Connecticut
Department of Energy &
Environmental Protection

Field Visit to the former Country Club property of the Town of Woodbridge off Woodfield Road
Post Visit Report
DEEP Forestry Division, Service Forestry, Private and Municipal Lands Program

Present Parties: Mr. Ben Carlson, Woodbridge Conservation Commission; David Irvin, DEEP Central District Service Forester; Tanner Steeves, DEEP Wildlife Biologist, on 6/28/2024 from 10am-12:30pm.

Stewardship Objectives

1. Improve forest health in the small forested areas
2. Manage and retain rare early successional habitats
3. Address invasives
4. Provide for responsible public recreation
5. Prepare shrublands and forest for more climate change resilience

Section of field at the Woodbridge Country Club property, showing grasses and milkweed.

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

The Town of Woodbridge owns and manages this property on Woodfield Road. The contiguous parcel is approximately 140 acres. The land was once a farm of historic figure Roger Sherman, who was a Founding Father and the only person to sign all four original state papers of the U.S. (Continental Association, Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and Articles of Confederation). The property is more widely known as a former Country Club that was purchased by the town in 2009. Approximately 7-8 years ago, the town quit mowing the golf course greens and these areas are now occupied by a mix of shrubland, grassland, and young forest as natural succession begins.

This property is surrounded by residential development on most sides and the Wilbur Cross Parkway to the East, and is sandwiched between Woodfield Road, Ansonia Road, and Johnson Road. It geographically occurs in the southeast edge of the town, near the New Haven town line. Maps of this open space are included with this report.

Despite nearby development, this area maintains a rural character and hosts some "Core Forest" areas, including a small one in the strip of forest along the eastern boundary. Other Small Core Forest (< 250 acres) areas occur in the vicinity and a Medium Core Forest (250-500 acres) is just to the southeast across the Wilbur Cross Parkway. These are reflected on the attached "Greenways/Core Forest Map". Core forests are tracts of unbroken forest that provide a more stable and useful home for plant and animal species, thereby protecting biodiversity. They are priority forest stewardship areas in Connecticut.

There is an officially designated Greenway that passes through the eastern portion of this property, which includes some of the former golf course and most of the stretch of forest along the northeastern edge. This is labeled the West River Watershed Greenway, which was designated in 2015 while the town owned the property. According to the DEEP website: *Nominated by the West River Watershed Coalition (WRWC) and endorsed by the Towns of Bethany, Hamden, New Haven, West Haven and Woodbridge in addition to the South Central Regional Water Authority and Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority. With this designation, the entire watershed of the West River is now an official CT Greenway. This greenway encourages the protection of natural resources and promotes sustainable recreational uses in the corridor. The WRWC can be contacted for more information at* ***westriverwatershedcoalition@gmail.com*** *203-500-7777.* For more information on the Greenway program in Connecticut, please see this link for our DEEP website: Official Connecticut Greenways

The CT DEEP Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) does **not** have occurrences of state-listed species of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern status on this property. The majority of the property is classified as either Prime Farmland Soil or a Statewide Important Farmland Soil, which are great to preserve for continued farming or forest rather than developing. The area is part of the Regional Basin known as the South Central Western Complex, and is ultimately part of the broader South Central Coast Drainage Basin.

Tree Cover

Forest on this property is very limited at present, but an abundance of advance regeneration is scattered across the grounds, and is sometimes present in adequate density for a regenerating a future forest. Regeneration observed included sugar maple, red maple, black oak, hickories, beech, sumac, sassafras, scarlet oak, white oak, pin oak, black cherry, pin cherry, gray birch, northern red oak, and swamp white oak. These are in the seedling and sapling size classes. What happens with this advance regeneration depends on future decisions on where to grow forest and where to maintain a more ephemeral shrubland habitat. Abandoned golf course greens have become a conglomerate of nonnative shrub and vine species, berry canes, native and nonnative grasses, herbaceous plant species, and forest regeneration.

No pole-sized (medium trees, about 6-10" diameter) trees were noteworthy throughout the property in all types of vegetation, with the exception of a portion of the northeastern hardwood stand. Older sawtimber (12" diameter and up) trees occur primarily in hedgerows frequently dominated by white pine, and the only areas of native hardwood sawtimber forest are along the northeastern border, with another strip along the south boundary.

The largest area of hardwoods is the 15-acre area in the northeast corner where the West River Watershed Greenway passes through. Tree species observed of sawtimber sizes were mostly black oak, white oak, and hickory. That area of forest had a secondary pole size class of sugar maple that is worth retaining and releasing in the case of active forest management. Other than some younger sugar maple, there was no real midstory of medium-sized trees.

Across the former Country Club grounds, there are remnants of nonnative trees that were planted, such as Japanese maple and the Crimson King variety of Norway Maple. Patches of very large and old examples of oak and hickory occur in the southern portion of the property east of the pond, which are interesting trees and large nut producers for wildlife, and could be retained. Dogwood also occurred near the pond.

Understory/Ground Cover

Most understory and ground cover in forested areas are invasive plants. In the hardwood forested acres in the northeastern area of the Country Club property, understory is predominantly winged euonymous, Virginia creeper, and sugar maple. The understories in the forest are too lacking in plant density to provide an abundance of wildlife cover and native foraging opportunities. The sawtimber overstory with a scattered midstory of pole-sized trees and little understory and ground cover means this forest is lacking in vertical complexity and diversity, and is not currently providing adequately for a forest replacement following mortality of the current canopy.

Invasives also dominate forest edges and the shrub areas of the abandoned golf course. Invasive species noted on the property were multiflora rose, tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus*), Asiatic bittersweet, autumn olive, winged euonymous (burning bush), mugwort, Japanese knotweed, wineberry, Norway maple, privet, and black locust. Rose and bittersweet were most prominent in both the fields and forest. The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group at the University of Connecticut is a great resource for the identification and control of invasive plants, and you are encouraged to visit their website: Home | Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (uconn.edu) . Here is also a resource regarding control of some of the more

common invasives we see in the state: Invasives_guide_2020_web.pdf

Here is a document that shows some of the most commonly known companies that provide local invasive plant control services, for private and commercial landowners. DEEP Forestry has used most of these businesses for such purpose on state forest and wildlife management area property: Invasives Vendor Contact Information revised 12-7-22.pdf

It may be worth considering contacting the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) and inquire about biocontrols for invasive plants that would reduce use of chemicals on the site. Dr. Carole Cheah would be a great point of contact to start, as she has done extensive work on biocontrols for hemlock woolly adelgid and mile-a-minute vine: Carole A Cheah (ct.gov)

Additionally, spread of many invasives can be reduced if mowing of them does not occur. This is particularly true for mugwort and Japanese knotweed. These plants should never be mowed unless combined with a larger control effort such as chemical control along with a mowing plan. Likewise, it may be beneficial to decommission some trails, as trail use also spreads invasives.

It is also noteworthy that a number of beneficial native grasses, vines, shrubs, and herbaceous species were found in the shrublands of the abandoned gold course. This included goldenrod, dogbane, pokeweed, grapevine, raspberry, and while native grasses were not predominant in the grassy areas, switchgrass and Indian grass was noted (Most grasses found are not native warm season grasses, but are introduced cool season species. Establishment of native grasses on a portion of the property would require a concerted effort to plant and maintain them.) Creeping thistle was found, which is an introduced plant. Milkweed was common and widespread in the areas dominated by grasses more than shrubs. Milkweed is very good for pollinators, and essential for migratory monarch butterflies, which are facing increasingly alarming threats along their range.

The following information is provided for any future interest in supplementing natural vegetation with native tree or shrub planting stock:
Native tree and shrub availability list.pdf –this is an excellent publication with many links to other useful links within.
Tree Nurseries.pdf
cttreeownersmanualpdf.pdf

Invasive tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus*) near the abandoned buildings.

Forest Health

Invasive plants are probably the most apparent and widespread threat to forest and habitat health at this town property. Both in the fields and in the forested acres surrounding them, invasives directly threaten the establishment and growth of native trees and shrubs, and must be addressed before native forest and habitats can be adequately restored and managed. The mortality of ash from emerald ash borer attack has already shown in isolated areas that as trees die (Emerald Ash Borer EAB (ct.gov), invasives thrive in the sudden increase of sunlight to the forest floor and desired native forest regeneration is not allowed to establish and survive. Over time, this pattern will continue, and the remaining overstory of trees will eventually be replaced by a shrub level canopy of invasives. Some mature trees are also being killed by bittersweet vines, which can both girdle and shade out trees in their aggressive climbs up anything standing. The fields are the same-- native herbaceous and shrub species and forest regeneration that are ideal for early successional habitats are fighting invasive plants for space.

Healthy native tree regeneration and plants, including redcedar, oak, sugar maple, and Virginia creeper, being aggressively overtaken by invasive Asiatic bittersweet.

Part of Connecticut's issues with invasive plants are closely tied to deer browse pressure. Typically, deer consume the natives and leave invasives alone, thereby contributing directly to the dominance of nonnatives. Any native plantings made on the forested acres and field (as opposed to natural regeneration) should likely have deer protection for the first few years (trees and shrubs). This is because nursery stock tends to be sought by deer more, and planting takes time and money that you don't want to be a wasted effort. Here is an introduction to options for dealing with deer issues: Deer Nuisance Problems (ct.gov) , and a fact sheet about our white-tailed deer as a species: White-tailed Deer (ct.gov) . Hunting is a beneficial management tool for limiting damage by deer, and Woodbridge may want to consider hunting as a option to supplement invasive plant controls.

Note that some forestry programs intended to produce successful regeneration have experimented with using tops and unmerchantable debris to produce "slash walls" around the area being regenerated, that are impenetrable by deer. Nearby South Central Regional Water Authority has used this with evidence of success, and some consulting foresters are now familiar with the method and process. For information on this, you are encouraged to view this slide show: Slash walls.pdf

Beech leaf disease (BLD) has recently become widespread in all areas of Connecticut. It has infected all observed beech on this property (see the pest alert here: beech-leaf-disease-pest-alert.pdf). BLD is caused by a microscopic nematode from Asia

that has recently begun to spread throughout the state, and the long-term prognosis for infected beech trees is still unclear. There is no known effective treatment for beech in a forest setting. Some early BLD management thoughts are provided in this writing, but are not practical across a forest setting: beech-leaf-disease-management-options.pdf .

Nectria canker has infected some observed black birch, but this is not a major concern at the Country Club property at present.

Wildlife Habitat and Recommendations

Wildlife are already using the dense cover and food sources being provided by the field as succession turns the former grasses into a shrubland. During the June site walk, deer, a red fox, red-winged blackbirds, catbirds, and chimney swifts were observed. In this report, recommendations to make the field and forested areas healthier with native plants, shrubs and trees will also improve the native wildlife habitat. Early successional habitat, which is normally composed of young forest, shrubland, and grassland, is lacking across Connecticut and well below historic percentages of ground cover. Even before colonization there was typically 10-15% early successional habitat that were produced by natural means, such as hurricane and other wind events, fire, and beaver meadows. Today, this habitat is limited to only about 3%. The 2015 CT DEEP "Wildlife Action Plan" (Connecticut Wildlife Action Plan) identified over 50 wildlife species of "Greatest Conservation Need" that depend on young forest or shrubland. The recommendations for this property will guide the town toward focus on this most needed type of habitat in our state.

Dense young forest/shrubland habitat on the property.

Oak and hickory provide valuable hard mast food sources for a variety of wildlife. The hard mast availability is likely abundant most years, especially considering that there are multiple species of oak and hickory on different mast "schedules". White oak alone is heavily sought by wildlife, because the acorns do not have the bitter tannins of red oaks. White oak supports over 500 lepidoptera species (butterflies, moths) and are critical for heavy pollinator populations. Any white oak present are a logical supplement to any plantings established for "Pollinator Pathways". The town has already partnered with Pollinator Pathways.org. There are also many plants naturally occurring on the property that are excellent for pollinators and in staggered fashion through the growing season. The milkweed is fortunately common at the property and should be maintained. It can also be expanded by seeding. Pollinator Pathway (pollinator-pathway.org)

Shagbark hickory is a multi-valued tree for wildlife. Besides the nuts it produces, the "shaggy" shedding nature of the outer bark creates natural hiding spots used by tree-roosting bats during the day. These are valued more than ever due to the decline of bat populations from "white-nose syndrome". Bat species are increasingly considered for state and federal listings as "Endangered" or "Threatened". For more information on bats, their value and habitats, Bats Count (ct.gov) . If interested in what species of bats may use the habitats here, including listed species, it may be worth requesting a bat survey through the DEEP Wildlife Division, Wildlife Division Office Directory

Standing dead trees ("snags") and any size cavity trees provide important sources of forage and shelter, as does coarse woody material (CWM) on the ground. Snags and downed material provide food for decay insects that, in turn, feed wildlife that seek the insects. Snags should not be left directly adjacent to recognized and maintained trails. Cavities for nesting in naturally hollow trees are invaluable for many species of both birds and mammals, including owls and flying squirrels. CWM of all sizes should be left on the ground, although the public frequently complains that it "needs cleaning up". Wood debris should not be chipped and removed, nor should it be chipped and left on the premises, as this is very expensive work that provides no ecosystem value and chips can mulch the ground and prevent vegetation growth. For more information on mast, the value of snags, edge areas, and even how to create brush piles useful for small animal cover, please see the information provided at this DEEP website link: Wildlife Habitat Fact Sheets .

Here are some specific recommendations and thoughts that resulted from observations on the site visit:

- Maintain existing grassland and meadow habitat by the practice of conservation mowing-- periodic mowing (once every 1-3 years) conducted during the fall or winter months. Woody stems could also be controlled from herbicide spot-spraying. Areas of native shrub cover or where tree saplings form dense thickets could be allowed to grow, and re-evaluated every 5 years, and when deemed necessary, heavy duty mowing can be used to reset and perpetuate these habitats.

- Remove mesh netting from former driving ranges, as they pose ongoing hazards to wildlife.
- Save old sandtraps, as these areas are a special microhabitat. The soft earth provides a great place for easy digging by turtles seeking overwintering habitat. One sand trap hosted pitch pine saplings, which are an adaptable native species of pine and part of the "pitch pine sand plain", the most imperiled ecosystem in the state. While there is little chance that such a cover type can be established here, it is worthwhile to save pitch pine potential where it occurs, and the small sites may host some of the 11 listed species of insects associated with the pitch pine sand plain (see the pitch pine seedling from the Country Club at right)

- For early successional habitats, *bigger* tends to be better. There is already abundant development in the vicinity outside the Country Club property. Further development on the town land should be prevented, and if necessary, development would be best only at the very edge of the property and on pre-existing development footprints (i.e. where current abandoned buildings occur). Even limited edge development will create added human impacts that most people are not aware of, including disturbance and predation by dogs and cats. Outdoor cats alone are believed to be responsible for killing an estimated 2.4 billion birds annually across the U.S., according to the American Bird Conservancy. Even small developments covering a fraction of an area can have major survivability impacts on wildlife across the entire area.
- It is suggested, if early successional habitat is the major goal on this property, that most narrow hedgerows of trees be removed. This would improve the continuity of the habitat, increasing the likelihood of shrubland or grassland "obligate" bird species to use the area. Hedgerows serve little purpose in an early successional area like this, and can be detrimental to nesting birds and small

mammals or reptiles because they provide a refuge for predators and a launching point to attack animals and nests. Birds searching for large contiguous areas of brushy or grassy habitat will bypass areas with hedgerows that fragment and subdivide the area. Most of these hedgerows are predominantly poor quality white pine, open-grown and expressing past white pine weevil damage. The largest patch of conifers to the north, closest to Ansonia Road, can be left, as conifers do provide valued diversity for wildlife, but their retention is probably best in the largest patches and other strategic sites such as adjacent to the pond or as determined by a natural resource manager.

If early successional habitat is the primary goal in this area of field, the narrow hedgerow of trees (background) detract from a large, contiguous grassland or shrubland habitat, rather than add forest benefits.

- The pond should be maintained and is a valued and unique habitat source on this property.

- To reduce disturbance and access by the general public, eliminate redundant trails. Trails could be limited to a loop or to the old paved road system, allowing other areas to grow. It is understandable to have a trail to the pond, for example, but there probably do not need to be multiple routes to the pond from different directions.

Here is a link from the DEEP Website's Wildlife Division pages, on "Managing Grasslands, Shrublands, and Young Forest Habitats for Wildlife: A Guide for the Northeast": Managing Grasslands Shrublands and Young Forest Habitats for Wildlife A Guide for the Northeast (ct.gov)

Here is a publication that discusses the wildlife benefits of clearcutting, which is a management option that will be discussed in "Forest Vegetation Recommendations": The "Clear Cut" Advantage for Wildlife and Forest Health (ct.gov)
Also see the following brochure, with checklists that can be used in the Conservation Commission's own wildlife surveys. Just note that the referenced New England cottontail is not likely to be on this Woodbridge property: Wildlife in Your Young Forest.pdf

The Audubon Connecticut 2022 report on the property will be included as a supplemental attachment for this report, as it ties into the wildlife portion of this DEEP document.

Carbon and Climate Resilience

Climate change exacerbates stress from insect, disease, and weather extremes, and creates conditions favoring invasives. Any forest health concern that causes mortality impacts both carbon storage and carbon sequestration (the active removal of carbon from the atmosphere). This is not currently a climate-adapted forest and shrubland environment. A forest or other natural environment needs to be resilient in the face of the increasing challenges of climate change. Any recommendations in this report to develop a healthier and more resilient forest and shrubland will generally make a forest more adapted to climate change and also make a better contribution to mitigating it. Some information on forest carbon and climate change: Climate Change and Connecticut Forests . Here is a publication on the role of young forests and carbon:
Young forest and carbon.pdf

Here is an example, from the limited sawtimber forest at the Country Club property, of a woodland that is not climate resilient and healthy. The picture shows a dying ash, and beech of varying sizes suffering from beech leaf disease. There are invasive plants in the understory, and sugar maple regeneration, which is a desirable native species but not a resilient choice on this southwest slope in a future of hotter summers and more droughts.

Recreation

Recreation is a use desired by the town on the property. Presently there are mowed trails that traverse the dense vegetation of the fields. It is possible that trails can be streamlined and reduced concurrently with active vegetation management on the land. Trails do not have to be widespread and enter every area of the habitat. By reducing trails, or focusing on keeping trails closer to the edges of critical habitat work, the town will reduce disturbance to these habitats on the interior. It will also reduce the spread of invasives across as large of areas, as previously mentioned.

It is worth considering making the trail system interpretive regarding the pollinators, habitat work, and forest regeneration/resilience benefits that the town will be pursuing, and the management could demonstrate land stewardship and early successional habitat for the public in an area where seeing examples of this are uncommon. Additionally, it may be worth researching more on the history of the land with the help of the Woodbridge Historical Society regarding past uses prior to the Country Club. Specifically, the history with John Beecher and Roger Sherman should be of local pride and interest, and are another worthwhile interpretive consideration via signage or QR codes.

Hunting should be considered to help control deer browse damage, and provide for another form of recreation. Due to population densities nearby, it would likely have to be limited to archery hunting. Further limitation and control could be attained by requiring daily permits from the town. Consideration of hunting as an option might tie in directly to Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) objectives, as this area is likely underserved when it comes to hunting opportunities. Note that hunting should necessitate a thorough job of boundary marking for safety, and to prevent encroachments from abutters. This is mostly true along the south boundary and northeast corner, as most other areas are bound by roads. These boundaries should be maintained and marked. See a document at the end of this report regarding boundary maintenance.

The pond can be open to local fishing.

Forest Vegetation Recommendations

The joint Forestry and Wildlife Division site visit assessment of the old Woodbridge Country Club Property is that both the shrublands and surrounding forest have issues with health, structure, and stiff competition from invasive plants. The few areas of sawtimber forest do not have enough of a midstory or understory of native plants and regeneration. The extensive shrublands are not consistent across the acreage. It is broken up by areas of much less stem density or remnant grassland, which may not always be an issue. But the inconsistency of density and invasives make this potentially valuable habitat more marginal.

Invasive plant control will likely involve multiple entries over the same areas. Where the invasives are dense and dominate the site as shrubs and clumps, they could be mowed down first outside of bird nesting season (Aug. 1 or later), as a first step. As the invasives attempt to re-emerge, the much smaller

sprouts can be spot-sprayed with herbicide control by a licensed vendor. In the forested acres and areas where native plants, shrubs, and forest regeneration are still dominant, an invasive crew can attack the invasives more selectively with backpack sprayers. Individual vendors or resource manager consultants may suggest differing combinations of mechanical vs. chemical controls, but this is an early critical step in management anywhere on the property.

The field will likely be easier to manage as a native shrubland, but that could be debatable. Grassland establishment would entail killing of all woody stems from these acres and planting native warm season grasses, which would involve even more work. Shrublands are already established and at this point, killing the invasives from the area is the biggest challenge. The option also exists to make this area a more ephemeral habitat by letting it establish young forest that will mature, rather than continually mowing it back. Grasslands would require keeping it as grasses and mowing or removing not only invasives but any encroaching woody stems.

Note that the invasives in the shrubland habitat can be mowed and treated in blocks or sections, rather than in entirety all at once. This reduces the amount of cost that has to be invested at a time, spreading it out, and also provides the benefit of giving wildlife already using this area a place to go for refugia while another portion is being cut and treated. A consulting forester can subdivide the property in logical ways as part of management plan development and implementation. It must be determined if most of the area is going to be managed as permanent shrublands or as more ephemeral habitat in the form of young forest that will eventually grow out of that stage. In the latter case, management can be "rotationally", treating areas in the aforementioned blocks. In that way, there will always be new ephemeral habitat creation somewhere on the property, which will be replaced as the previous areas grow out of the size and density of young forests. A combination of the permanent and ephemeral habitats can also be considered, the latter being sought in areas with the most successful and dense natural regeneration establishment. Some of the property has diversity of dense native forest regeneration that would be enviable in other management programs!

Bittersweet vines that are climbing trees that will be retained should be cut. The best way to do that is to cut the vine in two places and remove 6" to 1-foot section to prevent possible reattachment. Bittersweet can kill trees by girdling them in its tight, spiral climb, and by overtopping and shading out even large trees.

The hardwood forest in the northeast could be lightly thinned following invasive control, in order to improve the health of this stand and to provide more sunlight to the forest floor for regeneration encouragement. Older black oak will be less favored than white oak and red oak, as black oak has a shorter life span and produces the poorest acorn crops. But thinning in the few forested areas of the property should not be first priority, and most focus is recommended to be early successional habitat and how to enhance it.

It is highly recommended as a first step for management of this open space as continued open space that the town of Woodbridge seek the help of a private professional forester who can write a long-term management plan that will outline steps for all activities on the property. If there is a plan in place, the town will position itself in a much better situation to qualify for any available grants and cost sharing opportunities that are available.

Here is a list of certified professional foresters in CT, updated recently: ForestPractitiCertificatExamAnnouncementReport

Here is another version of the list from the Connecticut Forest and Park Association website (CFPA), that you will likely find in a more user-friendly organizing and formatting. You can find foresters by name, county, or even services offered: CT Forestry Services Directory - Connecticut Forest and Park Association (ctwoodlands.org)

Ferrucci & Walicki LLC is a consulting forestry service based in nearby Middlefield: Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC - Home (fwforesters.com) . Connwood Foresters Inc. is another well-established forestry consulting firm that is also based in Middlefield. CONNWOOD.COM

The following are grant opportunities that you should consider:

- Visit CT DEEP's grants website, as the list of funding opportunities is updated as they become available. If eligible, Middlefield may have particular interest in the Land and Water Conservation Fund: Outdoor Recreation and Legacy Partnership Program (Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program (ct.gov)).
- Visit CT DEEP's Urban & Community Forestry Program's grants website, as the list of opportunities is updated as they become available. You can contact deep.ucf.grants@ct.gov with specific questions.
- If applicable, Middlefield Land Trust properties are eligible to apply for the Connecticut Land Conservation Council's Climate Smart Grant Program . It may be wise to engage your land trust and schedule a site visit for

one of their properties while this grant is active.

- Contact the Connecticut Botanical Society assess viability for their small grant program: Grants – Connecticut Botanical Society (ct-botanical-society.org)
- Engage the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG): Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments | Connecting Communities in the Lower Connecticut River Valley (rivercog.org). This should be a valuable resource to inform landscape-scale planning efforts – free consultant services may be available, grant opportunities may exist, and valuable information and services can be provided. Their grant list can be found: Grants List | Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (rivercog.org)

The DEEP website has many educational materials available on numerous aspects of managing for healthy forest resources: https://portal.ct.gov/deep/forestry/ct-forestry-division

Here is a valuable link to the Connecticut Forest Action Plan from 2020, which is a companion piece to the previously-referenced Wildlife Action Plan. Most recommendations and missions by the DEEP Forestry Division can be linked to this current statewide Forest Action Plan: CT Forest Action Plan

CONCLUSIONS

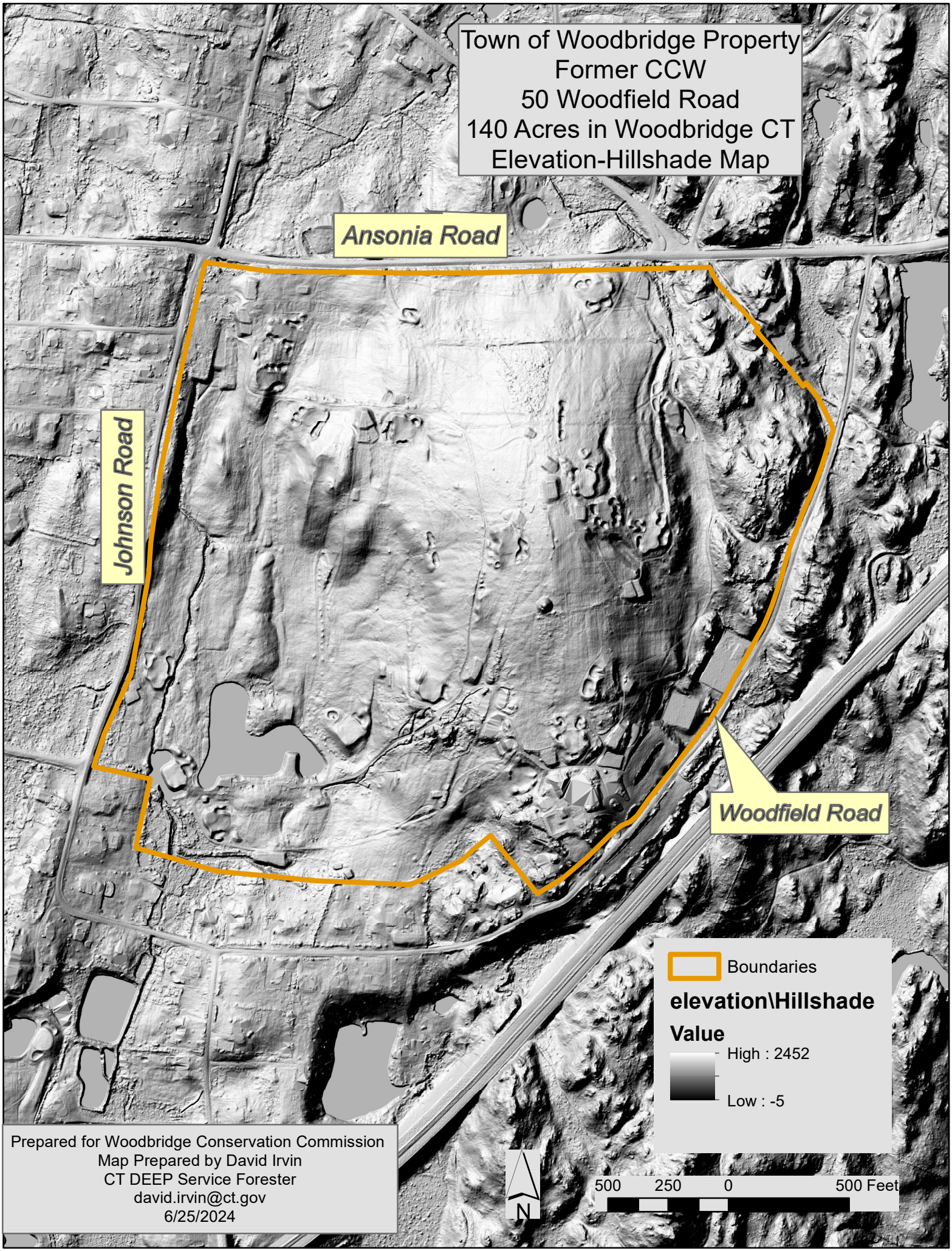
Here are some early possibilities for the Woodbridge Country Club:

- Contact a private consulting forester ASAP and get on their work schedule to write a stewardship plan for this property.
- Determine the desired mosaic of grassland vs. shrubland/young forest vs. older forest through the above planning and begin a schedule of mowing, cutting, planting and other treatments as appropriate.
- Research grant opportunities as listed in this report.
- Have property boundaries marked where relevant, with the above forester's help if needed.
- Remove/kill invasive plants on the property.
- Review benefits and considerations regarding hunting.
- Maintain trails in limited areas of the property and consider future interpretive opportunities for the public.
- Remove tree hedgerows, especially those only one or two trees in width.
- Remove any netting erected on the property during Country Club use.
- Consider requesting a bat survey by DEEP.
- Consider contacting CAES regarding invasive biocontrols.
- Protect microhabitats and unique places such as the old sandtraps and the pond.

Want to learn much more? Become a **Master Woodland Manager**! Annual application deadline for landowners and land trust members is July 15, so you have nearly a year to consider and apply for the next available round. More information: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/deep/forestry/mwm-flier.pdf .

Please feel free to share this report!


Town of Woodbridge Property
Former CCW
50 Woodfield Road
140 Acres in Woodbridge CT
Parcel Base Map
Ansonia Road
Johnson Road
Woodfield Road
Wilbur Cross Parkway
WOODBRIDGE
NEW HAVEN
Boundaries
Town Line
N
500 250 0 500 Feet
Prepared for Woodbridge Conservation Commission
Map Prepared by David Irvin
CT DEEP Service Forester
david.irvin@ct.gov
6/25/2024


Town of Woodbridge Property
Former CCW
50 Woodfield Road
140 Acres in Woodbridge CT
Elevation-Hillshade Map
Ansonia Road
Johnson Road
Woodfield Road
Boundaries
elevation\Hillshade Value
High : 2452
Low : -5
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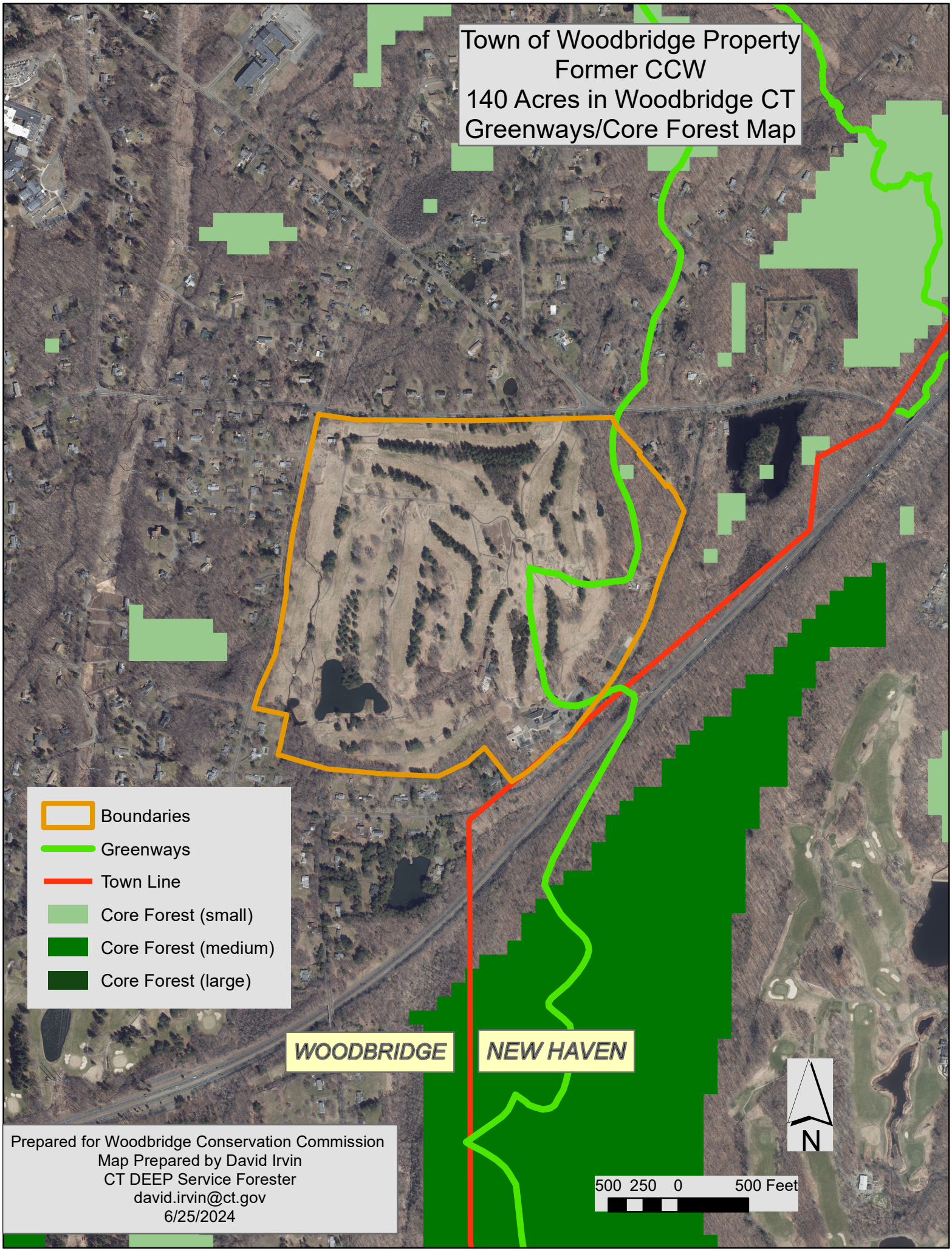
Town of Woodbridge Property
Former CCW
140 Acres in Woodbridge CT
Greenways/Core Forest Map
Boundaries
Greenways
Town Line
Core Forest (small)
Core Forest (medium)
Core Forest (large)
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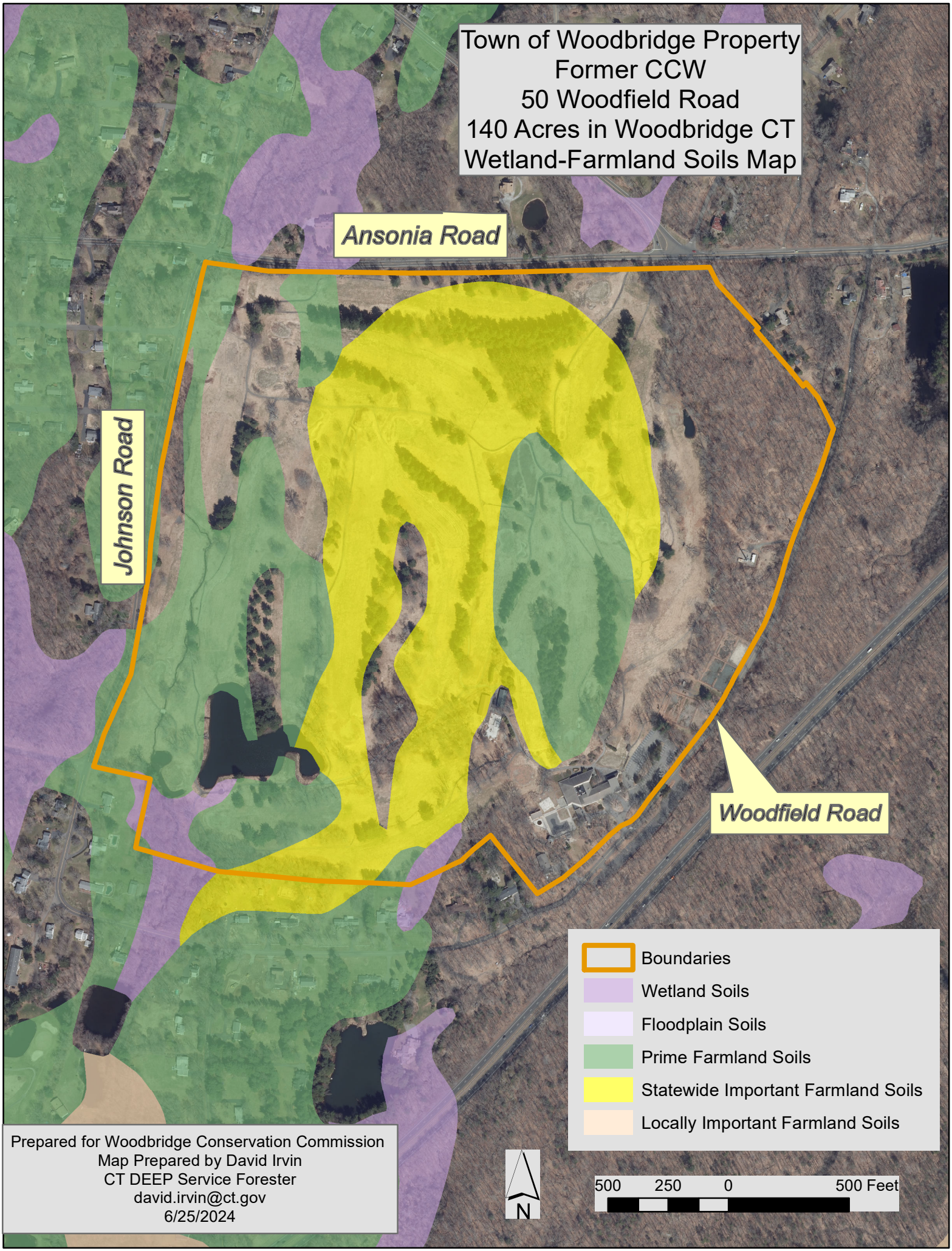
Town of Woodbridge Property
Former CCW
50 Woodfield Road
140 Acres in Woodbridge CT
Wetland-Farmland Soils Map
Ansonia Road
Johnson Road
Woodfield Road
Boundaries
Wetland Soils
Floodplain Soils
Prime Farmland Soils
Statewide Important Farmland Soils
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CT DEEP Service Forester
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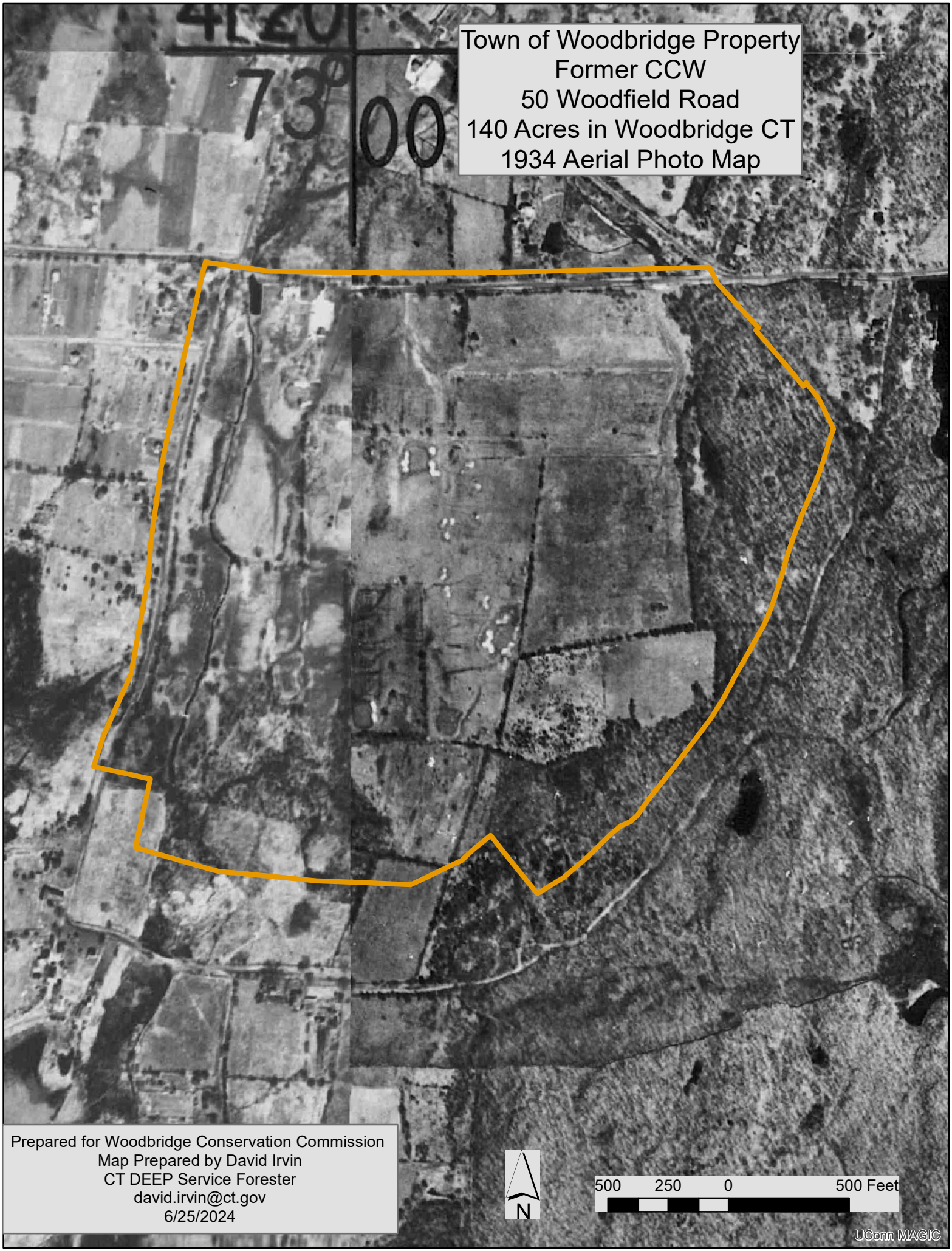
6/25/2024


Town of Woodbridge Property
Former CCW
50 Woodfield Road
140 Acres in Woodbridge CT
1934 Aerial Photo Map
Prepared for Woodbridge Conservation Commission
Map Prepared by David Irvin
CT DEEP Service Forester
david.irvin@ct.gov
6/25/2024
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