

To: Reid Silva
Vineyard Land Surveying
From: Carlos Montoya
Native Plant Associates
Subject: Proposed Restoration Plan for
Wetlands at Chilmark Town Hall Site
Date: 7/14/23

Subject:

Revegetation and stabilization of wetland areas (highlighted on enclosed drawing by Vineyard Land Surveying) bordering on Town Hall Parking, running along Middle Rd., and then returning northwest/west beyond the new, elevated walkway.

1. Existing Conditions:

— Area A is the section of this wetland located between the edge of the Town Hall parking, on one side, and an existing stone wall at the interface with Area B, on the opposite side.

Area A, along Middle Rd., starts out dropping down to a low flat area. Approximately one third of it is open, and two-thirds is wooded. Directly off Middle Rd. is a small, newly-hydroseeded bank, from which a large culvert pipe empties into a drainage ditch. The balance of the area has major Red Maple trees, casting heavy shade underneath, plus one large leafless oak tree. An elevated walkway over Area A, begins at the parking area and runs across to the new Tri-Town ambulance facility.

Area A extends beyond (N/NW) the elevated walkway, per the enclosed drawing.

— Area B is also low, about 1/3d open (potentially), with major Red Maples growing in the back 2/3d, heavily shading the understory. The potentially open area along Middle Rd. appears to be treeless, but is completely overgrown at this time with invasive plants and vines, which have actually reached the upper reaches of the trees, behind, and completely block the view in.

Area B also extends beyond the elevated walkway, per the enclosed drawing.

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2. Recommendations:

— Area A:

The Area A bank, directly off Middle Rd., may need more cover than it received from the recent hydroseeding to assure long-run soil stability. If so, it is recommended to plant native 1-gallon Switchgrass plants on 3' centers, heavily mulched with seasoned re-ground wood chips (from John Keene, at half the price of bark mulch).

The existing grassy cover at the main open area, beyond, could just be left in place and mowed periodically. Or, alternatively, the existing cover could be stripped - and the soil rototilled and raked out - to be planted in native Switchgrass (3'-4', when established) in 1-gal. size, installed on 4'-centers.

A Switchgrass planting could be diversified with native wildflowers that have the height to work alongside Switchgrass: Joe Pye Weed, Hyssop-leaved Boneset, Common Boneset, and Sweet Goldenrod.

The relatively bare understory below the Red Maples - on both sides of the elevated walkway - could just be left in its current condition. The understory area may be difficult to plant in, because of the often intense surface root system of Red Maples. It is possible, however, that the understory could be top-dressed with soil and seeded in a shade-tolerant, cool-season native fescue grass seed mix (for example). Some of the outside edges of the understory area will have sun exposure and could probably be planted, using native Sweet Pepper Bush/*Clethra alnifolia*, on 3'-centers, in a 3-gallon size (or above). It could also be used in the Area A section on the far side of the elevated walkway. NOTE: Sweet Pepper Bush is already growing in the shady sections of both Area A and B.

An arborist may need to be hired to determine if the large leafless oak in area A is alive and will leaf out again and - if not - it should probably be cut down, cut up, and removed.

— Area B:

First steps here should be to cut down and remove the heavy invasive growth in the section closest to Middle Rd. Once removed, the root system for these, across the entire area, should be carefully/lightly dug up, using a small Bobcat-type excavator, with a manual laborer pulling out and collecting roots material, as soil gets turned over by the excavator bucket.

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Clearing the invasives will allow a visual assessment of soil conditions and lead to an appropriate recommendation for revegetation. A mix of native Sweet Pepperbush, Highbush Blueberry, and Winterberry could be appropriate, provided that soil conditions and moisture levels there are a good match. Recommended plant material sizes for these is 3-gal. and above, if containerized; 3' and above, if ball-and-burlapped/B&B.

Sweet Pepper Bush, planted on 3'-centers, would be appropriate for any light shade areas of Area B, including on the far side of the elevated walkway.

3. Miscellaneous Notes:

— Landscape contractors receiving bid invitations to execute restoration work in Areas A and B will need to specify plant quantities and costs.

— New plantings will need reliable irrigation to achieve survival, in good condition, through to 'establishment' (at the end of the third growing season).