

Conservation Stewardship Collaborative Project Summary

Project Title: Developing a Protocol for Inventorying, Monitoring, and Managing Natural Resources on Conservation Lands

Goal: Develop a procedural standard for conducting resource inventories and baseline reports for conservation lands.

Brief Description: There is no uniform protocol for inventorying and monitoring the plant, animal, and ecosystem resources on the conservation land of Rhode Island. For conservation easements, the Internal Revenue Service requires that a land trust maintain 'documentation sufficient to establish the condition of the property at the time of the gift.' In addition to meeting IRS requirements, the baseline documentation report provides information useful in the ongoing stewardship of the conservation easement and design of management plans. Furthermore this approach can be a model for all land held in conservation. However, significant challenge for land managers are following these standards and obtaining the necessary natural resource expertise. This project developed such a protocol, identified sources of data to support its application, and is educating the conservation community of its availability and use. The ultimate goal of this protocol is to develop rigorous conservation management that is both adaptable yet translatable from property to property.

Deliverables: The final product of this project is a how-to guide to prepare baseline inventories of conservation properties. The guide is posted on the CSC web site (<http://www.ricsc.org/Projects/2009/Summary.htm>) and the Land and Water Partnership Resource Library portal page.

Project Status: Completed in December 2009

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