Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

SEPIESSA POINT RESERVATION

West Tisbury, MA

Land Management Plan

Approved by vote of the Edgartown advisory board: July 18, 1991
Approved by vote of the land bank commission: August 26, 1991
Approved by secretary of environmental affairs: October 16, 1991
Amended by the West Tisbury Town Advisory Board and MVLBC (August 20, 2019) *see page 49.*

August 20, 2019

Table of Contents

Figure Legend

I. Introduction

Management planning for Sepiessa Point Reservation has been a lengthy affair. Two years of field work and planning have gone into the production of this document. There have been at least five different public meetings where input has been given. The land bank staff met regularly for six months with interested scientists and with representatives of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. In fact, this management plan is based conceptuallyon a series of planning guidelines provided to the land bank commission by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and others (EOEA, 1991).

The natural outcome of an extensive planning period is an extensive planning document. As the management plan now stands there are three sections. These are the inventory, the land management goals and objectives, and the implementation schedule.

The inventory section contains most of the information gathered so far about the property. This information is presented graphically on maps wherever possible. These maps are included in the text for immediate reference. While there are still some gaps in the database, these are pinpointed in the report. An important element of the land management objectives is the continued updating and improvement of the natural resource inventory over the coming years.

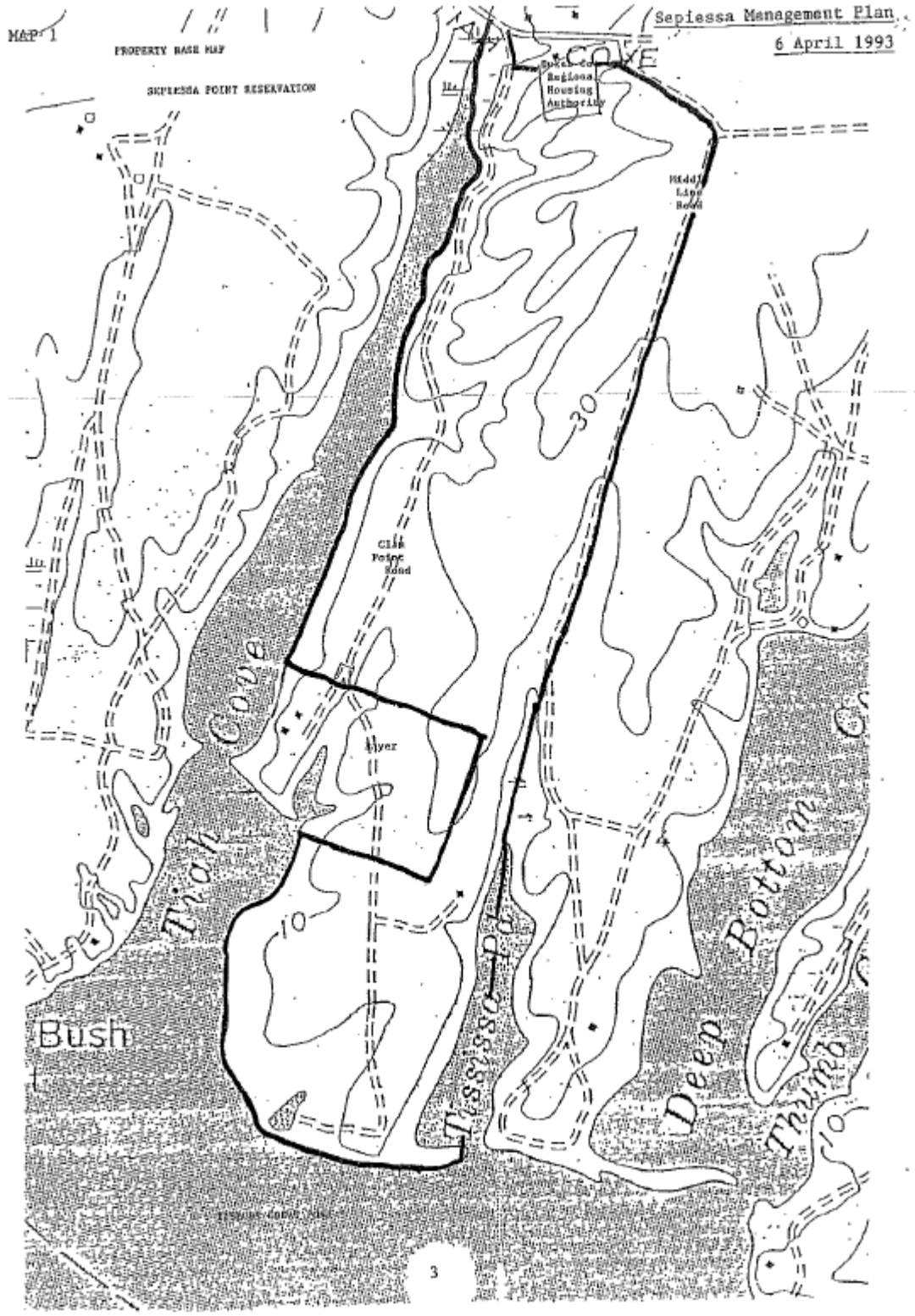
The land management goals and objectives section lays out the approach that the land bank wishes to take in the management of Sepiessa Point. A number of alternative management scenarios were considered as part of the planning process before a final decision was reached. These alternatives are presented in appendix B with a brief explanation of why they were chosen or not chosen.
The final section on implementation lays out the projects that would be slated for immediate action. They are explained in detail with a schedule that gives monthly goals for completion. The land bank commission presents this inventory, these goals and objectives, and this implementation schedule as a comprehensive land management plan for Sepiessa Point Reservation.

II. Inventory

A. Property Base Map (Map 1) and Regional Base Map (Map 2)

Sepiessa Point Reservation is a 164.4-acre parcel located in West Tisbury, Massachusetts at 41 °21' 07 11 north latitude, 70°3s' 36 11 west longitude (USGS, 1972). It is accessed from Edgartown Road by New Lane and Tiah's Cove Road (see map 1). The boundary is generally as follows: eastwardly by Tiah's Cove Road and neighboring property, including a parcel owned by the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority, to Middle-Line Road; southwardly along the center line of Middle Line Road and running through the center of Tississa Pond to Tisbury Great Pond; then running westwardly and northerly by Tisbury Great Pond shore; eastwardly, northerly, and westwardly again around the Bayer in-holding back to the shore of Tiah's Cove; and northwardly along the shore to Tiah's Cove Road. A full description exists in the Dukes County deed (bk. 566, pg. 317)
The property base map is a copy of part of the USGS Tisbury Great Pond Quadrangle which has geographical information updated to 1972. When reduced to 8 1/2" x 11" size the scale of the property base map is approximately 1" = 660' (see map 1). True north is at the top of the page. The regional base map is a copy of parts of both the USGS Tisbury Great Pond and Vineyard Haven Quadrangles. It shows a circled area surrounding Sepiessa Point that is approximately 1,640 acres in size (see map 2).

Map 1: Sepiessa Point Reservation Property Base Map



Map 2: Sepiessa Point Reservation Regional Base Map

REGIONAL BASE MAP - SEPIESSA POINT RESERVATION

B. Known or Potential Physical Characteristics:

1. Geology (Map 3)

Map 3 demonstrates that the entire 164 acres at Sepiessa Point is in the geologic type designated as "outwash from the Martha's Vineyard moraine" (Simmons, 1992). The alluvial plain is characterized here and elsewhere by gentle slopes and sandy soils. The Pleistocene ice sheet stopped its southern advance at the point where moraine meets the outwash plain today. Vast loads of sediment were deposited in the area that is now Sepiessa Point during summer melting of the glacier. Underneath today's surface soils are large deposits of clean, well-sorted sand and gravel. According to Chamberlain, "you could keep digging until you had gone as far down as a five-story building, and still you would be in sand and gravel" (Chamberlain, 1964). A fault line runs along the eastern boundary of Sepiessa Point.

2. Topography (Map 4)

The land at Sepiessa rises out of the Tisbury Great Pond at 8' above sea level. It slopes up to a maximum elevation of between 30 and 40 feet. The southern 40 acres at the point is all below 20 feet in elevation, as is most of the area within 400 feet of Tiah's Cove. The following is the approximate acreage within each 10 feet of elevation:

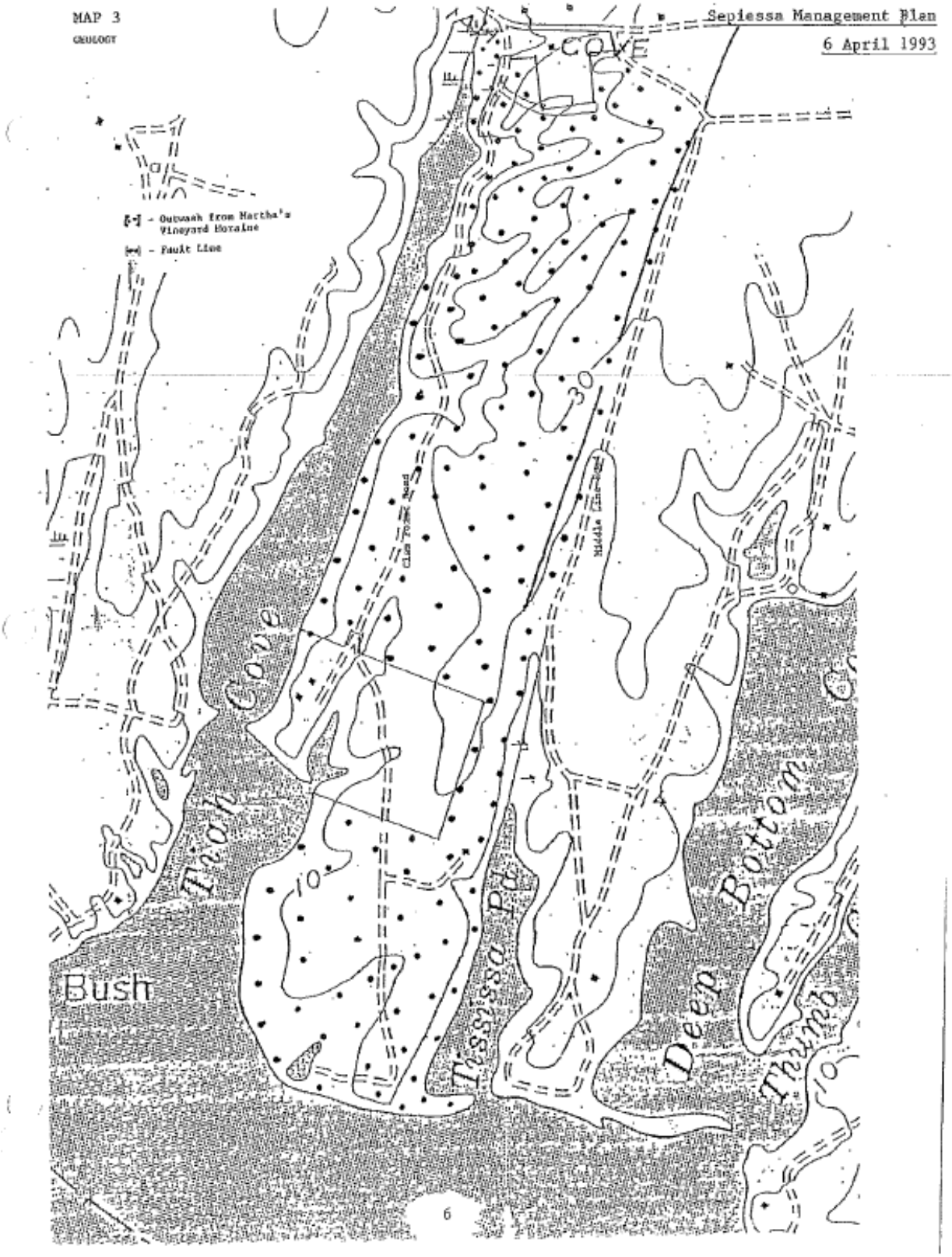
0' – 10'	36.7 acres (22%)
10' – 20'	66.1 acres (40%)
20' – 30'	40.8 acres (25%)
30' – 40'	20.8 acres (13%)
Total:	**164.4 acres (100%)**

3. Slope (Map 5)

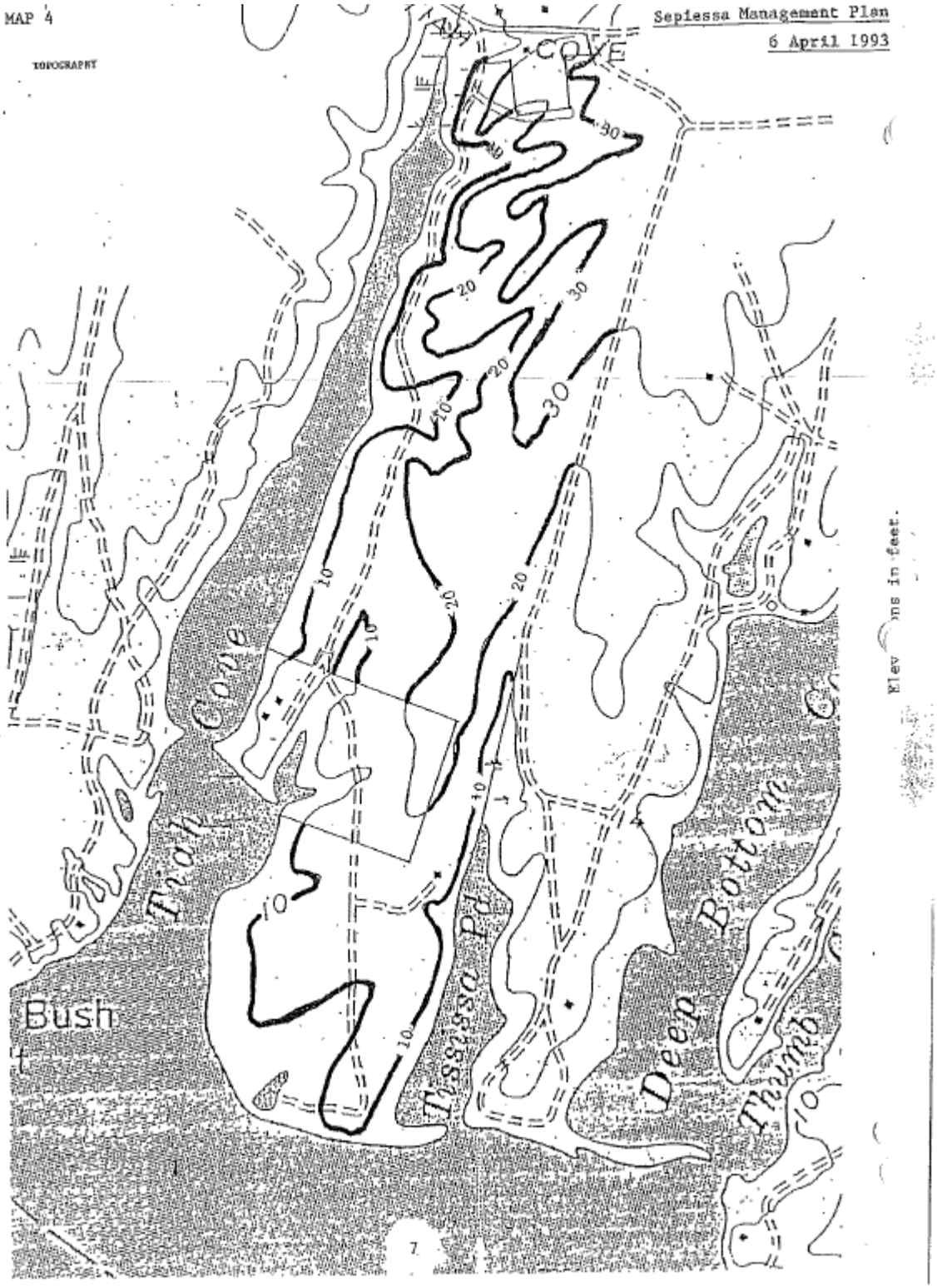
Sepiessa Point is generally flat, but becomes slightly steeper right at the western edge of the property along Tiah's Cove (West Tisbury Planning Board, 1987). Nowhere does the slope exceed 15% according to existing maps, and a cursory survey of the property revealed nothing greater than a 12%' slope. The approximate areas of the different slope categories are:

0 – 3%	49.4 acres (30%)
3 – 8%	94.0 acres (57%)
8 – 15%	21.0 acres (13%)
Total:	**164.4 acres (100%)**

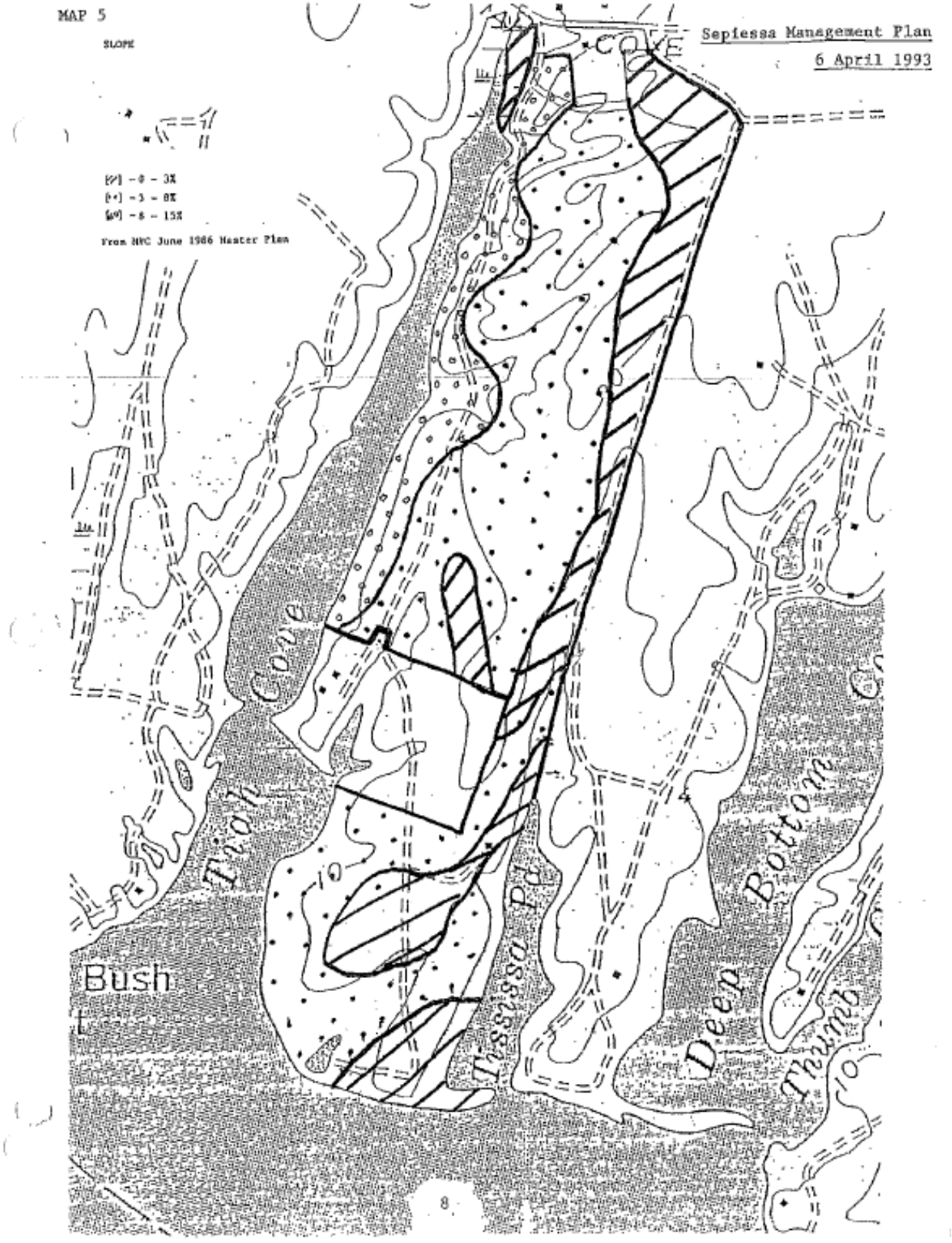
Map 3: Sepiessa Point Reservation Geology Map



Map 4: Sepiessa Point Reservation Topography Map



Map 5: Sepiessa Point Reservation Slope Map



4. Soils

There are three general soil types at Sepiessa (see map 6). These are Riverhead, Carver, and Pompton. All are very deep, well drained and excessively drained, loamy and sandy soils (USDA/SCS, 1986). A breakdown of the vital statistics for each soil type follows:

1) Carver loamy coarse sand: this is a very deep and excessively drained soil. The surface layer is generally about three inches of dark, grayish-brown loamy coarse sand. The subsurface layer is about one inch of light, brownish -gray loamy coarse sand. The subsoil is generally about ten inches of strong brown, loamy coarse sand and then about sixteen inches of a brownish yellow coarse sand. The substratum below that is a light yellowish brown coarse sand that will go to a depth upwards of sixty inches. Permeability is very rapid throughout this soil type (greater than 20 inches per hour), and consequently the available water capacity is quite low (0.03 - 0.10 inches of water per inch of soil in the subsoil layer).The soil is especially droughty in late summer. Moist bulk densities range from 1.3 - 1.5 grams per cubic centimeter in the subsoil to 1.55 g/cm3 at sixty inches. Water storage and root penetration are not restricted even at the lower depth. The site index for pitch pine is only 45. The depth to the seasonal high water table is greater than six feet. At Sepiessa there are three categories of Carver loamy coarse sand. These are designated by slope. The Carver A soils are as described above on zero to three percent slopes. The Carver B soils are as described above on three to eight percent slopes. The Carver C soils are generally as described above, but formed on the side slopes of swales and have eight to fifteen percent slopes.

Carver A	17.1 acres (10%)
Carver B	15.6 acres (9%)
Carver C	27.2 acres (17%)
Total:	**59.9acres (36%)**

2) Pompton sandy loam: This is a very deep and somewhat poorly drained soil. It occurs in some of the low areas that border the pond. The surface layer is typically ten inches of very dark, grayish-brown sandy loam. The subsoil consists of approximately twenty-two inches of mottled, olive brown sandy loam, and the substratum is sixty plus inches of light brownish gray and light brown, mottled loamy sand. Permeability is moderate or moderately rapid in the upper layers (0.6 - 6.0 in/hr) and rapid or very rapid down lower (>6 in/hr). Available water capacity is moderate (0.12 -0.16 inches of water per inch of soil in the subsoil layer), and the seasonal high water table ranges from one to two feet. This is a wetland soil. Moist bulk densities range from 1.50 -1.65 grams per cubic centimeter in the subsoil up to 1.70 g/cm3 at sixty inches. Water storage and root penetration are restricted throughout. The site index for white oak is 40. This soil

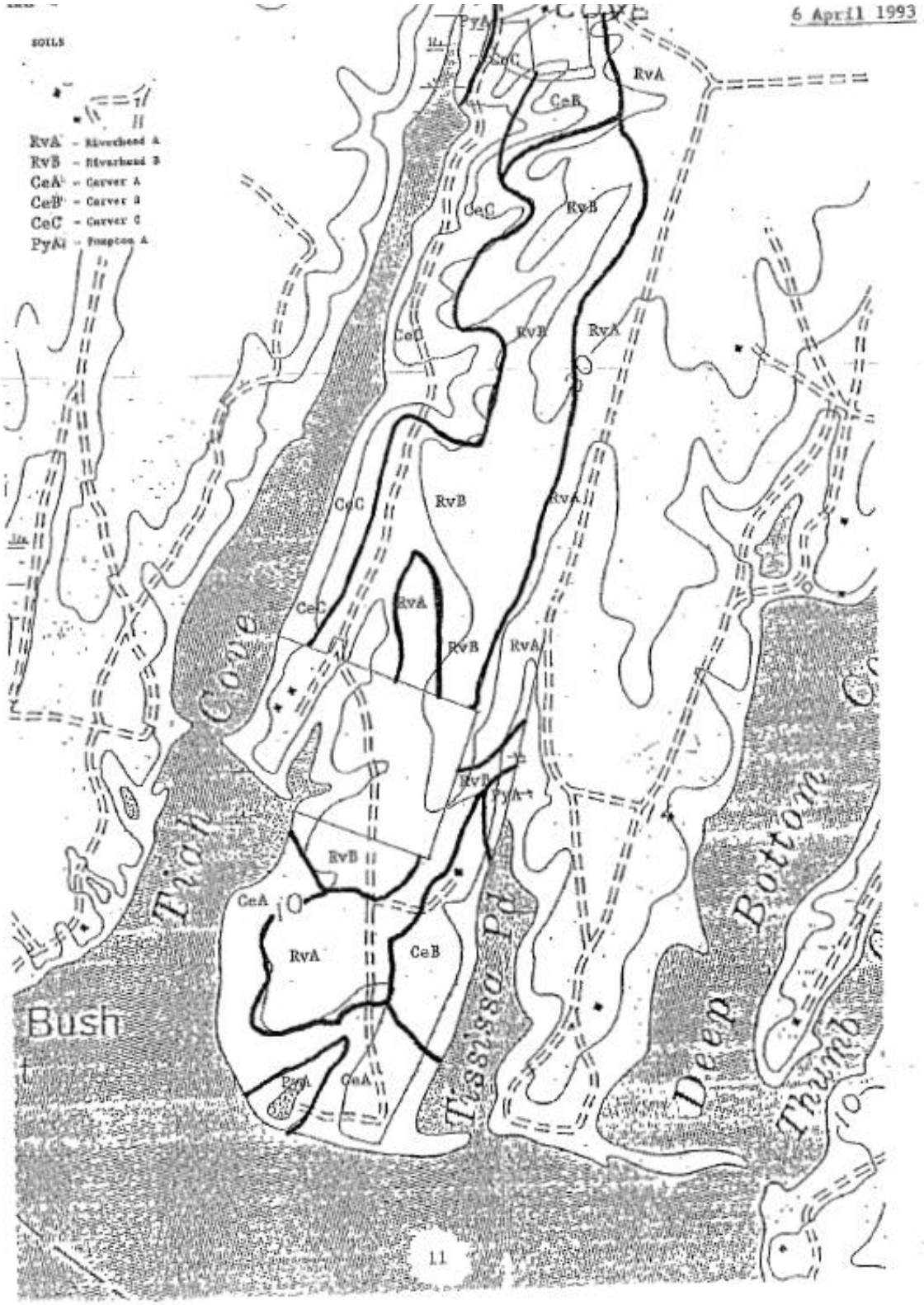
occurs on zero to three percent slopes.

Pompton A	6.2 acres (4%)

3) Riverhead sandy loam: this is a very deep well drained soil. It is the most productive soil at Sepiessa. The surface layer is usually about four inches of dark grayish brown sandy loam. The subsoil consists of twelve inches of yellowish brown sandy loam and eight inches of yellowish brown loamy sand. Underneath the subsoil is a layer of brownish yellow coarse sand that exceeds sixty inches in depth. Permeability is moderately rapid in the upper layers (2.0 - 6.0 in/hr) and very rapid in the substratum (>20 in/hr). Available water capacity is moderate (0,04 - 0.13 inches of water per inch of soil in the subsoil layer), and the depth to the seasonal high water table is greater than six feet, Moist bulk densities range from 1, 25 - 1.55 grams per cubic centimeter in the subsoil up to 1,65 g/cm3 at sixty inches. Water storage and root penetration are restricted only at depths approaching 60 inches. The site index for white oak is 55. Riverhead soils meet the soil requirements for prime farmland. Two types of Riverhead soil occur at Sepiessa. These are separated by slope - the A soils on zero to three percent slopes, and the B soils on three to eight percent slopes.

Riverhead A	43.6 acres (27%)
Riverhead B	54.7 acres (33%)
Total:	**98.3 acres (60%)**

Map 6: Sepiessa Point Reservation Soils Map

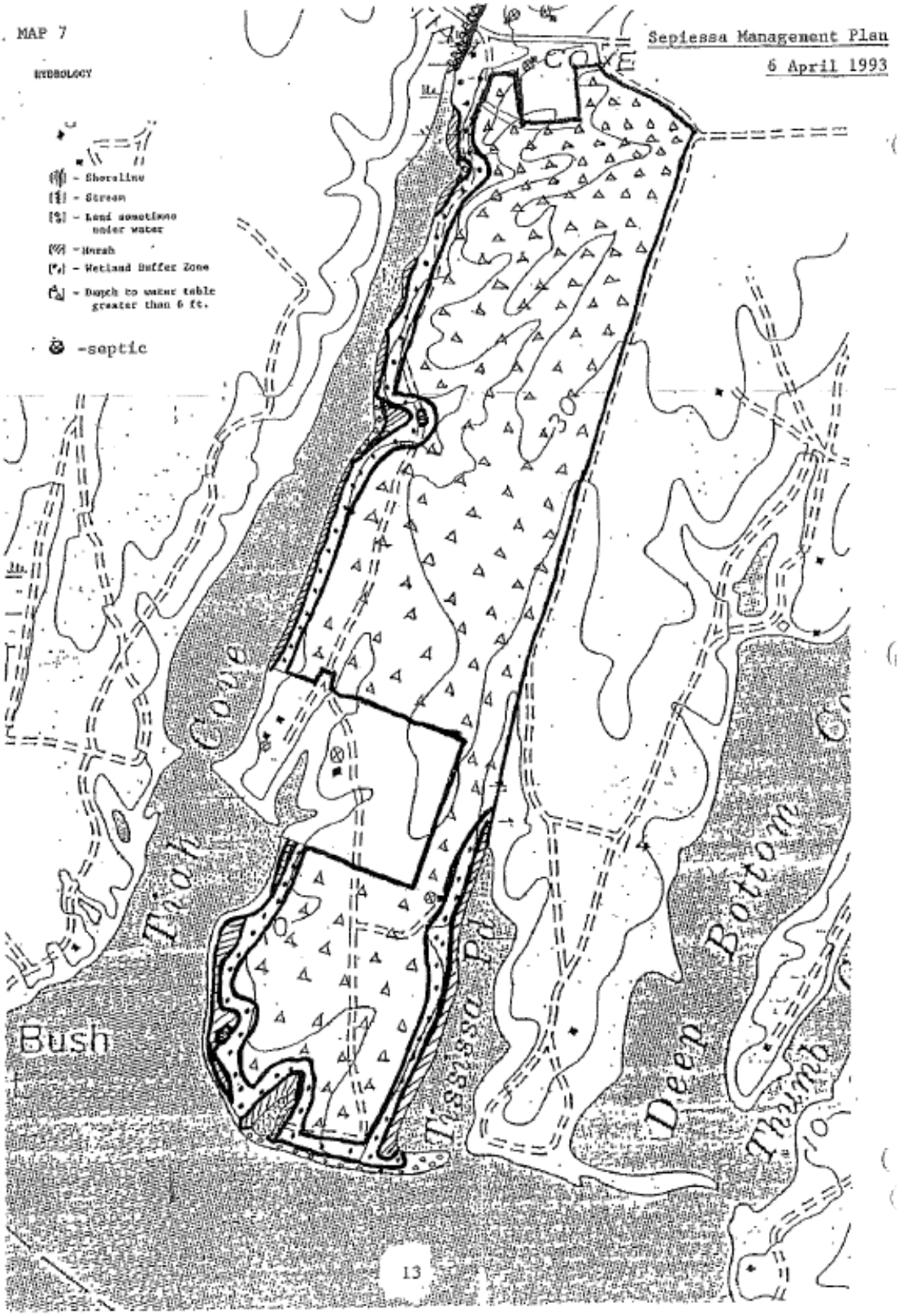


5. Hydrology

There are 7,300 feet of shoreline at Sepiessa Point. This shoreline runs along Tiah's Cove, Tisbury Great Pond proper, and Tississa Pond. There is 1,600 feet of shoreline along Tississa Pond. The interface between water and land is typified by beach and bordering vegetated wetlands. Approximately 122,000 square feet of freshwater marsh dominated by Spartina pectipata are presently standing on the property. A small, half-acre unnamed pond lies at the point. Tiah's Cove Road Brook flows into the Tiah's Cove at the very northern end.The map delineates the approximate areas under the jurisdiction of the West Tisbury Conservation Commission (a formal designation has not yet been completed). These are lands sometimes under water, marsh, and a 100-foot buffer zone. This buffer zone consists of approximately
18 acres. As mentioned in the section on soils, most of the land at Sepiessa Point has a depth to water table in excess of six feet. Three of the low-lying areas designated as "land sometimes under water" are depressions in existing roadways that are the major points of intersection between humans and the hydrological system (see map 7). They are the points where vehicles travelling on Clam Point Road get their undercarriages soaked. There are an estimated six septic systems either near or on the property. Information about the direction of groundwater flow has not yet been collected.

Tisbury Great Pond itself is a 740-acre coastal salt pond. It is separated from the ocean by 5,000 feet of barrier beach. This beach is periodically breached by human activities and by non-human events. The breaching causes as much as a four foot drop in pond water level and contributes to an alternating salinity level within the pond that ranges from 0 to 23 parts per thousand (Worden, 1991).Salinity management is essential to the maintenance of healthy shellfish populations and accounts for the human efforts to open the pond. Water quality studies have been conducted at Tisbury Great Pond including a recent 1991 study that recorded information about temperature, acidity, salinity, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, transparency, plankton populations, bacteria populations, and nutrient loads (Worden, 1991).Fauna life within the pond consists of oysters, blue crabs, various finfish, jellyfish, numerous invertebrates, as well as avian and mammalian visitors including herons, ducks, cormorants, raccoons and otters.

Map 7: Sepiessa Point Reservation Hydrology Map



C. Known Or Potential Biological Characteristics:

1. Vegetation

There are seven vegetative communities at Sepiessa Point. Their names and acreages are as follows:

Coastal salt pond edge	10.7 acres (7%)
Reedgrass marsh	0.3 acres (<1%)
Shrub swamp	2.0 acres (1%)
Maritime grassland/oak-pitch pine woodland	23.5 acres (14%)
Oak-pitch pine woodland	14.2 acres (9%)
Maritime oak forest	93.5 acres (57%)
Pitch pine-oak forest	20.2 acres (12%)
Total:	**164.4 acres (100%)**

The community classifications given below are developed after Reschke, 1990. The Heritage Program element ranks given for each type are estimates only. These are from descriptions provided by Tim Simmons and included in appendix A (Simmons, 1992). Please refer to map 8 for the location of each type.

i. Estuarine System

A. Estuarine Intertidal

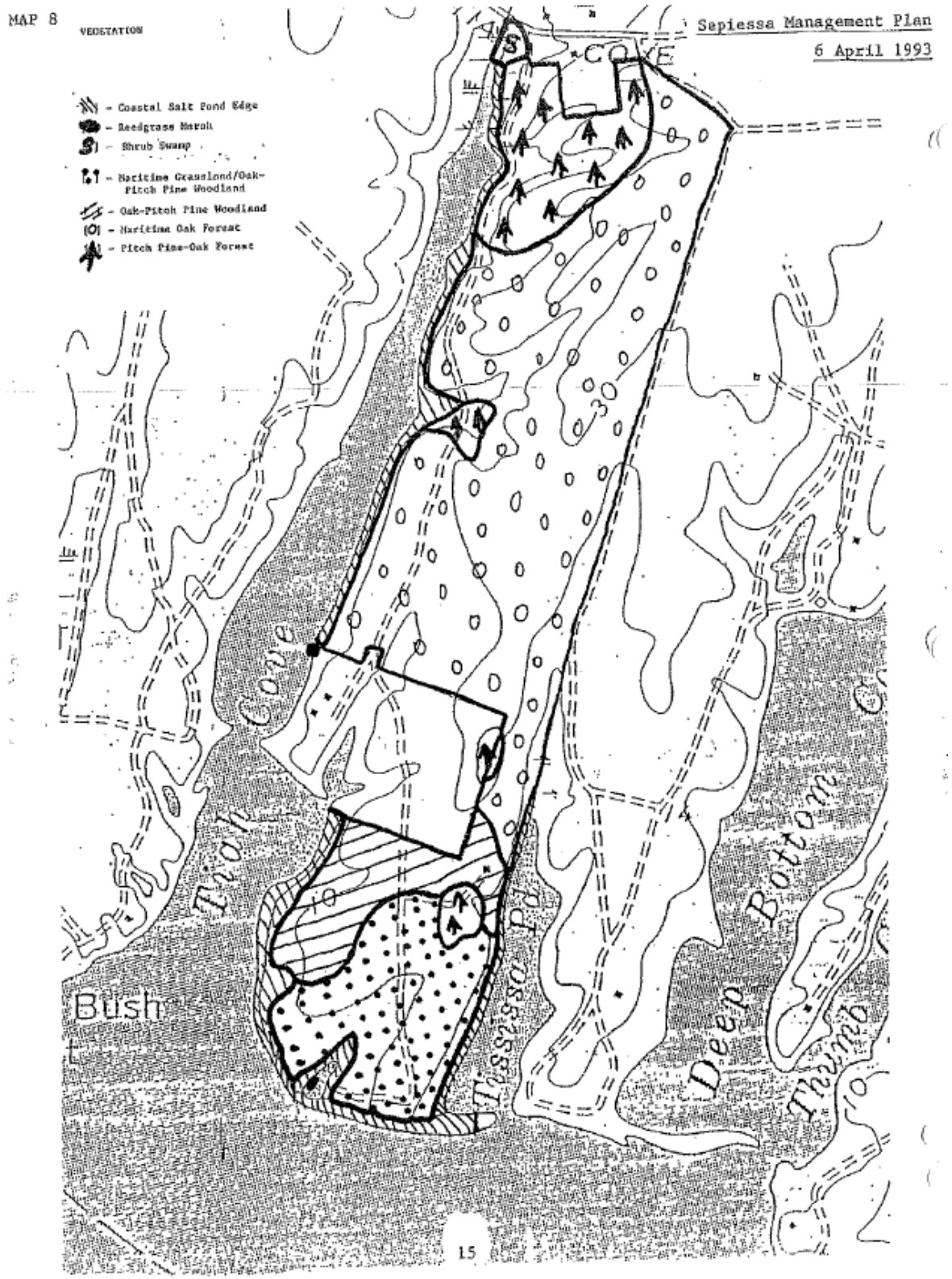
1) Coastal Salt Pond Edge (10.7 acres): The community surrounding the marine shoreline pond which is separated from the ocean by a barrier beach. The barrier beach is regularly opened by storms and cultural activities (i.e., trenching of the barrier beach), and this contributes to a salinity gradient that ranges from 5.2 - 20.2 parts per thousand along Tiah's Cove (Worden, 1991). This salinity gradient and the changing water levels have a direct impact on the vegetative composition of the pond edge. Characteristic species along the sandy edge are seaside goldenrod (Solidago sempervirens), salt-meadow grass (Spartina patens), saltmarsh fleabane (Pluchea purpurascens),seaside spurge(Euphorbia Polygonifolia), and seabeach orach (Atriplex arenaria). These species grade into less salt tolerant species such as freshwatercordgrass (Spartina pectinata),switchgrass (Panicum virgatum), chairmaker's rush (Scirpus americanus), a rare plant, and even an occasional seaside crowfoot (Ranunculus cymbalaria). Carol Reschke's 1990 study of the

ecological communities of New York state has coastal salt pond classified with an element rank of G4/S1S2 which means that it is considered "apparently secure throughout its range, but possibly rare in parts of its range, but with only 5-20 occurrences in New York State." (Reschke, 1990). From conversations with other ecologists on the Vineyard I understand that some consider this plant community to have an element rank of G2/S2 which according to the Nature Conservancy's ranking statements means that it is "imperiled globally (only 6-20 occurrences)" and also "imperiled in the state (with only 6-20 occurrences)" (Simmons, 1992).

2) Reedgrass Marsh (0.3 acres): two monotypic stands of reedgrass. (Phragmites australis) are established on or near Sepiessa Point, one stand is located on the edge of the lower, unnamed pond. It covered 4,000 square feet in October, 1992. There is evidence of genotypic variation among reedgrass that accounts for why some stands spread quickly and why others remain relatively stable (Marks et. al., 1992). It is unknown what type of stand occurs at Sepiessa Point, although a spreading genotype would threaten many thousand square feet of Spartina pectinata. The element rank for this community is GU/SU.

3) Shrub Swamp (2.0 acres) this community is a shrub-dominated wetland that occurs in a flat depression at the head of Tiah's Cove. While there are likely some estuarine impacts on this community, it is very much a transition zone between the coastal salt pond edge and the pitch pine-oak forest. Characteristic species are maleberry (Lyonia ligustrina), sweet pepperbush (Clethra alnifolia), swamp azalea (Rhododendron viscosum), high bush blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum), wild grapes (Vitis spp.), elderberry (Sambucus canadensis), winterberry (Ilex verticillata), and arrowwood (Viburnum recognitum). Other interesting species include meadow beauty (Rhexia virginica), jack-in-the-pulpit (Arisaema spp.), jewelweed (Impatiens capensis), swamp candles (Lysimachia terrestris), American germander (Teucrium canadense), marsh skullcap (Scutellaria epilobiifolia), and netted chain fern (Woodwardia areolata). The element rank for this community is G4/S4.

Map 8: Sepiessa Point Reservation Vegetation Map



ii. Terrestrial System

A. Open Uplands

1) Maritime Grassland/Oak-Pitch Pine Woodland (23.5 Acres):
This community is in transition from grasses to shrubs and trees. It occurs on very rapidly permeable Carver soils with low available water capacity. The community is near the ocean and within the influence of offshore winds and salt spray. This community was at one time dominated by grasses, but is now dominated by low shrubs and trees. Characteristic grass species are little bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium), velvet grass (Holcus lanatus), switchgrass (Panicum virgatum), and poverty-grass (Danthonia spicata). Other herbaceous species include path rush (Juncus tenuis), slender-leaved goldenrod (Euthamia tenuifolia), eastern joe-pye-weed (Eupatorium dubium), rough-stemmed goldenrod (Solidago rugosa), bushy aster (Aster dumosus), hyssop-leaved boneset (Eupatorium hyssopifolium), sweet goldenrod (Solidago odora), wild indigo (Baptisia tinctoria), and Bicknell's rockrose (Helianthemum bicknellii). Some of the rarer species include bushy rockrose (Helianthemum dumosum) , sandplain flax (Linum intercursum), and Nuttall' s milkwort (Polygala nuttalli).The woody species are characterized by huckleberry (gaylussacia baccata), bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica), trailing arbutus (Epigaea repens), sweet fern (Comptonia peregrina), white oak (Ouercfus alba), scrub oak (Ouercus ilicifolia), black oak (Ouercus velutine), black cherry (Prunus serotinal), Virginia rose (Rosa virginiana), Nantucket shadbush (Amelanchier nantucketensis), and pitch pine (Pinus rigida). The element rank for a maritime grassland is probably G2/S1 meaning that it is "imperiled globally with 6-20 occurrences and critically imperiled in the state with 5 or fewer occurrences.” The element rank for an oak/pitch-pine woodland, which this area is quickly becoming is only G4/S4 which means "widespread, abundant, and apparently secure with greater than 100 occurrences both globally and within the state." Since this area has the potential for becoming a maritime grassland again, its element rank should arguably lie somewhere between a G2/S1 and a G4/S4.

B. Barrens and Woodlands

1) Oak-Pitch Pine Woodland (14.2 acres):
The structure of this community is transitional between shrub-savannah and a woodland. It occurs primarily on droughty, infertile Carver soils. The most abundant trees are white oak (Quercus alba), post oak (Quercus stellata), and pitch pine (Pinus rigida). These form a more-or-less open canopy with about 50% cover. The shrub layer is dominated by huckleberry (Gaylussacia baccata), with bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica), dangleberry (Gaylussacia frondosa), low bush blueberry (Vaccinium angustifolium), and maleberry (Lyonia ligustrina). The density of shrubs and trees are inversely related; where there are no trees, there are dense shrubs. The element rank for this community is G4/S4.

C. Forested Uplands

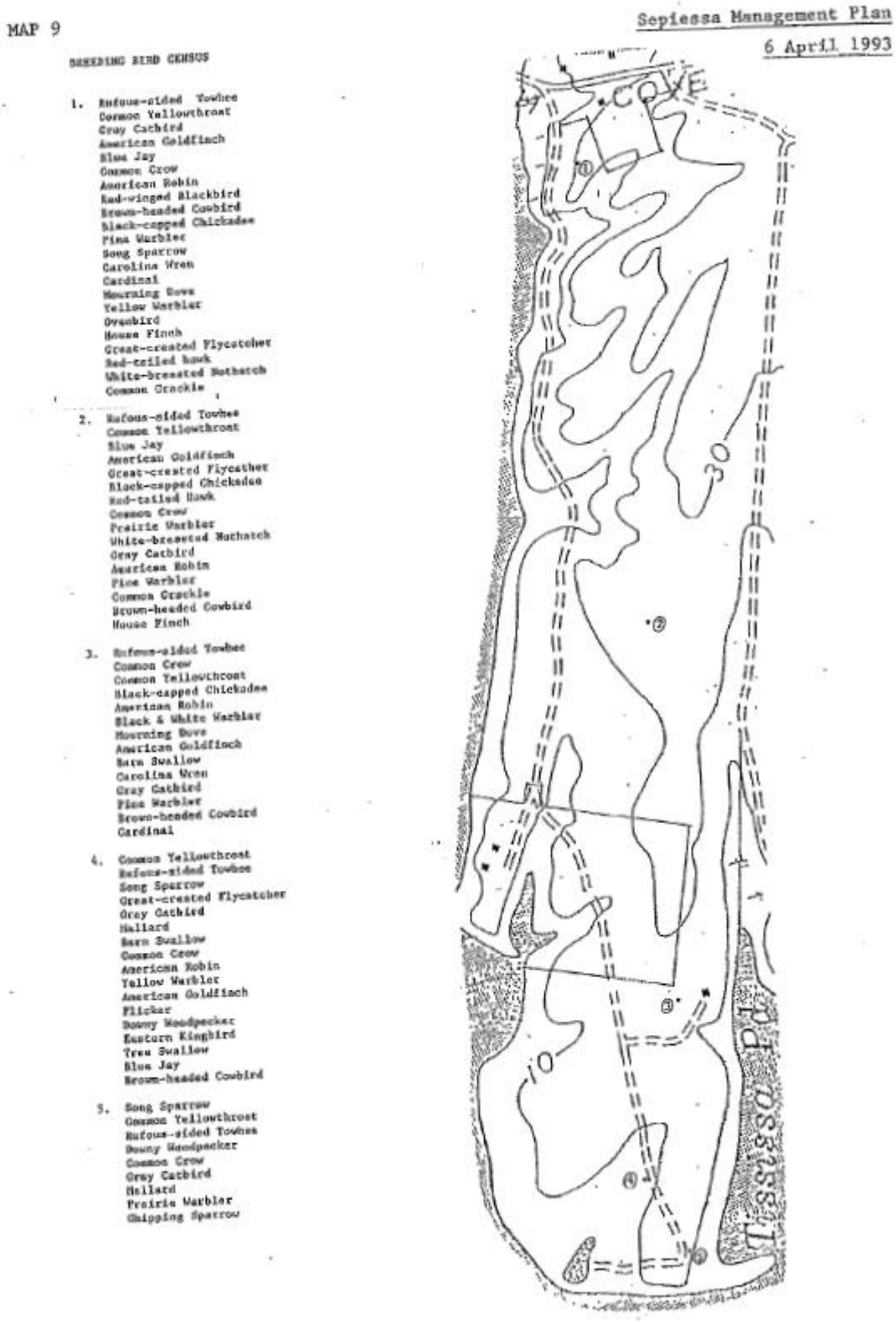
1) Maritime Oak Forest (93.5 acres):
This community is a hardwood forest consisting primarily of white oak (Quercus alba) and black oak: (Quercus velutine) with scattered pitch pine (Pinus rigida). Post Oak (Quercus stellata) is also present in areas. The understory is dominated by huckleberry (Gaylussacia baccata) with blueberry (Vaccinium angustifolium), bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica), black cherry (Prunus serotina), shadbush (Amelanchier canadensis), arrowwood (Viburnum recognitum), and scrub oak (Quercus illicifolia). Catbrier (Smilax rotundifolia) is dense in places, as is poison ivy (Toxicodendron radicans). There are some open shrubby areas, but the predominant cover is forest. The element rank for this community is G4/S4.
2) Pitch Pine-Oak Forest (20.2 acres):
This community is predominated by pitch pine (Pinus rigida), but mixes with oak species especially in the transition zone between it and the maritime oak forest. The oaks in the association include white oak (Quercus alba), black oak (Quercus velutine), and post oak (Quercus stellata). In areas, the pines form almost pure stands. The understory consists of a thick mat of pine needles, but will sometimes have species like pink lady slippers (Cypripedium acaule), sweet gale (Myrica gale), bracken (Pteridium aquilinum), sheep laurel (Kalmia angustifolia), and sweet fern (Comptonia peregrina), as well as the heaths (Vaccinium angustifolium) and (Gaylussacia baccata). The element rank for this community is G4/S4.

2. Wildlife Habitat

a. Breeding Bird Census (Map 9)
Local Ecologist Robert Culbert conducted a breeding bird census at Sepiessa Point during the nesting season in 1992. Map 9 shoes the location of recorded species. Mr. Culbert completed a full analysis of his findings in a report to the land bank (Culbert, 1992). This report examines expected breeding status of each species and species abundance based on a consideration of frequency of occurrence (number of individuals heard in a particular five-minute period), and spread (relative frequency). Map 9 lists species heard at each listening point in order of frequency of occurrence starting with the most frequent.

b. Mammal and Herptile Habitat (Map 10)
Ten mammal and herptile species have been reported at Sepiessa Point (see map 10). None of these sightings are verified by anything other than repeated reports of an observation of the same species in the same general location or by an expected occurrence due to habitat type as determined by vegetative community. A listing of species that use each type of vegetative community is also provided (see map 10). Ongoing studies of both vertebrate and invertebrate populations will prove useful in future management planning.

Map 9: Sepiessa Point Reservation Breeding Bird Census Map



Map 10: Sepiessa Point Reservation Mammal and Herptile Habitat Map

MAP 10

Sepiessa Management Plan

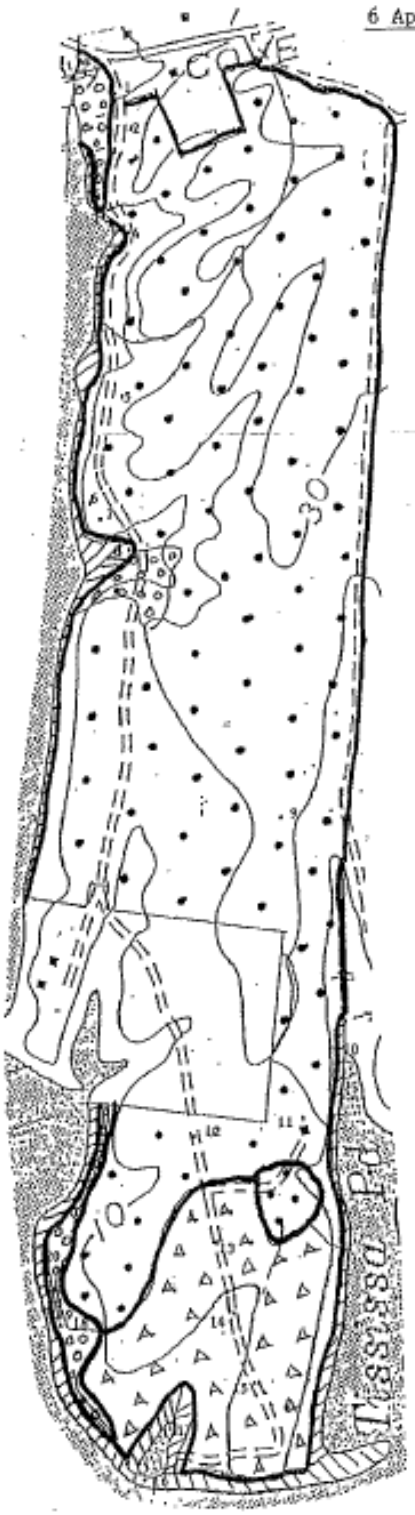
6 April 1993

MAP OF MAMMAL & HERPTILE HABITAT

1. Garter Snake (DW, 1992)
2. Eastern Cottontail Gray Squirrel (DW, 1992)
3. White-tailed Deer (DW, 1992)
4. Ringneck Snake (DW, 1992)
5. Garter Snake (DW, 1992)
6. Spring Peeper (DW, 1992)
7. White-tailed Deer (DW, 1992)
8. Ring-necked Snake (DW, 1992)
9. Eastern Meadow Mole (DW, 1992)
10. Domestic Cats (DW, 1992)
11. Smooth Green Snake (DW, 1993)
12. Eastern Cottontail (DW, 1992)
13. Garter Snake (DW, 1992)
14. Eastern Cottontail (DW, 1992)
15. Garter Snake (DW, 1992)
16. Otter (PB, 1992)
17. Otter (JP/MD, 1992)
18. Otter (JP, 1992)
19. Otter (PB, 1991)
20. Raccoon, White-tailed Deer (PB, 1991)

POTENTIAL SPECIES

- Foreshore: Otter, Norway Rat, White-tailed Deer, Red Bat, Little Brown Myotes, Snapping Turtle, Smooth Green Snake, Northern Black Racer, Garter Snake, Ribbon Snake Green Frog, Pickeral Frog, American Toad.
- Maritime Grassland: Cottontail Rabbit, Eastern Meadow Mole, Little Brown Myotis, Shrews, Meadow Jumping House, Meadow Vole, Otter, Norway Rat, Raccoon, Red Bat, Striped Skunk, White-footed mouse, White-tailed Deer, American Toad, Milk Snake, Garter Snake, Ring-necked Snake, Green Snake.
- Shrub Swamp: Little Brown Myotis, Norway Rat, Raccoon, Red Bat, Striped Skunk, White-tailed Deer, American Toad, Red-backed Salamander, Green Frog, Pickeral Frog, Spring Peeper, Painted Turtle, Black Racer Snake, Ribbon Snake, Garter Snake, Green Snake.
- Woodland/Forest: Cottontail Rabbit, Eastern Meadow Mole, Gray Squirrel, Little Brown Myotis, Raccoon, Striped Skunk, White-footed House, White-tailed Deer, Red-backed Salamander, Milk Snake, Garter Snake, Ring-necked Snake, Green Snake.



3. Rare and Endangered Species

a. State-listed species

There are multiple plant or animal species of particular concern at Sepiessa Point because they are listed by the Mass. Natural Heritage Program. The Natural Heritage Program identifies "endangered" species as species in danger of extinction throughout a significant portion of its Massachusetts range, "threatened" species as species likely to become an "endangered" species in the near future. throughout a significant portion of its Massachusetts range, and "special concern" species as a species that has been documented to have suffered a decline that could threaten the species within Massachusetts. Species ranked lower than "special concern" are not included here although some "watch list" species do occur at or near Sepiessa. None of the species at Sepiessa are listed by the federal government.

A listed species is considered "verified" if its occurrence is on record with Natural Heritage; "confirmed" if its occurrence has been reported and demonstrated to land bank staff; "reported" if its occurrence has been reported, but not yet confirmed; and "expected" if its occurrence has not yet been reported, but is likely to occur given other habitat characteristics.

There have been several reports of a rare bird species hunting in the maritime grassland areas at Sepiessa. There has also been a report of that these rare birds nested on the property at one time, although this has yet to be confirmed. The rare bird species has not been documented breeding at Sepiessa for at least the past two summers.

b. Noteworthy or Rare Plant Species

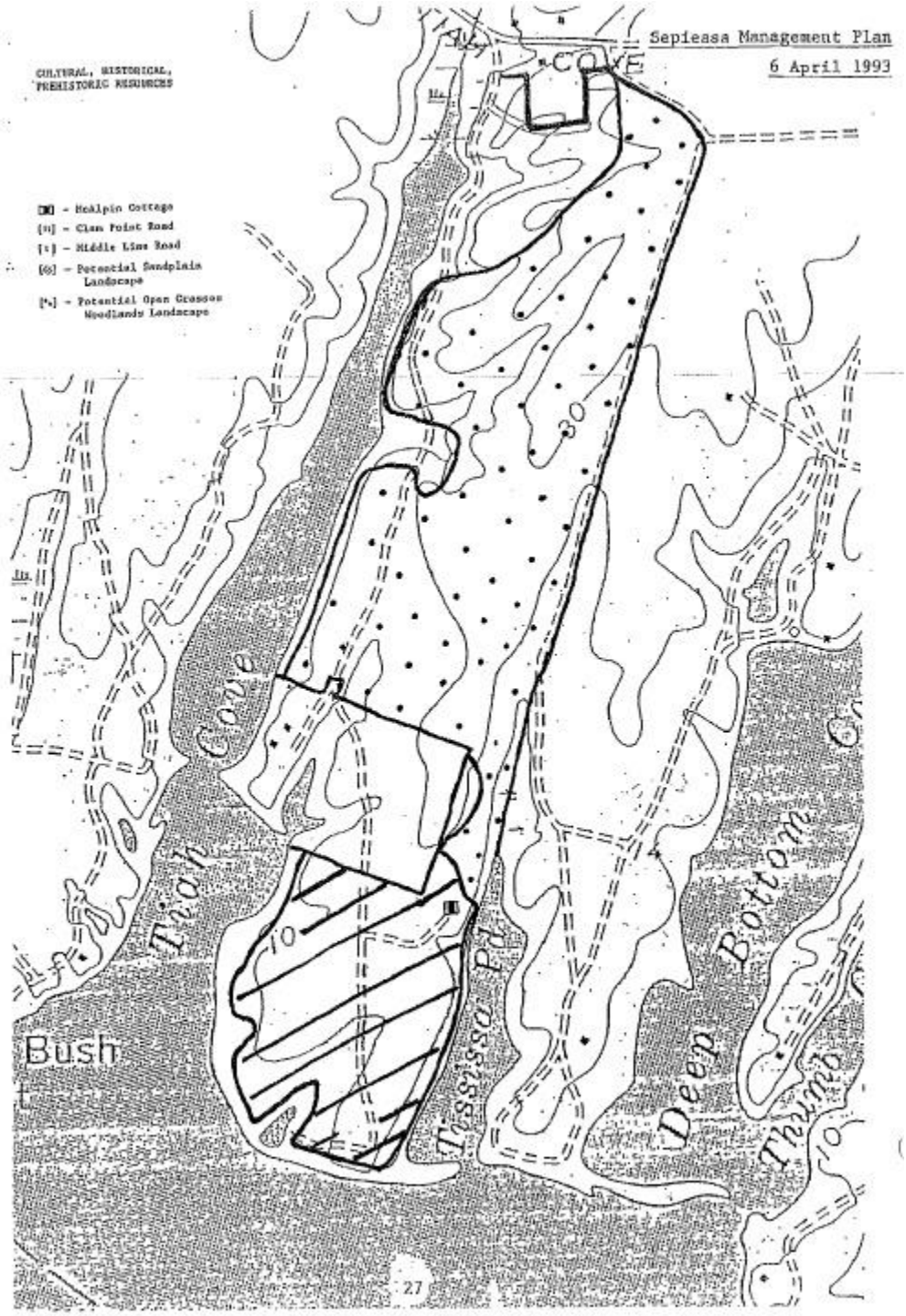
An inventory of plant species was done as part of Tim Simmons' examination of Sepiessa Point (Simmons, 1992). Josephine Bruno, Ed and Carol Knapp conducted this inventory during weekly walks in the period from late-June to mid-August 1991. During their walks, they recorded 215 different plant species. These were located in each of nine compartments. A complete list of these species is in Tim Simmons' report (Simmons, 1992). It should be pointed out that Bruno and the Knapps feel that their inventory was incomplete because it did not address the following: spring and early summer wildflowers and shrubs which bloom before the end of June and are indistinguishable thereafter, and late summer plants that may not have appeared due to the influence of a hurricane in 1991 (i.e., shore line plants). Some of these shortfalls have already been made up through complete mapping of shoreline plants. Plant studies will continue. Rare plants are those listed by the state Natural Heritage Program, and noteworthy plants are those which are otherwise scarce on Martha's Vineyard.

D. Known or Potential Cultural Characteristics

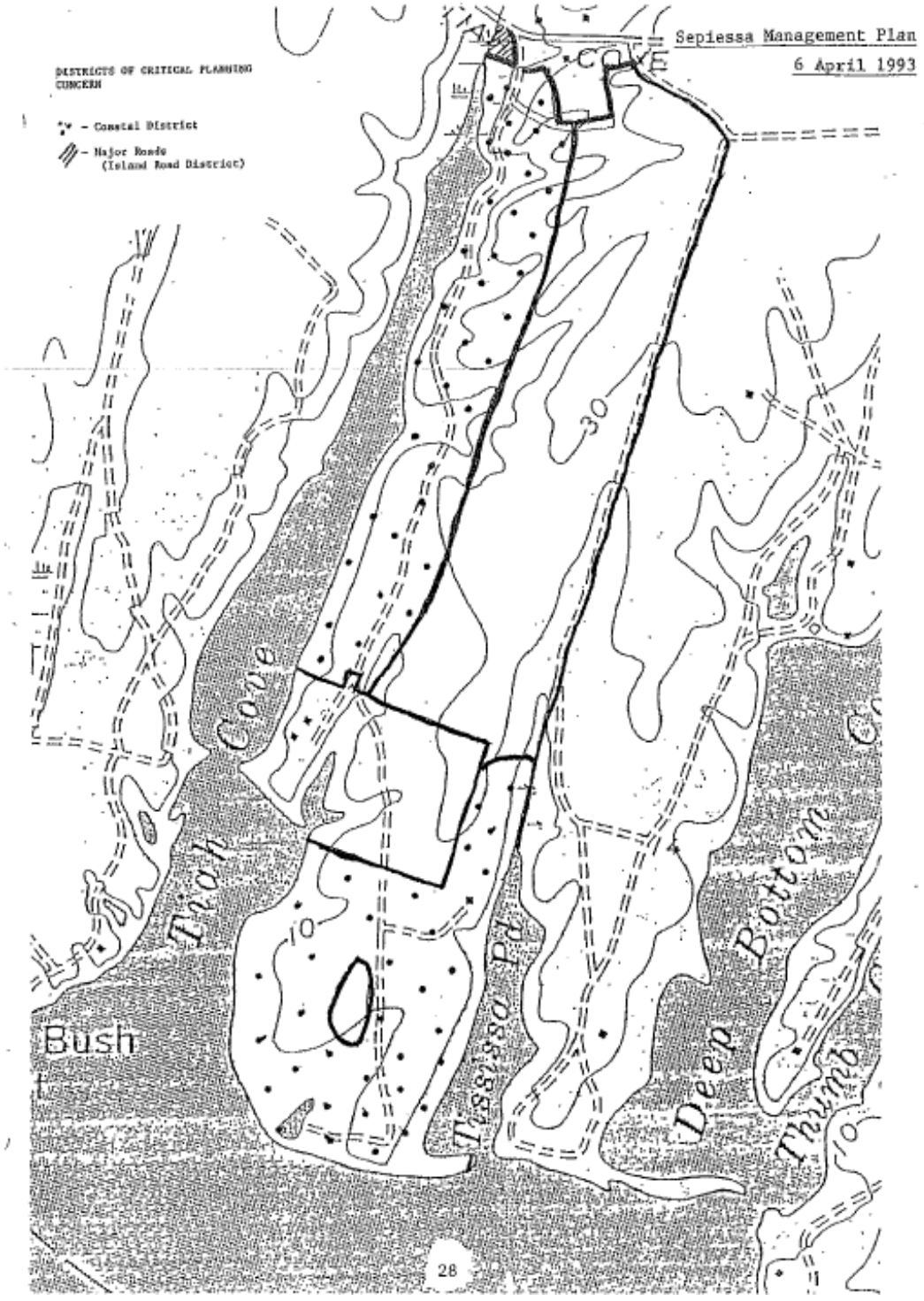
1. Historic and Prehistoric Resources (Map 11)
   There are a number of cultural resources at Sepiessa Point worth noting. At two areas near the lower point, cultural remains have been found. One structure exists on the property. This is the McAlpin cottage which is of unknown age. It was originally situated on the property across Tissisa Pond, but supposedly blew across to Sepiessa Point in a storm. The roadways for Clam Point Road and Middle Line Road are historic, but not dated. Finally, two potential historic landscapes are a maritime grassland on the lower forty acres and an open grassy woodland (savannah) on the eastern and central parts of the maritime oak forest. The maritime grassland and the open grassy woodland were traditionally kept in grasses by grazing and fire for the purposes of grazing. A report on the land-use history of the property since European settlement is forth-coming.

2. Areas of Planning Concern or Jurisdiction (Map 12)
   The Martha's Vineyard Commission recognizes two areas of planning concern at Sepiessa Point. These are the island road district which encompasses the land immediately abutting Tiah's Cove Road and the coastal district which is all land within five hundred feet of the shoreline (see map 12). The Martha's Vineyard Commission has approved the construction of an access roadway, three parking areas, and two boat slides within this coastal district (MVC, 1992). The Commission found that "the probable benefits of such construction would exceed the probable detriments providing that certain considerations are met" (MVC, 1992).
   The West Tisbury Conservation Commission has jurisdiction over approximately eighteen acres of wetlands and buffer zone at Sepiessa Point under the Wetlands Protection Act. Any activities proposed for this area that would alter the functioning of the wetland must be approved by this commission. The land bank is in the process of officially delineating the wetland boundaries at Sepiessa Point.

Map 11: Sepiessa Point Reservation Cultural, Historic, and Prehistoric Resources Map



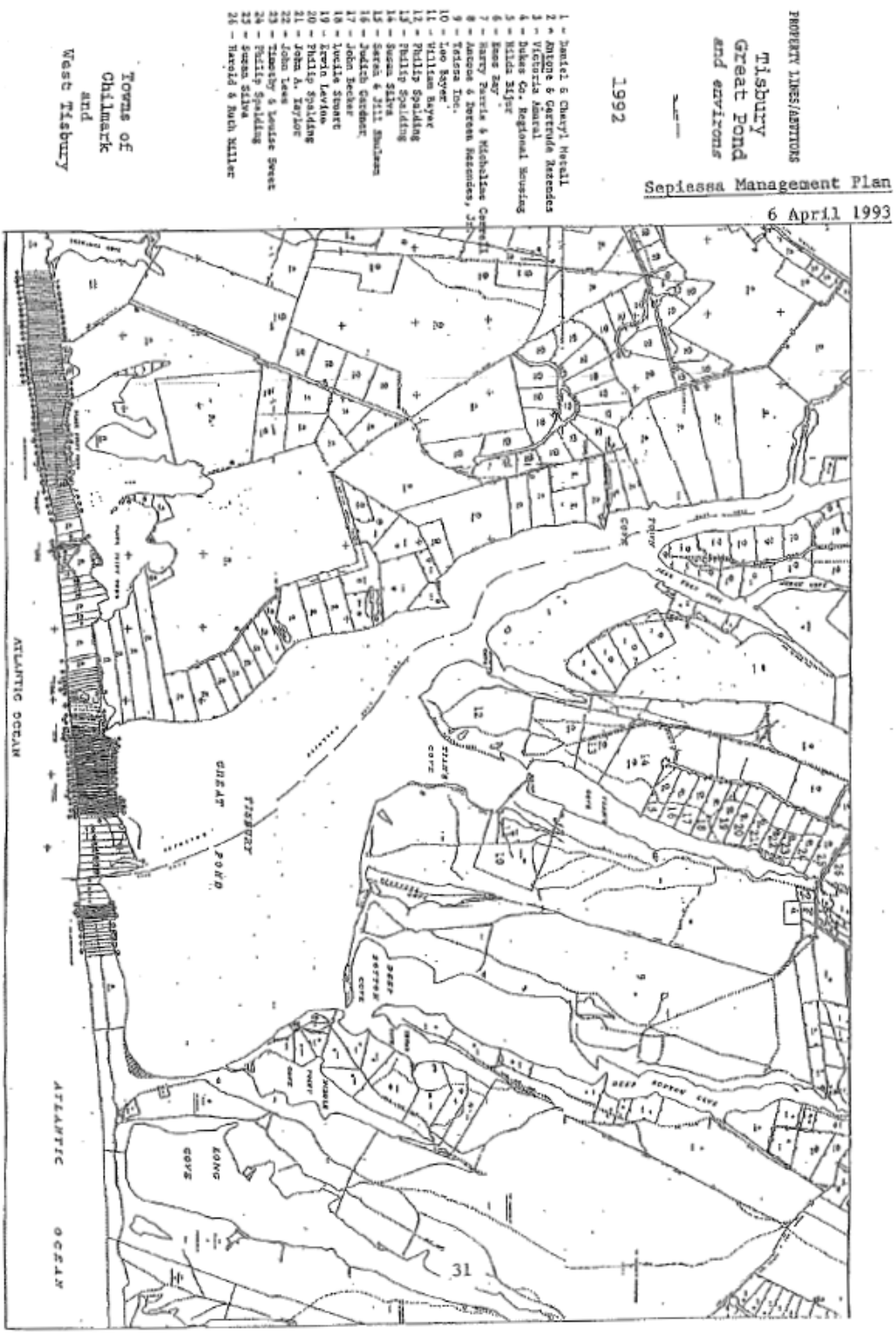
Map 12: Sepiessa Point Reservation Areas of Planning Concern or Jurisdiction Map



3. Property Lines/Abutters (Map 13)
There are 21 abutters at Sepiessa Point (see map 13). There are also a number of indirect abutters to Sepiessa Point. These people are listed below either generally or specifically with the communicated or anticipated concerns that they have:

Neighbor	Concern
Landowners who live off Tiah's Cove Rd.	• Increased traffic on Tiah's Cove Rd. • Driveway mistaken for property entrance • Noise in upper parking area • Overflow from limited parking blocking street
Landowners beyond the end of Tiah's Cove Rd.	• Trespassing by land bank guests on private road
Tsissa Inc. (Jones')	• Trespassing by land bank guests through woods or across beach • Trespassing by dogs own by land bank guests and damage to goat herd • Recreational use within sight of private houses
Riparian landowners around the pond	• Increased noise and pollution from land bank guests using motorboats • Trespassing by land bank guests onto private lands
Trustees of Reservations, Long Point	• Access by land bank guests onto Trustee land in restricted areas • Impact to local wildlife populations managed for at Long Point
Barrier beach landowners	• Trespassing by land bank guests onto beach
Bayers	• Any public use of Clam Point Rd. at Bayer in-holding • Trespassing by land bank guests through woods or along beach • Noise from lower parking area • Increased traffic on Clam Point Rd. • More recreational use of Tiah's Cove within sight of Bayer houses
Landowners directly across Tiah's Cove	• More recreational use of Tiah's Cove within sight of private houses

Map 13: Sepiessa Point Reservation Property Lines and Abutters Map



E. Known Existing Use or Management Characteristics

1. Property Access and Infrastructure (Map 14)

a. Clam Point Road

This is a ten foot wide, sandy gravel way that runs the length of Sepiessa Point. It is accessed off of Tiah's Cove Road (see map 16). There are 4,950 feet of this road on the property, and an additional 1,080 feet that cross Bayers' land. It is presently off-limits to the general public. There are gates at the start of the road and at the point as described on the map. Land bank staff use this road on average 1-2 times per month. The Bayers and their guests_ use the road an average of 63 times per week during the summer months and 20 or fewer times per week during the winter months. The general condition of the road is poor. It crosses wetlands or wetland resource areas in at least four locations. Several- of these spots are visibly deteriorated and often under water, especially when the pond is high. There is one particularly dangerous curve where motor vehicle accidents have occurred in the past. There is one bad grade on a slope exceeding 10% which is difficult to maintain. There are no turn-offs, and the surface is generally fair but in need of grading.

b. Middle Line Road

This is an eight to nine foot wide sandy way which is fairly well vegetated with grasses and rushes due to its limited use. It is approximately 3,030 feet in length and forms the eastern· boundary of Sepiessa Point (see map 16). Access is across private land. There is a gate at the head of the road. The road is not currently in use except in emergency situations such as when Clam Point Road is impassable for the Bayers. Vegetation is growing and falling into the roadway, and land bank maintenance has consisted only of trail level clearing.

c. McAlpin Cottage

This small cottage which is situated at the point near Tississa Pond is a summer residence of the former landowner. This landowner continues to have life rights in the cottage and is approximately thirty-five years old. The house presumably has electrical utilities and a septic system. Access is down Clam Point Road and is estimated to be an average of twenty trips per year. The cottage was not occupied last summer. A one hundred foot vegetated buffer around the house would provide aesthetic screening.

d. Tiah's Cove Road Parking Area

This cleared parking area can accommodate five to seven vehicles. It is not improved. Stumps and topsoil remain in the parking area and cause some inconvenience to users. The muddy ruts have been repaired several times. The area is badly in need of surfacing and grading.

e. Existing Boat Access Points

A small canoe launch currently exists far up Tiah's Cove within a short distance of the parking area. It is a path that was beaten down by use only. It has impacted a stand of freshwater cordgrass (Spartina pectinate) which is a solid three to four feet in width at this location. The area is used regularly, especially in the summer months. The boat access location at the southern point is used by a single shellfish harvester during shellfish seasons. His boat has remained on the property year-round because (of the difficulty in removing the boat due to shore erosion caused by 1991 storms. Coastal bank erosion and sloughing off onto the beach continues to threaten the usefulness of the southern boat access.

f. Utilities

The electric and phone lines for Bayers' houses, and possibly for McAlpin's cottage, run down the center of Clam Point Road.

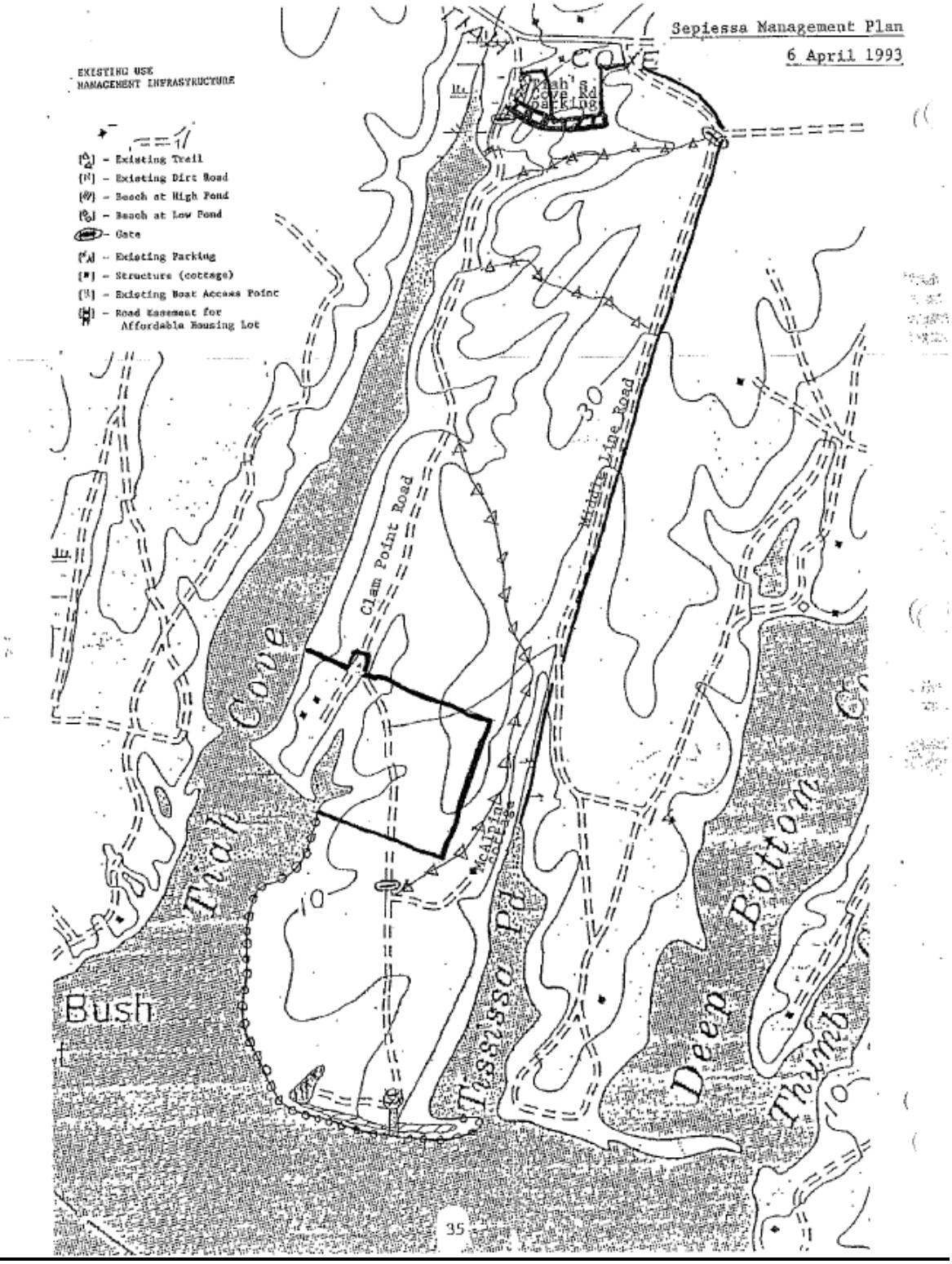
g. Easements

The Bayer family has a right-of-way across land bank land from Tiah's Cove Road. This provides them with access to their property. An easement also exists from Tiah's Cove Road across land bank land to the property of the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority.

h. Existing Amenities

The primary amenities currently existing at include beaches, views, and woodlands. The views are of Tisbury Great Pond from Clam Point Road and from the point. The beach lies along the pond shore at the point. It is approximately 2.4 acres in size, but this changes depending on the condition of the pond opening. It is a clear, sandy beach, but is often strewn with sharp oyster shells.

Map 14: Sepiessa Point Reservation Existing Use Management



F. Land Classification:

1. Resource Area Sensitivity (Map 15)

The resources inventoried above are here evaluated in terms of their sensitivity based only on their susceptibility to change. There are three levels. of resource area sensitivity: vulnerable, moderate, and durable. At Sepiessa Point, there are areas that fall into each of these categories (see map 15). They are as follows:

A. Vulnerable Areas:

The areas vulnerable to change at Sepiessa are generally determined by the presence or potential for support of viable populations of regionally rare species. They include the maritime grassland/oak-pitch pine woodland area which could be maintained in an ecological pattern favorable to hunting and breeding of the northern harrier (Circus cyaneus). They also include the largest stands of freshwater cordgrass (Spartina pectinata) which are known to support populations of spartina borer moths (Spartiniphaga inops).

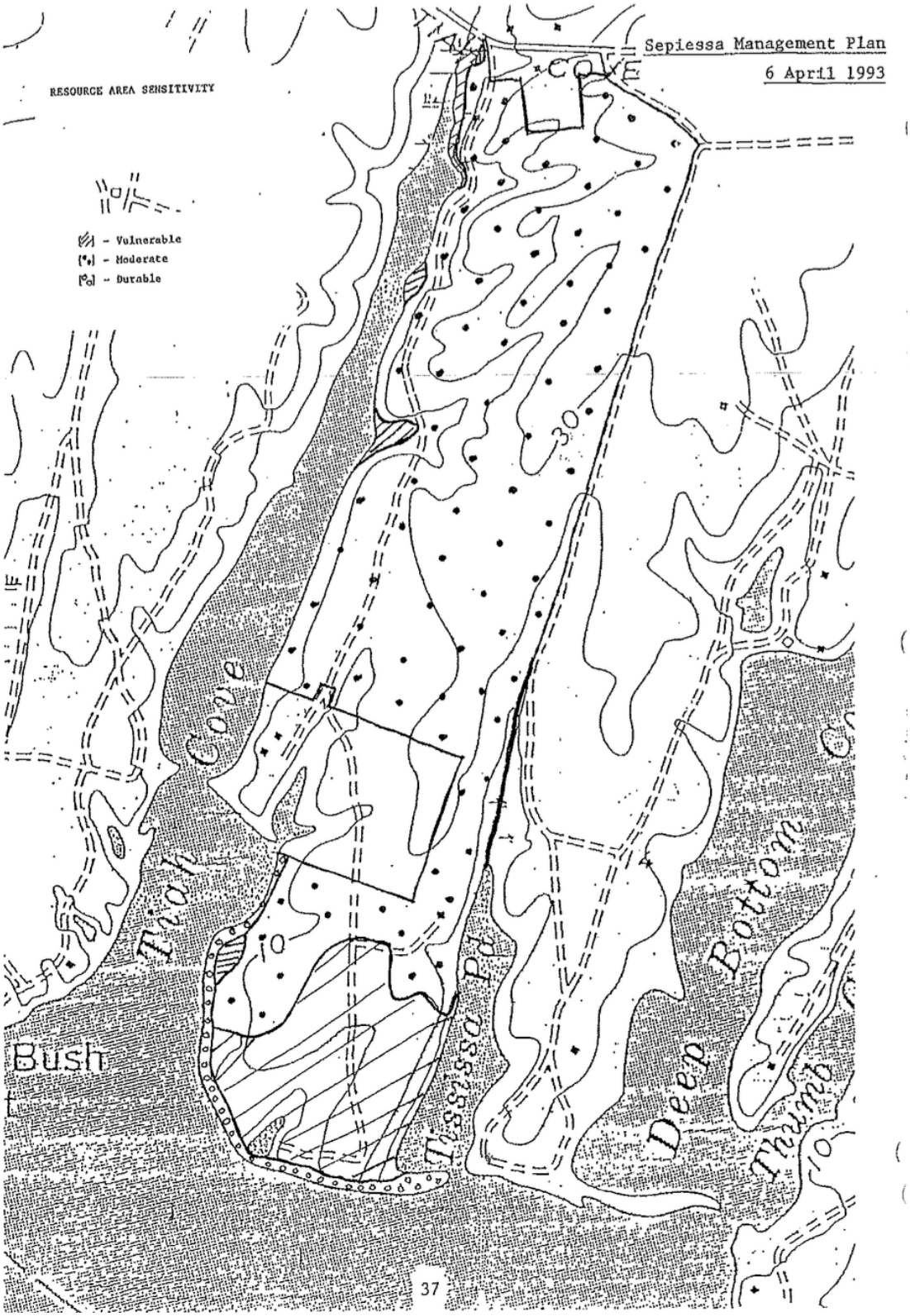
B. Moderate Areas:

The areas of moderate sensitivity to change at Sepiessa have reduced importance for maintaining rare species populations. These areas are mainly upland woodlands. While they are crucial to the ecological protection of wildlife species on the property, their resilience to disturbance is moderate to high.

C. Durable Areas:

The durable areas at Sepiessa consist entirely of the sandy beach along Tisbury Great Pond. This land can accommodate high levels of human use without threat of significant resource loss.

Map 15: Sepiessa Point Reservation Resource Area Sensitivity Map



G. Additional Inventory Data

1. Ecological Context:

Sepiessa Point Reservation is tied to other conservation land by Tisbury Great Pond. While no other conservation land directly abuts the property, there are several other conservation holdings along the pond shore. Most notable among these is the Long Point Preserve owned by the Trustees of Reservations.

At Long Point, as at Sepiessa, there is remnant sandplain grassland, a regionally restricted habitat. It provides potential hunting and nesting habitat for such notable species as the northern harrier (Circus cyaneus), short-eared owl (Asio flammeus), seaside sparrow(Ammodramus maritimus), and grasshoppersparrow (Ammodramus savannarum). Individuals of these species are likely to use a wide range of land properties in their foraging, mating, or nesting activities. The northern harrier, for example, can have a summer home range of almost four square miles (DeGraaf, 1987).

Sepiessa also provides habitat for foraging for a wide range of other birds and mammals whose home ranges extend beyond the property lines. These include white-tailed deer(Odocoileus virginianus), river otter (Lutra canadensis), great blue heron (Ardea herodias), and black-crowned night heron (Nycticorax nycticorax).

The plant communities themselves constitute a genetic reservoir which is connected to other land by way of wind and animal pathways. Several notable and regionally rare plant species can be found in the area. By providing protection to a full range of grassland, heathland, and pondshore plant communities, Sepiessa can fulfill a role in supporting viable populations of these wide-ranging plants and animals, as well as the more localized invertebrate and vertebrate species.

2. Recreational Uses and Social Importance

a. Recreational Use at Sepiessa

A sample of recreational visitors during the period from July to September 1992 identified the following uses:

Walking	**(44%)**
Biking	**(14%)**
Crabbing/fishing	**(10%)**
Canoeing	**(8%)**
Information only	**(7%)**
Horseback riding	**(5%)**
Bird watching	**(4%)**
Dog walking	**(3%)**
Beach bathing	**(3%)**
Picking blueberries	**(2%)**
Total	**(100%)**

The sample consisted of 246 people and included all visitors encountered by the Sepiessa property attendant during his rounds. Observations were made from 7am to 7:30pm, but mostly from 8am to 4pm. The survey was conducted on all days of the week, and for the most part on every day.
Each visitor encountered was informally interviewed or observed by the Sepiessa property attendant. Efforts were made to find out a primary use from all walkers. If there was none, then they were considered to be walking. Many people in the other categories certainly enjoyed walking the trails on the way to their destination or as part of their experience.

b. Intensity of Use:
Traffic counters were installed on the property in July 1992. These counters have given us a first glimpse at the total amount of use Sepiessa receives. During the months from July to October, weekly usage ranged from 23-40 vehicles. It averaged 32 vehicles per week. From the recreational use study described above, it was possible to calculate an average of 2.4 people per vehicle. Thus, Sepiessa experienced an estimated, average visitation rate of 77 people per week during the summer of 1992. During the months from October to December, weekly usage declined to a range of 11-27 vehicles with an average of 21 vehicles per week. We expect party sizes to also decline in the winter months to perhaps 2 or fewer people per vehicle. At 2 people per vehicle, a winter visitation rate of 42 people per week on average could be estimated. These numbers would translate to a total of approximately 2,940 visitors per year.

c. Duration of Use:
Most People spend several hours on the property when they visit. It is approximately one mile from the parking area to the point. This popular walk takes one to one and a half hours to complete. Canoeists generally spend from two to four hours out on the pond. Crab harvesters spend up to several hours gathering a catch, depending on how far from the parking area they have to walk. Mountain bikers tend to zip in and zip out, spending only an hour or less on the property. Beach users will usually spend half a day out at the point; Horseback riders generally use Sepiessa for one to one and a half hours.

d. Conflicts
1) Users and abutters: potential conflicts between these two groups are discussed below in the section titled “Potentially Affected Interests and Their Concerns.”
2) Users and other users: potential conflicts include those between walkers and other users using vehicles to enter the site. The impact on peace and solitude could be diminished by sensitive trail sightings, vegetative buffers, and restrictions on the number of vehicles entering the site. There are likely to be aesthetic issues between bike/horse users and walkers. These issues will have to be watched and possibly corrected through designated use of trails.
3) Users and resources: the following impacts are possible as a result of the various recreational uses.

User Type	Possible Impact
Walkers	**Trail deterioration** **Disruption to wildlife (e.g., talking/presence, harassment/dogs)** **Littering** **Access related (i.e., parking and roads)**
Bikers	**Trail deterioration** **Disruption to wildlife** **Littering**
Horse riding	**Trail deterioration** **Disruption to wildlife** **Littering**
Crabbers	**Same as walkers plus bank erosion**
Boaters	**Bank erosion** **Disruption to wildlife at Sepiessa and elsewhere** **Littering** **Water pollution** **Scatological**
Beach bathers	**Appearance** **Littering** **Scatological**

e. Anticipated Future Demand:

There is considerable enthusiasm for public boat access to Tisbury Great Pond. The Colonial Ordinance of 1641-47 directed the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to hold the great ponds in trust for the public (Shea, 1992), However, there has never been a public access to Tisbury Great Pond. Up to the 1950s, there was relatively minor conflict between riparian owners and people wishing to use the resource. As extensive land subdivision and development proceeded over the last forty years, individual property rights surrounding the pond and exclusions have replaced the former unwritten understanding allowing public access to the pond (Shea, 1992). Since 1958, there have been four to five attempts by the Town of West Tisbury to secure public access. These all failed. Finally, in 1991, the land bank was able to purchase Sepiessa Point. There is clear enthusiasm for opening the property to unlimited boat access. Local activists presented the land bank commission with a 1,200-name petition requesting an access at Sepiessa Point that was similar to the public landing at Edgartown Great Pond. The Edgartown landing accommodates twenty to forty motorboats at any one time. It is not clear whether this much launching area is actually required at Sepiessa Point or whether the site could support such an amount and still adequately protect the land's conservation values. There is definite interest in public access for crabbing, commercial oystering, and family oystering. These users have a particular need for getting their vehicles reasonably close to their catch; an opportunity not provided elsewhere on the pond

for the public. The demand for walking opportunities is likely to increase as area subdivisions are completed. The future public interest in Sepiessa will be a function of whether other public pond access points and public walking trails are secured.

3. Other Administration and Management Issues

a. Disruption to Wildlife

Disruption to wildlife is a general and widely encompassing term which is expanded on below. A number of possible disruptions have either been anticipated by staff or pointed out to the land bank by others. A number of specific, potential disruptions include:

1) Disturbance to nesting rare birds.
2) Disturbance to ground nesting birds such as quail (Colinus virginianus), black ducks (Anas rubripes), and gadwall (Anas strepera).
3) Disturbance to other important roosting, nesting, and foraging sites especially for great blue heron (Ardea herodias) and black-crowned night herons (Nycticorax nycticorax).
4) Disturbance by trampling to pondshore vegetation such as freshwater cordgrass (Spartina pectinata), seaside crowfoot (Ranunculus cymbolaria), and salt reedgrass (Spartina cynosuroides).
5) Disturbance to the community indicated by a rare moth.
6) Disturbance to any state-listed or otherwise noteworthy plants.
7) Introduction of invasive plant species such as water-nut (Trapa natans), water-milfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum), and crispus pondweed (Potamogeton crispus).

b. Budgets and Staffing:

The land bank commissioners set aside $1,000 in their fiscal year 1993 budget for Sepiessa Point Improvements. They also reserved $4,370 for a property attendant to caretake the area in 1992-1993. A portion of the Property Land Superintendent's and Property Field Assistant's hours are spent at Sepiessa each year. A portion of the $13,000 for contract ecological work and a portion of the $12,000 for management expenses are able to be used for Sepiessa. The land bank commission has expressed a commitment to fund all reasonable management needs on this property.

c. Maintenance

The land bank expects to maintain the following items at Sepiessa Point: roads for vehicles; trails for walkers, horseback riders, and bikers; parking areas; boat slides; signage directing recreational use; other facilities (e.g., bike racks, gates, fences); on-going inventory of biological resources; and vegetation.

d. Preliminary Land-Use Goals

The land bank commission and the West Tisbury town advisory board together developed four initial goals for managing Sepiessa Point. These fit into the mandate under which the land bank operates as well as the objectives of the West Tisbury master plan (West Tisbury Planning Board, 1987). The preliminary property goals were:

- To protect populations of federal or commonwealth listed species that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern as well as important plant communities.
- To provide public access to Tisbury Great Pond for boating, shellfish harvesting, viewing for aesthetics, nature study, swimming, and fishing.
- To provide access for passive recreational use of the land for walking, exercising pets, hunting, horseback riding, picnicking, viewing, nature study, and low-impact camping.
- To restore portions of the historical landscape which have been lost because of hands-off vegetation management.

III. Land Management Goals and Objectives

The inventory information presented above was analyzed as part of the planning process. The result was a series of land management alternatives which are presented and explained in appendix B. The land bank commission and the West Tisbury town advisory board examined these alternatives and decided to proceed with a land management approach that has the following goals and objectives. Map 16 will serve as a reference guide for locating the areas referred to in the following section.

Goal 1. Wildlife Resource Protection

Provide a refuge for the indigenous and naturalized biota of the region.

Objective 1: Protect populations of endangered, threatened, or special concern species.

Strategies:

A. Rare plants:

1) continue resource inventory of all listed plant species.
2) continue mapping of all populations.
3) verify absence of any rare plants from areas likely to be disturbed by land management activities.
4) discourage human use of sandplain areas and other rare plant habitat except on designated trails.

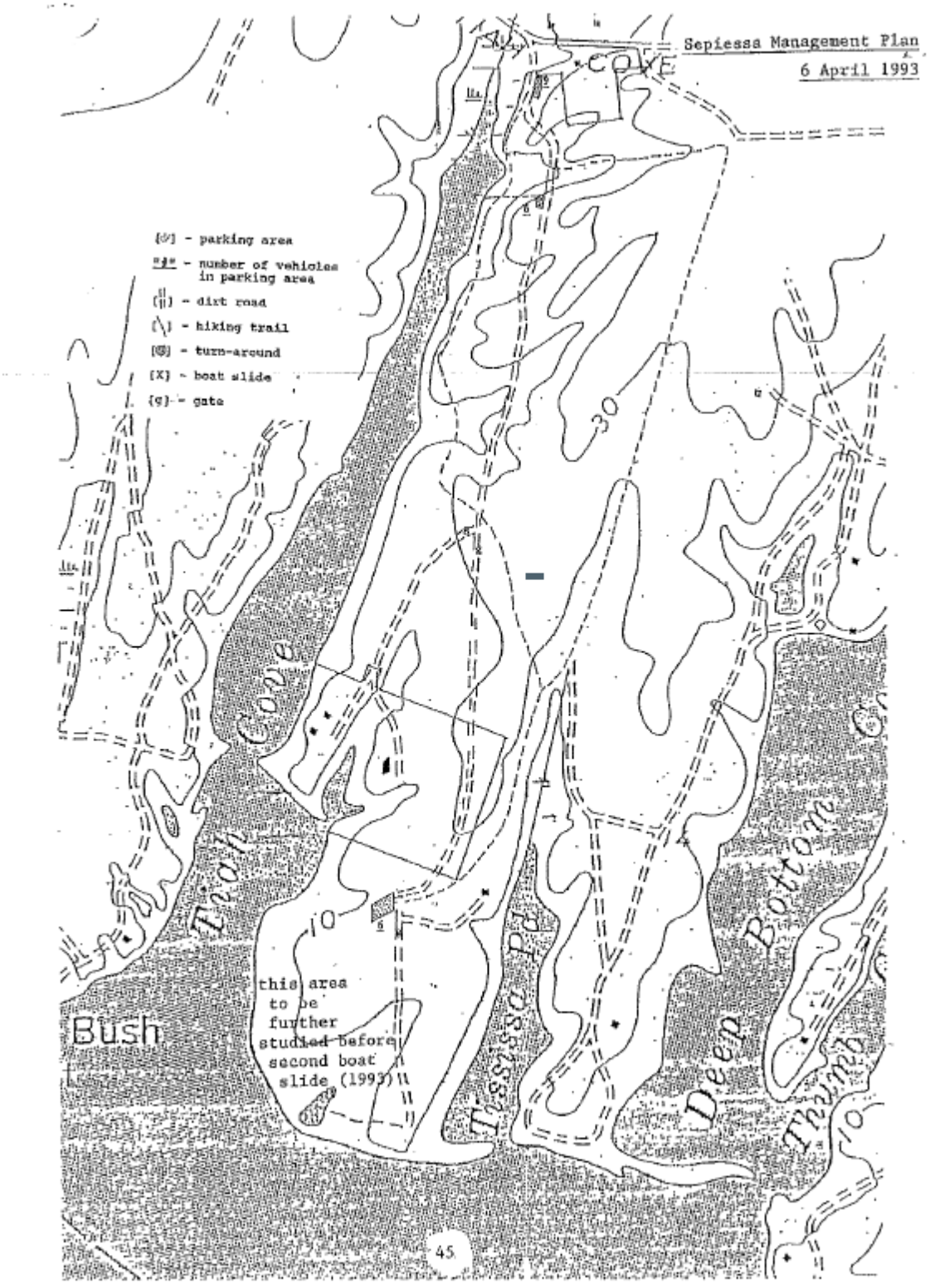
B. Northern harriers:

1) discourage human use of sandplain areas likely to support nesting northern harriers.
2) have full-time property attendants strictly enforce leash restrictions on dogs during northern harrier nesting seasons.
3) cordon off any actual nest areas with a 500 foot buffer zone.
4) if stray dogs or other predators disturb harrier nests, then take steps to fence off nesting areas.

C. Rare Moth

1) encourage healthy stands of the food plant for the moth.
2) limit human use only to narrow stretches of where the food plant grows that are natural fragmentation points for the habitat.
3) do not allow disturbance of the food plant to exceed thirty linear feet or a distance that might deleteriously impact moth flights from one side to the other.
4) suppress fire in areas likely to contain moth larvae.
5) if moth populations are found to be in decline, then look for ways to further mitigate any human impacts and commit resources to the study of the natural history of the rare moth and possible ways to stabilize its population.

Map 16: Sepiessa Point Reservation Area Reference Map



Objective 2: Protect wildlife during breeding seasons.

Strategies:

A. have property attendants strictly enforce dog leashing from May to September.
B. restrict human activity at dawn and dusk.
C. continue to add information to the natural resource inventory about which species are breeding at Sepiessa and how abundant they are.
D. if any breeding animal species is found to be in decline due to human impact, then take steps to reduce the amount or type of such impact.

Objective 3: Protect important roosting and foraging sites.

Strategies:

A. restrict human activity at dawn and dusk.
B. direct human use away from special habitat areas by relocating the upper canoe slide (see map 16).
C. continue to add information to the natural resource inventory about which species are roosting or foraging at Sepiessa, how abundant they are, where they are, and how they might be getting disturbed by human use.

Objective 4: Minimize human trampling of pondshore vegetation.

Strategies:

A. consolidate human use at limited points along the pondshore.
B. maintain an “in-out” policy on boat launching so that boats do not remain on the shoreline to shade out vegetation.
C. if trampling continues to be a problem and extensive erosion occurs, then consider reducing the number of parking spaces at the lower point.

Objective 5: Maintain some open sandplain habitat.

Strategies:

A. limit plant succession by removing invasive trees and shrubs from the potential maritime grassland area.
B. maintain open areas in a grassy condition by mowing or burning in winter months, once woody species are under control.
C. implement a full floristic analysis of abundance to verify that management activities are fulfilling the objective.

Objective 6: Prevent the introduction of invasive plant and animal species to Tisbury Great Pond.

Strategies:

A. have property attendants examine all boats entering Sepiessa for exotic plants and animals.

B. have property attendants restrict any boat from launching that has exotic or other unidentifiable plants or animals on it.

C. encourage other riparian owners to take similar steps with their boats.

Goal 2. Access to Tisbury Great Pond

Provide limited public access to Tisbury Great Pond for recreation and the harvesting of natural resources.

Objective 1: Provide access for canoes and kayaks as close to Tiah's Cove Road as is feasible.

Strategies:

A. move the existing canoe slide to a more ecologically sound location 300' further down the cove.

B. construct a new parking area associated with this slide that can accommodate six vehicles at any one time.

C. move Clam Point Road so that access to the new canoe slide is possible without crossing wetland resource areas.

D. do not increase parking at this area so that disturbance to landowners across Tiah's Cove is kept at a minimum.

Objective 2: Provide access for other small boats, motorized and non-motorized, at the lower point.

Strategies:

A. move Clam Point Road so that access to the lower point is possible without crossing wetlands, without impacting neighboring landowners, and with destroying any rare plants.

B. construct a parking area associated with the lower boat slide that can accommodate six vehicles with trailers or twelve single vehicles at any one time, after verifying the absence of any rare plants in the area (see map 16).

C. open the existing boat slide for immediate use by hand-carried boats as soon as the road and parking area are completed.

D. continue to conduct ecological study of the plants and animals in the southern thirty acres of Sepiessa during the 1993 growing season to determine the most ecologically sound location for the permanent lower boat slide.

E. construct a permanent lower boat slide at the most ecologically sound location as determined by the ecological study.

F. prohibit all overnight storage, including boats, with the exception of 2 to 5 outhaul anchors for commercial shellfishing, provided that they do not interfere with beach-nesting shorebirds (amendment).

G. prohibit boat landings on vegetated shorelines; allow short-term boat storage during the day on unvegetated beach shorelines (amendment).

Objective 3: Limit public pond access so that it is not overly burdensome to land bank neighbors or detrimental to the environment.

Strategies:

A. limit vehicle parking to designated areas with parking for boaters not to exceed a total opportunity of eighteen vehicles at any time between both upper and lower access points.

B. employ two, full-time property attendants during the summer months to help guide public use according to stated land bank policy.

C. have the property attendants instruct boaters about the extent of public land, the possible environmental impacts they avoid, and any pond-wide agreements about what constitutes proper use of Tisbury Great Pond.

D. have the property attendants enforce any horsepower of speed limitations agreed to jointly by the towns of Chilmark and West Tisbury for the pond.

E. instruct the property attendants to keep accounts of public water use and observe its impact so that adequate information exists for future management planning.

Objective 4: Allow limited shoreline access for swimming and fishing.

Strategies:

A. allow swimming at beach areas within 200’ of trailheads on the lower point, but do not encourage such activity due to the hazard of sharp oyster shells and the potential disturbance to wildlife from over-use (see map 16).

B. permit pondshore fishing in designated areas subject to limitation of the wildlife protection goal.

Goal 3. Open Space Preservation

Provide an attractive environment for low-impact, land-based recreational opportunities at Sepiessa.

Objective 1: Provide low-impact, land-based recreational opportunities.

Strategies:

A. maintain existing trails in a condition that does not impact rare species or allow excessive erosion, compaction, or vegetative trampling.

B. maintain nine parking spaces designated for land-based recreational users at the northern end of the property (see map 16).

C. separate pedestrian users from motor vehicle users by making old Clam Point Road a hiking path.

D. permit hunting of deer and upland game only as per stated land bank policy with a property closure during deer week.

E. have property attendant keep track of user-user conflicts and user-resource

conflicts in a systematic way so that information exists for future management planning.

Objective 2: Minimize potential conflicts with direct abutters.

Strategies:

A. have clear a logo sign at the entrance and make it easy to enter the property.
B. maintain adequate parking on property and work with local law enforcement officers to avoid any overflow of parking on private land.
C. help maintain fencing and post property lines when requested by neighbors.
D. employ property attendants to explain the limits to public lands and the potential concerns of neighbors.
E. move Clam Point Road away from the houses located on the private in-holding (see map 16).
F. site parking and other land-use away from the direct view of neighboring landowners as much as possible and maintain vegetative screens.

Objective 3: Improve the aesthetic quality and appeal of the land where such improvement is not inconsistent with wildlife protection goals.

Strategies:

A. maintain open views at the lower point.
B. open up limited scenic views of Tiah's Cove.
C. in addition to sandplain grassland restoration, implement a program of oak savannah restoration in the central portion of the property, if such restoration is found to be consistent with wildlife protection goals.

IV. The Implementation Plan

A central feature of this management plan is its phased implementation schedule. By postponing a final decision as to the location of a permanent lower boat slide until fall 1993, land bank staff and its consultants will be able to gather further information about spring flora and pondside vegetation that might be impacted by the boat slide. They will also be able to gain a more complete understanding of the patterns of wildlife use on the property over the course of the summer. While this approach is a slower and more cautious approach than most of the other alternatives considered (see appendix B), it may add significant new information for decision-making. Below is a schedule for implementation of the management plan in 1993.This schedule addresses each of the major projects that must be completed.

A. Relocate Clam Point Road to Higher Ground

Clam Point Road is presently impacting both wetland resources and water quality in Tisbury Great Pond. The proposed new route is through oak/pitch pine woodland which has a greater physical capacity to buffer vehicular traffic than wetlands (see

map 16 and map 8). The road will be moved out of an area which consists of rare species habitat, and there will be a net loss of 2,700 feet of road. At present there are 5,100 feet of Clam Point Road from Tiah's Cove Road to the road to the McAlpin cottage. There are also 4,200' of Middle Line Road which is used by the Bayer family when Clam Point Road is not passable. That means that there is a total of 9,300' of road existing and used annually at Sepiessa today. With this management plan, not only will Clam Point Road be pulled out of the wetlands, but there will only need to be 6,600' feet of road to service both the Bayers and the land bank. Thus the net reduction of 2,700'. The time line for implementation would consist of the following:

- site road layout from Tiah's Cove Road to southern end of Bayer property……..……..early April
- consult with Natural Heritage and MA Historical Commission.....mid April
- get agreement with the Bayers.....May
- get approved management plan from EOEA.....May
- confirm absence of rare plants on road layout……..….May-June
- start clearing vegetation on land bank land.....late May
- finish clearing vegetation on land bank land and Bayer land……late June
- remove stumps and topsoil from road layout……..…July
- surface roads with sand hardener……July
- grade road edges and seed with grass……...July
- install gates……..…July

B. Build Lower Parking Area

The second activity under this management plan is to build a lower parking area that could hold up to a maximum of six trailered vehicles and would accommodate the southern boat slide (see map 16). The temporary drop-off point for these boats will allow access without further stressing the eroded point with vehicular impacts. With six parking spots in this area, there will be increased, but controlled access for boaters this year. A schedule for implementation is the following:

- site parking area for six trailered vehicles at lower point……..early April
- get approved management plan from EOEA……...May
- confirm absence of rare plants in the area…….……May-June
- clear vegetation from parking area……...….mid June
- clear stumps and topsoil from area…….……July
- surface parking area……..July
- grade edges, mulch, and seed with grass……..……..July
- put up signs…….……July
- open existing boat drop-off to hand-carry use……..……late July
- monitor use levels and types……..…..ongoing

C. Move Canoe Slide to New Site

The third project for this summer is to move the existing canoe slide on Tiah’s Cove to a more ecologically sound location further down the cove (see map 14 and map

16). The new site will impact less wetland vegetation. It will be more open and level than the existing site, therefore reducing any concerns about potential erosion. While still near the head of the cove where there is feeding activity by greater and lesser yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca and flavipes), snowy egrets (Egretta thula), black-crowned night herons (Nycticorax nycticorax), great blue herons (Ardea herodias), and mute swans (Cygnus olor) among others, the new location would be an additional 300' from the mud flats. In addition, since the new canoe slide will be at a wider part of the cove, it will. be further from the boat slides, the Sweet's and Lees' houses across the way (see map 16 and map 13). This will help alleviate any conflicts that might have developed there. A new parking area holding six vehicles will be constructed on the west side of the new Clam Point Road in pine/oak woods. This approach will encourage non-motorized boating as a viable alternative to other types. A time line for implementation will go something like this:

- site six car parking area, footpath, and slide……..….early April
- get an approved management plan from EOEA……..May
- file NOI with West Tisbury ConCom for slide……late May
- get approval from WTCC……July-August
- clear vegetation from parking area and slide……..July-August
- clear stumps and topsoil from parking area…….July-August
- surface parking area……July-August
- grade edges and seed with grass……..……..July-August
- put up signs……..…early August
- open canoe slide to hand-carry use……early August
- monitor use levels and types……..…..ongoing

D. Build Lower Boat Slide

The fourth major element of the management plan is construction of a lower boat slide which could accommodate trailered boats (see map 16). A central factor in the recommended construction process is further study of the exact location for the slide. There are some possible disadvantages to any location; the challenge is to find the most ecologically sound location. The existing boat slide area at the extreme south end of the point has seen continued sloughing and erosion due to storm waves and bank suction. It is close to an area that might one day be able to host a rare bird nest, and it is at the far end of a potential sandplain grassland. Another possibility, as presented in another alternative that was considered (see appendix B), is to build a new boat slide area around to the west. This area is more sensitive from a wetlands standpoint with freshwater cordgrass (Spartina pectinata) and salt-meadow grass (Spartina patens) nearby. While it is close to rare moth habitat, it is at a natural convex point of Spartina pectinata, the food plant of the rare moth, and may not significantly influence moth populations if disturbed. It is also well away from the rare plant species of the sandplain grassland. The research goal for this summer is to closely examine these trade-offs. The area with the least overall impact will ultimately be chosen. A schedule for implementation would look like this:

- get approved management plan from EOEA……...May
- complete plant inventory with location of all rare plants

and in-depth look at pond shore vegetation……May-August
- continue vertebrate inventory……May-August
- evaluate inventory for best placement of lower boat slide……late August
- design and site lower slide……early September
- site access road……..early September
- file NOI with West Tisbury ConCom for slide……late September
- get approval from WTCC……..late October
- clear vegetation from boat slide and access road……..early November
- clear stumps and topsoil ……..……...November
- surface road and boat slide with hardener……November
- grade edges and mulch……..……..……...November
- put up signs……..…November
- put up gates……November
- open new boat slide……...December
- monitor use levels and types……ongoing

E. Restore Sandplain Grassland

The final significant part of the plan is implementation of sandplain restoration. The open area at the southern tip now being invaded by scrub oak, black huckleberry, and pitch pine (see map 8), will be mowed to restore lost habitat for rare species of animals and plants. A strategy for implementation would go like this:

- site restoration area and develop detailed working plan……..…early April
- get approval from EOEA…….……May
- do photo inventory of site……..……..……May-July
- file NOI with West Tisbury ConCom for work within buffer zone of bordering vegetated wetland……..……late May
- get approval from WTCC……..…….……early July
- conduct further inventory and analysis of species abundance (plants and vertebrates) ……..…….May-August
- establish permanent vegetation plots……...May-August
- start clearing invasive vegetation outside wetland buffer zone……...October
- start clearing invasive vegetation within buffer zone…….October
- Start arranging for any necessary state burning permits…….December

V. Conclusion

This document carefully lays out all of the accumulated knowledge about Sepiessa Point Reservation to date. It then specifies a series of goals and objectives that the land bank commission and the West Tisbury advisory board have agreed to. Lastly, it sets out a detailed schedule for implementation of the land use objectives. The land bank reviews its management plans on an ongoing basis to make sure that goals and objectives are being met. A comprehensive review of this plan will be done no later than five years hence.

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Appendix A

A Key to the Element Ranks (Simmons, 1992)

GRANK (global rank):

- **G1** - critically imperiled globally (5 or fewer occurrences)
- **G2** - imperiled globally (6-20 occurrences)
- **G3** - rare or uncommon (21-100 occurrences)
- **G4** - widespread, abundant, and apparently secure (>100 occurrences)
- **G5** - demonstrably widespread, abundant, and secure
- **GH** - of historical occurrence (expected to be re-discovered)
- **GU** - unrankable (status uncertain)
- **GX** - believed to be extinct throughout range

SRANK (state rank):

- **S1** - critically imperiled in state (5 or fewer occurrences)
- **S2** - imperiled in state (6-20 occurrences)
- **S3** - rare or uncommon (21-100 occurrences)
- **S4** - apparently secure (>100 occurrences)
- **S5** - demonstrably secure
- **SA** - accidental in state (infrequent and far outside range)
- **SE** - an exotic established in state
- **SH** - of historical occurrence in state (expected to be re-discovered)
- **SN** - not of conservation interest
- **SR** - reported in state but without persuasive documentation
- **SRF** - erroneous report in state
- **SU** - unrankable (status uncertain)
- **SX** - apparently extirpated from state
- **S?** - not yet ranked in state

Appendix B

Alternative Land Management Scenarios:

As part of the land bank's planning process, five alternative land management scenarios were examined for possible implementation at Sepiessa Point. These are briefly described below with an explanation of why they were either chosen or not chosen by the land bank commission and the West Tisbury town advisory board.

1. Potential Alternative Use "A" - "Status Quo" (Map 17)

Alternative "A" is essentially status quo management. Sepiessa would continue to be open for hiking and limited canoe access. There would be no public vehicular access south of the parking area (see map 19). Land bank staff would continue to study the property and the management approach would be re-examined in 1995.

Parking would continue to be limited to nine vehicles at any one time, although the parking area would be renovated. Clam Point Road would continue to be used by the Bayers for access to their land. Dogs would not be allowed on the property from May through July, and only on leashes the rest of the year. Camping would not be permitted at this time, and a seasonal attendant would not be necessary. Limited landscape restoration would be started on the lower forty acres.

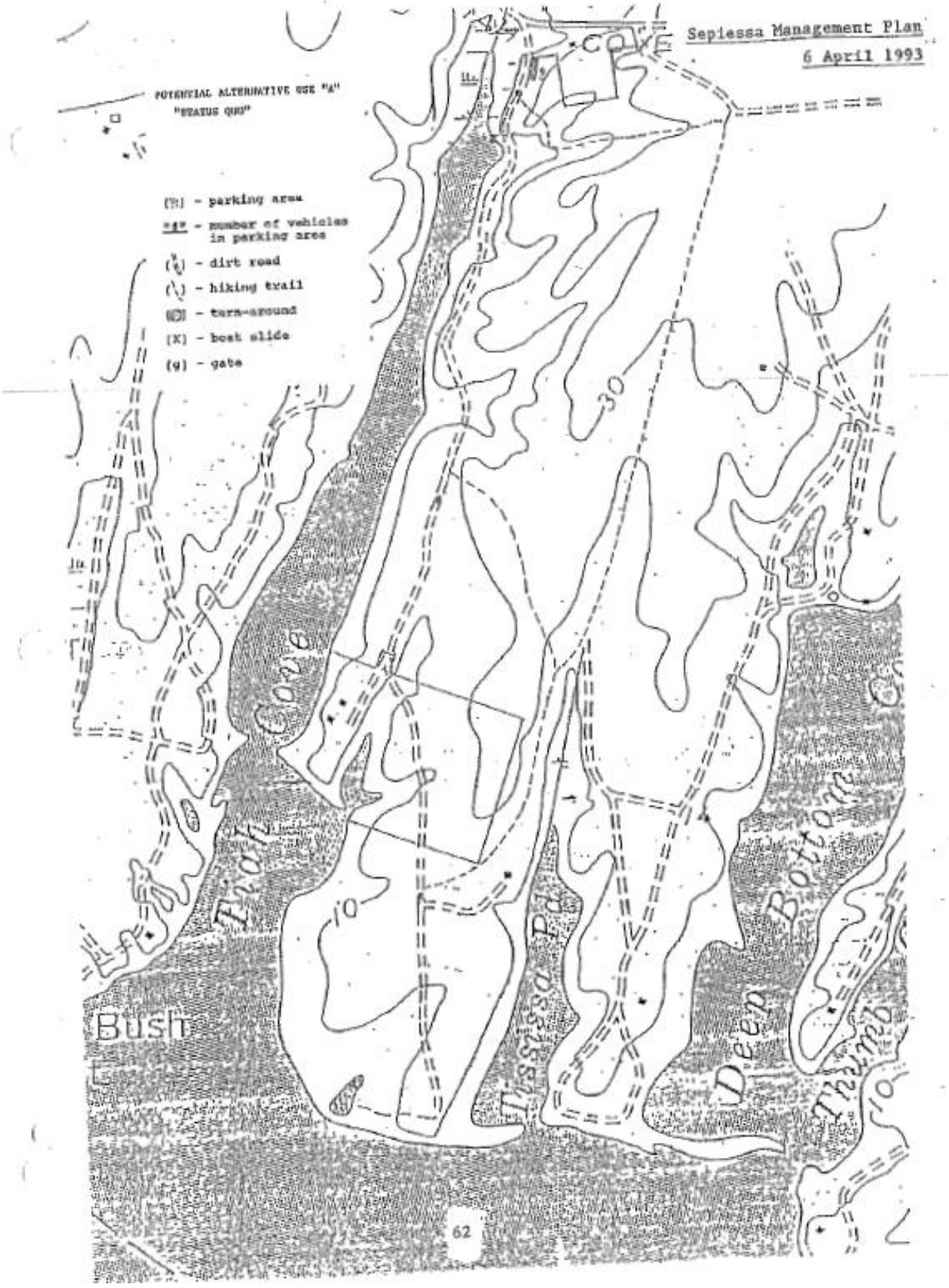
Advantages	Disadvantages
inexpensive approach	poor satisfaction of pond access goals
least impact to flora/fauna	continued use of Clam Point Rd. by Bayers
low impact to neighborhood, except Bayers	higher levels of trespass on Bayers
could be implemented immediately	limited parking could lead to disappointment or trampling

The management activity schedule would be as follows:

1. continue inventory/monitoring activities……1993
2. file notice of intent for parking lot renovation and implement……1993
3. begin landscape restoration……1993
4. maintain road and trails……1993
5. continue inventory/monitoring activities……..1994
6. continue landscape restoration...……1994
7. maintain road and trails……1994
8. continue inventory/monitoring activities……..1995
9. re-evaluate management approach……1995

NOT CHOSEN: this alternative was not chosen because Clam Point Road would continue to cross wetlands and because there would be only limited satisfaction of boat access goals.

Map 17: Sepiessa Point Reservation "Status Quo" Map



2. Potential Alternative Use "B" - "Existing Boat Slide" (Map 18)

Alternative "B" would meet all of the goals for the property, if implemented carefully. Pond access would be provided on a limited basis at the existing southern boat slide (see map 18). Access would be limited by a person's ability to hand carry their boat across a minor coastal bank and a beach to reach the water. Clam Point Road would be moved to bypass wetland resource areas and the Bayer property, but no net increase in roads would occur.

Parking would include a renovated nine space area near Tiah's Cove Road as well as a small six vehicle area at the upper end of the southern point. A turn-around would be maintained at the lower point for drop-off of boats.Dogs would be allowed from May through July, but leashing would be strictly enforced by an on-site attendant. Camping would not be allowed at this time, and limited landscape restoration would occur.

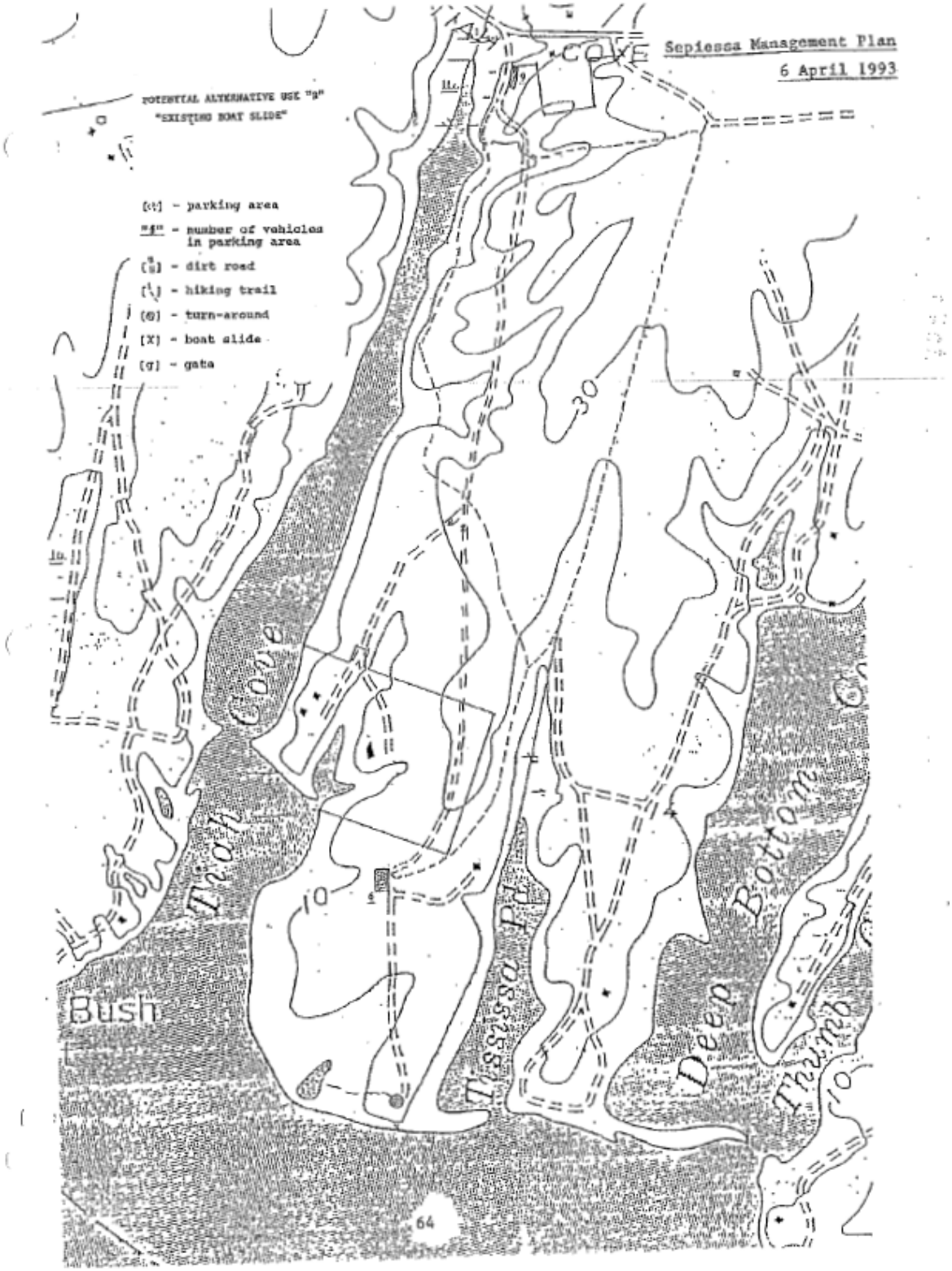
Advantages	Disadvantages
use of existing infrastructure at lower point	limited satisfaction of pond access goal
relatively inexpensive initial and annual costs	increased human impact to sandplain community
no disturbance of vegetated wetlands necessary	no upper canoe slide
additional parking to meet recreational demand	more linear feet of road than other alternatives
least impact to head of Tiah’s Cove	limited satisfaction of flora/fauna protection goal
better access to lower forty acres	less ecological monitoring than other alternatives

The management activity schedule would be as follows:

1. file notice of intent and implement upper parking area restoration……...1993
2. file determination of applicability and implement turn-around at lower point……1993
3. move Clam Point Road……..1993
4. construct lower parking area……1993
5. continue ecological inventory/monitoring……...1993/94
6. implement landscape restoration……1993/94
7. maintain road and trails……1993/94

NOT CHOSEN: this alternative was not chosen because it did not adequately address boat access goals and because a permanent: commitment to the existing lower boat slide area was deemed premature.

Map 18: Sepiessa Point Reservation Existing Boat Slide Map



3. Potential Alternative Use "C" - "New Boat Slide" (Map 19)

Under alternative "C", the two existing boat slides would be abandoned for more well-sited replacements (see map 19). The pond would be accessed at two points, thereby spreading out use and separating motorized use from non-motorized use. A parking area would be associated with each boat slide and with the entrance. The total number of parking spaces would be fifteen single vehicles and six vehicles with trailers.

Clam Point Road would be moved out of the wetlands onto higher ground, but there would be a net decrease in linear feet of roads. The majority of trails and roads on the property would be segregated according to pedestrian versus vehicular use. The road would also be moved away from the Bayers' houses at the lower end of the property.

While the boat slides would necessarily impact some pondshore vegetation, this would be done in areas of lower sensitivity. The larger boat slide would not exceed fifteen feet in width. A seasonal attendant would assist people with proper use of the public resources. Camping would not be allowed at this time, but would be re-examined as a potential use in 1995. The attendant would actively enforce leash restrictions on dogs from May through July. A landscape restoration area would be managed to encourage rare species and to add aesthetic diversity as in the previous alternatives.

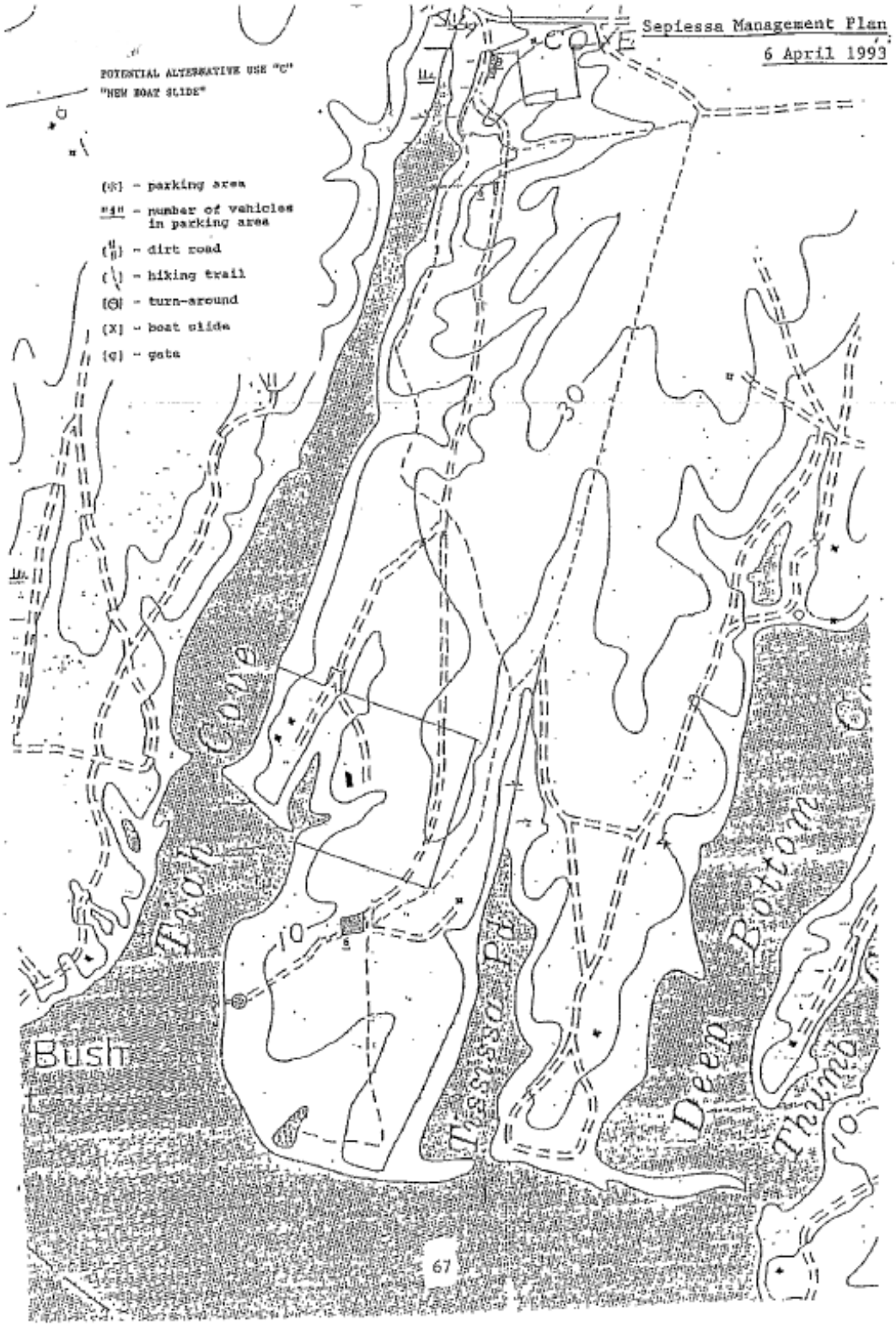
Advantages	Disadvantages
all access goals for the property would be met	one of the more costly alternatives
greater amount of public use expected	some potential disturbance to wildlife from boat slides, dogs, and higher visitation rate
present situation of Clam Point Road and existing boat slides would be improved	minor alteration to wetlands necessary
fewer linear feet to active road than other alternatives	
less impact to sandplain community than other alternatives	

The management activity schedule would be as follows:

1. file notice of intent for upper parking area restoration and boat slides ……..……...1993
2. move Clam Point Road……..1993
3. construct parking areas and boat slides.……1993
4. continue ecological inventory/monitoring……...1993/94
5. implement landscape restoration……1993/94
6. maintain road and trails……1993/94

NOT CHOSEN: alternative "C" was not chosen because a commitment to one single area for the lower boat slide was considered premature without further ecological study of the area.

Map 19: Sepiessa Point Reservation New Boat Slide Map



4. Potential Alternative Use "D" - "Fall 1993 Boat Slide" (Map 16)

This alternative would constitute a commitment to building a boat slide, but would delay implementation until fall 1993 in order to further study potential impacts to flora and fauna. While this approach is a slower and more cautious approach than most of the other alternatives, it may add significant new information for decision-making. There would be a complete study of spring and early summer plants as well as ongoing data-gathering with regards to faunal populations and floristic abundance.

Clam Point Road would be moved to higher ground this spring. A lower parking area that would hold six trailered vehicles would be constructed at the same time and would be opened to public use. Pond access would occur at the point in summer 1993 only by special permission of the land bank commission. The canoe slide at the head of Tiah's Cove would be moved south to a new site that would impact fewer square feet of wetlands (see map 16).

An attendant would be on-site during the season. The attendant's responsibilities would include enforcement of a leash restriction on dogs during the period from May through August, as well as general monitoring of property use. Camping would not be addressed as an issue at this time, but would be re-examined as a potential use in 1995. Landscape restoration would occur as in the other alternatives.

Advantages	Disadvantages
delayed implementation would allow more time for study and reflection on boat slide alternatives	high implementation costs
all use goals would be met in the long-term	only limited boat access in summer 1993

The management activity schedule would be as follows:

1. file notice of intent and implement upper parking area restoration……..1993
2. move Clam Point Road……..1993
3. construct other parking areas and new canoe slide……1993
4. make a decision about lower boat slide……...1993
5. file notice of intent and implement construction of boat slide and turn-around……1993
6. continue ecological inventory/monitoring……...1993/94
7. implement landscape restoration……1993/94
8. maintain road and trails……1993/94

CHOSEN: alternative "D" was considered the optimum approach because it not only addressed the few remaining gaps in the data base, but also because it allowed for action in areas where there already were adequate data.

5. Potential Alternative Use "E" - "Edgartown Great Pond" (Map 20)

This approach comes the closest to providing a public pond access similar to the one at Edgartown Great Pond. It would have parking for up to fifteen trailered vehicles at any one time at the lower point (see map 20). The boat ramp would be well-constructed and up to ten feet wider than that of alternative "C". It would be located on the site of the present access point at the southern tip of the point. There would be no upper canoe slide on Tiah's cove.

There would be no seasonal attendant with this alternative. People would be instructed with signage and the property would be checked regularly by land bank staff. Dogs would be allowed on the property from May through July but only on leashes. Camping would not be addressed as a potential use at this time, and landscape restoration would occur at the southern point.

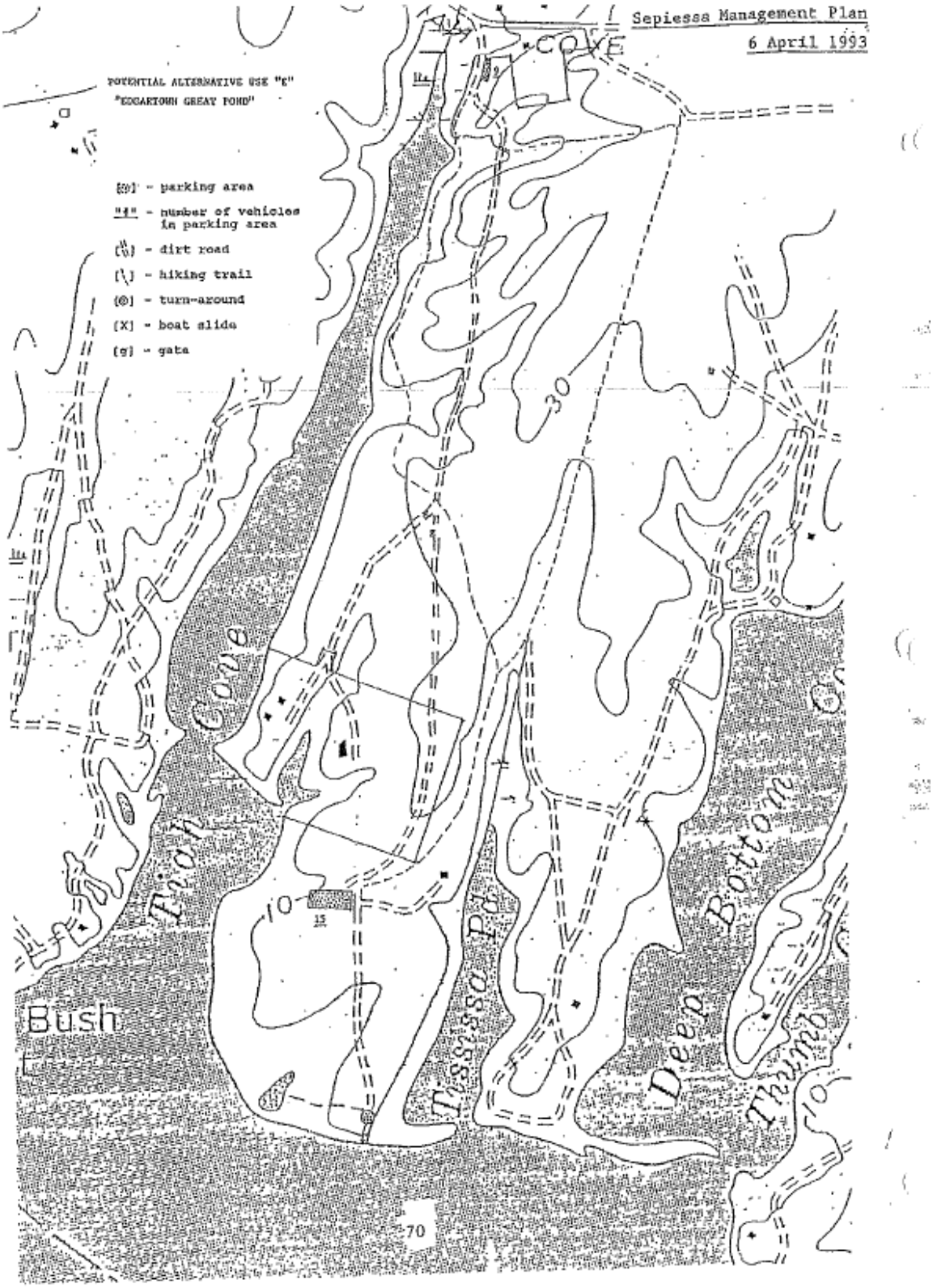
Advantages	Disadvantages
good boat access at the lower point	largest disturbance of vegetation and wildlife
inexpensive annual maintenance	user-user conflicts would reduce total use
no disturbance of wetland vegetation necessary	high potential for impact to rare species
	more heavy traffic on main access road

The management activity schedule would be as follows:

1. file notice of intent and implement upper parking area restoration……..……..1993
2. move Clam Point Road……..1993
3. construct parking areas and boat slides……...1993
4. continue ecological inventory/monitoring……..……1993/94
5. implement landscape restoration……1993/94
6. maintain road and trails……..……..1993/94

NOT CHOSEN: this alternative was not chosen because it was considered likely to impact wildlife and plants to a greater degree than other alternatives, even though the model which exists at Edgartown Great Pond has not been shown to be a major problem.

Map 20: Sepiessa Point Reservation Edgartown Great Pond Map



Appendix C

Sepiessa Point Reservation Summer Use Report 1994

Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

TO: land bank commissioners and town advisory board members (West Tisbury)

FROM: John Potter, land superintendent

DATE: 28 November 1994

SUBJECT: a report on summer use at Sepiessa Point Reservation for summer 1994

This final report on the summer season at Sepiessa Point summarizes the data gathered by our property attendants from June 13 to September 12, 1994. During this period, the attendants logged in 569 hours of time over eighty days. Their average start time was 10:00 am and their average finish time was 5:15 pm, each day. Some days started as early as 7:00 am and finished as late as 7:30 pm. Coverage varied depending on the weather and on the availability of the attendants, who were also responsible for overseeing other land bank properties.

During the 569 attendant-hours this summer, the attendants recorded 2,385 visitors. These are broken down by month in the following table:

MONTH	TOTAL VISITORS	AVERAGE VISITORS PER DAY
June	277	18
July	665	26
August	1179	39
September	264	29
Total	2385	30

The highest rate of use was in August when visitation averaged almost forty people per day with a maximum of 103 visitors over an eight-and-a-half hour period on Sunday, August 7. This was an exception. The next biggest day was Saturday, September 3 when there were 78 visitors over an eight hour period. Over the course of the entire summer, visitation exceeded sixty on only six occasions (7.5% of days), and exceeded forty on seventeen occasions (21% of days). Twenty-

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seven days (33.5% of days) had fewer than twenty people visit the property during the course of the day.

Visitation was highest on weekends, although Wednesday and Tuesday were typically big days, as well. The following table shows the break down by day of the week:

DAY	TOTAL VISITORS	AVERAGE VISITORS PER DAY
Sunday	541	42
Monday	205	17
Tuesday	267	30
Wednesday	387	32
Thursday	274	25
Friday	235	21
Saturday	476	40
Total	2385	30

The only trend that we could see to help explain the higher rates during mid-week is in use by hikers which correlates well with overall visitation. People showed up to hike on Tuesdays and Wednesdays more often than on the other weekdays. There was also some tendency to get higher numbers of beachgoers on Tuesdays.

Weather was a significant factor in the distribution of visitors. The attendants recorded a subjective rating for weather each day on a scale of one to five as described in the table below:

WEATHER	TOTAL VISITORS	AVERAGE VISITORS PER DAY
"Great all day" (1)	634	37
"Good day" (2)	810	30
"Mixed good" (3)	461	26

"Mixed bad" (4)	383	35
"Terrible all day" (5)	21	7
Total	2385	30

The breakdown is as you would expect except for overcast days when there was some chance of rain. On these days, visitation was relatively high. In further analysis, the data show an increase in hiking use during these days. People skip going to the beaches and head out to visit Sepiessa for a walk when there is bad weather threatening.

The attendants split out visitation by nine categories of evident use. Some of these overlap slightly and some visitors were not easily assigned to a category, but the overall distribution gives a good picture of the types of recreational use at Sepiessa Point. The following table shows each category of use and the length of time it took on average for the attendant to record the next visitor in each category. In other words, you will see that we averaged a hiker every fifty-two minutes of attendant-time.

CATEGORY	ONE EVERY.....	PERCENT OF DAYS IN WHICH USE OCCURRED
Visitor	14 min.	100
Hiker	52 min.	91
Beachgoer	1 hr. 24 min.	61
Curious visitor (in/out)	1 hr. 54 min.	80
Kayak or canoe user	2 hr. 6 min.	79
Biker	2 hr. 24 min.	71
Dog walker	4 hr. 48 min.	56
Someone fishing	10 hr. 12 min.	27
Motor boat user	21 hr. 54 min.	28
Horseback rider	28 hr. 24 min.	9

Hiking is far and away the biggest use of the reservation during the summer months. This is

consistent with the expectations of the management plan. The property was used quite often by beachgoers, bikers, and dog walkers. Throughout the summer, the attendants continued to observe a significant level of curious visitors. These are people who typically drive in, circle around the loop, and leave within fifteen minutes or so. Some notes were made that people returned with boats or for hikes, but the attendants generally considered this type of use to be of a tourist nature.

The boating use leaned heavily towards canoe and kayak users with some motorboat use, although considerably less than might have been expected. The following tables show the monthly trends for boating use:

MONTH	TOTAL # OF CANOES	TOTAL # OF MOTOR-BOATS	AVERAGE CANOES PER DAY	AVERAGE MOTORBOATS PER DAY
June	20	3	1.33	0.20
July	80	14	3.08	0.54
August	150	5	5.00	0.17
Sept.	26	4	2.89	0.44
TOTAL	276	26	3.45	0.33

It is clear that the primary demand as shown last summer is for canoe and kayak boating. With an average of five boats per day in August, canoe use dwarfed motorboat use, which did not even reach one boat every other day except in July. Nevertheless, twenty-six motorboat users were able to access the great pond over the course of the summer.

In mid-July, land bank staff installed a traffic counter just south of the Bayer's fork to gauge the possible off-hours use of the lower point. Over the last fifty-one days of the summer, the counter showed an average of 13.6 vehicles per day driving to the lower point. An average of eight of these were during attendant hours, while an average of five occurred when the attendants were not present. On an hourly basis this worked out to be 1.2 vehicles to the lower point during the hours when an attendant was on, and 0.28 vehicles per hour when attendants were off-duty. From the lack of complaints from the neighbors, it is expected that most of this off-hour visitation happened during daylight hours, as permitted in the management plan.

Overall, management was relatively simple at Sepiessa this summer. We had a moderate amount of use with about thirty visitors per day. The attendants noticed that parking was limited on only

one occasion and for about fifteen minutes or so. Several problems arose during the course of the summer and were addressed in the following way:

NO.	PROBLEM	ACTIONS TAKEN
1	horseback riding on new road	additional signs, visit to area barns, and talk to horse council representatives
2	trespassing on barrier beach	verbal plea to all people with boats
3	parking in buffer zone of pond	posts and no parking signs installed
4	people not finding property entrance	plans to add signs at entrance next summer
5	use of old canoe launch	posts installed in old Clam Point Road
6	trespassing on Bayer land	additional directional signs

Land bank staff will continue to monitor the effectiveness of these actions and improve them, if warranted.

This concludes the end of the year report on the recreational use of Sepiessa Point. Future studies would be useful if they could augment our understanding of some of the following factors. These are: average length of stay for various uses; pond destinations for boaters; acceptability of recreational facilities to users; and impact of users on biological resources. Some of these studies may be undertaken.

cc. West Tisbury conservation commission