

Latimer Point Land Use Assessment

Background:

Latimer Point is a Peninsula that is located in Stonington, Connecticut. The Point is split up into residential, public, and land conservation areas. The areas protected by The Nature Conservancy are the oak forests found on the Point, along with tidal marshes and assorted tidal rocks. The southern half of the Point is mainly a residential area filled with family cottages, two private beaches, a recreational field, and a boat dock. The remainder of the land, including an Amtrak railway, is public land associated with the state of Connecticut. The first cottage was built in 1941, providing for the start of a new community on the Point (Image 1). The Southwestern tip of Latimer Point used to be home to a fish processing factory, with humus-rich dark soils. Today, a sea wall still stands on the tip of the Point, as a remnant of the factory (Image 2). Since the 1960's, no new developments have been established on the Point, only renovations. Latimer Point has two nearby islands known as Lyddy Island off the southern tip of the Point, and Doages and Andrews Island heading south west off the Point.

Geology:

The peninsula land contains many different land types along with different uses based on the land composition. The surface geology of Latimer Point is made up of Wisconsinan glaciation consisting of large and small smoothed boulders, cobbles, pebbles, and sand (Image 3). Organic material can be found beneath this surface amongst the moderately acidic soils, peats can be found within salt marshes around Latimer Point. The peninsula's coast has been gradually

submerging over recent years. The salt marshes on the southern side of the Point are eroding and slowly expanding more inland.

Land Types:

Latimer Point is home to many different land types, each having their importance to the biodiversity and ecosystems on the peninsula. Estuaries are one of the few different varieties of land types found on the Point. The estuaries are the shallow waters on the east and west side of the Point. These waters are saline and filled with brackish waters. The areas are dominated by sandbars, mudflats, and seaweeds. The Coastal beaches and dunes hold rocky, gravelly, and sandy developments on the east side of the Point. The beaches are known to residents as Big Beach and Little Beach. Both beaches are maintained artificially, new sand is brought in from residents each year to replenish the disturbed beach from winter storms. On the west side of the Point the beaches and coast hold more of a rocky landscape with numerous glacial boulders.

Tidal marshes are found along the northwest and northeast sides of the Point, near the conservation areas and public land. The freshwater marshes are made up of ponds and lakes found on the northern side of the Point near the public Amtrak railway land. The invasion of the brackish water entering former tidal areas creates the freshwater mixture within the marsh. On the Point there are shrub swamps consisting of Red Maple swamps alongside the freshwater marshes. These can be found on the southwest side of the Point where the junction of US rt.1 and Latimer Point Road connect. In addition, oak forests are found on the Point, also known as maritime oak forests. These are mainly found in the northern half of the peninsula, specifically towards the northwestern end. The trees within these forests are encrypted to flourish and grow among large boulders within very rocky soil, a very common land type on Latimer Point. There

also happens to be areas of disturbed land, consisting of old fields and pastures, railroads, and small residential gardens all found on the Point.

Flora:

Among all these various land types a wide variety of northern flora holding arctic affinities are found along the Point. These flora are temperate coastal plain floras originating in the Eastern USA. Information can be obtained from the CVA regarding different flora species and their tolerances to salt water.

Images and Figures



Image 1: The first residential cottage of Latimer Point.



Image 2: Southern tip of Latimer Point.

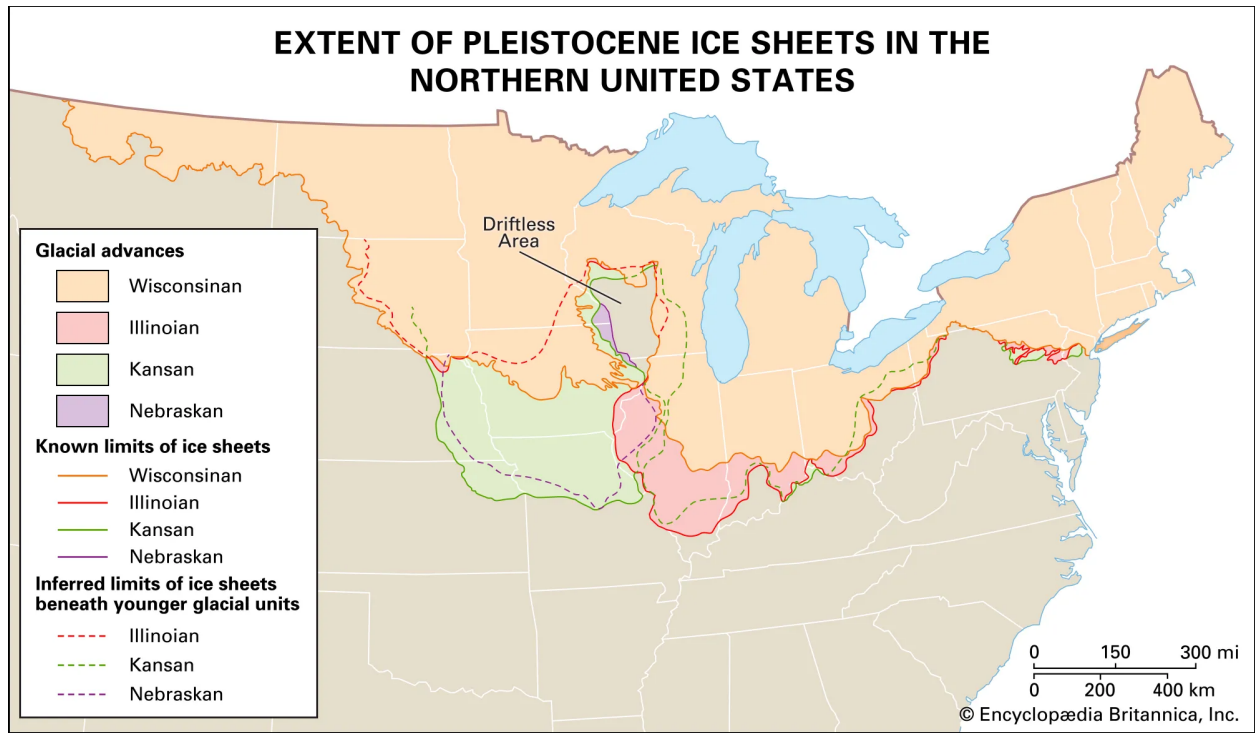


Image 3: Geology of Connecticut and Latimer Point.

References

Hill. R. S., 1996. The Flora of Latimer Point and Vicinity, New London County, Connecticut.

Rhodora. Vol. 98. No. 894

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. 2021. Wisconsin Glacial Stage. Encyclopedia

Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/science/Wisconsin-Glacial-Stage>.