

MANAGEMENT PLAN
JACKMAN FARM, LASSEN FARM,
AND BLAUVELT PROPERTY

Adopted by Town Council 6/28/2005

I. General Property Description

The Lassen Farm (Map 87, Lots 7, 8 & 16) and Jackman Farm (Map 80, Lot 41 and Map 87, Lot 6) are located along Boulder Road in southeast Cheshire. The Blauvelt Property (Map 87, Lot 25) lies generally between Boulder Road and Bluefield Court. While acquired separately by the Town, the three properties' contiguous nature and common features lend well to them being managed under a single management plan.

Acres: Jackman: 37.53 Lassen: 93.5 Blauvelt: 19.5 Combined: 150.53

A general map of the properties is attached as "*Map 1: Jackman Farm, Lassen Farm, and Blauvelt Property*"; Detailed descriptions of the properties' histories and natural & historic features are detailed in Appendix A & B of this plan.

II. Management Goals

General Statement: The mosaic of existing land uses, landcovers, and natural features on the Jackman & Lassen Farms and Blauvelt Property in turn lends these collected properties to a mosaic of open space uses. Further, and unlike many open space properties, because of the properties' recent agricultural uses and extensive existing field/pasture-like conditions, it is appropriate that portions of the properties covered by this plan be actively utilized for agricultural purposes. Therefore, the following management goals shall be recognized by this plan:

1. The Blauvelt, Jackman, and Lassen properties shall be managed for a combination of public access and passive recreation, wetland and upland habitat conservation, and active agricultural purposes.
2. As to public access and passive recreation, this plan recognizes that a major goal and purpose of open space acquisition is for use by the public. Therefore, portions of the properties shall be available for public use.
3. As to wetland and upland habitat conservation, this plan recognizes that inland wetlands and watercourses are an indispensable and irreplaceable but fragile natural resource with which the citizens of the Town of Cheshire have been endowed. Further, preservation of upland habitats helps to ensure a continuance of native upland biological diversity, and provides a balance to wetland preservation. Therefore, efforts shall be made to preserve/maintain existing wetland and woodland areas.
4. As to active agriculture, this plan recognizes that aspects of both farmland preservation and continuance of agriculturally-related activities are valued by the public as contributing to the community's "sense of place" and quality of life. Public farmland preservation assists in continuing farm-based economic activities on the landscape. Further, hay fields & meadows are links to the Town's agricultural heritage, serve as valuable habitat areas, and provide a publicly desired agricultural aesthetic. Therefore, efforts shall be made to engage a portion of the properties in agricultural activities.

III. Permitted Uses

General Statement: Permitted uses shall be as described in *Section 11-30 Open Space* of the *Town of Cheshire Code of Ordinances*, and any applicable conservation easements, including but not limited to the *Conservation and Public Recreation Easement and Agreement (OSWA-29)* in favor of DEP (attached to this plan as “Appendix / Exhibit C”). Specifically permitted uses shall be as follow, and as indicated on the attached map entitled “*Map 2: Jackman Farm, Lassen Farm, and Blauvelt Property - Permitted Uses.*”

A. Jackman Property:

1. Areas not leased for agricultural purposes shall be available for passive recreation, as described in *Section 11-30 Open Space* of the *Town of Cheshire Code of Ordinances*.
2. The northern field and former Christmas tree plantation shall be made available for active agricultural uses, as defined by State Statute, and shall comply with all terms of applicable conservation easements or other deed restrictions. Specific arrangements shall be solicited and arranged for by the Steward, presented for Town Council approval, and subsequently monitored by the Steward.
3. If not utilized as part of an as-of-right agricultural use, wet meadow wetlands may be seasonally cut to maintain wet meadow conditions, or else shall be maintained in a natural state.
4. Other wetlands, and existing woodlands shall be maintained in a natural state.
5. The farm pond may be utilized for public ice skating.
6. Existing farm roads may be posted by the Steward as public trail(s), and/or a trail may be constructed along the property’s eastern ridgeline.

B. Lassen Property:

Parcel B (#866 Boulder Road)

1. Shall be available for rental per the *Conservation and Public Recreation Easement and Agreement (OSWA-29)* in favor of DEP.

Parcel C (#810 Boulder Road)

1. Shall be subject to life tenancy and subsequent rental per the *Conservation and Public Recreation Easement and Agreement (OSWA-29)* in favor of DEP.

Parcel D (north of Boulder Road)

1. Field areas, as indicated on Map 2 as “PR”, shall be mowed and maintained as a passive recreational expanse for public passive recreation as defined in *Section 11-30 Open Space* of the *Town of Cheshire Code of Ordinances*, and described in the property’s *Conservation and Public Recreation Easement and Agreement (OSWA-29)* in favor of DEP.
2. Field areas, as indicated on Map 2 as “A” shall be made available for active agricultural uses, as defined by State Statute, more specifically described in the *Conservation and Public Recreation Easement and Agreement (OSWA-29)* in favor of DEP, and shall comply with all terms of applicable conservation easements or other deed restrictions.. Specific arrangements shall be solicited and arranged for by the Steward, presented for Town Council approval, and subsequently monitored by the Steward.
3. If not utilized as part of an as-of-right agricultural use, existing wet meadow wetlands and watercourses, as indicated on Map 2 as “WM”, may be seasonally cut to maintain wet meadow conditions, or else shall be maintained in a natural state.

4. Maintenance shall exclude use of fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and the like.
5. Woodlands, wetlands, and watercourses, as indicated on Map 2 as “W” shall be maintained in a natural state.

Parcel E (south of Boulder Road)

1. Field areas, as indicated on Map 2 as “A” shall be made available for active agricultural uses, as defined by State Statute, more specifically described in the *Conservation and Public Recreation Easement and Agreement (OSWA-29)* in favor of DEP, and shall comply with all terms of applicable conservation easements or other deed restrictions.. Specific arrangements shall be solicited and arranged for by the Steward, presented for Town Council approval, and subsequently monitored by the Steward.
2. If not utilized as part of an as-of-right agricultural use, existing wet meadow wetlands and watercourses, as indicated on Map 2 as “WM” may be seasonally cut to maintain wet meadow conditions, or else shall be maintained in a natural state.
3. Woodlands, as indicated on Map 2 as “W”, shall be maintained in a natural state.
4. Farm roads, existing and abandoned, may be posted by the Steward as public trail(s).

C. Blauvelt Property:

1. Field areas, as indicated on Map 2 as “A” shall be made available for active agricultural uses, as defined by State Statute, and shall comply with all terms of applicable conservation easements or other deed restrictions. Specific arrangements shall be solicited and arranged for by the Steward, presented for Town Council approval, and subsequently monitored by the Steward.
2. If not utilized as part of an as-of-right agricultural use, existing wet meadow wetlands and watercourses, as indicated on Map 2 as “WM”, may be seasonally cut to maintain wet meadow conditions, or else shall be maintained in a natural state.
3. Woodlands, as indicated on Map 2 as “W” shall be maintained in a natural state.
4. Farm roads, existing and abandoned, may be posted by the Steward as public trail(s).

As described above, the acreage distribution (rounded to the acre) by permitted use for the subject properties breaks down as follows:

	<u>acreage</u>	<u>% of total acreage</u>
Buildings & Yards	14	9
Agricultural	40	27
Wet Meadow	15	10
Wetlands & Woodlands	44	30
Passive Recreation	36	24

This acreage distribution by land use is representative of colonial land use distributions in terms of, at least, amount of acreage dedicated to pasture/mowing/tillage vs. acreage left as woodlands. (See Appendix C for further colonial detail.)

IV. Prohibited Uses

Prohibited uses shall be as described in *Section 11-30 Open Space* of the *Town of Cheshire Code of Ordinances* and all applicable Conservation Easements, including but not limited to the *Conservation and Public Recreation Easement and Agreement (OSWA-29)* in favor of DEP for the Lassen Property.

V. Special Considerations

Public educational activities shall be allowed and encouraged. These may include, but are not limited to, volunteer projects to enhance the public's enjoyment of the properties, and opportunities for Cheshire residents to educate themselves about the natural world. These could include compiling wildlife and plant inventories, analyzing the life forms in the streams and vernal pools, placing birdhouses in the less forested parts of the property, making periodic butterfly or bird counts, picking up litter on an annual basis (perhaps in collaboration with the Boy Scouts, Cheshire Academy or Cheshire High School students) and removal of invasive species where appropriate.

Appendix A: History

The 35.23-acre Jackman Farm, which includes one house and some storage facilities, was purchased by the Town of Cheshire, with assistance from the Trust for Public Land, in March 1994 from Ralph and Shirley Jackman. As part of the sale, Mrs. Jackman was allowed to retain 4.7 acres around the house at #800 Boulder Road; the Town has a right-of-first-refusal on this house and associated property.

From the early part of the 20th Century until March 2000, the Lassen Farm was home to a working dairy operation, the town's last remaining dairy farm. The 93-acre farm, its buildings and two houses (#866 Boulder Road, currently being rented out by the Town, and #810 Boulder Road), were sold to the Town of Cheshire by Gilbert and Lorraine Lassen for \$1,603,888.42. The State Department of Environmental Protection assisted with this purchase, in return for an open space conservation easement. As part of this easement, limited agricultural use is allowed on the property. The Lassen family was given lifetime use of the house at #810 Boulder Road.

The 19.5-acre Blauvelt Property was purchased in 2002 for \$175,000. This property was formerly used/leased by the Lassen family to grow silage for cattle.

Because the three properties form a contiguous expanse of 150.53 acres, they are considered together by this plan. *(Also adjacent to this block of properties, a conservation easement covering 18 acres was granted in 2004 to the Cheshire Land Trust by the Giddings family, for a portion of their property at #915 Boulder Road)* Together, the subject properties are a major link in the town's long-range plan to create a "greenbelt" along eastern Cheshire, essentially parallel to the Cheshire – Wallingford border. (The DeDominicis Property is the next existing portion of the greenbelt to the south, Meriden Water Company reservoir land the next existing portion to the north.

Appendix B: Natural/Historical Resources & Terrain

The Jackman property, prior to its ownership by the Jackmans, was known as the Weber Farm and has also been known as Cross Rocks Farm. The Jackmans used the property to raise miniature horses and maintained an evergreen tree farm that is still intact, though overgrown, along with a small shed from which trees were once sold, and an associated maintenance shed. There are old stone walls along a small traprock ridge that runs north-south along the property's east boundary. Residential properties off Wyndemere Court border the Jackman Farm to the north. Though there is some mixed potential use (agricultural and passive recreational), an existing lack of water for crop irrigation severely restricts potential agricultural uses. A neighboring farmer regularly cuts and bales the hay that grows in the fields and uses a small portion of one field for his own crops. He transports the water in for this himself. Preservation/maintenance of the property in its current state would provide for field wildlife habitat and early successional wildlife habitat.

The Lassen Farm, also known as Boulder Knoll Farm, was a dairy farm for nearly all of the 20th century. This remaining portion was the core component of the operation, where cows were housed and milked. Silage for the cows was grown on this property, as well as on the Jackman Farm, the Casertano property (Jarvis Street and Marion Road), the Blauvelt property, and on several other private properties in the area. Farm equipment left behind after the purchase of the property by the Town requires removal prior to future use of the barn structures. Portions of the barn structures have been demolished due to deteriorated conditions, but the main barn structure appears to be intact. The lower portion of the farm, toward the west, has a stream-fed pond that was maintained for the use of the cows. An overflow pipe allows water to spill into an adjoining field that was used to grow silage corn for feed.

Terrain

The parcels are relatively open, with terrain comprised of flat to rolling fields and hills that climb to a minor basalt/traprock ridge running generally along the north-south axis of the combined properties. Wooded portions of the properties generally include the field edges and the slopes of the slight ridge, which runs along much of Cheshire's eastside. Portions of the open fields on all of the properties are wet meadow, which is the fasted-declining type of wetland in New England. As a whole, the fields (wet and upland portions) were used for the growing of hay and silage corn. The fields are currently fallow. A 3/4-mile loop trail has been available to Cheshire residents for hiking since the Jackman Farm's purchase in 1994, as described in the 1994 book TRAILS. The Cross Rocks Formation, a geologically unusual feature studied by several area college/university geology departments, can be found near the western boundary of the former Lassen property. Here, the north-south trending traprock ridge intersects an east-west trending traprock dike. Vague remains of a copper prospecting pit, created in 1711 and soon abandoned, can also be found in this vicinity.

Appendix C: Representative Colonial Landuses

Figure 1: Forest and Farmland Area of Connecticut, 1600 - 1977

(adapted by M. Kasinskas from Irland, 1982)

Year	Forest		Farms		
	Acreage ('000)	(%)	Acreage ('000)	(%)	
1600	3,010	(96)	- no data -		
1700	2,130	(68)	- no data -		
1800	1,644	(52)	- no data -		
1860	923	(29)	2,504	(81)	- Estimated peak of cleared land in Connecticut
1900	1,276	(41)	2,312	(75)	
1977	1,860	(60)	470	(15)	

Figure 2: 1749 Land Use in East Quarter (by acres) – Concord, Massachusetts

(Compiled by M. Kasinskas from data in Donahue, 2004)

Deeded Landowner	Tillage	Orchard	Pasture	Mowing	Wood	Total	% Wood
Ebenezer Meriam (Sr. & Jr.)	5.5	0.25	9.5	21	14	50.25	28
Josiah Meriam	5.5	0	9	10.5	7	32	22
Nathan Meriam	7	3	19	24	48	101	48
Samuel Meriam	5	0	24	13	24	66	36
Samuel Minot	8	2	15	23	44	92	48
Samuel Fletcher	9	1.5	34	22	22	88.5	25
John Jones	13	1	19	29	40.5	102.5	40
Joseph Stow	12	0.5	7	21	28	68.5	41
Job Brooks, Jr.	8	0.5	17	22	55	102.5	54
Joshua Brooks, Jr.	8.5	2.5	24	22	14.5	71.5	20
Samuel Brooks	12.75	1.5	20	60	40	134.25	30
Thomas Brooks	13	3	28	27.5	31.5	103	31
Ephraim Hartwell	24.5	2	58	60	23	167.5	14
Nathaniel Whittenmore	12.5	1	47	65.5	23.5	149.5	16
Totals:					415	1329	31%

Figures taken from “Colonial Woodlot Stands in the Southern New England Landscape: Past and Present”, M. Kasinskas 2004, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

