

**MANAGEMENT PLAN
TEN MILE LOWLANDS
Adopted October 9, 2007**

I. General Property Description

The Ten Mile Lowlands is an approximately 146-acre open space parcel in North Cheshire, previously referred to as Assessor's Map 26, Lot 27; Map 26, Lot 125 (Open Space 'A'); Map 26, Lot 126 (Open Space 'B'); Map 26, Lot 127 (Open Space 'C'); Map 26, Lot 143; Map 17, Lot 39; Map 17 (Open Space 'F'). It is located directly across from the intersection of Moss Farms Rd. and Jarvis St. The property is bordered by Jarvis Street to the south, Guinevere Ridge to the east and the Ten Mile River to the west. Access to the property is gained primarily by a trail that leads north from Dundee Drive.

Property trail and topography is indicated in the attached Interim Map.

General open space features include:

1. The Ten Mile Lowlands property was originally part of a 176-acre parcel that was owned by the Waller Development Corporation. It was purchased by the town for \$481,157 and set aside as permanent open space in 1993 when a cluster subdivision of single-family homes was constructed on adjacent upland property.
2. The property is undeveloped except for a history of minimal agricultural use and the construction of a network of large drainage ditches.
3. Inland wetlands soils comprise approximately 140 acres of the property. The majority of the property contains a marginally open canopy forest, which encourages the vigor of the abundant shrub and herbaceous plant understory. The wetlands include the Ten Mile Watershed, as well as large wooded swamps with vernal pools and other smaller wetlands that are contiguous with the floodplain.
4. The wetlands provide valuable functions such as flood control and sediment retention.
5. Both the wetlands and the upland areas are structurally diverse and provide important habitats for wildlife.
6. With the exception of the eastern ridge, most of the property is low lying and is subject to occasional flooding and water retention.
7. The property is now almost entirely wooded.
8. Because of the importance of these wetlands as a watershed area, the Ten Mile Lowlands is not ideal for extensive public use.

II. Management Goals

General Statement: The Town of Cheshire acquired the Ten Mile Lowlands property through public purchase. Management goals should concentrate on the preservation of the Ten Mile Lowlands as a wetland/upland wildlife habitat and the importance of the property for watershed protection.

Therefore, the following management goals shall be recognized by this plan:

1. The Ten Mile Lowlands shall be primarily managed for wetland and upland habitat conservation and for purposes of watershed protection

2. A major goal of open-space management is public use. However, because of the fragile environment of the Ten Mile Lowlands, it is felt that public access should be closely monitored by the steward and restricted or even prohibited during early spring and seasonally wet conditions.
3. As to wetland and upland habitat conservation, this plan recognizes that inland wetlands and watercourses are an indispensable and irreplaceable but fragile natural resource with which the citizens of the Town of Cheshire have been endowed. Further, preservation of upland habitats helps to continue native upland biological diversity and provides a balance to wetland preservation. Therefore, efforts shall be made to preserve and maintain existing wetlands and watercourse areas.
4. As to watershed protection, this plan recognizes that the Ten Mile wetlands are important for flood control and sediment retention, not just for the surrounding neighborhoods, but also for the safety and welfare of the entire community. Therefore, efforts shall be made to manage and maintain the property in a manner that adequately protects the Ten Mile watershed.

III. Permitted Uses

General Statement: Permitted uses shall be as described in *Section 11-30 Open Space* of the *Town of Cheshire Code of Ordinances*.

1. Public access will be allowed but not encouraged during appropriate seasons and during optimal weather conditions. Further, the steward may close trails completely during seasonally wet or flood conditions.
2. Wetlands and watercourses shall be maintained in a natural state.
3. A certified forester may prepare a management plan to ensure the continued health and function of this valuable ecosystem. Additionally, plans may be prepared to address the removal of invasive plant species on the property.

There will be no need for parking facilities or improved access to the property. However, there may be a need for signage identifying the property as designated town-owned watershed property. In addition, because of the roadside access and the close proximity to a cluster subdivision, there may be a need for periodic trash removal.

IV. Prohibited Uses

Prohibited uses shall be as described in *Section 11-30 Open Space* of the *Town of Cheshire Code of Ordinances*.

Appendix A: History of the Ten Mile Lowlands

Because Native American cultures were dependent on a good supply of fresh water, it is likely that archeological sites may be located in close proximity to extensive wetlands, such as those of the Ten Mile watershed. In addition, there was a local belief that a prehistoric campsite and a historic ruin may be located in the vicinity of the property. In August 1992, a preliminary archeological study was conducted prior to the development of the Moss Farms subdivision. This survey concluded that any potential archeological sites would have been destroyed during prior excavations of sand and gravel.

The original parcel of land prior to development of the Moss Farms subdivision was probably part of a larger farm system that was owned by the large Moss family of Cheshire. There is evidence from aerial photographs that were done in 1965 that the nearby uplands property was cleared for agricultural use as a pasture. Sometime between 1965 and 1975, a series of large, interconnected ditches was excavated. These ditches were probably an effort to drain the wetlands on the property.

In 1993, the Moss Farms subdivision was constructed on the upland part of the original parcel. The remaining 146 acres was purchased by the Town of Cheshire for \$481,157 to be preserved as permanent open space. Prior to development, a Kings Mark environmental review was conducted in October of 1992. In addition, an independent environmental assessment was obtained from Soil Science and Environmental Services Inc. Both reviewers were impressed by the value of the wetlands as a watershed property and wildlife habitat.

Appendix B1: Natural/Historical Resources & Terrain

Natural/Historical Resources

The Ten Mile Lowlands is almost entirely wooded. The upland areas of the property are generally second growth areas of varying age classes. The majority of the property (approximately 140 acres) consists of inland wetlands. There are various types of wetlands, including floodplain, dense wooded swamps, and isolated pockets of wetlands. These extensive wetlands provide valuable watershed property. While there may have been some historical use as pasture, there is currently no agricultural use on the property.

The Ten Mile Lowlands is a rich habitat with interesting and diverse plant and animal life. The combination of dense upland forests contrasting with spacious wetlands makes it an ideal habitat for a variety of species. As the name implies, the Ten Mile Lowlands is a low-lying property with a few steep slopes, specifically along the eastern border of the property.

Water and Wetland Resources

The Ten Mile River originates in Prospect, Connecticut, just over the Prospect-Cheshire town line and flows north through Prospect, Cheshire and Southington. Of the seven-mile length of the Ten Mile River, 4.8 miles flows through Cheshire as a tributary of the Quinnipiac River and therefore, this habitat provides a valuable ecological function not just for the immediate surroundings, but also a larger portion wetlands, watercourses and uplands along the Ten Mile River and Quinnipiac River corridor.

The majority of the Ten Mile Lowlands is extensive wetlands, which are a valuable asset for the surrounding community as well as for the whole town of Cheshire. On this property, there are distinct wetlands that are characterized as: floodplain of the Ten Mile River, wooded swamps and small isolated pools. The Ten Mile floodplain, in particular, has an important function of 'storing' storm water during storm events. This high capacity to store storm water works to reduce flooding downstream. This quality of the Ten Mile floodplain is particularly important since the Ten Mile River is a tributary to the flood-prone Quinnipiac River.

Two wetland soil types are present at this property. The Rumney Variant is an alluvial, poorly drained soil found along the Ten Mile River, the western border of the property. The Rayham soil series is a poorly drained soil covering the majority of the property between the Ten Mile River and the eastern ridge. These wetland soils provide the valuable function of groundwater recharge and discharge for the Ten Mile River properties along the river corridor. These wetlands also serve an important function of removing sediments and pollutants from surface water to improve the quality of groundwater.

Because of its extensive wetlands, this property is not ideal for year round passive or active recreation and there are no scenic vistas or challenging trails. In addition, any bodies of water on the property are dense with riparian plant life and their size and depth is not conducive for water-based recreation such as canoeing or boating. Previous environmental analyses have also concluded that this section of the Ten Mile River is probably not ideal for fishing.

Forest Resources

The Ten Mile Lowlands is currently completely forested with wooded upland areas as well as dense wooded swamps. The uplands consist mainly of mixed hardwoods, which include red oak (*Quercus rubra*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tuliperifera*), and black birch (*Betula lenta*). Red cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) occurs in areas that show evidence of past clearing for agricultural use. The flora of the wetlands includes red maple (*Acer rubra*), swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*), pin oak (*Quercus palustris*), black willow (*Salix nigra*), silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*), Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) and Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), Wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*) and poison ivy (*Rhus toxicodendron*). Of particular note, this area contains an abundant understory of Mountain Laurel. This occurrence is of interest, as no other town owned property contains vast stands of this State of Connecticut flower.

The Dundee Drive access to the property is characterised by both native and non-native plants that exhibit invasive tendencies. Plants with invasive tendencies prefer disturbed sites along roadway and unmanaged clearings. The non-native invasive, Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*) is present along the trail clearing leading to the interior of the property, while the native invasive plants Common Greenbriar (*Smilax rotundifolia*), and Common Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), inhabit larger open areas along Dundee Drive.

Prior environmental reviews have concluded that commercial logging and forestry would not provide a cost benefit to the logging operation as the dominant tree species of this property is red maple, which has little commercial value nor would logging provide an ecological benefit to the ecologically sensitive Ten Mile Lowlands.

Habitat

The Ten Mile Lowland property is an excellent wildlife habitat. The Ten Mile Floodplain, in particular, is felt to be an outstanding quality habitat. Nutrients brought in by seasonal floodwaters allow for dense plant growth and help to support a wide variety of plant life. Vernal pools, streams, and woodlands with dense brush all contribute to a wide variety of interesting wildlife.

In July of 1989, prior to development, Richard Carroll conducted a bird species survey. The original inventory and subsequent follow up observations revealed a large quantity and variety of birds. At least 72 different species were noted including two species of owls, many types of ducks and other waterfowl and several species of hawks. In addition, many reptiles and amphibians have been noted on the property, including Eastern Box Turtles, spotted turtles, red backed salamanders, and marbled salamanders. There are also various species of frogs that have been seen of the property. Many species of mammals have been seen as well.

Terrain

The Ten Mile Lowlands is almost entirely a low-lying area with an average height of 129.4 feet above sea level. The ridge along the eastern border of the property is the steepest and highest terrain at 220 feet above sea level, but otherwise the property is relatively flat. There are also no special landforms that could contribute to the aesthetic or recreational value of the property.