

**Town of Tolland, Connecticut
Conservation Commission
Auperin Conservation Area Management Plan
Weigold Road, Tolland, CT**



A Passive Recreation Open Space Conservation Area

Revised by Commission – February 10, 2022

Adopted by Council – May 24, 2011

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Town of Tolland

Conservation Commission Property Management Plan

Auperin Conservation Area, Weigold Road

Background – The Tolland Conservation Commission is responsible for the management and oversight of properties obtained by the Town of Tolland for conservation purposes and preparing a management plan based on the environmental characteristics of each property. Each plan includes a property description, analysis of unique characteristics, acceptable public uses of the property, and a management program. The management program outlines property improvement needs, individuals and organizations designated to manage the property, available resources for management, and recommendations for ecological protections specific to the site. Management plans are developed following the Commission’s established management planning process.

I. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION, ACCESS, USES, USE RESTRICTIONS, VISITOR RESPONSIBILITIES, PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS



Property Description – The Auperin Conservation area is a 28.1-acre parcel of land located on the westerly side of Weigold Road in the southcentral part of Tolland near the Coventry town line. It is directly north of, and adjacent to, the Weigold Conservation Area. The property was purchased in November 2008 from the Lincoln Auperin family, with a combination of Town funds and a grant from the State of Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition program administered by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

The property is fully forested and ground cover ranges from thick underbrush to relatively open forest that appears park-like. Although previously logged, the property currently contains stands of white pine and mixed hardwood. A large vernal pool area, which is an important breeding area for frogs and salamanders, is found on the southwest portion of the property. There also is a small brook that flows downhill to the Weigold Conservation Area. The property is located in the Skungamaug River watershed, which is an important tributary of the Willimantic River system. Combined with the Weigold Conservation Area and Joshua’s Trust Tobiasson Memorial Forest, there are over 150 acres of open space in the immediate vicinity of the Auperin Conservation Area to protect wildlife habitat, aquifers, and watersheds.

At the high point of the property, two log benches have been built that look down at the vernal pool to the west and the brook to the east.

Access – Access to the Auperin trail is from the Blue Trail on the Weigold Conservation Area. The Weigold Conservation Area provides parking, use signage, and maps.

Uses – In accordance with the DEEP grant conditions, uses of the property must be limited to passive recreation. Accepted uses include:

- Hiking.
- Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.
- Dog walking under owner’s control; Town Ordinance requires dogs to be on a leash. Leashes must be held by a person responsible for the dog’s behavior.
- Habitat and wildlife studies
- Nature study



Use Restrictions - With the transfer of the property to the Town, there are inherent restrictions under the State of Connecticut conservation easement. The conservation easement requires that the property be used as a passive recreation open space conservation area in perpetuity.

Also, the Tolland *Conservation Commission Standards for Mountain Biking and Horseback Riding Use of Trails* must be met. Horseback riding is not allowed at the Auperin Conservation Area because the following standards for horseback riding are not met: no bridges or boardwalks, not traversing frequently wet areas or watercourses, trails to be at least eight feet wide, base to be a firm material. Mountain biking is also not allowed because the following standards for mountain biking are not met: trails to be at least 4 feet wide, no traversing frequently wet areas, consistency with permitted and non-permitted activities on abutting conservation properties.

Visitor Responsibilities – Visitors are to use the property in a manner consistent with land use guidelines for the protection of open space resources. The following guidelines are the standards for use and are identified on parcel signage:

- Town Ordinance requires dogs to be on a leash. Leashes must be held by a person responsible for the dog's behavior.
- Leave no trace - No littering and carry out what you carry in.
- No motorized vehicles or other means of motorized transport.
- No horseback riding or mountain biking.
- Do not disturb vegetation or wildlife.
- Visitors shall stay on marked trails.
- No hunting or firearms allowed.
- No setting of fires.
- Respect the rights of other visitors.
- Area is closed from sunset to sunrise. Night use is by permit only.
- Notify the Conservation Commission of organized group activities.

Problems – A deer stand has been removed from the property in the past; continued attentiveness to illegal deer hunting is needed.

II. OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN



Management objectives – The principal objectives are to conserve the property and protect wildlife habitat while providing access and passive recreational opportunities for the general public. While the Conservation Commission acting as an agent of the Tolland Town Council is ultimately responsible for property management, implementation of a management program is a shared responsibility with the Tolland Conservation Corps, Property Steward(s), and a variety of Town agencies in accordance with the *Open Space Management Guideline and Process*.

Specific objectives for this parcel include:

- Follow best property management processes.
- Maintain the approved trail system.
- Conduct a natural resource inventory.
- Pursue educational, documentation, and protection opportunities for habitat, wildlife, and unique features.
- Preserve areas for viewing the vernal pool.
- Control invasive species.

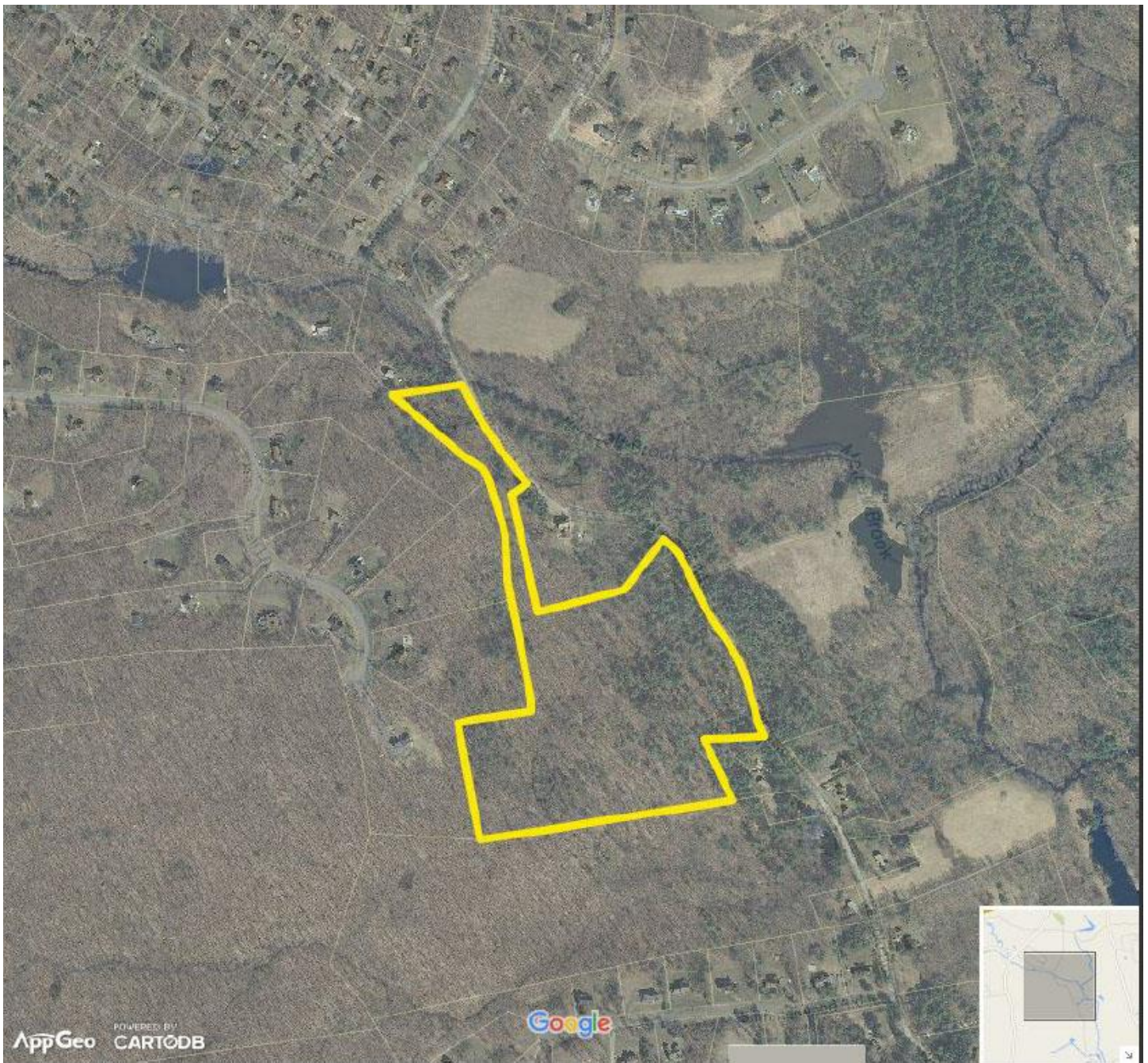
It is not the intention of the Conservation Commission to manage this property for timber production with periodic commercial harvests, however, it may be necessary from time to time to carry out certain silviculture practices to maintain the health of the forest or to encourage a particular habitat. Such management activities, if deemed necessary, will be done in consultation with a professional forester to ensure that the appropriate practices are implemented.

Management Plan and Program – Tasks required to assure management objectives are achieved shall be overseen by the Conservation Commission and implemented by the head steward and the property steward. Tasks include:

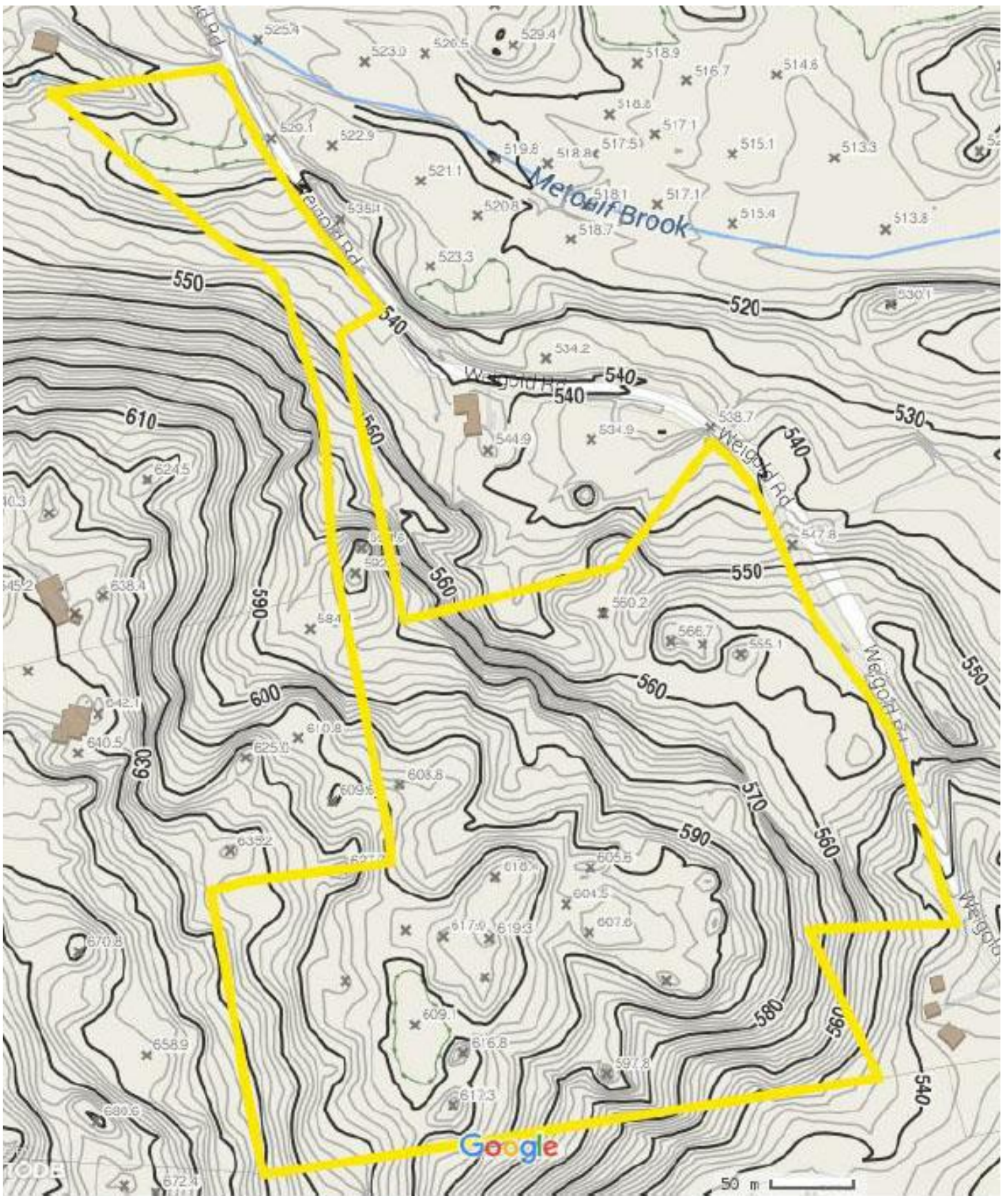
- Maintain the approved trail system.
- Maintain stream crossing in safe and serviceable condition.
- Maintain trail markings and signs.
- Maintain informational/educational trail signs.
- Maintain wood benches.
- Maintain the parking area (at the Weigold Conservation Area, which is used for access to Auperin)
- Protect vernal pool and stream resources.
- Protect unusual vegetation such as lady slippers.
- Perform litter patrol as needed.
- Install and maintain property boundary markings. Conduct a yearly walk of the boundaries.

Property Steward – The steward of the property is Sharron Laplante.

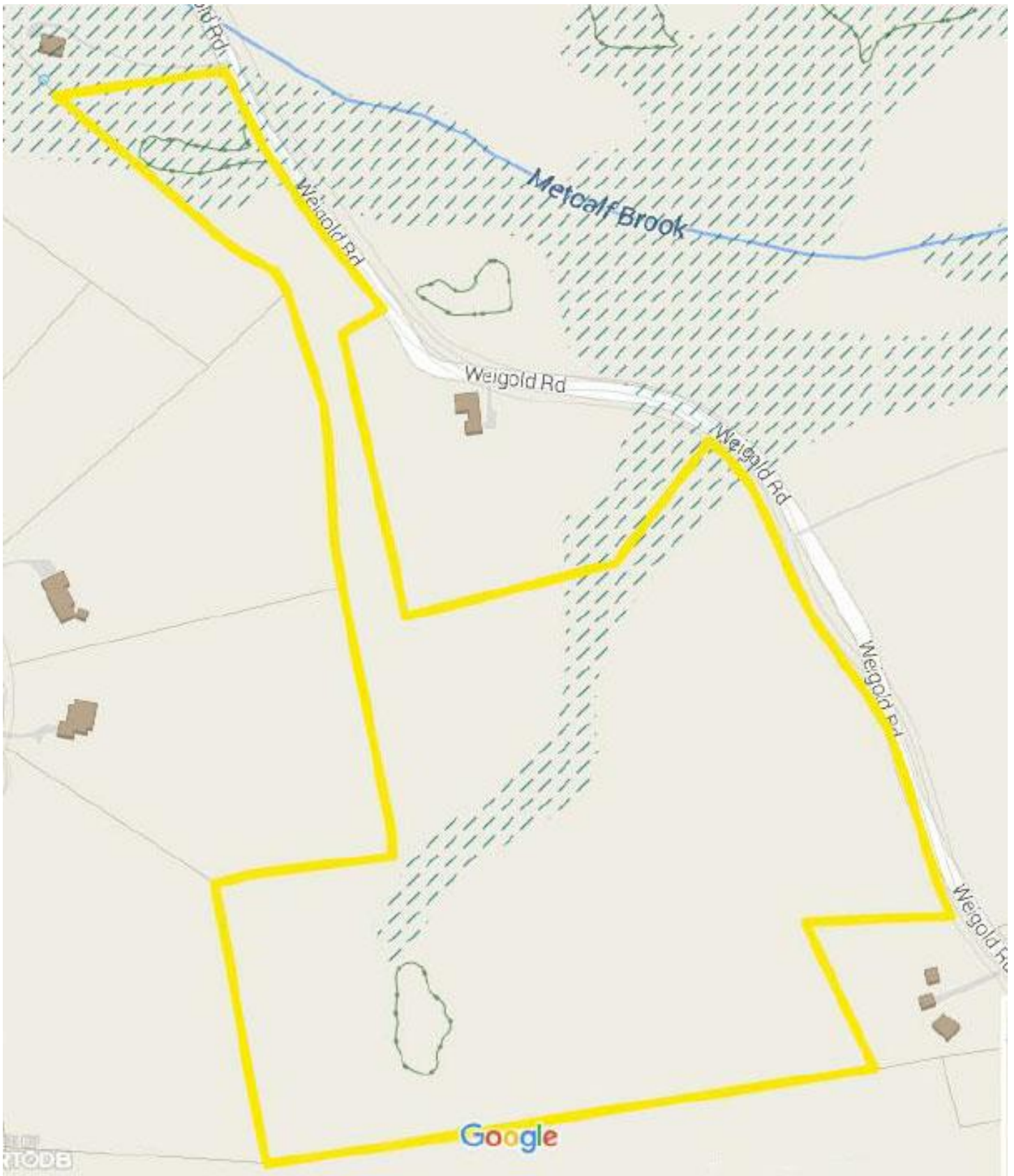
2012 Aerial Map



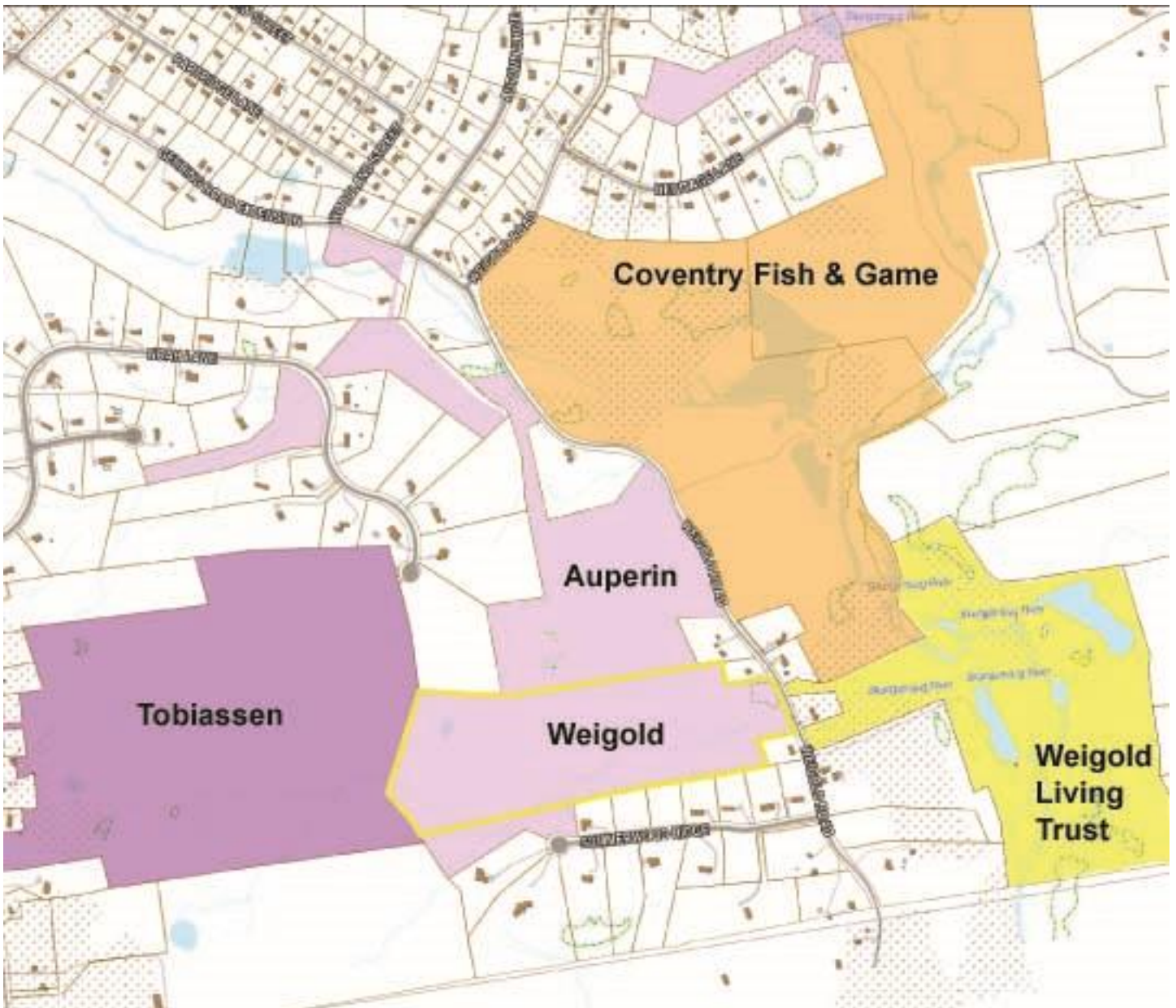
Topographical Map



Wetlands Map



Nearby Conservation Areas Map



Trail Map

