#### THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT



# THE MEADOWS 2024-2025 VISION PLAN

CLASS OF 2024

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#### THE MEADOWS VISION PLAN 2024-2025

# A WORD FROM THE SENIOR CLASS

Designing and planning for the Meadows residential community in Fairfield, CT involves a combination of landscape architecture principles, urban planning, and community engagement. We are the graduating class of 2024 from the University of Connecticut, and through our Community Planning course guided by Dr. Sohyun Park, we have developed a vision plan for this community to combat issues regarding flooding, erosion, ecology, maintenance and programming.

We had a wonderful time on November 13th working with the community and strategizing ways in which we can provide support and knowledge to better your community.

This charrette was structured to engage the community in a collaborative effort, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the proposed solutions. We look forward to hearing your feedback about our designs!

Sohyun Park DR. SOHYUN PARK AND **UCONN SENIOR CLASS '24** 





# HISTORY OF THE MEADOWS

BY ABBY VARGA UCONN CTASLA PRESIDENT AND SENIOR CLASS MEMBER

> Fairfield CT was established in 1635 by the Puritans and Congregationalists from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In the early 1700's, Fairfield county was burned during the American Revolution. By the early 1900's the community of Pine Creek was centered around the many recreational activities of the water including swimming and canoeing. This neighborhood became a popular place for summer cottages for the rich during the mid to late 1900's, one resident of which is the well known Ann Taylor.

The Meadows are a subset of the known Pine Creek community and share a unique history with surrounding neighborhoods.

"There are the chimneys of many burnt houses standing."

> George Washington on the burning of 1779

'Historically, much of the wetlands adjoining Pine Creek were filled for development of Town facilities such as the wastewater treatment plant, Town landfill, and public works garage or cut off from the Creek's flow by flood control dikes. The resulting environmental damage destroyed the original salt marsh system of Pine Creek.'

Using what we know about the history of the Pine Creek community, we hope that we can come up with ways to cherish the past, and look to the future.



# SITE ANALYSIS

After taking a first site walk at the Meadows community in Fairfield on October 6th, we returned to UConn and made a collection of our findings which are listed below:

- -Lots of open lawn space
- -Lots of invasive species
- -Little ornamental plantings
- -Large viewsheds
- -Surrounding wildlife
- -Effective flood gates preventing flooding
- -Need for erosion control

After analyzing both the backyard spaces as well as shared spaces, we have decided to come up with creative design solutions. Students have presented master plan and individual site design to support the needs and requests from the community. We hope that this written support will act as a helpful guide for discussing some of these concerns.



COMMUNITY FLOOD GATES



ADJACENT MARSH FACE SOUTHWEST

UCONN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

#### THE MEADOWS VISION REPORT 2024-2025



Key drivers of wetland loss include pollution, land conversion and drainage

# VISION PLANNING

Vision planning involves outlining the long-term goals, values, and aspirations that guide decision-making and actions. Articulating the values and principles that we think can and will guide decision making behavior within your community is crucial. This is why we have decided to outline key focus topics that are relevant to your community. We recognize that a good vision is adaptable to changing circumstances. It should provide a broad direction while allowing for flexibility in the face of evolving challenges and opportunities. Part of the success of this process requires monitoring. Regularly monitoring progress towards the vision and evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and actions allows for adjustments when needed and ensures that solving the concerns in your community stays on course. Vision planning is a dynamic and ongoing process. This report, as well as additional supplemental documentation for the strategic plan of your community should be revisited periodically to ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to changing conditions.



COMMUNITY CHARETTE, NOVEMBER 2023



# Breakdown of Key Focus Topics

Our key topics of focus when it comes to vision planning for the Salt Meadow Community include lawn maintenance, erosion, flooding, programming and ecology. The next few pages of the report act as a synopsis of these focus topics. These pages include solutions and suggestions solving these concerns..

# Turf Lawn Fertilizer Alternatives



BY NANCY PAN UCONN SENIOR CLASS MEMBER

# Why are traditional lawn fertilizers bad for the environment?

When lawn chemicals are applied improperly, they can run off into streams, harming fish and other animals and contaminating our drinking water. Over application of any lawn chemical can result in runoff that carries toxic levels of chemicals or excessive nutrients into lakes, streams and groundwater.



#### What are some alternatives to traditional lawn fertilizers?

Some alternatives to synthetic lawn fertilizers would be to use organic lawn fertilizers, engage in community composting, or install clover lawns.

#### **Clover Lawn**

Clover lawn require no fertilizers it is drought tolerant, little to no mowing required, and pulls plant-nourishing nitrogen from the environment to replenish the soil.

### **Community Compost**

Composting at the community scale allows individuals to engage with each other and learn from the process.

### **Organic Lawn Fertilizers**

Organic lawn fertilizer is a natural alternative to chemical fertilizers. It is made from natural ingredients such as compost, bone meal, fish emulsion, and seaweed.

# Community Compost Program

BY JOHN MOONEY UCONN SENIOR CLASS MEMBER

# Why should we start a Community Compost Program?

Compost programming engages and educates the community in food systems thinking, resource stewardship, or community sustainability while providing solutions that empower individuals, businesses, and institutions to capture organic waste and retain it as a community resource.

### How can Community Compost Program help the environment?

Compost is used to enhance local soils, support local food production, and conserve natural ecology by improving soil structure and maintaining nutrients, carbon, and soil microorganisms. Composting also prevent organic waste from ending up in landfills.

### Community Compost Program Resources

Robin Greenfield has a great beginners guild to start a community compost! Check him out online!







# Rain Garden?

Rain gardens have a significant role in urban and environmental planning. They are significant in reducing stormwater runoff, create habitats for biodiversity, and are an aesthetic value to communities, especially residential communities.



# Why are they so important?

-	

Manages stormwater as well as improving the quality of this collected water by filtering pollutants through natural vegetation

2

Creates aesthetic and recreational value, allowing all members of the community input on planting, location, size, etc

3

Rain gardens help remove excess, unwanted chemicals from soils such as Nitrogen and Phosphorus

# **Native Plant Species List**

BY SAM BUSHKA UCONN SENIOR CLASS MEMBER

#### Versatile and Available Native Trees and Shrubs for Constructed Wetlands

Button Bush (Cephalanthus occidentalis) Atlantic White Cedar (*Charnaecyparis thyoides*) Common Winterberry (*llex verticillatta*) Bald Cypress (Taxodium distichum) Elderberry (Sambucus canadensis) Black Willow (Salix nigra) Indigo Bush (Amorpha fruticosa) Box Elder (Acer Negundo) Inkberry (*llex glabra*) Green Ash (Fraxinus pennsylvanica) Smooth Alder (Alnus serrulata) Grey Birch (Betula populifolia) Spicebush (Lindera benzoin) Red Maple (Acer rubrum) Swamp Azalea (Azalea viscosum) River Birch (Betula nigra) Swamp Rose (Rosa palustris) Swamp Tupelo (Nyssa biflora) Sweet Pepperbush (Clethra alnifolia) Sweetbay Magnolia (Magnolia virginiana) Sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua) Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis) Water Oak (Quercus nigra) Willow Oak (Quercus phellos)

#### Native Emergent and Submergent Vegetation for Constructed Wetlands

Arrow Arum (Peltandra virginica) Broad-Leaf Arrowhead (Duck Potato) (Saggitaria latifolia) Blueflag Iris (Iris versicolor) Broomsedge (Andropogon virginianus) Bulltongue Arrowhead (Sagittaria lancifolia) Burreed (Sparganium americanum) Cardinal Flower (Lobelia cardinalis) Common Rush (Juncus spp.) Common Three Square (Scipus pungens) Joe Pye Weed (Eupatorium purpureum) Lizard's Tail (Saururus cernus) Marsh Hibiscus (Hibiscus moscheutos) Pickerelweed (Pontederia cordata) Pond Weed (Potamogeton pectinatus) Rice Cutgrass (Leersia oryzoides) Sedges (Carex spp.) Softstem Bulrush (Scipus validus) Smartweed (Polygonum spp.) P. Perfoliatum Spatterdock (Nuphar luteum) Switchgrass (Panicum virgatum) Sweet Flag (Acorus calamus) Waterweed (Elodea canadensis) Wild celery (Valisneria americana) Wild Rice (Zizania aquatica) Woolgrass (Scirpus cyperinus)

# Our Vision

Our vision for this report is for this booklet to be a guide for future-based decisions. We hope that this report not only educates individuals on nature based solutions, but also sparks interest and excitement in possible future design and evolution of the Salt Meadow Community!



# Our Mission



Provide solutions and suggestions for creating an environment that is safe for all inhabitants

Provide a variety of unique design solutions



2

Develop educational programs (such as this report) to raise awareness about the impact of erosion, flooding, and lawn maintenance practices



# COMMUNITY CHARETTE

BY LIZ HELMIN UCONN CTASLA VICE PRESIDENT AND SENIOR CLASS MEMBER

On November 13, 2023, students from the University of Connecticut Landscape Architecture's graduating class, as well as members of the Salt Meadow Community in Fairfield CT, gathered together in a day of exciting workshopping. Students and residents worked together to tackle five main topics of which were pinpointed as concerns in their community. These topics included ecology, maintenance, programming, flooding and erosion. Students were asked to run 20 minute workshops that involved hands on activities that required residents to stay active and ask crucial questions about combatting these issues.

Residents were faced with tough decisions when working in these small groups.

"Our actions and decisions truly dictate the environment we live in" -Salt Meadow Resident

These workshops acted as a foundation for continuing education. This day sparked new conversation, new thought, shared knowledge and inspired minds. We hope that the knowledge we were able to provide during this charette will transcend into the discussion and decisions you make in your community!



# **KEY FOCUS SOLUTIONS**

Recognizing that there are several hoops to jump through when it comes to creating significant change on your site, we hope that this section acts as a shortcut to some short term solutions and easy changes that can be made in your community. Some of these include:

- Community composting
- Changing/re-evaluating pesticide use
- Using deer resistant planting
- Planting natives that can reduce the possibility of encroachment of invasive species
- Planting more trees!
- Re-directing water flow (rain gardens!)
- Educating yourself and the community!

We recognize that effective design takes time and monetary efforts. However, we do believe that these small changes can be made in a short period of time and at a small cost!

These suggestions mentioned on the next page act as educational tools that can be shared and discussed within the community. We hope that if you decide to make these small changes for the time being, your return on investment will be relatively successful!

This next section of this report shares the individual master and vision planning from all members of the University of Connecticut's Landscape Architecture Class of 2024. All designs share similar thoughts yet are presented in unique, and inspiring ways that may hopefully be implemented at any level within the Salt Meadow Community!

# **NEXT STEPS**

Where do you go from here? Vision reports are not just about looking back, but also looking forward. This Vision Report presented by the University of Connecticut Landscape Architecture Class of 2024 is a continuous work in progress - a way for your community to track its impact and improvements over time. This section outlines our strategy for continuing the good work done and thought we've had so far!



### No. 01 – EDUCATE

Continuing education is incredibly important when it comes to protecting ourselves and the environment!



### No. 02 – **REFLECT**

Every effective vision plan always takes a step back when need be. Reflection and revision are a necessity in the success of this process.



### No. 03 - TAKE ACTION

This is by far the hardest and most provoking step in this process as it involves a variety of communities and organizations to get involved including the town and state governance

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT



# MASTER PLANNING

CLASS OF 2024





AHREN RAMIREZ FAIRFIELD CT

My design focuses on flooding and erosion issues throughout the site, placing various storm water management techniques in target areas. After holding a design charrette with the residents of the site my design process started. The middle of the site is the focal point of my design, having a swale leading to a constructed wetland. Looking at my base design I realized it lacked character, I wanted the space to relate to the surrounding marsh, but also have a separate experience. From there, Animals of The Salt Marsh began, residents sharing their interest in a sculpture garden, I decided to create various sculptures of native animals. Choosing the materials carefully to contrast plantings and the surrounding area, The Meadows would be home to a concrete bust of a Blue Herring, concrete sculpture of a Deer, and stained glass bust of a Salt Marsh Sparrow.





AREAS OF CONCERN







MASTER PLAN



AREAS OF FOCUS



VIEWSHED DIAGRAM

# JOHN MOONEY POMFRET, CT

My vision for the Meadows community involves integrating the surrounding landscape of the meadows into the spaces within the site while maintaining and building upon its unique character that residents know and love. An emphasis will be placed on user experience and environmentally conscious design. The main points of intervention for my project involve the marsh encroachment and excess lawn space on the site. The plan involves a boulder wall along the edges of the site to prevent the marsh from reaching further into the property, while maintaining the sightlines of the existing environment. In the center of my design is a constructed wetland/rain garden that will work to incorporate the surrounding marsh and give the buildings in the center circle a similar experience to those on the outside. Through careful planting choice and rain garden design, the Meadows community will become a comprehensive and continuous space with its own distinct feel and aesthetic.









# **MIA TUNUCCI** MILFORD, CT

CONCEPTUAL PLAN

My vision is to craft a landscape that creates an equilibrium between the raw beauty of the natural environment and the refined elegance of manicured landscape. The main concept is to have two intersecting corridors that cut directly through the community, bringing the wetlands and the residents together in harmony. These corridors will also utilize stormwater management practices such as bio-retention, rain gardens, and bioswales to combat flooding issues on site. On the outskirts of the site erosion issues will be addressed with reinforced and natural shorelines. Natural shorelines will use plant roots to stabilize steep slopes and prevent erosion, while in highly erodible areas boulders will be used to reinforce the terrain. Rooted in resilience, my design envisions environments that seamlessly adapt to climate changes, sustain diverse flora and fauna, and stand against flooding.





MASTER PLAN





PERSPECTIVE



### ZIQI (LEON) LI SHANXI, CHINA

My concentration of this project is to reform the existing meadow land by inserting more programming ideas. By adding these ideas the site could not only provide the natural habitat vibe to people and wild animals but also promote social well-being benefits. The boardwalk in this design serves as an entertainment for people to spend time outside of their house. The tree planting around the boardwalk provides the vision of the forest. Although getting the permission to build the boardwalk in the marsh land is hard, the boardwalk in the meadow could still provide joy to the community. I believe that the ideal rain garden location is a flat or gently sloped area and is down slope from a runoff source. By building the rain garden in the design, it will attract and support a variety of pollinators, butterflies and birds. The overall design is to bring vibrancy to the community and promote a better life quality for all.



RAIN GARDEN SECTION









MASTER PLAN



### LIZ HELMIN WOODSTOCK, CT

The purpose of my design is to restore ecological justice within the Salt Meadow Community. This will be accomplished by creating linkages of vegetation from the surrounding salt marshes to the inner parts of the community. Our actions can and will always have a positive and/or negative affect. Thinking about ways in which we may be able to first recognize, and then restore this environmental injustices are at the forefront of my vision for the Salt Meadow community.

Trees that sit just above man-made structures allow for sightlines to expand

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Minimal planting allows for stormwater

Unwanted critters are left to outer ring of Community 1 as their sightlines are diminished by structures

Entrance planting to properties create aesthetically pleasing, and unique, entrances to homes These rain gardens are not always filled with water... instead they rise and fall in relation to the amount of rainfall received on site Homeowners get the same ecological justice as those on the outer community does

Residents on the southern side of the site complain about frequent noise and bright lights from across the wetlands from adjacent athlatic

> Personal property lines sit in flood

Rain gardens and micro saltwater habitats create homes for smaller species that may otherwise be at risk in larger environments







FLOODING LIGHT BARRIER

## SAM BUSHKA HARWINTON, CT

My master plan works to create a beautiful and environmentally responsible community that takes advantage of the natural surroundings and helps to protect the wetlands and native vegetation simultaneously removing invasive species and preventing erosion and further flooding of the surrounding banks. By incorporating a series of spaces including rain gardens, bioswales and slope remediation tactics. Additionally, making these spaces as interactive as possible for the residents with the introduction of a central walking path and new gathering space will create a stronger sense of community. These central spaces strongly focus on native plantings that will increase biodiversity and promote runoff filtration. In addition to the central rain gardens this plan incorporates a natural solution to the marshline erosion, contamination, and flooding issues. The strategy of a Living Marshline Buffer will tackle all of these problems as a whole and includes additional specific plant selections to target specific problem areas. Lastly my master plan focuses on a strong sense of entry with welcoming plantings.

#### Native Trees and Shrubs for Constructed Wetlands

Button Bush (Cephalanthus occidentalis) Atlantic White Cedar (Charnaecyparis thyoides) Common Winterberry (llex verticillatta) Bald Cypress (Taxodium distichum) Elderberry (Sambucus canadensis) Black Willow (Salix nigra) Indigo Bush (Amorpha fruticosa) Box Elder (Acer Negundo) Inkberry (llex glabra) Green Ash (Fraxinus pennsylvanica) Smooth Alder (Alnus serrulata) Grey Birch (Betula populifolia) Spicebush (Lindera benzoin) Red Maple (Acer rubrum) Swamp Azalea (Azalea viscosum) River Birch (Betula nigra) Swamp Rose (Rosa palustris) Swamp Tupelo (Nyssa biflora) Sweet Pepperbush (Clethra ainifolia) Sweetbay Magnolia (Magnolia virginiana)

Sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua)

Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis)

Red Oak (Quercus rubra)

White Oak (Quercus alba)





#### Native Emergent and Submergent Vegetation for Constructed Wetlands

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MASTER PLAN



RAIN GARDEN DETAIL



### ABIGAIL VARGA NEWTOWN, CT

The Meadows is a unique neighborhood that blends residential and Fairfield's tidal marshes. The vision for The Meadows is to continue the style of the naturally occurring meadow in the tidal marsh throughout the site in bioretention areas with additional designated programming spaces. The concept for my master plan is based on rotary currents. A rotary current is a unique tidal pattern in which its current continuously changes direction through all points of the compass throughout the tidal period. All elements of my master plan are laid out on the radial lines of the rotary current pattern to create a unique radial organization. Using elements such as bioretention meadows and living walls, mitigating flooding and erosion can be done in a sensitive and pleasing way. The creation of new spaces and revitalization of existing ones, provides The Meadows with a high end, cohesive look throughout their community that blends in with the surrounding tidal marsh.



ROTARY CURRENT DIAGRAM

LIVING WALL

SCENIC OUTLOOK





## **ANDREW SIMMONS** DANBURY, CT

My design for the Meadows Condominium Complex focuses on the flooding and erosion issues the residents have been experiencing. The design combats these problems by proposing bioswales and irrigation canals throughout the site. The middle area of the Meadows experiences flooding, in some cases, enough for water to seep into resident's basements. Bioswales would allow for the water that is pooling to have a place to collect and be relocated out of the center space while also supplying the inner ring of houses to have a view similar to the marshland view the other residents experience. The irrigation canals allow for the outflow of the bioswales and stormwater drains to not only be filtered before entering the marsh, but for more water to avoid rushing down over the grass on the outer ring of residents' backyards. Outside of the main implementations, more diverse and native plants are recommended to be planted alongside various rock sizes on the sloped yards leading to the marsh to reduce the amount of erosion and land loss.

AREAS OF FOCUS





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### PUTTAPOB (PETE) ONGSUPANKUL BANGKOK, THAILAND

My objective is to build a landscape that enhances, produces, or emphasizes the natural beauty of the surrounding region. Additionally, I want to establish a program that is founded on the idea of preserving a diversified animal and plant population while also preventing erosion. The protection of the land's outside boundary can be achieved by the utilization of naturebased solutions that incorporate living shorelines. The roots of plants help to stabilize slopes, which in turn helps to decrease erosion and rocks provide the slope with additional support and stability on various levels. The design of temporary land art in a variety of methods helps to promote the qualities of the community. It is another activity that can be done simultaneously.





PUBLIC ART DIAGRAM



LIVING WALL SECTION



### MASTER PLAN



### RAIN GARDEN SECTION



COLUMBINE

35



### RICHI PATAI TORRINGTON, CT



AREAS OF CONCERN

My vision for the meadows is using ecological methods to combat areas of concern in the Salt Meadows. Keeping the natural beauty of the marsh while applying the residents' needs is key for this project. A rain garden will be placed in the center of The Meadows to help pooling in the site while also offering scenic views. To combat the erosion and stop the undercutting of the sediment, Coir logs (composed of coconut fibers) with a row of oyster shell bags in front are placed in high concern zones along the shoreline. Areas of low concern will have native wetland plantings to hold soil in place. A floating wetland design is placed in front of the floodgates. These floating wetlands have plant, soil, and root interactions similar to a natural wetland and provide homes to beneficial water cleaning microorganisms to get rid of pollutants. The key lies in the root systems and sticky biofilm hanging beneath the floating wetlands. Lastly a Outlook deck is placed near the entrance of the trail to encourage bird watching and offers seating accompanied by a scenic view.



FLOATING WETLAND









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5

EXISTIN

# CHALISA (TITI) THWONGPIA BANGKOK, THAILAND

My vision for The Meadows is to balance the spectacular salt marsh landscape with a new design approach that will replace the lawn with a garden or gathering space. The core concept of the master plan aims to create a connection between living experiences and the tidal marsh environment. The project uses nature-driven management to solve the influence of changing climate change conditions on the property.

ADD GA Incorporating marsh sill will protect the outer border of the land. Additionally, there are pollinator gardens that spread around the site to enhance local habitats and native plants. Furthermore, The particular area that is filled up with landfill could be solved by installing the landfill capping method to improve the soil quality. In terms of programming, there is a multi-purpose space in the middle area which fosters people to gather and hang around while enjoying the surrounding rain garden. Another activity is designing the temporary Land art in various ways that can promote the characteristics of the community.



ADD MORE PLANTS AND TREES

PUBLIC ART DIAGRAM

INCOR

3



PROCESS DIAGRAM

CONCEPTUAL M	ASTERPLAN
L <sub>l</sub>	BUILDING
	MAIN ROAD
	PATHWAY
	RECREATION
000	ADDED TREE
	GARDEN
	VEGETATION
	SAND FILL
	STONE SILLS
••	LAND ART

### MASTER PLAN











SECTION



SECTION





## NANCY PAN WILLIMANTIC, CT

My vision for the Meadows Condo is minimizing the lawn space in the community, while also using this opportunity to educate the people in the community on issues that are currently impacting the Meadows Condo. The idea of minimizing the current lawn area comes from our own observation from the site visit and from the community workshop. With the current state of the landscape in the Meadows is expensive to maintain, the pesticide and fertilizer from the lawn will leach into the surrounding meadows causing water degradation and algae bloom, flooding in part of the community, and erosion problem in parts of the community. That is where the education part of my vision comes in. Knowing and identifying the problem is the first step to finding a solution. In order for the residents in the community to accept changes, they first need to know why it needs to change.





MASTER PLAN











## OWEN WOLLENBERG SIMSBURY, CT

The motivation behind my design is to mitigate and reduce the flooding and erosion that The Meadows is experiencing while enhancing the everyday experience of the resident. This will be accomplished by creating a dynamic living edge. This edge will incorporate a mix of vegetation with a wide variety of root depths and stones of various shapes and sizes. Additionally, featured in the center of the site, there will be a large vegetated retention basin. This basin will provide a comprehensive stormwater treatment method for the site enhancing the health of the adjacent wetlands while also addressing the flooding that has been occurring in specific locations.













THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT 2024-2025 VISION PLAN