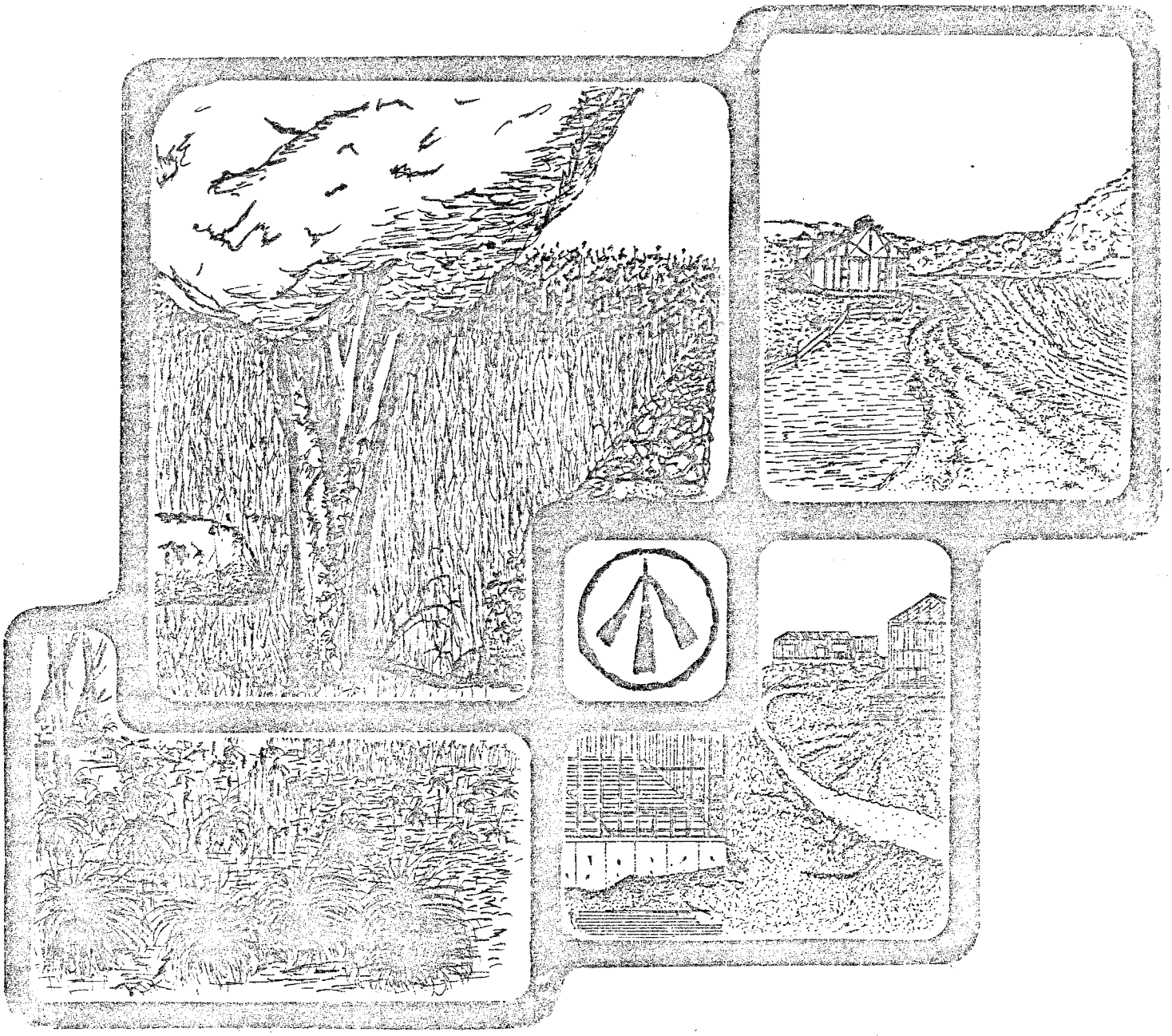
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT



THE ASPETUCK LAND TRUST PROPERTIES
WESTPORT, FAIRFIELD, WESTON, CT

KING'S MARK
RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT AREA

KING'S MARK
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT

THE ASPETUCK LAND TRUST PROPERTIES
WESTPORT, FAIRFIELD, WESTON, CT
MARCH 1985

King's Mark Resource Conservation and Development Area
Environmental Review Team
Sackett Hill Road
Warren,Connecticut 06754

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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
University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service
Department of Transportation

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
Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Planning Agency
Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials
Southwestern Regional Planning Agency
Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency
Regional Planning Agency of South Central Connecticut
Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency
American Indian Archaeological Institute
Housatonic Valley Association

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Richard Lynn, ERT Coordinator
Jamie Whitman, ERT Cartographer
Jamie Whitman, Secretary

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THE ASPETUCK LAND TRUST PROPERTIES

I. Introduction

The Aspetuck Land Trust is interested in preparing long-range management plans for a number of their properties. Three of these properties include:

1) The Guard Hill Preserve, ± 6 acres, located off Clinton Avenue and Guard Hill Road in Westport.

2) The Harwood Preserve, ± 14 acres, located off Lancelot Drive in the town of Fairfield.

3) The Taylor Preserve, ± 16 acres, located off Fanton Hill Road in the town of Weston.

Figure "a" shows the general location of these three properties.

The Aspetuck Land Trust in cooperation with the towns of Westport, Fairfield, and Weston requested this ERT study to assist the Land Trust in preparing management plans for the above named properties. Specifically, the ERT was asked to identify the natural resource base of the three sites and to comment on the potential of the properties for forest management, wildlife management, and recreational use.

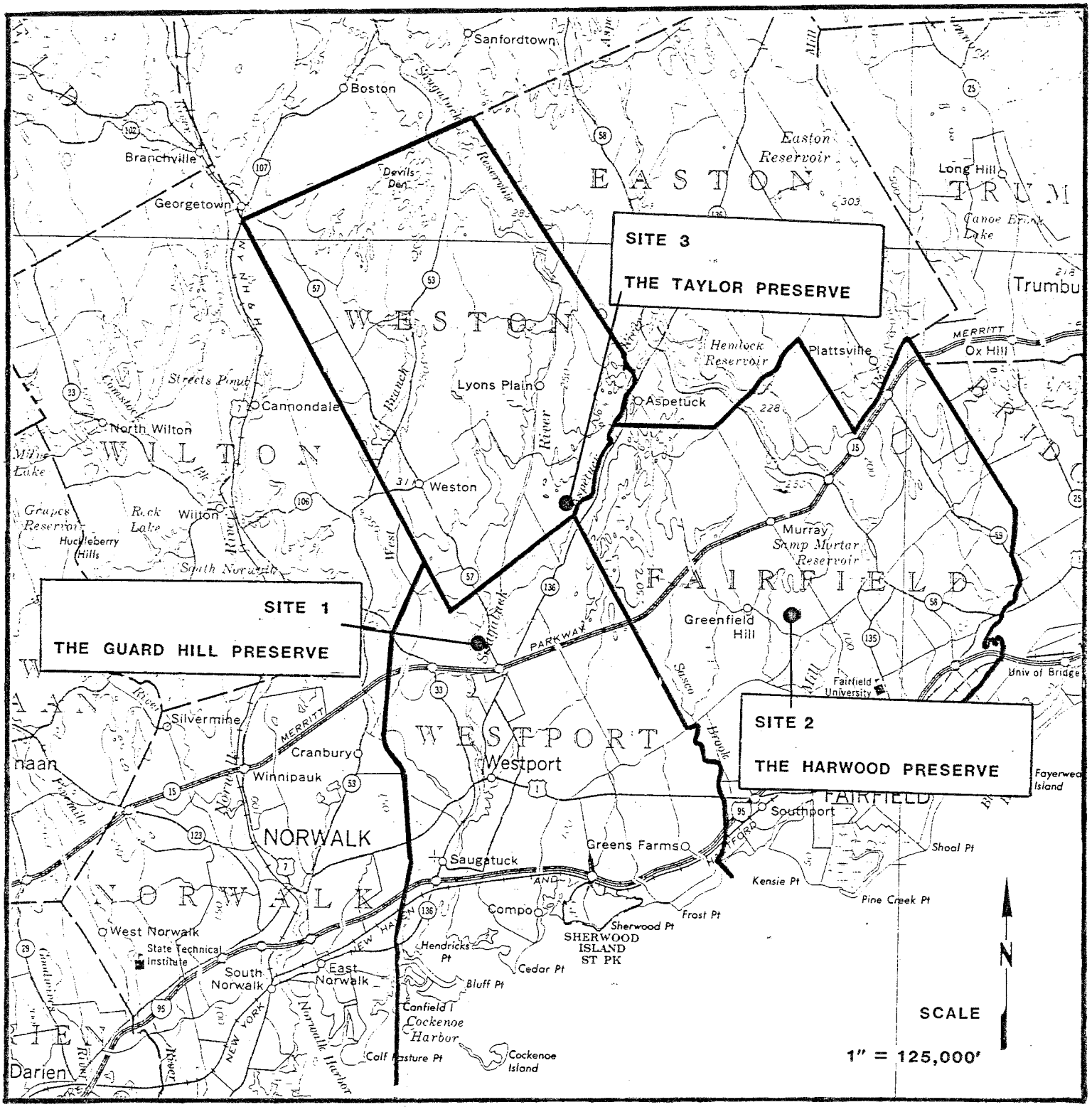
The King's Mark Executive Committee considered the land trust's request, and approved the project for review by the Team.

The ERT met and field reviewed the sites on October 30, 1984. Team members participating on this project included: Marc Beroz, Soil Scientist, U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service; Dave Platt, Wildlife Biologist, CT Department of Environmental Protection; Don Smith, Forester, CT Department of Environmental Protection; Dave Thompson, District Conservationist, U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service; Bill Warzecha, Geohydrologist, CT Department of Environmental Protection.

Prior to the field review day, each team member was provided with a summary of the proposed study, a checklist of concerns to address, a topographic map, a soils map, and a soils limitation chart. During the ERT's field review, team members met with representatives from the Land Trust and walked the three properties. 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. The report identifies the natural resource base of the three properties and discusses opportunities and limitations for land management. All conclusions and final decisions with regard to future land use rest with the Aspetuck Land Trust.

Figure a
General Location Map



It is hoped the information contained in this report will assist the Land Trust 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, Sackett Hill Road, Warren, Connecticut 06754.

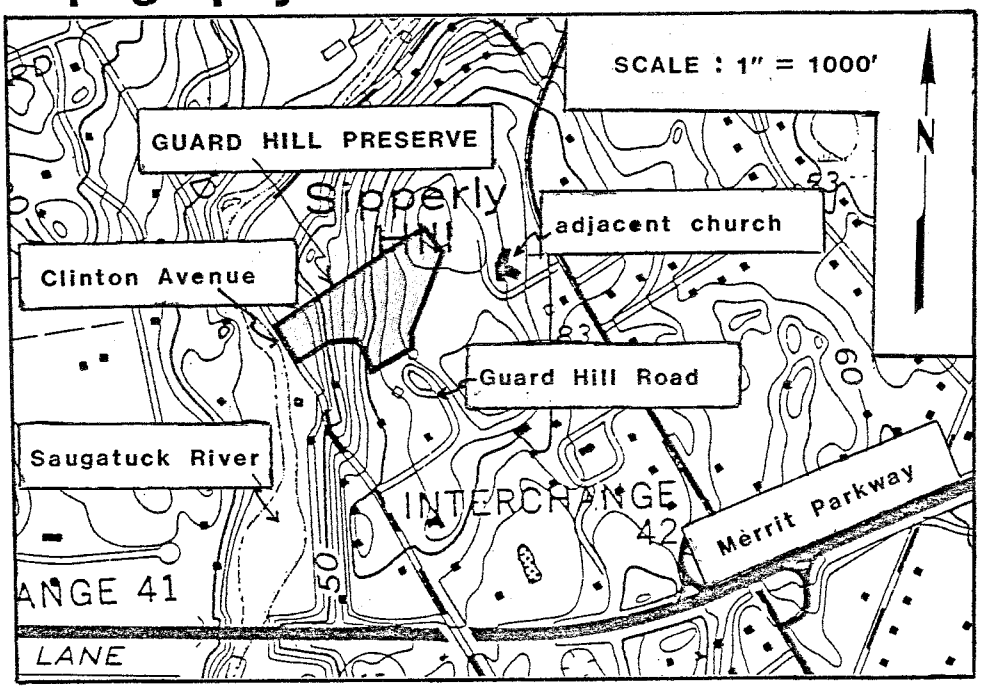
* * * * *

II. Site 1: The Guard Hill Preserve, Westport

A. TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The ± 6 acre Guard Hill Preserve is located in the northwest corner of Westport. Access to the site is available from the south off Guard Hill Road and from the west off Clinton Avenue. The terrain rises moderately from Clinton Avenue eastward nearly to the top of Sipperly Hill (see Figure 1a).

Figure 1a **Topography**



The steepest slopes are visible in the western part of the parcel. Gentle slopes predominate in the eastern portion. Maximum and minimum elevations on the parcel are about 140 feet and ± 30 feet above mean sea level, respectively. There are no major watercourses visible on the property, but the Saugatuck River lies just west of the site.

The tract is covered entirely by till. Till is a nonsorted sediment that was deposited directly from a former ice sheet. It consists of a complex mixture of clay, silt, sand, gravel and boulders. Test hole data were not available for the site but the till on the site is probably not much more than 10 feet thick.

Bedrock outcrops were not visible on the site during the field review. According to the Preliminary Bedrock Geological Map of Connecticut, by John Rodgers, bedrock underlying the site is classified as Ratlum Mountain Schist.

This rock unit consists of interlayered schists and granofels composed principally of the minerals quartz, oligoclase, biotite and garnet. Other minerals which are found mainly in the schist rocks include muscovite, staurolite and kyanite. This rock unit also contains numerous layers and lenses of amphibolite. "Schists" and "granofels" are crystalline metamorphic rocks. Metamorphic rocks are rocks which were geologically altered at one time by great heat and pressure deep beneath the earth's surface. A "schist" is a rock characterized by elongate or flaky minerals which become aligned, giving the rock a slabby or well-layered strucute (this slabby structure is known as foliation). "Granofels", on the other hand, are a medium to coarse grained rock which has little or no foliation. "Amphibolite" is a term given to rocks composed mostly of minerals in the amphibole group (usually hornblende).

The geology of the Guard Hill tract should pose no major difficulties in terms of passive recreation, such as hiking trails, jogging trails, cross-country trails, etc. Trails constructed on the steeper slopes in the western portion could become eroded, however, if not properly constructed and maintained. Also, trails constructed on the steeper slopes may be too rigorous for hiking and jogging for some users of the property. Wet areas on the site should be avoided where possible in designing a trail network.

B. HYDROLOGY

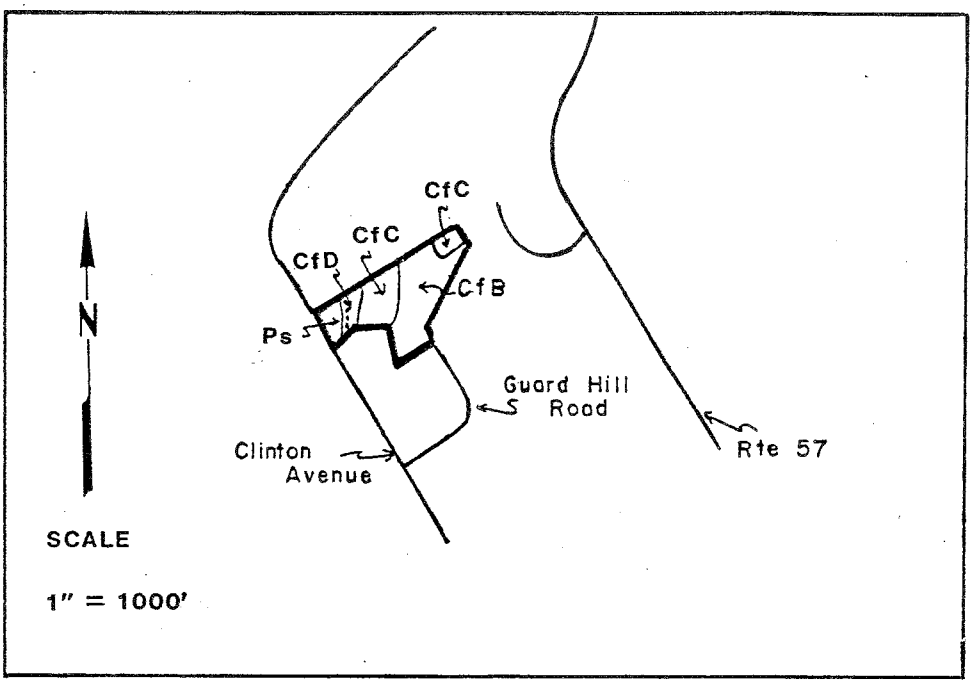
Surface and groundwater on the parcel flows generally downslope towards a low,wet spot in the western limits. Water is then routed through a culvert under Clinton Avenue and ultimately drains into Saugatuck River.

The parcel contains no particularly significant sources of groundwater supplies (aquifers). Bedrock appears to be the only suitable aquifer for a water supply well on the property. Bedrock is normally capable of yielding only small amounts of water (less than 5 gallons per minute). However, should the Land Trust ever wish to develop a water supply at the site, such a yield should prove adequate for meeting any passive recreational needs. High yielding wells from bedrock (more than 50 gallons per minute) are rare.

C. SOILS

Figure 1b and the following narrative are revisions of data contained in the Soil Survey of Fairfield County, Connecticut. The symbols on the map identify map units. Each map unit has a unique composition of soils. Areas

Figure 1b Soils



with the same symbol have the same composition.

The Guard Hill Preserve provides good opportunities for passive recreation. Trails can be developed within the site to provide increased access and enjoyment. Educational opportunities also exist, particularly in the form of nature study.

Map Units CfB and CfC (refer to Figure 1b) - These map units are composed of Charlton soils. Charlton soils are very deep and well drained. Typically they have fine sandy loam textures from the surface to a depth of 60 inches or more.

Slopes are 3 to 8 percent in the CfB unit and 8 to 15 percent in CfC.

The Charlton soils are well suited for the proposed use of walking and jogging trails.

Map Unit CfD - This map unit is composed of Charlton soils. These soils are the same as the Charlton described above except that they are on slopes of 15 to 25 percent. There is an area bisecting the CfD unit with slopes up to 45 percent. These slopes are 150 to 200 feet long and are identified in Figure 1b with the symbol (....).

The steep slopes on this site necessitate very careful trail layout. A trail can be constructed to switch back across the slope and thereby reduce the grade of the trail.

This will make the trail more pleasant to follow as well as reduce the potential for soil erosion.

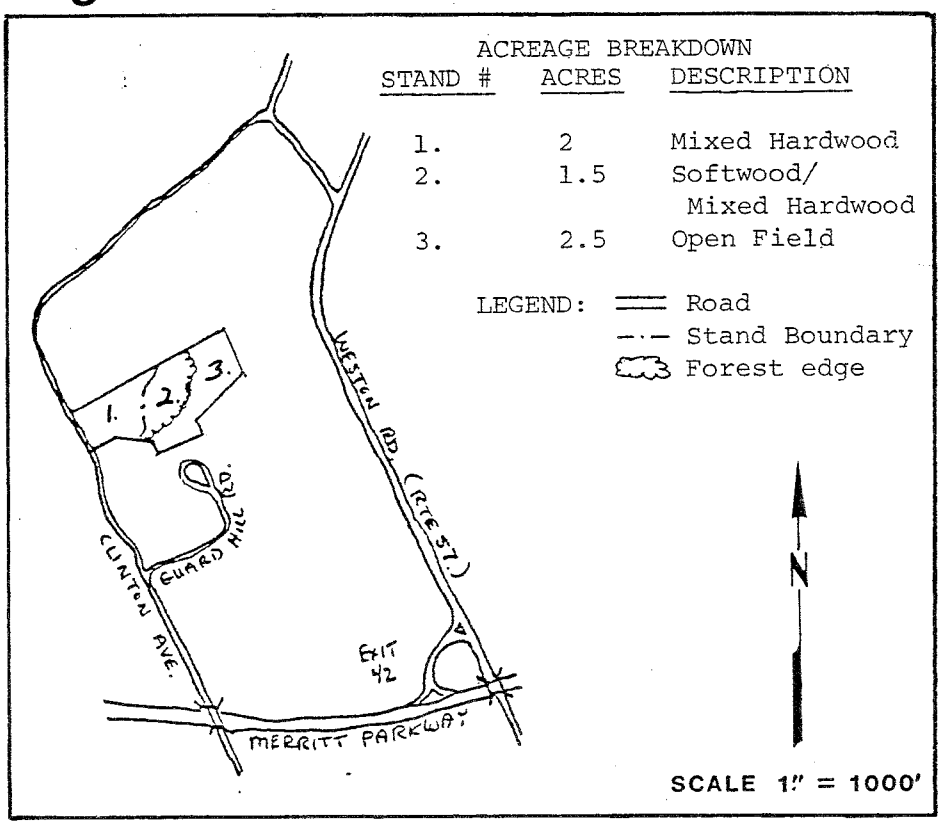
Map Unit Ps - Pootatuck soils on 0 to 2 percent slopes dominate this area. These soils are very deep and moderately well drained. Typically the Pootatuck soils have sandy loam and fine sandy loam textures to a depth of about 24 inches overlying sand and gravel to a depth of 60 inches or more. These soils have a seasonal high water table between the depths of 1.5 and 2.5 feet and are subject to frequent flooding. These soils are inland wetlands.

The Pootatuck soils have fair potential for trails. The trails will be muddy during the spring and fall due to the high water tables. In addition, trail improvements will need frequent maintenance due to flooding damage.

D. VEGETATION

As shown in Figure 1c, about 3½ acres of this 6 acre site is wooded. This wooded land occupies the western portion of the property. The eastern portion consists of an open field.

Figure 1c Vegetation



The wooded land consists of two vegetation types: a mixed hardwood stand and a softwood/mixed hardwood stand. Both of these vegetation types are described below, along with the open field stand.

Stand #1. Mixed Hardwood, 2 acres - This well-stocked stand is composed of medium quality, large pole-sized* red oak, cherry, red maple, sugar maple, ash, blackbirch, hickory, and beech. These trees are growing at a good rate on a good quality growing site and are approximately 30-50 years old.

The understory species encountered include saplings of the overstory species, multiflora rose, scattered spicebush, and winged euonymus.

The ground cover here ranges from grasses and bittersweet along the field edge to nothing in the interior due to dense shading.

No forest management is recommended at this time for this stand. It would be desirable to wait 10 years and then re-evaluate the condition of the stand.

Stand #2. Softwood/Mixed Hardwoods, 1½ acres - This well stocked old plantation is very similar to stand #1 with the exception of a large component of pole to sawlog-sized white pines and pole-sized red cedar.

Management here should be aimed at removal of all hardwoods which are actually physically interfering with the growth and development of the softwoods. This will enhance the growth of the softwoods. Certainly, exceptions should be made as in the case of the large specimen-type pin oak and beech found nearby. For these trees, the reverse should be true - sacrifice the softwoods to protect the specimen hardwood trees.

Stand #3. Open Field, 2.5 acres - This field is mowed annually and is dominated by grasses. Maintenance of this field is desirable for wildlife and nature study purposes. A diversity of wildflowers could be encouraged in this field if so desired.

The DEP's Natural Diversity Data Base does not have any record of rare or endangered species of flora or fauna on this site.

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*seedling size-less than 1" in diameter at breast height (dbh)
sapling size-1-5 inches in dbh
pole size-5-11 inches in dbh
sawlog size-11 inches and larger in dbh

E. WILDLIFE

The Guard Hill property consists of two major wildlife habitat types: open field and mixed hardwood.

The Open field habitat consists of a ± 2.5 acre grass field. This field has limited wildlife potential due to the proximity of residential development. Wildlife typically utilizing such sites include songbirds, woodchucks and rabbits.

To enhance the value of this field for wildlife, the following management recommendations are offered for consideration.

a. Additional plantings of perennial vegetation (ex. clover) would be beneficial as food and cover for wildlife.

b. No cutting should be allowed prior to August 1. This will avoid damaging birds nesting in the field.

c. Bluebird boxes should be erected at the edges of the field.

d. The edge vegetation (bittersweet, cedar, multiflora rose, and winterberry) should be encouraged to provide food and cover.

e. Where apple trees exist they should be released, pruned, and fertilized.

As discussed in the preceding section, the mixed hardwood stand consists of a well diversified mixture of hardwood species with one cluster of softwoods. The mast trees (oak, hickory, ash) present are food sources for a large variety of wildlife and should generally be encouraged. Wildlife typically dependent on such sites include deer, raccoon and various songbirds.

F. RECREATION POTENTIAL

The Guard Hill parcel has value for general, passive enjoyment as well as for specific educational uses. The land is attractive and inviting. It is enhanced by the variety of mature trees specimens.

Access to the parcel limits the potential for both passive recreational and educational uses, but either and preferably both uses could be enhanced if planning for them is done in association with the adjacent church. Both the Land Trust and the church would benefit: the church could reap the aesthetic values and the Land Trust could have convenient access.

The wooded portion of the parcel could be managed as an urban forest, demonstrating management techniques for homeowners to implement on their woodlots. In addition, there is an excellent opportunity at this site to develop a tree identification laboratory. This would be an especially appropriate adjunct to the management program.

from this part of the site flows downslope by sheetflow towards drainage channels. Once water reaches these drainage channels, it is transported directly to the streamcourse.

If there is a desire to develop an on-site water supply for recreational purposes on the property, bedrock is the site's principal groundwater supply resource. Bedrock is commonly capable of supplying only small to moderate yields, but these yields should be adequate for passive recreational uses.

It was indicated to Team members on the field review day that approximately 18-20 acres of residentially zoned land north of the Harwood property has potential for development. In regard to this, an Aspetuck Land Trust member questioned whether or not development of the site would increase the amount of surface water on the Harwood Property. Depending upon the amount of impervious surfaces created, density, as well as other factors, residential development north of the parcel could ultimately increase the flows of the streamcourse traversing the site. However, according to a planner from Fairfield's Conservation Office, the town would require that off-site flows following a development of this type be maintained at present levels. Therefore, providing this regulation is complied with and a stormwater management plan for future developments within the drainage area of the affected streamcourse is developed and followed closely, future development(s) north of the site should not increase the amount of surface water on the property. In addition, it is recommended that a careful erosion and sediment control plan be developed for potential developments in the drainage area to ensure that siltation problems do not occur in the streamcourse.

C. SOILS

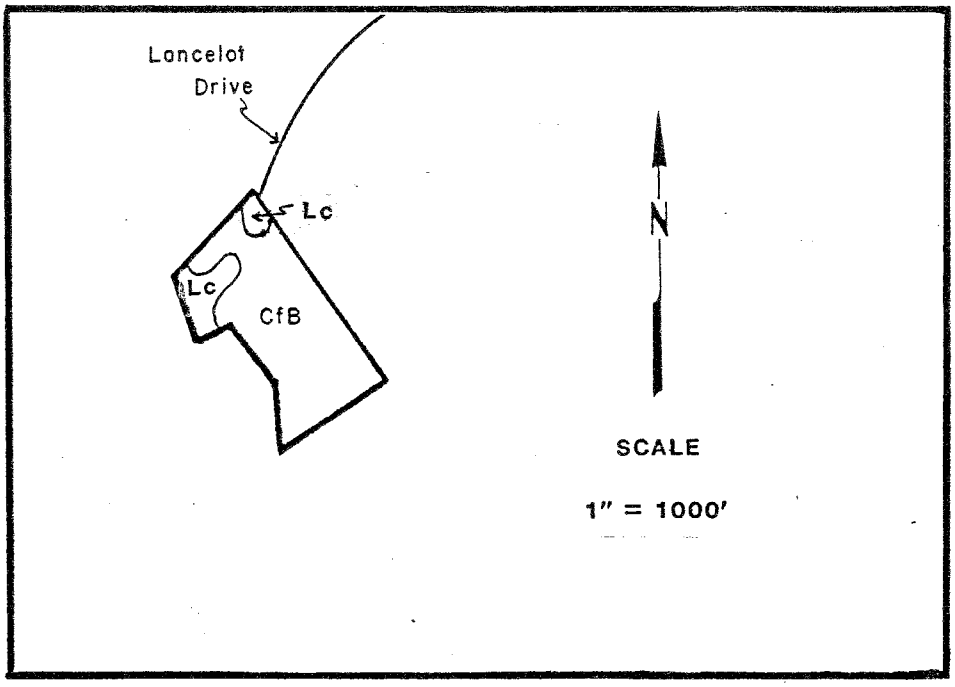
Figure 2b and the following narrative are revisions of data contained in the Soil Survey of Fairfield County. As shown in Figure 2b, two soil types have been mapped for this property. These soils are briefly described below.

Map Unit CfB - This map unit is composed primarily of Charlton soils on 3 to 8 percent slopes. These soils are very deep and well drained. Typically they have fine sandy loam textures to a depth of 60 inches or more.

These soils are well suited for walking trails. There are some small depressions that tend to stay wet throughout the year. Walking trails should avoid these low spots whenever possible.

Map Unit Lc - This map unit is composed of Leicester soils on 0 to 3 percent slopes. These soils are very deep and

Figure 2b Soils



poorly drained. Typically they have fine sandy loam textures throughout their depth. Leicester soils have a seasonally high water table at or near the soil surface for much of the year. These soils are inland wetlands.

The Leicester soils are poorly suited for walking trails due to their high water table. Trails through this area will be muddy.

D. VEGETATION

This entire 14 acre site consists of an oak/mixed hardwood forest type.

The forest is a variably stocked old wooded pasture and is composed of medium quality, pole to sawlog-sized red oak, white oak, hickory, yellow poplar, red maple, ash, and black birch. These trees are growing at a fair rate on a medium quality growing site and are approximately 40-90 years old.

The understory species encountered included: barberry, multiflora rose, and scattered spicebush.

The ground cover here includes grasses, dewberry, raspberry, and poison ivy. In places heavy bittersweet, greenbriar, and poison ivy vine growth severely limits ground cover.

Until the prolific vine growth on this property is reduced, no forest management here is feasible.

Elimination of vine growth is a thorny problem. Vines are flourishing due to the open nature of the area. Removal of any of the overstory would only perpetuate this condition. Wholesale broadcasting of herbicide to kill vine growth is economically expensive if not practically impossible.

The best course to follow at this point in the opinion of the Team's forester is to physically cut some of the vines as low to the ground as possible to release the hardwood crowns and promote hardwood undergrowth. Gradually, the hardwoods will become more dense and will shade out some of the vine regrowth.

The Connecticut DEP Natural Diversity Data Base does not have any record of rare or endangered species of flora or fauna at this site.

E. WILDLIFE

As discussed in the preceeding section, this property consists of an oak/mixed hardwood forest. The understory is very dense throughout the property with bittersweet and greenbriar being most abundant. Bittersweet and greenbriar are excellent sources of food and cover for a variety of wildlife species. Fruits, buds, and leaves are potential food for ruffed grouse, rabbits, squirrels, deer, and a wide variety of non-game birds. In addition these twining vines provide suitable nesting sites for birds. In its present condition, this site offers high value to wildlife. If succession begins to shade out the bittersweet and greenbriar, it would be desirable to maintain some open patches to encourage its continued presence. In addition, it would be desirable to encourage additional wildlife food sources in the form of viburnum, blueberry, winterberry and grape.

If a hiking trail was established in the future, creating patches of these various understory species could exhibit a type of wildlife habitat management. Trying to alter or control the entire dense understory of bittersweet or greenbriar for forest management or recreational use would neither be cost effective or beneficial to wildlife.

The southeast section of the property has clumps of cedar that should be maintained to provide food and cover, particularly during the winter months. This area also contains apple trees that are in need of release from competing vegetation. This "release" cut of vegetation overtopping the apple trees should be followed by pruning and fertilization.

An intermittent stream flows through the northwest section of the property and should not be altered. A water source is an important and necessary part of good wildlife habitat.

F. RECREATION POTENTIAL

With the heavy understory growth of bittersweet and greenbriar on this parcel, its potential for passive recreational use is severely limited. Any trails constructed on the parcel would rapidly become overgrown with vines unless frequent and intensive efforts were taken to control this growth.

In the opinion of the Team's District Conservationist, the recreational utilization of this parcel should be postponed. The property is strategically located, has high wildlife value, and will become more and more important as open space area as the surrounding neighborhood is developed. In time, natural succession will shade out some of the extensive understory growth and provide a parcel more suitable for passive recreational use and enjoyment. In the meantime, perhaps the most appropriate action would be to post the boundaries of the parcel to overtly demonstrate the Land Trust's function in the community.

IV. Site 3: The Taylor Preserve, Weston

A. TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The Taylor Property is about 16 acres in size and is located at the end of Fanton Hill Road in southern Weston. The topography of the parcel is diverse (see Figure 3a). The central portions are dominated by a relatively flat to gently sloping terrain. The southern parts of the parcel slope moderately southeastward towards the Aspetuck River. Moderate slopes also characterize the northwest parts of the parcel. Rock outcrops are visible on much of the property. These outcroppings are particularly prevalent in the areas delineated as CrE and HpC on the soils map (see Figue 3b). A bedrock controlled knoll in the eastern limits of the site offers an attractive, although short-distance, vista to the east.

A small stream traverses the northwest corner of the property. The stream ultimately discharges into the Aspetuck River which abuts the property on its southern border.

Bedrock on the property consists largely of interlayered schists and granofels and belongs to the same rock formation underlying the Guard Hill Tract. The minerals composing the rocks are quartz, oligoclase, muscovite (in the schist), biotite, garnet as well as staurolite and

Figure 3a Topography

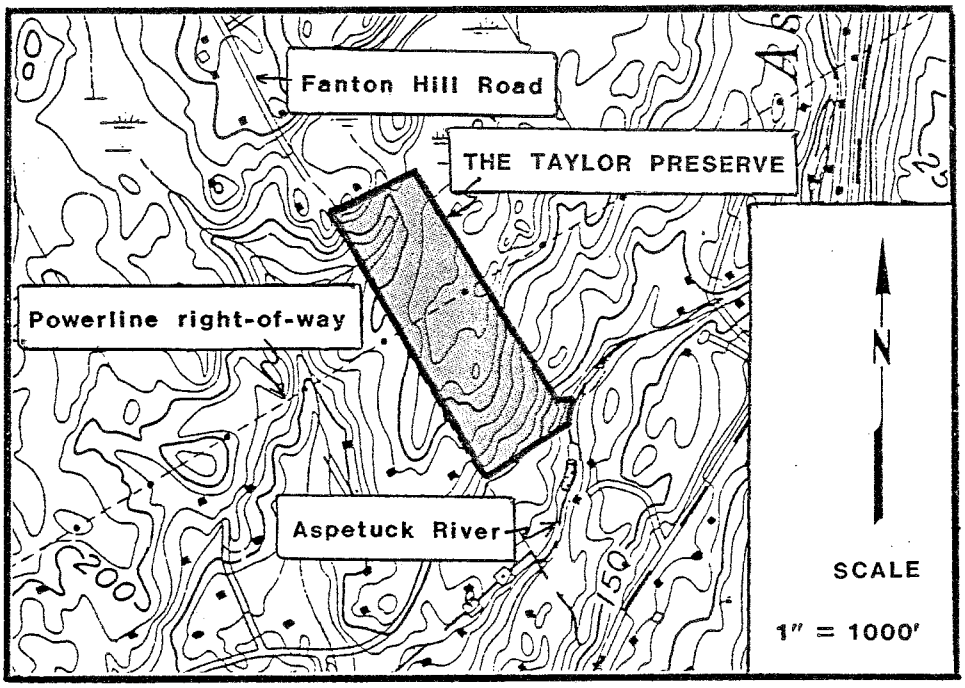
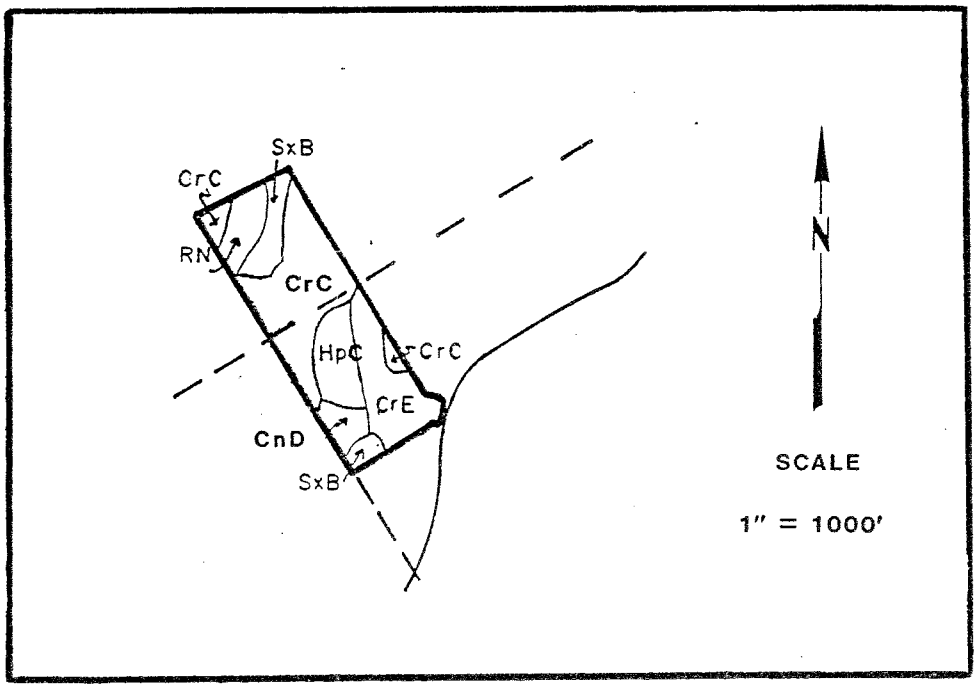


Figure 3b Soils



kyanite (in the schist). Depth to bedrock on the site ranges from zero, where outcrops occur, to probably not much more than 10 feet at various points in between the outcrops.

Bedrock on the parcel is covered with a glacial sediment called till. "Till" refers to rock particles and fragments or other types of sediment that were deposited directly from glacier ice. Since the ice indiscriminately collected, transported and released particles of widely ranging sizes as it passed over the pre-existing surface, the till is composed of a non-sorted, generally non-layered mixture of clay, silt, sand, gravel and boulders. The till on the site is mostly less than 10 feet thick but some deeper pockets may be present. The texture of this till on the site is variable, but it frequently is sandy, extremely stony and relatively loose. A band of seasonally wet soils parallel the small streamcourse in the northwest corner.

The patchwork of till soils, bedrock outcrops and seasonally wet areas should not pose a major problem in terms of passive recreation. A member of the Aspetuck Land Trust noted on the review day that horseback riding may be a potential use of this parcel. If so, horse trails should be located to avoid steeply sloping areas as well as bedrock outcrop areas both of which could be hazardous for horseback riders.

B. HYDROLOGY

The Taylor property lies entirely within the Aspetuck River watershed. Surface runoff in the southern half of the property flows downslope towards the Aspetuck River, either by sheetflow or it may be intercepted by any of the intermittent drainage channels in this part of the site. Water intercepted by these drainage channels is routed directly to the River.

Surface runoff in the northern half of the site flows downslope to the unnamed streamcourse traversing the northwest corner of the property. Once runoff reaches the streamcourse it flows westwards to a tributary of Aspetuck River. Subsurface drainage generally parallels the surface runoff.

The geological materials on the property possess no special potential for yielding groundwater to wells. Bedrock appears to be the most significant aquifer in this area. An aquifer may be defined as any geologic formation which is capable of supplying water in a usable quantity to a well or spring. Groundwater in the metamorphic rock underlying the site occurs primarily along fractures. The amount and natural quality of water obtained from a bedrock well depends upon the number and size of water-bearing

fractures that the well intersects, and on the mineralogy of the rock formations through which the fractures pass. Most wells drilled in bedrock can achieve substainable yields of 3 gallons per minute or more without drilling more than 300 feet of rock. If there is a desire to develop a water supply to serve the property, it appears the underlying bedrock will prove to be a suitable water source.

The Aspetuck River, which borders the southeast corner of the site is a very attractive natural feature of the site. This area would be favorable for development of facilities to encourage passive recreational uses such as fishing and picnicking.

C. SOILS

The soils on this property have fair potential for trails. The trail layout should avoid the steeper slopes. By doing this, the trails will be easier to walk and maintain. The number of stones and boulders on the surface will affect the trafficability of the trails and make many of the areas unsuitable for bridle paths unless fill material is added or the stones removed. A description of the soils in each map unit follows. The soil descriptions and map (see Figure 3b) are a revision of data contained in the "Soil Survey of Fairfield County, Connecticut".

Map Unit CnD - This map unit is composed primarily of Charlton soils on 15 to 25 percent slopes. These soils are very deep and well drained. Typically they have fine sandy loam textures to a depth of 60 inches or more. The soil surface is covered by 5 to 35 percent stones and boulders.

Map Units CrC, CrE and HpC - These map units are composed primarily of two soils and rock outcrops. They are so intermingled on the ground that they could not be separated on the map. One kind of soil is named Charlton. These soils are the same as the Charlton described above in the CnD unit.

The other soil is named Hollis. These soils are shallow and somewhat excessively drained. Typically they are fine sandy loam in texture overlying hard bedrock at a depth of 10 to 20 inches. Bedrock exposures are usually found adjacent to the shallow Hollis soils. The surface of both soils are covered by 5 to 35 percent stones and boulders.

The deep Charlton soils dominate in the CrC and CrE map units. Slopes are 3 to 15 percent in CrC and 15 to 30 percent in CrE.

The shallow Hollis soils are dominant in the HpC map unit. Slopes are 3 to 15 percent.

Map Unit Lc - This map unit is composed primarily of Leicester soils on 0 to 3 percent slopes. These soils are very deep and poorly drained. Typically they have fine sandy loam textures to a depth of 60 inches or more. Leicester soils have a water table at or near the surface for much of the year. These soils are inland wetlands. Stones and boulders cover 5 to 35 percent of the soil surface.

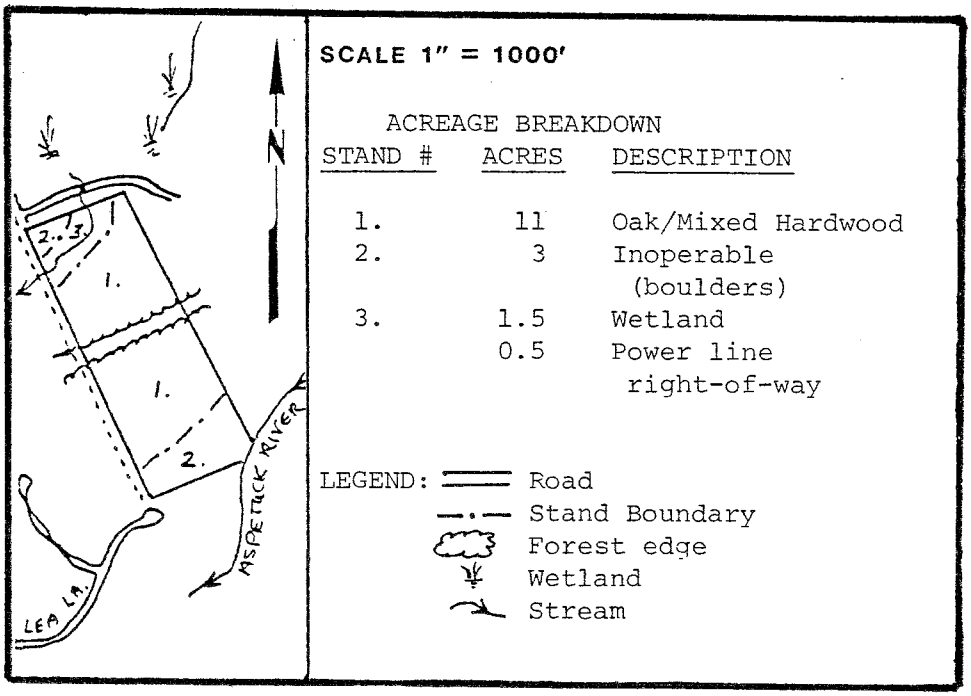
Although these soils may be ponded with water periodically, trails crossing this area could take advantage of the many stones and boulders on the soil surface.

Map Unit SxB - This map unit is composed primarily of Sutton soils on 3 to 8 percent slopes. These soils are very deep and moderately well drained. Typically they have fine sandy loam textures to a depth of 60 inches or more. Sutton soils have a seasonal high water table between the depths of 1.5 and 2.5 feet.

D. VEGETATION

As shown in Figure 3c, three forest stands exist at the Taylor Property. Each of these types is described below. Bisecting the property, and a convenient land mark, is a powerline right-of-way. This ROW, shown in Figure 3c, is maintained in grasses and low shrub growth.

Figure 3c Vegetation



Stand #1. Oak/Mixed Hardwood, 11 acres - This fully stocked stand is composed of good quality, sawlog-sized red oak, white oak, beech, hickory, black birch, red maple, and yellow poplar. These trees are growing at a moderate rate on a medium quality growing site and are approximately 70-80 years old.

The understory species encountered include maple-leaved viburnum, hardwood poles and saplings, sassafras, and spicebush in wetter areas.

The ground cover here includes ground pine, wood violet, and wild geranium.

There appear to be two basic management options for this property:

1) A timber harvest here may be feasible. However, further sampling will be necessary in order to make definitive recommendations as to the parameters and urgency for a harvest. Should this option be of interest, contact should be made with the DEP's Bureau of Forestry at 485-0226. DEP foresters can provide, upon request, more detailed information.

2) Emphasis on limited harvesting of poorly formed, diseased, or overcrowded stems for firewood.

Stand #2. Inoperable, 3 acres -This stand is similar in composition to stand #1. However, due to a high concentration of boulders and, in some localized areas, steep slopes, harvesting activity by normal means may be greatly restricted.

Stand #3. Wetland, 1½ acres - This under stocked hardwood swamp is composed of poor quality, pole to sawlog-sized red maple with some red oak, yellow poplar, and ash on the driest margins. These trees are growing at a fair rate on a medium quality growing site and are approximately 40-60 years old.

The understory species encountered include almost exclusively spicebush due to wetness. Some elderberry can be found in more open areas.

The ground cover here is almost non-existant where crown cover is dense. More open areas have some grasses, jewelweed, and skunk cabbage.

This stand could be managed for firewood by cutting and encouraging sprout growth. As in stand #1, additional information is available from the DEP Bureau of Forestry.

E. WILDLIFE

The Taylor property (± 16 acres) is a mixed hardwood forest type consisting mainly of oak, maple, beech and ash.

Wildlife utilizing such habitat include deer, turkey, squirrels, fox, raccoon and various non-game species.

A short stretch of brook exists along one border. Due to the shortness of this stretch and its proximity to residential areas, enhancement potential for wildlife use is limited.

A CL & P powerline crosses the area providing additional habitat diversity. Vegetation such as grasses, cedar, blackberries and sumac should be encouraged in this area.

The presence of stonewalls on the property provides cover and denning sites for small mammals.

If a timber harvest is planned, the following management practices should be followed:

a. Encourage mast producing species (oak, hickory, beech). Do not eliminate any one species.
b. Leave 5 to 7 snag trees per acre as they provide nesting, feeding and escape cover.
c. Exceptionally tall trees are utilized by raptors. for nesting and perching and should be left.
d. Trees with vines (berry producers) should be encouraged.
e. Conifer cover is lacking. Plant several small (¼ acre) sites to conifer species.
f. Create additional small openings (¼ to 1 acre) with feathered edges (gradually blended into the forest type).
g. Construct small brush piles on the edge of openings to provide cover for small mammals and birds.

F. RECREATION POTENTIAL

The existing path down the western border of the property offers a pleasant walk and, as discussed earlier, there is potential for additional trail development on the site. In particular, loop trails to the north and south of the right-of-way on the property would enhance access and enjoyment of the property. Improving access to the south-eastern corner of the property would enhance opportunities for fishing and viewing of this scenic area.

The most significant recreational resource on the Taylor parcel however, in the opinion of the Team's District Conservationist, is the high line right-of-way. This corridor provides an opportunity for a regional trail system. The extent of such a trail system is virtually unlimited; every road crossing is an access.

This particular corridor runs from Norwalk to Stratford where it intersects with another corridor that runs north to Stevenson. The procurement of trail easements could be obtained on a town by town basis by various trusts. As a minimum the Aspetuck Land Trust could establish an

arterial trail across town. In the opinion of the Team's District Conservationist, encouraging a regional trail system in this area for passive recreational use would be a more appropriate investment of trust property than site specific planning for this property alone.

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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 industrical 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.