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Focus Areas along the Taunton River: Natural Resources Inventory and Conservation Plan

Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts

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Focus Areas along the Taunton River

The following information is excerpted from a Natural Resource Inventory and Conservation Plan for the Taunton River Corridor prepared by the Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts in Feb of 1998. To learn more about the Wildlands Trust, please visit their web site at <http://www.wildlandstrust.org/>

Certain areas along the Taunton River are noteworthy for their geographic influence on the natural resources found in that area. Following are summaries of several of these areas which can be considered priority areas for conservation protection.

Tidal Oxbow

The Oxbow area of the river is located in the town of Raynham. The Oxbow area is one of the larger areas of low freshwater tidal marsh in the Taunton River watershed. This is also the highest ranked floodplain wetland in the study area with the highest diversity of wildlife and vegetative communities with many uncommon species. The globally rare Long's Bullrush, 5 species of mussels including the Triangle Floater, Brook Trout, Spotted Turtle, Box Turtle, 7 Vernal Pools supporting breeding Wood Frog and Spotted Salamanders, Black Duck, Wood Duck, Osprey, River Otter and Deer.

Poquoy/Taunton Confluence

This area of the Taunton River is located near the towns of Raynham and Middleborough. It is the largest floodplain forest on the Taunton River and one of the highest ranked floodplain wetlands. Wildlife and vegetative communities that can be found in this area include uncommon plants such as the Rattlesnake Fern and the Trout Lilly, 6 species of freshwater mussel including the Triangle Floater and the Eastern Pond Mussel, native Brook Trout, Spotted Turtle, Wood Turtle, Box Turtle, Blandings Turtle, Hognose Snake, breeding Northern Parula Warbler, Black Duck, Wood Duck, Woodcock, Red-shouldered Hawk, Canada Warbler, Eastern Bluebird, Otter and Mink.

Winnetuxet Confluence

This area of the river is located near the towns of Bridgewater and Halifax. It is one of the larger and more diverse floodplain wetlands on the west bank of the Taunton River. The Winnetuxet River is the largest and most intact floodplain meadow/shrub swamp with no trace of exotic vegetation. Significant stands of American Holly in the bottomland forests can be found on the south side of the Winnetuxet. Outstanding warmwater fish habitats, Spotted Turtles, Ruffed Grouse, Spotted Sandpiper and River Otter, 3 species of Tidewater Mucket, and Barn Owl can be found in this area.

Nemasket/Taunton Confluence

This area of the Taunton is located in the town of Middleborough. It is one of the best open bog-type wetlands as a possible result of the impoundment from the railroad line. Types of communities found here are Rattlesnake Fern, Bog Copper Butterfly, a noteworthy stand of Chain Fern which is the host plant for the rare Chain Fern Borer moth, native Brook Trout, Bridled Shiner, and abundance of Spotted Turtles, 5 moderately productive Vernal Pools, Musk Turtle, and the highest bird diversity of any site with 71 species including winter waterfowl, Wood Duck, Mallard, Virginia Rail, Woodcock, Ruffed Grouse, Bobwhite, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Coopers Hawk, Eastern Bluebird, Black-crowned Night Heron, Osprey, and Spotted Sandpiper. There is also a very high activity of Otter along the lower Nemasket with an abundant Deer population.

Town River Area

This site on the river is located in the town of Bridgewater and is characterized by a small leatherleaf bog with uncommon Atlantic White Cedar groves along the marsh border. It is the

most diverse floodplain wetland area studied with the most locally uncommon species. The invasive Purple Loosestrife is problematic in this area. Species found in this area include a very rich invertebrate life in the pools and marshes including abundant fingernail clams and mussel beds, a very good warmwater fish habitat, 5 Vernal Pools supporting Wood Frog and Spotted Salamander habitat, nesting Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Mallard, Spotted Sandpiper, Black-billed Cuckoo, Otter, Mink and Gray Fox.