

5.5 Natural & Cultural Resources

5.5.1 Introduction

This section of Exeter's Comprehensive Plan addresses the resources that are part of the natural and human environment, including soils, wetlands, reservoirs, watersheds and aquifers. This section also provides information on historic resources, such as historic sites, buildings, districts and available preservation opportunities.

The Natural & Cultural Resources section provides an inventory of the significant natural resource areas such as water, soils, prime agricultural lands, natural vegetation systems, wildlife, wetlands, aquifers, coastal features, flood plains and other natural resources and the policies for the protection and management of such areas. Also important is the documentation and protection of historic and cultural resources of Exeter.

5.5.2 Natural Resources

5.5.2a Geology

5.5.2a.1 Bedrock Geology

The bedrock of Exeter is primarily granite estimated to be 300 million years old. The dominant rock units are the Scituate granite gneiss and Hope Valley alaskite gneiss. Isolated areas of Aplite; Fine-grained granite; and, Blackstone series exist. The Blackstone series is the only metamorphosed sedimentary unit, while all other units being igneous rock.

The Scituate granite gneiss has been quarried, on a small scale. Most of the quarried material is being used for building foundations and walls of cemeteries. Also, evidence of pits indicate the removal of weathered bedrock, known as 'rottenstone.' This material has been used locally for roads.

5.5.2a.2 Surficial Geology

The surficial geology of Exeter is the result of glacial action and is comprised of materials deposited within the Pleistocene and Recent Ages. Generally, the glacial deposits in Exeter can be categorized as follows:

- Ground moraine deposits of till, 10-20 feet thick
- Glaciofluvial ice-contact sand and gravel deposits
- Swamp deposits of sand silt with some organic material
- Alluvial deposits of fine to medium stratified sand

The till deposits occur within the upland areas of Exeter. The glaciofluvial deposits are found within the major river valleys (i.e., Wood River, Beaver River). The swamp and

alluvial deposits are generally located within existing streams and associated vegetative wetlands.

The moraine deposits consist of unconsolidated materials deposited as a direct result of glacial ice. The other major deposits noted are comprised of stratified materials deposited from meltwater streams issued from the shrinking ice sheet. It is within the stratified depositions, or outwash as it is often called, that groundwater storage is greatest. These outwash areas of Exeter are, in fact, where the groundwater reservoirs are located.

5.5.2a.3 Soils

Soils for Exeter have been delineated in Table 5.5.A by major soil unit. Special categorization is used to further delineate those soils regarding: suitability as prime farmland or farmland of State importance; hydric soils; and soils with a seasonal high water table.

5.5.2a.4 Hydric Soils

Hydric soils are those soils that, in their undrained state, are saturated or flooded to the degree that anaerobic conditions develop. This scenario fosters the growth and propagation of hydrophytic plants. This inter-relationship between vegetation and soil conditions explains the presence of vegetated wetlands (i.e., swamps, marshes) in hydric soil areas.

Approximately 16.1% of the soils within Exeter are classified as hydric. See Map 5.5.A The hydric soil units, while dominant within stream systems, are located throughout most of the Town. The seasonal water table of hydric soils is within 0 - 18" of the surface. These soils coincide with significant recharge areas for groundwater reservoirs. As such, the potential for groundwater pollution is enhanced within these areas.

5.5.2b Seasonal High Water Table

Certain soil units, though non-hydric, have seasonal water tables between 19" and 36" from the surface. Approximately 3.9% of Exeter is composed of these soil units. The proximity of the water table to the surface increases susceptibility for groundwater pollution within those areas.

5.5.2.c Prime Farmland

The United States Soil Conservation Service (SCS) has classified certain soil units as having the physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. These prime farmlands have: adequate/dependable moisture; favorable temperature and growing season; acceptable pH; few rocks; and, are available for agricultural land use.

While other land can be used for agriculture, the prime farmland represents more optimum conditions for the economically feasible use of land in growing crops. It is those favorable conditions that also make those soil units highly compatible for other land use types. As such, much of the prime farmland throughout the state has been converted for residential development.

Presently there are approximately 5,500 acres of prime farmland in Exeter (see Map 5.5.B). The vast majority of that land is, in fact, being used for agricultural purposes.

5.5.2d Farmland of Statewide Importance

Besides those soils identified as prime farmland, the SCS has also designated other soil units as qualifying as additional farmland of statewide importance. Exeter has approximately 4,765 acres of such land. Those areas, while not possessing the optimum characteristics of prime farmland, have physical and chemical properties that provide for agricultural use with some modifications.

5.5.2e Inter-relationships of Soils

A review of the Soils Table 5.5A indicates that certain soil units are found within more than one of the special assigned categories. Specifically, 1,560 acres of prime farmland have a seasonal high water table and 900 acres of hydric soils are designated as being of statewide importance. It is unlikely that the hydric soil areas could be used for farming, unless they are presently in that land use. Those seasonal high water soils classified as prime farmland are best suited for that purpose.

5.5.3 Water Resources

5.5.3a Groundwater

Three (3) groundwater reservoirs and associated recharge areas are at least partially located within the Town of Exeter. See Map 5.5.C. Those areas are:

- Upper Wood River
- Usquepaug-Queen River System
- Chipuxet River

All three groundwater systems are classified, by the State as GAA. Class GAA denotes those groundwater systems that are known or presumed to be suitable for drinking water use without treatment. Quality standards for Class GAA are those established by the federal government for drinking water quality, plus several state established numerical standards.

5.5.3b Surface Water

Exeter has extensive standing and flowing water body resources. All surface water within the town is fresh water/non-tidal. These water resources have been classified by the State regarding potability and use for recreation.

Classifications of water systems range from 'A' to 'C'. 'A' is suitable as a water supply and for all other uses, 'B' is suitable for bathing and recreation, while 'C' is suitable for fish/wildlife and recreational boating. Present Exeter fresh water use classifications are as follows (see Map 5.5.D):

<u>Class A</u>	<u>Class B</u>	<u>Class C</u>
Wood River	Beach Pond	Queen River/
Fisherville Brook	Queen R. (lower)	Queens Fort Brook
Queen R. (upper)	Queens Fort Brook (lower)	
Queens Fort Brook (upper)	Chickasheen Brook	
Roaring Brook		

5.5.4 Wetlands

Wetlands, as defined by the federal government and states, include: open water (i.e., lakes, ponds); flowing water (i.e., rivers, streams); and areas dominated by hydrophytic plants (i.e., swamps, marshes). The latter systems could be called vegetative wetlands.

The federal government has classified all wetlands into a hierarchy of: system; subsystem; and class. Using those classifications, following is a list of wetland types present in Exeter:

- Broad leaved deciduous forested/scrub shrub complex
- Permanent open water
- Broad leaved deciduous forested
- Broad-leaved deciduous forested/scrub shrub complex with emergents
- Permanent open water upper perennial river
- Open water/emergent complex
- Broad-leaved deciduous/Needle leaved evergreen forested
- Permanent open water lower perennial river
- Permanent open water limnetic lake
- Emergent
- Semi-permanent open water/dead forest

The majority of vegetative wetlands in Exeter are broad leaved deciduous forest, in most cases, being red maple swamps. Some emergent systems exist, mostly marsh or meadow. The perennial rivers are those that normally flow throughout the year, while open water systems refer to the existing ponds.

Rhode Island freshwater wetland regulations delineate vegetative systems as swamp, marsh, bog or emergent. Rivers/streams are classified as perennial or intermittent. As noted, most Exeter vegetative wetlands are swamps with the major rivers as perennial and tributary brooks being intermittent.

Exeter's vegetative wetlands are located throughout the Town, either contiguous to water bodies or within low areas having at least a seasonal hydrological connection to existing riverine systems. Some isolated areas exist, but are the exception rather than the rule.

As noted earlier, the wetlands closely correlate with hydric soil units. The vast majority of wetlands being located within those soil areas. Wetlands are significant due to their role in: pollutant attenuation; flood storage; groundwater recharge; wildlife habitat; and recreation.

5.5.5 Floodplains

The federal government has designated all areas according to flooding potential (see Map 5.5E). Within Exeter there are four (4) different flood zone designations. The majority of the Town is designated as 'C' zone, meaning those areas of minimal flooding, outside of the 500-year flood event boundary. Small 'B' zone areas exist in association with some streams. Those areas are likely to flood in the event of a 500-year storm event.

A considerable portion along existing river/stream systems are designated as 'A' zones. These are areas likely flooded during a 100-year storm event. 'A' zone designations vary in classification in that within certain study areas the actual base flood elevations have been determined. In Exeter, the majority of 'A' zones areas have not been studied to the extent that a known base flood elevation exists. The exceptions being the Chipuxet River and the Queens Fort Brook (lower).

The following 'A' zone areas are noted, within Exeter:

- Tippecanett Pond
- Beach Pond
- Breakheart Pond
- Parris Brook
- Locke Brook (upper)
- Fisherville Brook (upper)
- Queen River
- Queens Fort Brook (lower)
- Wood River/Flat River
- Boone Lake/Roaring Brook
- Woody Hill Brook
- Deep Pond
- Chipuxet River
- Yawgoo Pond/Chickasheen Brook
- Queen River /Locke Brook

It is recommended that the Town institute policies and regulations for work within or adjacent to areas designated "A" or "B" (or areas within floodways) under the present or future FEMA program.

5.5.6 Flora and Fauna

5.5.6a Flora

The vast undeveloped areas of Exeter are dominated by woodland. Most of these forest areas are comprised of a hardwood/softwood mix with a hardwood dominance. Within these areas the understory (shrub) layer ranges from dense to sparse, being more sparse in those areas with a higher softwood composition.

In addition to the woodlands, there are some field areas, as well as, the existing agricultural lands. This diversity of vegetative cover types provides a good wildlife habitat, especially in those areas where different cover types border. The large areas of unfragmented forest tracts, such as the Arcadia Wildlife Management Area are of critical importance in providing large, relatively unfragmented forested tracts required by some animals, notable birds, unable to compete with species associated with “edge” habitats (roads, powerlines, developed areas, etc.)

5.5.6b Fauna

Given the abundance of undeveloped land, Exeter provides extensive habitat for wildlife. The woodland areas provide nesting and food sources for passerine birds and birds of prey. The stream/brook/pond systems provide areas for muskrat and other fur-bearing mammals. These systems also accommodate the requirements of a host of reptiles, amphibians and waterfowl.

Most of the recorded non-marine wildlife species are found, to varying degrees, within Exeter. This list includes deer, most small mammals, fresh water fish, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

5.5.6b-1 Rare and Endangered Species

Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program data indicates the presence of extensive habitat areas for rare species (see Map 5.5.F). Most noteworthy of these areas are the Arcadia Management Area and the Eppley Swamp/Queen River system.

Within the Arcadia Management Area at least thirty-three (33) occurrences of rare plant and animal species have been confirmed. At least three rare invertebrate species have been confirmed within the Eppley Swamp/Queen River system.

As Table 5.5B indicates, most rare species confirmations are recent giving encouragement that these rare plants and animals are still present within Exeter.

Table 5.5.B

Rare Species & Exemplary Natural Communities – Exeter (January 2001)

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Last Observed</u>
<i>Isotria medeoloides</i>	Small Whorled Pogonia	FT	1985
<i>Scleria pauciflora</i>	Few-flowered Nut-rush	SE	1988
<i>Lynx rufus</i>	Bobcat	ST	1981
<i>Acer spicatum</i>	Mountain Maple	ST	1971
<i>Eriophorum gracile</i>	Slender Cotton-gross	ST	1976
<i>Gymnocarpium dryopteris</i>	Oak Fern	ST	1971
<i>Xyris montana</i>	Northern Yellow-eyed Grass	ST	1920
<i>Carpophis amoenus</i>	Eastern Worm Snake	C	1959
<i>Clemmys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	C	1981
<i>Elaphe obsoleta</i>	Black Rat Snake	C	1996
<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	Dark-eyed Junco	C	1981
<i>Aletris farinosa</i>	Colicroot	C	1988
<i>Arethusa bulbosa</i>	Swamp Pink	C	1988
<i>Asclepias amplexicaulis</i>	Blunt-leaved Milkweed	C	1979
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair Spleenwort	C	1993
<i>Botrychium lanceolatum</i> <i>v. angustisegmentum</i>	Triangle Grape-fem	C	1921
<i>Calopogon tuberosus</i>	Grass Pink	C	1989
<i>Eriophorum viridicarinatum</i>	Bog Cotton-grass	C	1979
<i>Hudsonia ericoides</i>	Golden Heather	C	1994
<i>Lonicera caerulea</i>	Mountain Fly-honeysuckle	C	1976
<i>Lonicera dioica</i>	Mountain Honeysuckle	C	1989
<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Wild Lupine	C	1999
<i>Lygodium palmatum</i>	Climbing Fern	C	1991
<i>Panicum philadelphicum</i>	Philadelphia Panic-grass	C	1914
<i>Prunus pumila v. cuneata</i>	Sand Cherry	C	1999
<i>Sagittaria graminea</i>	Grass-leaved Arrowhead	C	1998
<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	Eastern Pearlshell	C	1995*
<i>Apharetra purpurea</i>	Blueberry Sallow	C	1996
<i>Aplectoides condita</i>	A Noctuid Moth	C	1986
<i>Atrytonopsis hianna</i>	Dusted Skipper	C	1992*
<i>Catocala nr. lineella</i>	An Underwing Moth	C	1995*
<i>Cicindela formosa</i>	Pine Barrens Tiger Beetle	C	1994'
<i>Dorocordulia libera</i>	Racket-tailed Emerald	C	1994*
<i>Enallagma laterale</i>	New England Bluet	C	1988'
<i>Enodia anhedon</i>	Northern Pearly Eye	C	1995*
<i>Gomphaeschna amilope</i>	A Dragonfly	C	1996*
<i>Hemileuca maia maia</i>	Barrens Buckmoth		1986
<i>Incisalia polia</i>	Hoary Elfin		1994

Table 5.5.B (continued)

Rare Species & Exemplary Natural Communities – Exeter (January 2001)

Scientific Name Common Name Status Last Observed

<i>Lithophane viridipallens</i>	Pale Green Pinion Moth	C	1985
<i>Nannothemis bella</i>	Bluebell		1993*
<i>Ophiogomphus aspersus</i>	Brook Snaketail	C	1993*
<i>Ophiogomphus mainensis</i>	A Snaketail	C	1995*
<i>Parrhasius m-album</i>	Whit M Hairstreak	C	1986
<i>Somatochlora georgiana</i>	A Dragonfly	C	1999*
<i>Stylurus scudderi</i>	Zebra Clubtail	C	1995*
<i>Williamsonia lintneri</i>	Ringed Boghaunter	C	1999*
<i>Zale submediana</i>	A Noctid Moth	C	1995*
<i>Zale sp.</i>	Pine Barrens Zale	C	1986
<i>Linnaea borealis</i>	Twinflower	SH	1935
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild Bergamot	SH	1965

Exemplary Natural Communities:

- Pitch Pine/Scrub Oak Barrens
- Coastal Plain Quagmire
- Inland Fen
- Dwarf Shrub Bog
- Atlantic White Cedar Swamp

Notes: These lists are updates from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Natural Heritage Program Office. Species added to the list since 1990 are marked with an asterisk (*).

Status Designations for Rare Species:

- FT Federally Threatened
- SE State Endangered
- ST State Threatened
- C Concern
- SH State Historic

It should be noted that the Status designations are applied to each species based on its status in the entire state. The "Last Observed" dates refer to the last time a particular population of species was observed within the Town of Exeter. For example, Mountain Maple (*Acer spicatum*) is listed as State Threatened based on its current occurrence within the town of Gloucester, however, the Exeter population of this species has not been seen since 1971, and is not believed to be extant in Exeter. Last observed dates prior to 1980 indicate that the species is of historic occurrence in Exeter.

5.5.7 Findings, Issues, Goals and Policies

5.5.7a Findings

1. 6,000 acres of the Town are comprised of hydric soils, with an additional 1,425 acres of seasonal high water table soils present. These soils are dispersed throughout the Town, often associated with groundwater aquifer/recharge areas.
2. Prime Farmland (5,500 acres) and Farmland of Statewide Importance (4,765 acres) comprise over 20% of the Town soils.
3. Three groundwater reservoirs are located at least partially within Exeter. Most of the existing community wells are located within the Queen River and Chipuxet River aquifers.
4. The vast majority of Exeter is located within the Pawcatuck River Drainage Basin.
5. At least one water body (Chickasheen Brook) has undergone water quality degradation due to industrial point source discharge.
6. Exeter is composed of approximately 5,400 acres of wetlands or 14.5% of the total area (per RIGIS). A significant portion is located within hydric soils and associated with groundwater aquifer/recharge areas.
7. The majority of undeveloped land in Exeter is comprised of mixed hardwood/softwood forests with dominant hardwoods.
8. As new residential subdivisions continue to be built, land will become increasingly scarce and expensive. This will result in loss of open space and rural character. If development continues to occur predominantly in the form of conventional subdivisions or frontage lots on existing roads, the perception of the Town as a rural community will gradually shift to that of a suburban community. Even cluster developments do not protect a significant portion of the development site as open space. Rural residential compounds, while preserving at least fifty percent of a development site as open space, are limited to large estate lots at very low densities. The design of future residential subdivisions will have a profound impact on the visual appearance of the Town as well as upon its open space patterns and environmental quality.

5.5.7b Issues

1. Siting of septic systems within hydric and seasonal high water table soils may result in dysfunctional systems and pollution to groundwater.

2. Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance pose fewer site constraints and can be subject to greater pressures for conversion to residential development.
3. Impacts to the Exeter aquifers have regional ramifications to other communities drawing water from the same supply.
4. Construction activities in areas outside of RIDEM jurisdiction can still impact wetlands and other sensitive natural areas.
5. Loss of forested areas (to development) results in a reduction to the Town's green space, wildlife habitats, and passive recreation areas.
6. Increase in impervious surfaces and changes to drainage patterns can significantly impact groundwater reservoir and recharge areas.

5.5.7c Goal

1. Identify, inventory, and protect the sensitive natural resources within the Town.

5.5.7d Policies

1. To protect and preserve surface and groundwater resources to insure continued high quality waters.
2. To recognize our responsibility to safeguard the headwaters of all major systems on which many of the communities of southern Rhode Island depend.
3. Require development standards for the protection of natural resources by adopting those standards as part of the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Land Development and Subdivision Review Regulations. Development Plan Review is incorporated into those two documents.
4. Future land use decisions and zoning should be based on physical and environmental constraints to development as shown on the various constraints maps included in this document. They include hydric soils, wetlands, groundwater aquifers and recharge areas, etc., as contained in Sections 5.5.1 – 5.5.5 of this Plan.
5. Require innovative land use techniques to avoid or minimize development impacts to natural resources, such as requirements to reduce impervious surfaces while retaining more natural vegetation.
6. Amend the Land Development and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance to provide for Conservation Development techniques. The Planning Board should be given the authority to make conservation development mandatory where necessary to preserve open space and important natural and cultural site features.

5.5.7e Water Quality

5.5.7e-1 Goal: Identify, inventory, and protect the environmental factors that contribute to excellent water quality within the Town.

5.5.7e-2 Policies:

1. Adopt a groundwater protection ordinance to limit or prohibit land uses with a potential to contaminate or pollute surface or groundwater and limit the removal of outwash materials in aquifers.
2. Control development in hydric and seasonal high water table soils to protect surface and groundwater resources.
3. Adopt appropriate ordinances to control soil erosion and stormwater run-off.
4. Adopt a policy of zero net increase in existing runoff for new developments.
5. Consider septic system maintenance programs in areas where septic system failures could adversely impact on surface or groundwater resources.
6. Protect existing and potential public well sites.
7. Require vegetative buffers from all surface water bodies and wetlands to protect water quality and wildlife habitat.
8. Consider a wood cutting/forest management ordinance to work in conjunction with a soil erosion and sedimentation ordinance to control the adverse impact upon water quality and wildlife habitat.

5.5.7f Open Space Preservation

5.5.7f-1 Goal: Identify, inventory, and protect valuable open space areas within the Town.

5.5.7f-2 Policies

1. The Town shall require innovative techniques to link open spaces and to preserve the rural character and natural habitats of the Town of Exeter.
2. The Town should continue to use the Farm, Forest, and Open Space Act. Establish incentives to encourage the continued use of prime farmland for agricultural purposes. (See Section 5.7)

5.5.7g Environmental Education

5.5.7g-1 Goal: Educate Exeter residents and businesses about the importance of protecting the natural environment.

5.5.7g-2 Policies

1. Educate and encourage users of hazardous materials and pollutants to use and dispose of these materials properly.
2. Educate and encourage users of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers to utilize best management practices.
3. Educate the community on the importance of protecting the natural environment.
4. Develop a localized environmental program in our school system.

5.5.7h Earth Removal

5.5.7h-1 Goal: Adopt regulations that limit the negative impacts from earth removal projects.

5.5.7h-2 Policies:

1. Limit and control commercial earth removal operations and require a minimum separation of finished grade to bedrock.
2. Require appropriate site reclamation for all earth removal operations.

5.5.8 Future Natural Resources Plan

5.5.8a Introduction

The future Natural Resources Plan presents recommendations with respect to the findings of the inventory section of the element. In addition, a review of applicable local/State/Federal policies and regulations was undertaken to ascertain existing degrees of protection for the Town's natural resources.

Although many State and Federal regulations exist for the express purpose of environmental protection, it is most often at the local level that pressures are brought to bear upon pristine natural systems. Also, the prime intent of higher-level government regulations is the protection of specific environmental systems. It is primarily at the local level that provisions can be made for the orderly management of growth with emphasis on not only natural systems protection, but with a concern for aesthetics, land use compatibility and the maintenance of local character.

Results of the town wide survey concluded that people/families have chosen to reside in Exeter because of the town's rural character and unspoiled natural setting. The

Natural Resources Plan is intended to establish a set of policies and regulations to insure that those amenities are adequately protected and properly managed.

Following are the specific elements of the recommended implementation program.

5.5.8b Aquifer Protection Overlay District

It is recommended that the Town establish an Aquifer Protection Overlay District to encompass wellheads, aquifers and recharge areas that provide groundwater for Exeter and would help to protect groundwater resources shared by Exeter and adjacent communities.

Specific regulations would be established to control:

- Storage and use of petroleum hydrocarbons
- Application of road salts
- Allowable impervious coverage
- Storage and use of hazardous materials, including herbicides and pesticides
- Point source pollution
- Drainage facilities

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8c Regulations for Earth Removal

The Town should establish specific regulations for the commercial removal of soil, with soil defined so as to include, but not be limited to boulders, cobbles, sand, gravel, and loam. The Town should revise its existing earth removal ordinance and include it in the Town's Zoning Ordinance. The regulations should specifically address:

- Excavation methods
- Transportation of materials
- Daily removal quantities
- Total project quantities
- Erosion/sediment control practices
- Site rehabilitation

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8d High Water Table Overlay District

The Town should establish a High Watertable Overlay District for those areas composed of hydric soils (watertable 0" - 18") and areas of seasonal high (watertable 36"). It is recommended that development within hydric soils be prohibited. Development within seasonal high watertables should be controlled as concerns the

installation of individual septic systems and use/storage of hazardous materials/petroleum hydrocarbons/hazardous materials.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8e Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Regulations

It is recommended that Exeter incorporate into its Zoning Ordinance regulations that dictate methods for the prevention of soil erosion and sedimentation from site work. The regulations should incorporate Best Management Practice (BMP) policies. The regulations should be drafted in concert with the Soil Conservation Service - Southern Rhode Island Conservation District.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8f Wastewater Management Districts

Consider establishing Wastewater Management Districts for the purpose of preventing pollution caused by failing septic systems. The Districts would provide a process to educate the public whereby individual septic systems are inspected for proper maintenance and pumping. The cost of the inspections and pumping might be defrayed by the property owner either through a special tax or settling of an annual fee.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8g Regulations Concerning Prime Farmland Conversion

Institute regulations that encourage the continued use of prime farmland for the preservation of open space, natural habitats and agricultural purposes.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8h Environmental Performance Standards

It is recommended that Environmental Performance Standards be incorporated into the Town's Zoning Ordinance & Subdivision Regulations. The standards would institute a Best Management Practice (BMP) policy requirement. Where available and deemed adequate, Federal and State standards could be incorporated. Lacking existing standards, the Town would establish its own requirements. Specific areas to be governed would include, but not be limited to:

- Alterations within areas where soils are shallow to bedrock
- Establishment of vegetative buffers
- Air/Noise pollution

- Drainage (i.e., establish a "no net runoff increase" policy)

5.5.8i Environmental Impact Requirements

Incorporate an Environmental Impact (EI) requirement for large residential, commercial and industrial projects. The policy should establish minimum thresholds for an EI requirement. Such thresholds can include: total house lots (for residential); total gross floor space (for commercial/industrial); percent of impervious cover; percent of total parcel alteration; and, particular proposed usage. Drafting such a requirement will require assistance from trained planning and legal staff, so that the requirements will be legally defensible.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8j Steep Slope Overlay District

Establish regulations governing alteration of sites having grades in excess of 15%. The regulations should specifically address methods for soil removal, stabilization and erosion control.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8k Forest Preservation

The Town should designate the Planning Board or Conservation Commission to be responsible to disseminate information regarding state or federal government 'Forest Legacy Programs.' The program, under the auspices of the U.S. Forestry Service, provides monies for landowners to sell certain rights to the federal government. Such a program helps protect tracts of land threatened by development and/or sub-division into smaller parcels.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8l Farm, Forest and Open Space Act

It is recommended that the Town review its present tax assessment practices under the Act. Efforts should be made to determine if the current tax incentives are adequate to promote continued agricultural uses of applicable land.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8m Agricultural Preservation

In addition to recommendations 5.5.7g and 5.5.7k, the Town should investigate additional means and methods for preserving agricultural land. These could include establishment of an Agricultural Land Trust and a mechanism for the transfer of development rights.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission

5.5.8n Regulations Pertaining to Livestock Control

The Town should establish regulations regarding the control of livestock and other farm animals. Appropriate animal population densities such as those developed by the Soil Conservation Service should be set to prohibit potential environmental and health hazards from disease and waste material. Siting of livestock populations in areas adjacent to waterbodies and adjacent to and/or over groundwater resources should be controlled. Specific management plans for waste material disposal should be required.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, Conservation Commission

5.5.8o Greenspace Protection

During 2001-2002, the Town participated in the preparation of the South County Greenspace Protection Project. In cooperation with the Rural Lands Coalition, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the University of Rhode Island, and the Washington County Regional Planning Council, the Town identified many of its important natural, cultural and recreational resources. Using this data, and the extensive mapping developed as part of this project, the Town has identified its local resource priorities, and in the process, developed a Town-Wide map of Potential Conservation Lands. This map (5.7.A) is included as part of the Comprehensive Plan. It can be used by the Planning Board in its review of proposed land developments and subdivisions and help create an interconnected network of conservation and/or open space lands. Using the techniques employed in conservation subdivision design, the Town can encourage this network of protected lands as part of the long-term development process.

It is very important that permanent open space and vegetated buffer areas be set-aside in new subdivisions and land development projects. Whenever possible, these open space areas should be configured so as to contribute to a connecting greenway system that links separate or individual open spaces in corridors throughout the Town. Public access to these greenway corridors should be encouraged, provided such access will not damage or diminish the conservation value of the open space.

5.5.9 Cultural Resources

5.5.9a Introduction

5.5.9b Brief Historical Overview

Exeter derives its name from Exeter, England and was part of North Kingstown until 1742. It is believed the first settlers were the Wing family who settled between 1680 and 1690 in the western part of the town near the Boone Pond. From 1690 to 1725 other families, probably from Connecticut, created small farms from the wilderness. In 1753 the Baptist Church on Ten Rod Road in western Exeter was built. See Map 5.5.G and the accompanying Table 5.5.C for locations of cultural and historic sites.

In the eastern section of Exeter, settlers moved west from Wickford and established small farms in the early 1700's. The town expanded rapidly and in 1740 there were about 1,000 persons residing in the town. In March of 1742, the settlers acquired permission from the English Crown to establish a separate township called Exeter. At the first town meeting, Joseph Tripp, Esq., was chosen as the Town Sergeant; John Wrightman, the Town Treasurer and Stephen Austin, Constable. The elected Town Council consisted of the following persons: John Reynolds, Nicholas Gardner, Jeffery Champlin, James Rogers, Edmond Sheffield and Joseph Case.

In 1776, the first schoolhouse was constructed in eastern Exeter on Ten Rod Road on a 500-acre tract of land donated by Samuel Sewall, the renowned pirate judge of Boston.

Ten Rod Road retains evidence of its past importance as the Colonial highway linking the farms of Connecticut with the port of Wickford in neighboring North Kingstown. Ten Rod Road gets its name from its original 165-foot width, unusual in this rural town; it was laid out straight and broad in the early eighteenth century to accommodate herders taking livestock to market. Another road of considerable historical importance is the 1815 New London Turnpike, an early "improved" highway, which runs across the town in a generally north-south line. Both roads are included in the cultural inventory and their historical importance should be recognized in planning for Exeter's future development.

By 1820, the population had tripled and many village type settlements had formed. Most of the villages were located in the lowlands where the mills and small factories depended upon waterpower created from the streams.

The village of Austin, in the west central part of town, was founded in the early 1700's as a farm community. As the village grew, a gristmill, later converted to a wagon wheel mill, and saw mills were established. The village also had a store, post office and a library. A church was erected in 1889. Several buildings still remain today along with some of the old farm houses; one of which is the Stephen Austin home, where the first town meeting was held in 1742.

The village of Lawtonville, located west of Exeter Hill on Ten Rod Road, once had a blacksmith shop, paint shop, carriage factory, a store, and a hotel. In 1795, a snuff mill

was erected and in 1825 this mill was changed to a cotton mill. Later, the mill was converted to a warp mill; then to a gristmill and finally to a sawmill.

Hallville was also a locally important mill village. A gristmill was built here in the late eighteenth century and a series of textile mills were put into operation in the early nineteenth century including the famous Boss Rake Factory. They continued in use until the 1870's, when they were destroyed by fire and never rebuilt.

Pine Hill, in the early 1800's, was the center of government of Exeter. This community hosted the seat of the old Town Bank, chartered in 1833 and existed until 1865; a post office erected in 1840, along with a Town Hall built in 1878 and used until the present town hall was constructed.

In the southeastern part of town, the Babcock Woolen Mill (Dorset Mills) with the mill owner's residence and outbuildings at Yorker Mill Pond near Slocum are of considerable importance. Other noteworthy properties included are the Potter House, the Dawley House and the Tillinghast House, all on South County Trail, and the Lawton House the Reynolds House, the Arnold House and especially the Peckham House on Slocumville Road. There is a good Late Victorian house, two earlier Gardner houses on Allentown Road and a large number of lesser nineteenth-century houses in the eastern portion of Exeter.

Historic properties in the western part of town are predominantly late eighteenth-century or early nineteenth-century farmhouses. Included in this group is the one-and-a-half-story, late eighteenth-century Sheldon House on Austin Farm Road.

South of Boone Lake there was a village called Millville probably the most important village in the western section of town. On Roaring Brook, Rob Reynolds constructed a mill in 1832, which was leased to James S. Harris. So-called "Negro cloth" and, later, warp were made there. In 1840 another mill was built north of the first one. This cotton mill was owned by D.L. Aldrich. A retail outlet was located south of the mills. The only vestiges of this complex are the foundations and sluiceways. The Dade Mill Store and housing quarters for employees still stand at the corner of Arcadia Road and Ten Rod Road. The Greek Revival style West Exeter Baptist Church is a handsome building and there is a scattering of interesting houses in the area, including the Bates House on Bates Schoolhouse Road.

In 1833, the village of Fisherville, located a short distance from Hallville, at one time had a warp factory, which was later, converted to a flannel mill, and a post office that was built in 1850. Today, the ruins of the Fisherville Factory and two, late nineteenth-century residences remain. Along Mail Road there is an interesting concentration of houses, a farm and good stonewalls. The Pearl Rose Farm on Sunderland Road, the Horn Heap Marker, which marked the northwestern boundary of the Pettaquamscutt

Purchase, and the Sherman House are noteworthy. Two areas of interest for their natural vegetation, rock outcroppings and scenic values are the School Land Road area and the Tefft Hill Trail.

In the western section of town the Lillibridge House, now called Johnnycake Acres, on Summit Road should be considered for the National Register. There are two houses of interest at the intersection of Woody Hill Road and Skunk Hill Road, a Greek Revival house (Cedar Valley Farm) and an early nineteenth-century house, as well as the renovated one-room Woody Hill School. There are also ruins of a gristmill (18) and exceptional stonewalls along both sides of Escoheag Hill Road north of Ten Rod Road.

The agricultural and manufacturing activities continued in Exeter until the turn of the century. Around 1900 most of the villages started to decline as agriculture in New England gave way to the more productive Midwest farms, and manufacturing coalesced in the urban centers of Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls and other cities with more population for work forces. In Exeter many farms were abandoned, factories were closing and as a result the population decreased and the stores and shops abandoned or converted to other uses. By the 1930's the agricultural way of life was practically gone.

Sources: Preliminary Survey Report for Town of Exeter by the RI Historic Preservation Commission (Dec. 1976) and 1974 Comprehensive Plan by the Town of Exeter

5.5.10 Inventory of Cultural and Historic Resources

5.5.10a Properties Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., is the nation's official list of properties determined to be of national, state, or local (town) significance and worthy of preservation. All places selected from Rhode Island for the National Register are also placed on the State Register. Historic properties or districts are placed on the National Register only after a formal nomination process is completed. Potential entrants to the National Register are reviewed against specific criteria, established by the National Park Service.

In 1978, a preliminary survey of Exeter was performed by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission (RIHPC). The survey was accomplished by driving all public rights-of-way in Town and making notations of each building or site of particular architectural, visual, cultural or historic significance. Each property was photographed and recorded on a standard data sheet, which includes a physical description and historical information. Other studies, histories and reports are also reviewed as well as interviews with local planners and historians to ensure that all appropriate historic sites and structures have been included in the study. The significance of each property is

determined in a preliminary fashion and properties are designated as being in one of the following three categories:

- Properties listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places
- Sites potentially eligible for listing on the National Register
- Recommended for further consideration and study

Exeter currently has nine historic sites, which have been placed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. The following is a list of these properties and the date they were entered on the Register:

- _ Austin Farm Road Historic District (8/6/77)
- _ Fisherville Historic and Archaeological District (12/5/80)
- _ Hallville Historic and Archaeological District (12/5/80)
- _ Parris Brook Archaeological District (12/5/80)
- _ Sodom Mill Historic and Archaeological District (11/24/80)
- _ Queen's Fort (11/26/80)
- _ Simon Lillibridge Farm (11/28/78)
- _ Chestnut Hill Baptist Church (11/21/78)
- _ Lawtonville Historic District (6/27/80)

Below is a brief description of each property.

Austin Farm Road Historic District - Austin Farm Road, west of Route 95

In 1977 the Austin Farm Road Historic District was placed on both the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register. This area along Austin Farm Road contains open rolling farmland with fine stonewalls. A small stream and a small pond within a dam, as well as old burying ground and several structures are also located here. In the nineteenth-century a gristmill was operating along the stream. Important structures located in the Austin Farm Road Historic District include the following:

- Austin Farm - The old Austin Farm Homestead constructed in 1870 is a 2 1/2 story, early nineteenth century dwelling overlooking a pond. A fine wood-shingle barn and silo also exists behind the house.
- House - This 1 1/2 story house was constructed in 1870 and is capped by a gambrel roof.
- The (former) Christian Union Chapel - This single story, cobblestone structure was built in 1892.
- The (former) School Number Five - This single-story building was constructed in 1870. It is a frame structure in poor condition.

Fisherville Historic and Archaeological District - William Reynolds Road

In 1989 the Fisherville Historic and Archaeological District was placed on both the National Register of Historic Places and State Registers. This former mill village located along Sodom Brook flourished for about forty years in the mid 19th century. A mill was

established in 1833 that manufactured warps, jeans, and check flannels. In 1873, the mill burned down and was never rebuilt. Today, the area includes the following significant sites:

- Ruins of the Fisherville Factory - Foundation located to the east of the road are still visible. Parts of the foundation are still well preserved, including the old mill trench.
- House - This 1 1/2 story, center-chimney house is of 19th century origin. The house is set back from the road across from a former mill.
- House - This 1 1/2 story, early 19th century structure is set into a slight hill along the road. The house is presently vacant.

Queen's Fort - Stony Lane

Queen's Fort was listed to the National Register of Historic Places and State Register in 1980. Queen's Fort is a small, rocky tree-covered hillock with natural outcrops and retreats. The fort is named for the Indian Squaw Sachem, Matanrick or Quaiapeni. The hilltop was supposedly fortified by Indians at one time but was never the scene of any warfare. The Fort was abandoned in 1676 after the Narragansetts were defeated in King Philip's War.

Chestnut Hill Baptist Church - Ten Rod Road

The Chestnut Hill Baptist Church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and State Register in 1978. This single story, Greek revival church with a square belfry was constructed in 1838. The church was established in 1750 and the original building was erected (and burying ground next to the church was set aside) in 1753.

Lawton's Mill District - Ten Rod Road (Route 102)

In 1980, Lawton's Mill/Albro Mill was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and State Register. Lawton's Mill is a three-story post and beam structure with a stone foundation located along Ten Rod Road next to the Fisherville Brook, which powered the Mill. A raceway from a small pond runs adjacent to the mill.

Hallville Historic and Archaeological District - Hallville Road

The Hallville Historic and Archaeological District is located along the banks of the Sodom Brook and Hallville millpond for 1,600 feet. The proposed district includes the remains of the two lowest (in elevation) textile mills on Sodom Brook: Dawley Mill and Hallville Mill, together with their dams and waterways; a standing late-18th century house formerly occupied by the Dawley family; and the archaeological remains of two dwelling houses, a store, a barn, and an outbuilding, all related to the Hallville Mill. Of particular visual and architectural impact and a monument to rural engineering is the elevated masonry headrace of the Hallville Mill, a massive dry-laid, dressed granite structure extending 146 feet and providing a head of water of nearly 25 feet.

Initial research and site inventory occurred during a 1978 survey of the rural mill and schoolhouse sites in Exeter by Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. Preliminary documentary research and field investigation identified the remains within the proposed district. Of those in the district, its elevated headrace had been sketched and included in a Victorian travel book entitled *Pleasant Places in Rhode Island*, written by Maria Tallman and published in 1894. The mill and surrounding buildings were described as a picturesque ruin of a vanished era. During the summer of 1979, a survey team, which recorded all structures, investigated the site and archaeological features, carried out limited archaeological testing at several of the sites within the district, and reviewed pertinent secondary literature and land evidence records.

Parris Brook Archeological District - Mount Tom Road

The Parris Brook Historic and Archaeological District, located in the hilly, western portion of Exeter, contains sites representing aboriginal occupation, eighteenth and nineteenth century rural industrial activity, and nineteenth-century domestic occupation. The historic sites include the ruins of a water-powered sawmill/cidermill which operated from the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth century, the remains of a late nineteenth-century water-powered sawmill, and the foundations of a dwelling house and outbuildings occupied in the mid-nineteenth century. A granite ledge, forming the opposite side of the ridge from the sawmill and house sites, which had been quarried in the nineteenth century along a 200 yard stretch, contains the prehistoric sites; two shallow overhangs containing evidence of prehistoric habitation. Taken together, the sites represent changing uses of similar resources over several cultural periods.

Sodom Mill Historic and Archaeological District - Sodom Trail off Hallville Road

The Sodom Mill Historic and Archaeological District lies on the north side of Sodom Brook, a small stream that joins Fisherville Brook about one mile down-stream from the proposed district. Located at the end of a mile-long dirt trail off Hallville Road, the proposed district contains the well preserved ruins of an early nineteenth century textile mill, together with its dam and races, the ruins of two dwelling houses, four outbuildings and a barn, an abandoned late nineteenth century house, and a still-occupied late eighteenth century farmstead with outbuildings and barn ruins. In addition to these historic period resources, evidence of a prehistoric occupation within the district was also found. Containing approximately 25 acres, the parcel includes the four acre "Factory Lot," mill pond, and portions of the farm lots; the parcel is now part of a larger estate consolidated in the early twentieth century totaling 160 acres.

The mill and associated buildings were first identified during a broadbrush archaeological survey of mill sites and schoolhouses in Exeter, conducted in 1978 by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. The following summer (1979) the site was revisited and land evidence records were researched to establish a rough chronology of site occupation. All structures and archaeological features within the

proposed district were then recorded, and limited archaeological testing at several of the sites was then carried out.

Simon Lillibridge Farm - Summit Road

Simon Lillibridge Farm is an almost complete farmstead located on approximately thirty-eight acres of its original rock-strewn tract of land in sparsely settled western Exeter. The complex includes a modest story-and-a-half, center-chimney frame house with two ells, a series of remarkable well-preserved nineteenth-century outbuildings (shed, outhouse, barn, and wagon shed), and a small fenced family cemetery.

The farm straddles Summit Road, a narrow, stone-wall-lined dirt tract which winds south from Ten Rod Road, a major east-west cattle driving road connecting the Rhode Island coast with the hinterland and Connecticut as early as 1702. The acreage remaining with the complex is now covered in second growth forest; on the west it still runs to its original boundary, the Wood River, carrying with it over the sharply declining hillside the straggling stonewalls which mark former fields. Diagonally across the road from the house, a small spring-fed brook has been dammed to form a pond. South of this are two cut-granite walls, part of the foundation of horse barn.

The house faces east, set back from the road about thirty feet. Its small dooryard, partly enclosed by a low-railed picket fence on a granite base, is sheltered by two large old sugar maples. Flat granite slabs form a path to the well and doorsteps for both front entrances. The original portion of the house, with its slightly irregular five-bay facade and prominent stone chimney rising well forward of the roof ridge, was probably built in the last half of the eighteenth century. The small, almost square, gable-roofed ell on the rear was added early in the nineteenth century; and the longer, three-bay ell on the north, set back slightly from the plane of the main house facade, is a slightly later nineteenth-century addition, probably built about 1840.

Lawtonville Historic District

This relatively large District is located along Ten Rod Road, and extends for a distance along Hallville Road. The District is located in a rural/natural environment, centered within a complex including houses, a mill and farm buildings. In approximately 1795 a "snuff factory" was established here. The structure was renovated in 1825 and changed into a cotton factory. Following reconstruction after it burned, it manufactured warp, then became a sawmill and gristmill. Thomas A. Lawton formerly kept a hotel there, and there was a store there at one time. The following is a brief description of noteworthy sites in the Lawtonville Historic District:

- Lawton's Mill - A two-story wood frame structure located along Ten Rod Road next to the Fisherville Brook.

- Two Houses - Both homes are two-stories tall and contain a center stone chimney. One house is capped with a gambrel roof while the other, located near a pond, is a wood shingle cottage.
- House - This three-story, early twentieth-century structure is considered a complex house located near a pond. The house is settled on well-landscaped land.
- Farmscape - Located south of Ten Rod Road, mostly along Hallville Road. This farmscape is characterized by large, rocky pastures bordered with stonewalls that are capped with a split rail fence for most of their length.

Browning's Mill Bridge - Old Nooseneck Hill Road over Roaring Brook

Browning's Mill Bridge is a small concrete arch, nearly semi-circular in shape, which crosses Roaring Brook near the entrance to Browning's Pond recreation area, part of the Arcadia Reservation. The bridge's spandrels are paneled. The railing surfaces are recessed behind the plane of pilasters, which, together with the overhanging capstone, create a paneled appearance. Both spandrels and railings appear to originally have had hammered finishes, though erosion has made the contrast in surface texture difficult to judge.

South of the bridge is a much smaller (less than 20') concrete slab crossing the dry bed of a former millrace (Bridge #39). The bridge's setting on a rocky stream in a public park gives it great scenic value. This bridge is highly significant as one of the first projects of the Bridge Department, established within the State Board of Public Roads in 1912. Browning's Mill Bridge also has exceptional public access, visibility, and scenic quality.

5.5.10b Resources Eligible for Consideration for National Register listing

The RI Historical Preservation Commission survey identified several historical sites that may be eligible for listing on the National Register.

Crandall Farm - Old Ten Rod Road

A 1 1/2-story center-chimney house located on top of a small hill and is surrounded by fine stonewalls. The Farm, recently restored, is in a very well preserved section of the old Ten Rod Road.

Johnnycake Acres - Summit Road

Johnnycake Acres is a 1 1/2-story house with a center chimney. The 18th century house is situated with a barn with a sweeping view to the west. The Old Lillibridge Cemetery is also located in the vicinity.

Bailey Farm - Victory Highway

This farm complex consists of a grouping of several residences and out buildings such as a corncrib, barn, sheds, and a garage. The complex is located along a small brook, which exits from nearby Hopkins Pond. Mill sites are located about 1,200 feet

downstream from the present buildings. Included in this site is an 18th century building that stands 1 1/2 stories. The house contains a large brick chimney and later additions, which form a large "L", plan building.

Danforth Estate (Wee Hoose Farm) - Victory Highway

This large estate of predominantly woods is centered on a 1 1/2 story, eighteenth century house. The house contains a large, stone center chimney and 2 two-story gambrel roof additions that are attached at right angles at both ends of the old house.

Judge Crandall House - Woody Hill Road

The Judge Crandall House, constructed in 1770, is a large estate, which includes several out buildings and an 1860 barn. The 2 1/2-story house contains a center chimney and a 1 1/2 story, all at a right angle. The house, which has been recently restored, is set back from the present road. The setting is characterized by slightly rolling terrain with stonewalls and a small pond. A cemetery is located nearby, and is said to contain the graves of slaves.

Nason Archaeological Site - South County Trail

Exeter contains one site for which eligibility has been agreed upon by the Historic Preservation Commission and a Federal or State agency for environmental review purpose

5.5.10c Archaeological Resources

Field surveys and research conducted by professional archaeologists on the Historic Preservation Commission staff in cooperation with other professional and local archaeologists in Rhode Island have recorded 2,000 archaeological sites in the State. The Commission regulates archaeological investigations on state lands and under state waters. Several resources have been identified in the Preliminary Survey Report prepared by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

5.5.10d Other Significant Historical Sites

Consideration has been requested or suggested for the National Register by an owner or other party. (This category includes properties for which the State Review Board reviewed preliminary or final materials and found that it did not appear eligible for the National Register at that time.) Several sites in Exeter fall into this category.

Exeter Village Historic District - Intersection of Ten Rod Road, Slocumville Road and New Road

Exeter Village is a small settlement in the northeast part of town. The village formerly contained mills, a school, church, and stores. Presently, the mills, school and church are gone leaving the village to be predominantly residential in nature. Noteworthy remains include the following:

- Stone Markers - these three uprights, inscribed flat-surfaced granite rocks were erected as memorials to the Narragansett Indians on Exeter Hill and dedicated in 1923 by the RI Historical Association. The stones are inscribed "Miantonomi," "Aspanasack Village-1620," and "Wawaloam Suncksquaw." The stones mark the site of the ancient village of Aspansuck.
- Exeter Hill School - The former schoolhouse No. 8 is a single story structure now used as a residence.

Dorset Mill/Yawgoo Manufacturing Co./Babcock Woolen Mill Historic District - Slocum Road

Manufacturing began here in 1846. The mill burned in 1861 and was rebuilt with twentieth century additions. The mill is located along Yorker Mill Pond.

Other Properties:

- Beach Pond Archeological Site/Pine Grove Farm - Ten Rod Road/Liberty Road
- Gardner Farm/Black Horse Inn - Widow Sweets Road/Pardon Joslin Road
- Stephen Austin House - Austin Farm Road
- Woody Hill School - Woody Hill Road
- John Moore House - Hoxie Road

5.5.10e Additional Historic Sites of Local Significance

Several types of historic resources are not eligible for listing on the national register of Historic Places, but are important to local history and are worthy of preservation.

Historic Cemeteries

Exeter has seventy-seven cemeteries, which have been identified by the State as having historic significance. These cemeteries include small family burial plots, as well as larger burial grounds, some of which are associated with a nearby church. A list of these cemeteries appears in Table 5.5.D on the following page along with the state number, location, size, condition and number of burials. These cemeteries are an important historical record of the Town's past. These cemeteries contain the graves of some of Exeter's earliest citizens and mill workers. Most of the cemeteries were found to be in poor to very poor condition.

Historic Landscapes

Exeter's rural and agrarian history has resulted in a continued tradition of cultural landscape history rather than a significant designed landscape history. The town today reflects the years of agrarian and small milling landscapes and village development. However, two properties appear to include significant designed landscapes. To understand these sites in the context of the landscape history of Exeter, it will be important to understand the cultural landscape evolution that has occurred in this town since its early settlement.

- Houghton Metcalf House "Wawaloam" - Ten Rod Road: William T. Aldrich designed the additions to this shingled 1732 house for one of S.O. Metcalf's three children in 1925-26. Landscape features on the site included a large mill pond and three 200 year old lindens in addition to the colonial house. The overall site landscaping retains the 18th century traditional agrarian/small mill landscape. This site reflects a similar landscape history to that of the King Tom Farm in Charlestown in that the historic farmstead was revitalized as a summer retreat during the early twentieth century. Early landscape features are utilized as pleasure grounds and a setting for the historic structures instead of a working agrarian landscape. (Buildings on Paper, p. 37-38, Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission)
- Pierce Metcalf House "Philmoney" - 375 Mail Road: This new house was designed by George Locke Howe in 1931 as part of a scattered three family complex for the Metcalf family of Providence. The estate includes a large "L" shaped house and a series of outbuildings, which encircle a large ledge outcropping on the site. An entrance drive and circular turn-around form a central 'courtyard' to the group of buildings. An arched porch reaches off one end of the house into a garden area. The formal garden layout is hedged by a trimmed formal hedge and scattered large shrubs and evergreens to screen it from the driveway turn-around. Large deciduous trees dominate the driveway turn around and entrance. The architect, George Howe, sited the building and intentionally designed part of the house with a garden in mind. (Buildings on Paper. p. 81-82, Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission)

5.5.11 Implementation - Historical and Cultural Resources

5.5.11a Introduction

Exeter will develop a program geared to foster the preservation of historic sites, structures and records. The Town is blessed with many historically significant properties that are a reflection of its rich agricultural and manufacturing past. This plan provides a mechanism to ensure the long-term preservation of these resources, in addition to realizing the value of historic documents as a direct connection to the past. The plan presents a variety of preservation "tools" that include legislative action, zoning amendments, educational and community activity programs to foster historic preservation.

There are four major components of this plan:

1. Providing legal mechanisms to protect historic resources in Exeter. Central to this component is the reestablishment of the Historical Commission and the establishment of a new Historic District Commission. The organization must be formed under RI State Law to take advantage of the powers such a commission

could have with respect to the preservation of historic sites and structures, historic cemeteries, funding and other regulatory opportunities. The primary function of the Historic District Commission will be to institute a Historic District Overlay Zone to protect historic properties.

2. Make the history of Exeter/West Greenwich a permanent part of the school's regular curriculum to emphasize the importance of local history and historic preservation to the youth of the community.
3. It is also recommended that the town seek an individual to work with the town to inventory important books and documents of historical significance, while applying for grants and other funding to promote historic preservation. The establishment of a record keeping system for important town documents is also recommended to preserve these important papers, plans and meeting minutes for future residents of the town.
4. The inclusion of historic properties in the town-wide recreation path system will serve to identify these sites as playing an important role in the town's history. The pathway, to be described in the Open Space and Recreation Element, describes the route of that path with a map describing the resources located along it.

5.5.11b Findings

1. Exeter has a rich historical past tied to its early settlement and agricultural past.
2. Exeter currently has nine properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places and State Register as well as eight other sites that have been identified as being eligible for the Register.
3. The Town has 77 historic cemeteries that have been identified by the State Historic Cemetery Commission. The majority of these cemeteries are in poor condition.
4. Exeter has many other sites of historical significance. Historical sites exist that may not have been identified due to their location on large tracts of private properties.
5. Some time ago the Town Council appointed a Historical Commission. Early attempts were made to collect historic Town data, but that effort ended when the commission stopped meeting on a regular basis.
6. The Town has an extensive amount of historic data in the Town Clerk's office. This data needs to be preserved and cataloged as an historic resource for the Town. The coordination and treatment of historic records in the Town Hall will ensure their existence for future generations.

5.5.11c Issues

1. There are no actual protection mechanisms in place to preclude the significant alteration or destruction of historic resources. Currently, Exeter must rely on the

intelligence and sensitivity of individual owners and others interested in historic preservation.

2. The zoning ordinance and general development regulations of the Town do not require the identification and protection of historic properties through its permitting processes. This can result in the potential loss of significant historic properties.
3. The Town maintains all its records, deeds etc., in the Town Clerk's Office. These records contain valuable historic information and need to be catalogued and preserved. No sound system of preserving these records is in place, and they are susceptible to deterioration and should be stored in a climate-controlled environment.
4. The Town Council appointed an Historic Preservation Commission, however it has been inactive for several years; as a result, the Town does not have an active Historic Preservation Commission to oversee the protection and enhancement of historic resources.
5. The Town is not eligible for designation as a Certified Local Government which allows the Town to participate in many preservation programs.

5.5.11d Implementation- Legislative Actions

1. Undertake further investigation, documentation and evaluation of historic resources. In order to understand the history of Exeter more fully and to update the survey of important resources, the historical survey of the Town should be updated in cooperation with the RI Historical Preservation Commission.

Administrative Responsibility: Town Council

2. Establish the Exeter Historic District Commission: It is recommended that the Town establish a Historic District Commission under Section 45-24.1-1 of the RI General Laws. The purpose of establishing such a Commission is to have a body directly responsible for all preservation activities in the town. This will include the development and adoption of a Historic Overlay District Ordinance to afford control over the future disposition of individual properties or those contained in a Historic District. They will also be responsible for developing standards of review within the context of the law, while also becoming an integral part of the Site Plan Review process. In general the Commission will act as the preservation conscience of the Town, promoting the recognition of these sites and structures, the general history of the town while directing all other preservation efforts to enhance the town's history for all future residents.

Administrative Responsibility: Town Council, Planning Board

3. Adopt Historic District Zoning: Once the Commission is established, one of their first responsibilities will be to develop a Historic District Zoning Overlay District. The purpose of such a zone will be to control changes to the exterior of structures

covered by such zones to ensure their preservation as historic sites. The first step in adopting such zoning is to add a Historic Overlay District Zone to the Town's Zoning Ordinance. The ordinance would set standards that include design guidelines, approval and rejection time frames for proposals affecting such properties. Regulations regarding demolition, signage, setbacks, height and other site design criteria would be applied. Coordination in establishing the ordinance and the district with the RI Historic Preservation Commission is suggested. Historic District Zoning has been recognized by the courts, and is upheld in the court of action if the regulations are not subjective and are applied in a reasonable manner.

In order to guard against incompatible construction, preservation design guidelines should be as specific as possible in order to avoid misinterpretations of the existing ordinances and to protect the commission charged with historic preservation from legal encounters. These design guidelines are established for the character of additions to historic buildings and for the design on new structures in historic context. These set guidelines may control the height, materials, signage, setbacks, proportions, and architectural styles. The U.S. Department of Interior publishes design guidelines and standards for the National Register, which many communities have used.

Administrative Responsibilities: Town Council, Planning Board, and Historic District Commission

4. Apply for Certified Local Government Status: Local governments can be partners in the State and National Historic Preservation Program. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established a nationwide program of financial and technical assistance to preserve historic sites in response to wide-scale destruction of historic resources. A local government can participate in this program when they enact a protective historic preservation ordinance and appoint a professionally qualified commission as well as meeting other Federal and State standards. A local government that receives such certification is known as a "Certified Local Government" or "CLG."

Certified local governments assist in nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places and they are eligible to receive grants from the RI Historic Preservation Commission to carry out preservation projects. The following is a list of benefits of becoming a Certified Local Government:

- Special grants from State Historic Preservation Officers
- Local historic preservation expertise recognized by State and Federal Agencies
- Technical assistance and training from State Historic Preservation Officers
- Participation in nominations to the National Register of Historic Places

- National Historic preservation assistance network: publications, professional assistance
- Information exchange with State Historic Preservation Officers
- Participation in statewide preservation programs and planning

Obtaining status as a Certified Local Government can help a local government encourage, develop, and maintain its local preservation efforts, as well as benefiting both economically and socially in the rehabilitation of a community's historic properties and landmarks.

5.5.11e Establish a Town Record Center

The Town should establish a Records Center in the renovated Town Clerk's office and/or in a new town hall building. Historic land evidence records and other significant meeting records and documents (i.e., Town Council Meetings, reports and other important papers and documents) would be stored and updated constantly to preserve a permanent record of the town. Records of this nature tend to be lost or destroyed, making it difficult in future years to compile complete accurate records.

At the same time, it is recommended that the town seek a student intern from the University of Rhode Island to work with the town to establish its Records Center. The intern could also be utilized to develop a historic structure and site inventory for the town, possibly to be included in the computer system. This would provide an easy reference to identify properties that may be threatened due to development, road construction, etc.

Administrative Responsibility: Town Council, Town Clerk, and Planning Board

5.5.11f Establish Town-wide Park and Heritage System

Create a Historic Pathway through the Town as an educational and recreational resource tied into a Town bicycle/pedestrian path. It is recommended that this town-wide corridor be established so that it links recreational sites and historic landmarks through a defined path system. This system would be an element of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements identified in the Circulation Element.

Administrative Responsibility: Recreation Director, Planning Board, Town Council, and Conservation Commission

5.5.11g Create a Heritage Education Program for Exeter

As a standard component of elementary education, the town should include as part of its American History Curriculum, a segment on the History of Exeter and West Greenwich as a part of the K-6 curriculum. A part of this effort should include teachings related to the importance of historic preservation as an element of one's life.

Administrative Responsibility: Exeter-West Greenwich School District

5.5.11h Create a Development Review Process for Historic/ Archeological Sites

A review of Historic and Archaeological resources should be accomplished during the Site Plan Review Process. The specific historic and archaeological sites can be identified through materials and maps developed by the RI Historic Preservation Commission and RIGIS. Further coordination is recommended with the Narragansett Indians to identify sites of potential historic significance to the Tribe.

Administrative Responsibility: Town Planner

5.5.11i Educate the Public about the History and Resources of Exeter

Consider town financial support for the publication of the historic survey developed for Exeter by the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission. The Exeter Historic Society should form a rotating or lending museum for permanent or temporary exhibit

5.5.11j Establish Town-wide Cemetery preservation program

Create a Town-wide Cemetery preservation program that combines Town resources with private efforts. Assess condition of all cemeteries and identify stewards for maintenance. Educate Exeter residents about the cemeteries and use in local historical educational programs. Team with local garden and civic organizations to maintenance programs and cleanups.

Administrative Responsibility: Town Council, Conservation Commission

5.5.11k Other Preservation tools

- Easements: An easement is a legal agreement between the property owner and the RI Historical Preservation Commission that the property will not be altered without the Commission's approval. Such easements enable a current owner to protect their property from destruction or inappropriate changes by future owners. Easements may also qualify the current landowner for tax benefits as easements may be claimed on the owner's federal income tax return. Currently, the Commission holds and monitors both term and perpetuity easements.
- Historic Preservation Loans: The Historic Preservation Commission administers the Historic Preservation Loan Fund. This funding procedure make available low-interest loans to restore historic properties listed in the State Register. The Commission will not only concentrate on single projects, but will consider neighborhood restoration programs when a local preservation organization is willing to operate a loan program and become a partner in preservation.

5.5.12 Relation to Other Plan Elements

A relationship has already been drawn between this element and the Circulation Element. Other elements also share such a relationship including Land Use, Housing and Economic Development. The establishment of Village Centers, as has been recommended, is an attempt to tie the history of the town directly to future land use by recreating village areas that provide a strong historic relationship to the town's past. The redevelopment of these villages will go beyond creating an historically correct relationship to the past and will also serve to recreate the sense of a community that existed in the mill villages of the past.