

These guidelines are meant to spell out the more technical aspects of developing a conservation subdivision. Natural systems and their interaction with human systems is a complex issue. These guidelines attempt to break down the process in a way that respects the trade-offs that have to be considered but preserve areas that will have the greatest benefit to the natural systems.

There are two major categories of space to be preserved and considered “conservation” space—Open Space and Natural Space. **Open space** is allowed to have some human element, and is meant to be a place where recreational uses and some non-intrusive common uses, like a common septic field are allowed. **Natural space** is geared more toward preservation—primarily of habitat and forest, but in some cases may also have a human element when it preserves a cultural or historic resource or existing agriculture.

When looking at a site’s potential as a conservation subdivision, a rough inventory of map information should be obtained from the Chatham County GIS department. Once the different information is all on the map of a site, the lands to be preserved should be considered before a decision is made on what parts of the site will be developed.

In considering what is to be preserved, the Environmental Review Board and the Planning Board created the following steps to identify what lands are to be preserved as part of Open Space and Natural Space.

Open Space:

Areas to Place in Open Space (10% of Site, 20% of Total Conservation Space)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active and/or Passive Recreation—impervious areas such as tennis or basketball courts should not exceed more than 25% of the Open Space total (2.5% of total site)• Septic Systems• Other Shared Infrastructure Such as Community Wells

Natural Space:

Natural Space is somewhat more complicated, in that some kinds of land is more worthy of preservation than others—not all land is created equal. The following categories prioritize what kinds of land should be preserved over others when deciding where the natural areas should be.

Primary Natural Areas (Preserve These First)

- Steep Slopes (greater than 25%) and Watershed Buffers (these first, then others in whatever order necessary for each site)

- Upland Pools and Rock Outcrops (site-by-site)
- State Natural Heritage Areas and Natural Heritage Element Occurrences
- NC Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) Upland Systems ($\geq 5,000 \text{ ft}^2$)
- Historic and Cultural Resources

* Upland Pools, Rock Outcrops, and WAP Systems require identification by an Environmental Professional.

Secondary Natural Areas (If the above have been preserved and there is still conservation area left)

- NC Wildlife Action Plan Lowland Systems ($\geq 5,000 \text{ ft}^2$)
- Active Farms and/or Prime Farmland Soils
- Wildlife Resources Commission and Forest Service Hunting and Burn Buffers
- Viewsheds (Scenic Views) of Natural and Cultural features visible from:
 - 1) scenic road corridors
 - 2) lakes or rivers