



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

**June 2023**

### Overview

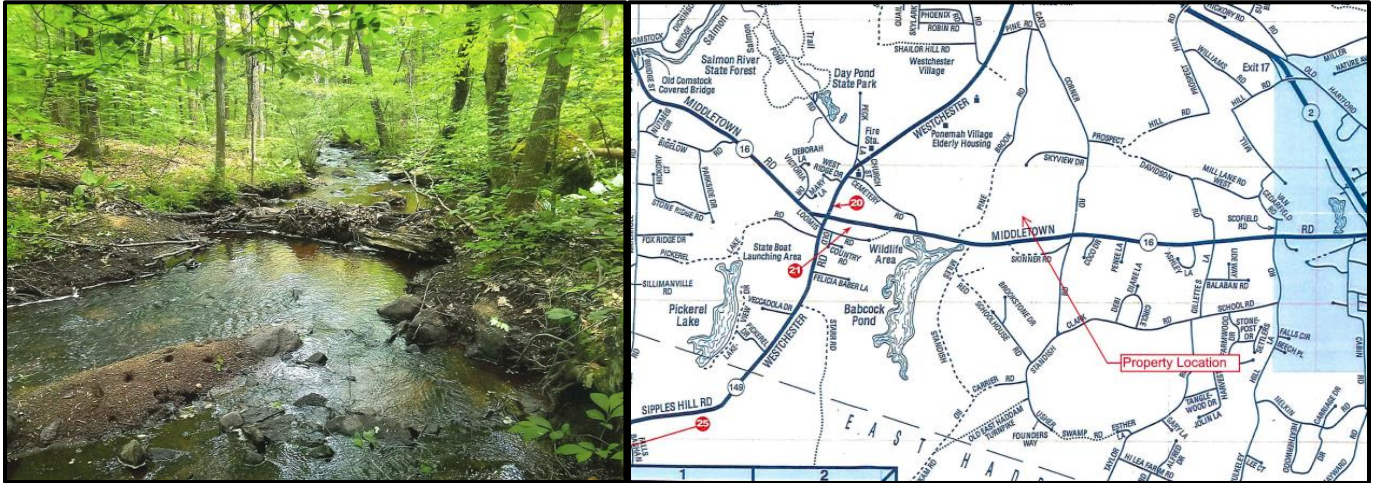
Section 22a-6v of the General Statutes of Connecticut requires the Commissioner of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection to submit a report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and bonding and to the State Bond 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

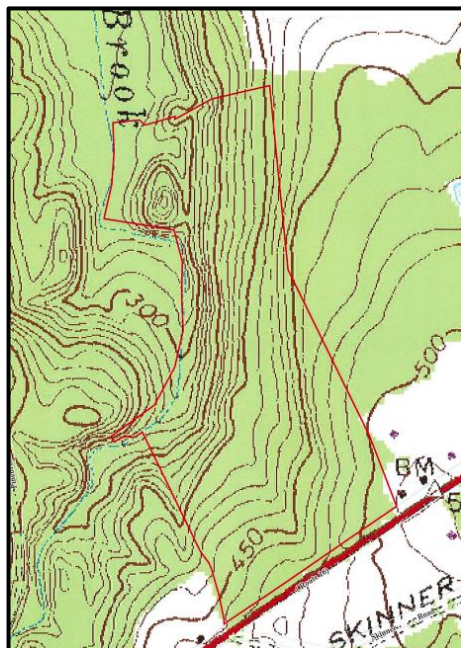
The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program provides grants to municipalities and private nonprofit land conservation organizations for the acquisition of open space land and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II watershed land. The State of Connecticut 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. There were three Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program grants funded in June 2023. Additional information on the projects follows.

| Sponsor                    | Project                   | Town                      | Acres Protected |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Town of Colchester         | Sablitz Property          | Colchester                | 75.174          |
| Southbury Land Trust, Inc. | Spring Hill Farm Preserve | Southbury                 | 31.14           |
| Bethany Land Trust, Inc.   | Van Epps Preserve         | Bethany &<br>Beacon Falls | 6.907           |

**Town of Colchester**  
**Sablitz Property, Colchester**  
**75.174 Acres**

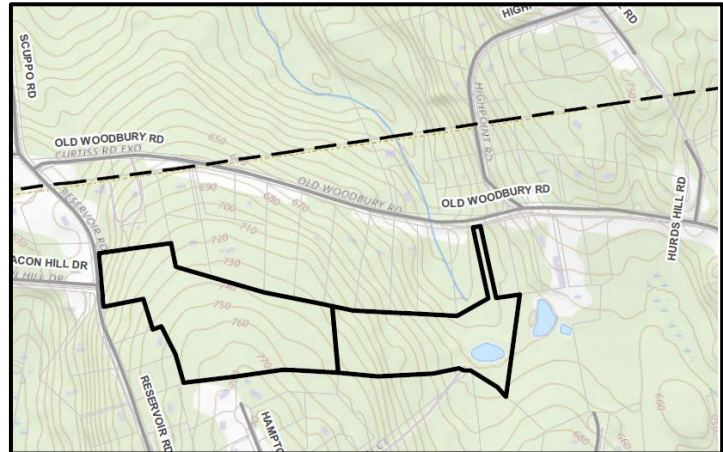
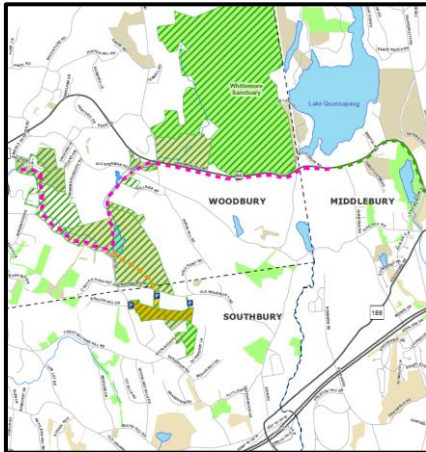


This property is located at the southern end of the State-designated Pine Brook Greenway. Wetlands on the property feed into Pine Brook which runs along the western boundary. Pine Brook is a tributary of the Jeremy River, both of which have a Class A designation. Almost all of the property is a designated "Aquifer Protection Zone". The conservation of this property will protect 2,600 feet of riparian area. The Town will create two public access loop trails which will connect to the Richard Goodwin Trail. There will be a handicap accessible gravel parking area and a picnic area.





**Southbury Land Trust, Inc. (SLT)**  
**Spring Hill Farm Preserve**  
**31.14 Acres**



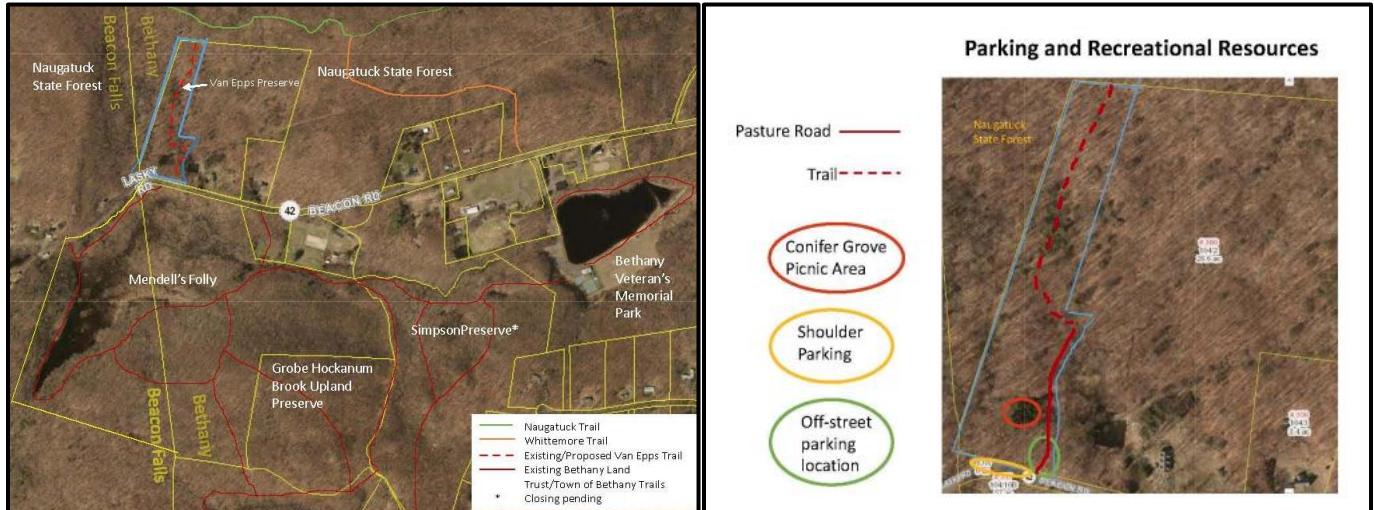
Spring Hill Farm Preserve is located in northeast Southbury, at 786 Reservoir Road & 443 Old Woodbury Road. It is historically and culturally significant, as a dairy farm in the early 1900s, utilizing perennial surface springs with stable year-round temps between 50-60 degrees to store and refrigerate the 10-gallon milk cans that were transported via the nearby Trolley to Waterbury. It provides a linkage between Woodbury's 245-acre Trolley Bed Preserve (also OSHA funded) to the north and SLT's Sterling Woods Preserve to the south. It provides a rich mixture of habitats within a relatively undisturbed tract of core forest, upland forest, forested wetlands, surface perennial springs/seeps, meadows, a pond and a stream and supports a variety of plant and wildlife species. SLT will clear trails and add boardwalks, if needed, to access natural features such as a pollinator pathway, meadow, pond and stream. The site contains an abundance of high quality DEEP rated Class AA watercourses, numerous year-round springs, seeps and streams plus the headwaters of streams that feed the recharge area of neighboring Woodbury's public water supply well. There are prime Farmland Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance. The property contains numerous passive recreation opportunities such as hiking, bird watching, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, biking, family friendly activities and educational programs. The trail plan will include a wildlife viewing platform at the northern side of the pond, a short and fairly level distance from the parking area, making it more accessible for visitors with disabilities.



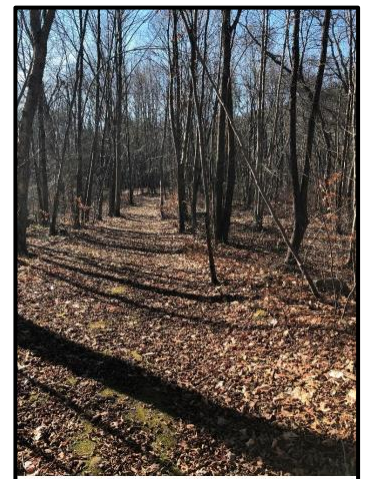
# **Bethany Land Trust, Inc.**

## **Van Epps Preserve, Bethany & Beacon Falls**

**6.907 Acres**



This parcel is located at 380 Beacon Road, on the Bethany and Beacon Falls town line. It is adjacent to the east block of the Naugatuck State Forest to the north and west, Bethany Land Trust Preserves to the south, and the Town-owned Bethany Veterans Memorial Park to the southeast. It is primarily forested with mature, second growth trees. Two cold water streams on the property flow through Mendel's Folly into Hockanum Brook. The DEEP Natural Diversity Database identifies this area as containing State and Federal Listed Species. The public can access the property from the pasture road on Route 42, which is approximately 8 feet wide and fairly level in the southern half of the parcel. The trail in the northern half of the parcel rises gradually to the rear, where it abuts the ridge of the State forest. The Conifer Grove area is great for picnicking, birding and wildlife viewing by the adjacent stream. BLT will maintain the Conifer Grove pasture road and area in a manner consistent with practices enabling handicap access. An unlocked gate at the entrance to the pasture road can be opened to facilitate handicap access.





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 was one Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program closing in June 2023. Additional information about the property follows.

| Property Name | Town(s) | Cooperators & Cost Share | State Share    | Acres Protected | Purpose of Acquisition               |
|---------------|---------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| LaMay         | Haddam  | None                     | \$0 (donation) | 2.32            | Addition to Cockaponset State Forest |

**LaMay Property**  
**Ruth Hill Rd, Haddam**  
**2.32 Acres – Donation**  
**Addition to Cockaponset State Forest**

The LaMay property is a generally rectangular shaped parcel located on the southern side of Ruth Hill Road. The land is mainly level and wooded with a small pond and was generously donated by the LaMay family. Surrounded by State land, the acquisition helps expand Cockaponset State Forest and prevent future development.

