site.

Soils typical of this site are the Carlisle series and the Scarboro series. These soils are described in detail as follows.

Carlisle muck. This nearly level, very poorly drained, organic soil is in low depressions of outwash terraces and glacial till plains throughout the county. These soils have slopes of 0 to 2 percent, but slopes are dominantly less than one percent.

Typically, this soil is dark reddish brown and black muck to a depth of sixty inches or more.

Included with this soil in mapping are small intermingled areas of very poorly drained Adrian, Scarboro, and Whitman soils and poorly drained Liecester,

Ridgebury, Raypol, and Walpole soils. Also included are a few areas of soils that are more acid than this Carlisle soil. Included areas make up 5 to 20 percent of this map unit.

The permeability of this soil is moderate or moderately rapid. Available water capacity is high. Runoff is very slow. This soil is wet most of the year, and water is frequently ponded on the surface from autumn to spring and after heavy rains in summer. Unlimed areas are very strongly acid to medium acid. Most of this soil is wooded. A few small areas have been cleared and drained. Cleared areas are used for vegetables or are idle.

This soil is poorly suited to cultivated crops because of wetness. Most areas are difficult to drain, but drained areas can be used for vegetables. If the soil is cultivated, use of cover crops and maintaining a proper water table level help to minimize subsidence and control wind erosion.

This soil is poorly suited to trees, but most areas are wooded mainly with red maple, ash and alder. Other common types of vegetation are sweet pepperbush, blueberry, viburnum, cinnamon fern, and royal fern. This soil is limited mainly by wetness. The organic material will not support heavy equipment. Tree windthrow is common because the high water table restricts rooting depth.

This soil has poor potential for most types of community development. The soil is limited by a high water table most of the year and by ponding. The organic layers have very low strength and will not support structures. In some places the organic layers are too deep to be removed. If the soil is drained, the organic layers subside or shrink and lower the surface of the soil. Side slopes of excavations are very unstable and slump. Onsite septic systems are not practical in this soil.

Scarboro mucky loamy fine sand. This nearly level, very poorly drained soil is in depressions of broad glacial outwash terraces.

Typically, the surface layer is three inches of very dark brown muck over six inches of black mucky loamy fine sand. The next eight inches is black loamy fine sand. The substratum is grayish brown and dark grayish brown sand to a depth of sixty inches or more.

Included with this soil in mapping are small intermingled areas of moderately well drained Sudbury soils, poorly drained Walpole soils, and very poorly drained Adrian soils. Included areas make up 5 to 15 percent of this map unit.

This soil has a seasonal high water table at the surface from fall until late spring. The permeability of the soil is rapid or very rapid. Available water capacity is low. Runoff is slow or very slow. Unlimed areas are very strongly acid to medium acid.

This soil is mostly wooded, or it is cleared and idle. A few areas are used for pasture.

This soil is poorly suited to cultivated crops because of wetness. Artificial drainage is needed, but suitable outlets are not available in most places.

This soil is poorly suited to trees, but it is better suited to woodland than to most other uses. Wetness restricts the use of equipment and causes high seedling mortality and tree windthrow. Machine planting is not practical when the soil is wet.

This soil has poor potential for community development because of the high water table. Steep slopes of excavations are unstable. Extensive filling is needed in areas of this soil used for community development. During construction, quickly establishing plant cover, providing temporary diversions, and establishing siltation basins are suitable management practices.

The catch basins were checked along Boston Post Road, Grove Street, and Riverview Road and found to be filled to over the outlet pipes with sand, silt, and debris. The swamp or wetland outlet pipe that crossed Grove Street was filled with sand and the Team was not able to measure its size. The outlet channel away from Grove Street had standing water that was stagnant and not flowing for about 200 feet. It is apparent that this outlet is restricted and will not allow stormwater to freely drain from the wetland area. The reason for all the silt and sand could be a restriction downstream. It appears that the wetland would provide enough storage to keep the surrounding streets from flooding if the outlet system was designed and maintained properly. The wetlands now provide a natural detention reservoir and any filling at all will make this reservoir less effective than it is now, increasing the severity of of flooding. Keeping the catch basins clean will reduce the amount of sand coming into the wetland and robbing its function as a detention reservoir.

WETLAND VEGETATION

Despite the encroachment of development upon the wetland perimeter, the vegetation is still natural and diverse. Overall composition probably has not changed significantly in this century. The wetland to the north of the trolley line has a high water table with extensive shallow pools and locally permanent ponds. Here, thickets of wetland shrubs punctuated by an occasional grove of red maple describe the general pattern of vegetation. In the southern basin, wetland composition is markedly different. Swamp or forested vegetation is common often separated by level areas carpeted with sphagnum mosses or thickets of wetland shrubs throughout. Shallow pools also occur here.

Vegetation is too complex to classify by any traditional scheme. Instead, a listing is provided of the common species encountered in the more obvious structural types as follows:

1. Shrub Thickets

Willow (*Salix sp.*)

Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*)

Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*)

Alder (*Alnus sp.*)

Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

2. Herbaceous Vegetation

Swamp Milkweed (Asclepias incarnata)
Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria)
Wool-grass (Scirpus cyperinus)
Marsh St. John's Wort (Hypericum virginicum)
Sensitive Fern (Onoclea sensibilis)
Marsh Fern (Dryopteris thelypteris)
Water Smartweed (Polygonum punctatum)

2. Sphagnum Moss Carpets

Sphagnum Moss (Sphagnum apiculatum)
Spike Rush (Eleocharis obtusa)
Sedge (Carex sp.)

4. Water Willow Thickets

Water Willow (Decodon verticillatus)

5. Buttonbush Thickets

Buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentials)

6. Red Maples Groves

Red Maples
Highbush Blueberry
Cinnamon Fern (Osmunda cinnamomea)
Sweet Pepperbush
Swamp Azalea (Rhododendron viscosum)

*Red Maple Groves (water table generally below soil surface)

Red Maple
Bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica)
Wild Yam (Dioscorea villosa)
Cinnamon Fern
Reed (near Dairy Queen)
*Reed (Phragmites communis)
Grey Birch (Betula populifolia)
Northern Arrowwood (Virburnum recognitum)
Poison Ivy (Rhus radicans)
Dewberry (Rubus flagellars)

As noted earlier, the wetland and its biota are yet healthy and diverse despite the surrounding land use and modifications such as filling which have occurred. The diversity of wetland habitat and plant species has created a diversity of animal and insect life. A variety of dragonflies and damsel flies were conspicuous in the wetland. Many species of birds utilize the area for breeding, refuge, or a source of food. Some of the common birds observed were Yellow Warbler, Yellow throats, Grackles, Red winged Blackbirds, Cedar Waxwings, Bluejays and Crows. Also some of the ponds are sufficiently deep to support a population of reptiles and amphibians. Observed during the survey were Bull frogs and Eastern Painted Turtles.

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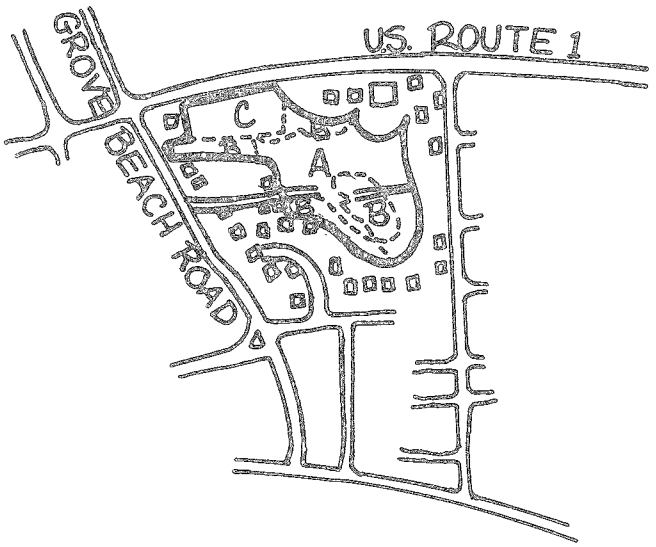
* Denotes locally abundant species.

Vegetation	Site Boundary	0 660' scale	N



LEGEND

Road

Property Boundary

Vegetation Type Boundary

VEGETATION TYPE DESCRIPTIONS*

TYPE A. Open swamp, 3±acres, wetland shrubs predominate.

TYPE B. Hardwood swamp, 2±acres, understocked, sapling-size.

TYPE C. Fill area/disturbed 1.5±acres.

* Seedling-size = Trees less than 1 inch in diameter at 4 1/2 feet above the ground (d.b.h.)
Sapling-size = Trees 1 to 5 inches in d.b.h.
Pole-size = Trees 5 to 11 inches in d.b.h.
Sawtimber-size = Trees 11 inches and greater in d.b.h.

FOREST VEGETATION

The Grove Beach wetland area which was proposed for possible filling and development may be divided into three forest types. These include an open shrub swamp, 3± acres, a sparsely vegetated hardwood swamp, 2± acres and a 1.5± acre area that has been filled or topped with sand and gravel. (See the Vegetation Type Map and Vegetation Type Descriptions.)

The potential for tree growth within this property as it stands now is severely limited by the saturated soils which are present. These soils do not allow trees to become securely anchored. Trees are therefore unstable and cannot reach large sizes and still be supported by the soils. Although this site is not valuable for growing commercial vegetation, such as sawtimber, the high plant diversity which is present offers high quality habitat for wildlife. Filling in all or part of this wetland will greatly reduce the vegetation diversity and completely destroy its present wildlife habitat value.

Forest Type Descriptions:

Type A. (Open Swamp) The open swamp vegetation type which is present within this property is approximately three acres in size. Shrub species including speckled alder, highbush blueberry, spice bush, swamp rose, swamp azalea buttonbush, silky willow and arrowwood are dominant. Seedling and sapling size red maple, gray birch, sycamore and black gum are widely scattered throughout this area. Many sedge species, including tussock sedge, are present. Other herbaceous vegetation which is present includes common cattail, narrow-leaved cattail, phragmities, skunk cabbage, spired elderberry, sensitive fern and large blueflag.

Type B. (Hardwood Swamp) Poor quality sapling-size red maple and occasional black gum and sycamore are present in this 2± acre under-stocked stand. A dense understory exists in this stand which is composed of sweet pepperbush, highbush blueberry, arrowwood and scattered gray birch. Ground cover vegetation where present consists of tussock sedge, skunk cabbage,water pennywort, and Canada mayflower. Vine species which have become abundant around the perimeter of this area include wild yam, poison ivy, Virginia creeper, green brier and oriental bittersweet.

Type C. (Fill Area/Disturbed Land) The 1.5± acre area along Route 1 which has been filled with sand and gravel is dominated by several species of woody vegetation and many herbaceous vegetation species. Silky willow, weeping willow, bayberry, sweet pepperbush, smooth sumac, staghorn sumac, maleberry, beach plumb and highbush blueberry have become established in this area along with grasses, sedges, Japanese knotweed, oriental bittersweet, goldenrod, milkweed, spirea, sweet fern, common mullein, deertongue, Queen Anne's lace, blackberry, raspberry, milkwood, St. John's wort, hop clover, white clover, rabbit's foot clover, bush clover, boneset, selfheal and common evening primrose.

WILDLIFE

This area has extreme diversity in the numbers of plants species present. It is a very unique area as it appears to be greatly utilized by a variety of

wildlife species, especially nongame songbirds. It is the only freshwater wetland in the immediate vicinity, which also adds to its uniqueness. About two-thirds of the property is wet and usually has standing water present, and the front one-third of the property is dry. The following vegetation is found most frequently on the area: red maple, alder, willow, dogwood, phragmites, blueberry, bayberry and sumac. Some pine and sycamore were also observed. There were also a few snag trees present which are used for nesting or perching by cavity nesting wildlife.

The vegetation present includes many berry and seed producers which are utilized as a food source by wildlife. The dense vegetation provides excellent cover, as well as good nesting sites for wildlife species. The wetland offers a source of fresh water.

Because of the small size of the area and the bordering urbanized areas, wildlife species that would most likely be found here would inlcude a wide variety of songbirds, raccoons, opossums, small mammals, aquatic life and some transient species. Species with low mobility or a small home range would do best here.

PLANNING CONCERNS

Currently, a number of residential structures and ancillary buildings are located on the perimeter of the wetland at a sufficiently low elevation to experience recurrent or chronic flooding. This is a function of the natural flood cycle common to depression wetlands such as this, which is exacerbated by incremental filling which has occurred since the 1930's. The process of filling displaces an equivalent volume of water which, in turn, elevates the flood level. Given the small size of the wetland and the gentle to flat slopes at the perimeter, filling will cause an appreciable change in the flood level and flood area.

The culvert under Grove Beach Road, which presumably was constructed to maintain the connections between the wetlands on both sides of this road, probably serves little if any function in the removal of flood waters. While cleaning this culvert might improve the connection between wetlands, the grade and conveyance capacity of the channel to the Hammack River marshes is probably inadequate to solve the flooding problems.

In light of the seasonal high water table and the low elevations of adjoining properties, particularly those placed on fill, contamination of the wetland from failing septic systems has probably taken place. The anticipated rate of septic systems failures is presumably high also. The ramifications of permitting additional minor filling coupled with the installation of conventional septic systems are obvious. Recurrent flooding merely exacerbates the problem.

A final problem associated with the placement of fill over an organic and compactable wetland soils is providing a stable substrate for building foundations. The potential solution to this problem involves either the removal of all the organic peat below the fill site or the placement of an appropriate pile foundation anchored in the stable substrate located at some unknown depth below the peat surface.

Suggested Avenues for Action

1. Insofar as the wetland is healthy and natural, the priority use should be preservation.

2. Limit the amount of fill placed in or prohibit filling of the wetland since any additional filling will merely aggravate existing flooding problems and future septic system failures.

3. Detailed water table analysis should be conducted during the season of highest water table elevation to determine the suitability of the soil for conventional septic systems.

4. If a system is devised in the future to reduce the flood frequency, then only surface flood waters should be removed preserving the range of the water table which exists throughout the growing season. This would reduce the impacts of flooding and preserve the natural characteristics of the wetland.

5. Assure that applicants acquire all necessary local, wetland and coastal site plan permits as necessary before development or other activities commence. Insofar as the latter is concerned, development or activities in the wetland must be consistent with the general resource, freshwater wetlands and coastal hazard area policies of the Coastal Area Management Act.

Appendix

Soils

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SCALE

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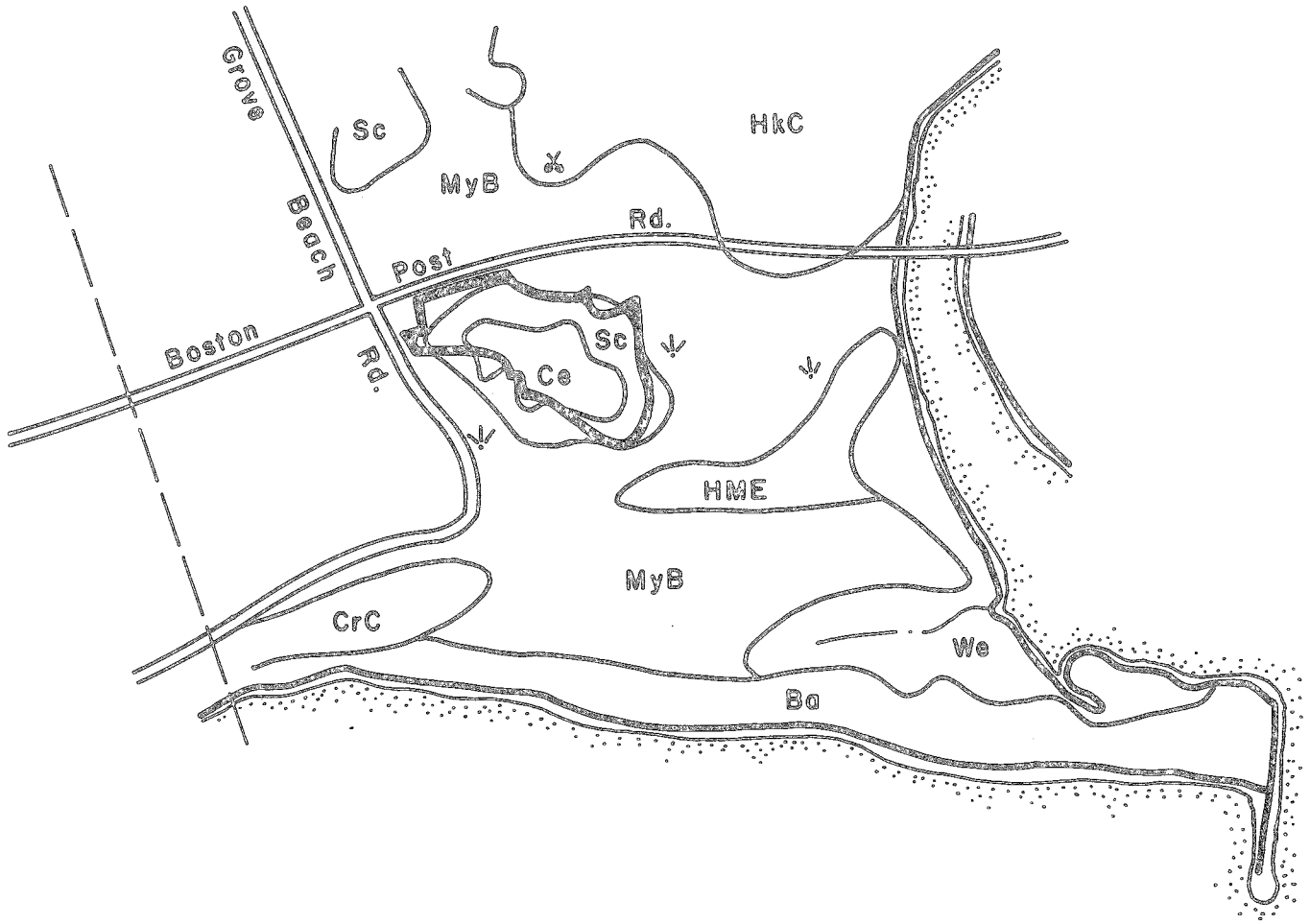

WETLAND STUDY
WESTBROOK, CONNECTICUT

PROPORTIONAL EXTENT OF SOILS AND THEIR LIMITATIONS FOR CERTAIN LAND USES

Soil Series	Soil Symbol	Approx. Acres	Percent of Acres	Principal Limiting Factor	Urban Use Limitations*			
					On-Site Sewage	Buildings with Basements	Streets & Parking	Land-Scaping
Carlisle	Ce	3	5%	Floods, wetness	3	3	3	3
Hinckley	HME	5	8%	Slope, small stones	3	3	3	3
Merrimac	MyB	36	57%		1	1	1	1
Scarboro	Sc	6	10%	Wetness	3	3	3	3
Westbrook	We	13	20%	Wetness, flooding, low strength	3	3	3	3
		63	100%					

Limitations: 1=slight; 2=moderate; 3=severe.

SOIL INTERPRETATIONS FOR URBAN USES

The ratings of the soils for elements of community and recreational development uses consist of three degrees of "limitations:" slight or no limitations; moderate limitations; and severe limitations. In the interpretive scheme various physical properties are weighed before judging their relative severity of limitations.

The user is cautioned that the suitability ratings, degree of limitations and other interpretations are based on the typical soil in each mapping unit. At any given point the actual conditions may differ from the information presented here because of the inclusion of other soils which were impractical to map separately at the scale of mapping used. On-site investigations are suggested where the proposed soil use involves heavy loads, deep excavations, or high cost. Limitations, even though severe, do not always preclude the use of land for development. If economics permit greater expenditures for land development and the intended land use is consistent with the objectives of local or regional development, many soils and sites with difficult problems can be used.

Slight Limitations

Areas rated as slight have relatively few limitations in terms of soil suitability for a particular use. The degree of suitability is such that a minimum of time or cost would be needed to overcome relatively minor soil limitations.

Moderate Limitations

In areas rated moderate, it is relatively more difficult and more costly to correct the natural limitations of the soil for certain uses than for soils rated as having slight limitations.

Severe Limitations

Areas designated as having severe limitations would require more extensive and more costly measures than soils rated with moderate limitations in order to overcome natural soil limitations. The soil may have more than one limiting characteristic causing it to be rated severe.

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.

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, 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 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 Jeanne Shelburn (889-2324), Environmental Review Team Coordinator, Eastern Connecticut RC&D Area, 139 Boswell Avenue, Norwich, Connecticut 06360.