

DRAFT



ESSEX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Land Inventory and Potential Recreational and Cultural Uses

SCHEMATIC MASTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

August 7, 2015

DRAFT

CONTENTS:

Introduction

- Purpose of the Study and an Explanation of the Contents and Summary.
- Projects Location Map
- The Desha Tract Introduction
- The Poor House Tract Introduction
- A Discussion of the DeShea Road Tract.
- A Discussion of the Poor House Tract.
- Funding related to Grant Opportunities
- Status and Cost
- Poor House Tract Site Conditions Assessment

Graphics and Tables:

The DeShea Road Tract:

- Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
- Proposed Improvements
- Phasing

Master Composite of the Poor House Tract:

- Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
- Proposed Improvements
- Phasing

Parcel A :

- Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
- Proposed Improvements
- Phasing

Parcel B:

- Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
- Proposed Improvements
- Phasing

Parcel C:

- Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
- Proposed Improvements
- Phasing

Parcel D:

- Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
- Proposed Improvements
- Phasing

DRAFT

Parcel E:

Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
Proposed Improvements
Phasing

Parcel F:

Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
Proposed Improvements
Phasing

Parcel G:

Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
Proposed Improvements
Phasing

Parcel H:

Known Encumbrances and Existing Improvements
Proposed Improvements
Phasing

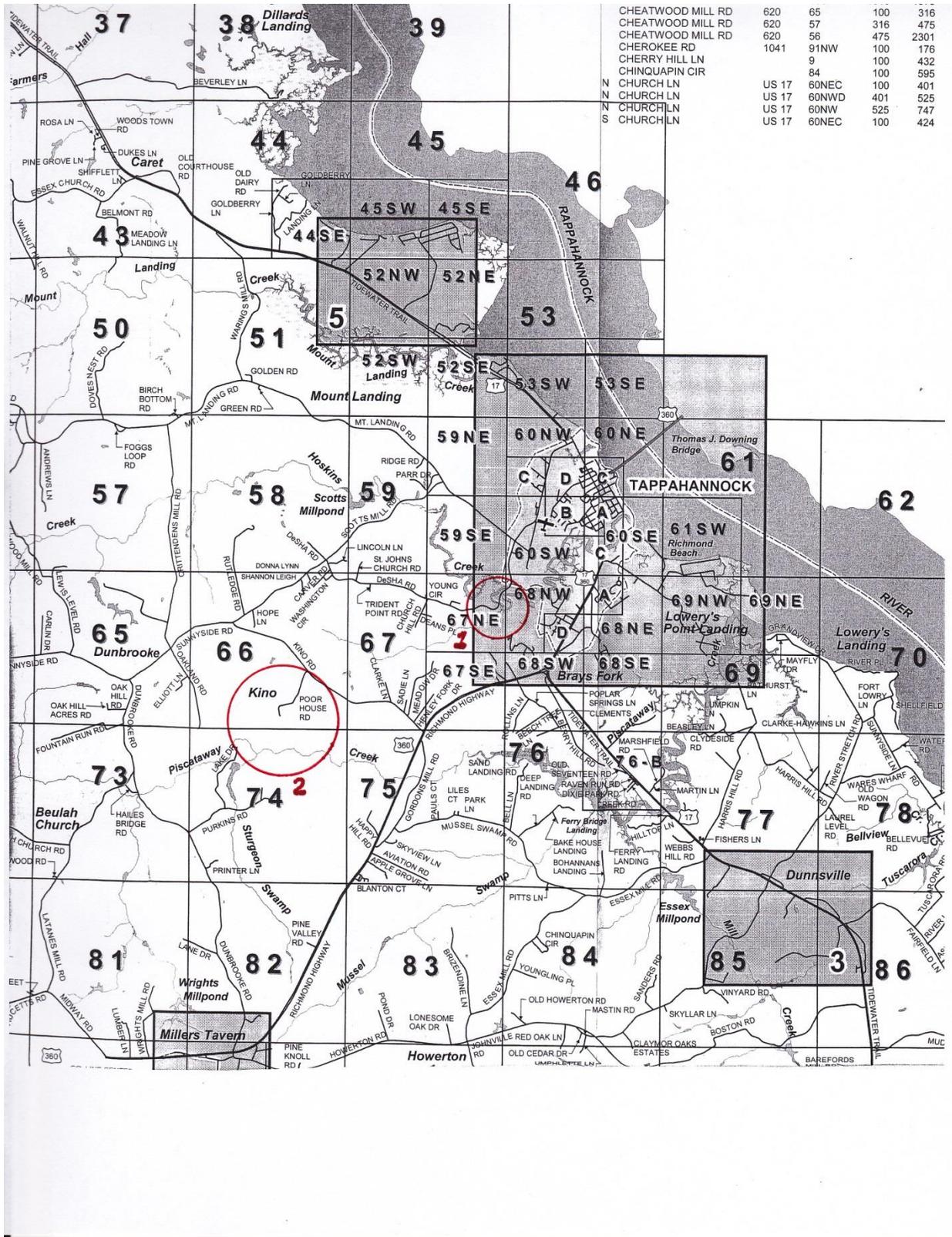
Phase 1 Design and Development Program

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Essex County is fortunate to have in its inventory of County Assets two tracts of land that are presently undeveloped, or partially developed and underutilized. This study is to look at the tracts and proposes the development of the tracts for parks and recreational and educational purposes that will provide a myriad of benefits for the local population, creating the local region as a destination, and which will greatly enhance the economic development initiatives which are quickly gaining momentum in the County.

The two tracts are presently being called the DeSha Road Tract, and the Poor House Tract.

DRAFT



Projects Location Map: 1 DeSha Road Tract 2 Poor House Tract

DRAFT

The DeSha Road Tract Introduction

The first tract that we will discuss will be the DeSha Road Tract. This curvilinear 5.6 acre tract is bounded to the north and west side by a curve in DeSha Road as one heads south towards the Hoskins Creek bridge. It is also bounded on the south and east side of a similar curve by a marsh and Hoskins Creek. It is bound on the northeast by private property. The most obvious and proposed development of this tract would be for water access – canoes, kayaks and bankside fishing.

This particular tract has its beauty and assets strongly defined by the natural environment and DeSha Road. However that which is beautiful; the proximity of the road to the marsh and creek, are going to likely create a permitting process that could be rather lengthy and expensive. So there is a likelihood that development of the tract for the County's managed recreation purposes might not be in the near future.

Launching canoes and kayaks into the creek and fishing from the bank are not as much a concern as creating parking for vehicles related to the floating activities. The launching platform for the crafts can be floated so as to not impact the tidal creek. That floating launch platform can also be long enough and wide enough along the bank to allow fishing from the platform.

However, there would have to be some land disturbance for parking that might possibly have to occur in the 100' wetlands buffer or Resource Protection Area (RPA) defined by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and Regulations. Since the tract is in a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area RPA, there is the limited possibility of a local administrative process that might allow encroachment into the 100' wetlands buffer, but only 50' into the buffer from the landward side (DeSha Road). Even with the possibility of using that encroachment for parking, there is relatively severe topography for parking development, so once we have a 50' encroachment permission, we will "not be out of the woods," pun intended!

There is also the possibility the Federal Environmental Protection Agency acting through the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will require a Joint Permit Application (JPA) be filed for permits to develop the tract. There is a difference in the 100' buffer defined by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and the wetland delineation required as defined by the USACE. The USACE will require a wetlands delineation, which isn't only defined by the presence of water; it is also defined by a presence of hydric soils and/or hydrophytic vegetation. Any combination of all/any, or just one of the three is enough to create the wetlands designation.

A firm that houses the ability to delineate wetlands would have to delineate the wetlands along Hoskins Creek, and that line can come inland, pushing the 100' buffer inland and the 50' encroachment further inland as well. All of this specialty engineering will also have to be accompanied by a plan of improvements and a Water Quality Impact Assessment prepared by an environmental engineering firm qualified to do such work. Optimally that is the same firm that delineated the wetlands.

DRAFT

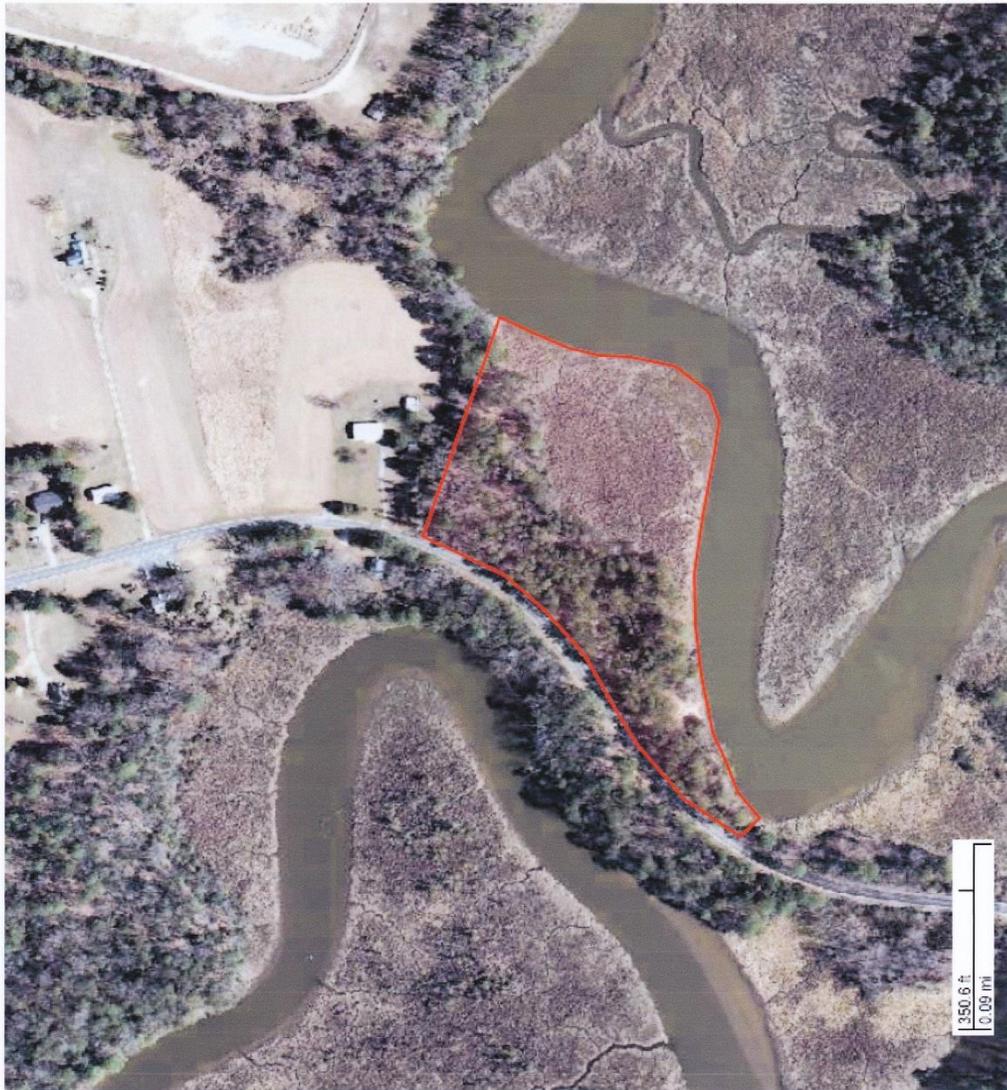
From past experience, far too much other information will likely be required to be submitted with the JPA. It sounds simple enough, but the information required and the submission/commenting period in a JPA can be quite substantial and expensive, so for the time being, we will continue to define the design program for the DeSha Road tract as it relates to the environmental encumbrances so we can see what can be shoehorned onto the property that will be permitted to be developed in such a way as to maximize the full permitted benefits of the property. We are presently obtaining cost for the special environmental compliance services to be prepared for permits to develop the property.

DRAFT

Notes
DeSha Tract



Essex County



The Desha Road Tract (the bridge crossing Hoskins Creek is off of the photo to the right)

DRAFT

The Poor House Tract Introduction

The Poor House Tract is off of Kino Road, and the main paved road into the property provides access back to the area of the tract commonly called the County Dump and Landfill. This area is Parcel E, and it is presently unavailable for recreational access by the public. In the eastern center portion of Parcel D, there is a small shooting range used by the sheriff's department and a local sporting goods store. These areas are to be respected in any development plan that is proposed.

The Poor House Tract is a considerably larger tract of approximately 675 acres with an interesting history to be respected and presented to the eventual users of the park. It also has streams and topographical variations that present environmental permitting concerns as well as varying educational opportunities.

As presented here, the tract of land has been subdivided into eight parcels in an effort to manage the phasing of the entire tract as it relates to availability of finances and the timber farming of the tract which has been farmed traditionally by parcels.

The southern boundary of the tract along the bottom of Parcels C, D, G, and H, is defined by the upper reaches of Piscataway Creek. This area provides some interesting opportunities, but it is also encumbered somewhat by environmental regulations that will have to be respected. Below is a list of the recreational activities being considered:

Recreational Possibilities

Multiuse Trails

Walking/Running Trails

Biking Trails

Horse Trails

Kayaking

Canoeing

Picnic Areas (Open and Shelters)

Scheduled Primitive Camping

Retreats

Shooting Range

Sporting Clay

Archery

Golf Driving Range

Educational Opportunities and Events

(Will be Discussed by Parcel - Selected and Prioritized)

It should be clarified here that primitive camping means wilderness camping. It does not mean improved campgrounds where there are "pads" for campers or designated tent locations supported by a utilities infrastructure of any description.

DRAFT

The scheduling of certain parcels development activities will depend on forestry schedules and upon completion of development, and the use of the land during hunting season.

In addition to the opportunities on The Poor House Tract, there are the possibilities to schedule performing arts activities by the development of a natural amphitheater.

Educational Opportunities - Environmental Education and Stewardship

Native plants and Wildflowers (Bugs and Butterflies)

Tree Farming

Trail Construction and Management

Wetlands

Streams

Water Conservation and Quality Practices

Erosion and Sediment Control (Land use and Development)

Stormwater Management

Poor House History

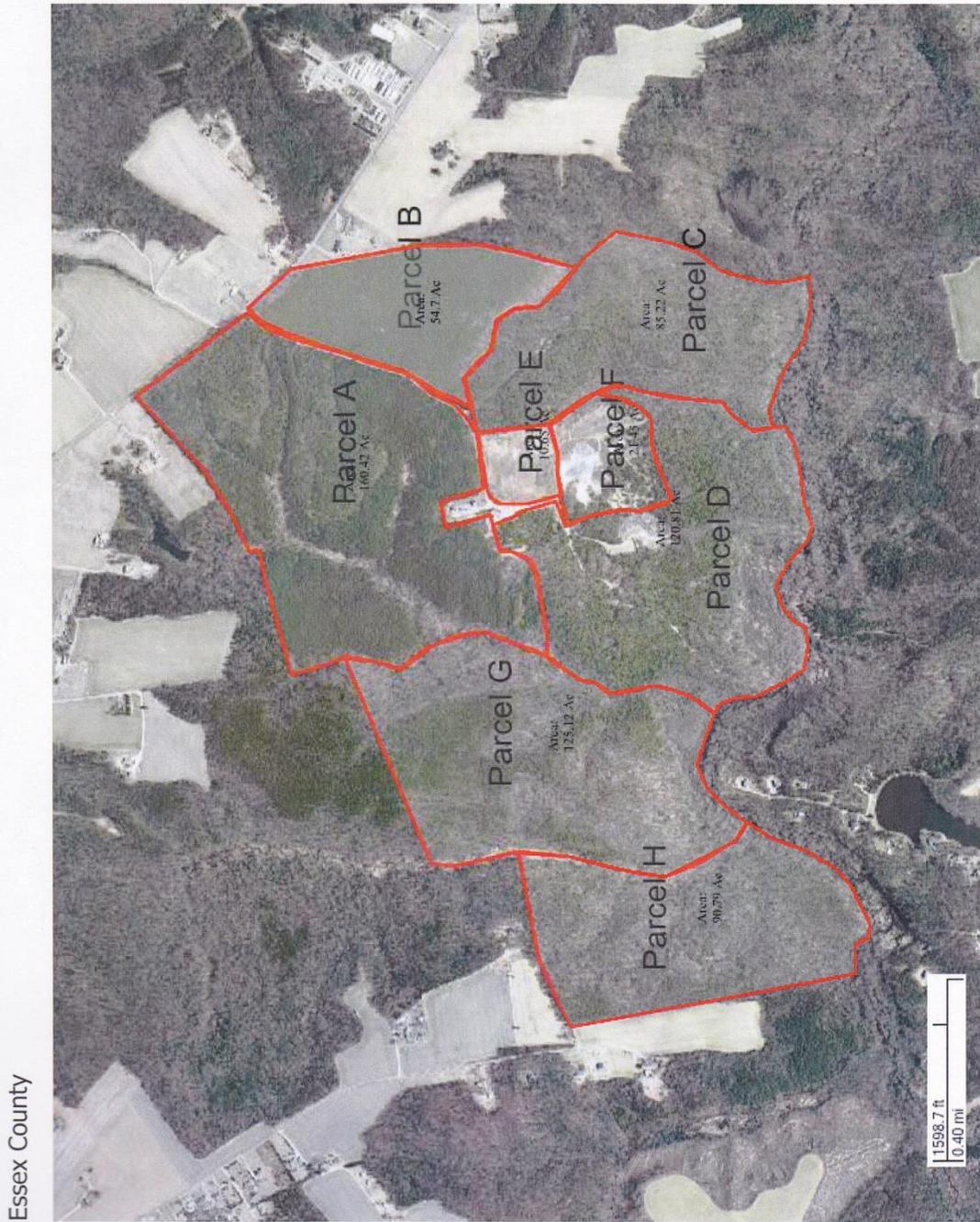
Archaeology to Locate Settlements

Dowsing to Locate Cemetery(ies)

Event Leasing

Performing Arts

DRAFT



POOR HOUSE TRACT - THIS IS A PLACE HOLDER FOR THE TIME BEING – I AM LOOKING FOR A BETTER ONE WITH PARCEL E CORRECTLY REPRESENTED!!

DRAFT

The DeSha Tract Discussion

For the present time, the DeSha Tract as mentioned in the DeSha Tract Introduction will be considered undevelopable until all environmental permit regulations have been reviewed and considered for their impact and related cost on the potential development.

Presently, there has to be major consideration given to the fact that there are wetlands and Waters of the US involved in the potential development of the DeSha Road Tract which are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency through the US Army Corps of Engineers who oversee the protection such environments at the federal level.

The development possibilities also fall under multiple Commonwealth of Virginia (State) regulatory agencies concerned with environmental concerns such as wildlife and water quality, to name a few. Most recognized at the State level is the State support of The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, which classifies the tract as a Resource Protection Area (RPA). In the Chesapeake Bay Protection Laws and Regulations and other multiple tiers of regulations that are associated with RPA classification, a 100' vegetated buffer of land is to be maintained between the mean high water mark of wetlands (marsh), or water (creek) landward prohibiting any land disturbance for development reasons. That buffer never changes in dimension.

There are certain exceptions/encroachments that can occur in a buffer area under certain conditions. The permitting process for such exceptions/encroachments requires the submission of plans indicating the proposed development and impacts, along with a Water Quality Impact Assessment (WQIA). Those are just the basics. There are often addendums to the requirements for the permit(s).

Because of the multiple tiers of regulatory agencies involved, the JPA should be completed addressing the concerns of each of the agencies in the regulatory tiers in the application and any activity proposed for the DeSha Tract that involves the possibility of land disturbance in the buffer area.

Where the tract is wide enough for development, there is marsh, and the land adjoining the marsh and over to the road has fairly severe topography. Also to be considered is the set back from the road right-of-way which will possibly make the land in the widest part of the parcel undevelopable.

Gaining access onto this tract to even develop something as simple as a gravel parking area is going to be a real challenge, from the standpoint of the permitting involved, and there is a strong possibility that the tract will not be permitted to have parking within the recorded boundaries of the tract.

There is presently ongoing discussion considering the possibility of purchasing the tract across the road (west) to compliment the one under consideration, but the environmental and physical land challenges as observed from the rough data available are as problematic on that side of the road. Discussions are ongoing with the Virginia Department of Transportation

DRAFT

(VDOT) concerning the parking issues and how they might be addressed. The outcome of this will likely create the need for a negotiated agreement between the Essex County Department of Parks and Recreation (ECDPR), and VDOT, and the Essex County Sheriff's Department as to what type of vehicular traffic related to the permitted creek activities can be managed there. Regulations related to such activities, if they evolve, will have to be approved/adopted by the County Board of Supervisors as recommended by the ECDPR.

Another interesting problem with the tract on the east side of the road is that the surveyed plat on record at the court house does not properly represent the actual road alignment. It is impossible to tell whether correcting that problem will provide more land to the site or remove land. But with the other constraints, that point is not a major concern at this time.

The Poor House Tract Discussion

The Poor House Tract of land is a large tract (675 +/- acres) with a history of a former "community settlement" there that is presently documented in writing. It is documented what settlements for the multiple descriptions of "disadvantaged" existed there, and of continuing historical interest the presently undocumented location of such settlements. Also of interest would be the location of any burial plots, as it is believed that possibly as many as 1,000 individuals might have been interred on that tract of land known historically as the Poor House.

The Poor House Tract of land is also presently parceled into eight parcels of land within the 675 acre (+/-) tract of land. This is done to be able to coordinate the availability of land within the tract for tree farming while using the land for recreational purposes at the same time. During certain times and processes of tree farming, certain parcels will have to be closed down to recreational use.

It is strongly noted here that the history of the "Poor House" and the process of tree farming offer many educational opportunities to be recognized as a cultural resource of the County, and as assets to be mentioned in the applications for grants for what will be a continuing development of the tract for recreational and community activities.

Previously introduced in **The Poor House Tract Introduction** is a list of the recreational activities that can be considered with the gracious size of the Poor House Tract. This report will address a schematic location plan for the entire tract's facilities to be constructed in phases as demand, time, and money allow. It will also address a schematic trail location for a multiuse trail, which will also serve as access into the park for the handicapped and emergency response vehicles. This trail will be the backbone or trunk trail from which other branch trails will emanate, and to which they will return.

The study addresses schematic locations for mountain biking, walking/running/fitness, and horseback riding trails, which will then be processed as a final designed and constructed as the completion of the first phase of the park's development. The trails in the first phase will be extensive enough to allow "reasonable access" to the entire tract for the biking, walking/running/fitness activities, and horseback riding activities.

DRAFT

The number of phases is not set at this time, in that a phase will be determined by the availability of funds allocated to the design and construction of an activity most vigorously demanded or for which grant funding has been approved.

For instance, horses and riders require a rather large and relatively flat parcel of land for the parking of truck drawn horse trailers and the unloading and loading of horses. There will also be a need for other space to pen horses and to store water and other related considerations.

The most immediate available location for that type of land requirement is in Parcel F. Parcel F is the large and relatively flat piece of landfill land adjoin the mound in Parcel E, which for a period of time will remain inaccessible for environmental reasons.

In the future, when there is a demand for multiuse and specialty playing fields, Parcel F is the logical place for that to occur. When that need becomes evident, then the accessibility for horses and all that comes with them, will be moved from Parcel F over to Parcel B, which is also relatively flat and very accessible to Kino Road. It will of course be readied to accept the horses when the sports fields development starts. It is desirable to keep that trailered traffic out of the park, as much as possible.

Master Composite of the Poor House Tract

The master composite of the Poor House Tract is a reference map of the total 675 acres in the tract broken into the eight parcels and their acreage used for the timbering on the tract. It is to be referred to when locating the individual parcels in the tract.

The Poor House Tract has water, power, septic, and telecommunications available in limited locations. In a discussion with the Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC), it was determined there is sufficient power entering the tract along the Poor House Road to service any needs arising from the development of the tract.

REFER TO THE POOR HOUSE COMPOSITE SITE MAP ABOVE.

Status and Cost

At this time it is to be noted that this study is based on very rough data which is not sufficient for more detailed planning/design decisions to be made and construction contract documents produced. The professionals to be selected to provide the services associated with the further detailed definition and delineation of the phase one project development and future projects are being considered as this report is being prepared.

Also, the planning to date has taken into consideration the most immediate access possible to tracts for the uses identified to be **Phase 1 development: hiking, biking, horses, and fitness**. The final location of some of those activities will change as future development of other various venues are developed in future phases.

DRAFT

That all being said, there is first an immediate need for a design program committee which will be in existence until the park is totally “built-out” and can be comfortably and completely assigned to the ECDPR for operation and maintenance. That committee will decide what is to occur in each phase of the development of the tracts and it will report all status to the Parks and Recreation Board of Directors.

The presentation of a Phase 1 design program in this document is purely hypothetical until it or a facsimile of it is approved by the board. But it is a starting point and it starts dealing with the ever fluctuating variations in cost.

Funding Related to Grant Opportunities

Educational opportunities and cultural events, although not normally listed as recreational activities, are to be strongly supported in an effort to increase the exposure of the tracts and their developed and potential benefits to the general public to reinforce the goals and objectives listed in grant applications. The successful receipt and assignment of grants is nearly always secured by the benefits of the resulting products to the public, and often with an emphasis on benefits to youth.

However and in addition, with an increasing percentage of the general population becoming older now and in the future, a greater emphasis is also being placed on the recreational and educational opportunities being offered to that older population.

There are many types of cultural and recreational trails being developed and exposed in the Commonwealth by the Virginia Tourism Agency such as the winery trails, the Civil War Trail, The Artisan’s Trail, and the recently developed and soon to be announced Oyster Trail, among others. Virginia is for Lovers is interconnecting the listings and exposure of all of these trails, and now that even includes canoe/kayak landing trails and more recently mountain biking and road bike trails.

The awareness of opportunities for funding and development of both tracts of land is continuously expanding, and the potential for economic development in what is becoming recognized as a primary Gateway to Tidewater Virginia has the possibility of being launched and maintained by the Essex County Department of Parks and Recreation development of the DeSha Road Tract and The Poor House Tract.

Following, is a summary of the present conditions and improvements on both tracts of land and related possibilities based on a list of identified possible recreational activities identified for the tracts. In the development of the tracts and the parcels in the Poor House Tract, there will necessarily be considered provisions of reasonable accessibility for the handicapped, as well as routes for emergency responders in case of an accident. For the time being, and due to the similarity in width of emergency access all-terrain vehicles and wheel chairs, the route there will be single trail route they will share. And during normal park operation, that trail route won’t be exclusive of any other activities.

DRAFT

The following is a site conditions assessment of the Poor House Tract by individual parcel:

SITES CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY									
DeShea Road Tact									
Acreage	Improvements	Power	Water	Sanitary	Gas	Telecomm			
	No	No	No	No	No	No			
Master Composite of the Poor House Tract									
Acreage	Improvements	Power	Water	Sanitary	Gas	Telecomm			
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	?			
Parcel A									
Acreage	Improvements	Power	Water	Sanitary	Gas	Telecomm			
160.42 Ac.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	?			
Parcel B									
Acreage	Improvements	Power	Water	Sanitary	Gas	Telecomm			
54.7 Ac.	No	No	No	No	No	No			
Parcel C									
Acreage	Improvements	Power	Water	Sanitary	Gas	Telecomm			
85.22 Ac.	No	No	No	No	No	No			
Parcel D									
Acreage	Improvements	Power	Water	Sanitary	Gas	Telecomm			
120.81 Ac.	Yes	Yes	?	?	No	Yes			
Parcel E									
Acreage	Improvements	Power	Water	Sanitary	Gas	Telecomm			
10.63Ac.	No	No	No	No	No	No			
Parcel F									
Acreage	Improvements	Power	Water	Sanitary	Gas	Telecomm			
21.45 Ac.	Yes	Yes (?)	No	No	No	No (?)			

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel A



Essex County

Parcel A in the Tract

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel A



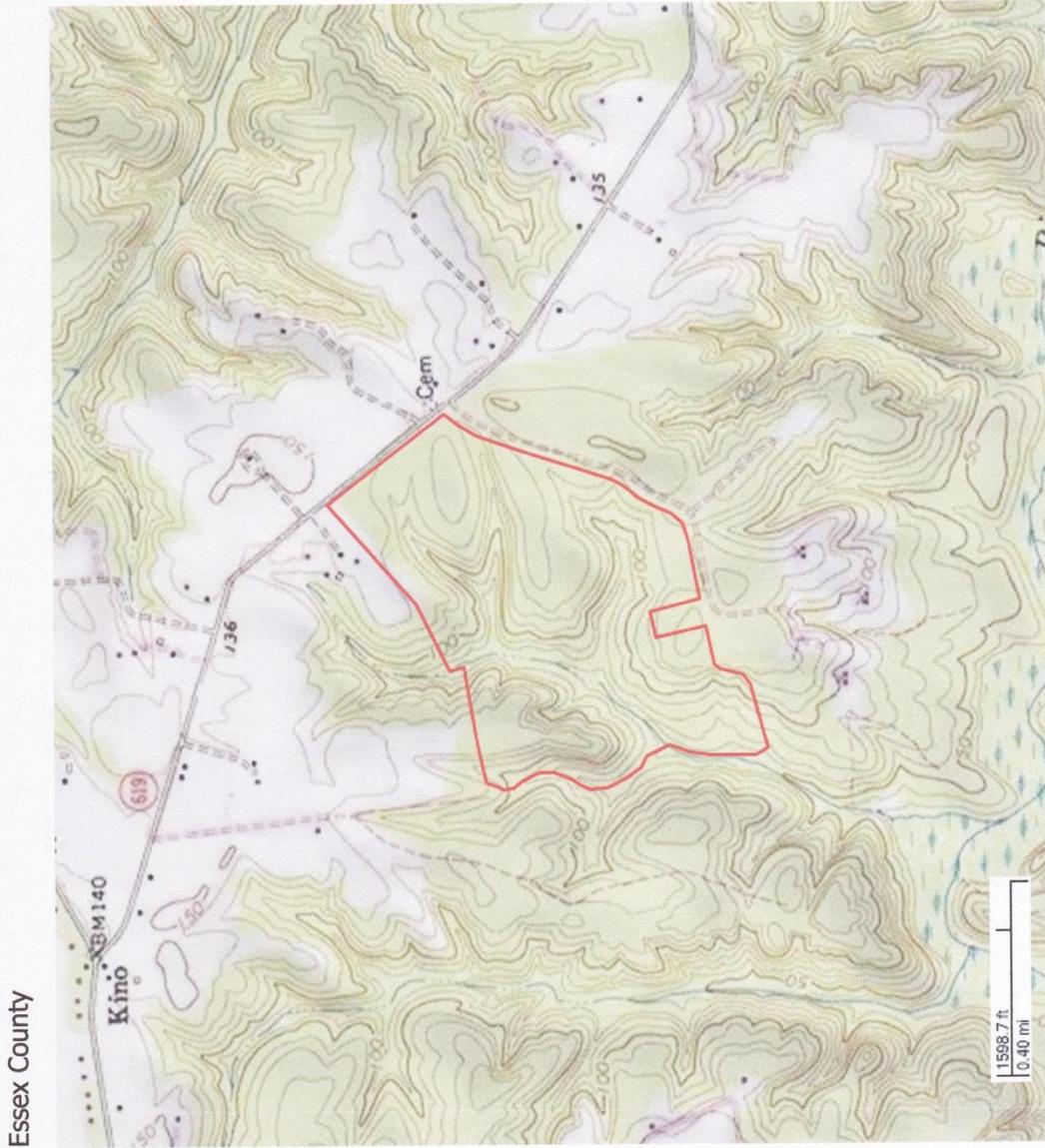
Essex County

Parcel A Aerial – Timber Stock in Green

DRAFT

Notes

Poor House Tract
Parcel A



Parcel A Topography – Limited flat land, moderately severe to severe slopes

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel B



Essex County

Parcel B in the Tract

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel B



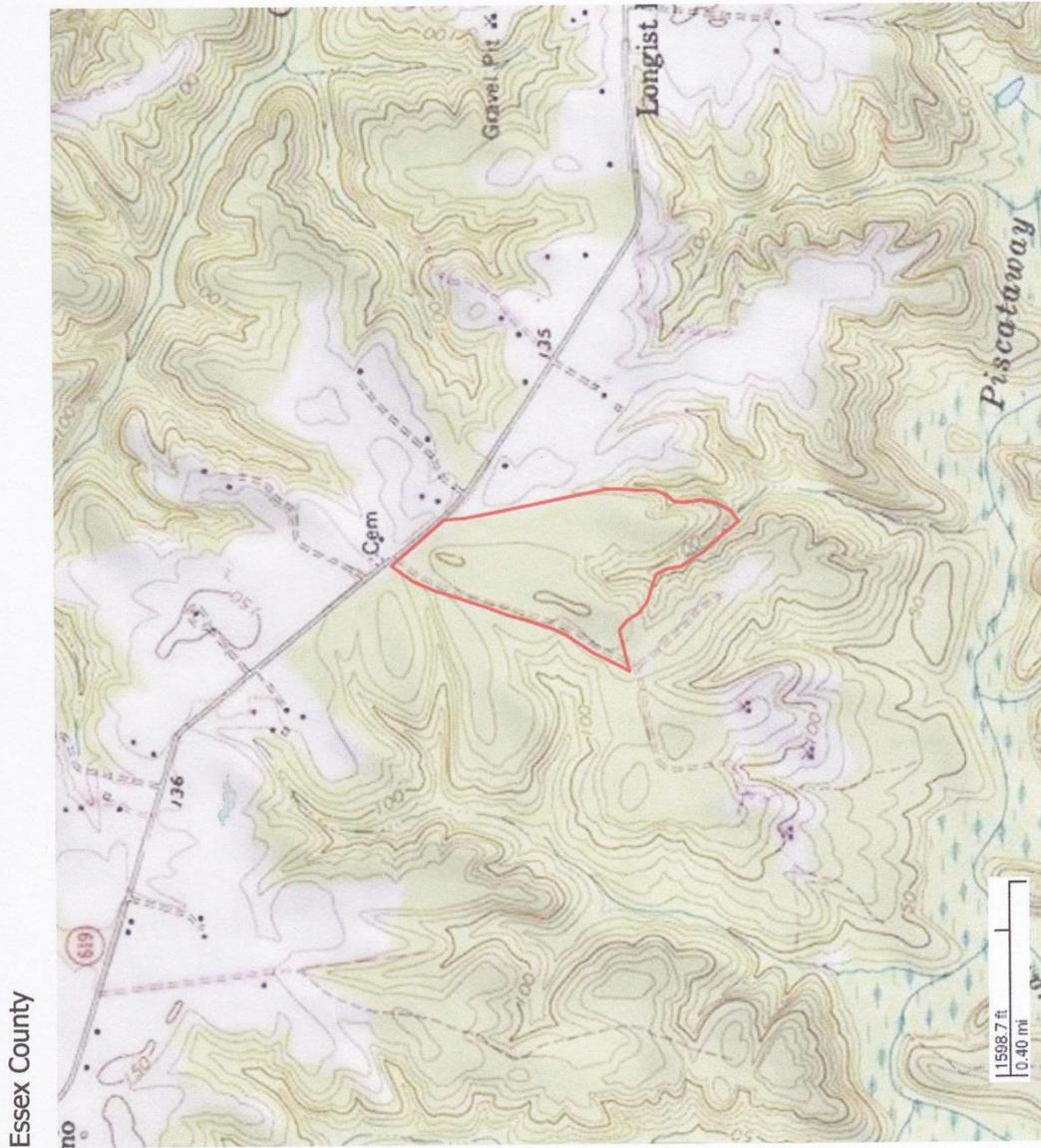
Essex County

Parcel B Aerial – Timber Stock in Green

DRAFT

Notes

Poor House Tract
Parcel B



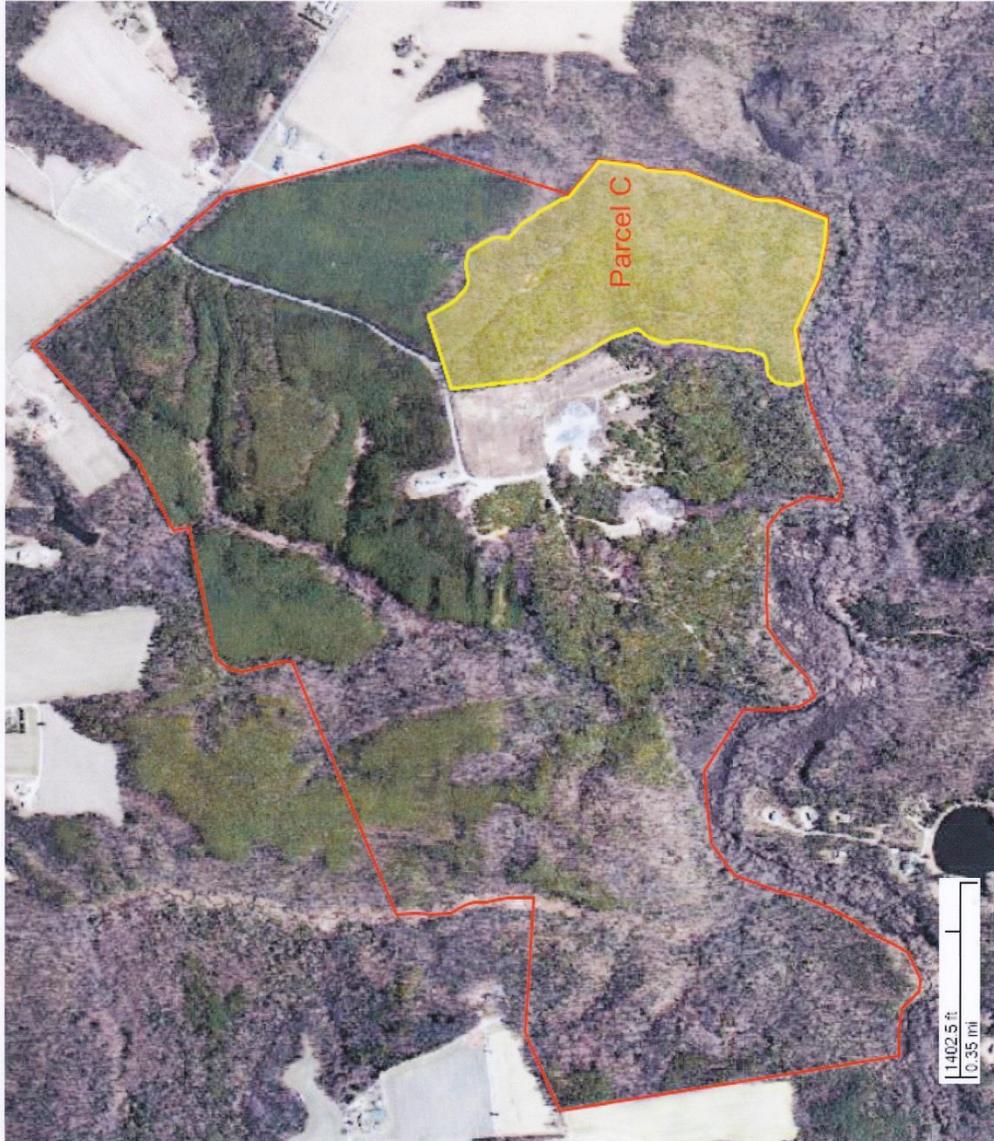
Parcel B Topography – The greatest amount of flat land and moderately severe to severe slopes

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel C



Essex County



Parcel C in the Tract

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel C



Essex County

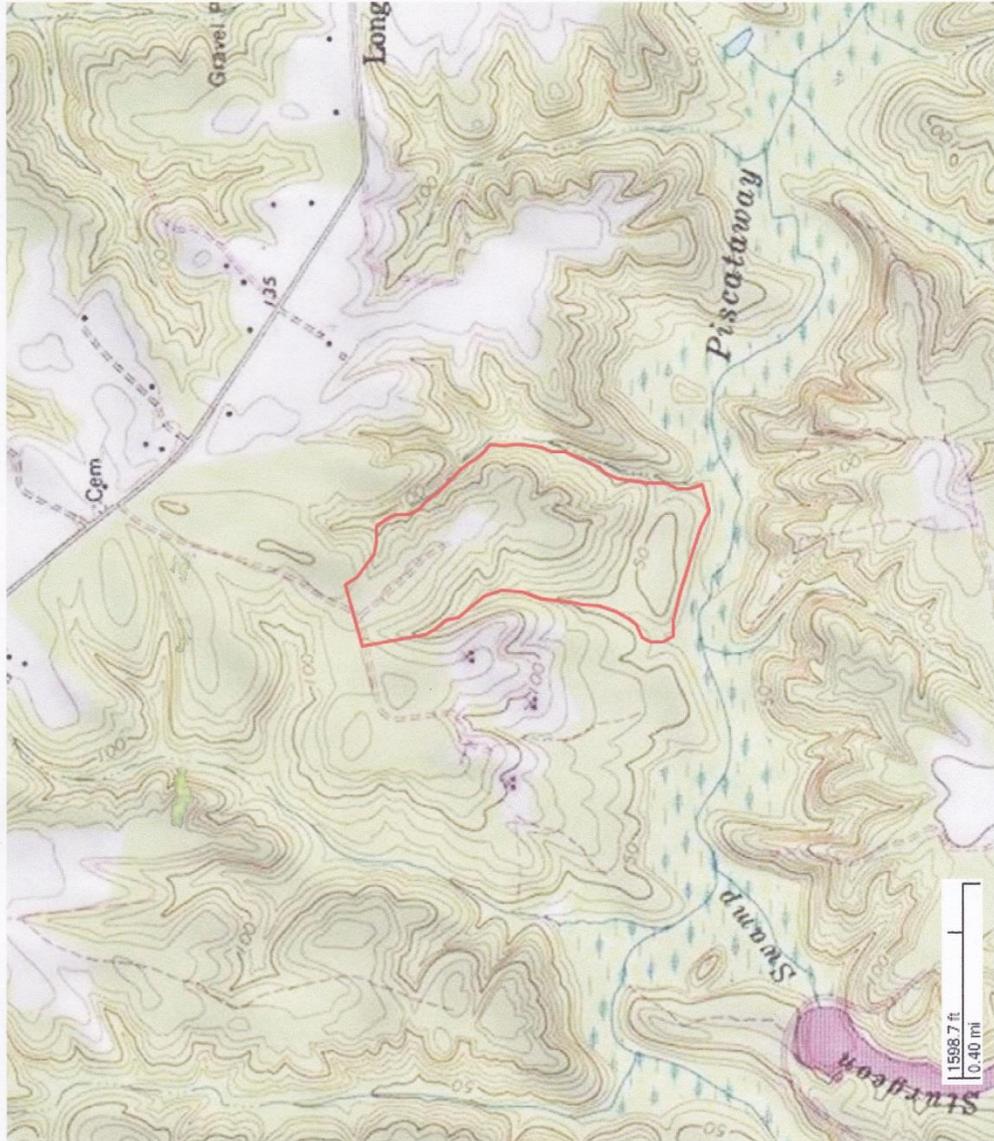
Parcel C Aerial – Recently Timbered

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel C



Essex County



Parcel C Topography – Limited flatland and moderately severe to severe slopes

DRAFT

Notes

Poor House Tract
Parcel D



Essex County



Parcel D in the Tract

DRAFT

Notes

Poor House Tract
Parcel D



Essex County

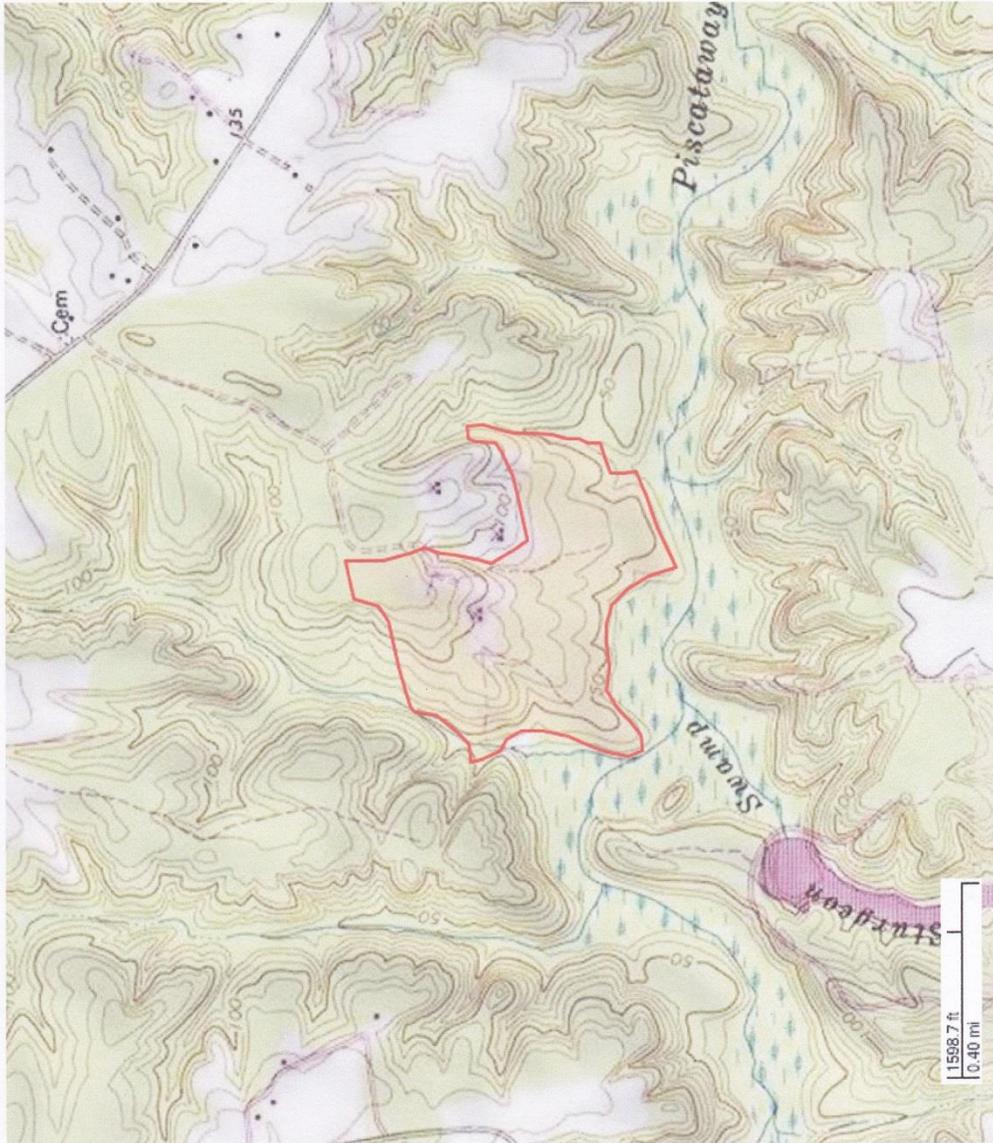
Parcel D Aerial – Young Timber Stock in Green

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel D



Essex County



Parcel D Topography – Generally gentle to moderately severe slopes

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel E



Essex County



Parcel E in the Tract

DRAFT

Notes

Poor House Tract
Parcel E

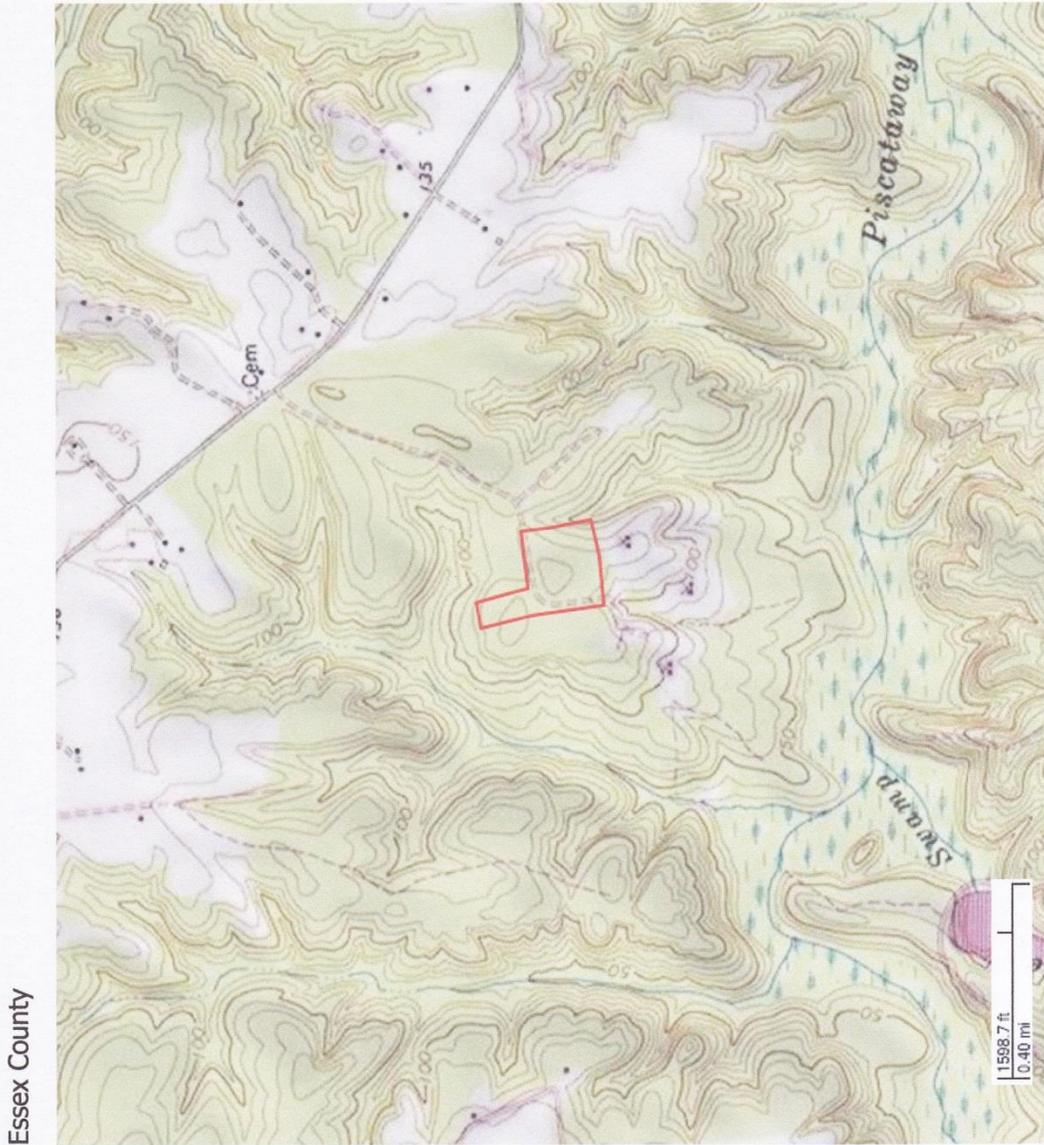


Essex County

Parcel E Aerial – Solid Waste and Landfill – Not Available

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel E



Parcel E Topography – For a few years, Parcel E is of limits and not to be considered as developable because of occupied by solid waste transfer station and the recently closed mound

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel F



Essex County

Parcel F in the Tract

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel F



Essex County

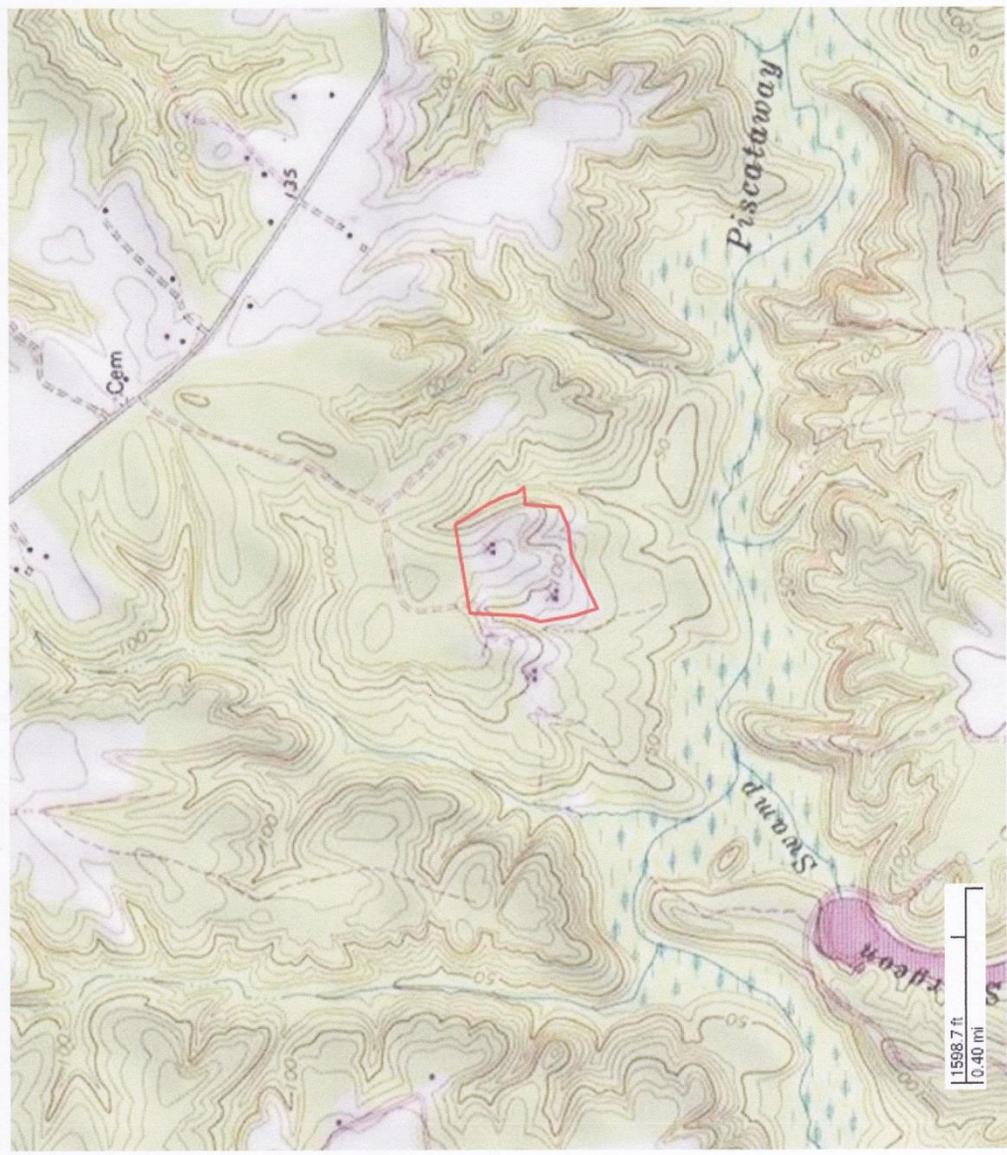
Parcel F Aerial – Immediately Available and Developable Parcel

DRAFT

Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel F



Essex County



Parcel F Topography – Parcel F is presently the most developable parcel with clear flatland and partially cleared gentle slopes.

DRAFT

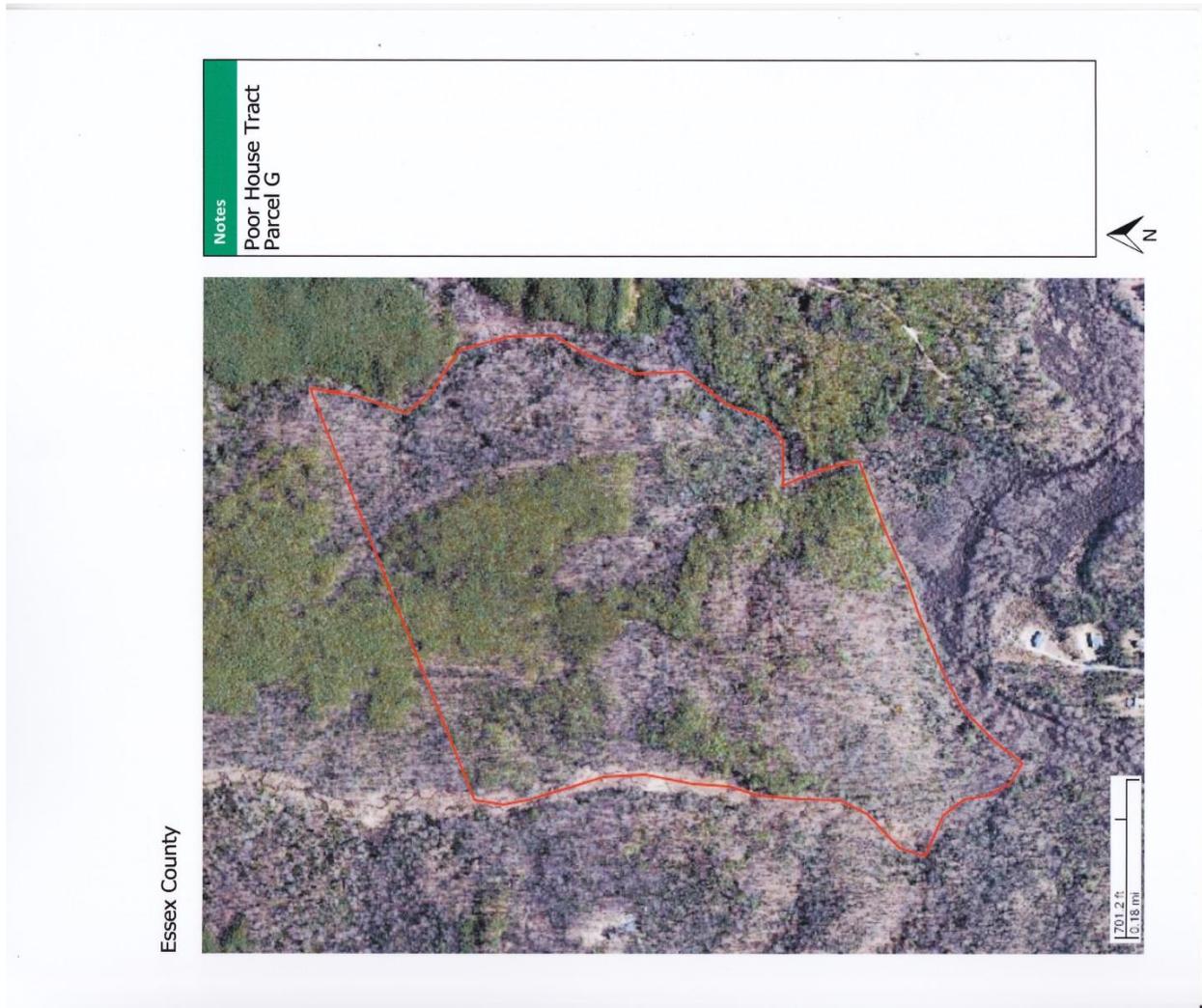
Notes
Poor House Tract
Parcel G



Essex County

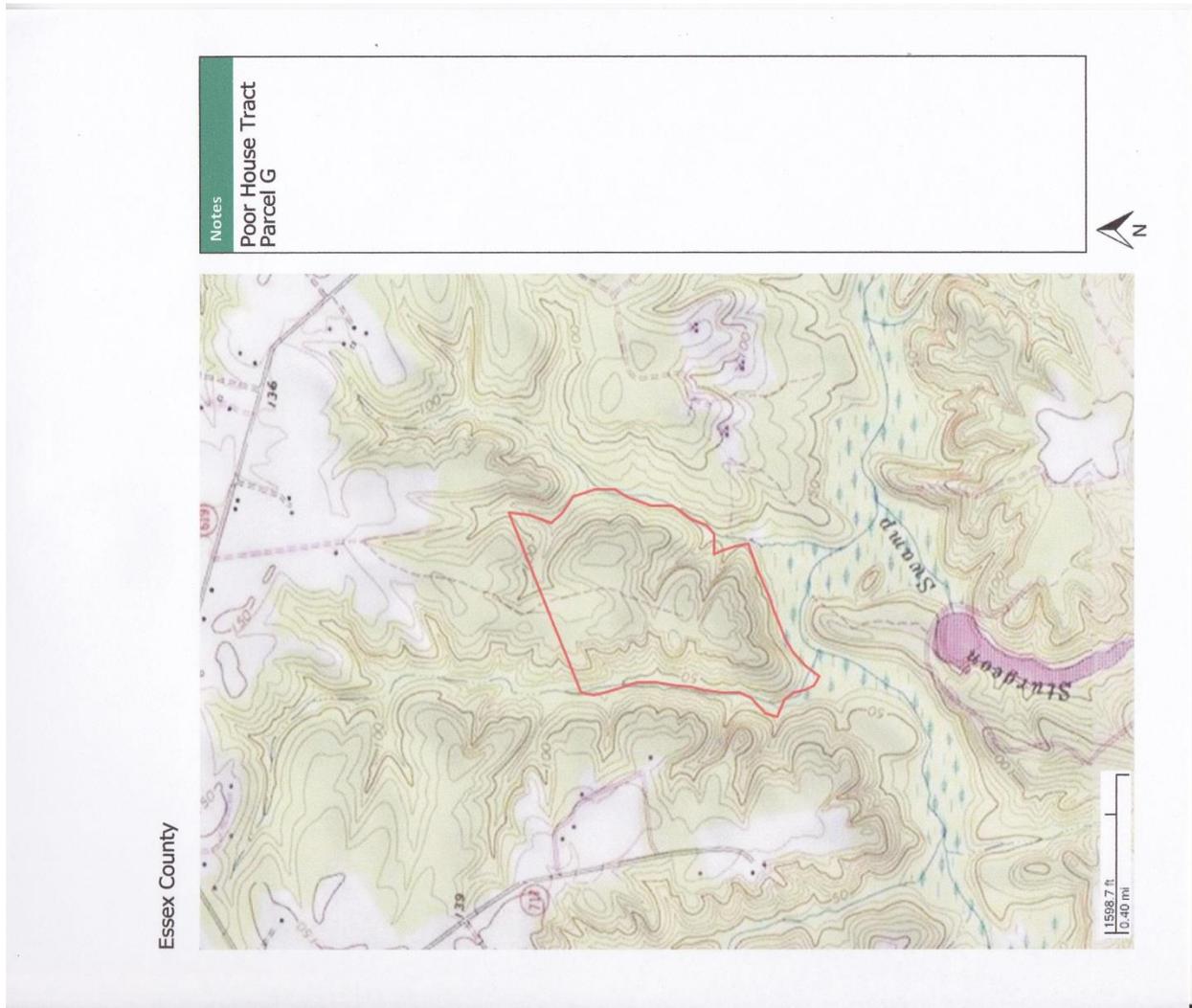
Parcel G in the Tract

DRAFT



Parcel G Aerial – Moderate Amount of Timber Stock

DRAFT



Parcel G Topography – Parcel G has relatively little flatland and limited moderately severe slopes with a majority of the land as severe slopes sloping into wetlands. It’s a challenging parcel with interesting possibilities.

DRAFT

Notes

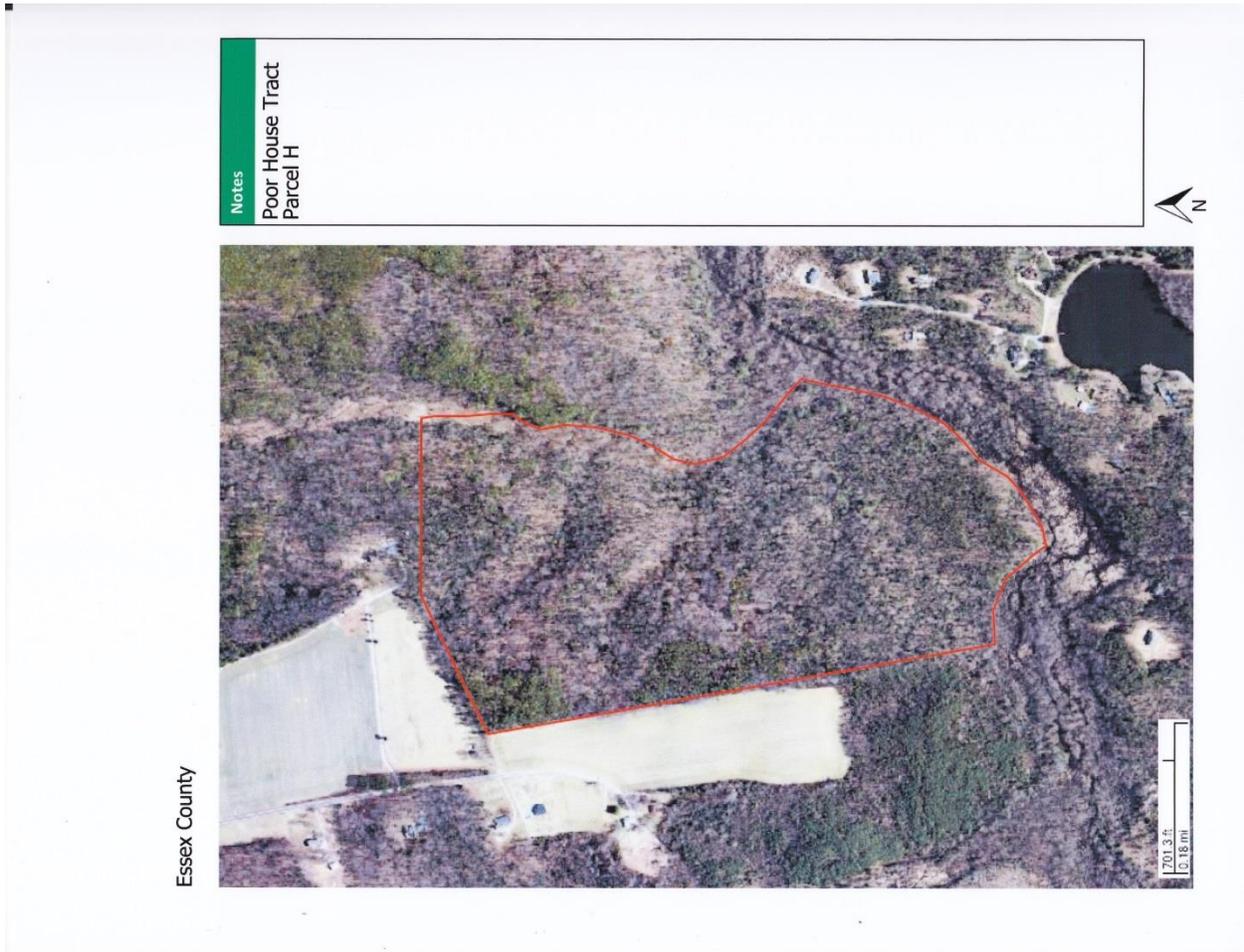
Poor House Tract
Parcel H



Essex County

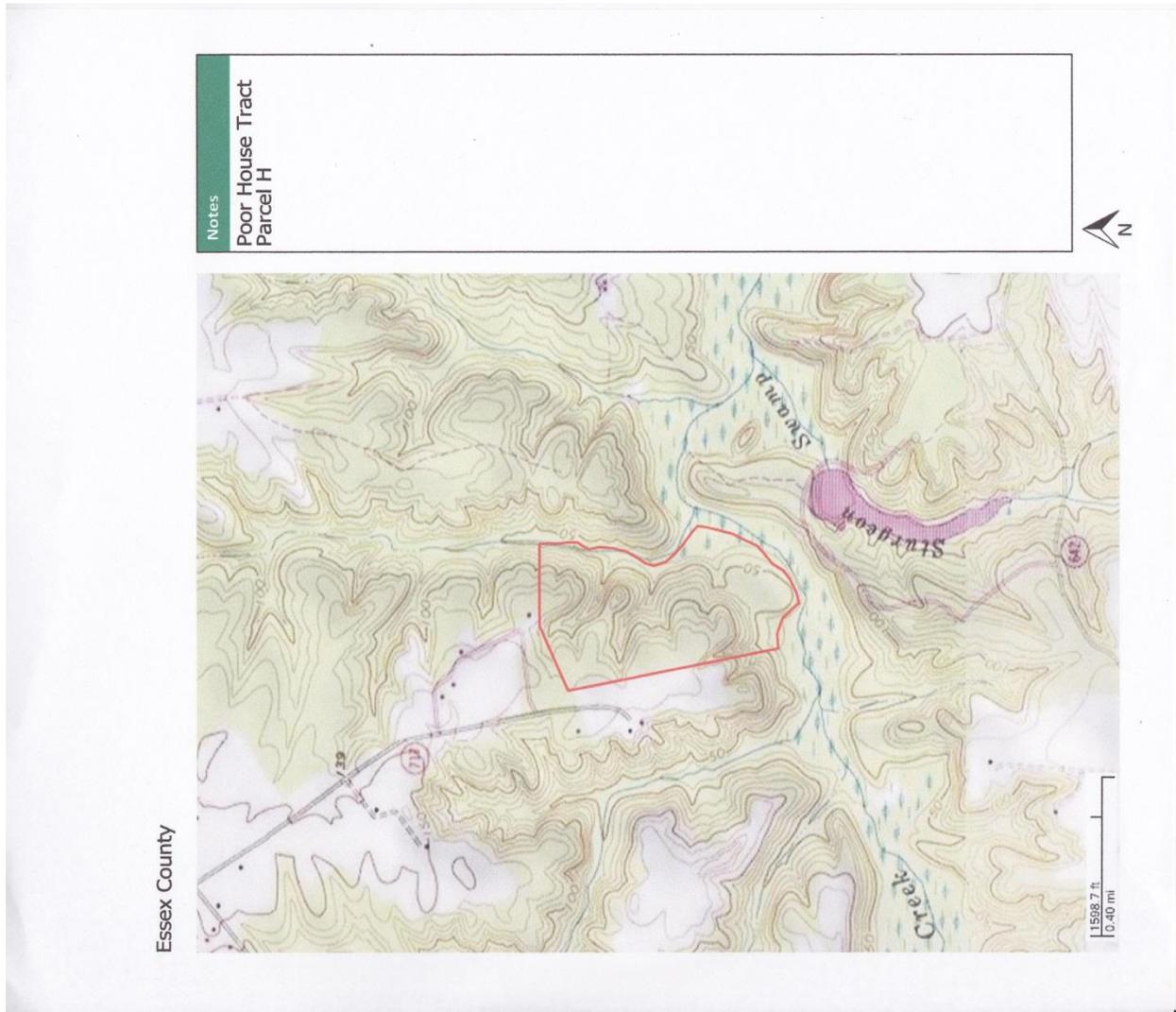
Parcel H in the Tract

DRAFT



Parcel H Aerial – Negligible Timber Stock and Very Challenging

DRAFT



Parcel H Topography – There is limited flatland on Parcel H which is occupied by wetlands and severe slopes. There is a small piece of flatland at the southern most foot of severe slopes at the south end of the parcel next to the wetlands, which offers some interesting possibilities.

DRAFT

The Phase 1 Design Program

The goal of the ECDPR is to get activity on both tracts as quickly as can be afforded, and because of the ease of permitting work and accessing the Poor House Tract, all phase I activities will be limited to the Poor House Tract.

The activities to be present in the first phase of the development of the two tracts will be the creation of multiuse trails, walking/hiking trails, mountain biking (biker) trails, and equestrian trails.

Phase 1 Design and Development Program

The following is the design and development program to get development activity and recreational opportunities designed, constructed, and started on the two tracts of land.

Phase 1 for the DeSha Tract will be site data gathering and the identification of all environmental constraints, and the beginning of the permitting process.

Phase 1 for the The Poor House Tract

A. The Phase 1 development of DeSha Tract and The Poor House Tract will involve the County contracting for the gathering of professionally prepared site information concerning surveyed tract boundaries, establishment of tract topographies based on 1' contours, and the delineation of Waters of the US, tidal and non-tidal wetlands, perennial streams, and RPAs. It will make sense to collect the same data for the DeSha Road Tract at the same time so there is a more detailed understanding of the environmental constraints to be considered on that tract.
(\$50,000 Allowance)

B. Next in The Poor House Tract Phase 1 will be the contracting for the demolition of an abandoned small shed on Parcels E and two connected equipment sheds on the Parcel F. Demolition debris will be properly disposed of in permitted locations.

(\$15,000 Estimate)

The demolition site will be fine graded.

(Allow \$20,000 for purchase and installation of gravel surface).

On Parcels D & E there is water, power, and telecom that need to be properly terminated where relative to new work so it can be reconnected at a later date in the Phase 1. The water at all locations is to be checked for potable classifications.

The flat part of the Parcels D and F are pretty well available for immediate use with a minimum amount of site preparation.

(\$35,000 Estimates Total)

DRAFT

C. There will be three Primary Stream Crossings (3 x \$10,000) and five Lesser Timber Stream Crossings (5 x \$7,000).
(**\$65,000 Stream Crossings**)

C. (Continued)

(**\$65,000 Stream Crossings**)

D. Four (4) miles of multi-use trail establishment
(**Trails \$23,000**).

E. In addition to the site preparation, there will be the following improvements in the mentioned locations:

Design and Construction Document Preparation (**\$11,300**)

Two Gates – Kino Road and the Entrance to Parcel F Through Parcel E that will be managed by the ECDPR. Both locations have a gate at the present time. New gates and enhanced security measures will be part of this design consideration. (**\$8,000**)

Signage will be installed at both gate locations. (**\$5,000**)

A picnic shelter for **XX** picnic tables in Parcel F and two satellite single table shelters located elsewhere. At one end of the multi table shelter will be a restrooms facility.
(**\$90,000**)

At the parcel E gate, in the location of the shed to be demolished, there will be an office/control station established. (**\$10,000**)

D. (\$124,300 in Construction Cost)

Total Estimated Cost to have the park available for use after Phase 1 - \$297,300.

(The initial expense of \$40,000 site documentation would be spread over the entire phasing of the park build out and other miscellaneous projects.)

Associations with other/unusual Grant Opportunities

There are many recreational and cultural trails and green infrastructure efforts evolving in the Commonwealth of Virginia, most being interconnected and “marketed” through the efforts of many State agencies and Department of Tourism.