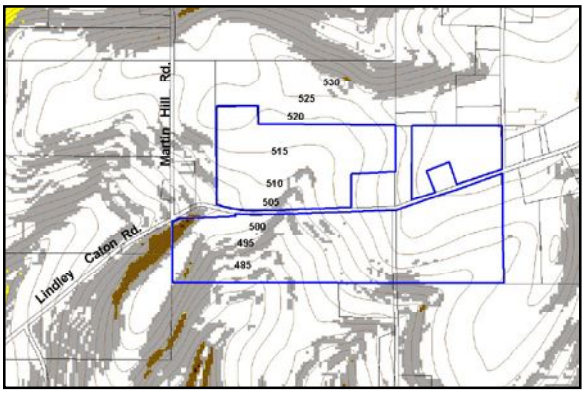
# 5: Good Design - Stuart Site

*Site Introduction:*

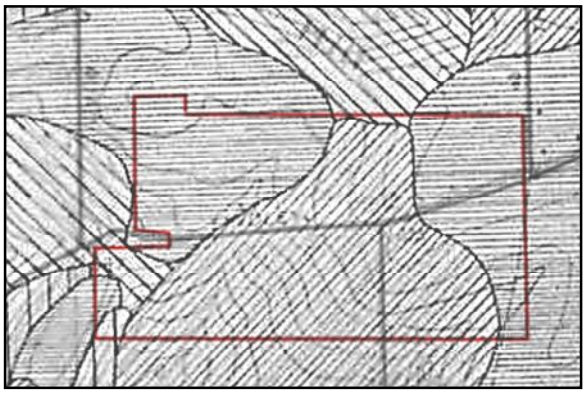
Dean Stuart originally intended to develop his 120 acre hilltop site into a standard, 18-parcel development, but upon further reflection decided to become involved with the Rural Design Workbook project and explore alternatives. The site is former farmland located in the town of Caton, and consists primarily of clear areas with some woodland, with a large storage barn in good condition. Most of the site's slopes are reasonably well suited for construction, as are its soils. The hill falls away to the south, yielding better views on the northern portion of the site.

The land is adjacent to an existing horse farm and another agricultural farm. As the second farm's owner is considering selling their farm, there is also the possibility of expanding the development into a larger project. A final note is that Dean's plans have changed as a result of participating in this project; he is now leaning towards developing rural estates connected to a horse farm through a network of continuous horse trails.

*Site Analysis:*




Slope Suitability

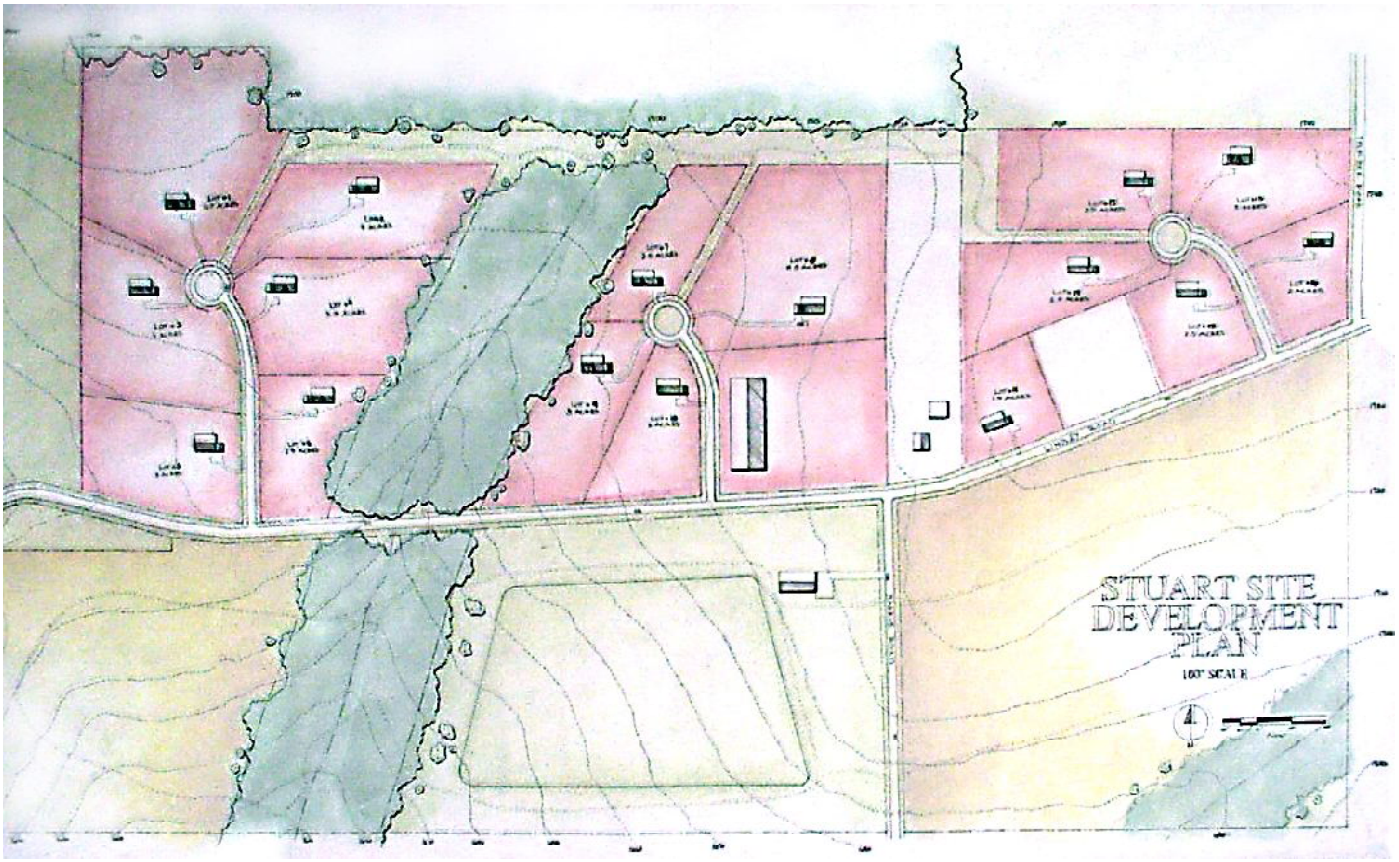


Soil Suitability


Significant Features

Site Photograph

# Stuart Site: Cluster Lots, Agriculture, and Trail Network




*Design overview:*

The lots are clustered around cul-de-sacs on the northern half of the site, with the southern half remaining as agricultural land and a horse farm. The stream-buffering greenbelt is a part of a larger network of horse and pedestrian trails connecting the clusters to one another and to the farm, and preserves open space in a conservation easement. The indicated house locations also take care to situate the homes up the slope so as to enhance the views out over the nearby agricultural land and the farther reaches of the valley.

*Highlighted Incentives:*

- Federal and NYS Farmland Protection Programs: the active agricultural land in the southern half of the site.
- Conservation Reserve Program - Streamside Buffers: the strip along the stream
- Lowered road costs due to clustering of lots and cul-de-sac access
- Heightened home values through access to open space and trail amenities
- Potential for a homeowners' association to manage open space and trails.
- Active agriculture preserves rural character

# Stuart Site: Open Space Conservation and Created Wetland

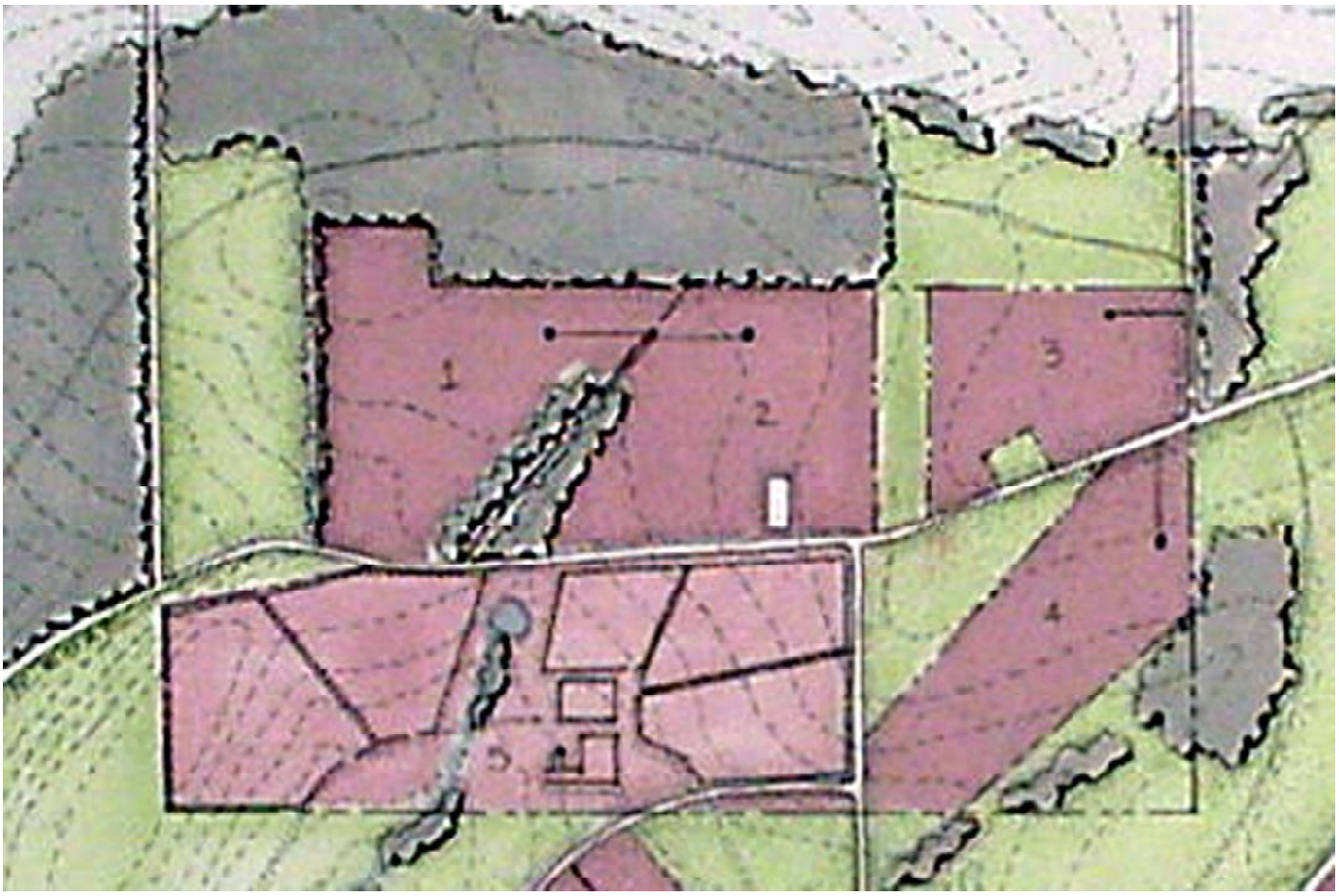
*Design overview:*

Cul-de-sac clusters of small-lot properties provide a higher number of lots with more land left open as a commonly-held open space. This land would be used recreationally and for its aesthetic value as wildlife habitat. In addition, drainiage from the majority of the site is directed into and along the stream to a created retention pond and wetland area for runoff management purposes, creating another form of open space amenity.

*Highlighted Incentives:*

- The Wetlands Restoration Program could provide support for the created pond area.
- A Conservation Easement over the central open space assures that the buffer and amenity created by the central land will always remain.
- The open space created in the unoccupied farmland is a prime candidate for the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. (Alternatively, the farm could be kept in use and receive Federal / NYS Farmland Protection Program funds.)
- Clustered Housing provides smaller lot sizes with access to a communal open space.
- Housing of this density is particularly well suited to a homeowners' association.

# Stuart Site: Large "Estate Lots" and Horse Farm



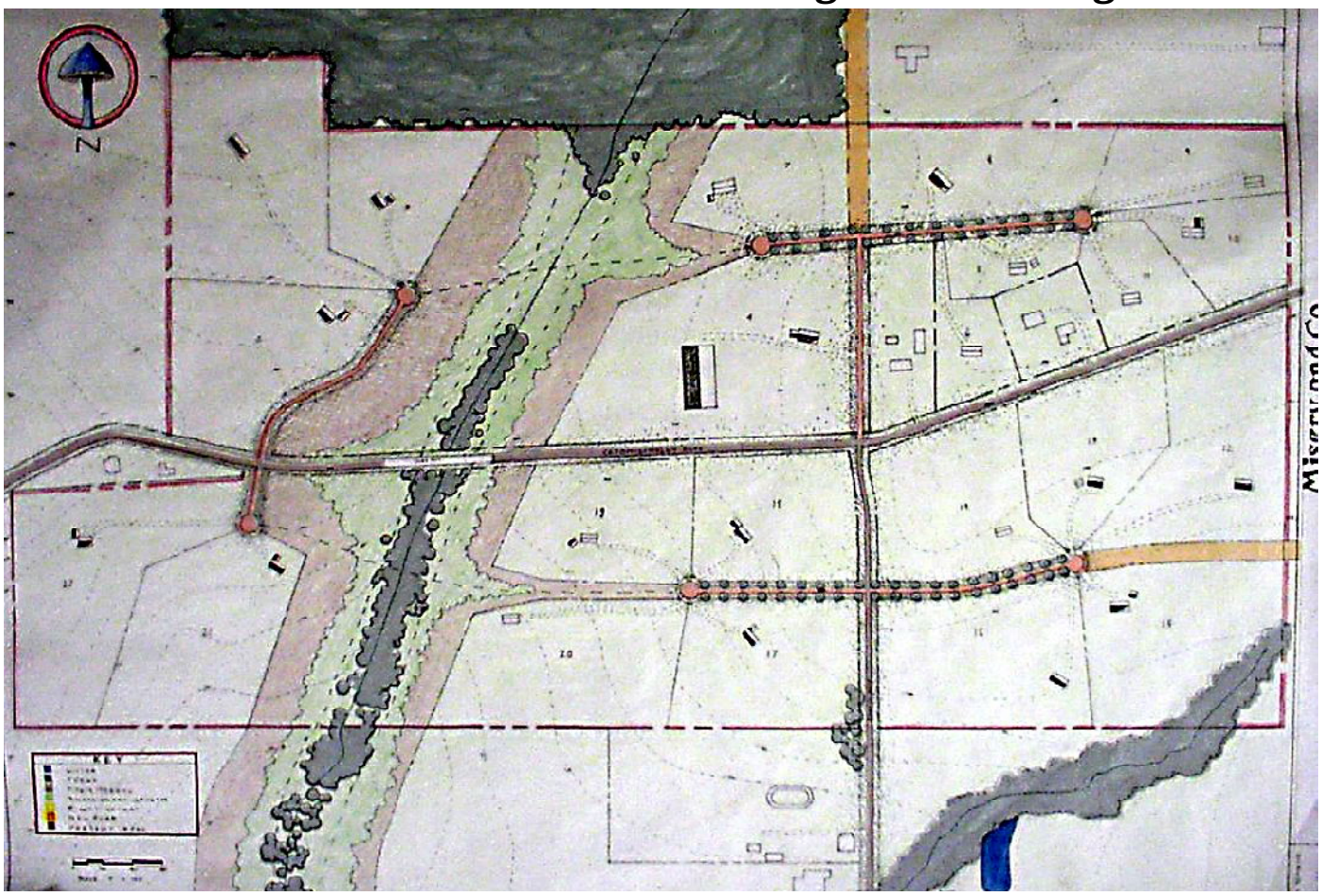

*Design overview:*

Four very large "estate lots"cover a large portion of the site, preserving the rural image of widely separated homes on large parcels of open land. The southern portion of the site, which the properties look out over, is kept in active use as a farm for livestock (primarily horses). Significant use is made of the ridge in the southwestern area to separate lot 4 visually from the other lots, and of the stream corridor to serve as the boundary between lots 1 and 2; this is a terrific example of allowing the site features to inform the division of lots in a pleasing way.

*Highlighted Incentives:*

- EQIP / AMA Grazing program assistance to support the horse pastures.
- No additional roadway costs, since all access is on private or shared driveways.
- Large lot sizes and active pasture use result in a truly rural "feel" to the development.
- Conservation Easement on the agricultural portion would heighten the values of the other lots and reduce the tax burden of the farmer.

# Stuart Site: Streamside Buffer and Long-Term Linkages




*Design overview:*

The dominant feature of the design is the broad swath of conserved land along the stream corridor. Beyond simply a protective buffer, the design transforms the stream into an amenity, making it the center of an area suited to wildlife habitat and recreational trails. This main system connects via easements to the cul-de-sacs, linking the development together, and has the potential to extend along the corridor in both directions through cooperation with neighboring developments. Long-term possibilities of expansion are also considered; there are right-of-way easements to allow for extensions of the cul-de-sac roads into neighboring properties.

*Highlighted Incentives:*

- Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program potential is very high for a corridor connection; such features are highly ecologically valuable.
- A Conservation Easement on the stream corridor protects it from development.
- With proper management and design, the Wetlands Restoration Program could be utilized along the stream.
- The significant inclusion and easy common access to a natural feature raises values.

# Stuart Site: Neighborhood Community and Rural Character

*Design overview:*

Four clusters of houses built on cul-de-sac streets allow nearly all driveways to be off of the main roadway and create a relationship between the lots, facilitating association with neighbors. A buffer strip around the outside of the property reduces the impact this denser development will have on neighbors. Two-thirds of the site remains in agricultural use, and is protected, along with the stream corridors and the outer buffer areas, by a conservation easement.

*Highlighted Incentives:*

- Federal and NYS Farmland Protection Programs: the active agricultural land in the southern half of the site.
- Conservation Reserve Program - Streamside Buffers: the strips along the streams are eligible, since the adjacent fields are still in farming.
- Siting of cluster houses maintains privacy and views while encouraging interaction.
- Active agriculture preserves rural character.
- Conservation easements on the open space protect the area from becoming more developed and losing its open space amenities.