

## **The Town of Eden Open Space Index Amendment 1 – May 2004**

The Town of Eden Open Space Index prepared by the Eden Conservation Advisory Council with the assistance of Paul Rutledge, Ph.D Ecologist and Eric W Gillert, Principal Urban Planner and The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service in September 1999 in the section titled “Considerations for Conservation. Prioritizing Open Space Areas for Protection” (page 6) states:

“If the Town decides to consider pursuing some form of protection or preservation for certain open space areas, the general approach recommended here is to use a rather flexible and approximate system for prioritization of candidate open space areas. There are two main categories of open space, agricultural land and natural land and these probably should be considered separately. In addition, a third category of areas worthy of protection consideration and which involves open spaces can be termed “viewscales” (see below.)”

The Open Space Index mentions the following parameters be used to help determine ecological importance and prioritization: size, ecological community type, condition of ecological community, location, diversity, potential for long-term survival of community or communities without a major management effort, agricultural land and viewscales. In addition to these parameters, any of the goals, recommendations and strategies sited in the Town’s other related planning documents must also be considered. All of these documents act as supporting materials for the Town’s Master Plan. The Master Plan is the document that ties these efforts together. It also “officially” acts as the guide for the overall vision and development of the Town.

As part of the ongoing efforts of the Eden Conservation Advisory Council and with the above considerations in mind, the Eden Conservation Advisory Council would like to make the following recommendations as part of this amendment to the September 1999 Open Space Index:

### **Recommendation 1**

Open Space Index Area number 41 be removed from the Open Space Map/Index/Inventory.

#### **Rationale**

Area 41 has been developed and is no longer open space.

### **Recommendation 2**

Open Space Index Area number 55 be removed from the Open Space Map/Index/Inventory.

#### **Rationale**

Area 55 has been developed and is no longer open space.

### **Recommendation 3**

Update the Open Space Map/Index/Inventory by prioritizing the remaining areas into Primary and Secondary Conservation Areas. Primary Conservation Areas would include all areas previously list as Agricultural Land, Mixed Covertypes and Palustrine – Wetland. Secondary Conservation Areas would include all areas previously listed as Natural Terrestrial Forested.

### **Rationale**

The “flexible and approximate system for prioritization” that the Eden Conservation Advisory Council is recommending can aid future conservation efforts. By dividing the existing Open Space Areas into two groups, Primary and Secondary Conservation Areas, the Eden Conservation Advisory Council will be better able to focus it’s efforts and help streamline some of the Town’s programs and initiatives. The Primary Conservation Areas include those areas that Eden Conservation Advisory Council feels deserve the most attention. The Primary Conservation areas include:

- Agricultural Lands – These are included because of their importance to the Town’s past, present and future condition. Maintaining viable agriculture and the town rural character are also major goals of the Town’s residents.
- Mixed Covertypes – These areas are included because there are so few of them remaining in the Town. With the removal of areas 41 and 55 (both were Mixed Covertypes) only seven areas of Mixed Covertypes remain. Mixed Covertypes are extremely important for ecological diversity. They produce different food sources; act as travel corridors, breeding grounds and “holding areas” for wildlife. If they are lost it is often very difficult to create or re-created them.
- Palustrine - Wetland – There are three Palustrine – Wetland areas in the Town of Eden. These are important ecosystems that collect and filter stormwater, regulate flooding, aid in groundwater recharge and provide unique habitat(s) for many wetland-specific plants and animals. They are often the most unsuitable areas for development.

The Secondary Conservation Areas include:

- Natural Terrestrial Forested – These areas are typically found in the more steeply sloped areas of the Town because most of the flat areas of the Town have long been converted to agricultural or residential use. The slope typically associated with these forested areas provides them a level of insulation or “safety” from development that the three areas mentioned above do not share.

**Recommendation 4**

Update the Open Space Map to include Other Conservation Areas. These conservation areas would show all areas of active agriculture (except those referenced previously as Agricultural Lands in the Open Space Index/Inventory/Map) and other areas including viewscapes, etc. that have conservation value not covered under by Primary or Secondary Conservation Areas.

**Rationale**

All agricultural operations are important in the Town of Eden and they should be reflected on the Open Space Index Map as Conservation Areas. Other areas (such as viewscapes etc.) are also important for maintaining the “rural character” of the Town and should also be reflected on the Open Space Index Map as Conservation Areas.

**Recommendation 5**

Create a new Open Space Map. (see attached)

**Rationale**

The current Open Space Map contains areas that are no longer open space (areas 41 & 55) and is not prioritized. A new map should be created that reflects these changes.

**Summary**

The Open Space Index adopted in September 1999 needs updating to reflect open space changes that have occurred in the Town of Eden to date (May 2004). The Open Space Index adopted in September 1999 contained criteria for prioritization, but open space areas were never officially prioritized. Using a flexible, simple and well justified system for prioritization outline in this amendment the Town of Eden will be better able to implement it’s Master Plan strategies and streamline some of the Town’s programs and initiatives.