



**REDDING, CONNECTICUT  
OPEN SPACE PLAN**

**2008**

**SUPPLEMENT TO THE REDDING TOWN PLAN OF  
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**2008**



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Prepared by the Redding Conservation Commission

**Redding  
Open Space  
Plan  
2008**

**A report on the protection of natural systems in Redding, Connecticut.  
Prepared by the Redding Conservation Commission as a supplement to the 2008  
Town Plan of Conservation and Development.**

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# **2008 OPEN SPACE PLAN: PART ONE**

## **Introduction**

In accordance with the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Redding Conservation Commission submits the Open Space Plan of 2008 to the Redding Planning Commission, and recommends that it be incorporated into the 2008 Town Plan of Conservation and Development.

This is Redding's fifth Open Space Plan. Its objectives are identical to those set forth in the 1984 and 1998 Open Space Plans, to wit:

- To protect the Town's crucial surface and subsurface water resources—as a reservoir for the region, and as an aquifer for itself;
- To preserve the country ambiance of Redding;
- To help shape an orderly direction for the future development of the Town;
- To develop strategy for conserving large contiguous areas of open space, both public and private—areas essential to ensure maximum resource protection, habitat diversity, wildlife values, and public access to our outdoor heritage; and
- To identify scenic resources worthy of special treatment by the land-use agencies of Redding.

The guiding principle of this Plan was set forth in the 1971 Open Space Plan and carried through subsequent plans as follows:

"Not the upgrading of subdivisions, not commercial areas, not industry, not multiple housing, but open space is the key to the future of Redding as a viable community. Fairfield County has strenuous cities, and active suburbs, but it also needs wide areas of open country to balance the environment. Due to its rugged topography, Redding is admirably designed by nature for this function."

The Commission believes that this principle is even more important today.

## **Section 1-1: Goals of the Open Space Plan**

During the ten years since the 1998 Open Space Plan, Redding, through the diligent efforts of the Town, the Redding Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy ("TNC"), and several other local partners, has added approximately 1,025 acres to its permanently-protected open space. This increase brings the total amount of such open space in the Town to approximately 4,640 acres plus the 2,824 acres of the Centennial Watershed State Forest.

Since the 1971 Plan, the Town has had a goal of 5,000 acres of permanently protected open space, a goal which did not include the lands formerly owned by Aquarion Water Company of Connecticut on the assumption that these lands would always be protected. The purchase by the State of Connecticut and TNC in 2002 of title to or conservation easements on all of Aquarion's lands statewide for open space validated this assumption.

There remain in Redding many properties of significant conservation value which are not permanently protected. The development of these properties, the majority of which are in the greenbelts described in this Plan and prior Plans, could adversely affect both the availability and the purity of the Town's water resources and diminish the country ambiance of the Town. Therefore, the Commission believes that the primary goal of the Open Space Plan and the efforts of the Town and its partners over the next ten years should be the protection as open space of as many as feasible of (1) the 22 units set forth as "Principal Lands for Conservation Protection" in Part II, Section C of this Plan and (2) the properties set forth as "Lands of Continuing Conservation Concern" in Part II, Section D of this Plan. In effect, the goal would change from a total acreage goal to a significant conservation property goal.

Another key goal of this Open Space Plan is the preservation of Redding's water resources. Redding is a water kingdom, having three river systems (the Aspetuck, Little and Saugatuck Rivers) which flow to public water supply reservoirs; two principal and 19 lesser stratified drift aquifers; and the bedrock aquifers which supply most of the water consumed in Redding. Approximately 90% of Redding's water recharges sources of drinking water, with the result that the State of Connecticut has designated Redding as a water conservation area. It is crucial that the Town protect its water resources. One of the most effective means of such protection is the increase of permanently protected open space as described in this Plan.

## **Section 1-2: Existing Open Space**

Since the 1998 Plan, there has been an increase of approximately 1,025 acres in the amount of permanently protected open space in Redding. This significant increase is mostly the result of sustained activities by the Town, the Redding Land Trust, TNC, the Aspetuck Land Trust and Highstead Foundation working singly or as partners on the various parcels. These entities have protected all of four parcels and a substantial portion of a fifth which were among the nine parcels designated "Principal Lands for Potential Purchase," the most important open space conservation category in the 1998 Plan. In addition, the State of Connecticut (with TNC as a partner) performed a significant role by taking over the 2,824 acres of water company land in the Town and by making significant funding grants toward the cost of the preserves described below acquired by the Town and TNC as partners.

In 1999, shortly after the adoption of the 1998 Plan, Redding purchased a 70-acre parcel located on Sunset Hill Road consisting mostly of open fields abutting Huntington State Park. This parcel, now known as Couch Hill Preserve, was singled out in the 1998 Plan as "the most important property for acquisition as open space."

In 2000, TNC announced its Saugatuck Forest Lands program, which seeks to protect an approximately 24 square mile area centered on the Saugatuck and Aspetuck Reservoirs and their watersheds including all of Redding. Pursuant to this program, the Town and TNC jointly have acquired approximately 360 acres of forested land in Redding, including two of the nine parcels designated in the most important category in the 1998 Plan. The separate parcels acquired are as follows:

<u>Preserve</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Nearby Roads</u>
Turkington Falls	65.3	Gallows Hill, Old Stagecoach
John W. Sanford Farm	58.0	Sunset Hill
Granskog Natural Area	116.8	Greenbush, Giles Hill
General Parsons Preserve	52.5	Limekiln, Whortleberry
Garnet Ridge Preserve	40.0	Dayton, Orchard Drive
Fred Hanssen Preserve	29.6	Poverty Hollow

In the ten years since the 1998 Plan, the Redding Land Trust has acquired title or conservation easements with respect to approximately 374 acres of land and assisted the Town with certain of its purchases. Redding Open Lands Inc. has also assisted the Town and TNC, serving as the developer where the development of a small portion of a conservation property was necessary to help finance a land purchase.

Two additional significant open space transactions were the acquisition by Highstead Foundation of approximately 100 acres of conservation land contiguous to the borders of its Highstead Arboretum and the acquisition by the Aspetuck Land Trust of title to 37 acres and conservation easements with respect to 15 acres on another parcel. These two transactions involved all of one property and a substantial portion of another property which were designated in the 1998 Plan in the most important conservation category.

As of June 30, 2008, the protected open space in Redding consists of 1,883 acres held by the Town (or the Town and TNC as partners), 66 acres held by the Town by easement, 1,655 acres held by land trusts by title or by easements, 740 acres of state parks, 293 acres held by private conservation organizations and neighborhood organizations, and 2,824 acres of Centennial Watershed State Forest.

The Conservation Commission will continue the policy expressed in the 1984 and 1998 Plans of managing the Town's open spaces as sanctuaries, preserves and natural areas in accordance with the Town's Open Space ordinance and, where applicable, with state and federal funding agreements stipulating that the use of such lands shall be limited to natural resources, conservation, passive recreation and outdoor education. The Conservation Commission reaffirms its policies for open space setasides on subdivisions as set forth in Part II, Section E of this Plan.

The Summary of Existing Open Space in Redding set forth in Part II, Section B of this Plan includes a detailed summary of the permanently protected open space in Redding.

### ***GREENBELTS***

The Commission believes that the fulfillment of the goals of this Open Space Plan depends significantly upon the continued recognition of the greenbelts described in prior Plans. There are four greenbelt corridors containing generally the valleys and watersheds of the Town's principal rivers—the Aspetuck, Little River, Saugatuck Central and Saugatuck West Greenbelts. They are described in Part II, Section A of this Plan and are delineated on the Greenbelt Map included with this Plan.

Greenbelts in concept have been basic to the Redding Open Space Plan since the 1971 Plan, which proposed them along the Town's rivers to protect water resources. The 1984 Plan extended the areas of protection to the tributary streams and their watersheds and undeveloped lands overlying stratified drift aquifers and recharge areas. With continuing development in Redding, the need to protect greenbelts is even more crucial. The Conservation Commission reaffirms the recommendations of the 1984 and 1998 Plans that the greenbelts be recognized as critical resource areas in the land-use planning and regulatory processes of the Town and that conservation zoning be adopted in the most fragile areas of the greenbelts to protect against a level of development detrimental to water resources.

### **Section 1-3: Lands For Protection**

The 1998 Plan listed 29 units in two separate categories—"Lands for Potential Purchase" and "Lands for Continuing Conservation Concern"—as the principal properties in Redding in special need of conservation protection. Of these units, seven have been protected in whole or in substantial part, and these units have been deleted from the 2008 Plan.

In this Plan, the Commission has consolidated the remaining 22 units into a single category, "Principal Lands for Conservation Protection." Significant portions of several of these units have been protected during the last ten years, such as Granskog Natural Area, Turkington Falls Preserve, and the General Parsons Preserve; unfortunately, major portions of two units were lost to development. The size of each of the units remaining in the Plan has been reduced if, and to the extent that, they were protected or developed since the 1998 Plan. The 22 units are described in Part II, Section C of the Plan and are marked on the Open Space Plan Map included herewith.

Part II, Section D contains a list of many other properties in Redding which the Commission deems of conservation value due to their location, size, linkage to other conservation properties, or protection of water, wildlife habitat, or country view from the road. These properties are listed by address, with conservation protection proposed only for the undeveloped portions of the property at each such address. The Commission believes that this approach will provide a more comprehensive inventory of potential conservation land than the approach used previously.

Although Redding has had success in preserving open space in the last ten years, its procedures, including a required town vote on each acquisition transaction, remain unwieldy and time-consuming. The Town cannot move quickly when the opportunity to acquire a conservation parcel becomes available. For this reason, the Commission reiterates strongly its recommendation contained in the 1998 Plan that the Town authorize an amount not exceeding \$5,000,000 to be used to acquire permanently protected open space in accordance with this Plan. This procedure has been used successfully by other towns in Connecticut. The Commission recognizes that the Town's present circumstances may not make this recommendation feasible immediately but trusts that it can be accomplished within the next five years.

## **Section 1-4: Additional Open Space Concerns**

### ***SUPER 7 AND THE NORWALK RIVER WATERSHED***

There are additional lands abutting Redding or located in Redding which are of conservation concern to the Town. Many of these lands were assembled by the State of Connecticut along the Route 7 corridor for the proposed "Super 7." Among these are parcels containing prime wetlands in the Norwalk River watershed which have great diversity of plant and animal life. Certain of these lands adjoin lands designated in this Plan for open space protection and would therefore provide unfragmented habitat and possible future trail connections. The present master plan for greenways in Connecticut includes these lands as a recommended greenway named "Sugar Hollow Greenway." With the reduced likelihood that Super 7 will be built in this area, Redding should cooperate with Wilton, Ridgefield and Danbury to assure that the ultimate uses of such lands are consistent with the preservation of wildlife diversity and other conservation purposes.

Redding should continue to oppose current and future State plans to build or extend limited-access portions of Route 7 in Wilton and Ridgefield. Such schemes, if successful, would inevitably lead to the piecemeal realization of Super 7, including a wide swath through Redding. However, Redding should support the widening of Route 7 as a course of action which would ameliorate the traffic problem but which is less destructive of wetlands.

### ***WILDLIFE HABITAT***

Accelerated suburbanization is causing a precipitous decline in biodiversity in Fairfield County. The loss of species is a result of two processes—loss of open space and succession of post-agricultural habitats to second growth forest. Redding's open spaces serve as important refuges for the flora and fauna in Southwestern Connecticut. Preservation efforts should continue to focus on the following:

vernal pool habitats and the unique upland communities associated with them;

open fields, open wetlands and open wet meadows, as these contain declining bird species, wild flower species, and optimal butterfly habitat;

larger unfragmented areas, especially older growth forest, as these support those species with large home range requirements.

The Town must take these considerations into account both in determining future priorities in open space acquisitions and in maintenance of open space areas. Because of their high-quality open field habitat, Saugatuck Falls Natural Area and Crossfields Natural Area were cited as "Great Butterflying Spots in Connecticut" in the *Connecticut Butterfly Atlas* published in 2007 by the Department of Environmental Protection.

The Town must increase its efforts to control deer and invasive plant species on Town open space and to urge similar efforts by private landowners. Destruction of the forest understory by deer has severe adverse effects on populations of forest-nesting birds and small mammals. In most cases, the affected bird species are neotropical migrants which are already threatened by destruction of their wintering habitats and increased hazards in migration such as tall buildings, communications towers and the like. Many places in Redding, including Town open space, have severe infestations of invasive plants such as Japanese Barberry, Oriental Bittersweet and Garlic Mustard, which overwhelm native plants. In the limited areas of Saugatuck Falls Natural Area where invasive species have been removed or controlled, there has been a vigorous regrowth of native plants.

Control of deer and invasive plant species are long-term efforts, but the Town's current efforts are insufficient.

### **Land Management**

The Commission believes that the Town and the Redding Land Trust, which together own over 2,800 acres of open space land,<sup>1</sup> should consider the hiring of a part-time land manager. There are too many activities such as the cutting of fields, the control of invasive plants, the clearance of fallen trees, and the illegal use of open space land that require supervision. Currently, individual members of the Conservation Commission and the Land Trust Board of Trustees attempt to perform the management function. These people are essentially volunteers and do not have the expertise or the time to be truly effective. The management policies of the Commission and the Land Trust are to leave land in its natural state, but even this policy requires at least some level of management or the lands will deteriorate over time. The Commission believes that this recommendation should be put in place over the next five years.

## **Section 1-5: Water Resources Protection**

The preservation of water resources in Redding is a key goal of this Open Space Plan. Approximately 90% of the surface water flow reaches one of four reservoirs or a wellfield of the public water supply of Aquarion. The Saugatuck, Aspetuck, Little and Mill Rivers (the latter drains a small area in the southeast corner of Redding) are classified by the State of Connecticut as Class AA—i.e., streams which flow to public water supply reservoirs. The West Branch of the Saugatuck River is a recharge source for Aquarion's Coleytown wellfield in Westport. In short, most of the water originating or flowing through Redding goes to the shoreline communities for drinking water.

Groundwater from the land surface of Redding drawn through individual wells is the source of almost all water consumed in Redding. The principal storage areas for groundwater are aquifers, which are geologic formations or deposits capable of yielding usable quantities of groundwater.

Stratified drift aquifers are alternating layers of sediment composed of sand, silt and gravel deposited by glaciers. In Redding the principal stratified drift aquifers are located in the Aspetuck and Saugatuck river valleys and are major recharge sources to the rivers as well as to bedrock aquifers (the major source of Redding's drinking water). All stratified drift aquifers are vital in recharging bedrock aquifers and in maintaining streamflow in dry periods to recharge surface water supply reservoirs.

Aquifers located in bedrock supply most of Redding's wells. These aquifer systems are complex and quite variable, with their potential yields affected by faults and fractures (cracks extending through the bedrock system) which transmit varying quantities of groundwater to the bedrock level. Bedrock does not generally have the capacity to filter or otherwise attenuate contamination which enters the bedrock structure. Therefore, it is imperative that Redding use maximum efforts to assure that there is no contamination of groundwater prior to its reaching the bedrock level.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes land owned jointly by the Town and TNC.

There is an extended discussion of water resources in the Natural Resources section of the 2008 Town Plan of Conservation and Development of which this Plan forms a part. Of note is the discussion of the increased risk of drought which may come from global warming. This could be of particular concern for Redding, where most of its surface water goes to shoreline communities. The Commission believes that the continuation of the Town's efforts to protect open space will contribute to maintaining an adequate supply of water by cutting water consumption and nonpoint source pollution from residences that would otherwise be located on the open space lands.

In recent years a new threat to the state's water resources has emerged in the form of an increased number of high-density residential developments proposed for important watershed areas. This problem is particularly troublesome in Redding, where, as previously noted, the vast majority of the town is classified as public drinking water supply watershed. The state Office of Policy and Management, in its *2005-2010 Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut*, recognized the density issue and recommended that intensive development be guided away from existing and potential water supply watersheds and aquifers. Among other concerns, the Plan warned against residential units exceeding in number one unit for every two acres in such watersheds. Redding has within the last two years taken an active role with other conservation and public health advocates to develop legislation that would implement the state's policy recommendations at the local land use level. The Commission strongly endorses such efforts.

Protecting the purity of Redding's surface and groundwater should be a maximum effort of Redding during the next ten years. The Commission believes that the Town should increase its efforts to limit synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides on Town properties—particularly around the schools and athletic fields where children are exposed and in the greenbelt areas closest to the rivers. These chemicals eventually run off to the Town's waters where they can adversely affect both humans and wildlife through drinking or absorption. The Town should seriously consider promoting a program of "pesticide free" or "organic management" of both Town and private lands. Organic management systems are proven to work, are more in tune with the way biological systems function, and result in far less soil and water contamination than equivalent systems using synthetic chemicals. A reliable source for guidelines on organic management practices can be found in the Northeast Organic Farming Association's *Standards for Organic Land Care—Practices for Design and Maintenance of Ecological Landscapes*, March, 2008, [www.organiclandcare.net](http://www.organiclandcare.net). In support of the foregoing, the Commission endorses the recommendation in the Natural Resources Section of the 2008 Town Plan of Conservation and Development relating to an aquifer protection subcommittee of the Town's land use commissions to explore informational and regulatory steps for the protection of the Town's aquifers.

## **Section 1-6: Conservation Zoning**

Under existing zoning regulations, the Zoning Commission, upon proposal by the Conservation Commission and/or the Planning Commission, has the authority to implement four-acre conservation zoning. This Commission believes that in order to maintain the integrity of the greenbelts, they should have conservation zoning which limits development to that consistent with their continued functioning and maintenance as greenbelts. The greenbelts have been added to the Town's existing GIS mapping, which will furnish the basis for conservation zoning. Preservation of these areas in their natural

character is essential to the future health of Redding and the region which depends on the quality of its surface and ground waters.

Despite two-acre zoning over most of the Town, the average size of new lots created by subdivisions in recent years has been between three and five acres. This fact reflects the natural limitations of Redding's terrain. Many of the larger tracts which remain undeveloped in Redding are comprised of land which is extremely difficult or costly to develop because of steep slopes, poor soils, extensive wetlands, major streams, ledges, flood plains, and remoteness from roads. Where these lands are located on public water supply watershed, on vital aquifer recharge and streambelt areas, or in areas of sensitive ecology or high scenic value, future development should be limited in order to preserve the character and environmental integrity of these areas. Conservation zoning of the Town's mapped greenbelt areas should limit new development to lots of not less than four acres in those areas. Building sites should be restricted to areas of minimal impact on the natural environment.

Existing dwellings and existing lots of less than four acres in the greenbelt areas would not be affected in any way by conservation zoning except to receive greater protection from nearby construction and closer neighbors.

The Commission recommends that the Planning Commission and the Conservation Commission work together to develop proposals for conservation zoning in the greenbelt areas in accordance with this Section of this Plan and that the Zoning Commission adopt such proposals in furtherance of the goals of this Plan.

## **Section 1-7: Privately Owned Lands**

There remain many tracts of privately owned land which protect Redding's land and water resources and Redding's country ambiance. These lands are a benefit to Redding and its residents, but development pressures and rising taxes threaten their integrity.

One benefit to private landowners of conservation lands is "Public Act 490," Section 12-107e of the General Statutes which permits privately owned open space to be valued at the lower "current use" value instead of "fair market" value for tax purposes. Since 1965 the Redding Town Plan has provided that any portion of a tract in excess of four acres may, on application to the Tax Assessor, be classified as open space land and assessed accordingly. The lower tax values have enabled many private land owners to continue to hold their properties as open space. Most of the units designated as "Principal Lands for Conservation Protection" or "Lands of Continuing Conservation Concern" under Section 3 of this Plan are taxed under Public Act 490. It is likely that if such valuation were not available, many of these units would have been sold for development with the attendant loss of open space.

The generosity of many private landowners has enabled the Redding Land Trust to add significantly to Redding's permanently protected open space over the years. Methods available to private landowners to preserve land as open space while saving estate, income and property taxes include gifts to the Redding Land Trust, the Town, or other land preservation entities either through outright gift, positive or negative conservation easements, deeding of development rights, bargain sales, and similar approaches.

Conservation easements have become important as a vehicle for private landowner generosity because many owners are willing to dedicate their land to open space but wish to retain title and the privacy that comes from lack of public access. The Conservation Commission believes that such easements which retain land in an undeveloped state

perform a valuable function in the preservation of wildlife habitat and the protection of water resources. The experience of the last several years has demonstrated that the transfer to the Redding Land Trust of the development rights to a parcel (which is a form of conservation easement) as a means of preserving it as open space has served the requirements of the landowners while benefiting the town.

### **Section 1-8: Special Treatment Areas**

The 1984 Plan designated four scenic areas along roads as focuses of attention for the protection of the beauty and country ambiance up to the line of winter visibility. The four areas were Poverty Hollow Scenic Area, Crossfields Scenic Area, Valley of the Drumlins Scenic Area, and Umpawaug Hill Scenic Area, which are described in more detail in Part II, Section I of this Plan. Since 1998, the Valley of the Drumlins area has received significant protection with the acquisition of title or development rights to significant land by Highstead Foundation and by the Redding Land Trust. The Poverty Hollow and Crossfields Scenic Areas remain largely the same as in 1998. Although a portion of the Umpawaug Hill Scenic Area has been developed with little preservation of scenic vistas, the area nevertheless retains a measure of its former beauty.

The Commission recommends that these four designated areas continue to be special treatment areas. The land-use commissions of Redding should continue to protect them in the event of proposed development, and the Town and the Land Trust should encourage their preservation by gift or purchase.

### **Section 1-9: Educational Use Of Open Space**

Redding's open space has played and should continue to play an important role in the school curriculum. Each of the Town's three schools is located adjacent to an open space tract. Lonetown Marsh is across the road from the elementary school. Saugatuck Falls Natural Area is across from the middle school. The Blaha tract is adjacent to the athletic fields of the high school.

As befits its name, Lonetown Marsh is marshland and is an ideal location for teaching younger children the value and uses of this type of environment. Saugatuck Falls Natural Area is extremely diverse terrain combining the river, extensive marshland, open fields, conifer forest, dry hardwood forest and rock cliffs. In a similar vein, the Blaha tract contains a pond, wetlands, forest, and rock cliffs. Seldom have science educators had this array of natural assets on their very doorsteps. The Commission hopes that the schools will make increased use of Redding's open space in their science curricula.

It is essential that these open spaces be preserved without disturbance in their natural state so that their full value may be realized as demonstration areas for such natural sciences as botany, geology, ecology and zoology.

### **Section 1-10: Trails**

Redding's trail system, which has grown to over sixty-five miles, is a major recreational asset of the Town and, indeed, of central Fairfield County. Located on lands of the Town, the Redding Land Trust, TNC, Huntington State Park, Putnam Park, and the Centennial Watershed State Forest, plus certain private properties, the trails provide a variety of hiking experiences over many types of terrain. Direct connection to TNC's Devil's

Den Preserve and to Centennial Watershed State Forest Saugatuck Valley Trails system effectively add another twenty-five miles or so of trails to the system.

Redding's goals for its trail system have evolved through successive Open Space Plans and continue to do so today. Earlier Plans placed the main emphasis on completing four Long Trails running north-south through the Town at distinct intervals, providing convenient access to significant segments of the system.

The four Long Trails are:

Aspetuck, down the Aspetuck River valley from Huntington State Park through Newtown to Rock House Road on the Redding/Easton border;

Little River, down the Little River valley from Pheasant Ridge Road to the Samuel E. Hill Preserve below Cross Highway;

Saugaway, from the West Redding firehouse down the Saugatuck River valley to the Great Ledge, Devil's Den Preserve, and Centennial Watershed State Forest Saugatuck Valley Trails; and

Westway, from Marchant Road south to the Scott Nature Preserve and Peaceable Street.

At the time of writing of the 1998 Plan, very substantial progress had been made in completing the main trunks of all the Long Trails except Aspetuck. Then, in 2002, the State of Connecticut and TNC acquired essentially all of Aquarion Water Company's undeveloped properties. From this genesis came the Aspetuck Valley Trail through former water company properties, constructed and maintained by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association for the benefit of all.

As represented in the above configurations, the goals for the four Long Trails set out in earlier Plans have now been substantially accomplished. Further significant additions to the Long Trails will be difficult to achieve, particularly at the north ends of Saugaway and Westway. The Town's Bogus Brook Preserve is the southeastern terminus of the proposed Ives Trail system running from Ridgefield through Danbury and Bethel to Redding. Although progress on the Ives Trail has been slow, it has been substantial, and it is expected to gain momentum in the not-too-distant future.

Earlier Open Space Plans also set goals for a system of five lateral trails which have proven problematic, due primarily to the fact that they depend entirely on the acquisition of numerous small properties in private hands. Such a system is unlikely to be achieved in any major way; therefore, the 2008 Plan abandons the specific goals for lateral trails.

## **2008 OPEN SPACE PLAN: PART TWO**

### **Section 2-1: Greenbelts**

The Greenbelt Areas include all major existing Open Space lands, Centennial Watershed State Forest ("CWSF") lands, and lands designated in this Plan as "Principal Lands for Conservation Protection."

#### **The Aspetuck Greenbelt**

Location: Aspetuck Valley, from the Bethel town line to the Easton town line.

Primary Resources:

- Stratified drift aquifers underlying central and southern portions of the corridor.
- Main stem and tributaries of the Aspetuck River.
- High scenic values along entire length of the corridor (Poverty Hollow Scenic Area).

Existing Open Space: Huntington State Park (551 acres), Couch Hill Preserve (70 acres), Ground Pine Sanctuary (54 acres), Fred Hanssen Preserve (29 acres), Land Trust open space (approximately 117 acres), plus easements and smaller setbacks.

Ownership Mix: Public open space and CWSF lands comprise approximately sixty percent of this corridor. The remainder is largely undeveloped private lands, with a few scattered enclaves of developed lots.

#### **The Little River Greenbelt**

Location: Little River valley and uplands, from headwaters south to the eastern shore of the Saugatuck Reservoir.

Primary Resources:

- Stratified drift aquifer north and south of Cross Highway.
- Main stem and tributaries of Little River.
- High scenic values where the corridor and Cross Highway intersect Crossfields Scenic Area).

Existing Open Space: Samuel Hill (Warrups Farm, 288 acres), Granskog Natural Area (117 acres), Highstead Foundation (100 acres), Samuel E. Hill Little River Preserve (94 acres), Land Trust open space (approximately 115 acres), plus easements and smaller setbacks.

Ownership Mix: Public open space and CWSF lands comprise about a quarter of the corridor. Very low residential density throughout the remainder.

#### **The Saugatuck Central Greenbelt**

Location: From the Bethel town line (at Limekiln Natural Area) to the Weston town line (at Devil's Den).

Primary Resources:

- Stratified drift aquifer within central portion of the corridor.
- Main stem and tributaries of the Saugatuck River.
- This corridor embraces the greatest concentration of public open space in Redding.

Existing Open Space: Limekiln Natural Area and the Marcus Gift (157 acres), Gallows Hill Natural Area and the Yovan Tract (87 acres), Stormfield (161 acres), Saugatuck Falls Natural Area (318 areas), Turkington Falls (65 acres); General Parsons Preserve (52 acres), the Dayton Tract (52 acres), McMurray (32 acres), Hermes (46 acres), Garnet Ridge Preserve (40 acres), Devil's Den (132 acres), and additional Land Trust open space (approximately 260 acres) plus easements and smaller setasides.

Ownership Mix: Public open space and CWSF lands comprise about seventy percent of the corridor. Many of the private conservation lands abut areas of moderate to relatively heavy residential density.

**The Saugatuck West Greenbelt**

Location: From the Danbury town line south to the Weston town line.

Primary Resources:

- Major stratified drift aquifer at the north end of the corridor; smaller aquifer to the south.
- Main stem and tributaries of the Saugatuck River.
- High scenic values along east-central portion of the corridor (Umpawaug Hill Scenic Area).

Existing Open Space: The Steichen Preserve (54 acres), Topstone Park (275 acres), The Rock Lot and Scott Preserve (approximately 205 acres), New Pond Farm (80 acres), Windy Hill (56 acres), Land Trust open space (approximately 68 acres), plus easements and smaller setasides.

Ownership Mix: Public open space and CWSF lands comprise about thirty percent of this corridor. Private conservation lands and a few scattered enclaves of development account for the rest of it.

## **Section 2-2: Summary of Existing Open Space in Redding** **Ownership by town of Redding**

### Individual Tracts Less Than 1 Acre

9 parcels, total 3.85 acres

### Individual Tracts, 1 to 5 Acres

19 Parcels, total 46.91 acres

### Land Area Units, 5 to 20 acres

Lonetown Marsh	11.72 acres
Seventy Acre South	8.50 acres
Umpawaug Pond Brook	11.00 acres (2 widely separated parcels)
Mine Hill	6.54 acres
Old Field East	18.58 acres (2 separated parcels)
Ridge Brook	5.28 acres
West Peaceable	5.02 acres
Giles Hill South	15.80 acres (2 separated parcels)
Rider's Pond	8.40 acres
Gallows Hill West	5.85 acres (2 separated parcels, Costa La.)
High Ridge	6.52 acres
<hr/>	
11 parcel areas, total	103.21 acres

### Land Area Units Over 20 Acres

Ground Pine Sanctuary	54.23 acres
The Rock Lot	99.72 acres
Couch Hill Preserve	70.54 acres
Little River Preserve	101.24 acres

Dayton Tract	52.18 acres
Topstone Park	275.73 acres
Stormfield	160.07 acres
Limekiln Natural Area	126.84 acres
Gallows Hill Natural Area	72.90 acres
Saugatuck Falls Natural Area	318.00 acres (excludes approximately 3.4 acres developed by CL&P)
Bogus Brook Preserve	35.81 acres
<hr/>	
11 major parcel areas, total	1,367.26 acres

*Total Town-owned Open Space Land: 1,521.23 acres*

**Joint Ownership by Town of Redding and The Nature Conservancy**

<u>Preserve Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date Acquired</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Turkington Falls	Old Stagecoach Rd. & Gallows Hill Rd.	5/01	65.34
Granskog Natural Area	Greenbush Rd. & Giles Hill Rd. (rear)	12/01	116.83
John W. Sanford Farm	Sunset Hill Rd. (rear) & Black Rock Tpke.	12/01	57.97
General Parsons Preserve	Limekiln Rd. & Whortleberry Rd.	3/03	52.56
Garnet Ridge Preserve	Dayton Rd. & Orchard Drive (rear)	9/07	40.00
Fred Hanssen Preserve	Poverty Hollow Rd.	6/08	29.63
<i>Total Joint Ownership, Town &amp; TNC:</i>			<i>362.33 acres</i>

## **Conservation Easements held by Town of Redding**

Redding Life Care LLC ("Meadow Ridge") 66.4 acres

## **Ownership by Land Trusts**

### **Redding Land Trust Inc.**

Acquired 1966–March 1998 (69 tracts) Total 785.55 acres

Acquired April 1998–June 2008 (49 tracts) Total 180.75 acres

*Total Redding Land Trust: 966.30 acres*

### **Aspetuck Land Trust Inc.**

1 tract (Church Hill & Meeker Hill Rds.) Total 36.75 acres

*Total Land Trust Owned Land: 1,003.05 acres*

## **Conservation Easements held by Land Trusts**

### **Redding Land Trust Inc.**

Acquired 1969–1996 (35 tracts & access easements) 443.0 acres

Acquired 1997 to June 30, 2008 (14 tracts & access easements) 193.1 acres

### **Aspetuck Land Trust Inc.**

1 tract (Black Rock Turnpike) Total 15.0 acres

*Total Conservation Easements Held by Land Trusts: 651.1 acres*

## **State of Connecticut Ownership**

Collis P. Huntington State Park (Redding portion only) 551.49 acres

Putnam Memorial State Park (Redding portion only) 190.50 acres

Centennial Watershed State Forest (Redding portion only) 2,824.00 acres

## **Ownership by Conservation Organizations**

The Nature Conservancy—Devil's Den 129.49 acres

Connecticut Audubon Society (Edward Steichen Memorial Preserve) 53.76 acres

The Highstead Foundation Inc. 100.00 acres

## **Private Open Space**

2 tracts in developments where access is limited to members 9.74 acres

## **Section 2-3: Principal Lands For Conservation Protection**

The following information is included in these tables with respect to the potential open space units described. These open space units are shown on the Open Space Map which accompanies this Plan and the Town Plan of Conservation and Development.

LOCATION. The unit's position in relation to other open space and resource lands.

KEY FEATURES: Its primary terrestrial elements—ledge, forest, field—and their capacity to contribute to the maintenance of natural processes.

WATER RESOURCES. Its importance, as undeveloped land, in protecting the quality of surface and subsurface water resources.

LINKAGE. Its capacity—in the event a portion of the unit should ever be acquired by purchase, donation, easement, or setaside—to provide trail connections to or between other existing and potential open space lands or to combine with other open space to provide contiguous open space habitat.

VISIBILITY. Its capacity to contribute visual amenity along public ways.

PLANNING PRECEDENTS. Its inclusion, if any, in previous Open Space Plans.

A number of abbreviations appear throughout the site descriptions. These include:

CWSF Centennial Watershed State Forest

SDA Stratified drift aquifer

MIRF Minor rock fracturing in bedrock

MARF Major rock fracturing in bedrock (1)

UPF Upland forest type (2)

LOF Lowland forest type (2)

Bedrock fractures, both major and minor, are the conduits through which bedrock aquifers are recharged with surface and shallow ground-water. Bedrock aquifers are the primary source of water supply to most of the wells in Redding.

The woodlands of Redding fall into a zone known to botanists as the central hardwoods. On most sites, they constitute a mixed group of species: oaks, maples, hickories, birches, poplars, beeches, and dogwoods, with occasional stands of hemlock and red cedar. Except where outstanding forest units are known to exist, woodlands as key features of a unit are described only in the most general of terms. UPF, for "Upland forest type," describes a woodland where oak is typically the dominant species; LOF, for "Lowland forest type," indicates a mix likely to be weighted in favor of the red maple.

The Commission emphasizes that in this section it is addressing land-use patterns and conservation opportunities, not property lines. Many of the units overlap the properties of two or more landowners; some embrace only a portion of a single ownership, and in a few cases boundaries are drawn to follow topographic or watershed lines.

In general, developed portions of units have been cut out of the designated units. However, in some cases, developed areas are included—either because they are essential to greenbelt contiguity, or because they embrace a major natural feature, such as an aquifer or a primary watercourse.

The units are grouped geographically from north to south within their respective greenbelt corridors. In the text, and on the accompanying map, Aspetuck lands are designated A; Little River B; Saugatuck Central C; and Saugatuck West D.

## **The Aspetuck Greenbelt**

### **Aspetuck A-1**

Location: Bounded north by Hopewell Woods Road, private lands and former Town landfill; east, by private lands and CWSF lands; south, by Land Trust lands; west, by Land Trust and CWSF lands.

Key Features: Steep ledges, ravine, open fields, UPF and LOF.

Water Resources: Aspetuck River and major Aspetuck tributary; ponds, MARF under wetlands and Aspetuck River. SDA under southern portion of this unit.

Linkage: North-south within the Greenbelt, west to Land Trust open space.

Visibility: Extensive scenic views from Poverty Hollow Scenic Area.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans: most of this unit was proposed as open space in the Plans of 1966 and 1971.

### **Aspetuck A-2**

Location: Bounded north by private lands; east by private lands in Town of Newtown; south, Old Hattertown Road; west, private lands.

Key Features: Woodland predominantly UPF, with some old-growth stands; high wildlife values (area adjoins extensive undeveloped lands in Newtown).

Water Resources: Small stream.

Linkage: Northwest-southeast within the Greenbelt.

Visibility: Frontage on Old Hattertown Road

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans.

### **Aspetuck A-3**

Location: Bounded north by Old Hattertown Road; east, Town of Newtown and CWSF; south, Goodridge Road and private lands; west, Aspetuck River and private lands.

Key Features: Ledges, east and south, forest types mixed; extensive area of pasture and old-fields. Area adjoins 600 acres of undeveloped CWSF lands in Newtown.

Water Resources: Aspetuck River and tributary bisecting unit northeast to southwest. Falls Pond. SDA underlying northerly three-quarters of this unit. MARF.

Linkage: North-south within the Greenbelt.

Visibility: Approximately 1 mile along Old Hattertown, Poverty Hollow and Goodridge Roads. Unit embraces Uncle John's Road.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans. The Strip encompassing Falls Pond and the Aspetuck River was proposed as open space in the plans of 1966 and 1971.

#### **Aspetuck A-4**

Location: Bounded north and west by private lands; east by CWSF; south, by private lands and Land Trust.

Key Features: Steep ledges and outcrops; woodland predominantly UPF.

Water Resources: None.

Linkage: Northeast-southwest within the Greenbelt.

Visibility: Along Foundry Road.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans.

#### **Aspetuck A-5**

Location: Bounded north by CWSF and private lands; east, by Fred Hanssen Preserve; south, by private and CWSF lands; west, by private lands and Turney Road.

Key Features: Woodland predominantly UPF, with mature stands trending northeast; open fields, southeast.

Water Resources: None.

Linkage: Potential link between Aspetuck Greenbelt and Little River Greenbelt, via Joel Barlow High School (Blaha Tract) and CWSF lands to the west.

Visibility: From Turney Road.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans.

#### **Aspetuck A-6**

Location: Two parcels; one bounded north by Land Trust; east by Sport Hill Road; west by CWSF; south, by Ledgeway Road and CWSF; the other bounded north and east by CWSF; south, by private lands in Town of Easton; west, by CWSF and private lands.

Key Features: UPF.

Water Resources: Tributary to Aspetuck River (draining Lyon's Swamp). MARF.

Linkage: Potential linchpin connecting CWSF/Ground Pine Sanctuary/ Lyon's Swamp areas with CWSF lands west of Ledgeway and Valley Roads.

Visibility: None.

Planning Precedent: 1966, 1984 and 1998 Plans.

## The Little River Greenbelt

### Little River B-12

Location: Bounded north and east, by private lands; south, by Warrups Farm; west, by private lands and Land Trust.

Key Features: Open fields in central portion; steep ledges, east; LOF along stream corridor; central hill rises to 740-foot elevation. (A portion of this unit is identified on early maps as John Read's "Deer Park").

Water Resources: Two ponds and stream tributary to the Little River. MIRF intersecting under streambed.

Linkage: Close to Putnam Park and abuts Warrups Farm.

Visibility: Long scenic views of meadows and woods.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1989 Plans.

### Little River B-2

Location: Bounded north and east by Town and private lands; south, by Cross Highway and Town lands; west, by CWSF lands.

Key Features: Open fields (Scenic Area) including wet meadow wildlife corridor.

Water Resources: Little River and tributary thereto. SDA underlines much of the area. MIRF under riverbed.

Linkage: Linkage with Little River North Trail on west side of Little River and trails in Little River Preserve and Crossfields.

Visibility: Open fields vista from Cross Highway.

Planning Precedent: 1966, 1971, 1984 and 1998 plans.

### Little River B-3

Location: Bounded north by Cross Highway; east by Newtown Turnpike; south by Land Trust; west by private lands.

Key Features: Open fields; magnificent view from road over valley of Little River to the ridges of Redding Center.

Water Resources: Little River tributary.

Linkage: Adjacent to Land Trust lands.

Visibility: From Cross Highway.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans.

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<sup>2</sup> The Redding Land Trust holds a Conservation Restriction on this unit which would restrict normal residential development.

#### **Little River B-4**

Location: Bounded north, east and south by private lands; west by private lands and Sanfordtown Road.

Key Features: Old fields, west; woodland predominantly UPF, streambelt corridor along Little River.

Water Resources: Unit embraces some 3,000 feet of the main stem of Little River; tributary thereto along the south. MIRF under both streambeds.

Linkage: Potential connection between Little River Preserve and Land Trust open space.

Visibility: From Newtown Turnpike and Sanfordtown Road.

Planning Precedent: Little River corridor proposed as open space in Plans of 1966, 1971, 1984 and 1998.

#### **Little River B-5**

Location: Bounded north by Land Trust lands; east and south by private lands; west, by Sherman Turnpike.

Key Features: Ravine along intermittent stream; borders dirt scenic road.

Water Resources: Intermittent stream.

Linkage: Abuts Land Trust property; link to Saugatuck Central Greenbelt.

Visibility: Ravine from Sherman Turnpike.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans.

#### **Little River B-6**

Location: Bounded north by developed lands and Giles Hill Road; south by Granskog Natural Area and Town open space; east by CWSF; west by private lands.

Key Features: High, open fields in the north; LOF and scattered wetlands, southeast; ledges and ravines southwest along stream corridors.

Water Resources: Mirror Lake and stream tributary to Little River. MIRF.

Linkage: Abuts two Town open space units currently "landlocked." Abuts Granskog Natural Area and Land Trust open space.

Visibility: Extensive frontage on Giles Hill Road with panoramic views.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans. Mirror Lake area proposed as open space in Plan of 1971.

## **The Saugatuck Central Greenbelt**

### **Saugatuck Central C-1**

Location: Two interior parcels essentially surrounded by General Parsons Preserve, Gallows Hill Natural Area and Highstead Foundation.

Planning Precedent: 1966 and 1998 Plans.

### **Saugatuck Central C-2**

Location: Bounded north by private lands; east by private lands; south by Stormfield Open Space; west, by Fox Run Road.

Key Features: Open fields; Moffits Brook stream corridor; LOF, east.

Water Resources: Unit embraces the confluence of Cemetery Brook and Moffits Brook, tributary to the Saugatuck River. Pond. Third stream flows west into Moffits Brook.

Linkage: High potential as key link between Saugatuck Falls Natural Area and Stormfield Open Space.

Visibility: Open lowland fields from Fox Run Road.

Planning Precedent: 1998 Plan.

### **Saugatuck Central C-3**

Location: Bounded north by private lands; east by private lands and Devil's Den Preserve; south by the Redding-Weston border and west by private lands and Devil's Den Preserve.

Key Features: Integral component of major greenbelt with Devil's Den Preserve, Land Trust and Town open space and the CWSF lands surrounding Saugatuck Reservoir.

Water Resources: Headwaters for streams which flow into Devil's Den Preserve.

Linkage: Important link in major wildlife habitat and green area described under "Key Features."

Visibility: None.

Planning Precedent: 1998 Plan.

## **The Saugatuck West Greenbelt**

### **Saugatuck West D-1**

Location: Bounded north by the Town of Danbury; east by Starrs Ridge Road; south by private lands; west, by the Town of Ridgefield.

Key Features: Steep ledges, west, at elevations up to 770 feet (and overlooking Great Pond, elevation 507). UPF, west; LOF, east. Swamp north.

Water Resources: The eastern portion of this unit overlies the Sugar Hollow SDA. Major wetland and stream system in central lowlands, draining north to join Saugatuck River in Town of Danbury. MIRF, trending north-south, east-west.

Linkage: Important component of Sugar Hollow Greenway.

Visibility: None.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans. Note: this unit is bisected, north-south, by corridor of proposed Route 7 Expressway.

### **Saugatuck West D-2**

Location: Bounded north by Town of Danbury; east, by CWSF and George Hull Hill Road; south, by George Hull Hill and Picketts Ridge Roads; west, by Starrs Ridge Road and private lands.

Key Features: Swamp, northwest; prominent drumlin (elevation 720 feet) occupying much of the rest of the unit. Woodland predominantly UPF; LOF adjoining the swamp and in the river valley, east.

Water Resources: SDA (Sugar Hollow) underlies western side of the unit. Main stem of Saugatuck River, and associated wetlands, in the extreme northeast. MIRF. Extensive wetlands, northwest.

Linkage: Potential linkages to Land Trust properties near railroad track and West Redding Station.

Visibility: Approximately 0.9 miles along George Hull Hill, Picketts Ridge, and Starrs Ridge Roads.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans. Portions of this unit were proposed as open space in the Plan of 1971.

### **Saugatuck West D-3**

Location: Bounded north by Simpaug Turnpike and CWSF; east, by CWSF and private lands; south, by Marchant Road and by private lands; west, by Simpaug Turnpike.

Key Features: Extensive open fields southwest, south central and east. Steep ledges along stream valley, rocky knolls, north. UPF and LOF. Central upland plateau may be usable for active recreational purposes.

Water Resources: SDA underlies eastern third of this unit (a lobe of the same aquifer enters, northwest); pond, wetlands, north central and to the east in association with Blackmans Pond Brook (tributary to the Saugatuck River). MIRF, east.

Linkage: North-south within the Greenbelt; potential for linkage east to the Saugatuck Central Greenbelt.

Visibility: Nearly 1.5 miles of frontage on Simpaug Turnpike and Marchant Road.

Planning Precedent: 1966, 1971, 1984 and 1998 Plans.

#### **Saugatuck West D-4**

Location: Bounded north by Marchant Road and private lands; east, by private lands; south, by private lands; west, by railroad right-of-way.

Key Features: Open fields, north. Woodland predominantly UPF. Protection of stream corridor and aquifer.

Water Resources: SDA underlies western two-thirds of the unit. Umpawaug Pond Brook (tributary to Saugatuck River) with MARF underlying.

Linkage: Undetermined.

Visibility: Open fields from Marchant Road.

Planning Precedent: 1984 and 1998 Plans.

#### **Saugatuck West D-5**

Location: Single tract on southwest corner of Topstone Road and Umpawaug Road; lands on east side of Umpawaug Road, bounded on north and south by private lands; on east, by CWSF; on west, by Umpawaug Road.<sup>3</sup>

Key Features: Open fields bounded by stone walls and mature trees.

Water Resources: None.

Linkage: None.

Visibility: Unit includes the only significant remaining open fields in Umpawaug Scenic Area.

Planning Precedent: Tract on west side of Umpawaug Road, 1971, 1984 and 1998 Plans; on east side of Umpawaug Road, 1998 Plan.

#### **Saugatuck West D-6**

Location: Bounded north by Topstone Road; east and south by private lands; west by Topstone Town Park and by private lands.

Key Features: Woodland predominantly UPF in northeast and south central areas, extensive red maple swamp in west central and southeast areas.

Water Resources: Blackman's Pond Brook flows northward through westerly portion and drains extensive wetland areas south and east.

Linkage: North-south within the Greenbelt; an important link between Topstone Park and Land Trust open space corridor along Blackman's Pond Brook to Marchant Road.

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<sup>3</sup> Not including residence.  
Town of Redding  
Open Space Plan – 2008

Visibility: 800 feet along south side of Topstone Road, a designated Town Scenic Road.

Planning Precedent: 1971, 1984 and 1998 Plans.

### **Saugatuck West D-7**

Location: Bounded north by Old Redding Road and private lands; east, by private lands and Town open space; south, by private lands; west by Mountain and Old Redding Roads.

Key Features: Woodland predominantly UPF; LOF in association with stream corridors and extensive red maple swamp, east-central. Steep ledges, laurel thickets toward west.

Water Resources: North-central area contains headwaters of two brooks tributary to Steichen Pond (Topstone Park). Small brook, southwest, drains to the Norwalk River. MIRF under brooks, east; under swamp, west.

Linkage: North-south within the Greenbelt; also potential for linkage east to the Saugatuck Central Greenbelt.

Visibility: Nearly 0.4 miles along Old Redding Road, in addition to frontage on Mountain Road.

Planning Precedent: 1966, 1971, 1984 and 1998 Plans.

## **Section 2-4: Lands of Continuing Conservation Concern**

The parcels are listed by street address and approximate total acreage only. Many of these parcels contain residences or other buildings. The continuing conservation concern is only with the undeveloped portions of such properties.

<b>Street Address</b>	<b>Approximate Total Acreage</b>	<b>Street Address</b>	<b>Approximate Total Acreage</b>
194 Black Rock Turnpike	29	562 Redding Road	22
400, 409 Black Rock Turnpike	32	614 Redding Road	34
52 Cross Highway	12	626 Redding Road	14
70 Cross Highway	3	636 Redding Road	9
115 Cross Highway	18	646 Redding Road	3
135 Cross Highway	24	676 Redding Road	11
60 Diamond Hill Road	17	686, 692, 694 Redding Road	25
62 Dorethy Road	32	45 Side Cut Road	46
257 Ethan Allen Highway	9	55 Side Cut Road	20
10 Fox Run	38	14 Simpaug Turnpike	37
208, 222, 236 Gallows Hill Road	26	235 Simpaug Turnpike	20
28, 48 George Hull Hill Road	23	96 Sport Hill Road	22
32,38 Giles Hill Road	14	16 Starrs Ridge Road	9
62 Giles Hill Road	9	8 Sullivan Road	10
70 Greenbush Road	14	44 Sunset Hill Road	17
18 Hill Road	31	72 Sunset Hill Road	31
83 Lonetown Road	11	65, 67, 69 Umpawaug Road	34
80 Lonetown Road	23	123 Umpawaug Road	46
9, 51 Mail Coach Road	44	180 Umpawaug Road	24
30 Mark Twain Lane	27	14 Whortleberry Road	28
284 Redding Road	34	36 Whortleberry Road	13
331 Redding Road	40		

## **Section 2-5: Redding Conservation Commission Policy** **Statement On Subdivision Setasides**

The Planning Commission's discretionary power in setting aside open space in new subdivisions is likely to remain one of Redding's principal landsaving tools through the coming decade. How such proposals are perceived and implemented will largely determine how well or poorly these lands may serve as meaningful additions to, or links in, the Town's matrix of permanent open space.

In making its final determination of the location and extent of setasides, including conservation easements, the Planning Commission is guided by Section 4.8.2 of the Subdivision Regulations, which stipulates that land to be reserved shall be chosen on the basis of its value in:

- protecting and conserving natural resources,
- enhancing living conditions and protecting cultural and historic values,
- creating recreational opportunity,
- providing greenbelts and trails connecting parks and separated open space parcels.

Even as the objectives of Open Space Plan 1984 are clearly reflected in Section 4.8.2, so do they underlie the provision of Section 4.8.5, which gives the Conservation Commission the statutory authority to recommend to the Planning Commission measures to protect and conserve the natural resources of a site, as well as the "most appropriate" location and extent of all setasides and easements. Section 4.8.5 stipulates that all subdivision plans shall be referred to the Conservation Commission for an advisory report on:

- the significance of the natural features and resources on the site, the adequacy of their protection in the proposed plan, and specific recommendations on measures or changes in the plan to effect their conservation,
- the most appropriate location and extent of open space to be reserved, and locations of both positive and negative easements recommended to achieve conservation and recreation objectives.

The location and extent of open space dedications shall be determined on the recommendation of the Conservation Commission, by the Planning Commission—not by the applicant—and shall be consistent with the objectives of the Open Space Plan.

The Conservation Commission interprets Section 4.8.5.b as a mandate to recommend reserved setasides and easements *most appropriate* to maintaining the environmental integrity of the resource and achieving the objectives of the Open Space Plan. Conversely, in making its recommendations, the Conservation Commission reserves its right to reject as inappropriate lands that may otherwise be protected under the Town's Subdivision, Wetlands or Zoning regulations. In particular, the Conservation Commission reserves the right to reject as inappropriate wetlands lacking extraordinary scenic, scientific or recreational values.

Adopted by the Redding Conservation Commission by unanimous vote November 6, 1986, and submitted to the Planning Commission for review and adoption as an amended element of the Town Plan.

## **Section 2-6: Access**

The Commission shall recommend that all setasides be provided with access either from a public way or from an adjoining public open space. This Commission believes that setaside access offered along subdivision driveways is unacceptable.

## **Section 2-7: Conveyance of Ownership**

Over the years, the prevailing practice of subdivision applicants has been to convey their setaside lands to the Redding Land Trust. Though the Conservation Commission has no official position on this matter, it generally favors conveyance to the Land Trust, except in such cases as when a setaside may adjoin an existing unit of Town-owned open space, in which case, it is preferred that conveyance be to the Town.

## **Section 2-8: Salt-and-Pepper Setasides**

In the best of all possible worlds, all subdivision setasides would fit neatly into the open space matrix suggested by this Plan, and each would become a link in the Town's trails system. Unfortunately, Redding will have no such luck. As in the past, some setasides will continue to be isolated from linkage patterns and many of the new ones will, perforce, be small.

This Commission does not agree with the view which perceives small, scattered "salt-and-pepper" setasides to be without value—or worse, to be attractive nuisances. In the maintenance of natural processes, every single acre of unmanicured land counts for something. For the enhancement of recreational opportunity, every public woodlot has value for children grown jaded on private yards.

This Commission will continue to recommend that open space setasides be required of every subdivision of ten acres or more.

## **Section 2-9: Scenic Areas**

### **1. The Poverty Hollow Scenic Area:**

From Newtown Town line south along Poverty Hollow and Valley Roads to the Easton Town line; both sides, depth from road to follow lines of winter visibility.

### **2. The Crossfields Scenic Area:**

The open fields along Cross Highway, both sides, east of Little River streambed; depth from road: to the far edge of the fields.

### **3. Valley of the Drumlins Scenic Area:**

East side of Lonetown Road, from approximately Gallows Hill Road (opposite) north to the Dahlia Lane subdivision; west side of Lonetown Road, from south end of Country Club property north to small cemetery beyond Putnam Park Road (opposite). Depth from road to follow lines of winter visibility. (Note: to find an "alley" upon a ridgetop may seem a contradiction, yet this is what a glacier did to us; it deposited drumlins on either side of what is now Lonetown Road).

### **4. The Umpawaug Hill Scenic Area:**

Both sides of Umpawaug Road, from Old Redding Road north to Marchant Road (except for developed lands on east side, as indicated on Open Space Map). Depth from road to follow lines of winter visibility.

## **Section 2-10: Summary of Recommendations of This Plan**

The primary recommendation of this Open Space Plan is the permanent protection as open space of the lands set forth in Part II, Sections C and D of this Plan.

The following is a summary of other recommendations contained in the Plan:

- 1) the establishment by the Town of a fund to acquire open space (Part I Section 3);
- 2) the hiring by the Town and the Redding Land Trust of a part-time manager for open space (Part I, Section 4);
- 3) the establishment of an "organic land management program" for use on Town and private lands (Part I, Section 5);
- 4) the establishment of a subcommittee of the land use commissions of the Town to address aquifer protection (Part I, Section 5);
- 5) the establishment of four-acre "conservation zoning" in the greenbelt areas (Part I, Section 6); and
- 6) continued recognition in land use considerations of the four scenic areas set forth in Part II, Section I of this Plan (Part I, Section 8).