STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020, 7:00 PM
ZOOM MEETING

(IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE NOT PERMITTED DUE TO COVID19)
(INSTRUCTIONS TO JOIN VIRTUAL MEETING PROVIDED BELOW)

I. CALL TO ORDER:

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS (On Non-Agenda Items)**:**

III. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

1. Sustainable Ellington Initiative
   a. 2.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory – Draft dated November 2020
   b. 2.7 Provide Education on Water Conservation

2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads
   a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly agenda/minutes

3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads

4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program: Gage – Lead

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 20-21 Budget Expenditure Update

2. Approval of the October 6, 2020 regular meeting minutes

3. Approval of 2021 meeting schedule

4. Approval of Organization Membership to CT Land Conservation Council

5. Correspondence:

V. ADJOURNMENT:

Note: Next regular meeting is scheduled for January 5, 2020

In order to comply with COVID-19 limited in-person meetings and social distancing requirements, this meeting will be conducted using the online video conferencing service provider Zoom. Meeting details will be provided on the Agenda and posted on the Ellington webpage (www.ellington-ct.gov), Agenda & Minutes, Conservation Commission.

Join Zoom Meeting via link:
https://zoom.us/j/94714037542
Meeting ID: 947 1403 7542
Password: 972442

Join Zoom Meeting by phone:
1-646-558-8656 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 947 1403 7542
Password: 972442

Ellington
CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

Dedicated to Conserving Ellington's Natural Resources

NATURAL RESOURCE
&
WILDLIFE INVENTORY

Prepared By:

Ellington Conservation Commission

Ellington Planning Department

Adopted: November 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

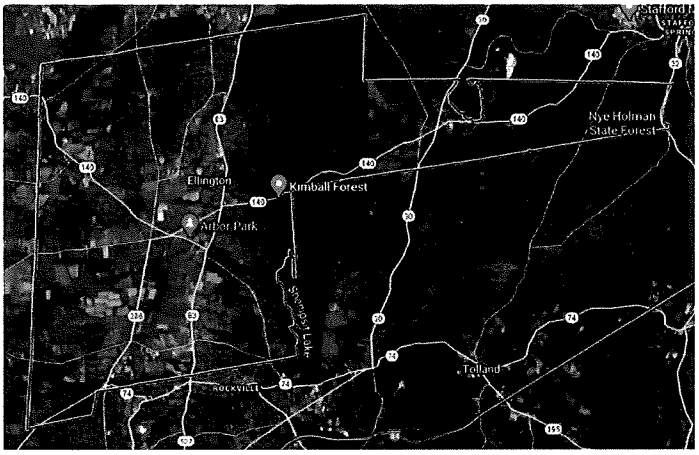
Ellington is a town rich with natural resources, diverse habitats and landscape, and varied plant and wildlife. The quality, quantity and distribution of natural resources effect the quality of life in town. The purpose of this inventory is to highlight major natural resources in Ellington and identify areas important to protect and preserve.

Understanding where natural resources are and how they interrelate will shape policies to help protect critical natural resources. This inventory is intended to guide future preservation recommendations and priorities, and serve as a guide when assessing areas suitable for development and areas important to preserve. This document will assist in furthering the goals and recommendations of the Ellington Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), as may be amended from time to time.

A. THE PROCESS

The process of conducting a natural resource inventory begins with documenting the town's natural attributes. These attributes include the geology (soils, surficial geology, bedrock outcrops), hydrology (rivers, streams, lakes and ponds), and biology (plant and animal habitat) of the natural landscape.

This inventory is prepared using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, open source intelligence, and personal knowledge and observations from commission volunteers. These tools provide a means to map and analyze natural resources and assist in establishing policy to protect natural resources in Ellington. Mapping of natural resources provides an opportunity to observe, on a town-wide scale, the distribution of natural assets that define the local landscape. Understanding the composition and location of important natural resources adds context when establishing policy and priorities intended to protect critical natural features.



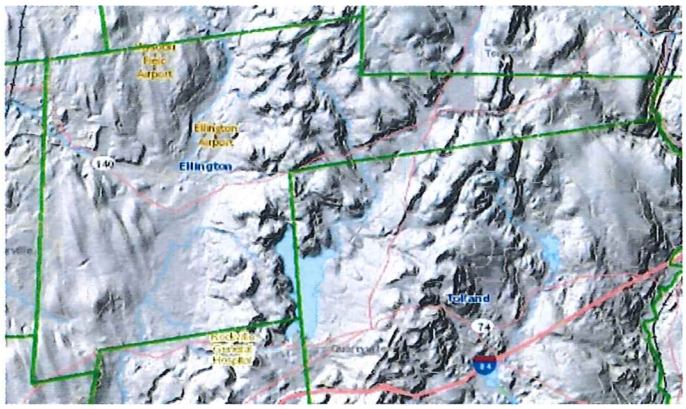
Town of Ellington

II. NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

A. GEOLOGY

Geologically, Ellington is separated into approximately two equal halves. The western lowlands, known as the western farm belt, is part of the Connecticut River Valley and contains fiber-producing soils and relatively flat terrain. The eastern portion of town, known as the eastern highlands, is hilly and largely forested.

Where the eastern and western segments separate is an ancient north | south fault line created millions of years ago by continental collision. The fault line separates Ellington generally along Route 83 from the southernmost point where Ellington borders the Town of Vernon and extends in a northward direction for about six miles to the Town of Somers. The fault line is illustrated below.



Western Lowlands & Eastern Highlands

Long ago the eastern highlands were mountains thousands of feet higher than they are today. Over millions of years the mountains eroded sending thick layers of minerals, soils, and silt into the western half of town and the Connecticut River Valley. Deposits were augmented by other eroded materials carried from the north by massive glaciers during successive ice ages.

For several thousand years following the last Ice Age, the flow of the Connecticut River was blocked by a dam of glacial debris near what is now Middletown, Connecticut. A large lake, referred to as Lake Hitchcock, covered the Connecticut River Valley. Lake Hitchcock existed along a delta of sediment deposited at what is today Rocky Hill, Connecticut, and its northern end 200 miles north to St. Johnsbury, Vermont. This lake drained over a relatively short period of time and the water cut a new escape through the hills south of Middletown. The silt that accumulated in Lake Hitchcock and the materials that eroded from the eastern uplands contributed to large areas of prime and important agricultural soils in Ellington's farm belt.

Lake Hitchcock

Bedrock Geology

The bedrock geology in Ellington is made up primarily of Brownstone, also referred to by geologists as arkose (*Bedrock Geology Map available at www.cteco.uconn.edu*). This sedimentary rock most likely originated from the deposits of the many streams that flowed from the Eastern and Western Uplands of Connecticut millions of years ago. According to the Bedrock Geological Map of Connecticut, Ellington's bedrock is largely composed of arkose, gneiss, schist, and amphibolite. Of some interest are a few exposures of bedrock on Soapstone Mountain in Ellington.

Soapstone Mountain

Soapstone Mountain was the first land purchased for the Shenipsit State Forest. It was purchased in 1927 for the purpose of building a fire lookout tower. Since the 20's over 7,000 acres of land has been added around the summit in Ellington, Somers and Stafford.

Surficial Geology

The surficial geology in Ellington is a product of glaciation. Glacial and postglacial deposits overlie the bedrock surface (*Surficial Materials Map available at www.cteco.uconn.edu*). Glacial ice-laid deposits known as tills, consist of a non-sorted mixture of materials ranging from large coarse boulders to fine deposits such as silt or clay. Glacial meltwater deposits, known as stratified deposits, were laid down in glacial streams, lakes and ponds which occupied the lowlands of Ellington as the last ice sheet melted. Stratified deposits are generally found in the form of sand or gravel uniform in size and have few large stones and boulders. The difference between the composition of till and stratified deposits

is important as subsurface water travels very well through stratified deposits, but not very well through till. Geologists look to areas with large stratified deposits to identify potential sources of ground water for public consumption. These areas are important natural resources and have been the focus of aquifer protection regulations in recent years.

Postglacial sediments, primarily floodplain alluvium and swamp deposits, are less widely distributed. Portions of the "Great Marsh" and areas abutting the Hockanum River, areas west of Route 83 in Ellington, are composed of alluvium and swamp deposits.

B. SOILS

Wetland Soils

In Connecticut wetland soil is defined by soil type. Wetlands is land, including submerged land, consisting of soils designated as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial and flood plain by the National Cooperative Soils Survey of the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture (NRCS). Wetlands generally fit into one of four categories: marshes, swamps, bogs, and fens.

Marsh land is periodically saturated, flooded, or ponded with water and characterized by herbaceous (non-woody) vegetation adapted to wet soil conditions. Generally, the water table in a marsh is at or above the ground surface throughout the year.

Swamps are watercourses distinguished by the dominance of wetland trees and shrubs. Swamps contain very wet soils during the growing season and standing water during other times of the year.

Bogs are watercourses distinguished by evergreen trees and shrubs underlain by peat deposits, poor or very poor drainage, and highly acidic conditions.

Fens are characterized by low, shrubby vegetation on saturated but not flooded soils. Fens, unlike common wetlands, depends on two specific criteria: 1) they must sit on an area of calcareous bedrock, usually limestone or marble, and 2) must be fed by groundwater from subsurface seeps or surface springs. Fens are unique wetlands and there are only a few known throughout Connecticut. There are no known fens in Ellington.

Cattails
Common Marsh Plant

Skunk Cabbage
Common Swamp Plant

Water Willow
Common Bog Plant

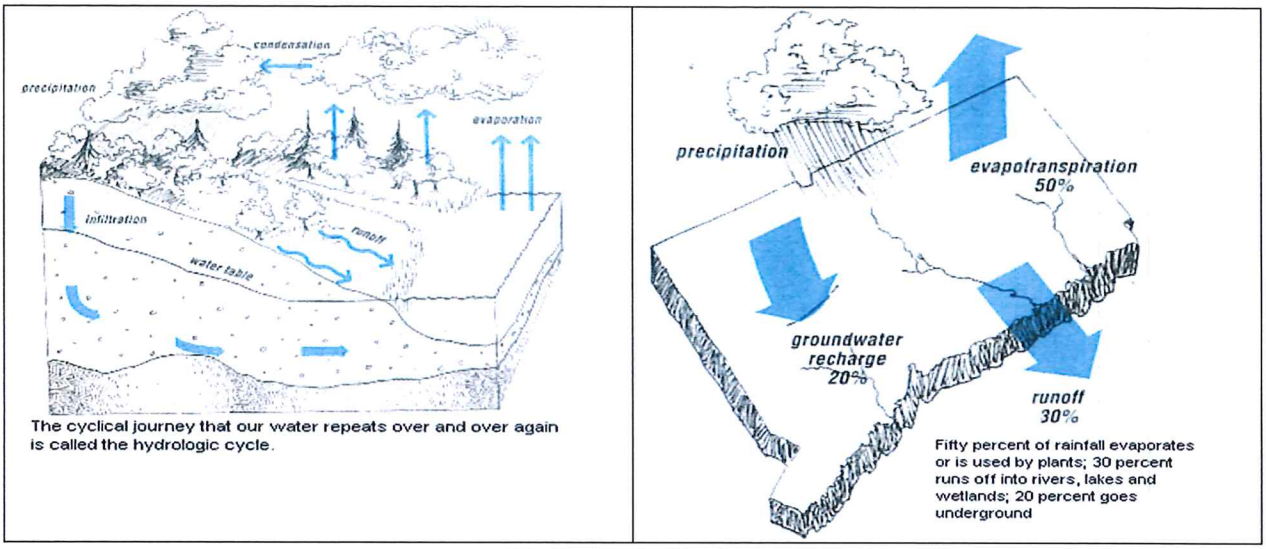
Brown Sedge
Common Fen Plant

The Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), lists 13 important functional values of wetlands as follows:

1. Groundwater recharge/discharge
2. Floodwater storage
3. Fish habitat
4. Sediment retention
5. Nutrient removal/retention/transformation
6. Production export
7. Sediment and shoreline stabilization
8. Wetland wildlife habitat
9. Recreation
10. Educational/scientific value
11. Uniqueness
12. Visual/aesthetic quality
13. Threatened and endangered species habitat

Not all wetlands perform all functions nor do they necessarily perform functions equally well. Nevertheless, wetlands are essential in both maintaining and improving water quality.

A function of wetlands is the distribution and circulation of water above, on, and below the earth's surface; put more simply, the cyclical journey that water repeats over and over is called the hydrologic cycle. Water quality functions include reduction of the velocity of flow, ground-water recharge, and influence on atmospheric processes. Hydrologic functions are those related to quantity of water that enters, is stored, or leave a wetland.



Hydrologic Cycle

In Ellington, there are 2,744 acres of wetland soils and 490 acres of waterbodies for a total of 3,234 acres of wetlands and watercourses comprising 14.7% of the town. There are an additional 7,422 acres in the upland review area (sometimes referred to as the wetlands buffer area) which comprise an additional one third of the town. The general location of wetland soils, waterbodies, and upland review area is available online at *ellingtonct.mapgeo under the Wetlands theme layer.*

Prime and Statewide Important Farmland Soils

Prime farmland is defined by the NRCS as "land that has the best combination of physical and chemical properties for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses." Prime farmland has the properties to generate high yields of crops when treated and managed according to modern farming methods. Statewide important farmland soils are nearly all prime farmland and also produce high yields of crops.

Statistics indicate that the quantity of farmland, and consequently the quantity of prime and important farmland soils, has been rapidly decreasing in the State. According to University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, farmland has decreased from almost 50% to only 11% of the State's total land area since 1950. Ellington is committed to keeping farmland an integral part of community character, and established of formal farmland preservation program enabling the town to partner with state and federal agencies to preserve farmland. In 2007, electors approved a 2 million dollar bond authorization for the purchase of development rights for farmland in exchange for a permanent easement ensuring farmland soils are retained in perpetuity. There are currently 888 acres of preserved farmland in Ellington. In addition, Ellington maintains over 5,000 acres of active agricultural land, approximately 25% of the total land area.

Most of the western lowlands of Ellington, generally the land west of Route 83, is designated as having prime farmland soils and statewide important farmland soils. The general distribution of these soil types is illustrated online at *ellingtonct.mapgeo under the Farmland Soils theme layer.*

Soil Potential for Subsurface Sewage Disposal

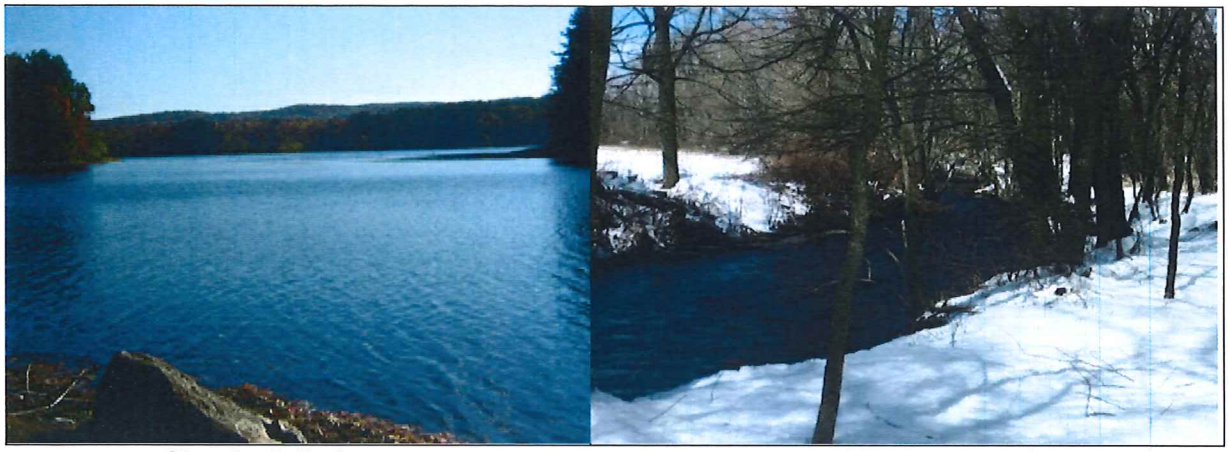
Understanding what areas of the town have soils suitable for installing a single family residence subsurface disposal system, commonly referred to as a residential septic system, is important in planning development. Assistance with rating soil potential for septic systems can be obtained through North Central District Health Department, and illustrated on Potential For Subsurface Sewage Disposal maps located at *cteco.uconn.edu and websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov.* The type of soil gauges the extent of soil limitations that must be overcome to meet Connecticut and local health code regulation when siting residential septic systems.

C. WATER RESOURCES

Water resources include watercourses, water bodies, watersheds, and aquifers. Crystal Lake and Shenipsit Lake, are major water bodies in Ellington. Some of the smaller water bodies are Sadds Mill Pond, Cigar Pond, Abbey Pond, Charters Pond, Moody Pond, Minor Pond, and Ladds Pond. The Hockanum River, Willimantic River, Broad Brook, Muddy Brook, Bahlers Brook, Kibbes Brook, Creamery Brook, Pecks Brook, Ketch Brook, Pinney Brook, Abbey Brook, Hydes Brook, Charters Brook, Kimballs Brook, Martins Brook, Belding Brook, Turkey Brook, Davis Brook, Shenipsit Lake Brook, Abby Brook, Bonemill Brook and White Lot Brook are watercourses flowing through Ellington. These water features are fed by a network of tributaries and are best defined by the watersheds that supply them.

Crystal Lake

Shenipsit Lake ("The Snip") is a natural lake used as a water storage facility, reservoir, for the Hockanum River. The Snip is 522.8 acres and borders Ellington, Tolland, and Vernon, Connecticut. The Shenipsit Lake Association ("SLA"), a not-for-profit organization, was established in 1990 to help keep Shenipsit Lake open and available for all people to enjoy. The Snip offers bass and trout fishing, and SLA sponsors fishing from boat or shore and several fishing derbies each year: boat fishing is limited to those registered and stored on premise. There's five and a half miles of hiking trails around The Snip open to hikers of all classifications. Trails are mostly flat, well maintained and easily accessible from Route 74 and Shenipsit Lake Road and amidst beautiful woods and natural scenery customary in rural New England.

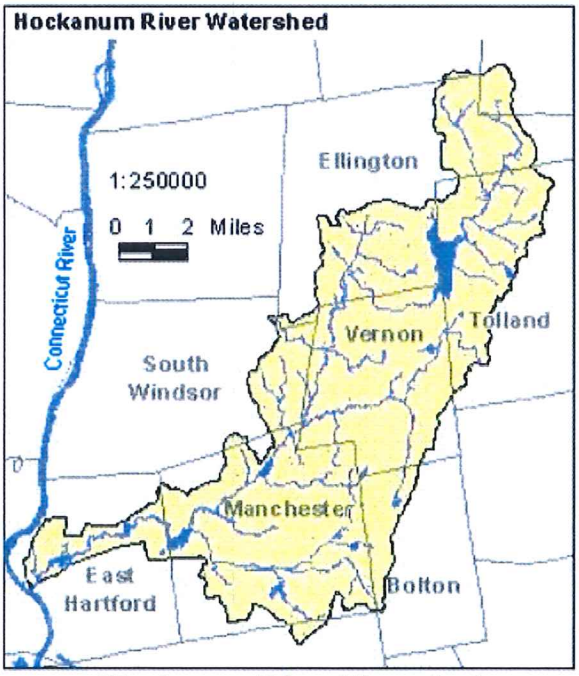


Shenipsit Lake **Hockanum River**

Subregional Watersheds

A watershed is defined as all the land and waterways that drain into the same body of water. All the surface water that drains Ellington's 34.4 square miles begins its flow at the highest point of one of ten subregional watershed basins. These watersheds are delineated on a *map titled Natural Drainage Basins available at cteco.uconn.edu, Ellington CT Subregional Basins and Surface Water Flow Directions at clear.uconn.edu, and illustrated online at ellingtonct.mapgeo under the Watersheds theme layer.*

Of the ten subregional watersheds within the town, two watercourses drain 16,128 acres or 72.9% of the town's land area: the Hockanum River and Broad Brook.



Hockanum River Watershed

A public water supply watershed and reservoir are located within the boundaries of Ellington. The public water supply watershed drains to Shenipsit Lake Reservoir which is owned and managed by the Connecticut Water Company. This lake is a critical water supply source for north central Connecticut.

Watersheds define the natural drainage systems in Ellington. Rivers, brooks, lakes, ponds, wetlands and floodplains are the attributes of the watershed that sustain private and public drinking water sources, support a variety of plant and animal life, and mitigate flood conditions. Managing these watersheds in a sustainable manner is vital to ensure the attributes they contain and the benefits they provide will be around for years to come.

Floodplains

A floodplain is a relatively flat low-lying area adjacent to a river or stream which is subject to flood events and is formed mainly of sediment deposits. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has delineated zones of Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs), and in some cases the Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) within the town. 100 Year Flood Zones indicate that there is 1 out of 100 chances that the area will be flooded every year, while 500 Year Flood Zones indicate that there is 1 out of 500 chances that the area will be flooded every year. General Flood Zone data is available online at *cteco.uconn.edu and ellingtonct.mapgeo under the Hazard Mitigation theme layer.*
Floodways are those areas within the floodplain that convey the floodwaters. FEMA defines the regulatory floodway as "the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height." Therefore, the town must regulate development in these floodways to ensure there are no increases in flood elevations.
In 1982 the Ellington Zoning Regulations were amended to include a Flood Plain District. The purpose of the regulation is to promote the health, safety, and general welfare and to minimize losses due to flood conditions in specific areas by:

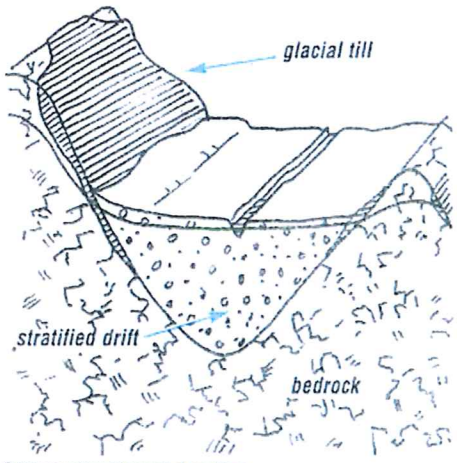
- Restricting or prohibiting uses dangerous to health, safety, and property due to water or erosion due to flood heights or velocities;
- Require uses vulnerable to floods, and facility which serve those uses, be protected from flood damage at time of initial construction;
- Control alteration of natural flood plains, stream channels, and natural protective barriers, which involve accommodation of flood waters;
- Control filling, grading, dredging, and other development which may increase erosion or flood damage; and,
- Prevent or regulate construction of flood barriers that will unnaturally divert flood waters or may increase flood hazards to other lands.

The FEMA Flood Map Service Center (MSC) is an official public source for flood hazard information produced in support of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Reviewing changes to flood maps, when available, is important to understanding the most up-to-date and effective information on flooding hazards and risks in your area. FEMA flood maps are continually updated through Letters of Map Change (LOMC) - a letter which reflects an official change to an effective Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). LOMCs are issued in response to a request of FEMA to revise or amend its

effective flood map to remove a property or reflect changed flooding conditions on the effective map. Two basic types of LOMCs include Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA), a written amendment documenting flood hazard details, and Letter of Map Revision (LOMR), a document displaying an area of the effective map revised to reflect newer information made available after the flood hazard zones where mapped initially. Since 2012, a list of accepted LOMCs have been published on FEMA's website and available at *msc.fema.gov.*

Aquifers

While groundwater can be defined simply as water lying below the surface of the ground, an aquifer is more specifically defined by the CT DEEP as "any geologic formation that allows for the withdrawal of useable amount of water". In most cases, the use of this water involves a water supply for human consumption.



Cutaway view of principal aquifers

Ellington has two (2) public water well fields operated by the Connecticut Water Company (CWC) and several private community well fields serving residential developments. Approximately half of Ellington homeowners get their drinking water from individual wells.

A small amount of hazardous material if improperly stored or disposed of, can result in substantial damage to underground aquifers as well as above ground water resources. CT DEEP has identified twenty-seven (27) contaminated or potentially contaminated sites in Ellington. Most of these sites involve leaking underground tanks.

In 2010, the State legislature passed legislation requiring eighty (80) towns within the state to adopt aquifer protection regulations and create an aquifer protection commission. These towns have aquifer resources meeting specific state defined criteria. Under the law, water companies with public wells in those affected communities are required to prepare detailed maps of recharge areas. Although Ellington has significant aquifer resources, it does not have large sand and gravel aquifers as defined under State law and therefore is not required to adopt aquifer protection regulations under this law. However, this does not mean that groundwater resources in Ellington are less vulnerable to contamination or are not significant enough to still merit added protection.

The Ellington POCD outlined strategies the town may wish to consider at further protecting these resources. The town could consider adopting a more modest version of the state's aquifer protection program. A study to map recharge areas could be undertaken in partnership with the CWC. In addition to recharge areas associated with public well fields, all significant aquifers should be identified. These areas would be used as the basis to define an overlay protection zone. The Planning and Zoning Commission could adopt regulations which either prohibit or place restrictions on certain land uses within this zone which pose the greatest threat to ground water resources. Alternatively, the commission could reference a set of best management practices to be implemented in connection with any application seeking site plan approval within the overlay zone.

D. FORESTED LAND

According to the CT DEEP, forests cover nearly 60% of Connecticut, making it one of the most forested states in the country. The trees and forests of Ellington add immensely to the quality of life for the people of the town. They filter the air, safeguard private and public drinking water sources, produce locally grown forest products, provide essential habitat for wildlife, moderate summer and winter temperatures and provide recreational opportunities.

The Ellington POCD recommends a selective tree harvest program based on a plan prepared by a licensed forester to benefit long-term health of the forest.

The state owns significant parcels of open space which are forested within the town comprising approximately 1,850 acres, and land trusts and town lands add approximately 300 acres each of additional forested lands. In fact, these protected areas account for 2,450 acres or 12% of the land in Ellington. Forested lands cover 10,604 acres or approximately 48% of Ellington. The distribution of the town's forested lands is illustrated online at *ellingtonct.mapgeo and noaa.gov.*

E. SIGNIFICANT HABITATS AND STATE LISTED SPECIES

Ellington has abundant diversity of plant and animal life. Ellington is a rural-suburban town with the majority of densely developed land clustered along the southern portions of town and along major thoroughfares. The northern segments of town and the eastern panhandle include a mix of farmland and forested areas. The combination of varied topography, forested tracts, numerous rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds provide exceptional habitat for a variety of plants and animals.

Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species

In Connecticut, the protection of unique biological communities is held to a high standard. In support of this, the CT DEEP has inventoried sites across the state that contain habitats of endangered, threatened, and special concern species. These habitat areas are perceived as unique and receive special protection status from the state. The state has identified these sites in a special survey called The Connecticut Natural Diversity Database (NDDB). The NDDB is a centralized inventory of unique habitat locations and represent the findings of years' worth of biological surveys.

The NDDB breaks down sites into the following taxonomic groups: mammals, birds, reptiles,

amphibians, fish, invertebrates and plants. Within these groups, the species are further categorized as being endangered, threatened, or special concern. According to Connecticut Public Act 89-224, these categories are defined as follows:

- "Endangered Species" means any native species documented by biological research and inventory to be in danger of extirpation throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the state and to have no more than five occurrences in the state, and any species determined to be an "endangered species" pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act.

- "Threatened Species" means any native species documented by biological research and inventory to be likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the state and to have no more than nine occurrences in the state, and any species determined to be a "threatened species" pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act, except for such species determined to be endangered by the Commissioner (DEEP) in accordance with section 4 of this Act.

- "Species of Special Concern" means any native plant species or any native non-harvested wildlife species documented by scientific research and inventory to have a naturally restricted range or habitat in the state, to be at a low population level, to be in such high demand by man that its unregulated taking would be detrimental to the conservation of its population or has been extirpated from the state.

Information from the state's database was transcribed onto maps, represented by circles a half mile in radius. These sites, commonly referred to as "blobs," are represented ambiguously because of the many threats they face. These threats include collection, because of their beauty, uniqueness or purported medical or economic values. Even well-intended observers and photographers have been known to accidentally destroy sites.

The location of blobs are illustrated on a map titled Natural Diversity Data Base Areas, Ellington, CT, and available online at *depdata.ct.gov and ellingtonct.mapgeo under Natural Resource Protection theme layer.* In addition to generalizing the exact location of these sites, the category in which the sites are located has also been removed. This is to further ensure the protection of these unique resources.

The NDDB information is updated every two years. Development applications should be compared to current NDDB information and any project located within a NDDB buffer area should submit a formal request for project review to the CT DEEP as part of local approval.

As part of this study, the CT DEEP reviewed NDDB for Ellington and found state-listed species documented nearby. A list of species has been provided, including selected management recommendations, where available. The CT DEEP NDDB Determination is attached as an appendix. The documented species include:

Birds:

- Sharp-shined hawk
- Broad-winged hawk
- Whip-poor-will
- Bald Eagle

- Savannah sparrow
- Brown thrasher

Herps:

- Spotted turtle
- Wood turtle
- Smooth green snake

Fish:

- Consult with a CTDEEP Fisheries Biologists for more information

Plants:

- Consult with a plant ecologist for more information

Hockanum River Bird Survey (2019)

The CT DEEP NDDB Determination appendix includes recommendation for surveying endangered, threatened, and special concern species in areas of special interest. In 2019, student and commission volunteers conducted a survey of birds along the Hockanum River, the survey is attached an appendix.

Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife corridors are contiguous segments of land that create a link between animal habitats by providing transportation routes for animals to use to reach breeding grounds or forage areas. Many wildlife corridors include riparian zones that line rivers and streams and include both undeveloped and partially developed areas. In some cases, land that comprise wildlife corridors are privately owned and vulnerable to development or activities destructive to wildlife and their ecology.

Wildlife passageways are important to avoid isolation and eventual extinction of plant and animal populations. The biological integrity of a species is also dependent on the interconnectivity of wildlife habitat to ensure diversity of species and avoid population "islands," which are subject to inbreeding and the detrimental effects this has on the genetics of the species.

In Connecticut, there is no formal inventory of wildlife migration routes that could be used to identify existing wildlife corridors. As a result, we must attempt to infer the wildlife migration patterns. This is a difficult assignment due to variables such as land use (undeveloped land), proximity to protected open space, presence of streams, ridge tops, wetlands, and/or forested lands, and proximity to "sensitive areas of special concern." The caveat is that these potential areas require additional scientific study to further refine their boundaries.

Riparian Corridors

According to the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR), "Riparian" refers to the area by the banks of a river, stream, or other body of water. A riparian corridor or zone is a strip of land of a specified width along rivers, streams, and other waterways.

Riparian corridors with native vegetation and soils provide multiple functions and values. They are the first line of defense against the impacts of impervious surfaces. Riparian buffers protect water

resources by improving water quality through filtering pollutants and sediments, stabilizing stream banks and river beds, provide habitat and corridors for wildlife, and shade waters for fisheries enhancement.

There is no one generic buffer width that will keep water clean, stabilize banks, protect fish and wildlife habitat, and satisfy human demands on the land. To protect wildlife habitat and provide wildlife corridors along waterways, the recommended buffer width varies depending upon the desired species. The United States Forest Service, in a publication titled "Riparian Forest Buffers-Function and Design for Protection and Enhancement of Water Resources," suggests a minimum buffer of 95 feet, which is composed of three zones: Zone 1 begins at the top of the stream bank and occupies a strip of "undisturbed forest" of 15 feet. Zone 2 begins at the edge of zone 1 and occupies an additional 60 feet of "managed forest." Zone 3 is composed of 20 feet of natural or controlled grazed grassland whose main function is to control runoff. The 95-foot buffer is a minimum, and actual widths vary depending on 1) the nature of the stream protected; 2) soils, topography and vegetation; and 3) land use of concern that may impact waterways. Mandating a minimum buffer is not feasible for the entire town, but it's feasible to implement some level of riparian zone in undeveloped potions of town.

III. CONCLUSION

The natural resource inventory presented here represents the general natural attributes of Ellington that are important to preserve. The next step in the planning process is to conduct an open space inventory and develop a strategy to help prioritize these resources and ensure they are protected for years to come. This is done through careful assessment of the open space priorities of the town and clear articulation of those priorities through identification of goals and objectives.

III. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Connecticut DEEP, Natural Diversity Database, deep.state.ct.us
Ellington Zoning Regulations
Ellington Plan of Conservation and Development 2019
Ellington Inland Wetlands Regulations
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service

Connecticut Department of
ENERGY &
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August 14, 2020

Lisa Houlihan
Town of Ellington
55 Main St, PO Box 187
Ellington, CT 06029
LHOULIHAN@ELLINGTON-CT.GOV

NDDB DETERMINATION NUMBER: 202008200

Project: TOWN OF ELLINGTON, NATURAL RESOURCES WILDLIFE INVENTORY - ELLINGTON, CT

Expiration: August 14, 2022

I have reviewed Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) maps and files regarding this project. According to our records, there are State-listed species (RCSA Sec. 26-306) documented nearby the proposed project area. Please see full list attached at the end of the letter. I have included selected management recommendations for species, where we have them available. We recommend that you consult with species biologists to refine your specific management plans.

Birds:

Sharp-shined hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)- State Endangered
Historical record, would benefit from surveys to determine distribution.
Sharp-shinned hawk nest in young, dense, even-aged conifer stands with overarching canopies. They prefer white pine, hemlock or pine/oak forests. The hawk's broad nests are usually placed in the denser portion of the canopy against the trunk. Its breeding season extends between April 15 and the end of July. Active nests benefit from a 660ft (200m) setback for new activities. Sharp-shinned hawk will benefit from protection of large unfragmented forest blocks and management that promotes young stands of conifer forest.

- Survey guidance:
    - Sharp-shinned hawk surveys should be initiated in late March when birds return. Dawn acoustic surveys are the preferred technique to detect this hawk. We recommend 3 survey visits between March 20-May 15. Listening stations should be positioned within 150 m (meters) of all habitats to be surveyed. The observer should arrive and be settled at the listening station at least 45 minutes before sunrise. The listening session should continue until 1½ hours after sunrise. Plan carefully so that the entire listening session can be conducted without interruptions for moving position. Subsequent location of the nest should not be attempted until after the estimated date of hatching to avoid disturbance.

Broad-winged hawk (*Buteo platypterus*)- State Special Concern
Primarily found in the northeast corner of the town.
The Broad-winged hawk is a neotropical migrant hawk that nests in deciduous or mixed forest. Its breeding season extends between April 15 and the end of July. Nests are often located adjacent to wetlands or other interior forest openings. Pairs sometimes reuse nests or renovate old crow or squirrel nests. They forage on amphibians, small mammals, and insects. Active nests benefit from a 660ft (200m) setback for new activities. Broad-winged hawk will benefit from protection of large unfragmented forest blocks.

- Survey guidance:

- Broad-winged hawk surveys should be initiated between April 20- May 10 in order to detect adults setting up nests, before leaf out. Conduct at least 3 visits to your focal area during this time period. Point counts, road or trail transects, or dawn acoustical surveys are survey techniques that can be used to detect this species. Take care to not disturb nests or nest building.

Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*)- State Special Concern

Primarily found in the Northwestern portion of town, and the far eastern portions of town.

The whip-poor-will is a bird that nests in forest habitat with an open understory, often adjacent to areas of shrubby or herbaceous habitat. They are ground-nesting birds that breed between April 20- July 30. They consume aerial invertebrates, especially Lepidoptera and Coleoptera. Whip-poor-will will benefit from protection of unfragmented forested blocks, which serve as insulation to development subsidized predators, invasive plants, and forest disturbance.

- Do not begin to cut, clear, remove trees or shrubs, or disturb forest floor between May 1-July 30.
- Avoid use of pesticides that will affect invertebrate food source (hymenoptera, coleoptera, diptera, lepidoptera, orthoptera). Protect native vegetation to promote insect availability and diversity.
- Survey guidance:
  - Whip-poor-will surveys should be initiated between May 20- July 15. Three visits are optimal to ensure that you detect birds that may be present. You will need to time your surveys based on moon phases. Best times to survey for whip-poor-will are when moon is at least half illuminated and above the horizon, and not obscured by clouds. You will want minimal wind for your survey. Detection rates increase also after midnight, before sunrise. With a 6 minute survey point, that is 3 min of silent listening followed by callback, followed by 3 minutes of silent listening, you will have 60% probability of detecting the bird, given it is present, within 400m of your survey point. You will need to conduct multiple points in your project area on multiple nights to be sure that it is not there at all.

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)- State Threatened

There are 2 nesting locations in your town. In addition, eagles often winter around Shinipsit Lake.

It is illegal pursuant to section 26-93 of the Connecticut General Statutes to disturb Bald eagles. This law prohibits disturbing the birds while they are roosting, feeding, or nesting. The wildlife division recommends a 660' setback with no public access from a bald eagle nest or critical roosting site. The critical time for nesting eagles is February 1- August 1. The critical time period for winter roosts is December 31- March 1. To determine if nest or roost in your area is active this year contact the DEEP Wildlife Biologist coordinating eagle monitoring (Brian.hess@ct.gov).

Additional protection measures:

- Do not intentionally feed bald eagles. Artificially feeding bald eagles can disrupt their essential behavioral patterns and put them at increased risk from powerlines, collision with windows and cars, and other mortality factors.
- Protect and preserve potential roost and nest sites by retaining mature trees and old growth stand within ½ mile of water.
- Where nests are blown from trees during storms or other elements, continue to protect the site in the absence of the nest for up to three complete breeding seasons. Many eagles will rebuild the nest and reoccupy the site.

- Monitor and minimize dispersal of contaminants into waterways from waste sites, pesticide applications, and runoff from agricultural areas.
- Non-motorized recreation and human entry (e.g., hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, birdwatching, kayaking, canoeing):
    - No buffer is necessary around nest sites outside the breeding season. If the activity will be visible or highly audible from the nest, maintain a 330-foot buffer during the breeding season, particularly where eagles are unaccustomed to such activity.
- Fireworks: Avoid blasting and other activities that produce extremely loud noises within 1/2 mile of active nests.
- Off-road vehicle use (including snowmobiles): No buffer is necessary around nest sites outside the breeding season. During the breeding season, do not operate off-road vehicles within 330 feet of the nest. In open areas, where there is increased visibility and exposure to noise, this distance should be extended to 660 feet.
- Motorized Watercraft use (including jet skis/personal watercraft):
    - No buffer is necessary around nest sites outside the breeding season.
    - During the breeding season, within 330 feet of the nest,do not operate jet skis (personal watercraft)
    - avoid concentrations of noisy vessels (e.g., commercial fishing boats and tour boats), except where eagles have demonstrated tolerance for such activity.
    - Other motorized boat traffic passing within 330 feet of the nest should attempt to minimize trips and avoid stopping in the area where feasible, particularly where eagles are unaccustomed to boat traffic.

Savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)- State Special Concern
Throughout in suitable habitat in your town. Savannah sparrow is the prime species documented, but habitat may support other grassland species.
In Connecticut, grasslands are among the most threatened and rare habitats. There are seven species of breeding grassland birds and that require grasslands as their primary habitat that are state listed in Connecticut. Most of Connecticut's grasslands would revert to forest without active management. Increasing development pressures on Connecticut's most important grassland habitats, exacerbates this loss of habitat through natural succession. The Savannah sparrow is most sensitive to disturbance between April 1- August 30. Traffic and construction in suitable habitat should be avoided during this timeframe. This species will benefit from protection and management of large patches of grassland of 10 acres or more.

The continuing decline of suitable grassland habitats is a major threat to our state listed grassland bird species. The decline is exacerbated by the intense development pressure on grassland habitat due to its accessibility. Many grassland species require expansive tracts of grassland mosaics that may include mowed areas, meadows of tall grasses and wildflowers that function best if kept in 30 acre parcels. Upland sandpiper requires 150 acres. Work closely with a biologist to plan your development to have the least impact on state listed grassland bird species.

Landscape Planning: Use partnerships and landscape scale planning to protect important conservation areas for this species. Many of these birds have minimum habitat size requirements for nesting, and have plant species or

structure preferences. Some will nest only in grasses of a particular height; others prefer a mix of tall and short vegetation, or a particular grass species or a mix of grass and forbs.

Visit DEEP website for more information on how to best manage your grassland:

- Managing Grasslands, Shrublands, and Young Forest Habitats for Wildlife: A Guide for the Northeast (http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=325732)

Other resources for grassland bird management

- NRCS leaflet: Grassland Birds
- (http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs143_009930.pdf)
- MassAudubon:
- (http://www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/wildlife-research-conservation/grassland-bird-program)

Development:
Land disturbance activities including digging, ground clearing, heavy machinery driving staging, or trampling that will occur more than 100 feet into or cut across in a way that fragments large parcels of grassland habitat should be done when grassland birds are not breeding. Breeding primarily takes place between April 15- August15. Conducting land disturbance activities outside of the breeding season will avoid impact to the individuals.

Mowing:
Early successional habitat is important for these species and maintenance by mowing is essential. Unfortunately, mowing is major source of human induced nest failure.

- Avoid mowing or vehicular traffic during peak use by these species (April 15-August 15)

Use these additional techniques to minimize impact, especially if you need to mow during peak use times:

- Mow on multiyear rotation (every 2- 3 years) in fields not used for high quality hay production, combine with chemical control of woody plants.
- In intensively managed agricultural fields where mowing occurs during the bird-nesting season, strips and edges should be left unmowed to provide areas of food and cover.
- For grasslands >10acres, limit total mowing to 50% each year. If mowing during active season, limit to 25% of area. If mowing during inactive season limit to 50% of area.
- Mowing style: Avoid flail mower heads with guide bars that ride along the ground. Sickle bar mowers will have the least impact if mowing every 1-5 years.
- Mowing height: If mowing during active season, retention of mowing stubble to 7-12 inches will reduce mortality, reduce blade wear, and will leave important cover for animals.
- Directionality - If mowing during the active season is necessary, start mowing from the center of the field and use a back-and-forth approach, or large circular pattern, to avoid concentrating fleeing animals where they may be killed or stranded. In addition, leave an unmowed 30 ft strip around the perimeter of the field and mow this area last. Additionally,
    - If field is near stream: start mowing the side furthest from stream and work towards stream.
    - If field is bordered by woodland: start mowing side furthest from woodland and work towards woodland.
    - If field is bordered by road, start mowing next to the road and work your way across field.

- Mower Speed – Mowing in low gear or at slow speeds will allow animals to react and move out of the field.
- Unmowed Edge - Leave an unmowed field edge until after September 15th. Other sensitive wildlife are usually along field edges adjacent to forest and closest to nearby streams.

Herbicides:
Selected herbicides can be used to effectively manipulate plant succession, control bush, reduce plant competition, control exotic weeds and improve habitat diversity. Herbicides can be used to control "weeds" in grasslands. Careful planning and care in application are required in the use of chemicals to improve existing habitat. Selection of a product shall be based on several factors, including product effectiveness, non-target species impacts, toxicological risks and off site movement of chemicals. Chemicals are to be applied only for the uses listed on the container label. Do not rinse or dump excess chemicals in local waterways or tributaries.

- For more specific recommendations, refer to Chapter 10 of Managing Grasslands, Shrublands, and Young Forest Habitats for Wildlife: A Guide for the Northeast (http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=325732)

Brown thrasher (*Caprimulgus vociferus*)- State Special Concern
Primarily found in suitable habitat in the northwest portion of town.
This bird nests in shrubs, thickets, and brush. Especially hedgerows adjacent to open fields. Their breeding season is approximately from April through August and it is during this period that the species is most susceptible to disturbances in its feeding or nesting habitat.

- Do not disturb shrubby habitat, hedge rows, or open fields between April 1- August 31.
- Survey guidance:
    - To adequately conduct surveys for brown thrasher, surveys should take place between April 15- June 15. We recommend 6 survey visits with at least 3 occurring before May 15 in order to adequately detect birds if they are present. DEEP research and monitoring has determined that birds are more likely to be observed early in the season, as opposed to the typical survey window used for BBS and other bird atlas instructions. Surveys may be conducted as point counts with a 50m radius, with coverage of suitable habitat, or as slow walking transects through suitable habitat. Survey should be conducted before 11am in the morning and not during rain or high winds that would impede the observer's ability to see or hear birds.

***Herps*:**

Spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*)- State Special Concern
Regional species modeling efforts indicate many areas of your town suitable to support this species (McGarigal et al 2017) Areas that model well include wetlands surrounding Bonemill Brook, Hockenum River, Charters Brook, and Martin's Brook. Records have only been documented in our database from the wetlands associated with Bonemill Brook.

Individuals of this species are associated with wetlands and are vernal pool obligates. Over the course of a season and lifetime, individuals will travel large distances (up to 1km) over upland forest and fields between multiple wetlands. They overwinter burrowed into the mud in wetlands between Nov 1- March 15. They do not begin to reproduce until 7-10 years old and adults can live at least 30 years. This species is threatened most by any activities that reduce adult survivorship including road kills, commercial and casual collection, increased predation

in areas around commercial and residential development, mortality and injury from agricultural equipment or other mechanical equipment.

Work with biologists to plan your development to protect (buffer) and connect critical habitat. Presence of bird seed, pet food, and garbage in and around residential areas can increase the threat of predators. Predation activity from species like raccoons and skunks can destroy the majority of this species reproductive output each year.

Early successional habitat is important for this species and maintenance by mowing is essential. Unfortunately, mowing is major source of human induced adult turtle mortality.

- Avoid mowing or vehicular traffic during peak use by this species (May 15-Sept 15)

Use these additional techniques to minimize impact, especially if you need to mow during peak use times:

- Mow on multiyear rotation, combine with chemical control of woody plants.
- For grasslands >10acres, limit total mowing to 50% each year. If mowing during active season, limit to 25% of area. If mowing during inactive season limit to 50% of area.
- Mowing style: Avoid flail mower heads with guide bars that ride along the ground. Sickle bar mowers will have the least impact if mowing every 1-5 years. In areas with more woody vegetation >1-2" diameter Brontosaurus-style mower will likely have the least impact on turtles.
- Mowing height: If mowing during active season, retention of mowing stubble to 7-12 inches will reduce mortality, reduce blade wear, and will leave important cover for animals.
- Directionality - If mowing during the active season is necessary, start mowing from the center of the field and use a back-and-forth approach, or large circular pattern, to avoid concentrating fleeing animals where they may be killed or stranded. In addition, leave an unmowed 30 ft strip around the perimeter of the field and mow this area last. Most turtles are found in these areas and this provides time for them to react to the mowing activity and move out of the area.
    - If field is near stream: start mowing the side furthest from stream and work towards stream.
    - If field is bordered by woodland: start mowing side furthest from woodland and work towards woodland.
    - If field is bordered by road, start mowing next to the road and work your way across field.
- Mower Speed – Mowing in low gear or at slow speeds will allow turtles to react and move out of the field.
- Unmowed Edge - Leaving an unmowed field edge in high turtle use areas until after September 15th. Eastern box turtles are usually along field edges adjacent to forest and wood turtle are often in field edges closest to nearby streams.

Maintaining forested habitat in association with vernal pools and wetlands is essential for the conservation of Spotted Turtles. The impacts of timber harvesting are recognized as having significantly fewer lasting effects as compared to other permanent changes in land use, such as residential and commercial development. However, certain precautions should be taken during timber harvesting in order to maintain the long-term viability of Spotted Turtle populations within forested areas.

The greatest concern during forestry operations are turtles being run over and crushed by mechanized logging equipment. This could occur when turtles are moving between wetland types, nesting, estivating, or hatchlings are emerging and moving to wetlands. Direct mortality could also occur when wetlands are being harvested. The chance of killing multiple turtles is increased with wetland harvesting because Spotted Turtles overwinter in

wetlands, sometimes in groups. Habitat modification surrounding vernal pools and structural alteration of wetland overwintering sites are also concerns. Vernal pools are used for foraging and mating. The prey base of invertebrates and amphibians in vernal pools requires cool, moist, and shaded surrounding conditions.

Wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)- State Special Concern
Documented only in the Willimantic River
Individuals of this species are riverine and riparian obligates, overwintering and mating in clear, cold, primarily sand-gravel and rock bottomed streams and foraging in riparian zones, fields and upland forests during the late spring and summer. They hibernate in the banks of the river in submerged tree roots between November 1 and April 1. Their summer habitat focuses within 90m (300ft of rivers) and they regularly travel 300m (0.2 mile) from rivers during this time. During summer they seek out early successional habitat: pastures, old fields, woodlands, powerline cuts and railroad beds bordering or adjacent to streams and rivers. Their habitat in Connecticut is already severely threatened by fragmentation of riverine, instream, riparian, and upland habitats, but is exacerbated by heavy adult mortality from machinery, cars, and collection. This is compounded by the species late maturity, low reproductive potential, and high nest and hatchling depredation rates.

Any fragmentation of habitat within 300m (0.2mile) of occupied streams has been demonstrated to reduce wood turtle survival through crushing of turtles under cars or mowers, collection of turtles by public, introduced predators (raccoons, skunks, chipmunks etc) that increase with housing development. New development, increased traffic, new agricultural practice that will use motorized vehicles, new or enhance recreational trails, or other removal or fragmentation of habitat within 90m buffer of occupied streams will cause increased adult mortality.

Work with biologists to plan your development to protect (buffer) and connect critical habitat. Presence of bird seed, pet food, and garbage in and around residential areas can increase the threat of predators. Predation activity from species like raccoons and skunks can destroy the majority of this species reproductive output each year.

Landscape Planning: Use partnerships and landscape scale planning to protect the 300m buffer of important streams.

- Nesting Area Management: Identify and protect instream features such as point bars, sand and gravel bars, beaches, and cutbanks.
- Manage and create new nesting opportunities through vegetation control near riparian areas (vegetative removal work should be conducted in dormant period between Nov 1 and March 31).
- Predatory control: Managers should consider creative options ranging from predator control, and nest protection.

Mowing and Agriculture:

- If mowing is necessary, leave a buffer at edge of fields that are only maintained in winter. In agricultural settings, use late season crop varieties that require harvest in October rather than August.
- Where feasible, mow or clear existing fields, if necessary, during the cold months.
- Best times to mow: (Nov 15- March 15).
- Worst time to mow: May 15-August 30. This is when turtles are most likely to be away from stream or wetland buffers and get killed under your vehicle.

Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)- State Special Concern

Primarily, viable records are found in the northern portion of town in larger forested blocks.
In Connecticut, these turtles are found in well-drained forest bottomlands and a matrix of open deciduous forests, early successional habitat, fields, gravel pits, and or powerlines. Turtles are dormant between November 1 and April 1 and hibernate in only a few inches from the surface in forested habitat.
The greatest threat to this species is habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation due to development. This species is very sensitive to adult mortality because of late maturity (10 years old) and long life span (50-100years). Vehicular traffic, heavy equipment used for farming, and ATV use in natural areas are implicated specifically in adult mortality through collisions. Illegal collection by the pet trade and unknowing public for home pets exacerbates mortality rates and removes important individuals from the population. Predation rates are also unnaturally high because of increased predator populations (e.g. skunks, foxes, raccoons, and crows) that surround developed areas.

Early successional habitat is important for this species and maintenance by mowing is essential. Unfortunately, mowing is major source of human induced adult turtle mortality.

- Avoid mowing or vehicular traffic during peak use by this species (May 15-Sept 15)

Use these additional techniques to minimize impact, especially if you need to mow during peak use times:

- Mow on multiyear rotation, combine with chemical control of woody plants.
- For grasslands >10acres, limit total mowing to 50% each year. If mowing during active season, limit to 25% of area. If mowing during inactive season limit to 50% of area.
- Mowing style: Avoid flail mower heads with guide bars that ride along the ground. Sickle bar mowers will have the least impact if mowing every 1-5 years. In areas with more woody vegetation >1-2" diameter Brontosaurus-style mower will likely have the least impact on turtles.
- Mowing height: If mowing during active season, retention of mowing stubble to 7-12 inches will reduce mortality, reduce blade wear, and will leave important cover for animals.
- Directionality - If mowing during the active season is necessary, start mowing from the center of the field and use a back-and-forth approach, or large circular pattern, to avoid concentrating fleeing animals where they may be killed or stranded. In addition, leave an unmowed 30 ft strip around the perimeter of the field and mow this area last. Most turtles are found in these areas and this provides time for them to react to the mowing activity and move out of the area.
    - If field is near stream: start mowing the side furthest from stream and work towards stream.
    - If field is bordered by woodland: start mowing side furthest from woodland and work towards woodland.
    - If field is bordered by road, start mowing next to the road and work your way across field.
- Mower Speed – Mowing in low gear or at slow speeds will allow turtles to react and move out of the field.
- Unmowed Edge - Leaving an unmowed field edge in high turtle use areas until after September 15th. Eastern box turtles are usually along field edges adjacent to forest and wood turtle are often in field edges closest to nearby streams.

If you conduct tree cutting or forest harvests when the species is active (April1-Nov 1):

- The logging crew be made aware of the species description and possible presence
- The immediate area to be harvested each day should be searched for turtles before starting work
- Any turtles found during the harvest should be moved out of the way, just outside of the work area. This animal is protected by law and should never be taken off site.

- Work conducted during the early morning and evening hours should occur with special care not to harm basking or foraging individuals

If you conduct work during the species dormant period (Nov 1- April 1):

- Use Best Management Practices to avoid soil compaction
- Limit total area impacted by motorized vehicles to less than 25%

Maintain these microhabitat characteristics for this species:

- If wood is chipped, chips shall be removed from the site or left in piles in an area disturbed by other harvest activities, preferably at the landing.
- Where feasible, leave two snags/acre to provide source of large woody debris for future overwintering sites and cooler microhabitat refuges.
- Where feasible, avoid disturbing fallen logs or snags that will serve as future sources of woody debris.
- Avoid disturbing pits from tipped root mounds which can serve as overwintering locations.

General recommendations for forest management that benefit this species include:

- Discontinue logging roads after operation are complete so they do not provide new access points to sensitive stream habitat or provide increased vehicle or recreational traffic in general area.
- On sites where options exist, favor site preparation techniques that minimize soil disturbance and compaction and overall minimize impacts to the forest floor.
- Give special consideration to unique habitat features within the forest such as ephemeral wetlands, springs, seepages, and rock outcrops.
- Maintain a patchwork of harvest practices in this area to meet the different life stages of this species. Including both mature forest and forest openings. If the only available sun-exposed ground is along roadsides, road mortality may occur as females seek nesting grounds and individuals bask.

If controlled burns are planned:
The creation and management of early successional habitat through burning is beneficial to this species, however, this activity can cause outright mortality.
The best time to conduct burns is during the species inactive period (November 1- April 1).
If burns must be done during active period:

- Sweep turtles and remove and exclude from area before you start your burn
- Conduct burns in phases so that individual turtles can seek refuge in unburned area
- Conduct burns with low intensity back fires and slower moving fires

Your project is located in a large block of suitable habitat for this species. Work with biologists to plan your activities so they minimize the impact on this species. Individual turtles will have best chance of survival in blocks of undeveloped habitat >100ha (247 acres). Populations will have the best chance of viability if they consist of 300 individuals in unfragmented habitat totaling at least 500 acres. Densities of >1km of road/km2 with moderate traffic >100 vehicle/lane/day will result in population decline.

- Landscape Planning: Use partnerships and landscape scale planning to protect important conservation areas for this species

- Nesting Area Management: identify and protect nesting areas for this species. Work with biologists to plan your site use and nesting site management.
- Predatory control: Managers should consider creative options ranging from predator control, and nest protection.

Smooth green snake (*Opheodrys vernalis*)- State Special Concern
Historical low accuracy records from the eastern edge of your town.
Smooth greensnakes favor moist, open habitats, such as old fields, meadows, pastures, fens, coastal grasslands, and edges of wetlands. Occasionally, this snake may inhabit sparsely forested areas with scattered shrubs and trees, such as mountaintop balds. Rural, undisturbed locations appear to be preferred, but smooth greensnakes have been found in urban and suburban areas as well. Greensnakes can be found basking on rocks, logs, or other debris. Smooth greensnakes are insectivores; they feed on a variety of insects and spiders. Preserving pastures and fields will benefit this species.

Survey guidance for herps:
I recommend you coordinate with Wildlife Diversity staff: Brian Hess (brian.hess@ct.gov) and Mike Ravesi (michael.ravesi@ct.gov) if you plan to conduct surveys for these species. Please be aware that state permits may be required to conduct surveys if animals will be trapped or tagged. Information on Scientific collector permits can be found here:

a. To find instructions go to:
   http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2690&q=322428&deepNav_GID=1511
b. Look for "Scientific collection," and the link to "Wildlife"
c. Questions about permits should be directed to Laurie Fortin (laurie.fortin@ct.gov)

Please report any results of survey efforts to NDDB at deep_nddbrequest@ct.gov.
You can visit this website to learn more about regional survey efforts for turtles:
http://www.northeastturtles.org/

Fish:
Please coordinate with DEEP Fisheries Biologists for more information.
DEEP Fisheries Biologists review permit applications submitted to DEEP regulatory programs to determine whether projects might adversely affect listed species. DEEP Fisheries Biologists are routinely involved in pre-application consultations with regulatory staff and applicants in order to identify potential fisheries issues, and to work with applicants to mitigate negative effects, including those to listed species.

Plants:
Please consult with a plant ecologist familiar with the species that have been recorded in your town. We do not currently have staff that can provide you with recommendations for management. You can access spatial data that illustrates where critical habitat exist in your town here:
https://cteco.uconn.edu/guides/Critical_Habitat.htm

Other GCN resources:
The northeastern portions of your town is included in a Core Blocks in the HUC6 Terrestrial Core-Connector Network (McGarigal et al 2017). These areas were designated as part of the Nature's Network project. You can access the report and spatial data for Nature's Network here:
https://nalcc.databasin.org/maps/522735111d19494a83b0a3badc710319

This is determination is valid for two years. Please submit an updated NDDB Request for Review if the scope of the proposed work changes or if work has not begun by the expiration date.

Please report any observations or reports that document these or other state listed species to **deep.nddbrequest@ct.gov**.

Natural Diversity Database information includes all information regarding critical biological resources available to us at the time of the request. This information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Bureau of Natural Resources and cooperating units of DEEP, independent conservation groups, and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultations with the NDDB should not be substituted for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations of species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated in the NDDB as it becomes available.

Please contact me if you have any questions (shannon.kearney@ct.gov). Thank you for consulting with the Natural Diversity Database and continuing to work with us to protect State-listed species.

Sincerely,

/s/ Shannon B. Kearney
Wildlife Biologist

Attachment (1): Species List

Species List for NDDB Request

Scientific Name	Common Name	State Status
Vertebrate Animal		
Accipiter striatus	Sharp-shinned hawk	E
Buteo platypterus	Broad-winged hawk	SC
Caprimulgus vociferus	Whip-poor-will	SC
Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Bald eagle	T
Passerculus sandwichensis	Savannah sparrow	SC
Toxostoma rufum	Brown thrasher	SC
Clemmys guttata	Spotted turtle	SC
Glyptemys insculpta	Wood turtle	SC
Opheodrys vernalis	Smooth green snake	SC
Terrapene carolina carolina	Eastern box turtle	SC
Cottus cognatus	Slimy sculpin	SC
Notropis bifrenatus	Bridle shiner	SC
Vascular Plant		
Carex polymorpha	Hairy-Fruited sedge	SC
Cypripedium parviflorum	Yellow lady's slipper	SC
Isotria medeoloides	Small whorled pogonia	E/FT
Lipocarpha micrantha	Dwarf bulrush	T
Lygodium palmatum	Climbing fern	SC
Orontium aquaticum	Golden club	SC
Orthilia secunda	One-sided pyrola	SC*
Platanthera hookeri	Hooker's orchid	SC*
Sagittaria teres	Quill-leaved arrowhead	E
Critical Habitat		
Acidic Atlantic White cedar basin swamp		
Acidic talus forest/woodland		
Alluvial marsh		
Poor fen		

E = State Endangered, T = State Threatened, SC = State Special Concern
FE = Federally Endangered, FT = Federally Threatened

Hockanum River Bird Documenting

NRCA Student: Kush Kataria[1]
Community Partner: Denise Anamani and Ann Harford[2]
[1]Kingswood-Oxford School; Ellington Conservation Commission[2]

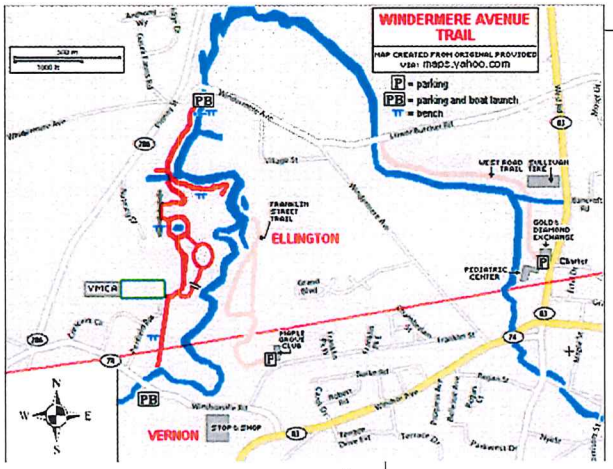
Natural Resources Conservation Academy CAP
Conservation Ambassador Program

UCONN UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this study was to record the population of different bird species in the Ellington Hockanum River Trail system. This is important in order to monitor the abundance of several species. We went bird watching on the Windemere Ave Trail of the Hockanum River in Ellington, CT.

Hockanum River (Windermere Av. Trial) pictures.
Left: Small marsh area with some human development.
Right: Another swampy area win an open field



This is a map of the Windemere Avenue Trail of the Hockanum River System. This is the trail that we took when we went bird watching. The Red marks the trail which consists of a variety of habitats, ranging from forests to marshes.

Methods/Logistics of Project

- Ellington Hockanum River Trials
  - Fall 2019
  - Went bird watching on Saturday, October 26
  - Foggy day in the morning made it a bit difficult to observe the birds, but it eventually cleared
  - The trail included forested regions, bushes, open plains, field edges, wetlands, and ponds- observed different species of birds in each of the different environments
  - Used binoculars to observe the birds as well as listened to their sound of them to match them to a certain species. Also carried a field book to match the pictures and verify the species.

RESULTS

Observed/Saw the following species of birds:

- ❖American Robin- most abundant; near low bushes
- ❖golden crowned kinglets
- ❖yellow rumped warblers
- ❖white-throated sparrows
- ❖Canada geese
- ❖downy woodpeckers
- ❖song sparrows
- ❖blue jays
- ❖white breasted nuthatches
- ❖red wing blackbirds
- ❖black capped chickadees
- ❖red-tailed hawk

Picture of a Red Bellied Woodpecker.
"DEEP Woodpeckers." CT.gov, www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=416874&Red-bellied

Heard the following birds, but did not physically see:

- ❖Carolina wrens
- ❖red bellied woodpeckers
- ❖nuthatches
- ❖american crows

Some of these species, like Canada geese, do migrate south for the winter, but other species like the downy woodpecker stay here for the winter. Overall, we had a very successful trip, finding 16 different species of birds.

CONCLUSION

- After completing the bird watching experience, I wrote up a short report on our findings and the different species of birds we found.
- This report will help the Ellington Conservation Commission in their efforts to track native bird species in Ellington, CT- my report will be included in the town's annual report
- This was the first time I officially went bird watching, and I learned a lot about the different species of birds and different ways to identify them- I developed a new fascination with these amazing creatures.
- I learned the importance of bird watching in order to help preserve the local bird population

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the help of my community partners Denise Anamani and Ann Harford who taught me so much and helped me every step of the way.
I also want to thank UConn NRCA CAP Program for teaching me so much in that one week of field work. This experience has ignited a newfound interest in environmental conservation within me. I want to thank the team for a fun-filled experience that I have thouroughly enjoyed.

On Saturday October 26, I along with Ann Harford from the Ellington Conservation Commission and Denise Anamani from UCONN, went bird watching on the Hockanum River and Ellington Trail system. Despite the morning fog, we observed a good variety of birds. The most abundant bird we found was the American Robin. We also observed golden crowned kinglets, yellow rumped warblers, white-throated sparrows, Canadian geese, downy woodpeckers, song sparrows, blue jays, white breasted nuthatches, red wing blackbirds, and black capped chickadees. We even saw a red-tailed hawk! We heard, but did not see the following species: Carolina Rens, red bellied woodpeckers, nuthatches, and american crows. Some of these species, like Canadian geese, do migrate south for the winter, but other species like the downy woodpecker stay here for the winter. Overall, we had a very successful trip, finding 16 different species of birds.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

LAUREN DESROCHER
CHAIRMAN

VALERIE AMSEL
PAM MCCORMICK
ERIN STAVENS
LOIS TIMMS-FERRARA
CYNTHIA VAN ZELM
LINDA ANDERSON
JUDI MANFRE
ANN MCLAUGHLIN

AD HOC ELLINGTON
TRAILS COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
October 7, 2020
Via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lauren Desrocher, Linda Anderson, Ann McLaughlin, Valerie Amsel, Pam McCormick, Cynthia van Zelm

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lois Timms-Ferrara, Judi Manfre, Erin Stavens

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Dinnie, Tom Palshaw, Rachel Dearborn

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Desrocher called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. CITIZENS FORUM: Tom Palshaw reported that the Hockanum River Committee (HRC) has been focusing their efforts on removing debris from the river. They have begun riverside mowing and are awaiting word from Public Works on tree removal due to storm damage. The Committee hopes that removal will be eased by the fact that the Town now has legal rights to most of the land the HRC operates on.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 2, 2020

Linda Anderson requested that Valerie Amsel's name be added under the Planning & Development Subcommittee report; Ms. Amsel was responsible for creating the schematic for the platform to be installed at the Batz Property.

MOVED (DESROCHER), SECONDED (ANDERSON) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 2, 2020 MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. Batz Property Frog Pond Project - Funding

Chairman Desrocher reported that the Board of Selectmen passed the Committee's motion for the installation of a ramp and viewing platform over the Frog Pond at the Batz Property, the

conversion of the front hay field into a Wildflower Meadow, and gave approval for the Committee to begin research into the design of a small amphitheater for the rear field. Ms. Amsel is in the process of locating materials and pricing out the Frog Pond project, but projects that the cost to the Committee will be between $1,500 and $2,000. Ms. Dearborn stated that she would stop by Public Works to see how much of the TREX material remains from last year's bridge projects.

B. Emergency Marker Project

Mr. Palshaw would like the Trails Committee to approve a standard design template for the proposed emergency marker system. Chairman Desrocher stated that the Committee would work with Ellington Printery to design a template using the composite material currently used for all Trails Committee projects because it is flexible and will allow for easy installation and limited need for replacements. Ms. Desrocher suggested that the signs include the instruction to "Call 911 with Code ____," so that users of the trail can easily understand what the signs are for. The Trails Committee will return to a future meeting with a quote from Ellington Printery to be shared with the HRC as well as the Northern Connecticut Land Trust, as each committee will be responsible for the respective cost to outfit their own trails. Mr. Palshaw stated that he felt the best trail to launch the system on would be the Windermere Trail. He will then reach out to Emergency Services for further input and report back.

V. NEW BUSINESS

The Committee acknowledged the resignation of member and founding Chairman, Erin Stavens. Committee members expressed their appreciation for Ms. Stavens' ambition and energy during her time on the Committee.

A. West Road Trail – CCSU Collaboration Project Proposal

Ms. Dearborn laid out the plan for the newly acquired West Road Trail property. Ms. Dearborn's engineering students from Central Connecticut State University will undertake a year-long project to survey the new Town property and the West Road Trail as it is currently situated along the river. Students will design and create a proposal for an improved trail in this area which would connect to the newly acquired land in Vernon and the proposed sports fields. This project will include two bridges which will cross the Hockanum River. One of these bridges may need to be able to support the transfer of farm equipment. At this time, it is unclear whether the funds for the new trail and bridges will be taken from the Trails Committee budget, the Town's own funds or a combination of both. Mr. Palshaw stated that the HRC is in full support of this project and acknowledged that the project may take upward of one year. In the meantime, the HRC will continue to maintain the trail as it lies. Ms. Desrocher inquired as to whether an announcement should be made regarding the current state of the West Road Trail due to recent storm damage. Mr. Palshaw responded that he did not believe the downed trees pose a safety hazard at this time.

B. Winter Event Proposal

Linda Anderson stated that she has been in talks with the Hall Memorial Library to hold a Winter educational event at the Batz Property which could include a short snow-shoe hike for children and other activities which could be performed in a socially distant manner. Cynthia Van Zelm felt it is important to nail down two or three activities to focus on in order to keep such an event

running smoothly. Ms. Desrocher reminded the group that any public events held for the foreseeable future would be contingent on the community's COVID numbers being appropriate as well as being able to conform to the governor's current safety requirements. Ms. Anderson will continue to discuss the matter with representatives from the Library and report back further in November.

VI. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Treasurer: None

B. Planning & Development

Ms. Anderson and Mr. Dinnie will be meeting with Jane Seymour, who created the Wildflower Field at the Belding Preserve in Vernon, to discuss best practices. Ms. Desrocher inquired whether it is necessary to contact Call Before You Dig prior to having the field plowed and/or prepped for planting; Ms. Dearborn expressed that she did not believe this was a necessary step but could be done just in case. Ms. Desrocher suggested walking the field after plowing and possibly inviting a metal detectorist in, as the property in question abuts the original site of the Batz farmhouse and may yield some interesting historical finds.

C. Maintenance

Mr. Dinnie reported that the Metcalf Nature Trails have been rerouted, cleared and blazed. A small work party is needed to clear vegetation from the stone footpath at the entrance. Ms. Anderson noted that the information in the kiosk should be updated.

Ms. Amsel reported that the extension of the trail at Kimball Forest has been completed and blazed. Blue blazes have now been converted to white to avoid confusion with the Shenipsit Trail across the street.

Ms. Amsel stated that she will be removing segments of the Sensory Walk at Batz prior to the first deep frost to prevent damage.

D. Community Outreach

Ms. Van Zelm pointed out that the Town has changed the formatting and distribution of its newsletter so that it is more geared toward the announcement of events. If the committee does not receive Statements of Interest for the two current vacancies soon, the Committee may ask that the vacancies be posted in the newsletter.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (DESROCHER), SECONDED (VAN ZELM) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7:33 PM.

Submitted by Julia Connor

Search in report Previous Next

TOWN OF ELLINGTON
BUDGET REPORT 2020-21

	0270 - CONSERVATION COMMISSION	2020-21 Approved Budget	Trans/ Add'tl Appr	Adjusted Approved Budget
01-02-00-00270-10-50103	Part Time	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60221	Advertising Printing Forms	550.00	0.00	550.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60222	Dues & Subscriptions	350.00	0.00	350.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60223	Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60234	Professional Development	100.00	0.00	100.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60250	Contracted Services	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60254	St of Ct Surcharges	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60341	Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-30-60341	Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00
	DEPARTMENT TOTAL	3,500.00	0.00	3,500.00

Search in report Previous Next

10/28/2020
10:33 AM

TOWN OF ELLINGTON
BUDGET REPORT 2019-2020
For the Four Months Ending Saturday, October 31, 2020

	0270 - CONSERVATION COMMISSION	July	August	September	October	YTD Detail
01-02-00-00270-10-50103	Part Time	130.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	130.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60221	Advertising Printing Forms	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60222	Dues & Subscriptions	0.00	0.00	0.00	60.00	60.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60223	Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60234	Professional Development	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60250	Contracted Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60254	St of Ct Surcharges	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-20-60341	Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
01-02-00-00270-30-60341	Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	DEPARTMENT TOTAL	130.00	0.00	0.00	60.00	190.00

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187
www.ellington-ct.gov

Tel. 860-870-3120 Town Planner's Office Fax. 860-870-3122

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020, 7:00 PM
ZOOM MEETING
(IN-PERSON PUBLIC ATTENDANCE NOT PERMITTED DUE TO COVID19)
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROVIDED VIA ZOOM)

PRESENT: **Chairman Rebecca Quarno, Vice Chairman David Bidwell, Regular Members Sean Dwyer and George Nickerson and Alternate Jessica Fay. Regular Member James Gage joined the meeting at 7:24 PM.**

ABSENT: **Regular Members Robert Zielfelder and Laurie Burstein and Alternate Ann Harford.**

STAFF: **Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner and Christine Post, Recording Clerk.**

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

I. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** (On Non-Agenda Items)**: NONE**

II. **ACTIVE BUSINESS:**

1. Sustainable Ellington Initiative
   a. 2.5 Create a Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory

      Ms. Houlihan gave an overview of several updates she made to the Natural Resource and Wildlife Inventory which will be sent to commissioners for review and comment at the next meeting.

   b. 2.7 Provide Education on Water Conservation

      Commissioner Dwyer suggested discussing the current drought with the Water Conservation Commission. Ms. Houlihan stated Connecticut Water Company includes information on how to conserve water in their bills. Ms. Houlihan will put Ellington's water conservation tips on the commission's web page. The commissioners agreed they will revisit this topic next month depending on weather patterns.

2. Update – Ellington Hockanum River Committee: Harford/Nickerson – Leads
   a. Ad Hoc Ellington Trails Committee – Monthly agenda/minutes

      Commissioner Nickerson reported that the Trails Committee has completely cleared one blockage of the Hockanum River Trail between the Diamond Exchange and Sullivan Tire.

Ms. Houlihan reported that she spoke with Linda Anderson of the Trails Committee and she indicated that the Trails Committee is focused on moving forward with the amphitheater and observation areas on the Batz property.

3. Report - Working Farmland Preservation Program: Gage/Staff – Leads

Ms. Houlihan will be at the Board of Selectmen Meeting on November 9, 2020 at 7 p.m. and will be presenting the request to forward to Town Meeting Oakridge Dairy's 2 easements via bond approval. She suggested commissioners attend the meeting to provide support and indicated the meeting will be limited to 12 in person attendees on a first come, first serve basis but participants can also attend via zoom. Ms. Houlihan will send the agenda to the commissioners once it is prepared and reiterated that this action only requires a ten percent (10%) town match to preserve 167 acres of farmland in Ellington.

Ms. Houlihan reported she is working with the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to advance the Plan of Conservation and Development goals regarding agriculture related activities. Ms. Houlihan shared a memo that has been drafted allowing potential regulation amendments to permit farm breweries, cideries, distilleries and wineries. Chairman Quarno asked the status of this process and Ms. Houlihan explained this language will be further expanded to include venues, hay rides and corn mazes before being forwarded on to Planning and Zoning for their review and approval, so there are several months of work ahead, but she indicated this might be approved early next year.

4. Report - Open Space Preservation Program: Gage – Lead

Commissioner Gage advised the commission that the status on the Wraight property is still same as last month. Commissioner Dwyer suggested talking to a State Representative to assist moving the process along. Commissioner Gage said he knows Chris Davis and will reach out to him.

Ms. Houlihan received a call from Scott Brady in response to her letter and he indicated that they are potentially interested in working with the town to purchase 79 Kibbe Road as an open space parcel. She told him that the sale price of $550,000.00 is too high for the town to meet and he will talk with his family members and report back their bottom-line price. Commissioner Dwyer had previously inquired if there was any idea of the value of the land. Ms. Houlihan reported that there is no appraisal yet and that typically the town would not spend the money on obtaining an appraisal without having a signed contract in their price range. Ms. Houlihan discussed the appraisal results for the Aaron's property values before the Great Recession and after the Great Recession and she indicated the Brady's asking price is far above both numbers. Ms. Houlihan further reported that the land could support one lot 'as is' but the current owners would be required by Connecticut Water Company to bring in a public water main if they wanted to subdivide the parcel.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 20-21 Budget Expenditure Update

The only expenditure during the last month is for the part time salary for the recording secretary.

2. Approval of the September 1, 2020 regular meeting minutes

MOVED (GAGE) SECONDED (FAY) AND PASSED (NICKERSON ABSTAINED) TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 AS WRITTEN.

3. Correspondence:
   a. CACIWC Membership Renewal Fees 2020-21

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (BIDWELL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO RENEW THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020 TO 2021 FOR THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION AND INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSIONS, INC.

   b. Letter dated September 23, 2020 from The Society of Soil Scientists of Southern New England Official Registry

   This correspondence is notification that the Wetlands Soil Scientist's Directory will not be available as a hard copy any longer, it will now be available solely online.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED (DWYER) SECONDED (BIDWELL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING AT 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

_____
Christine Post, Recording Clerk

STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

55 MAIN STREET – PO BOX 187
ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

www.ellington-ct.gov

TEL. (860) 870-3120 **TOWN PLANNER'S OFFICE** FAX (860) 870-3122

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

All meetings are held in the Town Hall Annex at 7:00 PM

1/05

2/02

3/02

4/06

5/04

6/01

7/06

8/03

9/07

10/05

11/02

12/07

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

October 30, 2020

Lisa Houlihan
Ellington Conservation Commission
PO Box 187
Ellington, CT 06029-0187

Dear Lisa and Members of the Ellington Conservation Commission,

It's been almost eight months since the Connecticut Land Conservation Council closed our office, canceled our annual spring statewide conference, and entered the world of virtual networking and learning.

We know that conservation commissions and other municipal boards like yours have had to do much of the same – holding meetings on-line and finding ways to conduct day-to-day town business under unprecedented circumstances.

We also understand that under normal times, pursuing land conservation projects – including applying for state open space grant programs, finding local match dollars, and stewardship funds – isn't easy for towns and the land trusts with which they partner. The pandemic has made these responsibilities even more challenging.

It's been quite a journey, with many lessons learned:

- The importance of conserved open space as people flocked to their local trails and preserves for respite and wellness in the midst of the pandemic.
- The crucial role of nature-based solutions to mitigating catastrophic impacts of the climate crisis.
- The nexus between the availability of greenspaces and locally grown food to economic resilience and healthy communities.
- The inextricable links between social justice, safe access to the outdoors, and protected natural resources.

Now more than ever, there is a recognition that conserving land is central to quality of life in urban, rural, and suburban communities across Connecticut.

Which is why your commission's annual membership contribution to the Connecticut Land Conservation Council is so important.

deKoven House • 27 Washington Street • Middletown, CT 06457 • T 860 614-8537 • F 860 346-8887 • www.ctconservation.org

With compounding challenges of tightening state and town budgets due to COVID-19, our Connecticut land conservation community will need to be even stronger and more resolute in saving the special places in communities across the state.

With your commission's support, we will continue to maintain a strong presence – whether in-person or virtually – at the Capitol to ensure that land conservation is a priority for the legislature, the Governor, and his administration, including…

- Protecting and enhancing critical state funding programs for land conservation, urban greenspaces, community gardens, and farmland preservation;

- Giving municipalities the option to generate new sources of revenue for land conservation, climate resilience, and other essential community conservation projects; and

- Creating new programs to invest in the establishment and care of urban forests, parks, and wildlife habitats.

Your commission's support also means that CLCC can continue to build regional collaborative relationships and deliver technical assistance to enhance your local land trust's essential role in serving diverse stakeholders in your community.

While we are unsure of what lies ahead in 2021, we are certain that investing in your community's land conservation efforts has never been more essential.

As a coalition organization, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council relies on the membership support of individuals, land trusts, and municipal land use commissions – together sharing a love for the land and understanding the importance of connecting with nature and each other, *not only during these extraordinary times, but always*.

Thank you for all you do to conserve land in your community.

Sincerely,

Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director

P.S. We realize that this is a difficult time for municipalities across the state. Please know that your commission's contribution, *at any level*, will make a difference in CLCC's work to support land trusts and members of the broader conservation community in conserving critical natural resources and providing access to greenspaces for all. If your commission is unable to contribute this year, please consider sharing this letter with individual commissioners for their consideration. Either way, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council will continue to be your conservation voice during the legislative session, and all year round. Please reach out to me anytime with thoughts and comments on how we may better assist your community in achieving its conservation goals.

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Connecticut Land Conservation Council
27 Washington St., Middletown, CT 06457
860.852-5512 – fax: 860.346.8887
Email: abpaterson@ctconservation.org
www.ctconservation.org

2020-2021 Organizational Membership

New Member _____ Renewal X

Membership year is July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. *CLCC is funded primarily through membership dues and private donations. Your support enables CLCC to build on its mission to advocate for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and work to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community across Connecticut. THANK YOU!*

Organizational Membership

Conservation Commissions, Other Municipal Land Use Commissions, & Other Government Entities

- ❒ **$250 or more**
- ❒ **$150**
- ❒ **$100**
- ❒ **$ Other**

Thank you for your partnership! Your commission's membership contribution supports CLCC and its work with land trusts, communities, and policy leaders throughout Connecticut.

Member Contact Information

Full Name of Commission: _____

Primary Contact Name/Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Website:** _____

Primary Contact Email: _____

Please return this form to: 27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT 06457

❒ ***Check enclosed made payable to:*** **"CT Land Conservation Council"**
❒ ***On-line payment at:*** **http://www.ctconservation.org/membership**

Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Barbra Galovich

Subject: FW: Batz Observation Platform

From: Julia Connor
Sent: Thursday, November 19, 2020 3:39 PM
Subject: FW: Batz Observation Platform

Good afternoon,

Lauren Desrocher, Chairman of the Ellington Trails Committee, wanted me to pass along the below message regarding the completion of their Batz Observation Platform.

Thanks,

Julia Connor
Executive Assistant
Website & Social Media Coordinator
860-870-3100

From: Lauren Desrocher [mailto:laurenidesrocher@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 19, 2020 3:33 PM
To: Julia Connor <jconnor@ELLINGTON-CT.GOV>
Subject: Batz Observation Platform

Hi Julia-

I was hoping you would be kind enough to pass this on to the BOS and any other interested parties who might like to see the completed project:

On Monday, Nov 16th members of the Trails Committee completed the installation of a universally accessible observation platform over the Frog Pond at the Batz Property. This platform, designed by Committee Member Valerie Amsel allows access to the pond for exploration of vegetation and wildlife and will ultimately include some educational signage. We thank the Board of Selectmen and the Town at large for your continued support in our mission to provide free and accessible nature education to community members of all ages and abilities - especially in these difficult times.

Regards,
Lauren Desrocher
Chairman, Ellington Ad-Hoc Trails Committee