

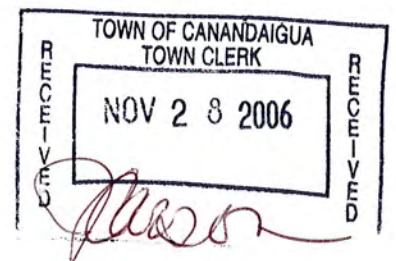
**PRIORITIZING FARMLAND AND SCENIC VIEWS IN THE
TOWN OF CANANDAIGUA**



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Introduction

In February 2004, the Town of Canandaigua released a report titled “Farmland and Open Space Conservation Program.” The report was an action that was recommended by the Town’s *Comprehensive Plan*, as an integral part of implementing the “Plan.” In addition, the report was designed not only to provide Town officials and its residents with a detailed **inventory** of farmland and open space resources within the Town’s boundaries but also to provide strategies to be used to achieve “meaningful open space conservation even while growth and development occur.”

The goals of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Maintain Canandaigua’s rural character by preserving farmland and supporting efforts to enhance the economic prospects of agriculture.
- Conserve significant open space throughout the town and create a network of open lands to provide wildlife habitat and potential trail corridors.

While the “2004 Report” provided a detailed inventory of the Town’s “Lands of Conservation Interest,” it did not prioritize and rank the farmland and open spaces by the soil’s fertility, the land’s environmental sensitivity, the parcel’s scenic views and ridgelines, and the threat from detrimental development.

In early 2006, Canandaigua’s Town Board created an “Environmental Conservation Commission” and charged it with the task of identifying those farmland and open space parcels in the Town with the greatest conservation value. In effect, the Board saw that the need to protect open space and set aside land for conservation was far greater than the funds currently held by the Town. Because of this, Town officials believed that its conservation efforts must be focused on **protecting the most important parcels of land**.

Instead of relying on a random or “shot gun” approach to land acquisition, The Conservation Commission decided that a ranking of the sites inventoried by the “Farmland and Open Space Program” would give town officials the ability to preserve those parcels that would provide the greatest benefit to the community.

Since the “2004 Report” provided an inventory of the most desirable conservation lands, the Commission decided to prioritize the parcels highlighted in that report. However, as the evaluation proceeded, some Commission members uncovered farms and scenic views with outstanding conservation features that were not identified in the 2004 Report. Some of these “discovered parcels” were among the Commission’s top scorers. Thus, while the parcels evaluated in this report are among the “best candidates” for conservation, the Commission would be willing to evaluate others if officials and residents would like to suggest them.

The Method Used to Prioritize Farmland and Open Space Parcels

Farmland.

Any ranking of farmland and open space for its conservation potential is bound to be controversial, especially given the beautiful farms and scenic views in the Town of Canandaigua which are highly valued by both residents and visitors for their natural/unspoiled state. In addition, the simple process of visiting a parcel and then discussing its general attributes could lead to stalemate because of wide differences in purely subjective judgments. Faced with this problem, members of the Commission sought a method that would provide a single objective value for each parcel evaluated. The process involved establishing the attributes of an ideal parcel and then comparing the selected parcels to that ideal.

Given the unique scenic beauty, prime agricultural soils and outstanding water quality in the Canandaigua area, finding “ideal” parcels was not too difficult. For example, the perfect benchmarks for evaluating parcels include: the Finger Lakes Land Trust’s 225-acre Great Hill (South Hill) Preserve with its steep hill side, gullies, wildlife, plant species and western views, and the “Scenic Turnout” on County Road #12 in South Bristol with its spectacular view of Canandaigua Lake and Bare Hill. Both parcels are “World Class.”

To evaluate the **farmland** inventoried by the “Farmland and Open Space Program,” the Commission considered six factors: Landscape (size of parcel, natural vegetation, and proximity to protected lands); Agricultural (prime soils, closeness to viable farms); Environment (steep slopes/wetlands/springs and stream corridors); Ridgelines and Scenic Views (type of vista and visibility from Canandaigua Lake); Legal Protection (type of legal protection, and location in or outside regulatory boundaries); and Development Potential (development of areas near protected lands decreases its conservation value).^{*} Each component received a score and the total score for an ideal parcel totaled 100 points. (See Appendix A for a description of the “*Conservation Scorecard*.”)

Since any objective (numerical) measure is likely to be imperfect, Commission members decided to include a subjective element (Extraordinary Factors) that was designed to include attributes that were deemed to be special and deserving of recognition and that were not included in the six objective factors described in the prior paragraph. Moreover, a parcel may score a zero in one or more of the above factors such as lack of prime soils, the absence of streams flowing into the lake or the lack of a ridgeline but still may be

^{*} The “Conservation Scorecard” that was adopted by the Town of Canandaigua’s Environmental Commission was adapted from a scorecard developed by the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. The scorecard was developed specifically to provide land trusts, open space committees, conservation commissions and regional planners with an objective, science-based tool for prioritizing land acquisition. Given the uniqueness of the landscape in the Western Finger lakes, the Town of Canandaigua’s Environmental Commission modified the Manomet scorecard to suit the Town’s characteristics.

very valuable from a conservation standpoint. The assignment of points through the “Extraordinary Factor” was designed to account for this shortfall.

Using the inventory of farmlands highlighted in the “Town’s 2004 Program,” Commission members were assigned parcels that were to be evaluated and subsequently discussed at its regular monthly meetings. Each member was expected to visit the parcel; consult tax maps to determine the size of the parcel and its zoning designation; and look at the extent of environmentally sensitive lands as well as steep slopes and view sheds. After these visits, members reviewed the scores given to each parcel. Needless to say, initial rankings by the individuals differed. Many times, one Commission member saw a feature that another member overlooked. Discussion, compromise and a collegial atmosphere led to a consensus score for each parcel. These were scores that each member could “live with” and represented the Commission’s “best judgment” about the conservation value of the parcel.

Scenic Views.

The evaluation of scenic views was similar to that used for farmlands. To evaluate and prioritize those parcels in the Town of Canandaigua with the greatest scenic and environmental value, the Commission considered four broad factors: Landscape (size of parcel, natural vegetation, and proximity to protected lands); Ridgelines and Scenic Views (extent and visual range of the parcel’s vista, accessibility of the parcel, and obstructed or unobstructed view); Legal Protection (type of legal protection, and location in or outside regulatory boundary); and Development Potential (could the parcel’s scenic view be threatened by construction of buildings in the immediate vicinity?). Commission members visited each parcel, recorded their impressions, discussed their individual scores and reached a “consensus score” for each parcel. This process was time consuming and was carried out over a two-month period. (See Appendix B for a discussion of the “*Scenic Views Scorecard.*”).

Some Words of Caution

While not a perfect process, and only one of many possible ways of prioritizing the conservation value of land, Commission members believe that the scores are an honest attempt to evaluate the lands inventoried by the Town in its 2004 “Report on Farmlands and Open Space.” In addition, the members believe that other methods would not yield results that are significantly different from those arrived at by our evaluations.

Since Commission members are unpaid volunteers and a representative cross-section of the Town’s residents, and since the members have “no axe to grind,” that would favor one parcel over another, the members believe that the scores listed in this report, would be close to what other residents of the community would arrive at if they used the methodology outlined above or if they visited and evaluated the parcels identified by the “Environmental Conservation Commission.”

FARMLAND SCORES

In evaluating farmland in the Town of Canandaigua, a parcel's conservation value was determined by the **size, shape and location** (Landscape) of a parcel together with the **productivity of a farm's soils** (Agricultural) and its proximity to other "working farms." Since water quality is critical to the economic well being and quality of life in the Town, land use practices that enhance and maintain surface **water quality** (Environmentally Sensitive) by preserving stream corridors and by minimizing development on steep slopes is scored higher than those that adversely impact water quality. Since protecting and preserving **ridgelines and scenic views** benefits all member of the community and enhances the Town's tourism potential, those parcels with attractive ridgelines and views of Canandaigua Lake were scored higher than those that did not.

The conservation value of a parcel also may be enhanced by the **legal protection** afforded it. A parcel will merit a higher score if it contains lands designated by the federal, state or local government as environmentally sensitive (one example – wetlands). Moreover, the legal protection that is placed on a parcel will determine if the land remains in conservation in perpetuity, or if it will be converted to another land use at some future time. Finally, the conservation value of land that is adjacent to developed areas is lower than land that is more remote. This scorecard item is controversial but the rationale for the measure is that a parcel's remoteness gives urban/suburban dwellers a chance to escape to the "solitude of the great outdoors" where one can enjoy nature, wildlife and the sense of "being one" with nature. In contrast, a parcel in an area of intense development may only provide a break in a pattern of sprawl. While recognizing the importance of having "sprawl buffers," the Environmental Commission decided to place a higher value on those areas free from the hustle and bustle of developed properties while recognizing the parallel need for open space in areas of rapid development. Our **Extraordinary Factors** score, in some instances, was designed to pick up this open space need.

The Scorecard Results.

1. **The John Miller Farm.** The top rated farm from the Commission's review was the John Miller farm (Miller's Nursery) on County Road #16 with a score of 83 out of a possible 100. (See the following Table.) The farm is comprised of approximately 142 acres and lies close to the Town of Canandaigua's Onanda Park. This proximity to the Town's Park adds to its Landscape and Conservation value. While the parcel does not have any "prime agricultural soils," it does contain steep slopes and a spectacular view of Canandaigua Lake. It is zoned AR-3 and does not have any major housing developments in its immediate vicinity. Commission members also awarded the parcel 10 extra points for its outstanding view of the Lake and its history as an important local family fruit and tree farm.

Land Use Options: Outright purchase of the John Miller Farm would be very expensive. The benefit to the Town, however, would be the parcels proximity to

Onanda Park and the recreational and open space opportunities that would be provided to the town's residents. A **"Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)"** would be less costly but still would be expensive. While the land would be protected from development by a PDR, one drawback would be the lack of public access. Nevertheless, one benefit of the PDR would be to provide a development buffer to the Town's Park.

Farmland Scorecard Summary			Landscape	Agricultural	Envir. Sensitive	Ridgelines/Scenic	Legal Protection	Potential Development	Extraordinary
Farmland Scores (Avg. Comm. Members)	Rank	100	33	14	19	16	10	6	0 to 10
Miller (City Rd #18)	1	83.0	23	8	13	15	8	6	10
Miller (City Rd #32, Hickox & Bliss)	2	82.0	23	14	14	11	8	6	6
Hicks Farm (Coya Rd)	3	73.0	17	8	16	16	8	6	
Knopf	4	72.0	18	14	12	11	8	6	3
Purdy	5	70.0	23	14	8	11	8	6	
Burt	6	69.0	13	14	12	11	8	6	5
Outhouse(Seneca Pt Rd)	7	61.0	17	8	11	16	3	6	
Wyffels	8	58.0	13	9	12	16	4	-6	10
Brocklebank	9	55.0	13	14	11	7	4	6	
Pritchard (N of Yerkes)	10	51.0	17	14	11	7	8	-6	

2. *The Miller Farm (County Road #32 – Hickox and Bliss).* The Miller farm on County Rd #32 was a close second to the farm discussed above. The parcels owned by the Miller's comprise hundreds of acres – many of which are contiguous. The property contains wetlands, rolling hills as well as hydric and prime agricultural soils. The parcels are adjacent to other working farms and one parcel can be seen from Canandaigua Lake. While the parcel has been zoned as AR-2 and has not been designated as "most" suitable for development (as the Southern Corridor has), developers have been "sniffing" around this area for sometime. Since this homestead is one of the premier farms in the Town, the Commission decided to award it 6 extraordinary points. .

Land Use Options. Given the sheer size of the Miller farm and given that developers already have the property in their "cross hairs", an outright purchase of the entire farm or even a small parcel would be financially prohibitive for the Town of Canandaigua. The only viable options would be a PDR on a portion of the farm (a parcel or parcels with wetlands or an exceptional view shed). Alternatively, the Millers might wish to consider a conservation easement with the separated development rights donated to a "Land Trust." Considering the new changes in Federal and State tax laws, the benefit to the Millers would be a tax

credit for property taxes paid, a charitable deduction for the gift to the Land Trust and a cut in federal estate taxes.

3. *The Hicks Farm (Coye Road)*. The parcel that was ranked in third place (73 points) by the Commission was the Hicks' property. This parcel comprises 51 acres. While the property does not abut protected lands, a neighboring property to the south and east is owned by a Land Trust supporter who is committed to preserving the property as bird habitat and unlikely to allow future development. Environmentally the parcel scored 18 points out of a possible 19 points, the highest of any of the farms in our survey. The property contains steep slopes, buffered streams that flow into the lake, and unusual geologic features in its terrain. With the exception of the Hicks' house, the property is undeveloped and treed and contains a beautiful view of Canandaigua Lake. (See photos.)



The farm is active, with grape production and some cattle grazing, but it does not contain any "prime soils." The parcel, however, is threatened by development from the south. The developers, Marie and Charlie Kenton, have purchased property just to the south of the Hicks' farm in the Town of South Bristol and have plans to construct 20 high value homes. In addition, the expansion of Bristol Harbor continues and highlights the desirability of this area for development. Currently, the Town of Canandaigua has zoned the Hicks' farm AR-3. Even with this restriction, the rural character and the outstanding viewshed make this an attractive parcel for developers.

Land Use Options. In the Commission's view, the Hicks' farm is an ideal candidate for a PDR. Besides acting as a buffer to the development coming from the south, the parcel would provide a tremendous scenic view for Town residents. The attractiveness of the property could be enhanced if town officials could convince the Hicks to set aside a small parcel of their land on Coye Road as a scenic turnout. While not on a heavily traveled road such a turnout would at least provide some psychic benefit to the Town's residents.

The Hicks also have two sons that own property adjacent to the farmstead. This land totals 31 acres. One parcel fronts Seneca Point and Coye Road and the other

is opposite the corner of Monks Road and Seneca Point Road. While not evaluated by the Commission, both parcels would make an ideal addition to any potential PDR and would enhance the benefits from this project.

4. *The Wyffels' Farm.* While not in our top-three-ranking, the Wyffels' Farm deserves special mention because of a PDR grant from the State to allow the Town of Canandaigua to purchase the Wyffels' development rights. When evaluated by the "Scorecard's" six conservation factors, the farmstead attained a score of only 48 points, near the bottom of our ranking. The parcel scored low because it is not near any protected lands and is in an area under intense development pressures. In general, land in areas where development is occurring, will not compare favorably in its ecological or conservation value to areas not threatened by development. As history has shown, a working farm with a PDR that is adjacent to a housing development will be a source of frustration to both the homeowners in the subdivision and to the farmers. The cost of farmland in a rapidly developing area also is likely to be very high per acre relative to more remote areas. Thus, an outright purchase or a PDR would stretch a municipality's limited conservation resources and divert resources from more cost-efficient uses.

Nevertheless, The Town's Environmental Commission members believed that a PDR would not only create a open space vista that would break up the monotony of subdivision sprawl but also would provide a blocking action to future development along Middle Cheshire Road. In the view of some Commission members, this action would provide the benefit of keeping the population and traffic densities in the area to manageable proportions. In effect, suburban sprawl would be curtailed in this area by a PDR on the Wyffels' farm.

In addition, some members suggested that the Town Board should take a longer-term view of this property. With future development likely around the hamlet of Cheshire and to the West of the Southern Corridor, the Wyffels' farm might provide a useful option for a park at some point in the decades ahead. Along the same line, one Commission member pointed out that the view north from the rise just before the Wyffels' farmhouse is pastoral. A scenic turnout, looking out over the open space to the North, would provide psychic benefits the Town's residents and would remind them of the Town's rural heritage. Thus, a PDR on the Wyffels' property might include a contingency that the Wyffels donate a one or two acre parcel to the Town for a scenic turnout.

Needless to say, these factors weighed heavily on Commission members. The potential to stop suburban sprawl in its tracks and to provide open space to Town's residents in the future, encouraged Commission members to award 10 extraordinary points to the Wyffels' farm, thus raising its total from 48 points to 58 points. This subjective adjustment boosted its "Scorecard" *ranking from 10 to 8.*

5. *Other Deserving Farms.* A number of other farms ranked high in our “Scorecard” ranking. The Knopf Farm on Cooley Road recorded a score of 72 just one point behind the Hick’s parcel, and the Purdy Farm in Emerson/Sandhill Road area was awarded a rating of 70. The Purdy parcel scored high for Landscape factors, prime agricultural soils and its view shed. This is a beautiful farm. A conservation easement or a future PDR would help preserve this outstanding property. The Burt farm on Woolhouse Road, and the Outhouse property on Seneca Point Road also scored very high. In short, the Town of Canandaigua is blessed with some beautiful farms that will continue to underpin the economic health of this area.

SCENIC VIEWS

Scenic views are abundant in the Town of Canandaigua and their protection and their preservation benefits all members of the community and enhances the Town’s tourism potential. The ranking of the views listed in the Town’s “Farmland and Open Space Report,” however, presented the Commission with a number of challenges. First, the “Conservation Scorecard” that the Commission adopted to evaluate farms was not suitable for evaluating scenic views. A view shed has to be evaluated by the extent and visual range of the parcel’s vista, the land’s accessibility, and the possible diminution to the view posed by future construction.

A second challenge was the size of the scenic parcel being evaluated. While most scenic (highway) overlooks typically are one or two acres in size, the viewshed is typically much larger. Some overlooks would not be endangered by future construction, since the building might be on a lower slope. In other cases, however, the development might be directly in the line of site, thus reducing the aesthetics and psychic benefits of the view.

To meet these challenges, the Environment Commission decided to construct a “**Scenic Value Scorecard**” that recognizes these issues and prioritizes scenic sites by providing a single value for each parcel being evaluated. The scorecard is designed to compare the attributes and qualities of a parcel to those of an ideal site; such as the Route #12 scenic outlook in South Bristol. Four general factors were used by the Commission to evaluate scenic parcels: Landscape (size of parcel, natural vegetation, and proximity to protected lands); Ridgelines and Scenic Views (extent and visual range of the parcel’s vista, accessibility of the parcel, and obstructed or unobstructed view); Legal Protection (type of legal protection, and location in or outside regulatory boundary); and Development Potential (could the parcel’s scenic view be threatened by construction of buildings in the immediate vicinity?). A copy of the “Scenic Value Scorecard” is located in Appendix B.

The Scenic View Scorecard Results

1. *Goodale Road.* The top ranked “Scenic View” in the Commission’s review was Goodale Road just west of Smith Road. The vista from this area is truly spectacular and

the site received a score of 80 points. While ranked low in Landscape Factors, the visual range of the Goodale view extends east past Canandaigua Lake to Gorham and beyond. The vista would not be adversely affected by development in the immediate vicinity because of the topography of hillside that faces east.

Given that the Town is planning to construct a water tower in this area, the Commission believes that consideration should be given to building a small overlook, possibly with one or two picnic table and a kiosk to the east of the planned tower. The added cost would be minimal and the benefits provided would be immense to Town residents.

Scenic Views Scorecard Summary							
Scenic Scores (Avg. Comm. Members)	Rank	Avg Score	Landscape Factors	Ridgeline/Scenic Views	Legal Protection	Potential Development	Extraordinary
Maximum Category Score		100	20	50	10	20	"-15 to 10"
Goodale (just west of Smith)	1	80	3	42	5	20	10
Deuel Rd (1/2 from Cty Rd 16)	2	79	7	44	5	13	10
Rte 21S County Turnout	3	76	10	47	1	13	5
Farren -- Cty Rd 16 (S of Foster)	4	74	3	44	9	8	10
Seneca Point Rd and Rte 21S	5	74	12	42	5	20	-5
Monks Road (1/2 W of Seneca Pt)	6	73	3	45	5	20	
Woolhouse Rd (4/10 S of Nott)	7	68	6	39	5	13	5
Emerson Rd (east of Sandhill)	8	65	5	42	5	8	5
McCann Rd	9	62	8	37	9	8	
Bliss Rd (W of Woolhouse)	10	60	6	36	5	13	
Cty # 16 (Miller's Hill)	11	56	2	36	5	13	
Rte 21S High Pt (S of Cty Turnout)	12	52	2	42	5	13	-10
County Rd #30 (west of Cooley)	13	50	4	34	5	7	
Cooley Rd	14	49	3	39	5	7	-5
Grimble Rd (1/10 W of Hopkins)	15	48	2	34	5	7	
Barnes/Seneca Pt (S of Barnes)	16	47	5	26	5	11	
New Michigan Rd (Yerkes)	17	45	3	31	5	6	
Jones Rd (1/10 from Rt21S)	18	45	2	42	3	13	-15
Brickyard Rd (north of Yerkes)	19	40	6	31	5	1	-3
Hopkins Rd (1/10 N of Grimble)	20	40	2	34	5	-1	
Parrish Street Ext (E of RT21S)	21	37	5	28	3	1	

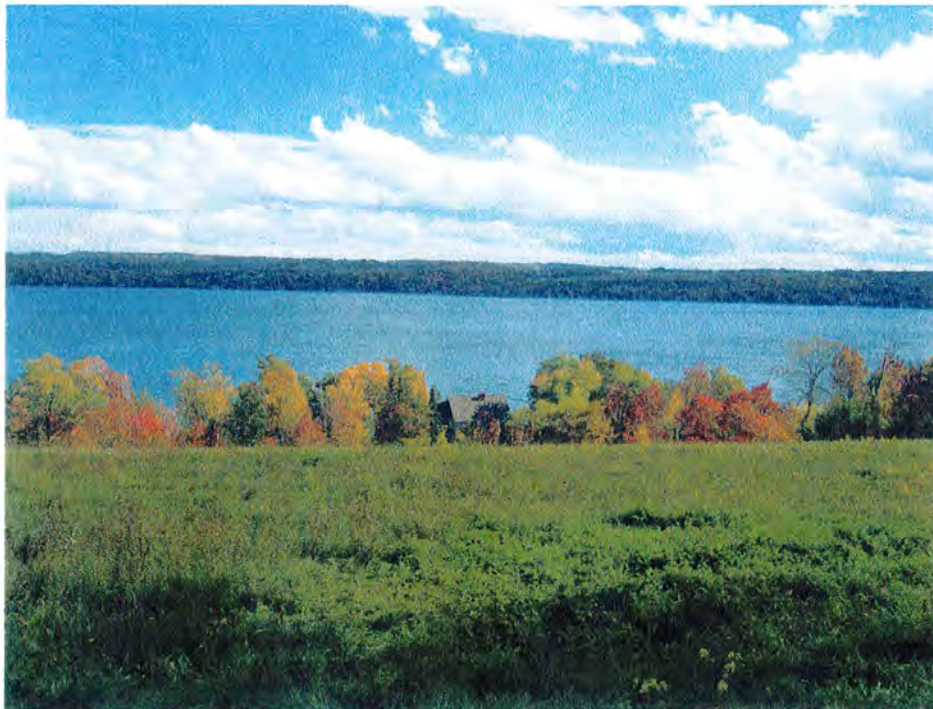
2. **Deuel Road**. The view of Canandaigua Lake from Deuel Road earned a score of 79 points. This is a classic Finger Lakes vista – rolling hills, fields and a magnificent

view of the lake. The parcel has unobstructed views and would be threatened by development. (See cover page.) Indeed, the Commission received information that the owner of the land has had a very attractive offer \$20,000/acre from a developer for the parcels to the north of Deuel road, which includes this viewshed. The owner reportedly rejected the offer, hoping for a staggering \$50,000 per acre. In effect, the market is saying that this is a parcel with tremendous beauty and potential.

With these prices in mind, the Town of Canandaigua *options* on a one or two-acre parcel or even for a PDR in this area are limited. Nevertheless, the site should remain a priority for the Town in the event that an opportunity for purchase or a PDR arises in the future.

3. ***Farren -- Property (County Road #16 South of Foster Rd).*** The parcel adjacent to the Farren homestead on County Rd. #16 is one of the few sites on this stretch of highway that has an unobstructed view of Canandaigua Lake from an elevated vantage point. The vista and visual range is exceptional and led to a score of 44 points out of 50 points. The site also has a steep slope and is zoned in the "Residential Lake District." The parcel could be easily developed which would destroy one, if not the last, prime viewpoints from County Road #16.

Options. Since many tourists and residents frequently pull over onto the shoulder to look at the view from this parcel, a small turnout would be appropriate from the standpoint of public safety. However, any expenditure of funds must be tied to a conservation easement being placed on the hillside in the immediate vicinity.



4. **Route #21 S County Turnout.** The Environmental Commission also evaluated the County Turnout on Route #21 South to see how this site would compare with others in the survey. Not surprisingly, the parcel received the highest score for “Ridgelines and Scenic Views,” posting 47 points out of a possible 50 points. The extent and visual of the vista are outstanding. The site is not threatened by development and is already protected.

Options. Given the foresight that the County had in acquiring this site, the Commission would recommend that the Town encourage the County to further enhance this site by clearing any invasive tree and plant species in the visual line of sight. In addition, some thought should be given to expanding the turnout and providing a few more picnic tables. With the success of the Route #12 “pull-off” in South Bristol as a tourist attraction, the Route #21 site should be upgraded. The two sites could be marketed by the County as part of the “Canandaigua Lake Scenic Trail.”

5. **Seneca Point Road & Route #21 S.** As one Commission member stated “this parcel is a gateway site that epitomizes the rural character of the Town.” The site is beautiful with a view of open fields and Canandaigua Lake in the distance. With homes having been built to the west and north of the property, the parcel is threatened by future development and by construction in the viewshed itself. One factor that works against this site as a “Scenic View” is its close proximity to the Route #21 County Turnout. To reflect this fact, the Commission members decided to subtract 5 points from the parcel’s score.

Options. While the Town could purchase a one or two acre parcel from the owner, the viewshed would be spoiled if development were to occur in the pastures to the east of Seneca Point Road. Hence, as is the case with many of the “Scenic Views” in this report, any expenditure of public funds for a turnout should be conditional on the placement of a Conservation Easement on the land in the immediate viewshed. This condition certainly would be applicable in both the Seneca Point & Route 21 S and the Duell Road parcels.

6. **Monks Road (1/2 mile South of Seneca Point Road).** This relatively unknown site sits on a knoll just to the north of the Bristol Harbor complex. The parcel has an unobstructed view of the southern end of Canandaigua Lake and the hills surrounding Naples. This land posted the second highest score in the survey for “Ridgelines and Scenic Views (45 points). Given the Bristol Harbor development to the south and the possibility of construction in the viewshed, the site is threatened.



Options. As is the case with most of the scenic sites that the Commission evaluated, an outright purchase of one or two acres for a turnout would be appropriate for this site. However, as the above picture illustrates, such a purchase would not protect the viewshed for the public to enjoy in the future, since houses could be constructed in the immediate vicinity. Hence, any outlay of Town funds for this site must be conditional on obtaining a “Conservation Easement” on the land in the immediate viewshed. In this regard, the Town, a Land Trust and the owner of the land should be brought together to discuss the advantages of such an arrangement.

Some Cautionary Words and General Observations

The attractiveness of the Town of Canandaigua as a place to live, work and play strongly suggests that the scenic views are likely to disappear quickly in the years just ahead. One site that was visited by the Environmental Commission and that had a very high score later had been graded for a new home. This parcel which was 9/10ths of a mile south of the County Turnout on Route 21S, is now lost forever. The disappearance of these sites will have a detrimental impact on the tourism industry and ultimately on employment in the region.

Throughout the Commission's evaluation process, the working assumptions were that high scoring farms would be candidates for PDRs, and that high scoring scenic views would be candidates for purchase by the Town (or donation by residents) of one or two acre parcels for parking and picnic area. The Commission believes that the Town of

Canandaigua can get the “biggest bang for the buck” if the two features (farmland and scenic views) are contained in one site. A number of the high scoring parcels listed above have this “double benefit.” They include: the Hicks farm and the Miller farms.

Finally, development pressures can have a significant impact on the potential for conservation action by the Town. For instance, the greatest development pressures at present time are in the northwest part of the town (coming from Victor/Farmington); the area directly west of the City of Canandaigua (proximity to water and sewer); and the portion west of the Lake (the Southern corridor). The relatively “unspoiled” areas with the most “natural” scenic views of farmland and/or lake are in the far southern part of Town (Monks, Coye, Deuel, and Seneca Point Roads; in the central section (County Road #30, Woolhouse and Bliss Roads); and in the far Northeast (Emerson and Sandhill Roads). These are areas where land protection projects may have the biggest potential impact and success.

Within highly developed areas, the possible projects (Wyffels, Albright and Farren properties) should be considered natural conservation “islands.” While important and while providing benefits to residents, these islands are certainly different from the farmland and open space in the undeveloped sections of the Town. As suggested above, these islands can provide a break in the monotony of suburban sprawl, and could be recreational space for Town residents. Creation of these green space islands thus should be a priority of the Town Board.

Long-Term Funding Mechanisms

Advising the Town Board on a long-term funding program for farmland and open space conservation was one of the Environmental Commission’s Priorities. Such a funding program would be consistent with the recommendations cited in the Town of Canandaigua’s “Comprehensive Plan.” The Town currently has a reserve fund of approximately \$1 million set aside for open space and farmland preservation. Some of these funds will be used in the near future as additions to the State funds that have been or will be earmarked for PDRs. However, the desirability of the Town as a place to live, work and play is pushing land costs ever higher, and while the property market has cooled off recently, the long-term trend remains in an upward direction. Thus, the parcels evaluated in this report can be expected to become ever more expensive in the years ahead.

To meet this financial challenge, the Town of Canandaigua should begin to develop a strategic land acquisition plan that targets specific parcels. At the same time, the Board with the help of the Environmental Commission should develop a mechanism to finance these acquisitions. In the Commission’s view, a successful land protection program will significantly exceed the financial resources currently held by the Town. In this regard, a bond issue is one option that should be considered to address this financial constraint.

The justification for bonding land acquisition is that since future generations will reap the benefits from the preservation of open space and scenic views that they, not just the current generation, also should share in the cost of purchasing the land. This intergenerational cost/benefit analysis is a well-established principle in Public Finance. In the Commission's view, the voters would approve a bond referendum, if it were timed correctly and linked to well-defined projects. The specific parcels recommended in this "Report" for preservation could be used as a justification for the bond financing.

While the ECC has ranked the parcels in the Town by their conservation value, described options for preserving these lands, and discussed long-term funding mechanisms, the hard part for town officials is yet to come. Philosophical debates about private property rights, the use of public funds to convey benefits on one landowner versus another, the benefits to the public of one parcel over another, are likely to be heated. Decisions regarding the funding of acquisitions also will require the Town Board's ingenuity, especially given its limited resources. Nevertheless, with the goals set forth in the Comprehensive plan as a reminder and with a spirit of doing what is best for the present and future generation of town residents, Commission members believe that the recommendations in this report will provide useful input and support to the Board's decision making process.

Finally, the members of the Commission believe that the Town Board should consider creating a permanent Environmental Conservation Board to advise it on matters affecting the preservation, development and use of the natural resources in the Town. The Conservation Board also could provide expertise on some of the environmental questions now faced by the Town's Planning Board. In the year ahead, the Commission (subject to the approval of the Town Board) could begin to work on the feasibility of a trail network in the Town. This effort would be a joint project with the Town's Parks and Recreational Committee. The proposed "Environmental Board" also could serve as a liaison with environmental organization such as the Watershed Council, the Watershed Alliance and the Finger Lakes Land Trust in educating the public in the importance of preserving the wonderful resources in the Town.

Appendix A: Conservation Scorecard

A Tool for Prioritizing Land Conservation

Since the need to protect open space and to set aside land for conservation is far greater than the funds available,¹ acquisition efforts must focus on protecting the most important parcels of land. From a conservation perspective, this means identifying and then protecting those lands with the greatest ecological and environmental value.

This Conservation Scorecard, which was developed by Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences in Southeastern Massachusetts, prioritizes lands for acquisition by providing a single value for each parcel evaluated. It does so by comparing the attributes and qualities of a parcel to those of an ideal conservation parcel. The evaluation process uses existing ecological and regulatory information, to provide an assessment of the **relative conservation value** of any parcel of land in the Town of Canandaigua. This Conservation Value may be used in conjunction with social and economic considerations (e.g., aesthetics, cultural significance, and **cost**) or by itself to prioritize open space acquisition.

The Manomet Scorecard was developed specifically to provide municipal governments, land trusts, open space and recreation committees, community preservation committees, conservation commissions, regional planners, and foundations that support land acquisition with an objective, science-based tool for prioritizing land acquisition. This Scorecard also may assist "Managed Growth" efforts by identifying those parcels most appropriate for development (i.e., those with low conservation values.)²

HOW TO USE THIS SCORECARD. Commission members will need one copy of the Scorecard for each parcel being assessed. In addition, it is strongly recommend that the evaluator visit each parcel and review the Town's planning documents. Although neither the site visit nor familiarity with planning documents is necessary to complete the Scorecard, the parcel in question will likely receive a lower Conservation Value than if the Commission member visited the site in person and reviewed the appropriate documents.

For each of the Scorecard's questions, the evaluator will see two or more possible answers and a point value for each possible answer.

Begin by answering question 1 A. Knowing your parcel's size, find the correct answer to the question, identify the number of points associated with that answer, and enter the resulting value in the corresponding "Score" box. Continue in this manner until you have answered all of the questions.

¹ To learn more about Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, please visit www.manomet.org.

² The "Conservation Scorecard" that was adopted by the Town of Canandaigua's Environmental Commission was adapted from a scorecard developed by the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. The scorecard was developed specifically to provide land trusts, open space committees, conservation commissions and regional planners with an objective, science-based tool for prioritizing land acquisition. Given the uniqueness of the landscape in the Western Finger lakes, the Town of Canandaigua's Environmental Commission modified the Manomet scorecard to suit the Town's characteristics.

Landscape Factors

1. The size, shape, and location of a parcel of land affect its conservation value. Neighboring parcels of open space, and their proximity and connection to the parcel being evaluated, also influence the conservation value of the property. Because of this, the evaluator must consider the parcel as part of a broader landscape.

The following three questions address the parcel from a landscape context. The first two questions deal with size -- the size of your parcel and the size of the undeveloped patch of land in which your parcel occurs. The third question deals with the concept of "Landscape Proximity and Integrity." Landscape Proximity and Integrity consider a variety of factors, including the shape of the parcel, distance to the nearest protected conservation lands, and the number and type of connections between the parcel and protected conservation lands.

Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. What is the size of the parcel being considered for purchase or for an easement?

	1A	
> 100 acres	10 points	Score
10–100 acres	5	
1–<10 acres	2	
<1 acre	1	

B. What is the size of the undeveloped land (i.e., land with natural vegetation) in which the parcel occurs?

	1B	
> 100 acres	3 points	
10–100 acres	2	
1–<10 acres	1	
<1 acre or not indicated on map	0	

C. What is the *Landscape Integrity Value* for the area in which your parcel occurs?

	1C	
High	20 points	
Medium	10	
Low	5	
Not indicated on map	0	_____

Subtotal (1A+1B+1C)

Agricultural Factors

2. The preservation of Farmsteads and Agricultural Lands is best accomplished by preserving multiple, intact examples of desirable Agricultural Soils. For this reason, a parcel's conservation value is greatly influenced by the productivity of its soil. Parcels that contain prime soils should be scored higher than those with lesser qualities. In addition, Prime Agricultural Soils or areas adjacent to viable farms enhance the conservation value of the parcel. The following questions assess the conservation value of farm soils on the parcel being analyzed. **Note: Consult map in "The Open Space Program For Prime Soils."**

Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. Does the parcel contain Prime

Agricultural Soils?

2A

Score

Yes

6 points

No

0

B. Is the farmland parcel adjacent or in close proximity to viable farms?

2B

Yes

5 points

No

0

C. Would the parcel qualify for a PDR or other type of easement?

2C

Yes

3 points

No

0

Subtotal (2A+2B+2C)

Environmentally Sensitive Lands

3. Water quality is critical to the economic well being and quality of life in the Town of Canandaigua. Land use practices that interrupt, disturb or pollute the flow of surface waters flowing into Canandaigua Lake can adversely impact water quality. In contrast, land use that maintains surface water quality is beneficial to the Canandaigua Lake Watershed. Wetlands also are important by functioning as natural filters to dilute pollutants before they reach streams. Due to the potential for erosion, the development of steep slopes is to be discouraged and the preservation of stream corridors is to be encouraged.

The following questions consider the relationship between the parcel and water quality. Environmentally sensitive lands that contribute to the protection of surface and ground waters are considered to be of greater conservation value than those that do not.

Note: Consult maps in "The Open Space Program for Slopes Wetlands and Hydric Soils."

Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. Does the parcel contain a steep slope, a wetland or hydric soils?

	3A	Score
Yes	6 points	
No	0	

B. Does the parcel provide a natural (grassland or treed) vegetated buffer to a stream or rivulet that flows into the Lake?

If so, what is the extent of the buffer?

	3B
Yes – 200 or more feet	6 points
Yes – 100 – <200 feet	3
Yes – Less than 100 feet	1
No	0

C. Do one or more vernal pools or springs exist in the parcel?

	3C
Yes – Certified vernal pool or spring	2 points
Yes – Potential vernal pool or spring	1
No	0

D. Is the environmentally sensitive land threatened by development? or located in an area with intense development pressures?

	3D
Yes	5 points
No	0

Subtotal (3A+3B+3C+3D)

Ridgelines and Scenic Views

4. Since scenic views and ridgelines are attractive to development, protecting and preserving these natural resources benefits all members of the community and enhances Town's tourism potential.

Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. Does the parcel located in a "Hilly Area?"

	4A	Score
Yes – Undeveloped and Treed?	<i>6 points</i>	
Yes – Undeveloped w Trees & Fields?	<i>4</i>	
No	<i>0</i>	

B. Does the parcel contain a scenic view of Canandaigua Lake and/or farmland vistas?

	4B	
Yes	<i>7 points</i>	
No	<i>0</i>	

C. Is the parcel visible from Canandaigua Lake?

Note: Consult map in "The Open Space Program."

	4C	
Yes	<i>3 points</i>	
No	<i>0</i>	

Subtotal (4A+4B+4C) _____

Note: A low score in the Ridgelines and Scenic Views category does not automatically mean that the parcel is of low conservation value. Even high-quality upland sites may score low in this category. Parcels that score high in all other categories should be considered for purchase.

Legal Protection

5. The conservation value of your parcel may be enhanced by legal protection afforded it, and/or to its surroundings. Parcels that occur in areas already designated as environmentally sensitive or important to conservation may be subject to increased regulation, or increased availability of funds for acquisition and stewardship. The legal protection that is place on a parcel will determine if the parcel remains in conservation, or if it will be converted to another land use at some future time. Parcels that occur in one or more regulatory overlays and those with multiple layers of legal protection are of higher conservation value.

Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. Does your parcel occur within the political boundaries of an environmental regulatory overlay (e.g., Area of Critical Environmental Concern, wetland protection area, steep slope etc.?) This includes all federal, state, regional, local, and privately designated areas.

5A

Yes
No

4 points
0

B. What type of legal protection will your parcel possibly have after purchase?

The following terms are used to answer this question.
CE = Conservation easement

5B

Ownership by Land Trust
Private Ownership CE Held by Land Trust
Private Ownership CE Held by Town including PDR
Ownership by Town

6 points
5
4
1

Subtotal (5A+5B)

Potential For Development

6. Once purchased, conservation land may be protected from the direct impacts of development but not the indirect impacts. Development of areas adjacent to protected lands decreases the conservation value of those protected lands. Because of this, the evaluator should consider if the land surrounding your parcel is likely to be developed. In general, parcels in areas in which development is unlikely, maintain their ecological and conservation value longer than parcels in areas where development is encouraged. One indicator of the likelihood, and type, of future development is the designated land use, as identified in the town's planning and zoning documents.

Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. Does the parcel occur within an area designated as "lands that are most suitable for development" in the municipality's Comprehensive Plan, or an area zoned for commercial or **DENSE** residential development (one house per 2 acres or less)?

No

No plans exist

Yes*

6A

6 points

0

-6

Subtotal (6A)

* Use this answer for your score unless you have reviewed planning documents.

Parcel Name: _____ Date Evaluated: _____

Conservation Value

The Conservation Value of your parcel is the sum of your six sub-totals. The higher the Conservation Value, the greater that parcel's contribution to conservation.

Remember, this is a relative value that is to be used to compare multiple parcels being considered for acquisition.

Scorecard Category	Total Points Possible	Sub-total Value
1. Landscape Factors	33	
2. Agricultural Factors	14	
3. Environmentally Sensitive	19	
4. Ridgelines and Scenic Views	16	
5. Legal Protection	10	
6. Potential for Development	6	
	Total 100	

Note: Extraordinary Factors: A parcel may score a zero in one of the above categories such as Agricultural or ridgeline factors but still is unique from a conservation standpoint; i.e., a treed parcel or watershed formation (gullies) that is essential for protecting and preserving water quality; a farm with unique historical or architectural significance; an environmentally sensitive parcel that contains unique (rare) plant or wildlife or wetlands exceeding a certain size.

A. Does the parcel contain a factor that is deemed to be special and deserving of recognition and that is not covered in another category?

- 1. Yes 10 points
- 2. No 0

7. Extraordinary Factors	10	

Total Adjusted Score

A quick rule of thumb for interpreting your score!

(Based on pilot studies)

0-20 Little to no conservation value 20-40 Poor to moderate conservation value

40-60 Moderate to good conservation value 60-80 Good to excellent conservation value

80-100 Outstanding conservation value (Only pristine, ideal parcels fall into this range.)

Appendix B -- Scenic Value Scorecard

A Tool for Prioritizing Scenic Site Preservation

The need to protect open space, to set aside land for conservation and to preserve scenic vistas is far greater than the funds available. Because of this, acquisition efforts must focus on protecting the most important parcels of land. From a conservation perspective, this means protecting those lands with the greatest ecological, environmental or scenic value. But how can we identify these lands?

This Scenic Value Scorecard, which was developed by the Town of Canandaigua's Environmental Conservation Commission, prioritizes lands for acquisition by providing a single value for each parcel evaluated. It does so by comparing the attributes and qualities of a parcel to those of an ideal scenic site parcel. The evaluation process integrates scenic information developed specifically for this Scorecard with existing ecological and regulatory information, to provide an assessment of the **relative scenic site and conservation value** of any parcel of land in the Town's geographic area. This Site Value may be used in conjunction with social and economic considerations (e.g., aesthetics, cultural significance, and cost) or by itself to prioritize open space acquisition.

This Scorecard was developed specifically to provide the Town of Canandaigua with an objective, science-based tool for prioritizing land acquisition. This Scorecard may also assist "Smart Growth" efforts by identifying those parcels most appropriate for development (i.e., those with low conservation values.)

HOW TO USE THIS SCORECARD. The evaluator will need one copy of the Scorecard for each parcel being assessed. In addition, it is strongly recommend that the evaluator visit each parcel and review the municipality's planning documents. Although neither the site visit nor familiarity with planning documents is necessary to complete the Scorecard, the parcel in question will likely receive a lower Conservation Value than if the evaluator visited the site in person and reviewed the appropriate documents.

For each of the Scorecard's questions, the evaluator will see two or more possible answers, information on what map layers (if any) provide you the information needed to answer the question, and a point value for each possible answer.

Begin by answering question 1 A. Knowing your parcel's size, find the correct answer to the question, identify the number of points associated with that answer, and enter the resulting value in the corresponding "Score" box. For example, if an evaluator is analyzing a 14-acre parcel, the answer to this question is worth 5 points, and he or she would write the number 5 in the "Score" box.

Continue in this manner until you have answered all of the questions.

Landscape Factors

1. The size, shape, and location of a parcel of land affect its conservation value. Neighboring parcels of open space, and their proximity and connection to the parcel being evaluated, also influence the conservation value of the parcel. Because of this, the evaluator must consider the parcel as part of a broader landscape.

The following three questions address the parcel from a landscape context. The first two questions each deal with size, the size of your parcel and the size of the undeveloped patch of land in which your parcel occurs. The third question deals with the concept of "Landscape Proximity." Landscape Proximity considers a variety of factors, including the shape of the parcel, distance to the nearest protected conservation lands, and the number and type of connections between the parcel and protected conservation lands.

1. Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. What is the approximate size of the scenic parcel being considered for purchase or for an easement? *(Please Note: A Scenic overlook can be a small one acre turnout on a highway, or the parcel could be somewhat larger [38 acres donated by Odell Scott] as was the case in the S. Bristol (Rt. 12) scenic overlook. This is a judgment call. In general, most parcels under consideration for purchase By the Town would be 2 acres.)*

	1A	<u>Score</u>
> 100 acres	10 points	
10–100 acres	5	
1–<10 acres	2	
<1 acre	1	

B. What is the size of the undeveloped land (i.e., land with natural vegetation) in which the parcel occurs?

	1B	
> 100 acres	3 points	
10–100 acres	2	
1–<10 acres	1	
<1 acre or not indicated on map	0	

C. What is the Landscape Proximity Value for the area in which your parcel occurs?

	1C	
High	7 points	
Medium	5	
Low	2	
Not indicated on map	0	_____

Subtotal (1A+1B+1C)

Ridgelines and Scenic Views

2. Since scenic views and ridgelines are attractive to development, protecting and preserving these natural resources benefits all members of the community and enhances Town's tourism potential.

Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. Does the parcel have an unobstructed "Scenic View?"

	2A	Score
Yes – Undeveloped and free of visual obstructions?	<i>10 points</i>	
Yes – Undeveloped with some trees?	<i>5</i>	
Yes – Developed with one or two houses	<i>2</i>	
No – Developed	<i>0</i>	

B. Does the parcel contain a scenic view of Canandaigua Lake and/or farmland vistas?

	2B	
Yes – Lake and Farmland	<i>10 points</i>	
Yes – Lake only	<i>5</i>	
Yes – Farmland only	<i>5</i>	
No	<i>0</i>	

C. Is the parcel visible from Canandaigua Lake?

Note: Consult map in "The Open Space Program."

	2C	
Yes	<i>3 points</i>	
No	<i>0</i>	

D. What is the extent of the parcel's vista?

	2D	
180 degrees	<i>10 points</i>	
90 degrees	<i>7</i>	
45 degrees	<i>3</i>	

E. What is the visual range of the parcel's view?

	2E	
5 to 10 miles	<i>10</i>	
2 to 5 miles	<i>7</i>	
1 to 2 miles	<i>5</i>	
½ to 1 mile	<i>2</i>	

F. How accessible is the scenic view?

Accessible from a public road and/or walking trail

	2F	
Yes	<i>7 points</i>	
No	<i>0</i>	

Subtotal (2A+2B+2C+2D+2E+2F)

Legal Protection

3. The conservation value of your parcel may be enhanced by legal protection afforded it, and/or to its surroundings. Parcels that occur in areas already designated as environmentally sensitive or important to conservation may be subject to increased regulation, or increased availability of funds for acquisition and stewardship. The legal protection that is place on a parcel will determine if the parcel remains in conservation, or if it will be converted to another land use at some future time. Parcels that occur in one or more regulatory overlays and those with multiple layers of legal protection are of higher conservation value.

Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. Does your parcel occur within the political boundaries of an environmental regulatory overlay (e.g., Area of Critical Environmental Concern, wetland protection area, steep slope etc.?) This includes all federal, state, regional, local, and privately designated areas.

3A

Yes

4 points

No

0

B. What type of legal protection will your parcel possibly have after purchase?

The following terms are used to answer this question.

CE = Conservation easement

3B

Ownership by Land Trust

6 points

Ownership by Town CE Held by Land Trust

5

Private Ownership CE Held by Land Trust

4

Private Ownership CE Held by Town including PDR

3

Ownership by Town only

1

Subtotal (3A+3B)

Potential For Development

4. Once purchased, conservation land may be protected from the direct impacts of development but not the indirect impacts. Development of areas adjacent to protected lands decreases the conservation value of those protected lands. Because of this, you need to consider if the land surrounding your parcel is likely to be developed. In general, parcels in areas in which development is unlikely, maintain their ecological and conservation value longer than parcels in areas where development is encouraged. One indicator of the likelihood, and type, of future development is the designated land use, as identified in the town's planning and zoning documents.

Measurement Map Layer Answer Points Score

A. Does the parcel occur within an area designated as "lands that are most suitable for development" in the municipality's Comprehensive Plan, or an area zoned for commercial or DENSE residential development (one house per 2 acres or less)?

No	4A
No plans exist	<i>6 points</i>
Yes*	0
	-6

B. Is the parcel threatened by future development? or located in an area with intense development pressures?

Yes	4B
No	<i>7 points</i>
	0

C. Could the parcel's scenic view be threatened by the construction of buildings in the immediate vicinity?

Yes	4C
No	7
	0

Subtotal (4A+4B+4C)

* Use this answer for your score unless you have reviewed planning documents.

Parcel Name: _____ **Date Evaluated:** _____

Conservation Value

The Scenic Value of your parcel is the sum of your four sub-totals. The higher the Scenic Value, the greater that parcel's contribution to site preservation.

Remember, this is a relative value that is to be used to compare multiple parcels being considered for acquisition.

Scorecard Category	Total Points Possible	Sub-total Value
1. Landscape Factors	20	
2. Ridgelines and Scenic Views	50	
3. Legal Protection	10	
4. Potential for Development	20	
	Total 100	_____

Note: Extraordinary Factors: A parcel may score a zero in one of the above categories such as "Potential for Development or Landscape Proximity" but still is unique from a preservation standpoint. Alternatively, a parcel may have attributes that significantly detract from its value, such as a power lines and buildings in the view shed.

A. Does the parcel contain a factor that is deemed to be special and deserving of recognition and that is not covered in another category?

- 1. Yes 10 points
- 2. No 0

Does the parcel have a serious deficiency?

If the answer is "yes," please describe.

- 1. Yes -15 points
- 2. No 0

6. Extraordinary Factors -15 to 10

Total Adjusted Score _____

A quick rule of thumb for interpreting your score!

(Based on pilot studies)

0-20 Little to no conservation value 20-40 Poor to moderate conservation value

40-60 Moderate to good conservation value 60-80 Good to excellent conservation value

80-100 Outstanding conservation value (Only pristine, ideal parcels fall into this range.)