

REDDING, CONNECTICUT

OPEN SPACE PLAN

2018

SUPPLEMENT TO THE REDDING TOWN PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT 2018

Prepared by the Redding Conservation Commission

Redding Open Space Plan 2018

A report on the protection of natural systems in Redding, Connecticut.
Prepared by the Redding Conservation Commission as a supplement to the 2018 Town Plan of
Conservation and Development.

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Table of Contents

OPEN SPACE PLAN.....	1
2018 OPEN SPACE PLAN: PART ONE	3
Introduction	3
Section 1-1: Goals of the Open Space Plan.....	3
Section 1-2: Existing Open Space	4
GREENBELTS.....	5
Section 1-3: Lands for Protection	6
Section 1-4: Additional Open Space Concerns.....	6
THE NORWALK RIVER WATERSHED AND THE NORWALK RIVER VALLEY TRAIL.....	6
WILDLIFE HABITAT	7
LAND MANAGEMENT.....	8
Section 1-5: Water Resources Protection.....	8
Section 1-6: Preserving and Protecting the Greenbelts and Other Sensitive Areas.....	10
Section 1-7: Privately Owned Lands	10
Section 1-8: Special Treatment Areas.....	11
Section 1-9: Educational Use of Open Space	11
Section 1-10: Trails.....	12
2018 OPEN SPACE PLAN: PART TWO	14
Section 2-1: Greenbelts	14
The Aspetuck Greenbelt	14
The Little River Greenbelt	14
The Saugatuck Central Greenbelt	15
The Saugatuck West Greenbelt	15
Section 2-2: Summary of Existing Open Space in Redding	16
Section 2-3: Principal Lands for Conservation Protection	19
The Aspetuck Greenbelt	20
The Little River Greenbelt	23
The Saugatuck Central Greenbelt	25
The Saugatuck West Greenbelt	26
Section 2-4: Lands of Continuing Conservation Concern.....	29
Section 2-5: Redding Conservation Commission Policy on Subdivision Set-asides	30
Section 2-6: Access.....	31
Section 2-7: Conveyance of Ownership.....	31
Section 2-8: Scenic Areas	31
Section 2-9: Summary of Recommendations of This Plan: Looking to the Future	31

2018 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 2018 to the Redding Planning Commission and recommends that it be incorporated into the 2018 Town Plan of Conservation and Development.

This is Redding's sixth Open Space Plan. Its objectives include and build on those of the 1984, 1998, and 2008 Open Space Plans, as follows:

- 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 scenic rural character of Redding;
- To help shape an orderly direction for the future development of the Town;
- To develop a strategy for conserving large contiguous areas of open space, both public and private areas essential to ensure maximum resource protection, habitat diversity, wildlife values, public access to our outdoor heritage, and to mitigate the consequences of climate change;
- To identify scenic resources and native species worthy of special treatment by the land use agencies of Redding; and
- To identify locally important farmland soils and designate them with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to protect them for food security.

The guiding principle of this Plan was set forth in the 1971 Open Space Plan and carried through subsequent plans to be reaffirmed in this current plan—that open space is essential to the preservation of Redding and the surrounding area as viable communities.

Section 1-1: Goals of the Open Space Plan

During the 10 years since the 2008 Open Space Plan, Redding, through the diligent efforts of the Town, the Redding Land Trust ("RLT"), The Nature Conservancy ("TNC"), and several other local and Connecticut State partners, has added approximately 176.21 acres to its permanently protected open space. This increase brings the total amount of such open space in the Town to approximately 4,816 acres in addition to the 2,824 acres of the Centennial Watershed State Forest.

There remain in Redding many properties of significant conservation value that 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 achievement of the other conservation goals stated in this Plan. 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 Section 2-3 of this Plan and (2) the properties set forth as "Lands of Continuing Conservation Concern" in Section 2-4 of this Plan.

A 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.

Other goals listed in the Introduction to this Plan are no less important. Notably, for example, prudent Town development incorporating protected open space may reduce the tax burden on towns over time. Studies, summarized by the American Farmland Trust, show that residential land in several Connecticut towns requires more local expenditures than it generates in revenue. In contrast, working and open land consistently generate more in public revenues than they require in services. Thus, the acquisition of open space is a way to reduce the tax burden on towns over time. In addition, other studies report that the property value of homes near open space increase because of their desirability.

Section 1-2: Existing Open Space

As of January 1, 2018, the protected open space in Redding consists of 1,944 acres held by the Town (or the Town and TNC/RLT as partners), 66 acres held by the Town by easement, 1,770 acres held by land trusts by title or by easements, 742 acres of state parks, 293 acres held by private conservation organizations and neighborhood organizations, and 2,824 acres of Centennial Watershed State Forest. The Summary of Existing Open Space in Redding set forth in Section 2-2 of this Plan includes a detailed summary of the permanently protected open space in Redding.

Since the 2008 Plan, there has been an increase of approximately 176 acres in the amount of permanently protected open space in Redding. This increase is due to the efforts of the Town, the Redding Land Trust, and the Aspetuck Land Trust, with significant support from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Aquarion Water Company, and private landowners.

The Redding Conservation Commission will continue the policy expressed in the 1984, 1998, and 2008 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 the protection of natural resources, conservation, passive recreation, and outdoor education. In addition, the Conservation Commission reaffirms its policies for open space set-asides on subdivisions greater than ten acres.

The following sections describe the land protection activities in Redding of various entities in the past ten years.

The Town of Redding

The Town acquired four properties through donations, subdivision set-asides, and in-fee acquisition in the past ten years, comprising approximately 61 acres of open space. This includes a donation of a wetland area on Ethan Allen Highway from a private landowner.

The largest property acquired by the Town, in partnership with the Redding Land Trust, in the past ten years was the more than 30 acres of land that comprise the Mary Anne Guitar Nature Preserve, the funding for which came from a CT DEEP grant, matching funds from RLT, and a donation from Aquarion Water Company. This large and varied open space acquisition holds great potential for passive recreational enjoyment, nature education, and future linkage to the Saugatuck Trail.

Another acquisition of great value was a 0.03-acre parcel in Georgetown that is now the Gilbert-Miller Park, a pocket park offering a green space in downtown Georgetown. The park property was acquired in 2005 and dedicated in 2006 but was not incorporated into the 2008 Open Space Plan. The park was developed with funds received through a Five Star Restoration challenge grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation as well as an EPA 319 Clean Water grant.

The Redding Land Trust

In the ten years since the last Plan, the Redding Land Trust acquired title or conservation easements with respect to approximately 102 acres of land and partnered with the Town to purchase the 30-acre Biehn property parcel. Now known as the Mary Anne Guitar Nature Preserve, it is the largest parcel protected by the RLT in the past ten years, funded jointly by a CT DEEP grant to the Town and Redding Land Trust, matching funds from the RLT, and a donation from Aquarion Water Company.

The RLT also acquired easements on six parcels of land ranging from less than one acre to almost ten acres, for a total of approximately 22 acres. In the same period of time, the RLT protected 80 acres as 15 parcels of land under fee ownership. These properties include several smaller parcels between one and five acres each and larger properties over ten acres.

The Aspetuck Land Trust

The Aspetuck Land Trust (ALT) protects land within and outside of the Town of Redding. Within the Town, the ALT acquired two properties on Giles Hill Rd in 2016, which in total make up about 14 acres of open space bordering the town of Easton.

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 ever more crucial. The Conservation Commission reaffirms the recommendations of the 1984, 1998, and 2008 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 as described in Section 1-6 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 2008 Plan listed 22 units as “Principal Lands for Conservation Protection”: parcels that the Commission considered the principal properties in Redding in special need of conservation protection. The Commission reaffirms this definition in this Open Space Plan. The remaining 20 properties can be found in Section 2-3 of this Plan and are marked on the Open Space Plan Map included herewith.

Section 2-4 of this Plan contains a list of many other properties in Redding that the Commission deems of conservation value due to their location, size, linkage to other conservation properties, or for the protection of water, species of special concern, wildlife habitat, or scenic 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 comprehensive inventory of potential conservation land.

Although Redding has had success in preserving open space in the last ten years, some of the required legal procedures may not allow the Town to move quickly enough when the opportunity to acquire a potential conservation parcel presents itself. For this reason, the Commission reiterates strongly its recommendation contained in the 1998 and again in the 2008 Plans that the Town authorize an amount not exceeding \$5 million 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 hopes that it can be accomplished in the future.

Section 1-4: Additional Open Space Concerns

THE NORWALK RIVER WATERSHED AND THE NORWALK RIVER VALLEY TRAIL

There are additional lands abutting Redding or located in Redding which are of importance to the Town for conservation purposes. The State of Connecticut assembled much of this land along the Route 7 corridor for the proposed "Super 7" highway. Among these are parcels containing prime wetlands in the Norwalk River watershed which have a 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 continuous habitat and possible future trail connections.

Our 2008 Open Space Plan referred to this corridor as the "Sugar Hollow Greenway." With the reduced likelihood that Super 7 will be built, a legislative change has allowed for other uses of the DOT parcels acquired over decades. Redding is cooperating with Wilton, Ridgefield, Danbury and Norwalk to build out the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT). The NRVT will be a multi-use trail that will foster recreation, healthy lifestyles, and alternative transportation and become a fitting amenity for our town given our history of trail building and open space protection.

In 2015, a Trail Layout and Design Document for the NRVT route in Redding was completed and fundraising commenced for this Redding portion. This segment from Fire Hill Road (at the Ridgefield border) to Picketts Ridge Road has been dubbed the Redding Mile. Furthermore, planners have made provision for the trail through a possible future incentive housing zone along Route 7.

Redding should continue to oppose current and future State plans to build or extend the 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. Redding should support the widening of Route 7 as an alternative course of action that would ameliorate the traffic problem but be less destructive of wetlands. We emphasize that pedestrian trail and bike lane access need to be considered in our roadway plans, which will also encourage alternative means of transportation, including links to rail and bus service.

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, which reflect the goals of the 2015 Connecticut Wildlife Action Plan, among other things, should continue to focus on the following:

- vernal pool habitats and the unique upland communities associated with them;
- open fields, successional shrub habitat, open wetlands and open wet meadows, as these provide optimal habitat for declining bird, wildflower, butterfly and pollinator species, as well as necessary habitat for the previously threatened New England Cottontail Rabbit; and
- 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.

In 2015 Audubon CT designated Redding's Couch Hill Preserve an "Important Bird Area" as one of a handful of important bobolink nesting sites in our state.

The Town should continue its efforts to control deer and invasive plant species on Town open space and should continue to urge similar efforts by private landowners. Destruction of the forest understory by deer has severe adverse effects on plant species diversity, populations of forest-nesting

birds, small mammals, and other fauna. 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 mugwort, Japanese barberry, Japanese knotweed, black swallowwort, and others, which overwhelm native plants. In the limited areas of Saugatuck Falls Natural Area where invasive species have been removed or controlled, there has been some regrowth of native plants. Deer hunting on several town-owned open space parcels has had a positive impact on understory plant diversity.

LAND MANAGEMENT

Following the Commission's recommendation in the 2008 Open Space Plan, a part-time open space manager was hired in 2011 jointly by the Town and the Redding Land Trust to manage the open space owned and stewarded by both the Town and the Redding Land Trust. Many activities, such as the cutting of fields, the control of invasive plants, the clearing of fallen trees, and the prevention of illegal use of open space land, require active supervision and intervention.

The Commission and the Land Trust recognize that land management is needed to achieve the goals of this open space plan and have adopted actions to accomplish this. For instance, following this policy, the Town mows the meadows in the Saugatuck Falls Natural Area to maintain them as an example of early forest succession from former agricultural fields. The Town also maintains the quality of the grasses in the Couch Hill Preserve to enhance the habitat for the bobolinks who nest there, and the Redding Land Trust annually mows its meadow holdings and has performed invasive plant removal on some of its parcels.

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 Town's land area is within the watershed of drinking water reservoirs for the public water supply. The Saugatuck, Aspetuck, Little, and Mill Rivers are classified by the State of Connecticut as Class AA—i.e., streams that 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 glacier melt waters. 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 that 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.

The increased risk of extreme weather events, including more frequent, intense, and prolonged drought resulting from climate change, 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 and safe supply of water by limiting the amount of water consumption and nonpoint source pollution from residences that might otherwise be built were the land not preserved as open space.

High-density residential developments proposed for important watershed areas are an ongoing threat to the state's water resources. This problem can be particularly troublesome in Redding, where the vast majority of the town is classified as public drinking water supply watershed.

The 2013–2018 Connecticut Conservation & Development Policies require state agencies to be consistent with the State C&D Plan whenever they undertake certain activities. Since the Plan is advisory to municipalities, Redding should strive to be consistent with the State Plan. The plan is divided into six Growth Management Principles (GMP). GMP numbers 4 and 5 are perhaps the most applicable for Redding's land use decisions. GMP #4—"Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands" and GMP #5—"Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety" are consistent with the protection of the watershed area within the town and the need to protect drinking water supplies.

Thus, protecting the purity of Redding's surface and groundwater should remain a principal goal of Redding during the next ten years. Among the ways to accomplish this goal are the encouragement of continuing efforts by the Town 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 promote 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 organic management practices can be found in the Northeast Organic Farming Association Standards for Organic Land Care, Practices for Design and Maintenance of Ecological Landscapes.

Another way the Town can and is attempting to protect the water supply is its adoption of a Fracking Waste Ban Ordinance prohibiting the storage, disposal, or use of waste from oil and gas exploration or extraction activities or any derivative thereof in the Town of Redding.

Section 1-6: Preserving and Protecting the Greenbelts and Other Sensitive Areas

The protection of our greenbelts is a crucial element of this Plan. And the best way to protect our greenbelts is through the acquisition and preservation of open space.

The Conservation Commission believes that in order to maintain the integrity of the greenbelts, the Town should adopt conservation zoning that 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. Building sites should be restricted to areas of minimal impact on the natural environment.

Some types of conservation zoning that could be implemented to protect sensitive areas from development include adopting regulations removing steep slopes and wetlands from the calculation of land to be developed and cluster zoning, which is traditionally defined as putting houses on smaller lots and preserving unused land for a conservation area, rather than for development, could also be considered.

Due to the natural limitations of Redding's terrain, many of the larger tracts that remain undeveloped in Redding are made up of land that 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 and to prevent habitat fragmentation. Adopting regulations that require minimum four-acre parcels for development in these areas may be another option for protecting these tracts.

Section 1-7: Privately Owned Lands

There remain many tracts of privately owned land that protect Redding's land and water resources and Redding's scenic rural character. These lands are a benefit to Redding and its residents, but development pressures and increasing tax burdens 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 Sections 2-3 and 2-4 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 under pressure to be sold for development with the attendant loss of open space.

The generosity of many private landowners has enabled the Town and 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 natural habitats and the protection of water resources.

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 rural scenic character up to the line of winter visibility. The four areas were Poverty Hollow Scenic Area, Crossfields Scenic Area, and Valley of the Drumlins Scenic Area (north of Town Hall to Putnam Park Road) and Umpawaug Scenic Area.

Other than the Umpawaug Scenic Area, which has now been developed, the Commission recommends that the remaining three designated scenic areas-- Poverty Hollow, Crossfields, and Valley of the Drumlins—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 (now owned by Region 9) 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 Region 9 tract contains a pond, wetlands, forest, and rock cliffs. Seldom have science educators had this array of natural assets at 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. At the same time, it is also important to maintain and possibly improve the boardwalk access to the Lonetown Marsh.

Section 1-10: Trails

With over 65 miles of trails, Redding's trail system 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 (CWSF), and certain private properties, the trails provide a variety of hiking experiences over many types of terrain.

In every direction, Redding trails connect to trails in neighboring communities. To the south and east lie connections to Weston and Easton through TNC's Devil's Den and the blue-blazed Saugatuck and Aspetuck Trails of the CWSF. To the north, connections are made to Bethel and Danbury through the Plishner and Bogus Brook Preserves (Ives Trail). Finally, we share a contiguous border to the west with a variety of Ridgefield Open Space parcels and trails. Indeed, Redding is the hub of a great array of paths and preserves.

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 (now complete) 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 Stormfield, the Centennial Watershed State Forest and the Saugatuck Trail, the Great Ledge, and Devil's Den Preserve; and
- Westway, from Marchant Road south through Marchant Farm, the Steichen Preserve, Topstone Park, and Windy Hill to the Rock Lot/Scott Preserve and Peaceable Street.

Several new trails were completed since the writing of the 2008 Plan. In 2009 the Town of Redding and The Nature Conservancy opened the Turkington Falls trail looping the jointly owned 65-acre Turkington Falls Natural Area, with a connector to the Reeve Biggers trail in the Centennial Watershed State Forest. In 2014 the Connecticut Forest and Park Association completed an extension of the Saugatuck Valley Trail connecting it to the Aspetuck Valley Trail, creating a long trail corridor from Huntington State Park in Redding and Bethel to Easton and Weston along the Saugatuck Reservoir. Finally, the Ives Trail is now substantially complete, traversing 20 miles from Ridgefield through Danbury and Bethel to its southeastern terminus in the Town's Bogus Brook Preserve.

As of this writing, planning is underway for two significant new trail systems. A trail loop has been scouted through the rugged new Mary Anne Guitar Nature Preserve, acquired in 2016 under a CT

State OSWA grant to the Town of Redding and the Redding Land Trust, with support from Aquarion Water Company. A trail connection to the Saugatuck Trail would further enhance the public access mandated by the terms of the grant. Also, the “Redding Mile” of the proposed NRVT from Fire Hill to Pickett’s Ridge Road has been laid out, and funding of construction costs is well underway.

Earlier Open Space Plans set goals for a system of lateral trails to connect our established long trails. While it became clear that the acquisition of numerous small properties needed to achieve these goals was unlikely to occur, this theme of connectivity remains central to the evolution of our trail system.

While future trail development will most likely occur on the preserves acquired and jointly owned with The Nature Conservancy, there is also potential for new trails and connections across Redding Land Trust lands. Stewardship goals must be developed jointly in the context of this partnership. For instance, the desire for open space access by new trail creation must be balanced by the importance of habitat protection. Ecological and even historical evaluation of a property is recommended prior to trail development and should inform trail layout and design. Programs to promote more trail use, especially among younger people, should be developed to encourage them to become future advocates for and stewards of open space and natural resources.

By tradition our trails are maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers known as the Trail Tenders reporting to the Conservation Commission and working closely with the Redding Land Trust. Maintaining our trails, signage, boardwalks, and bridges to a high standard is essential to the public enjoyment of this great resource. Professional work will be required to augment our volunteer efforts, and the Commission’s budget should continue to reflect this need. Near term goals include the replacement of our large hanging signs at the trailheads to key open space, and the rebuilding of a major portion of the Lonetown Marsh boardwalk across from the elementary school.

2018 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 set-asides.

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 set-asides.

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 acres), 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 set-asides.

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 (former 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 set-asides.

Ownership Mix: Public open space and CWSF lands comprise about 30% 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 Redding¹

Ownership by the Town of Redding

Size of parcels	Number and name of parcels	Size (acres)
<1 acre	9 parcels	3.85
1-5 acres	20 parcels	51.32
5-20 acres	13 parcels	128.76
	Lonetown Marsh	11.72
	Seventy Acre South	8.50
	Umpawaug Pond Brook	11.00
	Mine Hill	6.54
	Old Field East	18.58
	Ridge Brook	5.28
	West Peaceable	5.02
	Giles Hill South	15.80
	Rider's Pond	8.40
	Gallows Hill West	5.85
	High Ridge	6.52
	<i>Gair Route 7 Property</i>	<i>8.30</i>
	<i>Old Stone Estates</i>	<i>17.25</i>
>20 acres	12 parcels	1397.96
	Ground Pine Sanctuary	54.23
	The Rock Lot	99.72
	Couch Hill Preserve	70.54
	Little River Preserve	101.24
	Dayton Tract	52.18
	Topstone Park	275.73
	Stormfield	160.07
	Limekiln Natural Area	126.84
	Gallows Hill Natural Area	72.90
	Saugatuck Falls Natural Area	318.00*
	Bogus Brook Preserve	35.81
TOTAL		1551.19
*Excludes approximately 3.4 acres developed by Eversource		

¹ Italicized entries reflect changes and additions since the 2008 Open Space Plan.
Town of Redding
Open Space Plan – 2018

Joint Ownership, Town of Redding and the Redding Land Trust

Parcel name	Size (acres)
Mary Anne Guitar Nature Preserve	30.70

Joint Ownership, Town of Redding and the Nature Conservancy

Preserve name	Location	Date acquired	Size (acres)
Turkington Falls	Old Stagecoach Rd & Gallows Hill Rd	May-01	65.34
Granskog Natural Area	Greenbush Rd & Giles Hill Rd (rear)	Dec-01	116.83
John W. Sanford Farm	Sunset Hill Rd (rear) & Black Rock Tpke	Dec-01	57.97
General Parsons Preserve	Limekiln Rd & Whortleberry Rd	Mar-03	52.56
Garnet Ridge Preserve	Dayton Rd & Orchard Drive (rear)	Sep-07	40.00
Fred Hanssen Preserve	Poverty Hollow Rd.	Jun-08	29.63
TOTAL			362.33

Conservation Easements held by the Town of Redding

Parcel name	Size (acres)
Redding Life Care LLC ("Meadow Ridge")	66.4

Ownership by Land Trusts

Entity	Date acquired	Number of parcels	Size (acres)
Redding Land Trust, Inc.	1966 to March 1998	69	785.55
	April 1998 to June 2008	49	180.75
	July 2008 to July 2018 ²	15	79.99
RLT subtotal			1046.29
Aspetuck Land Trust, Inc.	Before July 2008	1	36.75
	July 2008 to July 2018	2	13.75
ALT subtotal			50.50
TOTAL			1096.79

Conservation Easements held by Land Trusts

Entity	Date acquired	Number of parcels	Size (acres)
Redding Land Trust, Inc.	1969 to 1996	35	443.00
	1997 to June 2008	14	193.10
	July 2008 to July 2018	6	21.81

^{2 2} In January 2019, the Redding Land Trust acquired the Colonel Alfred McCormack Conservation Preserve, a parcel that straddles Redding and Danbury. Of the total 238.32 acres, 155.78 acres are in Redding. This acquisition is not included in the information included in this Open Space Plan.

Aspetuck Land Trust, Inc.	To date as of July 2018	1	15.00
TOTAL			672.91

State of Connecticut Ownership

Name of Parcel	Size (acres)
Collis P. Huntington State Park	551.49*
Putnam Memorial State Park	190.50*
Centennial Watershed State Forest	2824.00*
TOTAL	3565.99
*Size reflects only the area within the Town of Redding	

Ownership by Conservation Organizations

Name of Parcel	Entity	Size (acres)
Devil's Den Preserve	The Nature Conservancy	129.49*
Edward Steichen Memorial Preserve	Connecticut Audubon Society	53.76
Highstead Arboretum	The Highstead Foundation, Inc.	100.00
TOTAL		283.25
*Size reflects only the area within the Town of Redding		

Private Open Space

Description	Number of parcels	Size (acres)
Tracts in developments where access is limited to members	2	9.74

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 set-aside— 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
UPF	Upland forest type
LOF	Lowland forest type

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 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, 1998, and 2008 Plans.

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, 1998, and 2008 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, 1998, and 2008 Plans.

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, 1998, and 2008 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, 1998, and 2008 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: 1984, 1998, and 2008 Plans.

The Little River Greenbelt

Little River B-1³

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, 1998, and 2008 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: 1984, 1998, and 2008 plans.

³ The Redding Land Trust holds a Conservation Restriction on this unit, which would restrict normal residential development.

Little River B-3

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 1984, 1998, and 2008.

Little River B-4

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

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

Water Resources: Intermittent stream.

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

Visibility: Ravine from Sherman Turnpike.

Planning Precedent: 1984, 1998, and 2008 Plans.

Little River B-5

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, 1998, and 2008 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: 1998 and 2008 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 and 2008 Plans.

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 and 2008 Plans.

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

Visibility: None.

Planning Precedent: 1984, 1998, and 2008 Plans.

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, 1998, and 2008 Plans.

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 Blackman's 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: 1984, 1998, and 2008 Plans.

Saugatuck West D-4

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.⁴

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 the formerly designated Umpawaug Scenic Area.

Planning Precedent: Tract on west side of Umpawaug Road, 1984, 1998, and 2008 Plans; on east side of Umpawaug Road, 1998, and 2008 Plan.

⁴ Not including residence.

Saugatuck West D-5

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.

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

Planning Precedent: 1984, 1998. And 2008 Plans.

Saugatuck West D-6

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: 1984, 1998, and 2008 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.

Street address	Approximate total acreage
194 Black Rock Turnpike	29
400, 409 Black Rock Turnpike	32
52 Cross Highway	12
70 Cross Highway	3
115 Cross Highway	18
135 Cross Highway	24
60 Diamond Hill Road	17
10 Fox Run	34
208, 222, 236 Gallows Hill	24
62 Giles Hill Road	5
60 Greenbush Road	8
83 Lonetown Road	8
80 Lonetown Road	14
51 Mail Coach Road	38
30 Mark Twain Lane	20
284 Redding Road	31
331 Redding Road	32
562 Redding Road	18
614 Redding Road	27
626 Redding Road	10
636 Redding Road	5
646 Redding Road	3
676 Redding Road	11
686, 692, 694 Redding Road	23
45 Side Cut Road	42
55 Side Cut Road	14
14 Simpaug Turnpike	37
235 Simpaug Turnpike	14
96 Sport Hill Road	17
16 Starrs Ridge Road	5
8 Sullivan Road	8
44 Sunset Hill Road	9

72 Sunset Hill Road	19
65, 67, 69 Umpawaug Road	34
123 Umpawaug Road	34
180 Umpawaug Road	20
14 Whortleberry Road	25
36 Whortleberry Road	8

Section 2-5: Redding Conservation Commission Policy on Subdivision Set-asides

The Planning Commission's discretionary power in setting aside open space in new subdivisions is likely to remain one of Redding's principal land-saving 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 set-asides, 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 set-asides 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 set-asides 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.

This Commission will continue to recommend that open space set-asides be required for every subdivision of ten acres or more.

Section 2-6: Access

The Commission shall recommend that all set-asides be provided with access either from a public way or from an adjoining public open space. This Commission believes that setback 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 setback 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 setback 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: 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 a "valley" 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).

Section 2-9: Summary of Recommendations of This Plan: Looking to the Future

While much has been accomplished to reach the goals of the Open Space Plans preceding this one, there is still much left to be done in the next ten years. As the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection states in its Green Plan 2016–2020, “[L]ands of high conservation and recreation value continue to be lost to development, even with the current economic conditions....Investing in protecting lands in the most critical locations will not only increase the value of the land DEEP and its Partners have already protected, but also secure the future of Connecticut’s natural heritage, rural landscape, abundance of recreational resources, and strong communities.”

As the CT DEEP Green Plan so persuasively notes, “Protecting land today leaves a legacy for tomorrow.” “Key remaining lands and waters must be protected now if we wish to leave our future generations with the wildlife habitat, safe air and water, and outdoor recreational opportunities we benefit from today.”

Thus, in accordance with the CT DEEP principles, as well as the abiding importance of open space preservation to the Town of Redding and its neighbors, the primary recommendation of this Open Space Plan is the permanent protection as open space of the lands set forth in Sections 2-3 and 2-4 of this Plan.

The following is a summary of additional recommendations designed to meet the objectives set forth in the Plan:

- 1) advocating the establishment by the Town of a fund to acquire open space (Section 1-3);
- 2) continuing the monitoring of parcels identified in this plan as critical to open space so that if and when they become available, the Town can consider acquiring them;
- 3) encouraging "organic land management programs" for use on Town and private lands (Section 1-5);
- 4) establishing planning and zoning regulations for limiting building development on sensitive lands with steep and/or rocky slopes and wetlands, including those in the greenbelt areas (Section 1-6) and other parcels subject to residential development; and
- 5) continuing the recognition in land use considerations of the three scenic areas set forth in Section 1-8 of this Plan;
- 6) recognizing the importance of unfragmented landscapes by encouraging the acquisition of land that will create contiguous open space parcels.
- 7) continuing to maintain and improve signs and boardwalks that encourage the appreciation of Redding’s precious water resources and open space;
- 8) continuing, as needed, the use of professional land maintenance, including but not limited to the employment of an open space manager, to assist the Conservation Commission and the dedicated trail tender volunteers; and
- 9) encouraging trail development that will further the preservation and understanding of the natural and historical features of Redding’s open space.