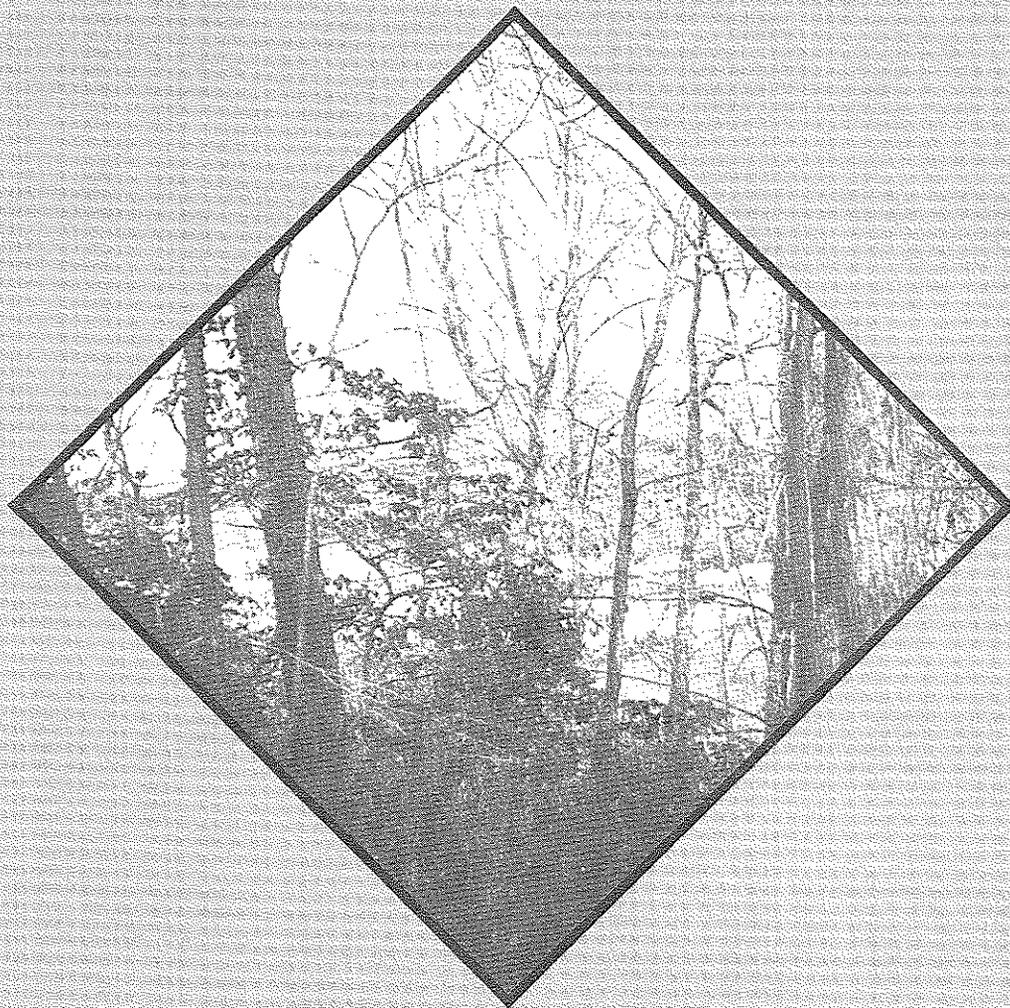


TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
1994 CONSERVATION PLAN



JULY 1994

OLD SAYBROOK CONSERVATION COMMISSION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION IS INDEBTED TO MANY PEOPLE FOR THEIR ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SANITY IN GENERAL AND OF THIS DOCUMENT IN PARTICULAR. IN ADDITION TO THOSE MENTIONED IN THE INTRODUCTION WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK FORMER MEMBERS ELSIE-IVES BAKEWELL, JOHN DONOVAN AND RICHARD FREEMAN; STEVE MAZEAU, CHAIR OF THE INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION AND DILIGENT KEEPER OF OUR DELIBERATIONS; THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S LIAISON, HARRIET B. NAUGHTON; AND, NOT LEAST, FIRST SELECTMAN ROGER GOODNOW, WHO REVIVED THE COMMISSION FOUR YEARS AGO AND SET US ON OUR HOPEFUL, IF CHALLENGING PATH.

HELEN CASEY

JAN FENGER

ROBERT HANSEN

JEAN HOYTE, *VICE CHAIR*

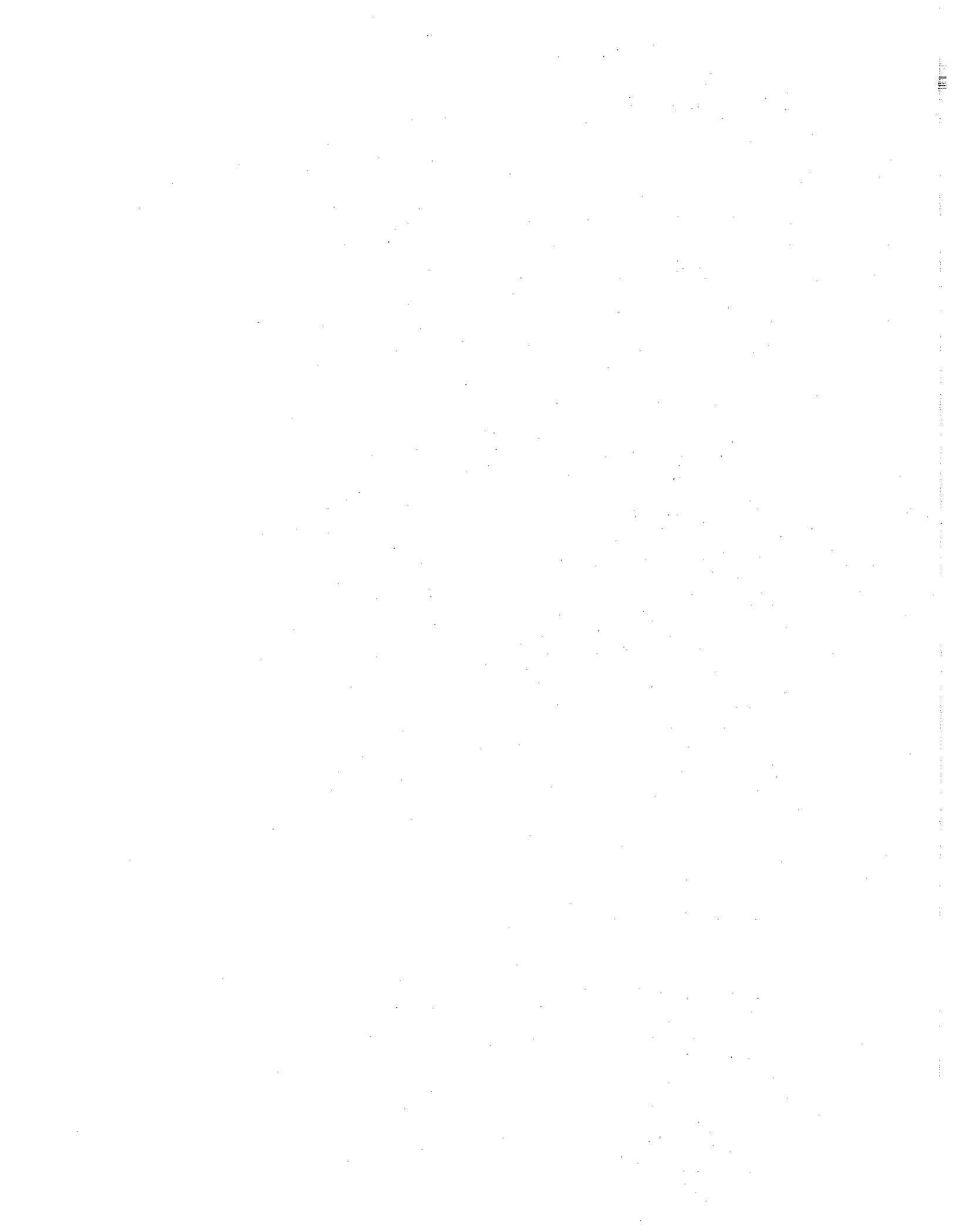
ROBERT LONDON

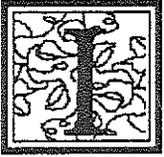
RICHARD TIETJEN, *CHAIR*

TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
1994 CONSERVATION PLAN

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Introduction

Under Section 7-311 of the Connecticut General Statutes, each local conservation commission in the State of Connecticut is authorized to prepare an inventory of its town's natural resources, including such features as open spaces, marshlands and swamps, geological features, and historic landmarks. The Conservation Commission may also make recommendations for the development and use of such areas.

The Old Saybrook Conservation Commission has chosen to combine its inventory and recommendations in this Plan of Conservation for the Town of Old Saybrook. The Town's most recent conservation plan, entitled "Open Space Plan for Old Saybrook, Connecticut . . . and other recommendations for environmental improvements", was completed by the Conservation Commission in November 1969, expanding upon the first general plan for conservation, offered by the Conservation Commission in November 1967. This 1994 revision first looks back, reviewing the status of issues that were of concern to the Conservation Commission twenty-five years ago. It discusses how those issues have been resolved or have changed during the ensuing years. Next, this Plan summarizes the current status of open space in Old Saybrook, based on a recently completed inventory. Finally, the Conservation Commission offers recommendations for future conservation measures and activities.

Planning, Zoning and other land use boards must make informed decisions regarding the direction and scope of development within the Town of Old Saybrook. It is our

hope that knowledge about what resources are available to us in Old Saybrook and the recommendations offered herein concerning those resources will help town officials make decisions with heightened awareness and thoughtful husbanding of our irreplaceable natural resources. These are the very things that make our community livable and lovely now. With care for Old Saybrook's future as well as for the present, we should continue to grow sensibly, avoiding mindless mistakes to which indifference and ignorance of our surroundings can so devastatingly lead.

It has been said that we really don't own our environment, but rather, we borrow it from our children. Therefore, it behooves us to treat it well.



The Old Saybrook Conservation Commission's function, as with all conservation commissions in Connecticut, is mainly an advisory one - to the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Commission, various other land use boards, and to the public at large. Accordingly, we offer this new Conservation Plan to the Town via the Planning Commission, without whose help, and the help of Linda Krause of CRERPA, it would not have been completed. We are indebted to Jim Gibbons of the University of Connecticut Extension Service for arranging and for Alison Guinness for doing the research, and to the Rockfall Foundation, for funding the open space inventory underlying this plan.



Historical Perspective

Conservation and Open Space Issues Raised by the 1969 Conservation Plan

A review of the issues raised in the 1969 Conservation Plan indicates that there has been a substantial improvement in our understanding and level of sophistication concerning environmental matters since that 1969 plan was adopted. Unfortunately, with that understanding also comes the knowledge that many issues are far more complex than we once believed them to be.

As with this current revision, the principal focus of the 1969 plan was protection of Old Saybrook's special natural resource areas. The plan made recommendations for preservation of three types of open space, and included further suggestions for preserving and enhancing the environment of Old Saybrook. The three types of open space were tidal wetlands, streams, and a listing of specific resource areas with characteristics of particular conservation interest.

The 1969 Plan recognized the critical importance of one of the town's most important natural resources, the approximately 1,335 acres of tidal marsh within the town boundaries of Old Saybrook. Marshlands are spawning and nursery grounds for fish, provide breeding and nesting areas for wildlife, and provide a buffer against violent coastal storms. The plan recommended that further dredging, filling or polluting of any tidal wetlands be prohibited by local ordinance. It is also urged that all tidal marshes be designated as open space areas. At about the same time, statewide recognition of the importance of tidal wetlands resulted in the passage of the State's Tidal Wetlands Act in 1969, later modified in 1971, which provides a considerable degree of protection for marshes today.

The 1969 Plan also identified protection of all streams and their watersheds within the town as an important conservation goal. Concern was expressed about potential pollution from septic system leach fields seeping through the ground water and contaminating streams. The plan also cautioned against diverting or draining streams, and against excessive cutting of timber and vegetation leading to erosion. In 1972, the State General Assembly passed Public Act 155, the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act, which addressed many of the concerns identified in the 1969 plan.



In addition to tidal wetlands and streams, the 1969 Plan identified additional specific areas of conservation interest for the entire community. These areas were acknowledged for their scenic value, their recreation potential, and their importance to the natural resource base. Specifically, six hilltop areas were recommended for limited development and possible acquisition. Chalker's Pond was recognized for its special scenic value and acquisition was suggested. Acquisition of additional open space in the beach areas was recommended to offset high housing density.

The 1969 Plan also included suggestions concerning the most appropriate type of open space to be required through the subdivision process. Specific resources cited were marshes, swamp, ponds, streams and rock ledges. In addition, the Plan recommended that subdividers be required to set aside adequate land for playground-type recreation.

Other recommendations in the 1969 Plan to improve the environment ranged from a street tree planting program to control of pesticide use by the town. Many of the issues raised in the Conservation Plan more than 24 years ago have been addressed in part by federal or state regulations, but almost all issues identified then remain conservation concerns today in some form.



Old Saybrook Today

The Natural Resources Inventory

In 1993, an inventory of natural resources and open space land within Old Saybrook was completed by Alison Guinness through the University of Connecticut Extension Service, with financial support from the Rockfall Foundation in Middletown. A series of overlay maps were prepared showing water resources, natural and cultural areas, and open space. This inventory serves as a basis for this conservation plan. Among other features, the maps illustrate both committed and uncommitted open space. For mapping purposes, the two categories were defined as follows:

Committed Open Space includes land specifically designated for active and passive open space such as school yards, athletic fields, parks, boat landings, rights-of-way

to public beaches, scenic overlooks and waterways, and cemeteries;

Also included are properties owned by Conservation Land Trust; and Town, State and Federal land areas essentially protected from development.

Recreation, preservation, and education are characteristic functions of committed open space areas. Encroachment by other uses on such open space areas should be avoided.

Uncommitted Open Space includes marinas, set-aside areas in subdivisions and open spaces reserved by private or quasi-private associations, e.g. beach associations.

These properties are highly desirable, or even essential amenities, and should be protected through appropriate plans and land use regulations.

The amount of committed open space identified in Old Saybrook in 1993 was more than 1100 acres, or about 10% of the town's total land area. Uncommitted open space, as defined above, added another 400 acres to the total land area either dedicated to or specifically used for open space. In addition, the open space categories as defined do not include private undeveloped land in those calculations.

Approximately 59% of the total land and water area of Old Saybrook was undeveloped in 1990, according to an inventory of existing land uses in the Estuary Region completed by the Regional Planning Agency.



A similar inventory by CRERPA in 1970 measured slightly different categories, but a general comparison of the total undeveloped area can be made between 1970 and 1990. In 1970, CRERPA identified approximately 78% of the total area of the town as undeveloped. Thus, during the past two decades, almost 20% of the town's area has been developed for residential, commercial, industrial, institutional or transportation uses.

Table One provides a summary of distribution of land uses in Old Saybrook in 1990. (Information is taken from "Land Use - 1990 - Connecticut River Estuary Planning Region", prepared by the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency in September 1992.)

Some of the undeveloped land is unlikely to be developed due to environmental constraints, including wetness, steep slopes, or ledge conditions. Other areas are more likely to be developed, but may be in as much need of protection from inappropriate development as preserved open space. This plan will recommend protection of certain areas through easement, acquisition or other means.

There follows a catalog of open spaces and a list of areas of special concern identified in the Natural Resources Inventory. Property locations are keyed to illustration #1 - "Existing Open Space, Areas of Special Conservation Interest, Linkage Areas, Location of Northern Greenway".

1990 DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING LAND USES IN OLD SAYBROOK

Type of Use	Acres	% of Town
Residential	2,826	24.13
single family	2,751	23.49
multi-family	75	.64
Commercial	443	3.78
Industrial	213	1.82
Institutional	290	2.48
Transportation	918	7.84
Open Space	951	8.12
Uncommitted Land	4,238	36.19
Total Land Area	9,879	84.35
Water Bodies	1,833	15.65
Total Town Area	11,712	100.00

(= in square miles, 18.3)



A. COMMITTED OPEN SPACE	Location Key Map #1
FEDERAL	
Saybrook Light	1
STATE	
Railroad Right of Way	2
<u>Marshes</u>	
Back River	4
Beamon Creek	5
Hagar Creek	6
Hyde Point Creek	7
Mud Creek	8
Parsonage Creek	9
Plum Bank Creek	10
Ragged Rock Creek	11
MUNICIPAL	
North Cove Road Boat Launching Area	12
Clark Community Park	13
Exchange Club Park	14
Fort Saybrook Monument Park	15
School Playground & Nature Trail	16
High School Athletic Fields	17

Kavanaugh Park - Trask Road	18
Middle School Playground & Athletic Field	19
Saybrook Point Park & Mini Golf Course	20
Town Dock - Sheffield Street	21
Town Landing - North Cove Road	22
Main Street Memorial Park (Town Green)	23
Town Land Fill (former)	24

Rights of Way and Scenic Overlooks

Cove Road - North Cove	25
Fenwick Street - South Cove	26
Ferry Road - Connecticut River	27
North Cove Road - Connecticut River	28
Old Fenwick Road - Long Island Sound	29
Other Rights Of Way on Long Island Sound (a total of 27, including scenic overlooks) *	*
<i>* symbol indicates location on map #2</i>	

Beaches

Harvey's Beach	30
Old Saybrook Town Beach	31

Old Saybrook Land Trust

Meadowood Lane on Mud Creek	32
Rocky Point Road on Connecticut River	33
Lynde Point Land Trust (Fenwick)	

Nature Conservatory

Turtle Creek, on Connecticut River	34
------------------------------------	----

Cemeteries

Cypress, on College Street	35
Riverside, on Sheffield Street	36
St. John's, North Main Street/ Old Middlesex Turnpike	37

Future use of much of the committed open space property listed above is restricted by deed to open space or passive recreational use. This is not true of all properties listed, however, particularly school grounds and athletic facilities.

B. UNCOMMITTED OPEN SPACE **Location Key**

Map #1

Bel Air Manor	38
Borough of Fenwick	39
Chalker Beach Association	40
Clark Memorial Field (O.S. Fire Company)	41
CL&P Right of Way (power lines)	42
Cornfield Point Association	43
Fenwood Swim Club	44
Great Hammock Beach Association	45
Knollwood Beach Association	46
North Cove Yacht Club	47
Old Saybrook Camping Association	48
Old Saybrook Racquet Club	49
Otter Cove	50

Open space owned by private associations is often legally restricted as to future use, or if not legally committed, is unlikely to be developed. However, it is not unheard of for an area thought to be public or semi-public open space to be proposed for development, and for the public to discover that there are no legal restrictions to prevent such use. Open space reserved as part of a subdivision approval under current subdivision regulations must be maintained as open space in perpetuity.

C. Natural Areas

Many privately owned areas, including much of the upland areas north of I-95, remain largely undeveloped. Some of this land is kept open and undeveloped under provisions of Public Act 490, the State's Farm and Forest Act. This Act relieves pressure to use farm and forest land for more intensive uses by providing preferential tax treatment for qualifying undeveloped land. Land which has been classified under Public Act 490 is subject to a conveyance tax if the owner sells or changes the use within a period of ten years. After the ten year period, there is no penalty for conversion to another use. About 1800 acres in Old Saybrook are in the 490 Program, with less than 100 acres under cultivation today.

Several large undeveloped tracts of land are located together north of Interstate 95. Along with the large tidal marsh areas to the south and east, these large wooded areas are the town's most significant natural areas. Significant portions of these properties should be considered for protection by outright acquisition or conservation easements. Retention of these

upland wooded hills which are interspersed with swamps and ponds will retain the rural character of the town, enhance the quality of already-developed areas, and provide greenways and passive recreation. Passive recreation activities which might be both desirable and suitable include access to views from hilltops, hiking and biking trails, environmental studies, bird watching, canoeing, and just plain relaxing and appreciating nature.



The following properties have been identified by the Conservation Commission as areas of particular conservation interest. This list is not all-inclusive, but is intended to indicate some of the most important areas. Other areas such as Saybrook Point and unprotected tidal marshes are also of significant conservation interest.

- ❖ **Inland wetlands, located in the triangle formed by Route 154, Route 1 & I-95**
(Location Key: Map #1 - 51)
This 35 acre property is a large inland wetland, providing storm water retention and habitat in a mostly developed area. The parcel is generally unsuitable for development.
- ❖ **Hilly rugged wooded uplands, streambelts, extensive inland wetlands and Pequot Swamp Pond, located at the northern end of Ingham Hill Road.**
(Location Key: Map #1 - 52)
Known as the Lyons property, the entire

tract of approximately 850 acres, occupying much of the town boundary with Essex, is under single ownership. The property is the largest undeveloped parcel in town. Its dramatically varied terrain serves many natural functions. A portion of the property is within the area planned for the Northern Greenway Loop. Any future development of the property should be according to an overall plan which retains linked open space areas.

- ❖ **Upland woods, ponds, streams and wetlands, located on both sides of Ingham Hill Road, immediately north of I-95.**
(Location Key: Map #1 - 53)
Known as the Gleason property, approximately 175 acres in several separate tracts are under a single ownership. Portions of the properties provide habitat for rare plant and animal species. Jacob's Peak, the highest undeveloped hilltop in Old Saybrook, is located on another tract. (Location Key: Map#1 - 54) A portion of this land is included in the Northern Greenway Loop proposal.
- ❖ **Property of Old Saybrook Camping Association, located in the north west corner of the intersection of Old Back Highway and the I-95 R.O.W.**
(Location Key: Map #1 - 55)
This 3 acre property includes a portion of the Fishing Brook wetlands.
- ❖ **Fishing Brook wetlands, located on property west of Old Back Highway, south of Town-owned Clark Park.**
(Location Key: Map #1 - 56)
This 50 acre parcel includes a 100 foot high peak dropping sharply to a wide band of wetlands. A portion of this property is part of the proposed Northern Greenway Loop.
- ❖ **Beacon Hill, located east of Schoolhouse Road, between I-95 and the AMTRAK railroad line.**
(Location Key: Map #1 - 57)
This approximately 28 acre parcel includes the summit of Beacon Hill, 100 feet above sea level.



urrent Conservation Issues

OPEN SPACE

Open space may be as small as a buffer strip in a commercial zone, or include large, undeveloped tracts of land like the state-owned salt marshes or Clark Community Park on Schoolhouse Road. Open space can serve many purposes, and a particular parcel often serves several functions at the same time.

Open space functions include preservation of natural resources, retention of natural drainage ways, provision of wildlife habitat, provision for active or passive recreation, maintenance of scenic quality, enhancement of historical and cultural activities, and establishment of development patterns.

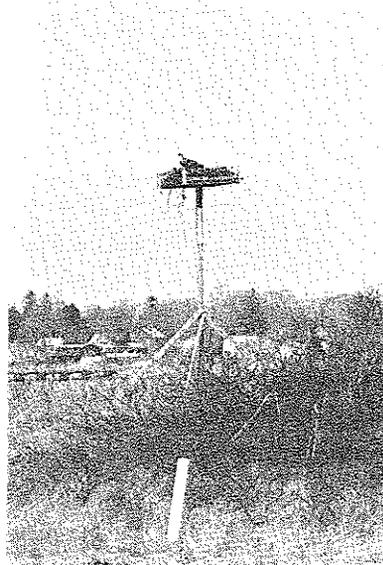
Open space also has significant economic value, enhancing the property values of nearby properties, and avoiding the cost of services and utilities to the property if it were to be developed.

PROTECTION OF AREAS OF SPECIAL CONSERVATION INTEREST

Like the 1969 Conservation Plan, this 1994 Plan places considerable emphasis on open space preservation. In 1969, the Plan recommended protection of all tidal wetlands and streams, plus limiting development of other special areas. Through state and local regulations, development in tidal wetlands and streams is now restricted, although not completely prohibited.

Plans for protection of other special areas identified in the 1969 Plan have not fared as well. Prospect Hill, Fox Hill, Ferry Hill, and some of the high points above Pequot Swamp have all been subdivided in recent years, with apparently little attention given

to preserving views for the public or preserving the wooded appearance of the hilltops from afar. Development on Ferry Hill is particularly visible when approaching Old Saybrook from the east over the new Baldwin Bridge. Development has not yet occurred on Jacob's Peak and Beacon Hill, both of which were also identified in the 1969 Plan as important conservation areas.



The 1969 Plan recommended acquisition of some of the town's hilltop areas, and also acquisition of Chalker's Pond, for the special scenic value of those areas. This recommendation has not been implemented, although the Town has expressed interest in purchase of some of the land to maintain natural resources and provide public access to a variety of terrain.

The generally held impression of unlimited large areas of undeveloped woodlands north of I-95 is deceptive. Some of the most important natural resource areas have been gradually lost to new residential development with little recognition of the importance of the resource to the general public. Greater public awareness of areas of special conservation interest is necessary to assure the future development is more sensitive to protection of these special natural areas than has been the case in recent years.

The 1969 Plan urged that subdivision open space regulations be more specific as to the types and location of required open space. Open space regulations were upgraded with the adoption of new subdivision regulations in August of 1992. Due to the lessening of housing development activity following the boom years of the mid-1980's,

there has been little opportunity for the Planning Commission to use its new open space criteria in new subdivision applications.

A COHERENT PATTERN OF OPEN SPACE

The 1969 Plan focused on preservation of specific types of resources, including streams, marshes, and hilltops. Since 1969, a greater understanding has emerged of the importance of the relationship of one open space area to another. Linkage of open space areas into a continuous network provides benefits which are even greater than that resulting from the protection, conservation, or preservation of widely scattered separate areas. Linked areas provide better wildlife habitat, giving wildlife a range of movement. Maintenance of water quality is best accomplished through protection of entire streambelt systems. A connected network of open spaces also provides a framework upon which to base orderly development.

The location and character of open space is important in helping people understand their surroundings. Open space can provide "edges" which both separate and integrate various types of land use, and which serve to distinguish one neighborhood from another. Fingers or swaths of open space projecting into or through a development provide a significant sense of variety and openness. Open space can also serve as a focal point, to give direction and provide orientation, a function served by Saybrook Point Park and the Town Green next to the Town Hall.

Well-located open space can help maintain the character of Old Saybrook. In the village areas, small well-maintained park areas, private yards, and street trees are a critical factor in retaining the small town village character. In residential areas outside of the village north of I-95, the open space pattern is a major factor in retaining rural character. As the residentially zoned areas of town are broken up into smaller ownership units, new houses have been built lining existing roads, and new roads have been created for the sole purpose of providing frontage for new lots. The resulting overall appearance

of many residential areas is suburban in character. As development continues, care should be taken to locate future open space in visible locations to maximize its visual impact.



CREATING A GREENWAY FOR OLD SAYBROOK

"GREENWAY: A greenway is any corridor of open space that protects natural resources and/or provides recreation. Greenways can be located along a waterway or other defining feature, such as a ridgeline, or along a man-made corridor such as an abandoned right-of-way, abandoned town road, a woods road, or a canal. It can be a greenspace along a highway or around a village. Greenways can provide the vital 'missing links' to connect existing protected areas, and to give people convenient access to the outdoors. A greenway can be as wide as a river valley or as narrow as an abandoned rail bed.

"Greenways serve many purposes. Rural greenways preserve natural habitats and wildlife migration routes, encourage restoration of environmentally valuable landscapes, and provide opportunities for recreation and education. In the cities and suburbs, greenways can encompass natural or man-made features and can provide resource conservation, recreation and transportation."

*From the working definition as used
by the State of Connecticut
Greenways Committee, March 1993*

One function of open space preservation is to link areas now open and thereby enhance the available habitat and range for animal and plant life threatened by development. There are good and sufficient reasons for greenways, not only aesthetic and recreational ones, but also ecological ones as well. Underlying a healthy environment is the interrelatedness of its natural components with each other and with us as well.

Old Saybrook includes many areas of vital importance to plants and animals. Connections between these areas will provide the linkage mentioned above. Existing and recommended open space cited in this plan has potential as wildlife corridors or "greenways". Waterways and watersheds especially, can serve as arteries for travel by many species. Cemeteries, parks, golf courses, and our own backyards can also provide transportation routes for wildlife. While the more rural or less developed parts of Old Saybrook appear to be decisively separated by the commercial strip along Route 1, there are nevertheless corridors of open space, potential or actual greenways, between the northern, more wooded area and the southern water side of town.

The largest such corridor is based on the Oyster River and its tributaries and wetlands, starting in upland swamps and ponds and emptying into the Sound. The area drained by Pequot Swamp is thus linked, via high ground to the east, with the Ingham Ponds, which drain their side of Ingham Hill Road to the south via Chalker's Mill Pond, Lake Rockview, Mill Meadows and the Oyster River. To the west, the linkage would follow from the Pequot Swamp area south to Crystal Lake, along Fishing Brook through more wetlands, joining up with the Oyster River.



An intermediate connection across open land and Cedar Swamp east from Crystal Lake would further link the two watershed greenways, making a rough figure eight. (See Map #2)

THE NORTHERN GREENWAY LOOP

Several years ago, the Old Saybrook Land Trust compiled a map which shows undeveloped property, natural features, and preserved open space within the town. A study of the map indicates that, in the part of town north of I-95, several large tracts of undeveloped land could be connected to form a loop which includes a wide range of natural terrain and vegetation. One of these tracts, containing about 180 acres, is the town-owned Clark Community Park, east of Schoolhouse Road. Other large tracts are in private ownership. From the Park property, a corridor could be envisioned which would form a donut-shaped loop along streambeds and the shores of several ponds, and up hills to some of the highest points in town. In total, the loop would provide access to over 800 acres of diverse habitat. In recent years, members of the Old Saybrook Ecology Club and the Conservation Commission have walked and studied that land in order to make intelligent recommendations for preserving a portion of the natural resources on those properties.

The Conservation Commission has identified a corridor of uplands and wetlands connecting town-owned land in Clark Park with other features. Parking for hikers could be made available on town-owned land. Beginning at the Town Park, it would be possible to create a trail which extends from Crystal Lake to Lake Rockview, along the Fishing Brook. The trail would then run by Chalker's Mill Pond and along the side of Prospect Hill to Ingham Ponds. From the side of Prospect Hill, a branch trail could be developed to the top of Jacob's Peak. From Ingham Ponds, the trail could follow the topography along the hillsides to circle to the north of Pequot Swamp Pond, providing views of the pond. From Pequot Swamp pond, a trail would then turn south and return to Clark Park, completing the circuit. The general

location of the proposed greenway loop is shown on Map #2. Along the way, a hiker could view a variety of resources, including fresh water ponds, wetlands, a peat bog, stands of evergreens and mixed woodlands. With preservation of important individual resource sites and protection of a connecting corridor on either side of the trail, a significant portion of the natural landscape can be saved.

The Conservation Commission supports the preservation of land through the creation of a northern greenway loop. The greenway loop will maintain a large, mostly undisturbed corridor for various types of wildlife and plant life. Several rare or unusual species have been identified in the area north of I-95, including wood duck, and several rare plant and bird species. Creation of the greenway would increase the likelihood that a major watershed area in town will retain its important role in assuring continued good water quality. The greenway would also allow expansion of existing hiking trails, increasing the opportunity for education and appreciation of the natural areas of Old Saybrook. In addition, the greenway corridor would help give definition to the residential areas along its border.

A combination of approaches should be used to create and protect the greenway corridor. Reservation of land as open space in any future subdivisions should be consistent with the greenway plan. Where possible, state open space acquisition funds should be actively pursued for purchase of special areas. Donations of land or of conservation easements should be sought from property owners.

WATER QUALITY

The following is a list of Old Saybrook's major fresh water resources:

Chalker's Mill Pond
 Cranberry Pond
 Crystal Lake
 Deitch Pond
 Ingham Ponds
 Lake Rockview



Obed Reservoir
 Pequot Swamp Brook
 Springdale Pond
 Back River
 Beamon Creek
 Cold Spring Brook
 Fishing Brook
 Hagar Creek
 Mud Creek
 Oyster River
 Plum Bank Creek
 Ragged Rock Creek

Other (unnamed) ponds, streams, inland wetlands and associated watersheds.

FRESH WATER RESOURCES - STREAMS

The 1969 Plan identifies streams and watersheds as the most important natural resources in Old Saybrook.

Recommendations for protection of all streams and their watersheds included the following measures: (1) a Town ordinance against draining, diverting and polluting streams; (2) a town ordinance against septic tanks and leaching fields within 50 feet of streams; and (3) a Town ordinance against erecting structures, destroying timber or other vegetation within 50 feet of a stream. In 1972, The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act gave towns the authority to establish a local wetlands agency to regulate activities within inland wetlands and watercourses. The Act provided for a case-by-case analysis of the environmental impact of development activities within areas of poorly drained and very poorly drained soils, and within watercourses. The local Inland Wetlands Commission is required to assess the adverse impact of development activities, require mitigating measures where possible, and determine whether alternatives to the proposed activity can be found. The result of the local inland wetlands review requirement has been a general tendency for developers to avoid development in wetlands where possible to save themselves the time and expense of obtaining a local wetlands permit. Since local wetlands decisions are made on a case by case basis, there has been

an uneven quality to wetlands decisions throughout the state. At present, a state task force on rivers and streams is developing a program of measures to provide additional, standardized protection to watercourses within the State.

Some possible measures to protect water quality, in addition to those programs already in place, might include requiring buffers along major streams and development of policies to control nonpoint sources of pollution, such as waste oil and lawn fertilizers. Implementation of a municipal sewer avoidance program for non-sewered areas, which includes regular inspection and maintenance of septic systems, would also help protect water quality.

FRESH WATER RESOURCES - AQUIFER PROTECTION

Old Saybrook relies heavily on groundwater for its drinking water supply, both from numerous individual private wells and from the Connecticut Water Company system. The Connecticut Water Company, which serves most of the town south of I-95, obtains its water from the Killingworth Reservoir and several wells located west of Old Saybrook, including the Holbrook Well in Westbrook. The Old Saybrook Well on Bokum Road is pumped as needed, typically between May and October to meet the increased seasonal demand. The Bokum Road aquifer has an estimated safe daily yield of 290,000 gallons per day, and is seen as a potential future source of additional public water.

The remainder of the town, where most new residential development has been occurring, relies on individual private wells.

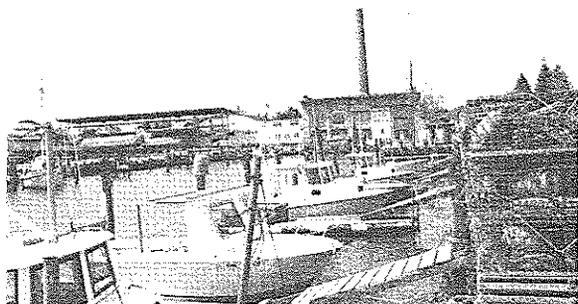
New lots are approved and sold based on the assumption that sufficient water of suitable quality will result each time a new well is drilled. Some Connecticut communities require that the well be drilled and tested before approval is granted to construct a residence, to assure that a suitable potable water supply can be located. This practice should be considered for adoption in Old Saybrook.

If ground water becomes contaminated, it may remain polluted for a very long time. Prevention of contamination is far easier than restoration of ground water. In 1985, the Old Saybrook Zoning Commission, in cooperation with the Connecticut Water Company, established an overlay Aquifer Protection District to prohibit certain uses from the area around the Bokum Well. This was an initial step to protect one particular area. A more comprehensive approach to ground water protection is still needed to protect ground water quality throughout the town.

COASTAL RESOURCES

Major coastal water resources include the Connecticut River, Long Island Sound, North Cove, South Cove, and Indiantown Harbor (at mouth of Oyster River).

Old Saybrook's coastal location, where the Connecticut River Estuary meets Long Island Sound, has been the determining factor in the town's historic development. Old Saybrook is fortunate to be surrounded on two sides by salt water, with beaches, bluffs, coves and salt marshes along its south and eastern border. The 1969 Plan recognized the importance of tidal marshes and urged their preservation through their designation as open space areas. Also in 1969, the State of Connecticut undertook the regulation of development activities in tidal marsh areas. In 1982, the Old Saybrook Planning Commission adopted a Municipal Coastal Program under the provisions of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act. The coastal program described coastal resources within Old Saybrook and adopted policies and recommendations for use of those resources. The coastal program



includes many substantive recommendations, but with the passage of time, this plan has not received continuing attention. The Old Saybrook Municipal Coastal Program should be reviewed and revised as necessary.

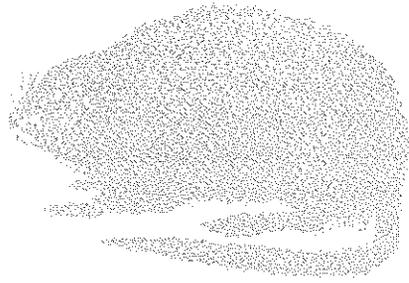
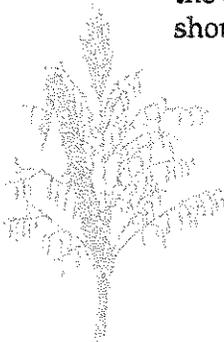
Under the Coastal Management Act, most land use applications within a designated coastal area must be reviewed by the Planning or Zoning Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals to determine consistency with state policies and use guidelines concerning coastal resources. In some instances, coastal site plan review appears to have become a token process, with little real discussion of coastal impacts. A review of coastal management requirements might be useful for the commissions charged with the responsibility for conducting coastal reviews.

Coastal issues which should be addressed in further detail include the impacts of coastal flooding, coastal erosion, and the possibility of sea level rise due to global warming. Consideration should also be given to preparation of a formal Harbor Management Plan for Old Saybrook to allocate uses of Old Saybrook's coastal waters.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

Over 1800 acres are currently registered with the Old Saybrook Tax Assessor under the Connecticut Farm and Forestry Act (Public Act 490), an increase of about 750 acres since 1980. Only 10% of the acreage is in active use for farming and forestry. Despite the limited amount of actual farming today, there are significant areas of rich agricultural soils with the town. A case can and should be made for

preserving as much of it as possible, both for its value as open space, and for future food production.



WILDLIFE HABITAT

State records indicate that several rare and endangered plant and animal species have been found in Old Saybrook. The location of these species is generally not made public knowledge due to the need to protect the species. It is equally important to protect the environmental system that supports each rare or endangered species, as well as those species which are more common.

Maintenance of existing wildlife corridors and creation of new linked greenways will help preserve habitat for birds and animals.

TOWN CHARACTER

The present character of Old Saybrook has been determined in large part by its natural resources. Its location at the junction of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound made Old Saybrook an early center for waterborne transportation. Major land transportation routes were chosen to avoid the extensive salt marsh areas and upland hills, and to minimize the difficulty in crossing the Connecticut River.

Today, each area of town owes its particular character to the natural resources of that area.

The distinct areas of town, including the beach communities, Main Street and the village area, other commercial and industrial areas and the upland areas north of I-95, owe their present physical character to the natural setting in which they were located. To maintain the interesting diversity which characterizes Old Saybrook, new development must be sensitive to the environmental resources of each area.

Conservation policies and land use regulations should be individually tailored to each distinct area within the town. In the beach

areas, public shore views and shore access must be maintained and enhanced. New development which blocks views must be actively discouraged. Fragile marsh areas should be protected by upland buffers. Main Street development and other new commercial activity should be required to incorporate appropriate landscaping and tree planting in site plan revisions. In commercial areas, especially along Main Street and the village area, the importance of small public spaces must be recognized, and such areas protected from encroachment. In residential areas, new development must be in keeping with the character and limitations of the land, protecting such features as ledge outcroppings and large wooded areas. Strip residential development, with new lots and new driveways lining existing rural roads, should be avoided through subdivision design which requires a buffer area between the road and new reserved open space should be located so as to create linkages among larger open parcels.

Throughout the town in areas where public sewers are not anticipated, greater attention should be given to establishing a formal sewer avoidance program so that water quality problems do not develop. The cost of installing sewers in the northern hills, if problems were to develop in that area, would be staggering.

HISTORICAL PLACES

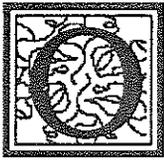
Various landmarks, historic sites and potential historic districts offer possibilities for maintaining the village and residential character of Old Saybrook as well as many other cultural resources, especially its 18th and 19th century houses. The North Cove Historic District is an example and is now included as a whole in the National Register of Historic Places. Other examples of cultural resources relevant to land use policy are the old millstone on Main Street, the site of Yale's origins, Cypress Cemetery with grave markers from the town's beginnings, such as Lady Fenwick's Bower, and of course Fort Saybrook Monument Park.

Among the sites listed by the Connecticut Historical Commission are:

- Black Horse Tavern
- Elisha Bushnell House
- Jedidiah Dudley House
- Samuel Eliot House
- Gen. William Hart House
- Lynde Point Lighthouse
- Old Saybrook South Green ("Trivet Green")
- Parker House
- Humphrey Pratt Tavern
- Saybrook Breakwater Lighthouse
- William Tully House
- Ambrose Whittlesey Jr. House
- John R. Whittlesey Jr. House



All of the above as well as the North Cove Historic District are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Other Conservation Issues

The 1969 Plan included a section entitled "other ways to improve the environment". Six recommendations were listed, encompassing a broad range of concerns. While considerable progress has been made in dealing with environmental issues, the concerns raised in 1969 remain today, as discussed below:

1. URBAN FORESTRY

The 1969 plan expressed concern about the loss of the town's elm trees to Dutch Elm disease, and urged establishment of a tree planting program for Main Street and Route 1. Today, a municipal tree planting and maintenance falls under the heading of "urban forestry". Old Saybrook has a limited urban forestry program under the direction of the town's Tree Warden. This program should be expanded to include other areas of town in planting and maintenance efforts.

2. HIKING AND BIKING TRAILS

The 1969 Plan suggested that the Town work with the State to convert the right-of-way for the former New Haven Railroad in Old Saybrook to a walking-bicycling trail. Instead, today the railroad line is used by the Valley Railroad for its museum activities.

Although hiking and biking activity can occur along the same trail network, the requirements for a bicycle trail are more demanding than for hiking. Hiking trails can include a variety of terrain, with trails of varying widths. Bicycle trails, for other than off-road bicycles, must have a smooth surface, adequate width, and manageable grades to attract cyclists. Ideally, there should be a physical separation between the bike path and the road surface for automobiles.

The Conservation Commission's priority hiking trail project is the northern greenway, extending the hiking trail eastward from the existing trails on town park property. Technical advice on trail design is available from the Connecticut Forest and Park Association and should be utilized to formally plan the location of a main loop trail and alternatives. The loop trail plan could serve as a guide to open space acquisition both through future subdivisions and other means. (See map #2)

In addition to its recreational aspects, bicycling should be encouraged as both an energy conservation measure and a means of improving air quality through reduced automobile use. Bicyclists regularly use Old Saybrook roads as bike trails, particularly Route 154 through the southern part of town. The Connecticut Bicycle Map, published by the Connecticut Department of Transportation in the Summer of 1993, shows Route 1, Route 154, and Schoolhouse Road to Route 153 as "recommended bicycle routes". A separate review of possible bike routes should be considered, possibly by the Parks and Recreation Commission, and measures taken to make bike traffic as safe and inviting as possible. Any major bike route through town should include a connection to the bike lane on the new 1993 Baldwin Bridge.

3. LITTER CONTROL

In 1969, the Conservation Commission considered litter to be a significant problem, particularly with the increase in the number of drive-in restaurants occurring at that time. Route 1 was mentioned as a particular concern. Today, most takeout restaurants have learned to manage their waste, and solid waste disposal and packaging is a much broader

issue than control of litter. Public pressure has led major fast food chain outlets to use more biodegradable packaging, and reduce packaging in general. The cost of waste disposal has risen dramatically, and recycling has become mandatory under state law. The "bottle bill" requiring deposits on many beverage containers created an incentive to return bottles and cans.

Where litter remains a problem, some communities have created an "adopt-a-highway" program, with civic groups assuming responsibility for regularly picking up litter along a designated stretch of road. Greater attention to waste disposal during site plan review, including screened dumpsters for both garbage and recyclables, can also help reduce potential litter problems.

4. HAZARDOUS POLLUTANTS

The 1969 Plan recommended that the town reduce its use of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides in light of a growing awareness of their negative impact on the environment. Today, we are aware that the issue of chemical pollutants goes far beyond the use of one class of pesticides. Many chemicals, particularly synthetic chemicals in very small amounts, can have a serious impact on both wildlife and people. Once in the natural environment, such chemicals can persist for a very long time. Since 1969, many substances have been prohibited or strictly controlled. We are still learning how to deal with such materials.

Many common household products are hazardous in the wrong place. People are beginning to realize that many chemicals poured down the drain or tossed into the trash can do not merely disappear, but may enter the groundwater and can pollute nearby wells. Public information campaigns have informed people of the hazards of improper disposal of household hazardous materials, but there is not yet a safe alternative means of waste disposal.

Some communities have sponsored annual hazardous household waste collection days. In this area, annual regional collections were held for several years, but the cost of running a collection site was very high. Towns should be encouraged to work together to develop a permanent collection program, perhaps focusing on large volume waste such as paint.

The greatest concern today about persistent chemicals is the threat to groundwater quality. The State has passed legislation requiring local communities to establish regulations to protect public water supply wells through control of uses within the well's drawing area - the wellshed. Old Saybrook has two such wellsheds within its limits. Currently, federal water programs are about to require states to address the issue of nonpoint sources of water pollution - from such sources as stormwater runoff, septic system leaching fields, agricultural activities, and sedimentation and erosion.

5. AIR QUALITY

The 1969 Conservation Plan urged that state regulations against open burning be enforced by local authorities. The plan noted that "permits are required for open burning by residents -- except in the case of open burning of leaves and brush in towns where no provision is made for their collection". The Plan also recommended that the "local health officer determine on each occasion of (a state-declared) 'air pollution alert' whether or not there should be burning at the Town dump". Air pollution concerns in 1969 were primarily about smoke (particulates) and odors.

Air quality is an environmental issue that has become much more complex than it appeared in 1969. We are now concerned with ozone and hydrocarbons from automobiles, industry smokestacks, and even home chimneys. World-wide, there is considerable scientific debate about the effect of air pollution on global temperature. Global warming appears to be occurring, although the debate about cause continues. Damage to the ozone layer has

apparently resulted from the release of CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) from aerosols, air conditioning units, and manufacturing processes. It has even been determined that pollutants from the air are a significant cause of water pollution in Long Island Sound. Much of this area's air pollutants are generated in the New York metropolitan area and travel up Long Island Sound with the prevailing weather patterns to this area. In Connecticut, an automobile emission inspection program attempts to reduce air pollution caused by auto exhaust.

Despite considerable progress in addressing air quality issues since 1969, Connecticut air quality remains a major problem. Connecticut is a non-attainment area for both ozone and carbon monoxide emissions. Under federal clean air standards, Connecticut may have to take measures to limit future uses to avoid additional air pollution.

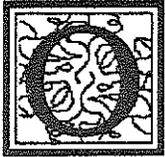
6. WASTE DISPOSAL

In 1969, the Conservation Commission recognized "sanitation" as Old Saybrook's most immediate environmental problem. A new town dump was seen as a temporary solution to garbage disposal, and a town (or regional) incinerator was suggested as a more permanent solution. Failing septic tanks were also seen as a problem which could be solved through construction of a sewer system.

Old Saybrook no longer has a town dump, but rather a transfer station where municipal solid waste is transferred from small garbage trucks to larger trucks for transport to the Mid-Connecticut Incinerator, located in Hartford. Recycled materials, including glass and plastic bottles, cans and newspapers, corrugated cardboard, tires, batteries and waste oil are collected for transport to recycling facilities elsewhere. Yard waste and leaves are composted on site. A regional recycling transfer station serving seven towns, is in the planning stages, to be located off of Route 154 near the Essex/Deep River town line. When the transfer station is complete, it may be possible to recycle additional items such as office paper, junk mail, magazines, clothing, milk cartons and more. Returnable bottles are taken back to the store and the deposit is returned to the consumer.

The greatest obstacle to additional recycling is the absence of steady markets for recycled materials. Recently the federal government mandated purchase of paper goods with a substantial recycled material content by all federal agencies. The Conservation Commission recommends that the Town of Old Saybrook consider requiring town purchase of recycled paper goods.

For almost two decades, Old Saybrook has been actively involved in a search for solutions to water pollution problems resulting from inadequate septic systems in several densely developed areas of town. In the mid-1970s, the engineering firm of Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. was hired to examine alternatives. Together with the Town of Westbrook, Old Saybrook hired the firm of Hayden/Wegman for additional study. The "Old Saybrook-Westbrook, Connecticut Joint Study of Wastewater Treatment - Alternatives" was completed in 1987. Both studies concluded that significant sewage disposal problems do exist in built-up areas, and no feasible localized solution is possible. A limited central sewer collection system has been proposed, to collect effluent from areas of Clinton, Westbrook and Old Saybrook for treatment at a plant in Old Saybrook and discharge to the Connecticut River. Considerable opposition has arisen to the tri-town sewer system, particularly to the sewer outfall location on the Connecticut River. Town officials continue to seek alternative solutions.



Open Space Preservation Methods

No Conservation Plan would be complete without some mention of the tools available for conservation and preservation of open space.

Land Acquisition

The most direct means of preserving open space land is for the town or a land preservation organization to acquire title to the property, either through purchase or as a gift, or a combination of both. Funds for purchase can come either through tax funds or through grant programs.

Towns are most interested in preserving open space land during times of rapid growth and development, which is typically when land prices are likely to be high. The ideal time to purchase land for open space would be during an economic downturn, but it is difficult for people to understand the importance of land preservation among the many other competing demands for funds at such a time. Public Act 89-378 allows towns to establish a non-lapsing land acquisition fund to be used for open space, recreation or housing. Towns can also issue bonds for land purchase, such as was done for acquisition of property at the tip of Saybrook Point.

At various times in the past, there have been significant land acquisition grant programs at both the state and federal level. The State of Connecticut established the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program in 1986 to acquire state conservation lands and other properties with important natural features. This program, which requires matching funds, is financed through issue of state bonds. The State Outdoor Recreation Fund is a matching assistance program to help towns purchase or develop parks, recreation areas or conservation land. The Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund can provide up to 75% reimbursement for the cost of the project. If federal funds

are unavailable, State reimbursement may be up to 40% of the cost. Both federal and state funding programs are competitive, receiving many more requests for assistance than funding permits.

TAX INCENTIVES

Several state programs provide relief from local property taxes for preservation of land. Public Act 490 had been discussed previously in this Plan. Federal law also provides for income tax deductions for land or easement donations or less-than-fee sale to tax exempt organizations, and reduction of estate or inheritance taxes for donation of land or easements to certain groups for conservation.

EASEMENTS FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES

An easement is an agreement in which one party owns land, and another (the owner of the easement) has the right to conduct specific activities to limit the use of the property. The owner of the land retains all other rights. Tax deductions for the value of the easement may be given to a land owner as his right to use the land has been restricted by the granting of an easement. In a conservation easement, the owner's right to develop his land is restricted.

STATE AND LOCAL LAND USE REGULATIONS

Over the past several decades, the Connecticut General Assembly has passed a series of resource protection laws. Some of these programs require local officials to administer regulations in accordance with state standards. Resource protection programs include tidal wetlands, inland wetlands and watercourses, the coastal area within the defined coastal boundary, flood hazard areas, public water supply aquifers, sedimentation and erosion controls, and energy conservation. The 1994 Session of the legislature is considering a program to protect rivers and streams.





Recommendations

The Old Saybrook Conservation Commission offers the following conservation policies and measures for consideration by the agencies and people of the Town of Old Saybrook (not in priority order). All of these recommendations have direct or indirect correspondence with the goals of ENVIRONMENT 2000:

☞ 1. Continue to place emphasis on preservation of both fresh and saltwater wetlands and watercourses through regulations, monitoring, and enforcement against violations to the maximum extent allowed by law.

☞ 2. Through zoning and subdivision regulations, and through inland wetlands review, require establishment and maintenance of natural buffer strips at least 25 feet wide or greater along streams and ponds within the town, with conservation easements in favor of the Town of Old Saybrook. Natural buffers are strips of land in which no construction, filling, or general removal of natural vegetation is permitted.

☞ 3. Develop policies and regulations for control of non-point sources of water pollution to protect inland and coastal resources. "Non-point" is the term used for water-borne pollution which does not come from a pipe or a single discharge point. It includes storm water runoff containing salt and oil from parking lots and streets, runoff from agricultural land and fertilized lawns, chemicals and nutrients from individual septic systems, and other sources.

☞ 4. Protect groundwater quality through adoption of additional aquifer protection measures in accordance with the State Aquifer Protection Program for wellhead protection, and to assure groundwater quality for areas served by private on-site wells.

☞ 5. Encourage preservation of land which is suitable for tillage and food production, as defined by soil type. Land which is highly suitable for agriculture is generally not the best land for septic systems due to its water retention properties. Once developed for other uses, agricultural land is extremely unlikely to be returned to agricultural use.

☞ 6. Maintain existing wildlife corridors and create new linked greenways for habitat preservation, especially in areas known as locations of rare and endangered species.

☞ 7. Maintain and enhance public views of Long Island Sound, the town's rivers and its salt marshes. Maintain and increase general public access to the shore for both active and passive recreation. Monitor new development to assure that it does not block existing public views.

☞ 8. In the same manner suggested for freshwater streams and ponds, retain a natural buffer strip along all salt marshes to protect the integrity of the marsh area.

☞ 9. Create and maintain a map showing areas of special conservation interest within the town to assist the Planning and Zoning Commissions, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and other town agencies and officials in making land use decisions which will best preserve the special qualities of such areas. Meet with other town agencies and officials periodically to explain the purpose of the map and the special characteristics of each area.

☞ 10. Actively pursue completion of a pedestrian loop trail through the northern Greenway, connecting existing town-owned land with a variety of terrain and natural resource areas.

☞ 11. The principle of creating linkages among open space parcels should be a primary basis for acquisition or reservation of open space. Encourage completion of greenways through donations, grants, open space requirements, purchase of easements, or other means.

☞ 12. Encourage other town agencies to create and utilize an on-going referral process to obtain comments from the Conservation Commission on new development, particularly with reference to protection of areas of special conservation interest. Public Act 93-270 reaffirms the authority of a local conservation commission to make recommendations to Zoning Commissions, Planning Commissions, Inland Wetlands agencies and other

municipal agencies on proposed land use changes.

§ 13. The Conservation Commission should use this Conservation Plan as a basis for review of development proposals before other town agencies. When development impacts an area which involves important natural resources, or which has significant conservation interest for other reasons such as protection or creation of views, the Conservation Commission should encourage other agencies to use this plan as a guide for site design and reservation of any open space requirements. For example, development on hilltops could include public access to high locations and selective cutting to create new views.

§ 14. Develop model documents and procedures for town acquisition of open space through a variety of means, including donations, purchase, and acquisition of conservation easements.

§ 15. Encourage adoption of zoning and subdivision regulations designed to preserve special features of natural and cultural interest. When reviewing plans, land use commissions should encourage preservation of scenic views, large specimen trees and tree stands, areas of rare flora and fauna, and man-made features with historic significance, including stone walls, historic sites and areas of archaeological interest.

§ 16. Urge the Planning and Zoning Commissions to adopt a regulation requiring a development envelope for large lots, which would limit the area on the lot which could be cleared and developed for structures and lawns.

§ 17. Encourage land use commissions to give greater attention to aspects of solid waste disposal during site plan review, such as requiring dumpsters for recycled materials to be shown on plans.

§ 18. Review the Municipal Coastal Program for the Town of Old Saybrook, Connecticut, (adopted by the Planning Commission on September 1, 1982, and revised November 13, 1982,) and amend as appropriate. Consideration should be given to coastal flooding issues, sea level rise, and control of non-point sources of pollution

such as stormwater runoff and septic system leachate.

§ 19. Request the State Office of Long Island Sound Programs to schedule a training session for local boards, commissions and interested individuals on the procedural and technical aspects of coastal site plan review and other coastal permitting programs.

§ 20. Support adoption of a Harbor Management Plan for the Town of Old Saybrook which recognizes the importance of wise use of limited coastal resources.

§ 21. Tailor conservation policies and land use regulations to recognize the differences in the physical character of separate areas of town. Policies for open space preservation, landscaping, and requirements for infrastructure improvements should be appropriate to the specific areas. Street tree maintenance in the Main Street area, appropriate landscaping along Route One's commercial areas, and creation of open space linkages in residential areas north of I-95 are all aspects of an overall conservation approach.

§ 22. Continue to pursue the creation of a local design review board to provide advisory comments on new architectural proposals, in order to encourage design which is appropriate in scale and content.

§ 23. Consider possible adoption of a town Scenic Road Ordinance under Connecticut General Statutes 7-149 a, and designation of scenic roads by the Planning Commission.

§ 24. Compile and publish a map and brochure to inform townspeople about the importance of Old Saybrook's natural resource areas. Identify areas open to the public and mark with appropriate signs.

§ 25. Identify management responsibility for all publicly owned open space within the Town. Create a system of volunteers, coordinated by the Conservation Commission, to monitor condition and use of individual open space properties, and report any misuse or encroachment to town officials. Encourage property neighbors to serve as stewards for open space in their neighborhood. Develop guidelines for

maintenance of open space areas, including town rights-of-way to the shore.

☞ 26. Utilize the services of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association to educate volunteers concerning trail planning, development and maintenance.

☞ 27. Share information on open space maintenance, insurance, and other matters of common interest with area land trusts and homeowners' associations. (See listing of uncommitted open space on page five.) Consider convening an annual meeting of open space property owners and managers to discuss common issues.

☞ 28. Recognize the importance of small public open spaces such as the triangle at the intersection of Main Street and Pennywise Lane or the center island down Main Street. Encourage appropriate landscaping and maintenance, and avoid any encroachment by new development activities.

☞ 29. Create a formal urban forestry program to monitor, maintain and increase the town's street trees and other trees on town property.

☞ 30. In northern rural areas, encourage open space which provides linkage among larger open space parcels. Consider requiring a natural buffer between new lawns and rural town roads to preserve the wooded appearance of the northern areas.

☞ 31. Establish a formal sewer avoidance program for non-sewered areas of town, including regular inspection and maintenance of septic systems, to reduce or avoid the need for new public sewers.

☞ 32. Examine alternative methods of waste water treatment, such as a solar aquatic system, as an alternative to construction of a conventional wastewater treatment plant.

☞ 33. Consider creation of an adopt-a-highway program for litter control within the town.

☞ 34. When the regional transfer station becomes available, work with other towns and the regional recycling coordinator to expand recycling to additional items beyond those now being recycled.

☞ 35. Work with other towns in the Estuary Region to develop a permanent household hazardous waste collection solution. Encourage use of alternative products to reduce generation of hazardous household materials.

☞ 36. Encourage and support town purchase of paper and other products with a high recycled material content to assist in the creation of markets for recycled materials.

☞ 37. Support and publicize transportation alternatives which reduce the use of private automobiles. Such alternatives include carpools, bicycling, and public transportation such as the Shoreline East Commuter Rail Service running from Old Saybrook railroad station to New Haven.

☞ 38. Support actions to make bicycling as safe and convenient as possible. Urge the Parks and Recreation Commission or other civic group to review possible bicycle routes, identify safety hazards and seek their removal, and post appropriate signs to direct cyclists to the most appropriate routes. Provide education on safety "rules of the road" for cyclists.

☞ 39. Through zoning and subdivision regulations, require construction of sidewalks in appropriate locations to encourage and facilitate pedestrian traffic. Sidewalks should be required for all new or substantially altered development along the Boston Post Road and its immediate side streets, and on streets leading to Main Street.

☞ 40. Review and update the town's conservation plan at intervals of no more than ten years.

☞ 41. Finally, the Conservation Commission recommends that area conservation commissions join forces to develop a regional approach to conservation. A regional inventory of open space will show the relationship of open space parcels to other properties regardless of town boundaries. Therefore, open space should be viewed as a regional issue. Linkage of open space parcels should not be limited by town boundaries. More extensive wildlife corridors, linked hiking and biking trails and uniform groundwater protection measures are likely benefits of inter-town cooperation.

1994 Conservation Plan Old Saybrook, Connecticut

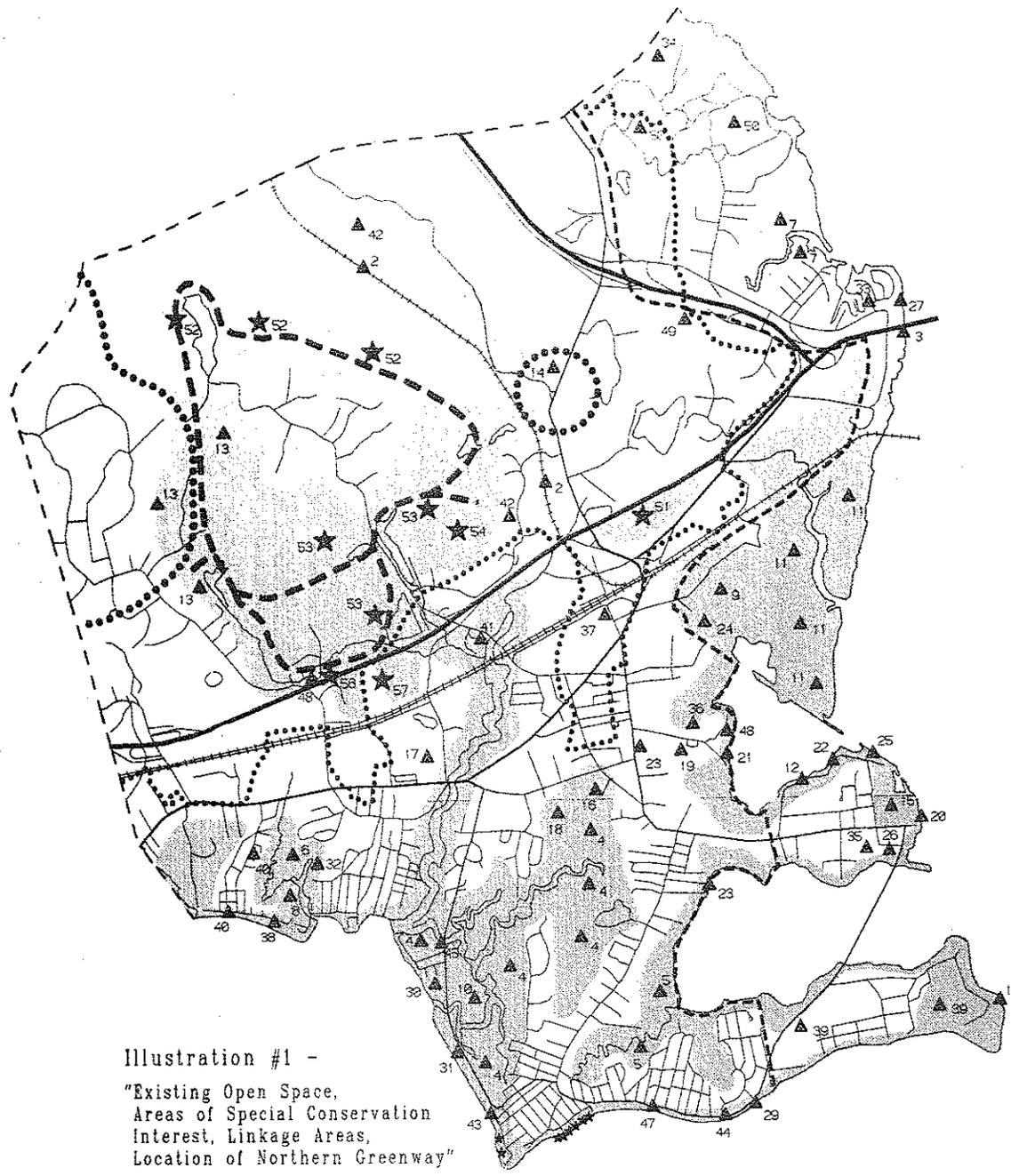


Illustration #1 -
"Existing Open Space,
Areas of Special Conservation
Interest, Linkage Areas,
Location of Northern Greenway"

- Key:
- ▲ 1 - 50 Committed and Uncommitted Open Space Locations (approximate - see text)
 - ★ 51 - 57 Areas of Special Conservation Interest (see text)
 - * Shoreline Access
 - Northern Greenway Loop (approximate)
 - Public Water Supply Well Protection Areas
 - Coastal Boundary
 - - - Gateway Boundary
 - ◻ Natural Resource Systems - Linkage Areas



Based on Mapping by UCONN Extension Service
with Funding From Rockfall Foundation, Date 3/92

CRERPA/EnviroGraphics
June, 1994

1994 Conservation Plan Old Saybrook, Connecticut

Illustration #2 - Proposed Northern Greenway Loop Detail



CRERPA / EnviroGraphics
June, 1994

The Town's 1969 Open Space Plan, expanding on the original Conservation Plan adopted in 1967, offered this observation, which seems to us to be as valid today as then:

"We in Old Saybrook belong to a larger physical environment, just as we are part of a larger social and political one. We are accountable for this small piece of our planet home. 'Never send to know,' said John Donne, 'for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.' The proposals we adopt here will affect us, our neighbors, our children, and our children's children. No town, any more than a man, is an island."