The Town of Falmouth has committed to protect its natural resources while preserving its agricultural heritage by promoting the organic cultivation of cranberries in the Farley Bog and the Coonamessett River Bogs, including those bogs known as Middle Bog, Reservoir Bog, Flax 1 Bog, Flax 2 Bog, Flax 3 Bog, East Thomson Bog, West Thompson Bog, Upper Baptiste Bog, and Lower Baptiste Bog. The Town entered into a ten-year lease (with the option to extend an additional ten years) with Cape Cod Organic Cranberry, LLC, on February 15, 2008, which stated that the Town and the Grower will jointly develop a Farm Conservation Plan for organic cultivation that is consistent with the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) program and the Town of Falmouth Restoration Plan for the Coonamessett River.

This Statement represents the Town’s Goals and Objectives for a Farm Conservation Plan that will describe the first 5 years (2008 – 2012) of activities and shall be completed by January 1, 2009. A second Farm Conservation Plan describing the next five-year period (2013 – 2017) shall be jointly developed and completed by January 1, 2013.

The six main goals for the Farm Conservation Plan are listed here and further described, in terms of specific objectives, below.

Goal 1: River-Bog Separation
Goal 2: Protect and Enhance the Fisheries of the Coonamessett River and Childs River
Goal 3: Promote/Protect Wetlands & Other Conservation Interests to Enhance the Conservation Values of the Bogs, the River, and Surrounding Land
Goal 4: Enhance Farming
Goal 5: Maintain and Enhance Public Access
Goal 6: Establish Reasonable Timelines Consistent with the Lease

Goal 1: River-Bog Separation

Specific Objectives:

- The Town’s overriding goal for the Farm Conservation Plan is separation of the bogs from the Coonamessett River for the benefit of both the River and cranberry farming. Components of separation include the creation of a vegetated buffer and hydrologic separation by a designated physical means. All farming should be physically and hydrologically separated from the River along the lines of the bog-by-bog recommendations developed by the Coonamessett River Working Group (CRWG) in the 2004 Report that was accepted by Town Meeting in Spring 2005, which are enumerated throughout this document. The emphasis should be on separating farming from the River, not vice versa. This objective will be phased in over time. Phase I activities have
already been approved and funds have been appropriated by Town Meeting in Spring and Fall 2005, respectively. Phase I includes constructing berms on Middle Bog and Flax 1 Bog, as well as restoration of Flax 2 Bog and Lower Bog. Among the example activities as recommended by the CRWG that appear in this document, those pertaining to Phase I activities (concerning Middle Bog, Lower Bog, Flax 1 Bog, and Flax 2 Bog) should be acknowledged and accounted for in the first Farm Conservation Plan to be completed by January 1, 2009.

- The separation plans for the remaining bogs should be fully detailed by the Town during the first 3 years of the lease and fully implemented by the end of the 10-year lease, as funding permits.

- Although it may ultimately prove in some cases to be impracticable, the planning for this objective should be approached from the premise that reasonable study and consideration must be given to separating every farmed bog from the River. In a case where separation proves impracticable, either that bog shall not be farmed or all involved parties shall collaborate to reduce farming impacts on the River to the maximum extent possible.

- It is the responsibility of the Town to develop plans for the separation of farming from the river that are both practical and consistent with the terms of the lease. Such plans must include all necessary engineering and must be permittable under Federal, State and local laws and regulations. These separation plans shall be developed to take into account terrain, hydrology, conservation values, fisheries restoration and the ability to be funded.

- The Grower shall cooperate with the Town in the construction of bog separation projects such as dikes, berms, by-pass canals, restoration of riparian buffers, etc.; measures for the improvement of water control and fish passage; and submission of applications for funds to conduct such projects, which shall be at Town expense.

- All River separation projects shall include the creation of naturally vegetated buffers, which should range in width from 25 to 50 feet, as deemed practicable by the Grower and as deemed necessary by the Falmouth Conservation Commission. As directed in the existing Farm Plan (ca. 1999), a 25-foot buffer to the river shall immediately be allowed to grow as natural vegetation and not be farmed. The use of innovative methods such as bioretention swales to reduce nutrient loading from farming operations and other sources is encouraged, as well as innovative separation measures such as, but not limited to, the use of sheet piling if it is a viable approach.

- Any pruning (e.g., to maintain vista windows) or weeding within these buffers shall be done with the approval of the Conservation Commission and is the responsibility of the Town.

**Example Activities as noted by CRWG:**

Design and build dikes:
- Middle Bog
- Flax 1

Construct bypass channel:
- Upper Baptiste Bog

Determine how best to separate River from bogs:
- Reservoir Bog
- Lower Baptiste Bog
--AFCEE portion of Lower Baptiste Bog

**Goal 2: Protect and Enhance the Fisheries of the Coonamessett River and Childs River**

Specific Objectives to maintain sufficient flow for fish passage and habitat (e.g. herring, trout, eel):

*Bog Flooding and Harvesting:*
- Bog flooding shall be restricted during sensitive timeframes, particularly during the herring run on the Coonamessett River unless the bog is separated from the river. The Grower shall consult with the Herring Warden as to the schedule for flooding restrictions.
- Any necessary flooding of the bog shall be implemented in such a manner that adequate flow for the unimpeded passage of fish be maintained in the river. Anadromous fish runs shall not be impeded, in accordance with all applicable State and Federal Laws.
- Dry harvesting of berries shall be employed where wet harvesting would interfere with fish movements (until water control modifications are implemented that allow bog flooding without blocking the River channel) and/or that have a negative impact on vegetated buffers. When dry harvest is not feasible, a method such as silt fencing shall be used to contain berries and exclude herring fry from the bogs during wet harvest.

*Flow Impediments:*
- An unblocked, free-flowing Coonamessett River shall be re-established by replacing/upgrading culverts and water control structures (as per Herring Warden and CRWG list of priorities).
- The placing of impediments to fish movement into water control structures or the Rivers themselves shall not be allowed during periods of herring migration.
- The irrigation pipe network shall be modified so that no piping remains in-stream within the River proper. This modification shall be included in and funded as a part of bog separation plans.

*Water Use Conflicts:*
- Water for irrigation, frost protection, flooding, and chemigation must be from groundwater sources, not the rivers, where feasible, but it is recognized that there are areas along the river where this will not be possible.
- All water management activities shall be coordinated with the Herring Warden.

*Example Activities as noted by CRWG:*

**Lower Bog:***
-- Remove sand under direction of Herring Warden  
-- Begin active in-stream restoration and restoration of the bog platform

**Middle Bog**
-- Construct a fish box just below John Parker Rd., per Herring Warden recommendation, and replace culverts  
-- Modify, replace, or remove flume at present Middle Dike
Flax 1:
-- Replace culvert under John Parker Rd. and remove water control structure
-- Move Flax stream away from Parker Rd.
-- Fix steep slope next to Parker Rd. and stabilize banks

Flax 2:
-- Lower culvert at Flax Pond

Reservoir Bogs:
-- Actively restore in-stream and any buffer areas created by any separation project
-- Get irrigation pipes out of River

Pond 14 to Middle Thompson Bog
-- Maintain bypass channel under supervision of Herring Warden
-- Replace water control structure at top of Flax Pond sluiceway

Lower Baptiste:
-- Lower flume/culvert at outlet
-- Lower culvert in Lower Baptiste Bog

Goal 3: Promote/Protect Wetlands & Other Conservation Interests to Enhance the Conservation Values of the Bogs, the River, and Surrounding Land

Specific Objectives:
– Protect the natural resources of the Town of Falmouth. The Town shall provide to the Grower a preliminary inventory of resources, including plant surveys and other relevant surveys that have already been carried out under the auspices of the CRWG, and the Grower shall include this preliminary inventory as an appendix to the first Farm Conservation Plan. The Town and the Grower shall cooperate in the refinement and expansion of this inventory as part of the activities carried out under the first Farm Conservation Plan.

– Farm the premises consistent with NOFA- and USDA-certified organic cultivation practices and best management practices applicable to a flow-through bog system.

– Follow those recommendations of the latest edition of “Best Management Practices Guide for Massachusetts Cranberry Production” written by the University of Massachusetts Cranberry Experiment Station that do not conflict with the organic practices referenced above.

– Promote the interests and protect the resource areas delineated in the Wetlands Protection Act and the Falmouth Wetlands Bylaw. Important elements include:
  -- As the separation project progresses, establish riparian buffers that separate the River from the bogs and are sufficiently wide to create zones of natural vegetation that serve as wildlife habitat (i.e., 25 – 50 feet; see Goal 1).
  -- Allow vegetation in buffers to grow naturally to create shade, lower water temperatures, provide habitat, and optimize nutrient uptake from groundwater that flows into the River. Cooperate with the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan for southeastern-facing estuaries.
-- Follow Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) priorities: protect, restore, develop, or enhance declining or important aquatic wildlife species’ habitats.

-- If organic pesticides are used, use only those approved for aquatic environments and take measures to ensure they do not enter the riparian system.

-- Cap lateral ditches to prevent runoff into riparian buffer.

-- Develop water management plans and structures that allow the Grower to flood separated bogs and to release water back into the river system in a manner that does not alter temperature and minimizes nutrient loading in the river. Such plans shall be incorporated into the design and engineering of the separation plans.

− Investigate developing buffers to optimize nutrient uptake from groundwaters that flow into the River.

− Develop a watershed-wide nitrogen management plan in consultation with NRCS and take into consideration the conditions under which N fertilizers can and cannot be applied to maximize N uptake by the cranberry bog and minimize runoff to bog ditches and the River.

− All involved parties are encouraged to collaborate on an alternative to farming the Flax 2 bog (as currently provided for in the lease). The two-fold goal of developing an alternative would be to restore the Flax 2 bog to natural vegetation and to allow the entire watercourse from Flax Pond to the main Coonamessett River to become an unobstructed fishway. Feasible alternatives deemed appropriate by the Falmouth Conservation Commission should be considered for renegotiation within the lease between the Town and the Grower.

*Example Activities as noted by CRWG:*

**Lower Bog:**
-- Eliminate pine seedlings and Japanese knotweed

**Middle Bog**
-- Actively restore in-stream and buffer areas

**Flax 2:**
-- Restore bog platform to naturalized wet meadow

**Reservoir Bog:**
-- Actively restore in-stream and any buffer areas created by any separation project

**Middle Thompson Bog:**
-- Restore to a naturalized wet meadow at some pint in the future

**Thomas Landers Rd to Lower Baptiste:**
-- Routine stream maintenance under supervision of Herring Warden

**Lower Baptiste Bog:**
-- Actively restore in-stream and any buffer areas created by any separation project

**AFCEE Portion of Lower Baptiste Bog**
-- Actively restore in-stream and any buffer areas created by any separation project
-- Determine how best to reconnect Broad River to Coonamessett River with a more natural channel

**Upper Baptiste Bog:**
-- Place rocks below the bubbler to prevent more erosion, per Fred Bottomley’s recommendation

**Upper Baptiste to Coonamessett Pond:**
-- Routine stream maintenance under supervision of Herring Warden

**All Areas:**
-- Monitor and maintain restoration efforts
-- Mitigate any road runoff

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**Goal 4: Enhance Farming**

Specific Objectives:
- “Renovate” the Town’s bogs for enhanced viability and productivity (e.g., strip and replant as needed).
- Undertake fixed improvements as necessary (flume repair and replacement, ditching, installation/repair of irrigation equipment, repair of pump house, etc.).
- Provision should be made for any sand removed from construction or dredging activities in the vicinity of the bogs to be re-used, if appropriate, in sanding the bogs.

*Example Activities as noted by CRWG:*

**Upper Baptiste Bog, top priority per Herring Warden unless a bypass is built over the winter of 2008-2009:**
-- Repair dike in AFCEE portion of Lower Baptiste Bog
-- Replace culvert between sections E2 and E3

**Middle Bog:**
-- Square off eastern side (in conjunction with building dike)

**Reservoir Bog:**
-- Replace culverts under John Parker Road
-- Replace wooden planks in Pond 14 Flume with steel sections
-- Get irrigation pipes out of River

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**Goal 5: Maintain and Enhance Public Access**

Specific Objectives:
- The public shall retain access for passive recreation to the roads, dikes, and other areas surrounding all areas in agricultural use.
- The grower shall post public notification of any pesticide use in accordance with all applicable State and Federal laws.
- The grower shall cooperate with relevant projects identified by the CRWG and the Town.
**Example Activities as noted by CRWG:**

**Lower Bog:**
-- Volunteers will install a pedestrian crossing (foot bridge) at catch area (where flume to be removed) pending proper Town approvals and consultation.

**Middle Bog:**
-- Volunteers will construct a foot bridge across Flax stream below John Parker Rd. pending proper Town approvals and consultation.

**All Areas:**
-- Any site identified as archaeologically significant must not be disturbed without the proper authority

**Goal 6: Establish Reasonable Timelines Consistent with the Lease**

Specific Objectives

A. For the Town (not the Farm Plan):

   − The Coonamessett River Working Group (CRWG) shall develop a comprehensive plan for the second phase of bog separation from the river, including studying the feasibility of creating buffers along the river prior to physical separation – an objective that was called for in the farm plan of 1999 on pages 22, 29 & 39 and a concept that is endorsed by the Conservation Commission. The CRWG will submit its plan and cost analysis for design and engineering to the Conservation Commission no later than the expiration of its charter in June 2009. If approved by the Commission, the Commission and the CRWG will jointly meet with the Board of Selectmen to seek its endorsement for a Town Meeting article seeking approval of the plan and funding for the design and engineering of the additional separation projects. If approved, the Conservation Commission and the CRWG will submit this article to the Fall 2009 Town Meeting.

B. For the Farm Plan:

   − The Farm Conservation Plan shall contain a timeline for implementing specific agricultural improvements (e.g., installation of pumps, improvements to water control structures, etc.).
   
   − The Farm Conservation Plan shall set forth a schedule for periodic progress updates from involved parties to ensure goals and timelines are being met.
   
   − The Farm Conservation Plan shall include a simple checklist for involved parties to fill out annually indicating dates and progress on specific actions identified in the Farm Conservation Plan. This checklist shall be submitted to the Conservation Commission in January of each year prior to a yearly meeting between the Grower and the Commission.
   
   − The Farm Conservation Plan shall cover a five-year period, after which it will be reviewed and updated as necessary.