



The Trustees of Reservations  
200 High Street | Boston, MA 02110

February 8, 2020

***Via Email***

Wareham Board of Selectmen  
54 Marion Road  
Wareham, MA 02571  
Attn: Peter Teitelbaum, Esq., Chair

*Re: Proposed Zoning Change to create a Wareham Hospitality, Recreation and Entertainment District*

Dear Chairman Teitelbaum and Members of the Wareham Board of Selectmen:

The Trustees of Reservations appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in opposition to Wareham's proposed Hospitality, Recreation and Entertainment District (aka Economic Opportunity Overlay District). The Trustees preserves, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts, receiving over two million people at our 120 special places each year.

The Trustees is alarmed about the impacts this proposed zoning change would have on critical natural resources throughout the region as well as the local community. In addition to Mass Wildlife's Red Brook Wildlife Management Area the proposed district would threaten habitat on The Trustees' Theodore Lyman Reserve property and would impact quality of life for our neighbors, who choose to live in the area and visit the Lyman Reserve, Red Brook and Buttermilk Bay because of its natural beauty and scenic vistas.

The Lyman Reserve, together with the Wildlife Management Area, protects the entire length of Red Brook, one of the few fully protected coastal rivers in Southeastern Mass. The reserve sits at the mouth of the brook, a 4.5-mile spring-fed, cold-water stream that flows from White Island Pond to Buttermilk Bay – a critical estuary and shellfish production area. Red Brook is one of the few coastal streams in Massachusetts that supports anadromous fish (which make their way to the sea to grow and return as adults to spawn) and is home to one of the last remaining native sea-run Brook Trout fisheries in the Eastern US. The Lyman Reserve also offers habitat for other species as well as outdoor recreational opportunities for public use including a scenic stretch of coastal shoreline with views of Buttermilk Bay and the Cape Cod Canal vertical lift railroad bridge.

Considerable effort and expense by The Trustees, MassWildlife, A.D. Makepeace and other partners has been made to restore and protect the sensitive fish and wildlife habitat offered by Red Brook.

Since the removal of several dams, the native Brook Trout population has rebounded providing one of the most popular destinations for trout fishing in Southeastern Massachusetts. The historic and live herring runs in Red Brook also contribute to the region's recreational fishing economy as they are a primary food source for stripe bass and other coastal fish. This fishery is so unique and important that the state designated this river as catch and release only.

The lands proposed for this zoning change represent some the last undeveloped Pine Barrens habitat in the region. These barrens have global significance due to their size and concentration of rare species and species of concern. The area is designated as Priority Habitat, Core Habitat or Critical Natural Landscape by the state. Proposed zoning changes and related developments will threaten the habitat value and integrity of the barrens, in particular the existing corridor between the greater Myles Standish State Forest and the Upper Cape.

The proposed zoning change will lead to dense developments that threaten the water quality and quantity that supports these ecosystems, especially during warmer months when ground water maintains the water flow and lower temperatures are needed for the fisheries' survival. Allowing dense development in this area would negatively impact groundwater resources through nutrient enrichment from runoff and wastewater disposal. In addition to concerns about nitrogen, groundwater could be negatively impacted by dissolved oxygen depletion, other dissolved nutrients and chemical constituents and emerging contaminants of concern. Climate change impacts including warmer temperatures and drought already threaten the globally rare pine barrens as well as Red Brook and its regionally important status - future development could exacerbate problems for the community's water supplies resulting from increased water withdrawals, wastewater, and stormwater runoff.

The impacts of a zoning change and associated development on these sensitive and already-threatened natural resources could be permanent and would likely result in an irreversible collapse of the region's unique and sensitive ecosystems and would detrimentally impact quality of life for the local community. As such, The Trustees opposes Wareham's proposed Hospitality, Recreation and Entertainment District and associated developments.

If you have questions, please contact me at [toshea@thetrustees.org](mailto:toshea@thetrustees.org). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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Thomas K. O'Shea  
Director of Coast and Natural Resources

cc: Mark Tisa, Ph.D., M.B.A., Director, Mass Wildlife

*Founded in 1891 by Charles Eliot, The Trustees preserves, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts. Today, 130 years after our founding, we are Massachusetts' largest conservation and preservation organization and with the support of our 150,000 members we care for 120 properties—nearly 27,000 irreplaceable acres. The Trustees works with a variety of volunteer, nonprofit, and community-based partners in communities across the state to preserve remarkable, scenic landscapes and historic and cultural resources. [thetrustees.org](http://thetrustees.org)*