

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

January 2022

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. One Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program grant was funded in January 2022. Additional information about the project follows.

Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
Town of Ridgefield	Bear Mountain Open Space	Ridgefield	13.826

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 no Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program closings January 2022.

Town of Ridgefield
Bear Mountain Open Space
Fee Acquisition – 13.826 Acres



The acquisition of this parcel provides access to a 3-acre parcel of town-owned open space and the 386-acre Hemlock Hills open space preserve. The steeply sloped property is mostly wooded, containing native tree and shrub species including American beech, black birch, hickory, blueberry and mountain laurel. It provides runoff to Miry Brook, which discharges into the Still River in the Still River Watershed.

A parking area, near the end of Bear Mountain Road will provide access to the Bear Mountain trail, which runs along the northern peak of Bear Mountain for approximately 700 feet, affording views of Danbury and northern Fairfield County.

