





## **History/Property Information:**

On June 26, 2000, 74.9 acres was purchased from John Mitchell for the sum of \$750,000 utilizing both the State of Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Grant and the Town Open Space Referendum Funding. On December 19, 2001, an additional 40.6 acres was added to the north of the property as part of the open space component of the Strawberry Fields Development. Today the property consists of 115.5 acres.

The South Windsor Town Council has, for some time sought to recognize, in a significant way, one of this Town's own – Air Force Major Michael Donnelly, a young man of courage and determination, brought up in our Town, who still makes his home in South Windsor, and, significantly, is a Veteran and casualty of the Persian Gulf War. As a result of his brave and selfless service in the Persian Gulf War, he contracted ALS (Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease).

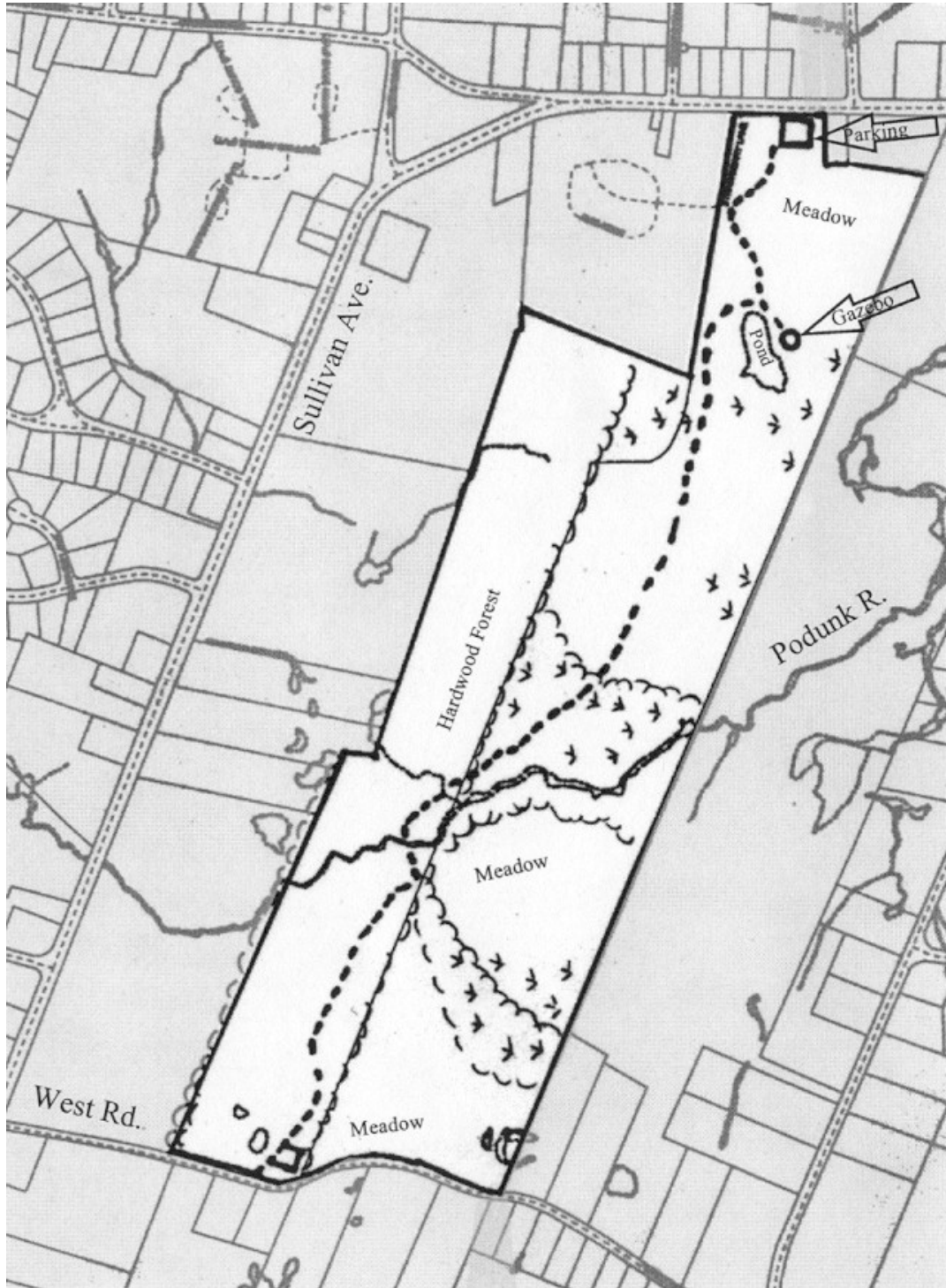
After six years of courageous and impassioned efforts on behalf of his fellow Gulf War Veterans, and while suffering greatly himself from the disease, Major Donnelly has won the first step in his own private battle to prove that there is, in truth, a direct connection between participation in that War and the contraction of ALS.

Because of Major Donnelly's six-year campaign to convince the Federal Government of this connection, the U. S. Secretary of Veterans' Affairs, Anthony J. Principi, has concurred and ordered medical, disability, and survivor benefits for those Veterans affected, and their surviving families – the first time the Federal Government has linked a specific illness to service in the Persian Gulf War.

The South Windsor Town Council, on behalf of its residents, and in recognition of Major Michael Donnelly and his family, and other Persian Gulf War Veterans and their families who, because of their dedication to duty and the call of their Country to serve in this region, have suffered and lost much to this debilitating disease, wishes to thank Major Michael Donnelly for his heroism; and to thank he and his wife Susan Allen Donnelly, his daughter Erin, his son Sean, his parents Tom and Rae Donnelly; and his sister Denise Donnelly for the difference they have made in the quality of life for many of those brave men and women who fought the War in the Persian Gulf. On January 7, 2002, the Town Council formally named the property the "Major Michael Donnelly Land Preserve" in honor of Major Michael Donnelly.

The property was formally dedicated and a sign marking the property entrance off Sullivan Avenue was unveiled on Veterans' Day, November 11, 2003.

# MAP OF THE TRAILS



## Purpose

To outline planned and potential improvements and management strategies for the Major Michael Donnelly Land Preserve.

## Improvements/Management Strategies

General and conceptual types of property improvements have been identified in the “Open Space Access Plan” and the “Open Space Stewardship Plan.” More specific and detailed planned and potential improvements are described below. Additionally, Management Strategies are identified as well in an effort to insure that implemented improvements can be properly maintained and to insure that the health and diversity of the natural resources within the property are managed.

## Planned and Potential Improvements

### 2004

1. Trail construction – provide continuous trail system from Sullivan Avenue to West Road (started)
2. Install gazebo near pond.
3. Increased parking off Sullivan Avenue (completed)
4. Landscaping/stabilization of area adjacent to parking lot and trail off Sullivan Avenue
5. Brush clearing for grassland habitat and selective tree releases west of Podunk River(started)
6. Install benches
7. Install trail signage/kiosk
8. Install educational signage
9. Mow field off West Road
10. Stock pond with fish (completed)
11. Install/construct crossing to allow equipment access along wet area off West Road
12. Flag Pole with lights

### 2005

1. Trail construction
2. Construct Viewing Tower
3. Planting of grassland west of Podunk River with mixture of warm and cool grasses
4. Install educational signage

5. Install trail signage
6. Install benches
7. Mow field off West Road
8. Install equipment crossing structure over Podunk West Road side of property
9. Trim brush along trails/boardwalks
10. Install kestrel nest boxes
11. Install parking lot off West Road
12. Stock pond with fish
13. Mow grassland west of Podunk River
14. Parking lot/Trail/Boardwalk maintenance

#### 2006

1. Build Educational Building
2. Trail construction
3. Mow field off West Road
4. Mow grassland west of Podunk River
5. Install bat houses
6. Trim brush along Trails/boardwalk
7. Parking lot/Trail/Boardwalk maintenance

#### 2007

1. Supplement riparian buffers with hazelnut, switchgrass, winterberry, elderberry, sweet pepperbush, spicebush, blackberry
2. Mow field off West Road
3. Trim brush along trails
4. Supplement signage and benches
5. Stock pond with fish
6. Stock Podunk with trout
7. Mow grassland west of Podunk River

8. Parking lot/Trail/Boardwalk maintenance

2008

1. Mow field off West Road

2. Trim brush along trails/boardwalk

3. Stock Podunk with fish

4. Mow grassland west of Podunk River

5. Parking lot/Trail/Boardwalk maintenance

6. Install kestrel nest boxes

7. Overseed grassland west of Podunk

06/28/04



Major (ret) Michael Donnelly, a Persian Gulf War fighter pilot awarded four Air Medals for completing 44 combat missions over Iraq during Operation Desert Storm, was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) at the age of 36. Unlike many other Gulf War veterans, Major Donnelly was active duty when he was diagnosed with the progressively fatal disease. As a result, he was granted permanent and total disability benefits, yet his willingness and ability to help others has not stopped.

Since his diagnosis, Major Donnelly has become a champion for other Persian Gulf War veterans who are suffering from ALS, cancer and many other illnesses. In 1998, Major Donnelly published his story under the title of Falcon's Cry. More than just Major Donnelly's wartime memoirs, the book tells the story of living with ALS and the fight by tens of thousands of Persian Gulf War veterans for acknowledgement of their war-related illnesses while serving their country. Confined to a wheelchair and unable to speak, Major Donnelly continues to communicate, by using a special computer, and remains dedicated to helping those men and women with whom he served.

On December 10, 2001, Veterans' Affairs Secretary, Anthony Principi, made a startling announcement. He reported that a recently completed Veterans' Affairs study revealed that Persian Gulf War veterans are more than twice as likely as other veterans to develop ALS. This announcement confirmed Major Donnelly's chief claim: that an epidemic of ALS is plaguing Persian Gulf War veterans. As a result of the VA study, Secretary Principi acknowledged Major Donnelly's efforts in this cause and announced that the VA would grant full benefits to all Gulf War veterans diagnosed with ALS.

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## *The SCHOW-DONNELLY AWARD*



The SCHOW-DONNELLY AWARD was commissioned in 2002 as a team award for exemplary “service before self” in honor of Lt. Col. (ret) K.C. SCHOW, Jr. and Major (ret) Michael DONNELLY who flew formation together as combat fighter pilots during the Persian Gulf War. Those who fly in formation together find their lives inextricably intertwined. They are bonded together by discipline, dedication, competence, and the absolute necessity for trust and mutual support. In combat, as in life, people who seek to serve in adversity knowingly accept increased risk and personal sacrifice in the belief that they are serving a cause greater than themselves. Each knows that by working as a team (a formation) they exponentially amplify their effectiveness and probability of success.



Every formation has a designated leader, and every great combat flight leader depends on the wingman not only to protect the formation, but also to be capable of taking the lead at any moment; in any situation. Combat wingmen are leaders in their own right as they are expected to simultaneously follow, think, and lead, while each member of the formation is focused on supporting the other, getting the mission accomplished, and returning with honor to fly and fight another day. The SCHOW-DONNELLY AWARD by this right is presented as a team award to people who have exemplified these ideals.

Lieutenant Colonel K.C. Schow Jr., (USAF ret.) and Major Michael Donnelly, (USAF



ret.) flew thirty-five (35) F-16 missions together as lead and wingman during the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Each earned 4 Air Medals, and Lt. Col. Schow earned the Distinguished Flying Cross for their service in defense of our nation during combat. Lt. Col. Schow and Major Donnelly’s service to others and the nation did not stop after the war.



Because the actions and contributions of Lt. Col. Schow and Major Donnelly exemplify “Service

Before Self,” the Schow-Donnelly Award is commissioned in the form of a falcon statue. The

falcon represents the F-16 Falcon, the airplane Lt. Col. Schow and Major Donnelly flew during the Persian Gulf War. A tear is shed from the eye of the falcon for the terminal illness each hero faced in the prime of their life, and the award is given to those who exemplify “Service Before Self” to the United States and the community they serve.



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