

**Town of Tolland, Connecticut
Conservation Commission
Shafran Conservation Area Management Plan
Eaton Road, Tolland, CT**



A Passive Recreation Open Space Conservation Area

Adopted by Commission 2/12/2009; Revised 1/9/2014; Use change 3/13/2014

Adopted by Council 2/24/2009

Town of Tolland

Conservation Commission Property Management Plan

Shafran Conservation Area – 104 Eaton Road

Background – The Tolland Conservation Commission is responsible for overseeing properties purchased by the Town of Tolland for conservation purposes and to prepare a management plan for each property. The management plans are based upon the environmental characteristics 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.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION, RESOURCES, POTENTIAL, AND PROBLEMS

Property Description – The Shafran Conservation area is a 65.3 acre parcel of land on the northerly side of Eaton Road in the northwest section of Tolland. It was purchased on June 24, 2002 from Raja Peggy and Dimitry Shafran 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 parcel abuts land owned and preserved by the Connecticut Water Company as part of the Shenipsit Lake Watershed. The lake serves as a public drinking water supply for Vernon, a portion of Tolland, the University of Connecticut and nearby towns. Given the benefits of forestland for watershed and water quality protection, the property should be managed to maintain the existing forest. The protection of the forest will benefit the Shenipsit Lake water quality and the ground water in the aquifer underneath the property. The northwest corner of the property abuts the elevated grade of an abandoned trolley line.



A detailed stewardship plan for the property was prepared in November of 2002 by the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 344 Merrow Road, Tolland in collaboration with and for *Conserving Tolland*. Entitled “Stewardship Plan for the Shafran Property”, it serves as the basis for this management plan and is an integral part of the process of identifying problems, opportunities, and considerations for the management of the property for use by the public.

The Shafran Conservation Area is a woodland area with two ponds and meandering streams. The site is bisected by Cemetery Brook which flows westerly to Charter’s Brook and then to Shenipsit Lake and then further westerly to the Connecticut River via the Hockanum River. Where Cemetery Brook enters the property from the east, the terrain flanking the stream rises abruptly, forming a sandy escarpment and upland. Further to the west, the stream passes through lowlands from which the terrain rises more gradually to drier uplands. Browns Brook enters from the east and immediately joins Cemetery Brook. Observation of the streams indicates that the streams are babbling brooks during low flow times and roaring brooks during periods of high flow. The brooks are frequented by trout and serve as nursery areas for fish. The brooks are *Surface and Stream Water Quality Class AA* (Town of Tolland Open Space & Conservation Plan, map 5), which is the highest rating obtainable.

Two small, excavated ponds occupy the lowlands and drain easterly into the stream. Amphibians and waterfowl have been observed there. The lower pond is shallow and will eventually become a wetland.



The Shafran property is forested with several plant communities. A small, dense stand of Pitch Pine occupies a site to the far southwest corner of the property. Pitch Pine stands are a unique and uncommon vegetation type to the area. The dominant plant of the understory is wild Lily-of-the-Valley scattered about the forest floor. A Red Oak/Red Maple/White Pine/Black Birch Forest is a forest of mixed composition that comes about after a site has been extensively cleared. Several White Pines of considerable size are present especially along the southwest corner and in the northernmost reaches of the property. In the extreme northeast, east, and southeast corners there is a Red Oak/Low Blueberry forest which is typical in Connecticut. The shrubby understory is chiefly a “heath” composed of blueberry and Mountain Laurel. At the east side of the property the trail passes through a grove of Mountain Laurel. In the moist lowlands,

the dominant canopy tree is the Red Maple with Cinnamon Fern forming a nearly uninterrupted understory. Along the edge of the ponds grow a narrow margin of sedges and grasses.

An analysis of plant types suggest that, like many areas of Tolland, the property was once clear cut and mostly an open land area. Evidence shows this may have been due to logging as well as fire. A few invasive plant species can be found (Oriental Bittersweet, Japanese Barberry, Multiflora Rose) but do not overrun the tract. Excavated ponds and drainage-ways suggest that drainage of the lowlands may have been attempted. Stone walls and fence wire give evidence of past human use of the land.

The soils on the property range from the excessively dry soils to poorly drained wetland soils. They are not considered *Prime Farmland or Additional Farmland of Statewide Importance*.

Evidence suggests that there is a lot of wildlife on the property. Deer tracks, snakes, owls and rabbits were observed. The Cooper's Hawk has been observed on the property. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection lists the Hawk as a "threatened" species. Protecting its existing forest and habitat will contribute to the Cooper's Hawk's long-term survival in the area. The many snags (a dead or dying standing tree) are considered important and support a variety of cavity-using amphibians, reptiles and mammals. This property is within an *Important Wildlife Area and Corridor* as designated by the Town of Tolland Open Space & Conservation Plan (map 12).

Potential Uses – In accordance with the DEEP grant conditions, uses of the property must be passive recreation which includes hiking, maintaining habitats for animals, and studying existing habitats and wildlife. Accepted uses include:

- Hiking
- Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing
- Dog walking under owner's control; town ordinance requires dogs to be on a leash
- Mountain biking
- Habitat and wildlife studies
- Nature study

Use Restrictions – With the transfer of this property to the Town there are inherent restrictions which derive from 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 and roads.

- No hunting or firearms allowed.
- No setting of fires.
- Respect the rights of other visitors.
- Area closes at sunset. Night use is by permit only.
- Notify the Conservation 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*. Upon acquisition of this property, erosion problems were evident and need to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Specific objectives for this parcel include:

- Follow best property management processes.
- Maintain the approved trail system.
- Monitor dams, ponds, and streams.
- Maintain the parking lot.
- 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 bridges and bench.
- Protect the stone walls.
- 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. The Commission will consult with a professional Forester to insure 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 the bridges and bench.
- Maintain trail markings and signs.
- Maintain map containers and keep supplied with property brochures.
- Monitor dams, ponds, and streams.

- Protect the stone walls.
- Perform litter patrol as needed.
- Maintain parking lot and access fence.
- Maintain property boundary markings. Conduct a yearly walk of the boundaries.
- Manage the woodlands following the guidance of a professional Forester.

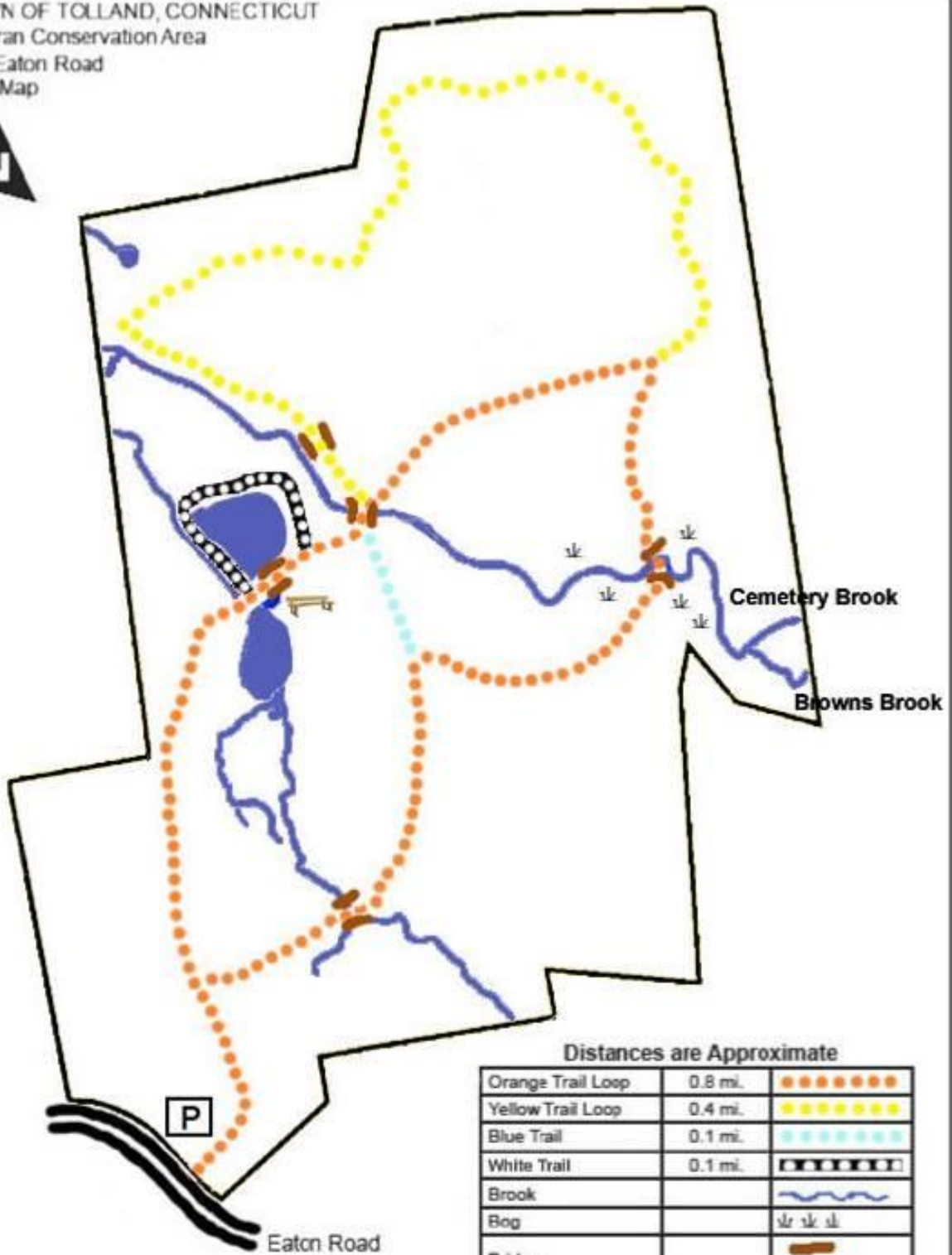
Attachments

- Parcel map with location map insert
- Topographical map
- Trail map
- Perimeter Survey

The steward of the property is Barry Jezek.



TOWN OF TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT
 Shafran Conservation Area
 104 Eaton Road
 Trail Map



Distances are Approximate

Orange Trail Loop	0.8 mi.	
Yellow Trail Loop	0.4 mi.	
Blue Trail	0.1 mi.	
White Trail	0.1 mi.	
Brook		
Bog		
Bridge		

