



## **Open Space Report to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee and the State Bond Commission December 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 property was funded by the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program in December 2022. Additional information about the acquisition follows.

<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Acres Protected</b>
Town of Groton	Watrous Property	Groton	159.79

### **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 in December 2022.

**Town of Groton  
Watrous Property, Groton  
159.79 Ac. Fee Acquisition**



This 159.79-acre property contains Eccleston Brook, a Class A watercourse, and its associated tributaries which flow south through the property and into Palmer Cove. Palmer Cove is a high-quality estuary. Forty-two acres of contiguous wetland surround Eccleston Brook. A DEEP sampling of the brook found a wild brook trout population. Other species observed in the brook include American eel, golden shiner, redfin pickerel, and tessellated darter. A Tier 1 vernal pool on the property provides breeding habitat for Wood frogs, Spotted salamanders, Marbled salamanders, and Fairy shrimp. A study of the vernal pool by a local wetland scientist found over 800 egg masses, 1,000 wood frogs and over 1,000 salamanders over a two-week period during a springtime breeding migration. Acquisition will provide a link between town-owned open space to the north and south and will provide for nearly 200 acres of protected land between Route 1 and I-95. A preliminary NDDB review shows Eastern box turtles and Wood turtles to be present in or near the area. The forest cover is mainly beech, oak and maple. Wetland vegetation includes Red Maple, Swamp Azalea, Common Alder and Northern Spicebush.

