

Sprague Farm Town Forest Management Plan

March 26, 1990

Revised and Adopted November 10, 2015

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1.0 OVERVIEW

The property described herein consists of a 1,278 acre tract of land known as "Sprague Farm Town Forest". This property (hereinafter called the "site" or the "property") is owned in fee simple by the Town of Gloucester Land Trust, a public body having the authority to acquire, hold and manage open space and agricultural land within the Town of Gloucester. Funds for the purchases are made available from The Rhode Island Open Space and Recreational Bond Grants, open space bond proceeds, Real Estate Transfer Taxes from the Town of Gloucester, donations from The Nature Conservancy, and private landowners.

The site is comprised of 37 lots roughly bounded on the north by Putnam Pike (US Route 44), on the east by Pine Orchard Road, on the south by Chestnut Hill Road, and the west by the RI DEM Durfee Hill Management Area. Details pertaining to the site boundaries and location are provided in Appendix A (Property Map), Appendix B (Topographical Map), and Appendix C (Plat-Lot Acquisition List recorded in the town clerk's office that includes the book and page number for each lot).

The property is largely mature second-growth woodland. The lower elevation is largely wetlands, including a 24-acre cedar swamp, and a mixed evergreen/deciduous forest with several coexisting northern and southern species. The middle elevations include a large evergreen forest and a unique basin sedge fen. The upper elevations are primarily deciduous forest with substantial growth of Striped Maple, a species listed in the Rhode Island "List of Species Concern". The property is a diverse wildlife habitat that, among a wide variety of wildlife, supports the Black-throated Blue Warbler, a species that, until found on this property in 1989, was considered extirpated in Rhode Island.

The sheer size of this property with its unusual diversity of forest types and its number of small streams and ponds makes its preservation as open space most significant for present and future generations.

Historically this property was farmed by the Sprague family from the mid-18th Century to the mid-20th Century. To this day the property retains evidence of their presence in the form of numerous farmhouse and

farm building foundations and cellar holes, and a family cemetery. Several unimproved gravel farm roads dating to the 18th Century, such as the Haystack Hill Trail, Elbow Rock Road, Colonel Anthony Trail, and Sprague Trail cross the property. See Appendix D for a late 19th Century map showing farmstead sites on this property.

Beginning in 1990 with the purchase of 247 acres (see Appendix C), which was the last actively farmed parcel, to 50 acres in 2012, and with many additional purchases in the intervening years, the Gloucester Land Trust has acquired Sprague Farm land as it has become available. As land was acquired the Trust named various sections of Sprague Farm as Woodlands, often to recognize the cooperation of the preceding owner in land conservation. See Appendix E for a map of the named woodlands.

This document defines a formal management plan that is designed to ensure that the ecological and scenic value of this open space is preserved in perpetuity.

2.0 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

The Gloucester Land Trust (hereinafter called the Trust) is a municipal body organized in accordance with Rhode Island Public Laws, Chapter 87-548, with authority to acquire, hold, and manage real property situated in the Town of Gloucester. The responsibility for managing the Sprague Farm property will rest with the Gloucester Land Trust.

Specific management activities may be assigned by the Trust to one or more designated persons or organizations. The Trust shall also solicit the advisory assistance of various personnel or organizations with expertise in disciplines such as forestry, botany, wildlife management, soil science, etc.

3.0 PROPERTY USE

The property shall be used primarily for passive recreational and educational purposes. Passive recreation is defined as outdoor recreational activities, such as nature observation, hiking, and canoeing or kayaking, that require a minimum of facilities or development and that have minimal environmental impact on the recreational site. Access by the general public shall be allowed and encouraged during daylight hours. Evening access is not allowed unless authorized by the Trust. To avoid trail damage and erosion, no horses or bicycles are allowed during the mud season of mid-March to mid-April or the Trust deems it necessary due to the trails being muddy.

4.0 ACCESS

The site may be accessed from marked parking areas and trailheads on Pine Orchard Road, Putnam Pike, Joe Sweet Road, and Sprague Hill Road. (See Appendix F). The primary parking areas shall be on Pine Orchard Road (Sprague Trailhead) and Putnam Pike (Huckins Woodland).

Other than vehicles authorized by the Trust, such as, but not limited to, fire apparatus, police vehicles, and maintenance vehicles; no motorized or other vehicles are allowed anywhere on the site except for the trailhead parking areas. The Trust will establish the times during which the property will be open to public use, and may restrict access to certain areas of the property when necessary.

5.0 PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES The following activities are specifically prohibited:

- Swimming
- Camping*
- Fires*
- Littering
- Sound-broadcasting devices
- Collecting plants, or plant parts, unless authorized by the Gloucester Land Trust
- Soil-grading, excavating or removal (except for trail-restoration and maintenance, or public-safety considerations)
- Soil-paving or oiling
- Fabricating or placing of structures of any kind (unless authorized at a stated meeting by the Trust, such as but not limited to, the construction and maintenance of stone, wooden bridges on trails, portable toilets, trailhead kiosks, and sitting benches.)

*Camping or campfires may be permitted by the Trust for individuals or for supervised, organized groups.

6.0 MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

6.1 Police Surveillance

Police surveillance along public roads shall be provided by the Gloucester Police Department.

6.2 General Surveillance

General surveillance of the site shall be provided annually by a person or persons designated by the Trust.

General surveillance includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Inventory update of plant species, animal species, or other natural features
- Verification of the general health of plant and animal species
- Verification and reporting of fires
- Reporting damage or potential for damage to the property or its natural features
- Reporting violations of site regulations
- Identification and reporting of site-maintenance needs
- Identification of practices that would improve the management function
- Boundary walk for encroachment violations and to check boundary signs.

6.3 Scheduling of Activities

Organized activities at the site such as nature walks, botanical field studies, etc., shall be scheduled and/or permitted by the Trust or by a person designated by the Trust.

6.4 Fire Control and Regulation

All fires on the site shall be promptly extinguished using methods that will minimize overall damage to vegetation. Fire-control and regulation are the responsibility of state and local fire-protection authorities.

6.5 Maintenance

The property shall be maintained as open space. Management and maintenance practices will be designed to ensure the continued evolution of the site with emphasis on the protection and propagation of less common forest and wildlife species. Maintenance may include timber-harvesting subject to formal review by the Gloucester Land Trust of its ecological impact in accordance with the overall management plan. The existing

fields and pastures may be restored and maintained where appropriate, if in accordance with the overall management plan. Maintenance activities shall be funded through the operating budget of the Trust.

Specific maintenance activities are listed below:

6.5.1 Litter Removal

Litter is defined as material that does not naturally exist at the site, or that is not a historical artifact. Naturally occurring materials such as fallen trees, stones, leaves, etc. shall not be included in litter removal activities. Litter removal shall be the responsibility of the Trust and shall be conducted at least twice a year by one or more persons or agencies designated by the Trust.

6.5.2 Footpath and Trail Maintenance

In accordance with the policy and standards adopted by the Trust on March 10, 2015, footpaths and trails shall be maintained by persons or agencies designated and supervised by the Trust in a manner consistent with the scenic character of the site, while providing safe public access. (See Appendix G: Sprague Farm Trail Master Plan.)

6.5.3 Field Maintenance

Per guidance from the Northeast Upland Habitat Technical Committee Managing Grasslands, Shrublands, and Young Forests for Wildlife, except for approved footpaths, fields may be mowed to minimize impacts to wildlife during the nesting and brood rearing portion of the year. Controlled burns shall be conducted wherever possible every five years to control invasive plants and stimulate grass and forb production. Best management practices to control invasive plants is encouraged.

7.0 PUBLIC AWARENESS

7.1 Informational Leaflet

An informational leaflet shall be published and periodically updated by the Trust. Copies of the leaflet shall be available at the Town Hall, trailheads, the Trust website, and other locations designated by the Trust. The leaflet shall describe the various natural features of the site and shall include a map illustrating the location of footpaths and noteworthy natural features. A list of prohibited activities shall be posted at trailhead kiosks and on the Trust website.

7.2 Posting and Marking

Informational signs shall be posted at visible locations. These signs shall identify the site and acknowledge financial assistance provided by the State of Rhode Island for acquisition of the property. Public access shall also be acknowledged along with the hours that the site is open. Prohibited activities shall be listed.

The site-access point, boundaries, and footpaths shall be clearly marked. The method, design, and materials for all signs and markings shall be compatible with the natural character of the site, shall be approved by the Trust, and shall comply with Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management requirements.

8.0 SPECIES INVENTORY

A list of the general plant and animal species is provided in Appendix H (Species Inventory). A detailed inventory of plant and animal species is available from the Rhode Island Natural History Survey. The species inventory shall be continuously updated.

Various resources shall be utilized for evaluation of wildlife and wildlife habitat. This shall include evaluation of existing soils and vegetative maps available from State and Federal agencies.

The animal-species inventory may also be conducted concurrently with other management activities. If evidence of bird or mammal species of special concern is noted, an attempt shall be made to identify habitat, (e.g. nesting areas) that may require special protection.

The Trust may also solicit the assistance of specialists in plant and wildlife in this effort. This includes, but is not limited to, personnel from the University of Rhode Island's College of Natural Resources, naturalists, RIDEM foresters and wildlife specialists, representatives of the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program, The Rhode Island Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and The Rhode Island Wild Plant Society.

9.0 SPECIAL SPECIES-PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 Plant Species

A number of plant species that are sensitive to human influence exist at the site. These include, several exemplary specimens of *acer pensylvanicum* (Striped Maple), which is listed as a Rhode Island "Species of Concern". The location and design of footpaths shall be considered in the results of the species inventory (see Section 8.0) so that rare plant species may be observed but not endangered.

9.2 Wildlife Species

The location of footpaths and vista points, as well as general site management practices, shall be such that their effect on wildlife habitat shall be minimized. Human traffic in the vicinity of known or potential feeding and drinking areas shall be minimized. Forest management activities such as cutting or trimming shall require formal review by the Land Trust such that adverse effects on existing wildlife habitat are minimized. Specific forest-management activities may be required in order to enhance habitat for certain species.

Particular management emphasis shall be placed on protection and enhancement of habitat for the Black-throated Blue Warbler (see Section 1.0). This shall include continuous observation and evaluation of this species in regard to numbers, nesting habits, types and height of nesting plants, density of forestation etc. Advice and assistance from various resources shall be solicited in this regard; this includes, but is not limited to RIDEM, RI Audubon Society, National Fish and Wildlife Service, the Nature Conservancy and Cornell University Ornithological Laboratory.

10.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN SCHEDULE AND PERIODIC REVIEW

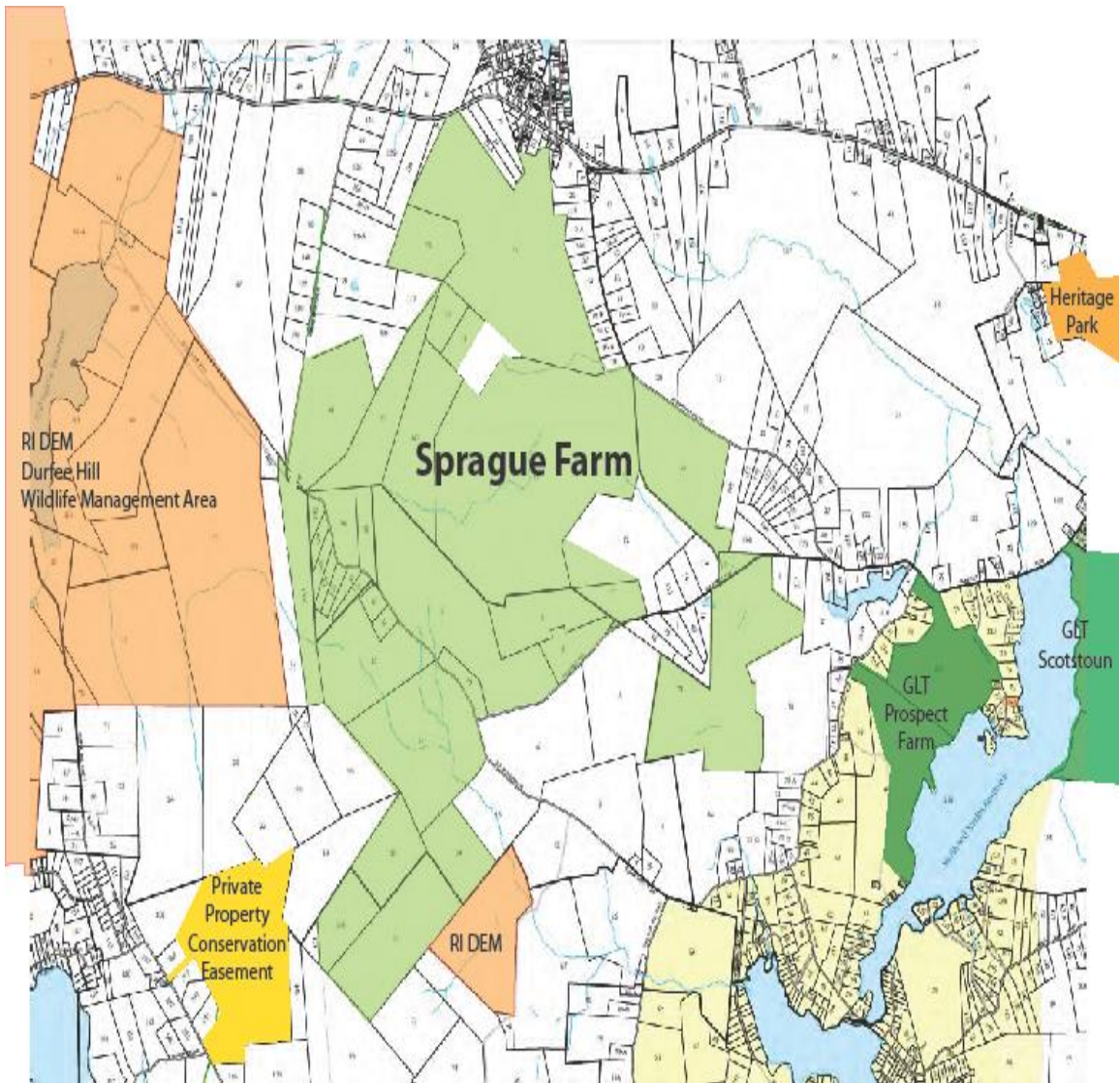
The Management Plan consists of a five-year program which includes informing the general public of the existence of the site, establishing a site-maintenance and surveillance routine, and completing the species inventory, footpaths, and marking/posting. Information pertaining to the site's biological status, management activities, and management plan schedule shall also be reported at regular meetings of the Trust. Reported items may or may not require resolution by the Trust.

At least once every calendar year, the Trust shall meet for a general review of the site's status. At minimum, the following shall be included in the annual review:

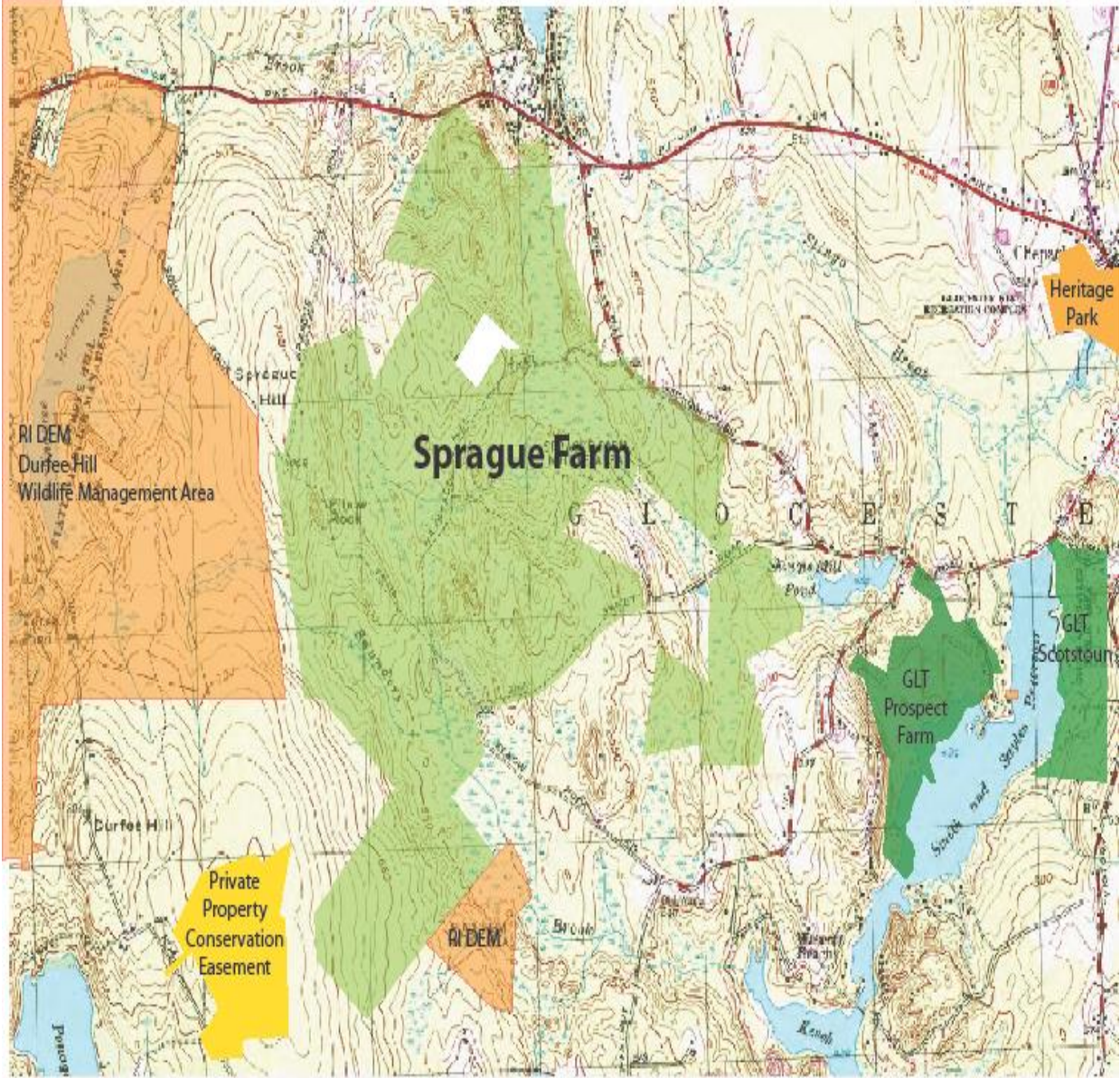
- Schedule update
- Review of personnel or agencies involved in active management functions
- Update of plant and animal species inventories
- General overview of the natural evolution of the site
- Identification of problem areas which may require changes in management methods

The Management Plan shall be modified no more frequently than once every five years

Revised and Adopted November 10, 2015



Appendix A - Sprague Farm Property Map



Appendix B - Sprague Farm Topographical Map

Sprague Farm Town Forest

Date acquired	Parcel Name	Easement	AP-Lot No.	Survey Hanging File-Map No.	Acres per Survey	Appraised (Assessed) Value	Non Cash Land Gift	Grants & Donations	Paid by GLT*
1990, 12-12	Sprague Farm	DEM	7-11	212 - 370A	186.4720	518,700	-	390,000	130,000
		DEM	10-32		60.8210				
1993, 11-29	Burton Woodland (A)	**	7-15	36 - 435c	3.9700	50,000	32,600	-	-
1997, 08-01	Burton Woodland (B)	**	11-78	200 - 410	107.8260	226,400	53,900	-	13,000
1997, 08-05	Huckins Woodland	**	7-20	297 - 502	161.9600	745,800	-	130,000	-
2001, 06-15	Chase Lots	TNC	7-126		3.5930				
		TNC	7-128		3.9700				
		TNC	7-129	230 - 513	3.0310	130,000	-	130,000	-
		TNC	7-130		2.9930				
		TNC	8-30		3.6310				
2001, 06-15	Bolwell	TNC	7-125	230 - 513	3.6640	30,000	-	30,000	636
2001, 06-15	McKeon	TNC	7-127	230 - 513	3.2980	30,000	-	30,000	636
2001, 06-26	Robitaille	TNC	8-35	230 - 513	3.0070	30,000	-	5,000	30,321
2001, 08-10	Coleman - Carlos	DEM	8-10		6.2300				
		DEM	8-11		94.1980				
		DEM	8-15		50.7380				
		DEM	8-15	296 - 501	2.0000	456,860	301,671	169,260	2,777
		DEM	7-92		19.5480				
		DEM	7-92 Gore		5.7600				
2001, 08-10	Desnoyers	DEM	8-9	296 - 501	115.5550	400,709	275,739	137,324	2,438
		DEM	7-147		48.1640				
2002, 08-29	Kilmartin	TNC	8-16A	202 - 544	33.4800				
		TNC	7-93	318 - 543	46.7000	258,726	98,726	-	173,718
		TNC	7-94	318 - 543	52.9100				
		TNC	7-98B						
2002, 11-26	Wilks, Gloria	TNC	7-96	321 - 561	14.1000	58,400	-	20,384	21,458
2002, 11-26	Wilks, Kevin	TNC	7-95	321 - 561	13.6000	48,100	-	21,166	22,248
2003, 04-15	Oiney		7-18	212 - 370A	8.7800	13,200	3,403	-	9,797
2004, 12-21	Keating, Dr. Wm (Andrea Klutz)	TNC	8-7	266 - 824	14.6900	105,000	165,600	1,085	-
2005, 11-29	Schlemmer	TNC	7-97	49 - 244	5.3147	50,000	-	25,000	26,418
2008, 10-3	Hammond, Donald	DEM	8-14	261 - 716	26.2500				
2008, 10-3	Hammond, Donald	DEM	8-18	261 - 716	25.8000				
2010, 8-26	Hope, Evelyn		9-71	282-763	60.8196				
2011, 10-28	Cook, Hope	TNC	9-118	48-278	25.6000				
2012, 1-2	Goodier-Lund	TNC	8-8	266 - 824	31.6800				
		TNC	7-13	266 - 824	17.9300				
		TNC	8-5A	266 - 824	0.1900				

Total
 Prepared April 8, 2012 & Aug 5, 2015
 1,278.273 Acres \$ 2,620,395 \$ 931,639 \$ 1,089,219 \$ 433,447
 \$ 339 cost per acre

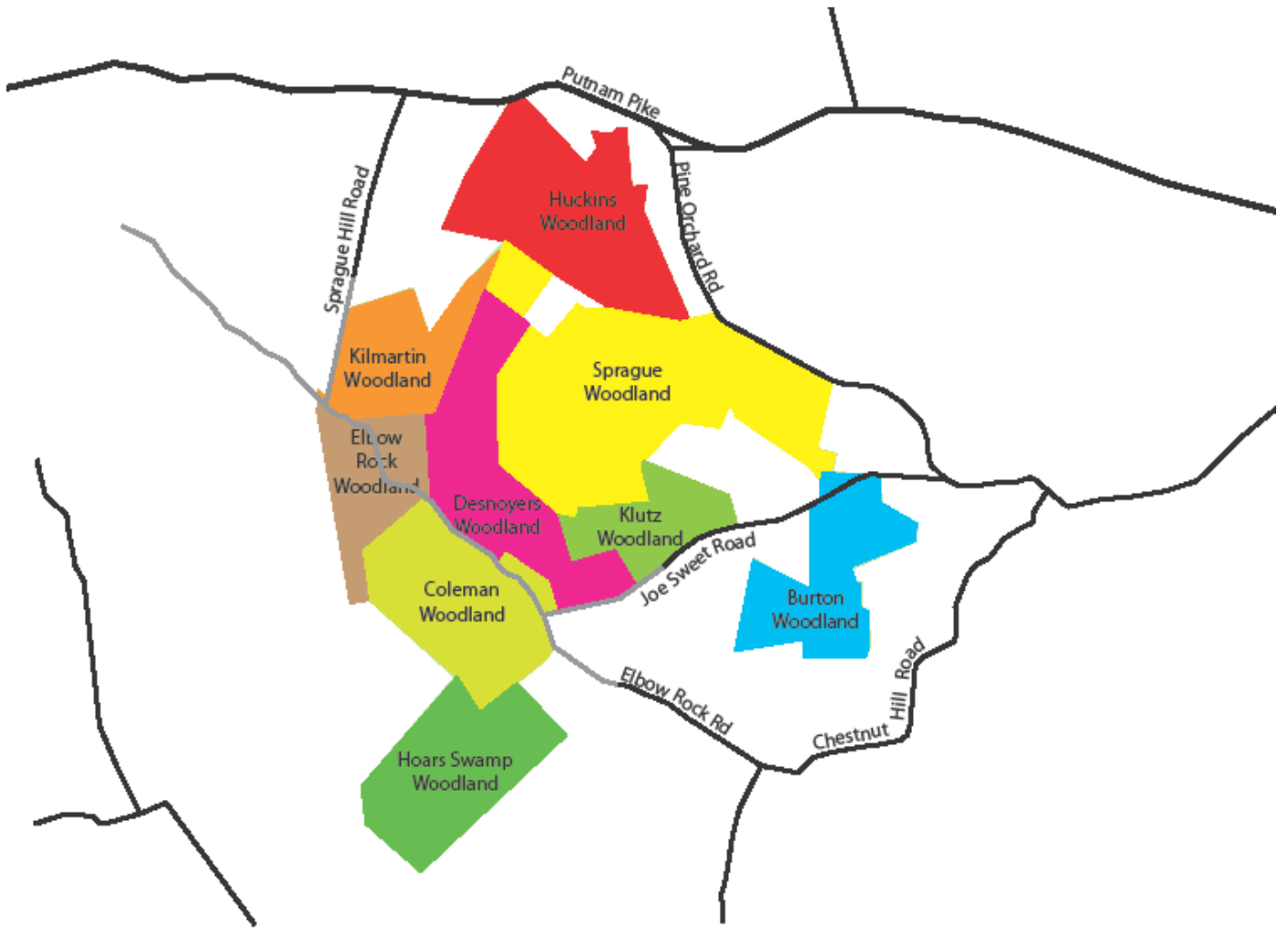
Note 1: A 2 acre unnumbered lot (HF49-Map 244 & HF267-Map 348A) identified in Chase lot survey, was added to AP 8 Lot 15 after the (HF 296-Map 501) survey of AP 8-Lot 15.
 Note 2: The surveyed acreage for 8-16A included the 1.18 acres of AP 7 Lot 98B.

* Paid by GLT includes survey cost, title search, insurance, appraisal fees, etc.
 ** Deed contains restrictions on use of property, generally that it be kept in a natural state.

Appendix C - Sprague Farm Acquisition List



Appendix D - Sprague Farm area c. 1875



Appendix E - Sprague Farm Woodland Map



Appendix F - Sprague Farm Parking Areas



Appendix G - Sprague Farm Trail Plan

Major Animal Species found during the 2009 BioBlitz at Sprague Farm

Birds:	Reptiles:
Wild Turkey	American Toad
Great Blue Heron	Northern Spring Peeper
Red-shouldered Hawk	Bullfrog
Broad-winged Hawk	Green Frog
Mourning Dove	Wood Frog
Eastern Screech-Owl	Spotted Salamander
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Northern Red-backed Salamander
Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Ringneck Snake
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Eastern Milk Snake
Eastern Phoebe	Smooth Green Snake
Great Crested Flycatcher	Northern Brown Snake
Eastern Kingbird	Eastern Garter Snake
Blue-headed Vireo	Spotted Turtle
Red-eyed Vireo	Eastern Box Turtle
Blue Jay	
American Crow	
Black-capped Chickadee	Mammals:
Tufted Titmouse	Woodland Jumping Mouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Meadow Jumping Mouse
White-breasted Nuthatch	Southern Red-backed Vole
Carolina Wren	Meadow Vole
House Wren	White-footed Mouse
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Eastern Gray Squirrel
Eastern Bluebird	Eastern Chipmunk
Veery	Red Squirrel
Wood Thrush	Coyote
American Robin	Common Raccoon
Gray Catbird	Fisher
American Pipit	Common Water Shrew
Cedar Waxwing	Bats
Ovenbird	Horse
Northern Waterthrush	White-tailed Deer
Blue-winged Warbler	
Black-and-white Warbler	Butterflies:
Nashville Warbler	Eastern Tiger Swallowtail
American Redstart	Cabbage White
Cerulean Warbler	Harvester
Yellow Warbler	American Copper
Chestnut-sided Warbler	Cherry Gall Azure
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Pearl Crescent
Pine Warbler	American Lady
Yellow-throated Warbler	Painted Lady
Prairie Warbler	Red Admiral
Black-throated Green Warbler	Red-spotted Purple
Canada Warbler	Appalachian Brown
Eastern Towhee	Little Wood Satyr
Chipping Sparrow	Inomate Ringlet
Song Sparrow	Juvenal's Duskywing
Scarlet Tanager	European Skipper
Northern Cardinal	Peck's Skipper
Brown-headed Cowbird	Tawny-edged Skipper
American Goldfinch	Long Dash

Appendix H - 2009 BioBlitz Species Inventory