

Open Space Report to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee and the State Bond Commission

December 2020

Overview

Section 22a-6v of the General Statutes of Connecticut requires the Commissioner of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection to submit a report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and bonding and to the State Bond Commission each month. The report provides information on the acquisition of land or interests in land by the state, a municipality, water company or nonprofit organization using funds authorized for the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program established under Sections 7-131d and the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program established under Sections 23-73 to 23-79 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program

The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program provides grants to municipalities and private nonprofit land conservation organizations for the acquisition of open space land and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II watershed land. The State of Connecticut receives a conservation and public access easement on property acquired to ensure that the property will be protected and available to residents of Connecticut as open space in perpetuity. The following two properties were funded in December 2020.

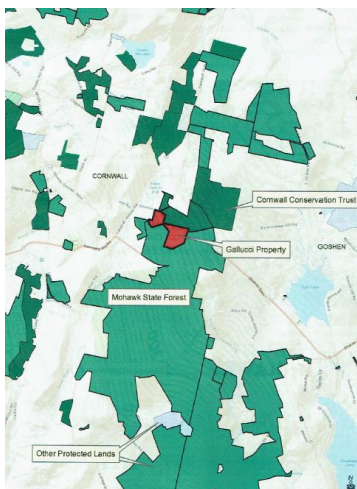
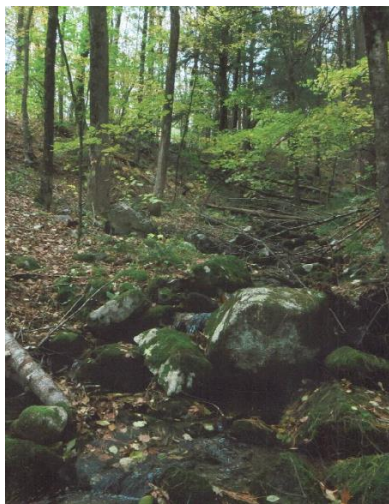
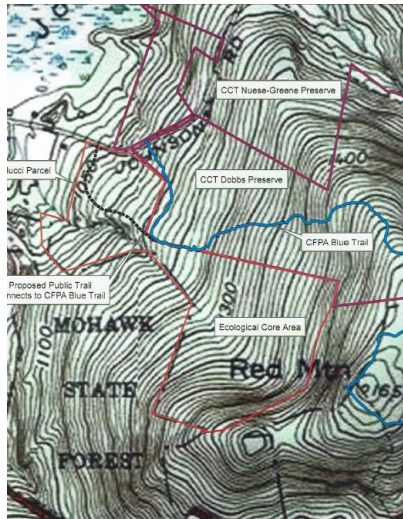
Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority	DePodesta Property	Hamden	14.05
Cornwall Land Conservation Trust, Inc.	Red Mountain Gallucci Preserve	Cornwall	66.11

South Central CT Regional Water Authority (RWA)
DePodesta Property
1420 West Woods Road, Hamden & 350 Brooks Road, Bethany
14.05 Acre Fee Acquisition



Approximately nine acres, along the westerly boundary of this property, will become Class I Watershed land and approximately five acres will become Class II Watershed land, within the Lake Whitney public water supply reservoir. It will protect two streams that eventually flow into Lake Whitney. The property will be managed for the protection of the public water supply. Additional activities, subject to the jurisdiction and regulation of the Department of Public Health, include recreation, timber and cord wood harvesting, environmental education and research. The Farmington Canal Rail to Trail passes to the west of the property. Although there are no plans for direct public access to this property, preserving it will allow users to enjoy it from the trail.

Cornwall Land Conservation Trust, Inc. (CCT)
Red Mountain Gallucci Preserve
66.11 Acre Fee Acquisition



This property, on Red Mountain, is surrounded almost entirely by other protected property. It connects Mohawk State Forest with more than 310 acres of CCT preserved lands, filling in a contiguous protected forest block of more than 1,230 acres and a core forest block of 2,350 acres. The acquisition contributes to two existing greenways, the Mohawk Trail and the Housatonic River. The property is bisected by a headwater stream, Birdseye Brook, which forms a dramatic ravine before draining into Furnace Brook, which then drains in to the Housatonic River. The land's core forest, slopes, ridgelines, headwater stream, and elevations create a wide diversity of habitats, timber strands and terrain that mitigate the impacts of climate change and support many important wildlife species. It has excellent trail potential and is easily accessible from Johnson Road, near its junction with CT Route 43. A portion of the blue-blazed Mohawk Trail goes along the property and CCT plans to create a connector from Johnson Road across this property to the Mohawk Trail. This property received additional funding from the US Fish & Wildlife Service Highlands Grant Program

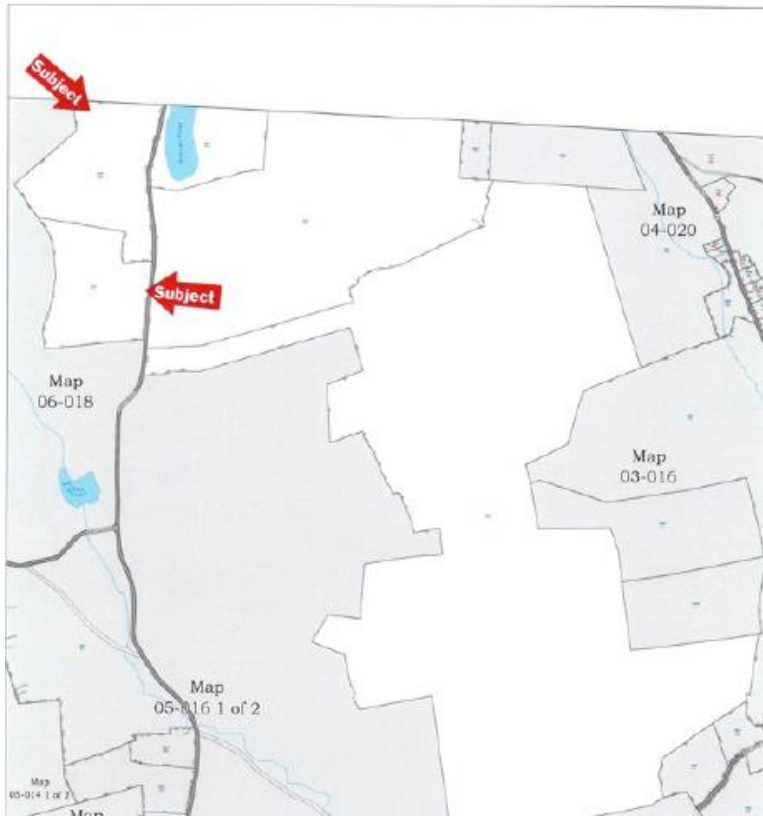


Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program

The Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program is the State of Connecticut's primary program for the acquisition of lands for the beneficial use and enjoyment of the public as additions to the State's system of parks, forests, wildlife, fisheries and natural resource management areas. The program acquires land that represents the ecological diversity of Connecticut, including natural features such as rivers, mountainous areas, coastal systems and their natural areas, in order to ensure the conservation of such land for recreational, scientific, educational, cultural and aesthetic purposes. There were two Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program closings in December 2020.

Property Name	Town	Cooperator & Cost Share	State Share	Acreage	Purpose of Acquisition
Town of Goshen	Goshen	USFWS Highlands grant \$131,500; Town donation \$131,500	\$0	95.484	Permanent protection via Conservation Easement
Housatonic Temple Assoc.	North Canaan	GE Housatonic River Natural Resources Damages Settlement Agreement Fund \$140,000	\$0	2.03	Housatonic River Water Access

Town of Goshen
East Street North, Goshen
95.484 Acre Conservation Easement Acquisition



The DEEP acquired a conservation easement over two adjoining parcels which are owned by the Town of Goshen but not permanently protected. The property is rural, forested with rock outcrops, wetlands and a small pond. A gravel parking area provides good access to the property. The Town sold the easement at a 50% bargain sale, with the funding provided by a federal Highlands Conservation Act grant administered by the USFWS.



Housatonic Temple Association Property
310 Salisbury Road, North Canaan
2.03 Acre Fee Acquisition



This property consists of a former fellowship hall on 2.03 acres with frontage along the Housatonic River. The acquisition will help provide public access to this upper section of the river which has historically been limited. Once the structures are removed, the site will be developed for public use including fishing access and potentially car top boating access.