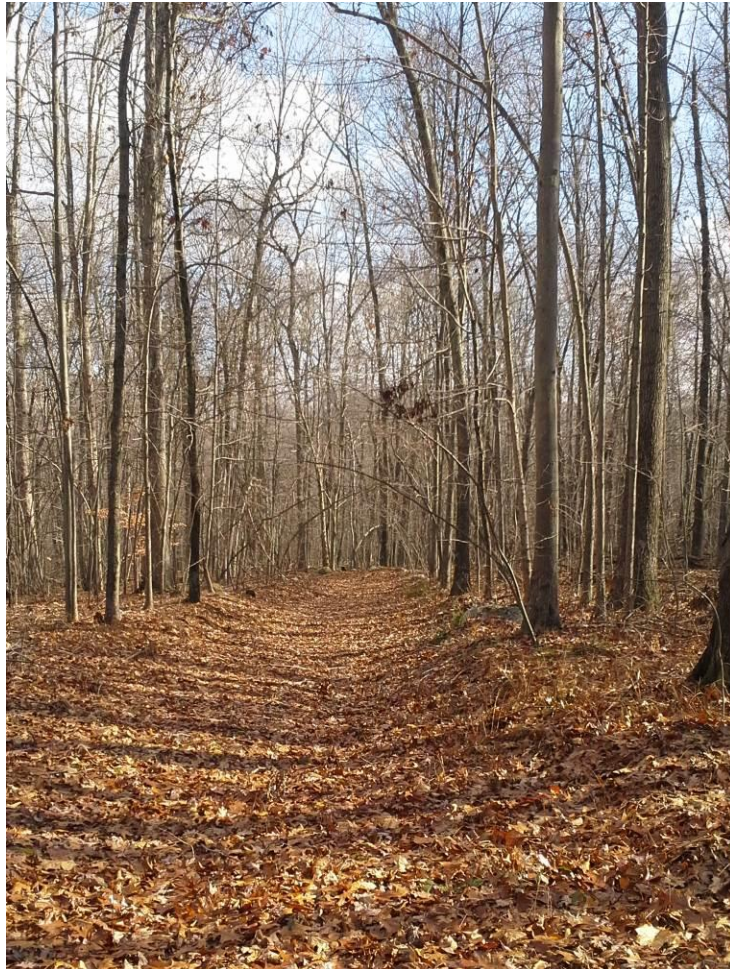


**Town of Tolland, Connecticut
Conservation Commission
Baxter Street Conservation Area
Management Plan
287 Baxter Street**



A Passive Recreation Open Space Conservation Area

Adopted by Commission 12/12/2014

Adopted by Council 2/10/2015

Town of Tolland Conservation Commission
Property Management Plan
Baxter Street Conservation Area
287 Baxter Street

Background – The Tolland Conservation Commission is responsible for overseeing properties purchased by the Town of Tolland for conservation purposes and for 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 to 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 – In May of 2002, the Town acquired the 41.98 acre parcel at 287 Baxter Street largely for a municipal cemetery. The funding sources used were the Active Recreation/Municipal fund and the Passive Open Space fund. Besides the cemetery, Public Works maintains a DEEP approved “stump dump” for municipal use only. Prorating the funding sources would have about 25 acres as Passive Open Space. At their June 10, 2014 meeting, the Tolland Town Council gave its approval of the open space and active recreation/municipal areas delineated on a map of Town land at 287 Baxter Street. This management plan is for the approximate 25 acres that are Passive Open Space at the northern part of the parcel. The 2.5 acres of wetlands that surround the brook will not have trails and will be left in its natural state.

There is an old woods road that runs across the property in an east/west direction. The road continues onto adjacent properties to the east. It is deeded as a right-of-way to the property immediately to the east. The old woods road will be used as the trail. The elevation ranges from a high of 720 feet above sea level on the western side down to 660 feet above sea level on the eastern side. It is a very gradual descent. There are wetlands on the eastern side of the property.

The brook flows easterly and joins Clark Brook which runs southerly along Route 195 and then joins the Willimantic River. Therefore this property is part of the *Willimantic River Watershed* (Town of Tolland Open Space & Conservation Plan, map 7). It is not an area of *Productive Forest Soils* (Town of Tolland Open Space & Conservation Plan, map 8). It is in an *Important Wildlife Areas and Corridors with Significant Natural Habitats* (Town of Tolland Open Space & Conservation Plan, map 12).

Problems and Concerns – A parking area will need to be constructed as this property lies on a curve. Also, the public must not park blocking the entranceway to the Public Works area. There is a stream crossing, with culvert, iron grids, and plywood, which needs to be cleaned up and re-constructed.



Potential Uses – The use of the property must be 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
- Habitat and wildlife studies
- Nature study
- Mountain biking

Utilizing the *Conservation Commission Standards for Mountain Biking and Horseback Riding Use of Trails*, for horseback riding, the standards of not traversing frequently wet areas or watercourses and no boards or bridges are not met so horseback riding is not allowed. All standards for mountain biking are currently met so mountain biking is allowed.

Future Plans – The Commission could investigate developing a loop trail.

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.

Use Restrictions and Visitor Responsibilities – Visitors are reminded to use the property in a manner consistent with land use guidelines and protecting open space resources. The following guidelines are the standards for use and are identified on signage on 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.
- Do not disturb vegetation or wildlife.
- Visitors need to stay on marked trail.
- 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.

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, and a variety of Town agencies and resources 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.
- Construct and maintain the parking area.
- 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.
- Construct and maintain the stream crossing.
- Maintain property boundaries.

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 a particular habitat. Such management activities, if deemed necessary, will be done in consultation with a professional forester to insure 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:

- Construct and maintain parking area and access fence.
- Install and maintain permitted/non-permitted use signs, map boxes, and trail map signs.
- Keep map boxes supplied with property brochures.
- Maintain the approved trail system.
- Maintain trail markings and signs.
- Perform litter patrol as needed.
- Maintain property boundary markings. Conduct a yearly walk of the all boundaries.
- Conduct ongoing habitat and wildlife documentation.
- Construct and maintain the stream crossing.
- Manage the woodlands following the guidance of a professional Forester.

Attachments

- Aerial map with location map insert
- Topographical map
- Map of passive versus active use of the property
- Trail map

The temporary steward of the property is Bob Rubino.

2012 Aerial Map with Location Map Insert



Topographical Map



Map of passive versus active use of the property



Trail Map

TOWN OF TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
BAXTER STREET CONSERVATION AREA
287 BAXTER STREET
TRAIL MAP

