

PROTECTING IMPORTANT RESOURCES

3

Overview

Much of East Hampton's community character and quality of life stems from its unique combination of natural, historic, and scenic resources. By protecting these important resources and guiding future development, East Hampton can maintain and enhance community character and quality of life for generations to come.

Protecting East Hampton's environment, character and other resources is very important to Town residents. To accomplish this goal, this Plan will strive to:

- protect water and other natural resources,
- preserve more open space, and
- protect historic and scenic resources

Protecting important resources is a critical element in maintaining community character and ensuring quality of life for current and future generations.



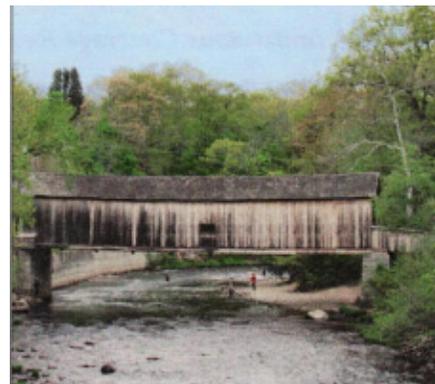
Open Space



Natural Resources



Historic Resources



Scenic Resources

Town residents have identified protecting water quality as one of the highest priorities in this Plan.

Protect Water Quality

Protection of East Hampton's surface and groundwater resources is critical not only for environmental and public health but for economic health as well. Lake Pocotopaug, the Salmon River, the Connecticut River, and their fisheries are valuable recreational resources that play a vital role in the Town's tourist economy. The map on the opposing page illustrates many of East Hampton's water resources, which are described in more detail in the strategies to follow.

Protect Surface Water Quality

With its surrounding cottage development, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty, Lake Pocotopaug (the Lake) is arguably the single most defining aspect of East Hampton's character. The Salmon River and other surface water bodies, while not as significant to community character, are also important for their natural, recreational, and scenic functions. While the following strategies are intended to have a direct impact on the water quality in the Lake and other water bodies, they are many other strategies contained throughout this chapter and the remainder of the plan that will indirectly serve to protect and improve surface water quality.

Watershed Protection Regulations

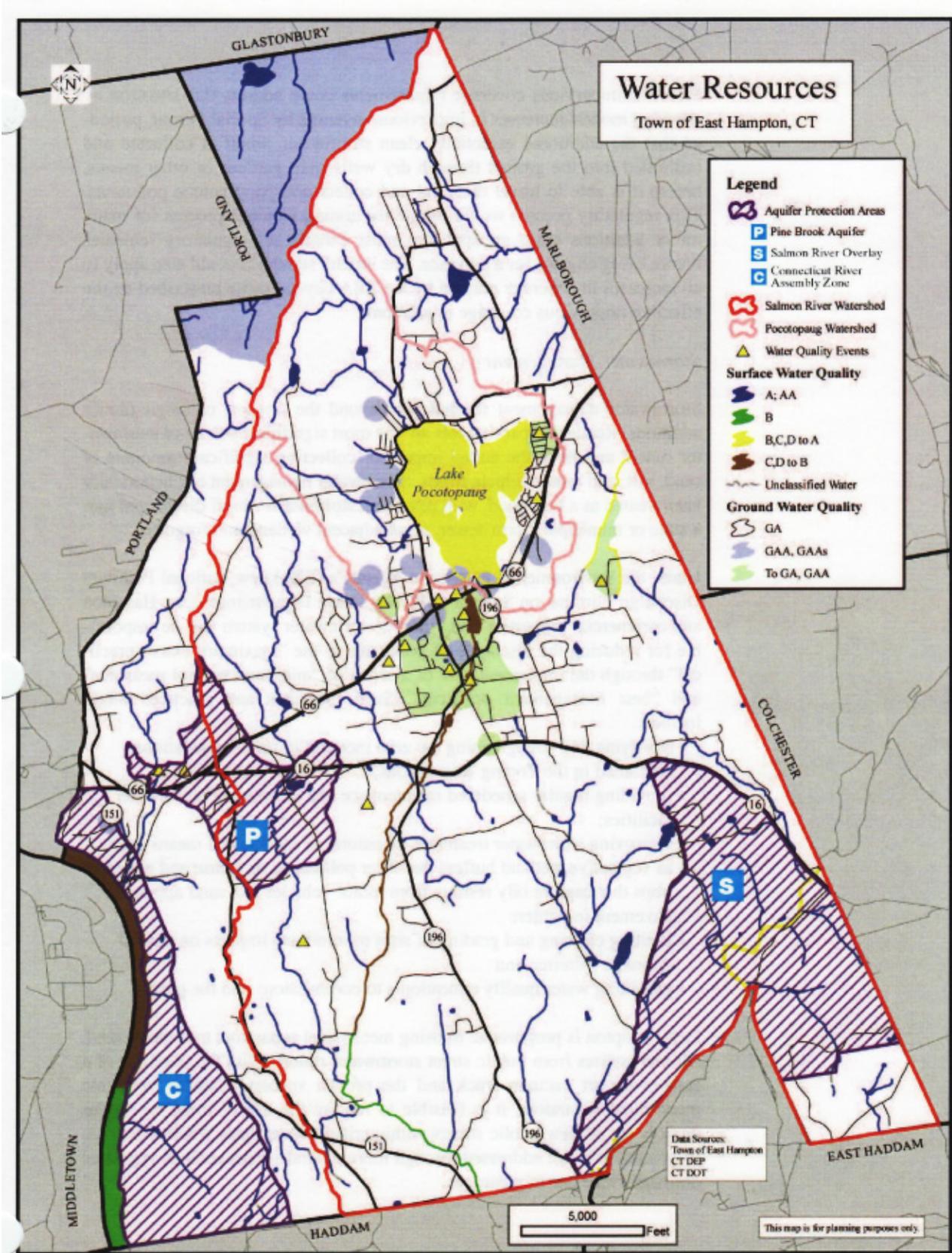
East Hampton already has aquifer protection regulations in place to protect future public drinking water supplies but despite significant public concern, lacks similar regulations to protect critical surface waters of the Town. While not public drinking water reservoirs, these water bodies are used for swimming boating, and fishing and their degradation can have far-reaching ramifications for the Town.

Watershed Protection Regulations can be applied to critical watersheds that would be identified on the Zoning Map as Watershed Protection Zones and apply use standards and best management practices similar to an aquifer protection zone. Uses likely to cause surface water contamination can be regulated to the degree that they pose a minimal threat, or if impractical, prohibited altogether. Care should be taken to strike a balance between environmental protection and economic development; since much of East Hampton's economic development potential lies within the Lake's watershed.

Effective Impervious Coverage Regulations

The Watershed Protection Zone might also include improved standards for impervious coverage. The land surrounding much of the Lake was initially developed as seasonal cottages but most have since been converted to year-round use. Their conversion has caused increased environmental pressure on the Lake by increasing impervious coverage. Public sewers have addressed septic issues but the Zoning Board of Appeals continues to grant dimensional variances for additions that can negatively impact surface water quality by increasing the volume and velocity of runoff that can carry fertilizers, pesticides and other non-point source pollutants into the Lake.





Effective impervious coverage requirements could address this situation by allowing modest increases in impervious coverage by Special Permit, provided that the additional essentially clean stormwater runoff is collected and infiltrated into the ground through dry wells, rain gardens or other means, before it is able to travel overland and collect non-point source pollutants. This regulatory process would negate the zoning variance process for many minor additions since an applicant must exhaust all regulatory remedies before being eligible for a variance. The stricter standards could also apply to all increases in coverage granted by the ZBA beyond those prescribed by the effective impervious coverage regulations.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater management reaches far beyond the impacts of single-family additions. Roads and parking lots are the most significant source of stormwater runoff and have the added impact of collecting significant amounts of sand, salt, and motor vehicle fluids. Stormwater management has historically been treated as a free good, with pavement stormwater runoff discharged into a state or municipal storm sewer, or an adjacent wetland and forgotten.

Under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II guidelines, East Hampton and commercial properties tying into its stormwater system will be responsible for reducing the discharge of pollutants to the "maximum extent practical" through the implementation of a series of "minimum control measures" and "best management practices." Such measures and practices might include:

- clarifying and strengthening the zero increase in runoff regulations contained in the Zoning Regulations;
- providing regular scheduled maintenance and cleaning of stormwater facilities;
- improving stormwater treatment by natural or mechanical means such as vegetative wetland buffers that filter pollutants; or grease and sediment traps that capture oily residue from motor vehicles and sand applied to pavement in winter;
- limiting clearing and grading of sites to minimize impacts on natural drainage patterns; and
- providing water quality education s to commissions and the public.

East Hampton is progressive in using mechanical separators to remove sand, silt and greases from public street stormwater runoff. With the purchase of a state-of-the-art vacuum truck and the proven success of three Vortecnic mechanical separators, it is feasible to require the use of these or similar devices for all new public streets within critical watersheds where stormwater treatment is not addressed through more natural means such as vegetated drainage swales or rain gardens.



Septic Management Program

Septage from failed septic systems can pose a significant threat to both surface and groundwater resources by spreading Cholera, Cryptosporidium, Giardia, and other harmful bacteria. As noted previously, the use of public sewers has addressed this issue for much of the Lake's watershed but there are undoubtedly septic systems that remain in use within this watershed as well as in critical watersheds in more rural locations such as that of the Connecticut River, Pine Brook, and Salmon Brook. Before implementing such a program, the Town should assess the threat within each watershed to determine the necessity and appropriate tools to apply.

A Septic Management Program can include a variety of tools that the Health Department can mix and match according to need, including:

- registration of systems, noting their age, location and reserve capacity;
- mailed reminders for regular inspection and cleaning;
- certification of regular inspection and cleaning by a septic contractor;
- amortization of existing septic systems over a fixed period of time before hookup to available public sewers is required; and
- educational programs on the financial and public health benefits of proper care and maintenance of septic systems.

Protect Groundwater Quality

Aquifer Protection Regulations

Aquifers are subsurface deposits of sand and gravel that contain significant amounts of water that can be pumped in volumes and rates necessary for public wells without appreciable effects. Despite the lack of any public wells within these watersheds, East Hampton already has aquifer protection regulations intended to regulate the use and storage of potential water contaminants above these aquifers and has appointed the Planning and Zoning Commission as the regulating authority.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be adopting Model Aquifer Protection Regulations that specifically affect public water supply well fields. In light of the Town's desire for a public water system, it would be prudent to modify these regulations to comply with the minimum requirements of the DEP's new regulations in anticipation of their future use.

Underground Storage Tank Regulations

Underground fuel storage tanks, if not properly maintained and monitored, can also pose a threat to groundwater quality. Without maintenance, an older steel tank has a life expectancy of 10 to 20 years, depending on soil conditions. For most homeowners, an underground storage tank is "out of sight and out of mind" until a problem arises. Recognizing the potential for leaking tanks to threaten property values, many lending institutions and insurance companies are requiring the removal of underground storage tanks prior to issuing mortgages or policies. However, this trend does little to address many longtime homeowners whose tenancy has long surpassed the life expectancy of their oil tanks.



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To protect existing and potential drinking water resources, East Hampton should consider adopting an underground storage tank ordinance that:

- prohibits the installation of new underground storage tanks;
- requires the registration, testing and/or monitoring of existing tanks; and
- requires the amortization of older tanks based on their age, construction and designed useful life.

Water Quality Protection Strategies

1. Adopt a Watershed Protection Overlay Zone that allows uses according to their potential risk to water resource protection areas.
2. Consider including effective impervious coverage requirements in the Watershed Protection Overlay Zone
3. Require that the “first flush” of runoff be appropriately treated in terms of quality and rate of runoff.
4. Encourage site designs that minimize impervious surfaces, promote infiltration of stormwater, and reduce runoff.
5. Continue to provide vegetative buffers to wetland and watercourses to filter pollutants and protect them from direct receipt of runoff.
6. Limit the clearing and grading of sites to minimize the impact on natural drainage patterns.
7. Promote public education programs that address “non-point” pollution issues.
8. Modify the aquifer protection regulations to comply with the DEP’s model Aquifer Protection Ordinance when it becomes available.
9. Adopt a residential underground storage tank ordinance to prohibit the installation of new tanks, require the licensing and monitoring of existing tanks, and require the removal of older and undocumented tanks.
10. Adopt a watershed protection overlay zone for the Lake Pocotopaug Watershed.



Underground Storage Tank Removal



Failed Septic System

Preserve More Meaningful Open Space

Preserving meaningful open space will help conserve important natural resources, protect wildlife habitat, create more environmentally sensitive development patterns, provide fiscal benefits, protect community character, and enhance the quality of life for East Hampton's residents.

The Open Space Plan on Resource page 3-9 illustrates the current inventory of open space and suggests desirable open space acquisitions that might further the many strategies to follow, if and when the properties become available through purchase, donation, or partial acquisition as open space set-asides as part of a residential subdivision.

Open space ranked as a high priority for East Hampton residents, with 82% of households surveyed agreeing that the Town should expand greenways to protect streams, 79% agreeing with purchasing more open space and 66% agreeing with increasing open space in new subdivisions.

Preserve More Open Space

Preserving more open space is an important component of protecting East Hampton's community character and quality of life. This can be accomplished through two basic approaches: regulation and acquisition.

Regulatory Approaches

In terms of regulation, East Hampton already requires that 15% of every new subdivision be "set-aside" as open space. This is typical of many Connecticut communities although towns have begun to increase the percentage to 20%. Sixty-six percent of residents surveyed agreed that East Hampton should increase the amount of open space as part of every new subdivision.

Some communities have adopted open space equivalency factors where wetlands, floodplain, steep slopes, and other environmentally constrained areas are "discounted" so that an even greater percentage of open space preservation occurs on the most constrained parcels (i.e. one acre of wetlands might only count as one-quarter acre). Other communities require that dedicated open space be representative of the overall quality of the parcel (i.e. similar in the proportion of wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes). In addition to increasing the percentage of open space preserved, these measures also improve the quality of open space. East Hampton should consider similar regulations for these reasons.

Flexible development and buildable land regulations, while intended primarily as resource protection tools, can also result in significantly more quality open space. These tools are discussed in detail on Resource page 4-2.

When there is no appropriate open space within a new subdivision, the Connecticut General Statutes allow the Commission to accept a fee-in-lieu of open space equal to ten percent of the fair market value of the land prior to development, to be used to purchase open space elsewhere in Town. The Commission can also accept a combination of land and fee, but again is lim-

Preserving open space is a major concern of East Hampton residents

Open Space Types

From an open space planning perspective, experience has shown that open space generally falls into four categories.

Dedicated Open Space

Land preserved in perpetuity as open space, often with public use.

Managed Open Space

Land set aside for some other purpose, such as a golf course or public watershed land that provides some open space value. Public use may not always be allowed.

Protected Open Space

Land protected from development, such as a conservation easement, but public use may not be allowed.

Perceived Open Space

Land that looks or feels open, such as a fallow farm or private woodlands, but is not preserved as open space.



Many property owners have an emotional attachment to their land and given a choice, would prefer to see their property preserved in a way that enhances the community.

Fiscal Benefits

Studies have shown that purchasing open space can be fiscally responsible over time when compared to the perpetual costs of residential development that might otherwise occur. A 1990 study of three Dutchess County, NY towns by Scenic Hudson, Inc. found that residential land required \$1.11 to \$1.23 in services for every tax dollar it generated, while open land required only \$0.17 to \$0.74 in services.¹ According to a report by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, “for every \$1.00 collected in taxes, residential development costs between \$1.04 and \$1.67 in services...”² A study of three rural Massachusetts towns found that residential development requires \$1.12 in services for every dollar in tax revenue, compared to \$0.33 in services for farmland and open space.³

¹Thomas, Holly L. February 1991. “The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation,” Technical Memo of the Dutchess County Planning Department.

²Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions. “Open Space is a Good Investment: The Financial Argument for Open Space Preservation.” 1996.

³Freedgood, Julia. 1992. “Does Farmland Protection Pay?: The Cost of Community Services in Three Massachusetts Towns.” American Farmland Trust.

ited to ten percent despite a mandatory set-aside of 15% or more. Any fees must be placed in a dedicated open space fund created by the Town Council and Board of Finance expressly for this purpose.

An alternative might be to allow an equivalent off-site dedication of open space, such as land linking to the Air Line Trail, land adjacent to the Salmon Brook, or similar valuable open space. A variation on off-site dedication is open space banking in which the Town purchases threatened but desirable open space as it comes on the market and allows developers to gradually pay-down the purchase over time with fees-in-lieu of open space as they develop less desirable land elsewhere in Town.

Regardless of the methods used, the Planning and Zoning Commission should obtain desirable open space or a fee-in-lieu thereof as part of every residential subdivision.

Acquisition Approaches

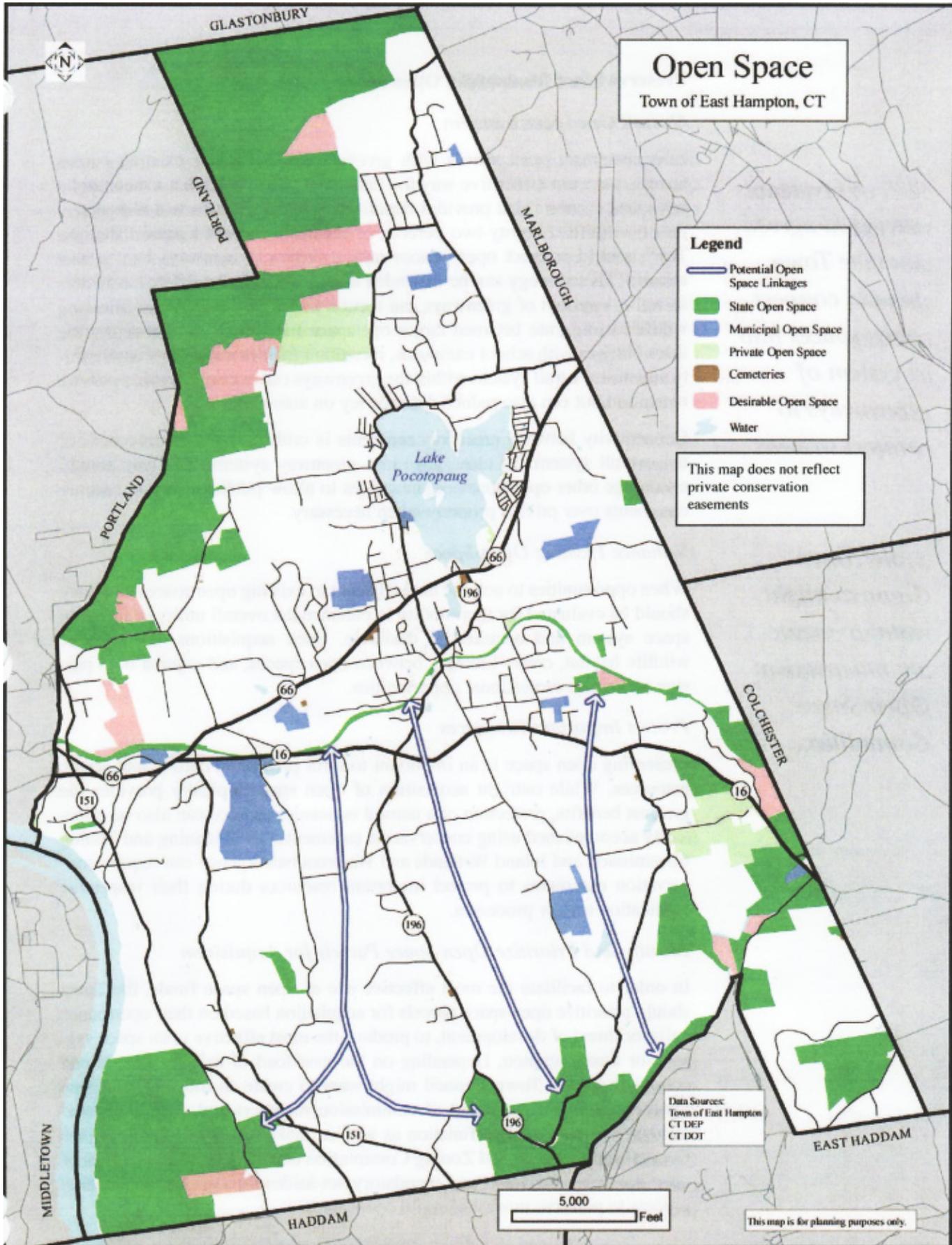
For East Hampton to be able to preserve the open space parcels that are most important to the Town’s open space strategy, the community must be prepared to purchase key properties and/or work with property owners for their full or even partial donation, preferably before they come on the market. Residents are supportive of the Town purchasing additional open space with 79% of those surveyed agreeing that the Town should spend the money to do so.

To facilitate this, the Town should finance a dedicated open space fund on an annual basis or consider bonding to have an immediately effective fund, able to purchase critical open space as it becomes available. Several communities, such as Groton, CT, have successfully used this approach. When adequately funded, an open space fund can be used to leverage matching open space grants as they become available, making local funds twice as effective, and giving the Town a competitive edge over Communities with no appreciable funds in place.

Open space preservation does not always have to mean the purchase of an entire property. Many communities participate in one or more programs for purchasing development rights to protect farmland and open space. Land can also be purchased outright and paid back over time through a “reverse mortgage,” leased back to an owner, or an owner can be granted “life use” of the property.

Donating land or development rights can also be an effective estate-planning tool. Many property owners have an emotional attachment to their land and given a choice, would prefer to see their property preserved in a way that enhances the community rather than be developed. The active solicitation of open space donations (land, development rights, and easements) is an increasingly popular and successful open space tool that should be promoted in East Hampton.





82% of residents surveyed agreed that the Town should connect open spaces into a system of greenways to protect streams.

...the Town Council might want to create an independent Open Space Committee...

Preserve More Meaningful Open Space

Overall Open Space System

Interconnecting open spaces with greenways and enlarging existing open spaces is the most effective way for East Hampton to establish a meaningful open space system that provides benefits for both recreation use and protection of wildlife. Eighty-two percent of residents surveyed agreed that the Town should connect open spaces into a system of greenways to protect streams. This strategy can be expanded to include trail and wildlife corridors as well. A system of greenways can function as wildlife corridors, allowing wildlife to migrate between larger open space habitats. By connecting the three villages with school campuses, recreation facilities and other community amenities, a trail system within the greenways can not only provide passive recreation but can also reduce dependency on automobiles.

Connectivity between greenway segments is critical to the effectiveness of the overall system. To close gaps in a greenway system, the Town should encourage other open space organizations to allow public access and secure easements over private property when necessary.

Enhance Existing Open Space

When opportunities to acquire land adjacent to existing open space arise, they should be evaluated for their ability to enhance the overall utility of the open space system and acquired if desirable. Such acquisitions can enhance wildlife habitat, create linkages between open spaces, and expand both passive and active recreational opportunities.

Protect Important Resources

Preserving open space is an important tool for protecting natural and scenic resources. While outright acquisition of open space typically provides the greatest benefits, protection of a natural or scenic resource can also be effectively accomplished using conservation easements. The Planning and Zoning Commission and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency can require conservation easements to protect important resources during their respective application review processes.

Identify and Prioritize Open Space Parcels for Acquisition

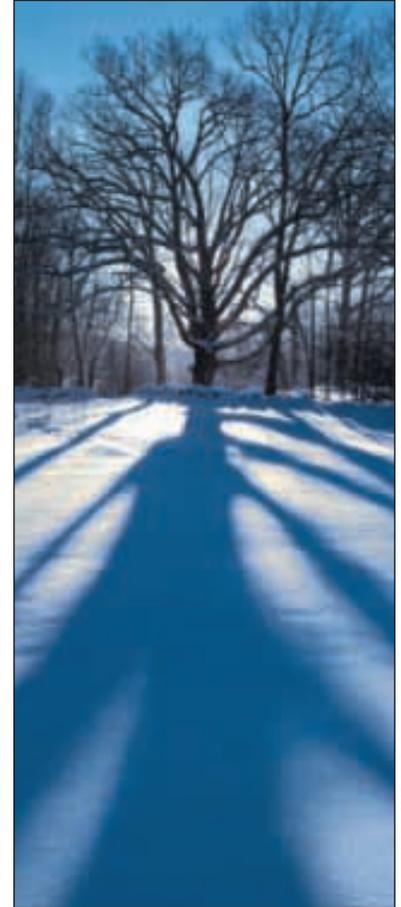
In order to facilitate the most effective use of open space funds, the Town should prioritize open space parcels for acquisition based on their open space value or threat of development, to produce the most effective open space system for East Hampton. Depending on the workload of existing boards and commissions, the Town Council might want to create an independent Open Space Committee comprised of commission members and other interested residents, to perform this function as well as make recommendations to the Council and Planning and Zoning Commission on both outright purchases of open space by the Town and mandatory set-asides through the subdivision process to preserve more meaningful open space.



Open Space Preservation Strategies

Preserve More Open Space

1. Consider increasing the mandatory open space “set-aside” to 20% as part of every residential development application.
2. Adopt regulations to require open space equivalency factors that discount the value of environmentally constrained open space or require the mandatory portion of open space to be representative of the parcel as a whole.
3. Adopt regulations to allow the acceptance of fees in lieu of open space.
4. Adopt regulations to allow off-site dedication and/or banking of open space.
5. Deleted
6. Consider creating an open space acquisition fund and building it through annual contributions in the budget and/or by bonding to have a more immediate effect.
7. Pursue state and/or federal open space grants.
8. Convert unprotected and perceived open space into protected open space by acquiring land or easements.
9. Educate residents about benefits of open space donation and sale of development rights. Preserve Meaningful Open Space and Create a Greenway System
10. Interconnect open spaces into a system of greenways.
11. Establish trails along greenways to encourage passive recreation.
12. Encourage other organizations to allow for public access and use.
13. Continue to require conservation easements or other measures during approvals.
14. Identify and prioritize open space parcels for acquisition.



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Meshomasic State Forest



Active Open Space

Conservation of natural resources is important for preserving environmental functions, maintaining biodiversity, and preventing damage to the environment.

Protect Important Natural Resources

Relate Development Intensity to Land Capability

While natural resources are often degraded over time due to pollution and other factors, development activity poses one of the most significant threats to both the quantity and quality of natural resources in East Hampton. Not all land is created equal and unless development regulations acknowledge that fact, development will continue to encroach upon environmentally sensitive areas; degrading or depleting natural resources.

Buildable land regulations can relate development potential to the capacity of the land to support development. Environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplain are less capable of supporting development than dry, flat land, yet are often treated equally in many regulations. Development in and around these sensitive areas can lead to increased erosion and flooding as well as biodiversity and property loss.

East Hampton currently requires a minimum buildable area on each new lot in a residential subdivision. While well intentioned, this regulation is tuned more towards ensuring an adequate area to support a house, a well and a septic system, than protecting natural resources. Nothing discourages developers from incorporating unbuildable sensitive areas into oversized building lots where they can be built upon (slopes or floodplain) or inadvertently encroached upon in the future by careless homeowners clearing additional lawn (wetlands or wildlife habitat).

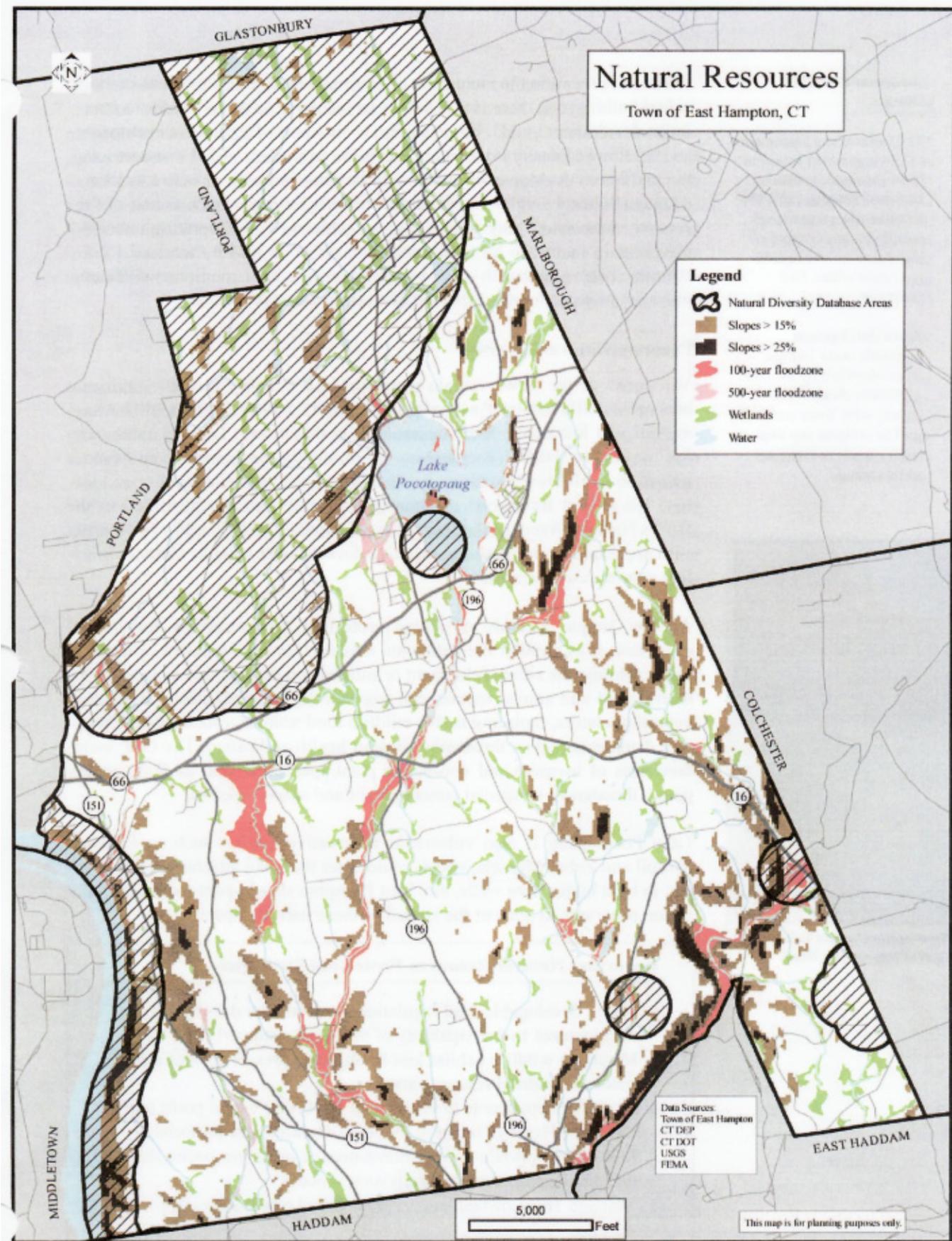
A developable land regulation has a subtle distinction from a buildable land regulation in that unbuildable areas are subtracted from the development potential of an entire subdivision before building lots are planned, thus minimizing development pressure on sensitive areas. In order for a developable land regulation to function, the Town must first adopt a density-based standard for determining development potential instead of the current minimum lot size approach. In this way, a density standard specifying the number of allowed dwelling units per acre can be multiplied by the developable acreage to determine an environmentally sensitive development yield. Density-based zoning will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.



Wetlands and Watercourses



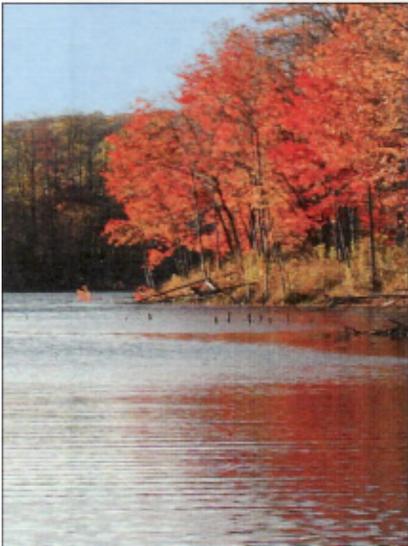
Steep Erodeable Slopes



Important Wildlife Habitat

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) maintains a Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) that identifies areas where species of concern that are threatened or endangered may exist within East Hampton.

When development proposals occur in these areas identified by the DEP, applicants should work closely with Town and DEP staff to mitigate any impacts on the species of concern and its habitat.



**Loos Pond in the Conservation Area
Off White Birch Road**

While not preventing the inclusion of environmentally sensitive areas in individual building lots, there is no longer an incentive to do so in order to maximize development yield. For example, if only half of a parcel is developable and the allowed density is tuned to create the equivalent yield of one-acre lots, the maximum development yield could be achieved with one-acre lots located almost entirely within the developable area, leaving as much as half of the property untouched. Any financial gains achieved by incorporating unbuildable areas to increase lot sizes would be offset in part by increased infrastructure costs required to serve larger, wider lots. Soil conditions will determine the ultimate lot size where onsite septic systems are used.

Preserve Natural Diversity

Vast areas of the Town remain developable and likely contain significant areas of wildlife habitat. As development occurs, wildlife habitat will be fragmented and lost unless their disturbance is minimized. Loss of habitat can lead in-turn to wildlife encroaching on residential development and even a reduction in biodiversity if rare or endangered species are affected (see sidebar). To protect threatened or endangered species habitat identified in the DEP's Natural Diversity Database, East Hampton's staff should work closely with applicants to mitigate any negative development impacts on these sensitive natural resource areas.

Another simple measure of added protection for preserving the natural ecosystem is to prohibit the deliberate introduction of non-native or invasive species during the site development or subdivision process. Invasive and non-native plant and animal species can aggressively multiply in the absence of natural predators, replacing native wildlife food sources, causing costly property damage and even threatening human health and safety. The DEP maintains lists of invasive and non-native plant species as well as State endangered, threatened, or special concern plant and animal species.

Lake Pocotopaug is also vulnerable to invasive species such as Eurasian Milfoil and Zebra Mussels, which could enter the Lake attached to boat trailers, in boat bilges, live wells, etc. East Hampton should continue boater education programs to prevent the spread of these harmful species.

Important Natural Resource Protection Strategies

1. Adopt developable land regulations to relate the density of development to the capability of the land to support it.
2. Minimize wildlife habitat loss through the preservation of open space and natural resource areas.
3. Work with applicants to ensure that important vernal pools and Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) resources are protected.
4. Prohibit the introduction of non-native or invasive species during the site development or subdivision process.
5. Manage Town owned land to prevent and remove invasive species.

Preserve Historic Resources

East Hampton is clearly proud of its rich heritage as both the center of bell manufacturing in the United States and as an important 19th Century ship-building center. Fortunately, residents' strong sense of pride and the Town's rural nature have enabled the preservation of much of the Town's history through its architecture and other historic elements. Now that East Hampton has been discovered as a residential bedroom community for the Hartford, New Haven and other labor markets, pride alone may not be sufficient to protect many of East Hampton's historic resources.

Encourage Sensitive Stewardship

Owning an historic resource is not for everyone and purchasing historic property should be considered carefully. While most of East Hampton's historic resources are privately owned, they are a significant part of the Town's character and there is an implicit obligation to maintain their architectural and historic integrity for the good of the Community as a whole. Owners who are emotionally and financially committed to maintaining historic resources can be the most effective means of preserving them. This kind of sensitive stewardship should be encouraged through educational programs and other technical assistance because no amount of incentives or regulations can protect privately owned historic resources from owner neglect and ultimately demolition.

Historic Resources Inventory

Building upon the earlier work required to nominate East Hampton's two National Register Historic Districts, the Town should complete a townwide historic resources survey. When completed, the survey can be used to expand the existing National Register Historic Districts and make nominations to the national, state or even a local historic register for individual properties outside of these districts. Some of the Town's historic resources are illustrated on the map on page 3-17.

Recognize Significant Historic Resources

Recognition programs such as the National Register of Historic Places can encourage sensitive stewardship by instilling pride in ownership. East Hampton has two National Register Historic Districts: the Belltown Historic District in the Village of East Hampton and the Middle Haddam Historic District in the Village of Middle Haddam along the Connecticut River. There are also two National Register historic structures: the Comstock Bridge over the Salmon River and the Rapallo Viaduct over the Flat Brook. While mostly honorary in nature, these national designations afford financial and preservation benefits as well (see sidebar).

The Connecticut Historical Commission also maintains a State Register of Historic Places, which contains 15 East Hampton buildings as well as the Comstock Bridge. Unlike the National Register, the State Register is strictly honorary in nature.

National Register Benefits

In addition to honorific recognition, listing in the National Register offers the following benefits.

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires that Federal agencies allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on all projects affecting historic properties either listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register. The Advisory Council oversees and ensures the consideration of historic properties in the Federal planning process.



- Owners of properties listed in the National Register may be eligible for a 20% investment tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing certified historic structures such as commercial, industrial, or rental residential buildings.
- Federal tax deductions are also available for charitable contributions for conservation purposes of partial interests in historically important land areas or structures.
- Qualification for Federal grants for historic preservation, when funds are available.

Historic District Myths

Historic District Designation will lower the value of homes.

False. Studies have shown that both national and local historic district designations can stabilize or increase property values relative to similar properties outside of historic districts.

Local Historic District Commissions can regulate interior changes to buildings.

False. Local Historic Districts in Connecticut can only regulate the exterior appearance of properties that are visible from the street. Any changes to the interior of a building and any changes to the exterior that are not visible from the street are not regulated.

Local Historic District Commissions can control the color of a house.

False. Painting a house is routine maintenance and is not a regulated activity. If requested, a Historic District Commission might offer advice on historically accurate paint schemes.

Local Historic District Commissions can prohibit the installation of hand-capped access ramps or fire escapes.

False. Historic District Commissions cannot prohibit the permitted installation of features required to protect public safety.

While there are certainly additional historic resources in East Hampton worthy of pursuing for either state or federal recognition, there are also historic resources of local significance that could be placed together with the state and nationally designated sites into local register of historic places. This would again be simply honorary in nature but the program could include placards to identify the age and/or original owner of the structure.

Local Historic Districts

Local historic districts are another effective means of protecting the integrity of historic resources. Local historic districts are established by a two-thirds vote of the property owners within the proposed districts and regulated by a Historic District Commission, whose membership is typically drawn from within the districts themselves. Once appointed by the Town Council, the Commission(s) can then adopt and administer ordinances requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness for certain exterior improvements as well as the demolition of historic structures within their district.

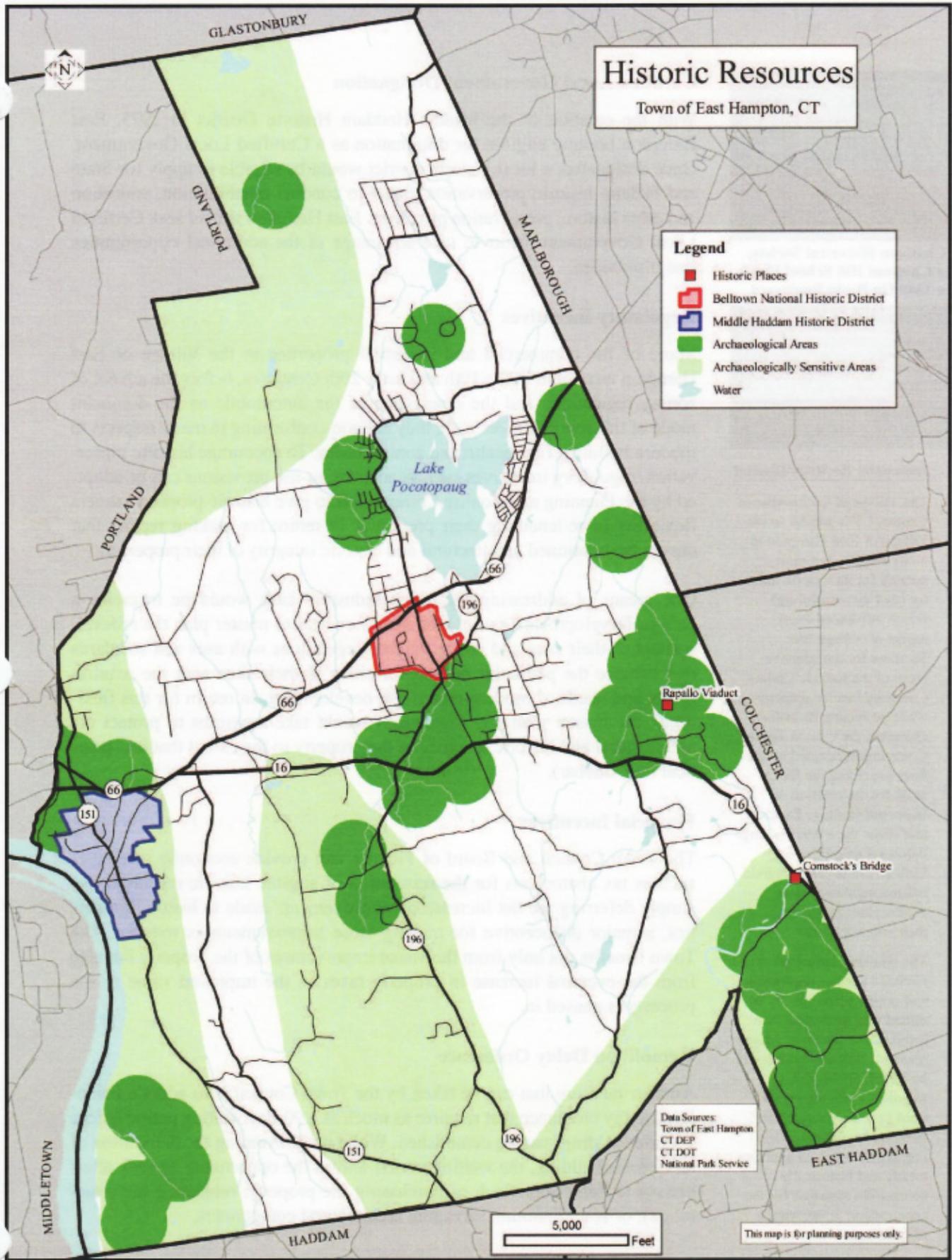
East Hampton already has one local historic district: the Middle Haddam Historic District (MHHD), created in 1975. Formerly a center for shipbuilding, the area encompassed by the MHHD contains over 100 structures from the Colonial, Federal, pre-Civil War and Victorian periods as well as more modern homes. East Hampton should continue to support the efforts of the Middle Haddam Historic District Commission to preserve the historic integrity within the district.

The Village of East Hampton could also benefit from the added protection of a local historic district but the timing and nature of the district would have to be mindful of the flexibility needed to adaptively reuse many of the historic industrial buildings in the Village. These buildings could be initially excluded from such a district and addressed through other means outlined below.

While the scope of regulations may vary from district to district, the intent should be to ensure that repairs and improvements do not harm the architectural character of historic properties or the surrounding district. For example, Middle Haddam warrants regulations that attempt to keep the architectural integrity of existing structures and the village intact while a Belltown Historic District might need more flexible regulations that recognize the difficulties of adapting functionally obsolete industrial buildings to modern-day mixed-uses.

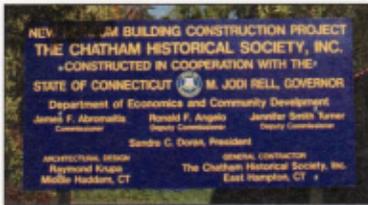
Preservation-minded property owners within local historic districts often appreciate the assurance that their investment in rehabilitating and maintaining their properties is protected by the continued historic and architectural integrity of neighboring properties. However, a concerted effort will likely be needed to educate property owners about the benefits of membership in a local historic district and to dispel myths and misinformation about how historic districts are regulated (see sidebar).







**The Chatham Historical Society,
and the Chestnut Hill School House
Circa 1840 On Bevin Boulevard**



Industrial Heritage District

The Village of Collinsville in Canton, CT is similar to the Village of East Hampton in many respects but most notably for its historic industry (tool manufacturing) which influenced every aspect of village life.

To allow for the adaptive reuse of the historic Collins Company factory property while protecting its historic character, the Canton Zoning Commission adopted regulations providing the framework for the creation of Industrial Heritage Districts that allow the owners of large industrial properties in Collinsville to create individualized regulations and master plans to govern their redevelopment.

The resulting Industrial Heritage District regulations and master plans specify permitted uses as well as their location and intensity. Master plans identify all buildings to be added, pre-served, or removed while the regulations provide standards for parking, landscaping, lighting, signs, and even architecturally and historically compatible materials for the construction or renovation of buildings.

Certified Local Government Designation

With the creation of the Middle Haddam Historic District in 1975, East Hampton became eligible for designation as a Certified Local Government. Once designated, a local historic district would be eligible to apply for State and Federal historic preservation grants to conduct rehabilitation, education and other historic preservation programs. East Hampton should seek Certified Local Government status to take advantage of the additional opportunities that it provides.

Regulatory Incentives

Many of the commercial and industrial properties in the Village of East Hampton were built in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, before the advent of zoning regulations and the emergence of the automobile as the dominant mode of transportation. As such, they are non-conforming in many respects to modern building, fire, health and zoning codes. To encourage historic preservation, regulatory incentives such as adaptive re-use provisions can be adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission to give historic property owners flexibility in re-tenanting their properties in return for making repairs that ensure the continued architectural and historic integrity of their properties.

One means of addressing the larger industrial sites would be to create a Design Development District that allows owners to master plan the redevelopment of their sites and create tailored regulations with uses and standards that balance the particular non-conformities of their sites with the requirements and needs of modern mixed-use development. In return for this flexibility, the master plan and regulations would take measures to protect the architectural and historic integrity of the property to the extent that it is practical (see sidebar).

Financial Incentives

The Town Council and Board of Finance can provide economic incentives such as tax abatements for the restoration of eligible historic resources. By simply deferring the tax increase on improvements made to historic properties, a major disincentive for making those improvements is reduced. The Town benefits not only from the visual improvement of the property but also from the eventual increase in property taxes as the improved value of the property is phased in.

Demolition Delay Ordinance

Another measure that can be taken by the Town Council is to adopt a demolition delay ordinance that requires as much as a 90-day waiting period before historic buildings can be demolished. While not preventing the demolition of an historic building, the waiting period allows the opportunity to seek alternatives to demolition such as purchasing the property, relocating the structure(s), or at a minimum, salvaging architectural components.



Education and Tourism Programs

The Chatham Historical Society should continue to expand upon their efforts to educate the public about East Hampton's history and the benefits of historic preservation, becoming a clearinghouse of information for residents interested in understanding and preserving the history of their homes. The Historical Society should continue to encourage house tours and other historic tourism initiatives as an element of East Hampton's overall economic development strategy.

Preserve Archeological Resources

East Hampton has a rich history and archeological resources are an important aspect of the Town's cultural heritage, which should be protected

To date the Office of State Archeology (OSA) has recorded 51 archeological sites (Resource page R-25), including Native American camps, villages, and burial sites dating from over 11,000 years ago, as well as more recent colonial farms and industrial ruins. Of particular concern are the Middle Haddam Historic District, Salmon River, Pine Brook, Flat Brook, Connecticut River, and the Town Center.

At present, subdivision applications require an inspection for historical sites, but are not specific in terms of guidance. The Zoning Regulations do not address archeological review for Site Plans or Special Permits. If archaeological requirements are developed, they should be careful not to become a major financial or logistical burden for developers and property owners and discourage desirable development.

Historic Preservation Strategies

1. Encourage "sensitive stewardship" or pride in ownership as the most effective means of preserving historic resources.
2. Continue to identify and recognize important historical resources through national and state recognition programs.
3. Complete a townwide historic resources survey.
4. Consider establishing a local register of historic places.
5. Pursue Certified Local Government designation.
6. Provide economic incentives such as tax abatements for restoration of historic resources.
7. Adopt regulatory incentives (such as historic overlay and/or adaptive re-use provisions in the Zoning Regulations).
8. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance that requires as much as a 90-day waiting period before historic buildings can be demolished.
9. Continue to provide educational programs and technical assistance about historic preservation to historic property owners.
10. Consider modifying the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to clarify and strengthen archaeological and historic resource requirements.

Archaeological Agencies

The State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) Staff Archeologist reviews all federal and State funded projects for impacts to archeological resources.

The State Archeologist of the Office of State Archaeology (OSA) provides technical assistance in the preservation of archeological resources to municipalities in their planning and zoning capacity for projects that do not require compliance with federal or state preservation legislation



The Rapallo Viaduct in East Hampton spans Flat Brook on the Airline Railroad. Named for a director of the railroad, it is 1,380 feet long and 60 feet high. It was built out of iron in 1873, and later filled in when trains became heavier.

Scenic resources contribute to community character and quality of life.



Preserve Scenic Resources

East Hampton's natural and man-made scenic character plays a significant role in the overall character of the community. From its picturesque villages to its scenic vistas, East Hampton's scenic character makes the town attractive to residents, tourists, and outdoor enthusiasts alike. Like natural and historic resources, if not adequately protected, scenic resources can be degraded or even lost.

Protect Scenic Areas and Vistas

Scenic resources can be grouped into two main categories: vistas that offer distant scenic views and scenic areas that may offer scenic views from within as well as from afar.

Lake Pocotopaug offers numerous scenic vistas and there are expansive views of the Connecticut River as well.

Other scenic areas include East Hampton Village Center, Middle Haddam and East Hampton's abundant state park, forest and wildlife preserve land which derive their scenic character from a combination of natural and historic elements.

The Town should form or designate a committee to conduct a thorough inventory of scenic resources to allow the Town boards and commissions, such as the Planning and Zoning Commission can take steps to protect them.

Preserve Undeveloped Land As Long As Possible

While not protected from development, undeveloped land contributes to the overall character and quality of life in East Hampton. Such land should be pre-served for as long as possible.

Public Act 490 can be an effective tool in reducing the cost of owning undeveloped land. This program allows the Town to reduce property taxes on farmland, forest and open space in return for not developing the land for a ten-year period. If the land is developed during the ten-year period, a recapture provision allows the Town to recoup a prorated share of the taxes that would have otherwise been paid without the tax reduction.

East Hampton should investigate whether it is one of a select number of Connecticut towns authorized to regulate forestry practices. Once the Department of Environmental Protection adopts model regulations, authorized towns will be able to use its Forest Practice Ordinance designed to mitigate the impacts of commercial logging through a strict regulatory process administered by the local conservation commission or other agency.

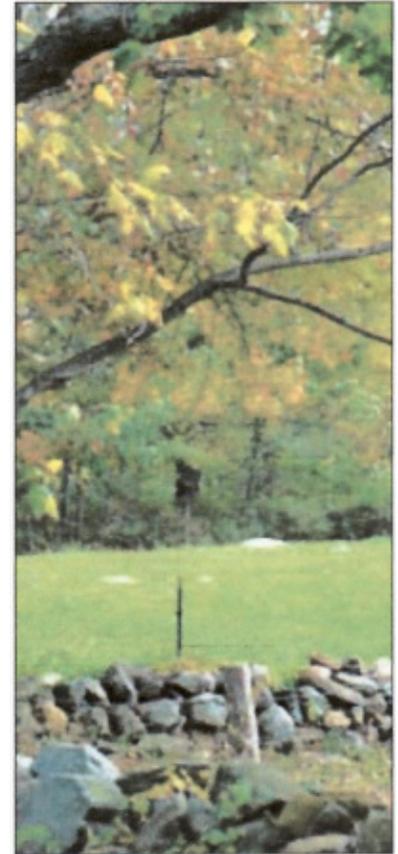
Protect Scenic Roads

East Hampton has many roads throughout town that are scenic in character due to natural and historic features located along them as well as the rural character of the roadways themselves (i.e. narrow, winding, tree lined, etc.). Several scenic roads are illustrated on the Transportation Plan (page 5-9).

A scenic road ordinance offers a degree of protection by limiting road improvements that might alter a road's scenic character. Unfortunately, many of the elements that make a road scenic such as stone walls, significant trees, rustic barns, and scenic meadows often lie outside of the road right-of way, beyond the reach of state and local scenic road regulations, requiring a second level of protection.

As development threatens the character of these roads, consideration should be given to protecting scenic elements through conservation easements, open space acquisition, or other means to limit the disturbance of stone walls, street trees, and other scenic features, while pushing development away from roads. Consideration should be given to providing design flexibility in the Subdivision and Zoning Regulations to allow for thoughtful subdivision designs that do not penalize a developer for preserving historic or scenic resources.

Utility maintenance is also a threat to scenic roads. Utility companies and their contractors often disfigure street trees for the sake of electrical or telephone reliability. While an important duty, such maintenance does not always have to be so destructive to scenic character. The Town's designated Tree Warden can intervene and should work cooperatively with the utility companies to limit pruning to the extent necessary to maintain service reliability.



Scenic Areas and Vistas in East Hampton Need Protection

Scenic Resource Protection Strategies

1. Inventory scenic resources and establish policies and regulations to protect them.
2. As scenic roadsides are developed, preserve scenic elements through conservation easements or open space set-asides.
3. Take full advantage of all three PA 490 programs to delay development of land for as long as possible.
4. Work with utility companies to preserve scenic streetscapes.



Utility Lines Through a Prominent Tree



A Hole Cleared Through Street Trees

