

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

February 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 (OSWA) established under Sections 7-131d and the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program (RNHTP) 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.

There were no open space and watershed acquisition grants closed in February 2020.

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. The following acquisitions closed in February 2020. Additional information on this project follows.

| Property Name | Town(s) | Cooperators & Cost Share | State Share | Acres Protected | Purpose of Acquisition |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Mellon Property | Lyme | \$822,000* | \$0 | 152.53 Ac. | Forest Preservation/ Addition to Nehantic State Forest |

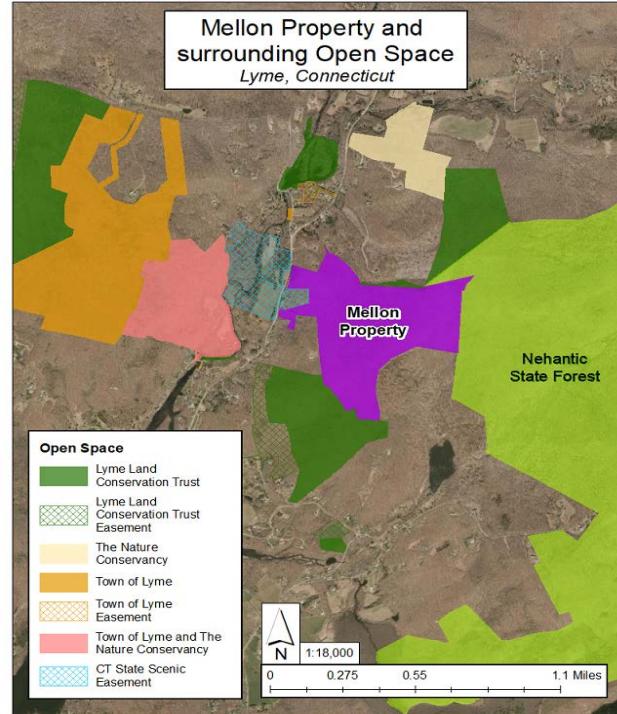
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|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----|--------|-----------------------------|
| St. Germaine Property | Bozrah, Lebanon, Franklin | USFWS \$363,000 | \$0 | 124.48 | Addition to Pease Brook WMA |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----|--------|-----------------------------|

*appraised value of donated parcel per Lyme Assessor.

Mellon Property

Hamburg Road a/k/a Route 156, Lyme

152.53 Acres – Fee Acquisition



Twenty years ago, Mr. Mellon donated a Scenic Easement and Development Rights for this property and the property across the street, to the State. The current donation is the underlying fee interest of the easterly 152.3 acres, subject to the previously donated scenic easement and development restrictions. This acquisition connects 943.7 acres of contiguous open space.

This property adds two non-contiguous sections of Hamburg/Route 156 frontage (738+/- feet), providing valuable access to the Nehantic State Forest. Several woods roads on the property will be evaluated for public access and recreational opportunities and for DEEP emergency and business related access purposes. The property will be managed in perpetuity as forest or open space with public access permitted for educational and passive recreational activities such as hiking, biking, fishing, hunting and equestrian uses. This acquisition further protects the Eight Mile River Watershed and Long Island Sound.

St Germaine Property
Bozrah, Lebanon & Franklin
124.48 Acres – Fee Acquisition



The St Germaine property provides a significant expansion of the Pease Brook Wildlife Management Area. Located at the southern end of the WMA, at the intersection of Bozrah, Lebanon & Franklin, the property features extensive fields and forest. Pease Brook runs north to south through the property.

DEEP purchased the property with assistance from a Pittman-Robertson Act grant, administered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, to expand public hunting and other recreational opportunities at the WMA.