

Preparing Baseline Documentation for your Protected Lands

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William Hall Free Library
Cranston, RI**

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**Sponsored by Rhode Island Land Trust Council
& Land Trust Alliance**

Why do a BDR?

- To document existing condition and conservation values (required by the IRS for donated or bargain sale properties)
- To provide a baseline for future monitoring and enforcement
- To inform management planning decisions





Ideally...

- **created at the time of acquisition**
- **signed and acknowledged by all parties**
- **includes a complete property description, summary of conservation values, appropriate resource and boundary maps & photo documentation**
- **is directly referenced as an exhibit to a conservation easement or restriction**



- BDRs are static - supplements and upgrades are options, but the original baseline should always be maintained, unaltered
- Facts are facts. BDRs document best available information at the time.
- Useful as a basis for management planning, great source of public interest info, landowners love them!

Who prepares them?

- Skilled volunteers
- Paid staff
- College-level interns
- Professional conservation biologists
- Every imaginable combination of the above...



Components of a Baseline Documentation Report



Basic Property Information

- **Property Name**
 - **Owner / Donor Name**
 - **Street Address**
 - **Plat/Lot**
 - **Acreage**
 - **General property description**
 - **Conservation easement
and/or deed reference**
 - **Landuse history (as available)**
-
- **Plat maps, survey plans,
location and property maps
using aerial or satellite
photography**



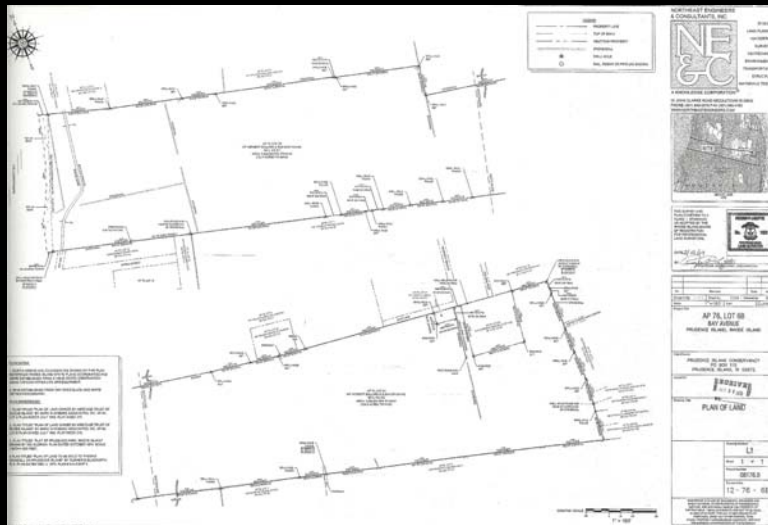
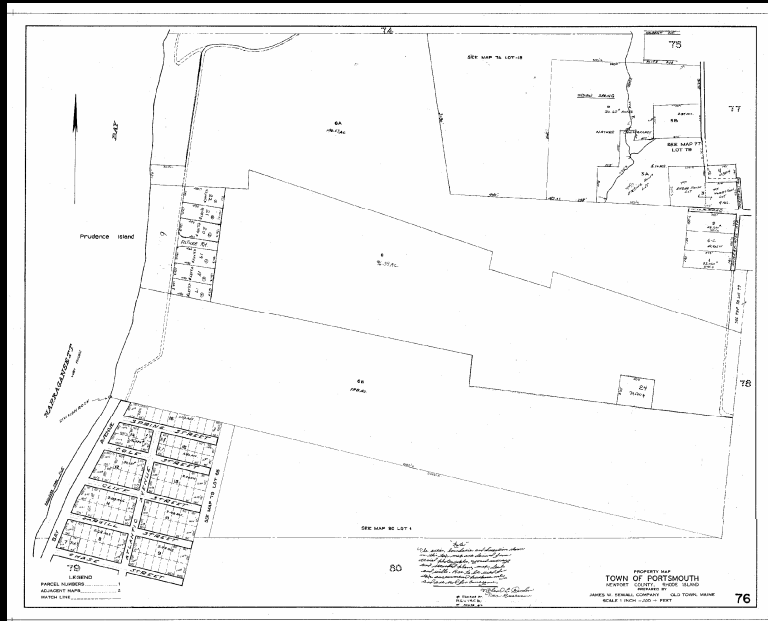
Purpose of Protection

- **Statement of intent – often found within easement language, or could more generally reference organization's mission**

More Detailed Property Description & Conservation Values Documentation

- **Boundaries, surrounding land use context**
 - **Topography**
 - **Soils**
 - **Agricultural values**
 - **Water Resources (wetlands, rivers, streams, watershed, groundwater, etc.)**
 - **Natural Communities – representative flora & fauna inventory, invasive species, species of conservation concern**
 - **Historic, Scenic, Educational, & Recreational Values**
 - **Human-made Features**
-
- **Photo Boundary Documentation**
 - **Supporting Maps**

Boundaries, Surrounding Land Use

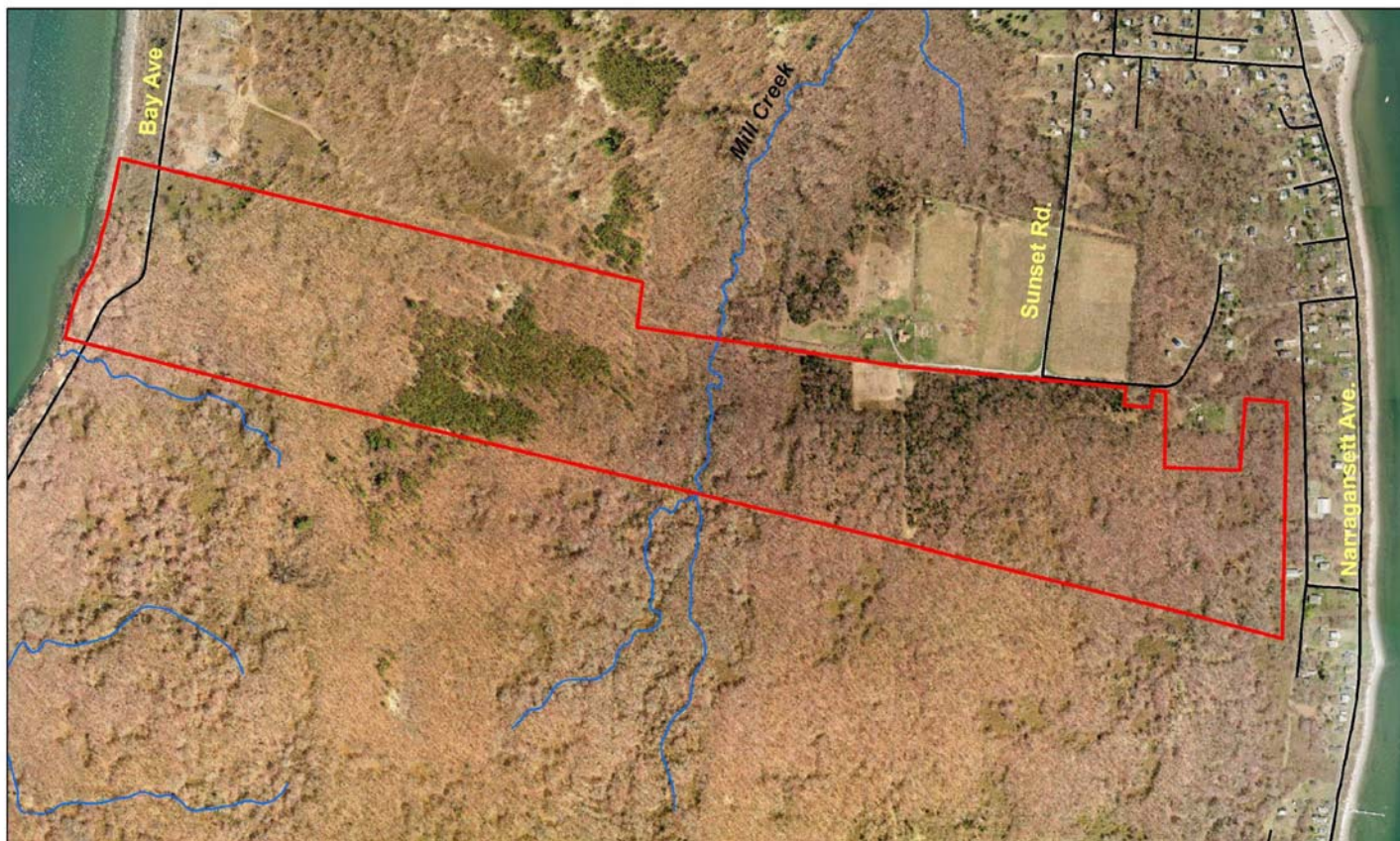


Ballard Property

- Conservation Area
- Perennial Streams
- Roads

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles

Datalayers: Rhode Island E911
Uniform Emergency Telephone
System, Pictometry International
Corporation, 2008 (URI-EDC);
Roads and Perennial Streams
Datalayers (RIGIS).
CLT 2/11



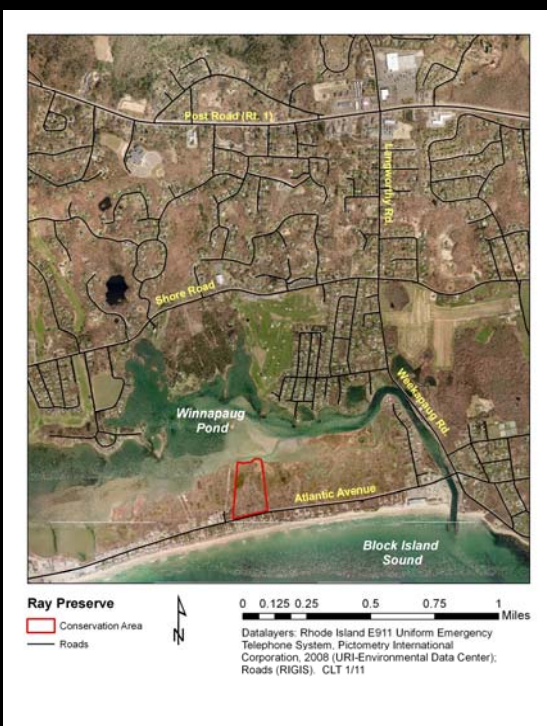
Ballard Property

- Conservation Area
- Perennial Streams
- Roads



0 487.5 975 1,950 Feet

Datalayers: Rhode Island E911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System, Pictometry International Corporation, 2008 (URI-Environmental Data Center); Perennial Streams and Roads Datalayers (RIGIS). CLT 2/11



Ray Preserve

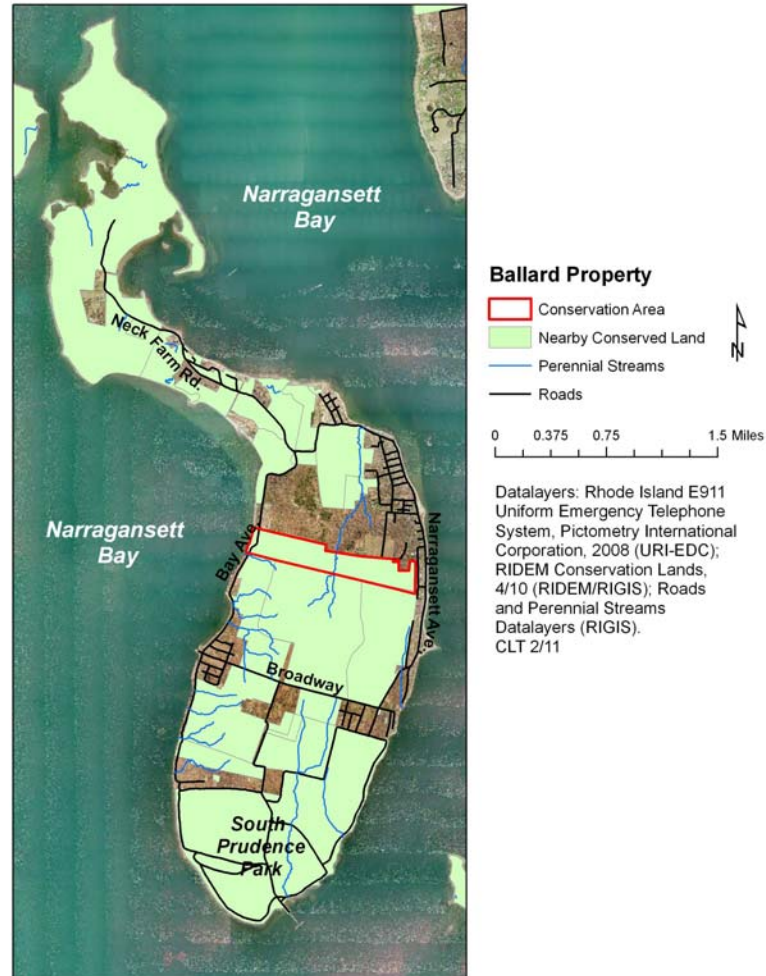
Conservation Area



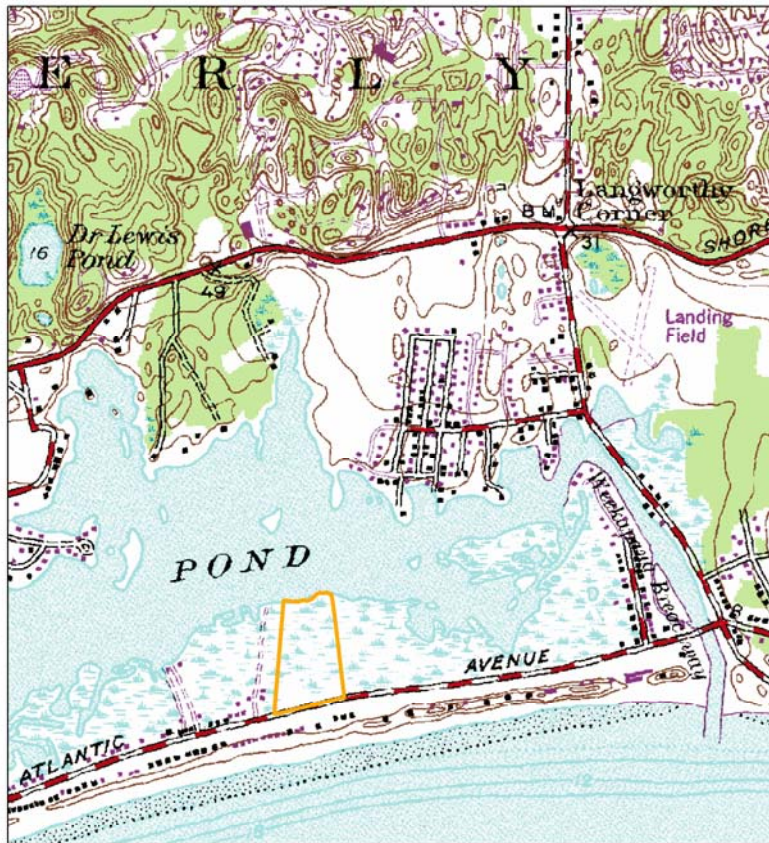
0 80 160 320 480 640 Feet

Datalayers: Rhode Island E911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System, Pictometry International Corporation, 2008 (URI-Environmental Data Center); CLT 1/11

Landscape Context – surrounding uses, nearby conserved land



Topography – elevation, slope



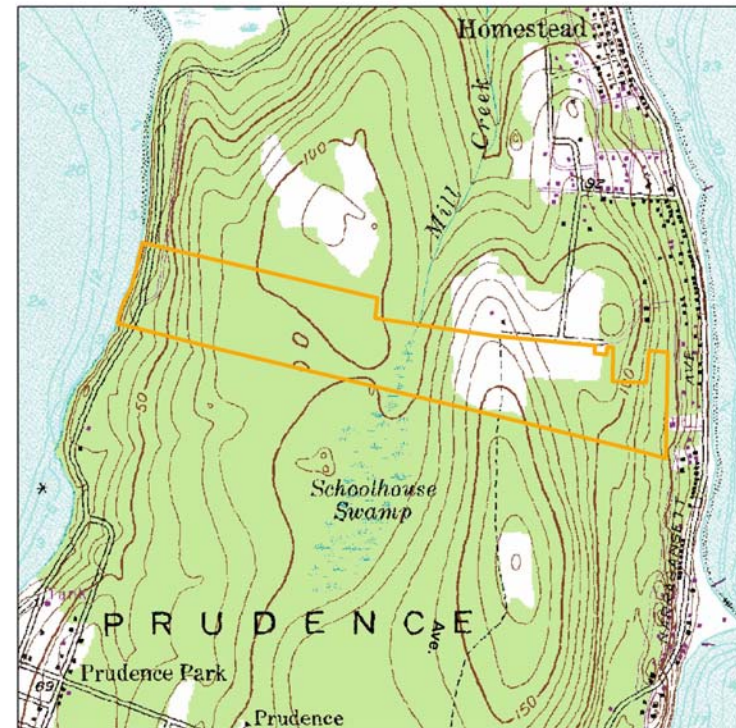
Ray Preserve

Conservation Area



0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 Miles

Datalayers: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle, Watch Hill Quad (RIGIS). CLT 1/11



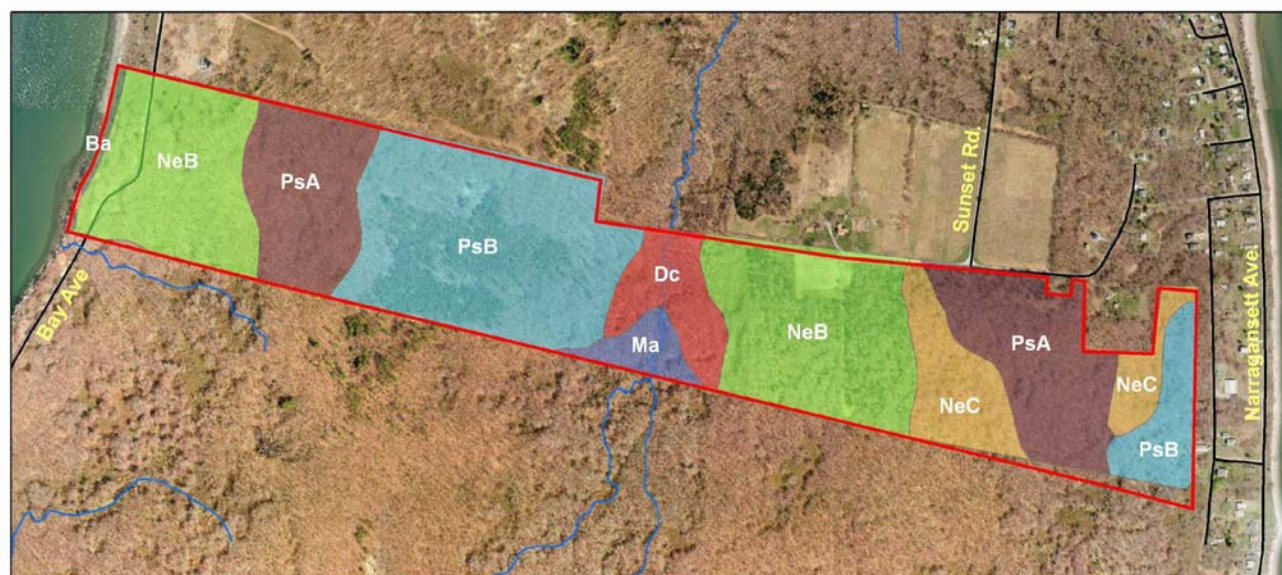
Ballard Property

Conservation Area



0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles

Datalayers: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle, Prudence Quad (RIGIS). CLT 2/11



Ballard Property

- Conservation Area
- Perennial Streams
- Roads

Soils

- Beaches (Ba)
- Deerfield loamy fine sand (Dc)
- Mansfield mucky silt loam (Ma)
- Newport silt loam, 3-8% slope (NeB)
- Newport silt loam, 8-15% slope (NeC)
- Poquonock loamy fine sand, 0-3% slope (PsA)
- Poquonock loamy fine sand, 3-8% slope (PsB)

0 455 910 1,820 Feet



Datalayers: Rhode Island E911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System, Pictometry International Corporation, 2008 (URI-Environmental Data Center); USDA-NRCS RISSURGO datalayer, 2008 (RIGIS); Perennial Streams and Roads Datalayers (RIGIS). CLT 2/11

Mapped soil types and descriptions

Agricultural Values



- Current or historic ag use
- Prime Farmland Soils or Soils of Statewide Importance for Agriculture
- Surrounding agricultural use

Water Resources

- Presence of wetlands, streams, rivers, coastal water bodies (type, acreage, status)
- Drainage/watershed information
- Groundwater / drinking water resources



Natural Communities / Flora & Fauna Inventory

- Characteristic communities
- Rare species and communities
- Invasive species

FAUNA

Birds

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)
Great Blue Heron (*Ardea Herodias*)
American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*)
Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)
Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)
Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*)
Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)
Saltmarsh Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacutus*)
American Goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*)
Mammals (detected by sign)
Cottontail Rabbit (*Sylvilagus* species)
Coyote (*Canis latrans*)
White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

FLORA

(species in bold are considered to be 'widespread and invasive' by the Rhode Island Invasive Species Council) [\[1\]](#)

Upland / Maritime Scrub-Shrub

Asiatic Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)

Aster species (Family Asteraceae)
Beach Heather (*Hudsonia tomentosa*)
Beach Plum (*Prunus maritima*)
Beach Rose (*Rosa rugosa*)
Blackberry (*Rubus* species)
Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)
Dune Grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*)
Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
Goldenrods (*Solidago* species)
Marsh Elder (*Iva frutescens*)
Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*)
Northern Bayberry (*Morella pensylvanica*)
Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*)
Shadbush (*Amelanchier* species)
Smooth Sumac (*Rhus glabra*)
Spike Grass (*Distichlis spicata*)

Scenic, Historic, and Cultural Resources



- Historic sites
- Historic districts
- Fieldstone walls
- Scenic areas
- Viewshed, road frontage

Public Access , Recreation & Educational Resources

- Public access?
- Trails?
- Existing uses?

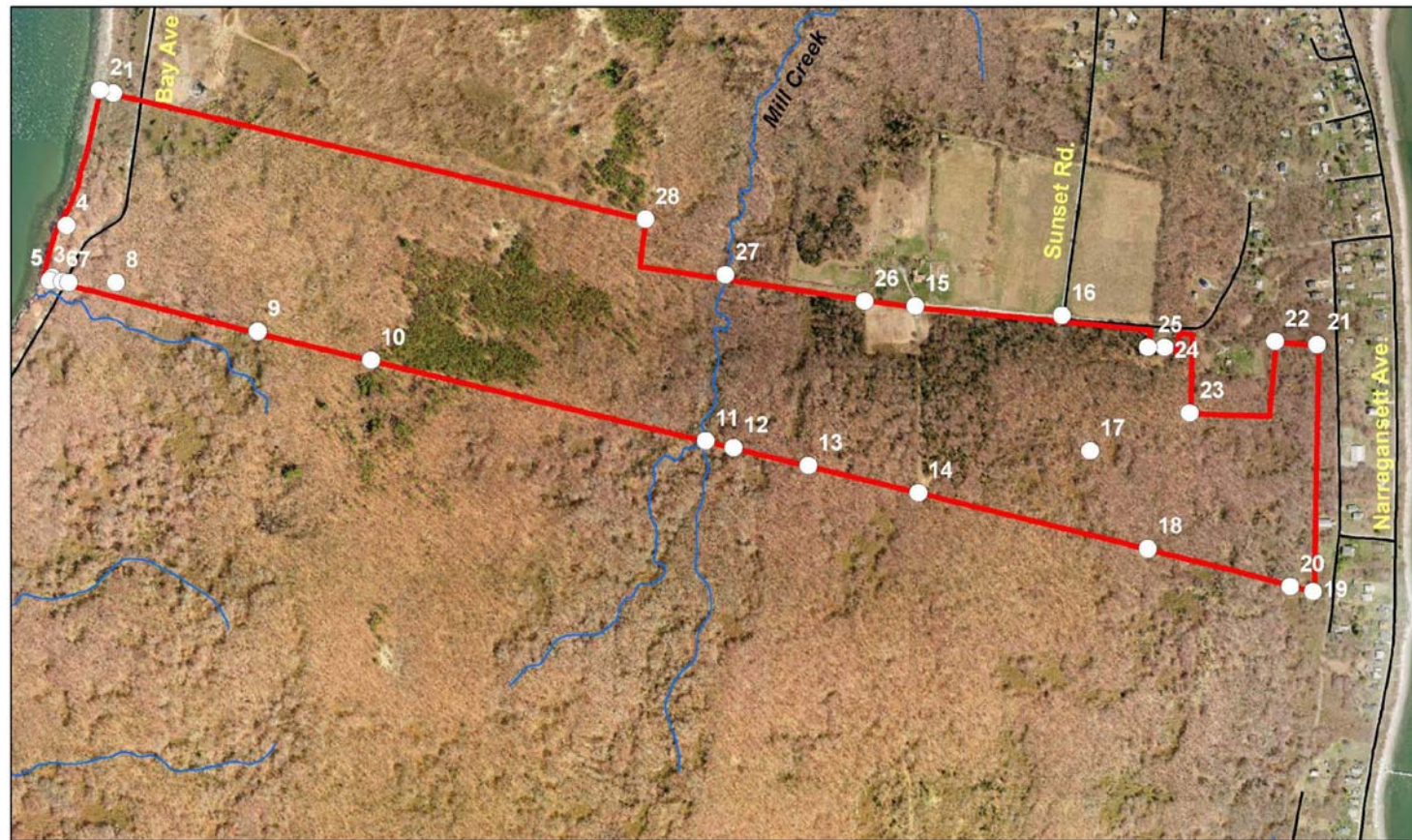


Human-made Features



- Especially important to document for future monitoring

Representative Boundary Photography



Ballard Property

- Conservation Area
- Photo Stations
- Perennial Streams
- Roads



0 465 930 1,860 Feet

Datalayers: Rhode Island E911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System, Pictometry International Corporation, 2008 (URI-Environmental Data Center); Perennial Streams and Roads Datalayers (RIGIS). CLT 2/11

Representative Boundary Photography

Photo No.	Photo Description
1	Looking south along the trail running down the western edge of the Premises.
2A	Looking ESE along the northern boundary of the Premises from the northwest corner.
2B	Looking SSW along the western boundary of the Premises, along the shoreline, from the northwest corner.
3	Approximate location of picnic table along trail.
4A	Looking ESE along stone wall intersecting trail.
4B	Looking WNW towards shoreline.
5A	Looking ESE along stone wall running along the southern boundary of the Premises.
5B	Looking WNW towards shoreline.
6	Looking NNE onto unpaved road running along the western portion of the Premises.
7	Sign posted at entrance to trail running along the southern boundary of the Premises.
8	Tree stand located in deciduous forest in the western portion of the Premises (location approximate).
9A	Looking north along a stone wall running through the Premises.
9B	Looking ESE along the southern boundary of the Premises.



Photo 1

Looking south along the trail running down the western edge of the Premises.

Photographed by Carol Lynn Trocki

9/24/2010

Resources

Rhode Island Land and Water Partnership – Online Library
Land Stewardship Resources

<http://www.landandwaterpartnership.org/library.php>

RIDEM Environmental Resources Maps

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/maps/>

Rhode Island Conservation Stewardship Collaborative: Maps to
Support the Work of RI Land Trusts

<http://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=87e6b692db834d62bfa0d6609c9fd5db>

Vision Appraisal

<http://www.vgsi.com/vision/Applications/ParcelData/RI/Home.aspx>

RIGIS Historic Aerial Photos

<http://www.edc.uri.edu/rigis/data/imageryBaseMapsEarthCover.html>

Questions?

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