

**Town of Tolland, Connecticut
Conservation Commission
Management Plan
John & Mary Parciak Conservation Area
207 Bald Hill Road**



A Passive Recreation Open Space Conservation Area

Adopted by Commission: 2/12/2009; As Revised 4/10/2014; As Revised 04/23/20

Adopted by Council: 2/24/2009; _____

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Background – The Tolland Conservation Commission is responsible for overseeing properties purchased by the Town of Tolland for conservation purposes and preparing a management plan for each property. The management plans are based upon the environmental characteristics of the property and outline the opportunities for public use. Each plan includes a property description, an analysis of the unique characteristics and acceptable uses of the property, and a management program. The management program outlines the property management and improvement needs; the individuals and organizations that manage the property; and resource capabilities and protection needs related to the site. Each management plan is developed under the Commission’s management planning process

I. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION, RESOURCES, POTENTIAL, AND PROBLEMS

Property Description - The Parciak property consists of 60 acres of undeveloped woodland located north of the Tolland Green, between Bald Hill Road and Burbank Road. The property was purchased in the fall of 2002 from Thomas and Marianne Parciak with Town open space bond funds.

The property slopes from an elevation of approximately 1,000 feet above sea level just west of Bald Hill Road to approximately 750 feet at Burbank Road. The highest point in Tolland, Bald Hill, is located on this property at an elevation of 1,011 feet. The northern section of the property is relatively level, but the land surface drops sharply down 100 feet in elevation to the south. There is an excellent view to the south from the top of the ridge at the north end of the site, especially when leaves are off the trees in the fall. A bench is located on the ridge and hikers may wish to sit and enjoy the view.

The commercial communications tower at the north end of the site is located on a 0.9-acre easement that was established a number of years ago. The tower was reconstructed and upgraded in 2006, and public access and use of the easement property is prohibited.

In the southern part of the property, two unnamed streams join together to form Paulk Hill Brook. The brook flows to the millpond at Crandall’s Park, which is a Town-owned public swimming area, and then joins Clough Brook which flows to the Tolland Marsh which drains to the Skungamaug River. Portions of the property near Burbank Road are wetlands. Paulk Hill Brook has been designated a Class A surface water body by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) (see Town of Tolland Open Space & Conservation Plan, map 5). The northeast-most corner of this property is in the Shenipsit Lake Watershed and the rest of the property is in the Skungamaug River Watershed.

The entire property is woodlands. White birch and mountain laurel are found at the higher elevations, while white and black oak, hickory, and maple abound throughout the property. The lower half of the parcel has extensive beds of princess pine. Low brush and red maple trees surround the wetland areas at lower elevations. The absence of very large diameter trees is indicative of past logging operations.



Figure 1: Meteor Rock

have been observed. This property is within an Important Wildlife Area and Corridor as designated by the Town of Tolland Open Space & Conservation Plan (map 12).

Flowing groundwater seeps have been observed in winter at the base of the ledge, even after an extended cold snap. Several large white quartz boulders are prominent landscape features, with an exceptionally large quartz rock at the end of a spur trail off the blue-ridge trail. A large black boulder, which has been amusingly called a “Meteor Rock”, can be found along the yellow loop trail in the southeast section of the property. The “Meteor Rock” is actually a black schist which

is not extraterrestrial in origin. The property supports wildlife and deer, fox, and turkeys



Figure 2: Quartz Boulder

Periodic vandalism and destruction of Town signage has also been a problem on this property.

Problems and Concerns – ATVs have been illegally using the property causing negative impacts. The illegal ATV users have made several unauthorized trails in the northern section. Continued unauthorized use could cause permanent damage to vegetation, increase erosion of soil, and disturb wildlife. A misaligned culvert on the yellow loop trail near the middle of the property was recently removed and replaced with stepping stones, which has improved the stream crossing at this location. Mountain biking and horseback riding are not permitted on this property since the property does not meet the standards in multiple ways (Conservation Commission

Standards for Mountain Biking and Horseback Riding Use of Trails, adopted April 7, 2014). The most significant reasons for prohibiting horses and mountain bikes is the large wet area at the center of the site and the relatively poor condition of trails.

Access - The parcel has frontage on both Bald Hill Road (approximately 2,000 feet) and Burbank Road (approximately 1,500 feet). Access from Burbank Road is along an existing logging trail that extends eastward up a ridge. Access from Bald Hill Road is by a small trail that enters the site south of a large communications antenna tower

Uses – The use of the property must be passive recreation, maintaining animal habitats, and studying existing habitats and wildlife. Accepted activities include:

- Hiking
- Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing
- Dog walking under owner's control; town ordinance requires dogs to be on a leash
- Bird watching and other animal studies
- Plant and other ecological studies

Use Restrictions – With the transfer of this property to the Town, there are inherent restrictions which derive from the use of conservation bond funds. This funding source requires that the property must be used as a passive open space conservation area in perpetuity.

The following guidelines are the standards for use and are identified on signage at the property:

- Dogs must be leashed.
- Leave no trace.
- No littering. 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 need to stay on marked trail and roads.
- 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 Town-issued permit only.
- Notify Commission of organized group activities.

Visitor Responsibilities – Visitors are reminded to use the property in a manner consistent with land use guidelines that protect open space resources.

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 and to protect the spring that feeds Paulk Hill Brook, since the brook flows to a public swimming area at Crandall Park. 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, and a variety of Town agencies and resources in accordance with the Open Space Management Guideline and Process

Specific objectives for this parcel include:

- Preserve the quality of the watersheds.
- Follow best property management processes.
- Maintain the approved trail system. Block off unauthorized trails.
- Maintain the parking access.
- Conduct a natural resource inventory.
- Pursue educational, documentation and protection opportunities for habitat, wildlife, and unique features.
- Manage the woodlands following the guidance of a professional forester.
- Maintain the bench located on the ridge.
- Maintain property boundaries. Pursue the removal of any and all encroachments.
- Pursue law enforcement against illegal ATV use.

Although it is not the intention of the Conservation Commission to manage this property for timber production with periodic commercial harvests, it may be necessary, from time to time, to carry out certain silviculture practices to maintain the health of the forest or to maintain the property in a particular stage of succession in order to encourage certain habitats. The Commission will consult with a professional forester to ensure that the appropriate practices are implemented.

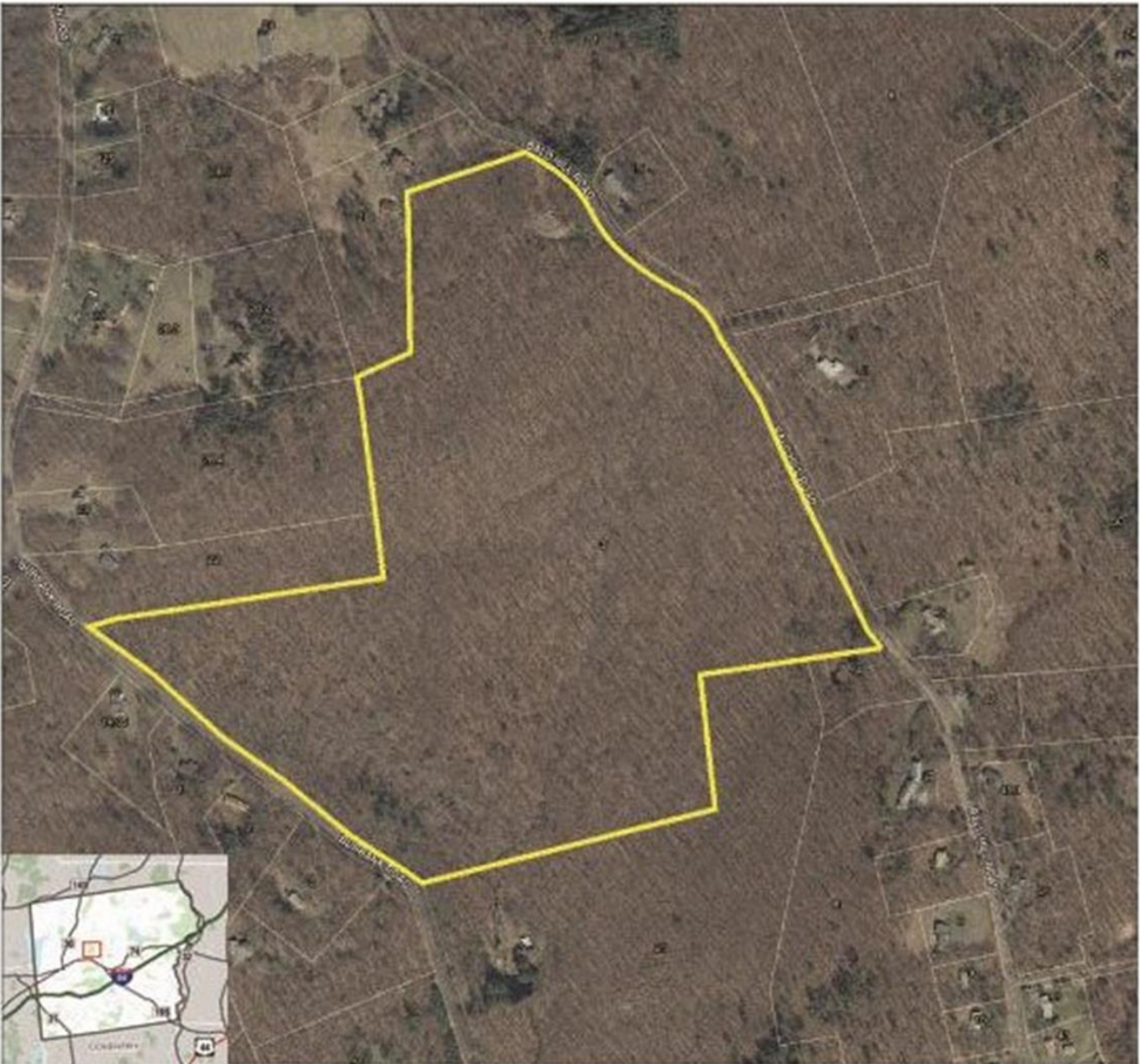
Management Plan and Program – Tasks required to assure that management objectives are achieved shall be overseen by the Conservation Commission and implemented by the head steward and the property steward. Tasks include:

- Maintain parking access and access fences on Burbank and Bald Hill Roads.
- Install and maintain permitted/non-permitted use signs, map boxes, and trail map signs at entrances.
- Keep map boxes supplied with property brochures.
- Maintain the approved trail system. Block off all unauthorized trails.
- Maintain trail markings and signs.
- Perform litter patrol as needed. Clean up trash along Burbank Road and Bald Hill Road.

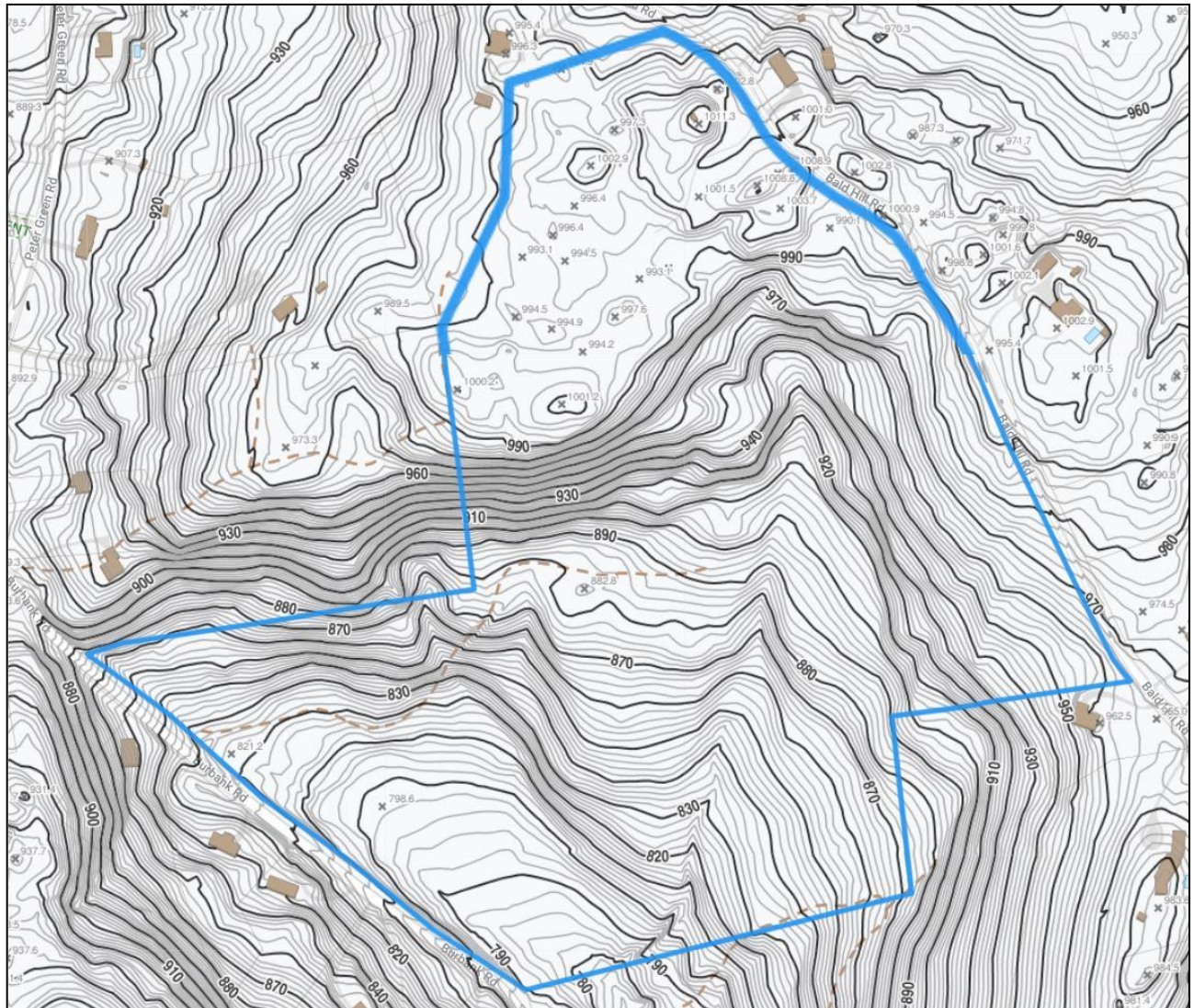
- Maintain property boundary markings. Conduct a yearly walk of the all boundaries with three additional seasonal walks of the northern boundary to monitor encroachment previously observed there.
- Report any encroachment of property boundaries.
- Report all ATV use to the police.
- Monitor the winter viewshed.
- Conduct ongoing habitat, feature, and wildlife documentation.
- Maintain the bench located on the ridge.
- Manage the woodlands following the guidance of a professional forester.

Property Stewards - The steward of the property is Len Bach.

2012 Aerial Map

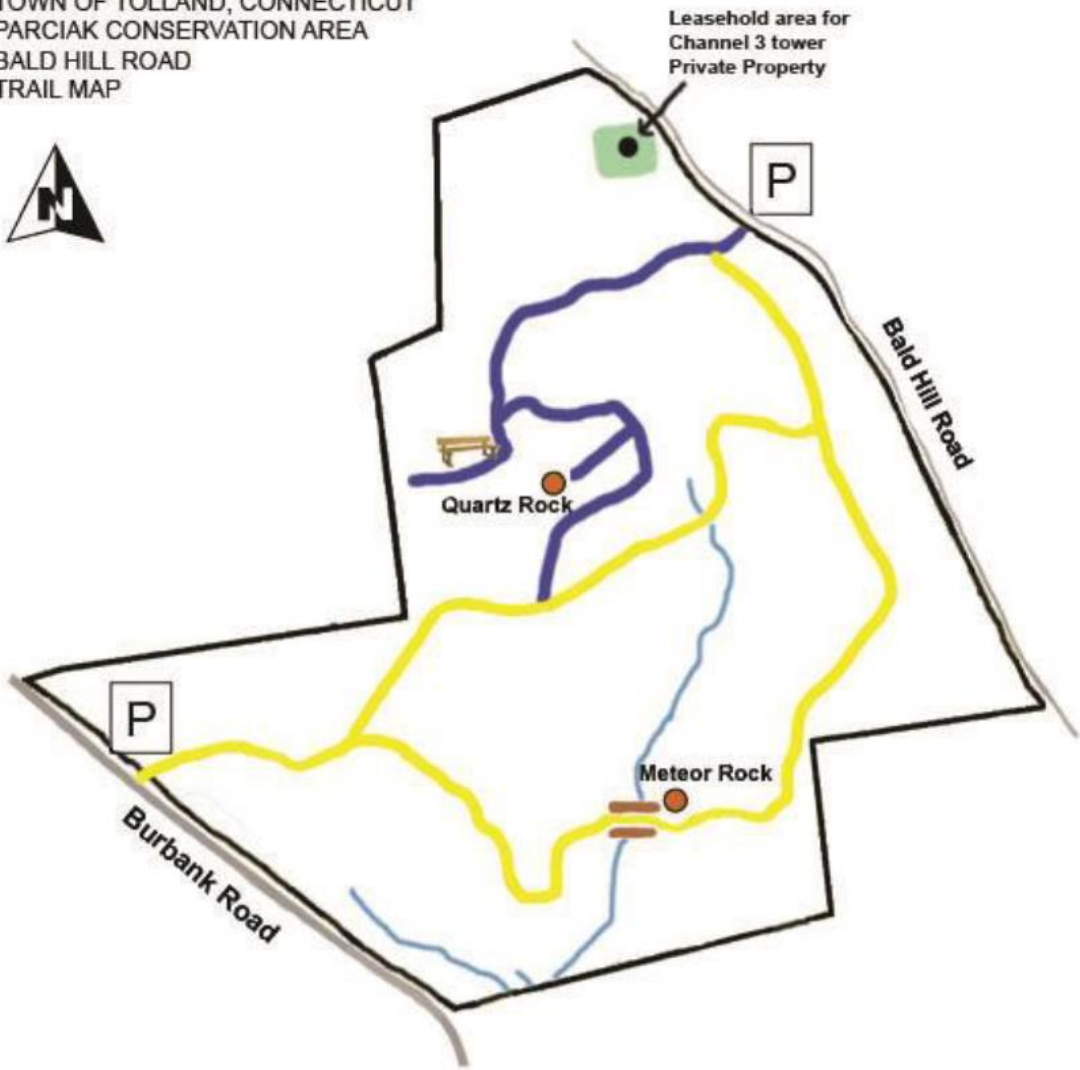


Topographical Map



Trail Map

TOWN OF TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
PARCIAK CONSERVATION AREA
BALD HILL ROAD
TRAIL MAP



Distances are Approximate

Loop Trail - Yellow	1.6 mi.	
Ridge Trail - Blue	1.2 mi.	
Brook		
Bridge		