

SURROUNDINGS

The Titicut Conservation Area is 33 acres large, located on the Taunton River in a residential neighborhood in southwestern Bridgewater; the site spans the Bridgewater/Reynham town line. Parking and access to this site are on Beech Street. There is a golf course adjacent to the Titicut site to the east and I-495 borders the site to the south. Ungated private property abuts Titicut to the southwest allowing unmonitored vehicular access to the property.

EXISTING NATURAL CONDITIONS

Titicut is a flat, shady site with steep banks along its approximately 2000 feet of river frontage on the Taunton River. The white pine forest on the Titicut site is typical of drier, sandy soils and a previously disturbed area due to clearing, farming, or fire. There is little understory in part because the site is so shady and in part because it has been cleared of shrubs. These clearings make for pleasant views through the woods to the river and other parts of the site but also encourage foot traffic throughout the site.

The surface water on the site comes from springs which feed several small brooks and one pond; all this water drains directly to the Taunton River. Fragile habitats border these sources of clean water and should not be disturbed. A 200 foot river protection buffer zone is mandated by the MA Rivers Protection Act; a 100 foot pond protection buffer zone is mandated by the MA Wetlands Protection Act.

Topography shows one wide, steep bank leading to the river's edge which could be used as a canoe pull-off with construction to ameliorate the effort of portaging a boat up the hill; there are no other access points to the water's edge.

ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS and MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Existing trails are wide and well-worn. To allow the forest to continue regenerating, the trails could be narrowed and defined using rocks and downed trees to limit excessive foot traffic off the path. Encouraging the shrub layer in the white pine woods will provide valuable cover for wildlife as well as limit visibility to places where foot traffic is discouraged.

Fire scars on several trees indicate that designated fire pits might help control where campers decide to build fires. Additionally, designated camping sites would help direct campers to less fragile areas which are already cleared, are far enough away from the river and other water sources, and are close to constructed fire pits.

Perhaps a more immediate threat to the ecological well-being of the Titicut site appears to be the misuse of the natural surroundings. A private road off of Pine Street at the southern tip of Titicut allows unmonitored vehicular access to the "back" of the site where vandalism, trash, and fire scars are noticeably more abundant than on other portions of the site. A gate to contain this activity, or better to disallow it all together, would be desirable to contribute to the safety of the those using Titicut.

Wildlife Habitat

Small mammals, deer, blue heron, turtles

Safety Consideration

Due to uncontrolled access through private property
Vandalism

PAST, CURRENT, and

FUTURE USE

For thousands of years before the Colonial Era, the Titicut Conservation Area was the site of a Wampanoag village which served as a crossroads for Native Americans on the Taunton River. Archeological digs in the 1940's and '50's unearthed artifacts dating from hundreds, even thousands, of years ago. In the early 1800's, Titicut was the site of a cargo ship building yard. In the 1950's, this site was used as a summer camp and later as a Boy Scout camp until it was purchased in the 1970's and put into conservation.

Today, Titicut is used for passive recreation such as hiking and mountain biking; tenting is allowed with special permit from the Conservation Commission. Except for maintenance and special events, vehicular access is restricted; consequently the old roads on site have become established wide walking trails through the woods. A parking area for 4 cars is provided on Beech Street; additional parking is available in an open field further into the parcel for special events.

The slope, drainage, and soil conditions on this site lend themselves well to continued use as a hiking and camping area. The trail system is well-established, winding through a regenerating white pine stand with little understory allowing for wonderful views of the Taunton River to the east. Future use as a canoe pull-off will require some construction along the only accessible bank of the Taunton River; this bank is not shallow enough to comfortably access the Taunton River with a canoe overhead, therefore stairs will be necessary to make this area usable as a pull-off.

SUMMARY

For thousands of years before the Colonial Era, the Titicut Conservation Area was the site of a Wampanoag village which served as a crossroads for Native Americans on the Taunton River. Today, Titicut is used for passive recreation such as hiking and mountain biking; tenting is allowed with special permit from the Conservation Commission.

The Titicut Conservation Area is a 33 acre site which was first acquired with a Self-Help Grant in 1976. It is a gently sloping, shady site with steep banks along its approximately 2000 feet of river frontage on the Taunton River. The slope, drainage, and soil conditions on this site lend themselves well to continued use as a hiking and camping area. The trail system is well-established, winding through a regenerating white pine stand with little understory allowing views of the Taunton River to the east. Future use as a canoe pull-off will require some construction along the only bank that leads to the water's edge of the Taunton River.

Existing trails were once roads and are wide and well-worn; narrowing these trails will help direct foot traffic thereby disturbing less of the site. Fire scars on several trees indicate that designated fire pits might help determine where campers decide to build fires. A private road off of Pine Street at the southern tip of Titicut allows unmonitored vehicular access to the "back" of the site and should be gated.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - TITICUT CONSERVATION AREA

BRIDGEWATER CONSERVATION SYSTEM

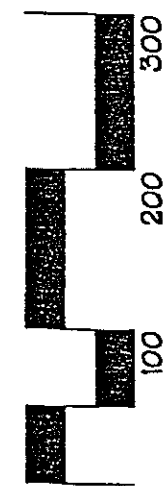
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june 1999

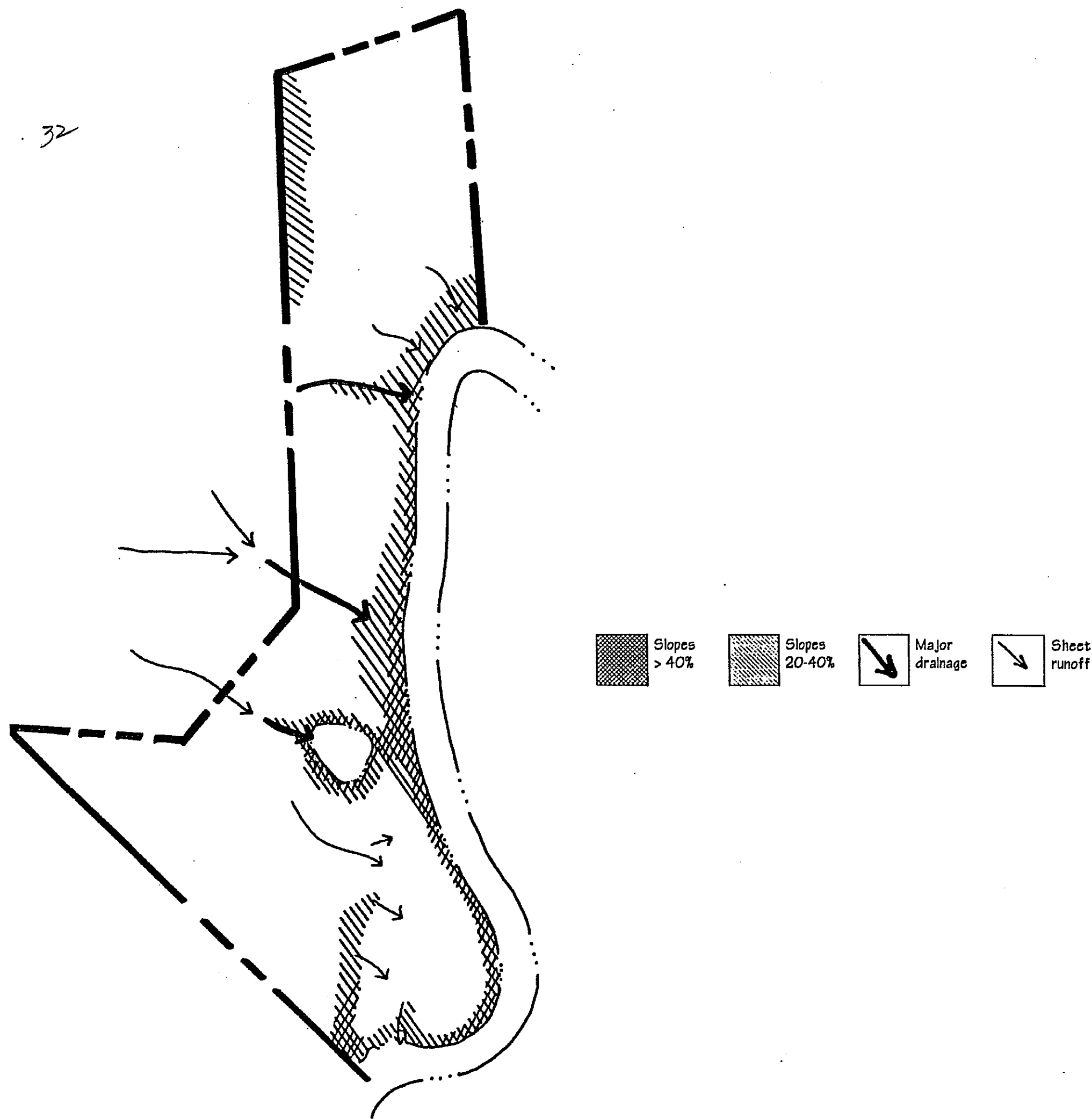
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feet in inches



SLOPE & DRAINAGE ANALYSIS



SLOPE CONSIDERATIONS

A majority of the Titicut site is flat and suitable for hiking and camping. The steep areas on this site are concentrated in the brooks and along the banks of the Taunton River. Most of the steep slopes along the river bank are over 40% and are not suitable for use.

DRAINAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Most water drains evenly into the Taunton River. Soils are highly permeable so standing water is not an issue on most of the site, however, water may collect in depressions along the river at the southern tip of the property where soils are susceptible to ponding. The three major drainage patterns on this site carry the water either by brook or ravine to the Taunton River, or into the pond which has a culvert to the Taunton. These major drainage areas should be left alone to prevent unnecessary erosion and to maintain movement of water off site.

RIVER BANK CONSIDERATIONS

The Windsor soil, which comprises the majority of the Taunton River bank at Titicut, is highly susceptible to erosion as a bank. Combined with the steep slopes along the river bank, this should serve as an alert to limit use of and access directly to the river banks on this site to prevent further degradation of the banks. These steep slopes are currently vegetated which contributes tremendously to stabilizing these banks; vegetation must remain intact to prevent severe erosion.

TRAIL CONSIDERATIONS

The soils on this site hold a shallow slope suitable for trails except along the steep river banks, however, the Windsor and Merrimac soils are most suitable for trails because they are dry and stable when not on a slope. These soils can be droughty and vegetation can have a difficult time getting established. For this reason, existing vegetation should be allowed to flourish when doing trail maintenance. The Scarborough and Saco soils in the southern portion of the site should be avoided due to surface water.

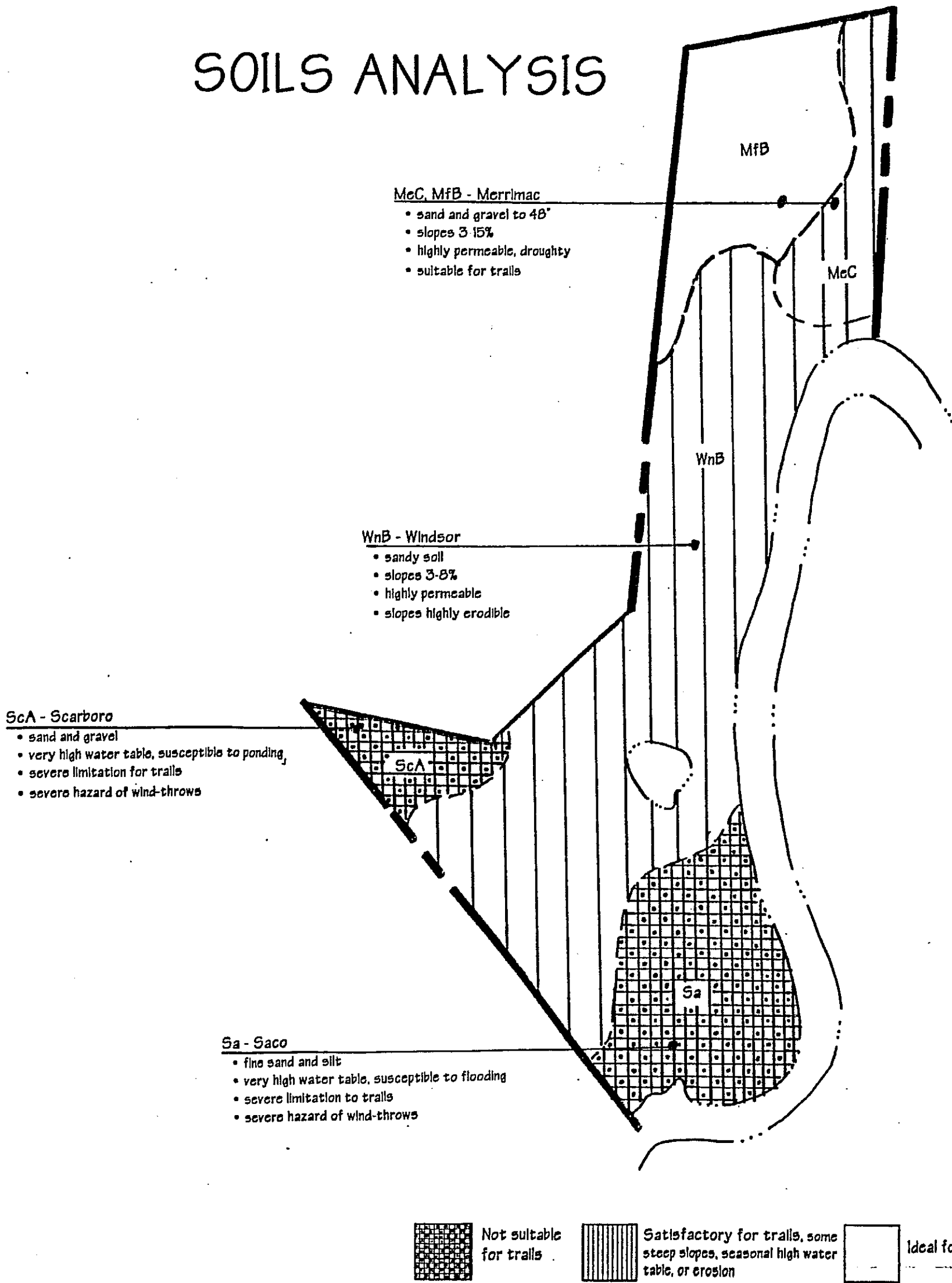
SUMMARY

The Titicut Conservation Area is a site with dry sandy soils in most places; there are wet areas around brooks and in a few concentrated locations. The majority of Taunton River bank is at a slope of 40% or more which is unsuitable for use; the river bank is composed of Windsor soil - a sandy soil which erodes easily on a slope. Three brooks on site form the major drainage pattern.

DESIGN DIRECTIVES

Use the flat Windsor and Merrimac soils for trails because they will be dry and more stable. Because the river banks on this site are highly erodible, bank stabilization efforts should be used to prevent severe erosion, therefore, any water access or canoe pull-off should be constructed to minimize impact of use. Wet areas in the southern portion of the site are not suitable for use. Brooks and ravines are not suitable for use due to risk of erosion.

SOILS ANALYSIS



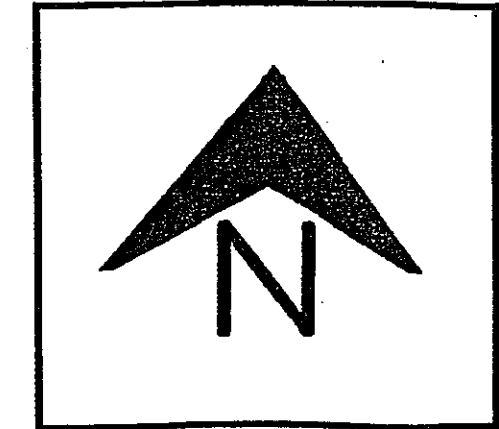
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ANALYSIS - TITICUT CONSERVATION AREA

BRIDGEWATER CONSERVATION SYSTEM

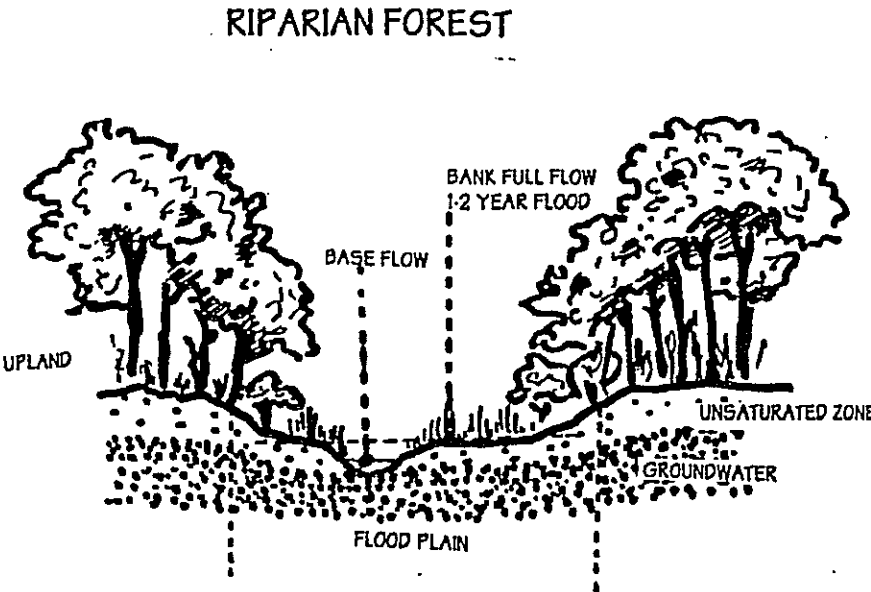
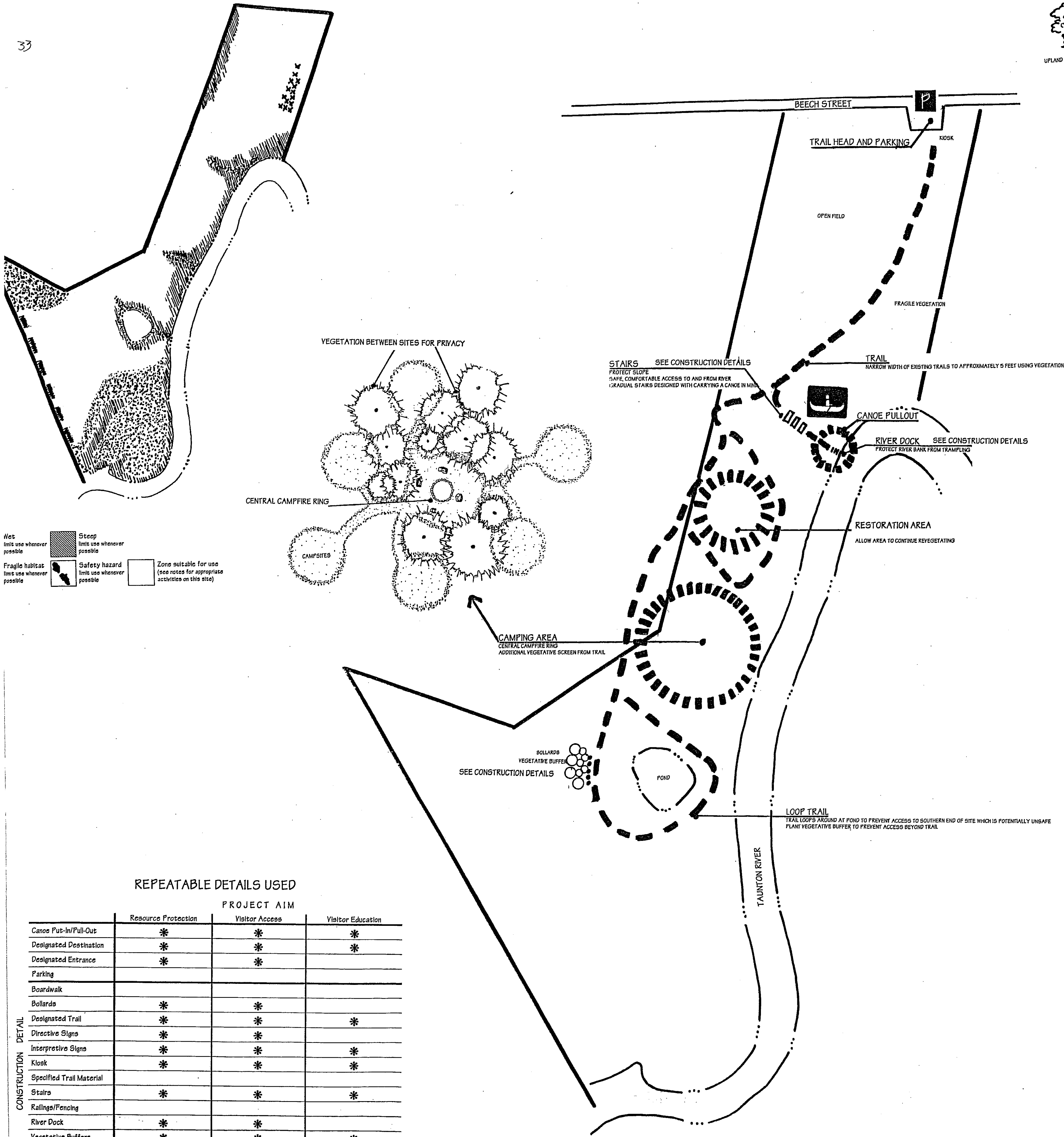
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ZONES APPROPRIATE FOR USE

33



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CONCEPTUAL DESIGN - TITICUT CONSERVATION AREA

BRIDGEWATER CONSERVATION SYSTEM

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June 1999

0 100 200 300
feet in inches

CONSTRUCTION DETAIL	REPEATABLE DETAILS USED		
	PROJECT AIM		
	Resource Protection	Visitor Access	Visitor Education
Canoe Put-In/Pull-Out	*	*	*
Designated Destination	*	*	*
Designated Entrance	*	*	
Parking			
Boardwalk			
Bollards	*	*	
Designated Trail	*	*	*
Directive Signs	*	*	
Interpretive Signs	*	*	*
Kiosk	*	*	*
Specified Trail Material			
Stairs	*	*	*
Railings/Fencing			
River Dock	*	*	
Vegetative Buffers	*	*	*

- ACTIVITIES APPROPRIATE ON THIS SITE
GIVEN THE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS
- ☒ WALKING, HIKING
 - ☒ NATURE OBSERVATION
 - ☒ PICNICKING
 - ☒ CANOE PUT-IN/PULL-OUT
 - ☒ MOUNTAIN BIKING
 - ☒ CAMPING
 - ☒ FISHING
 - ☒ HORSEBACK RIDING
 - ☒ CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

