



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

May 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.

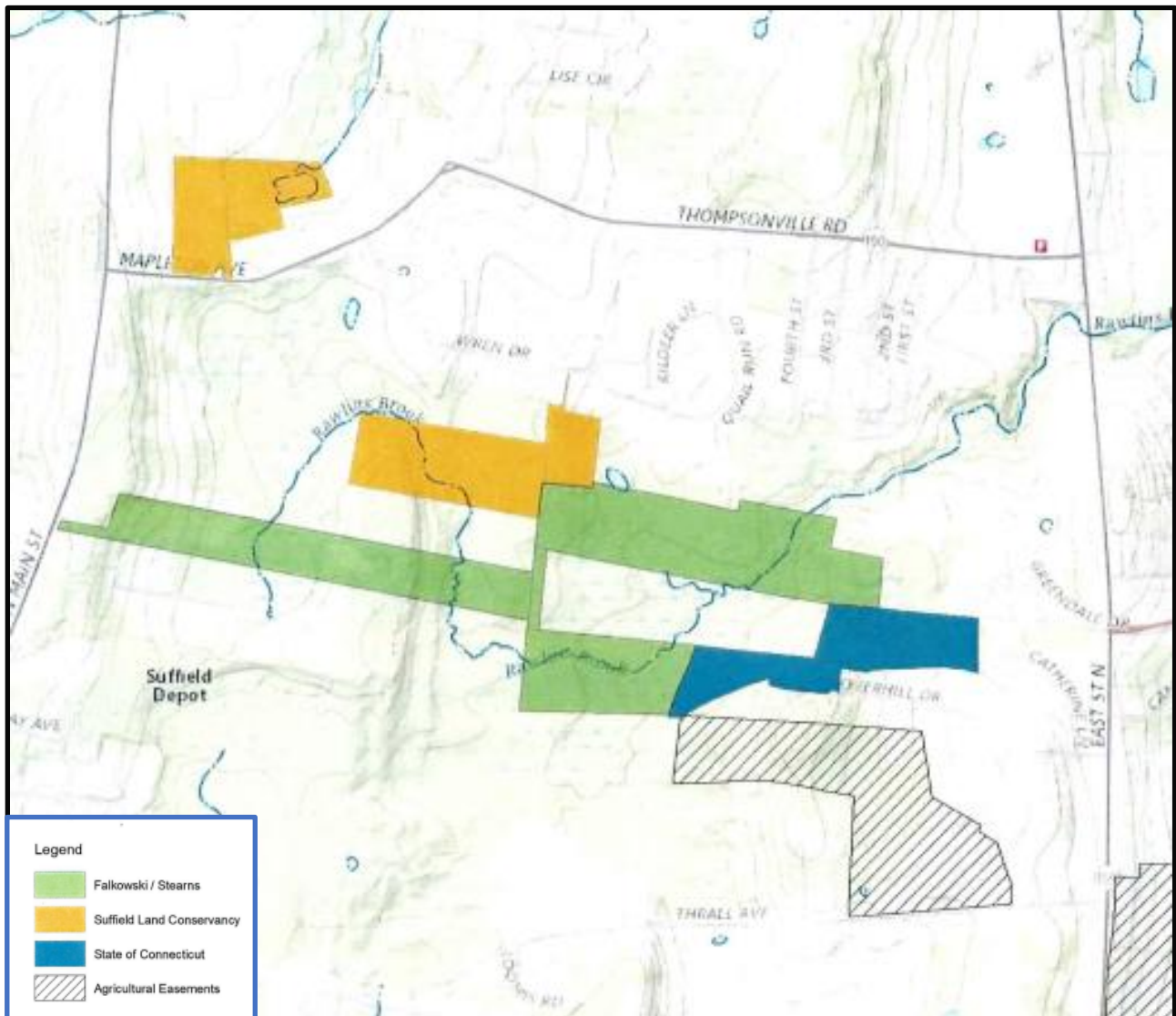
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program

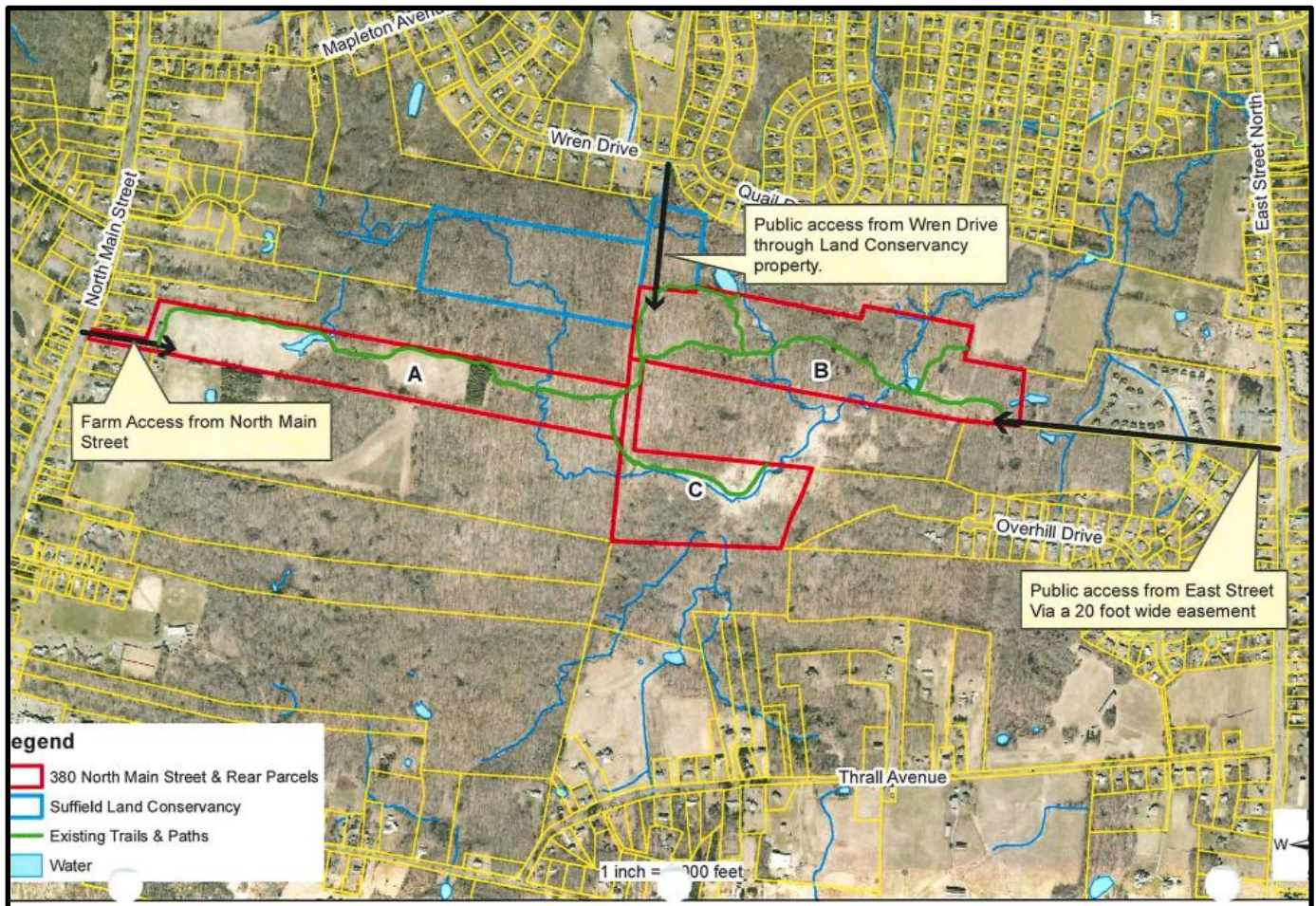
The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program provides grants to municipalities and private nonprofit land conservation organizations for the acquisition of open space land and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II watershed land. The State of Connecticut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

Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
Town of Suffield	Falkowski Stearns Property	Suffield	98.956 (easement)
East Haddam Land Trust, Inc.	Saunders Preserve	East Haddam	69.473
Warren Land Trust, Inc.	Cunningham Road Property	Warren	237.07

Town of Suffield
Falkowski Stearns Property, Suffield
98.956 Acres (Easement)

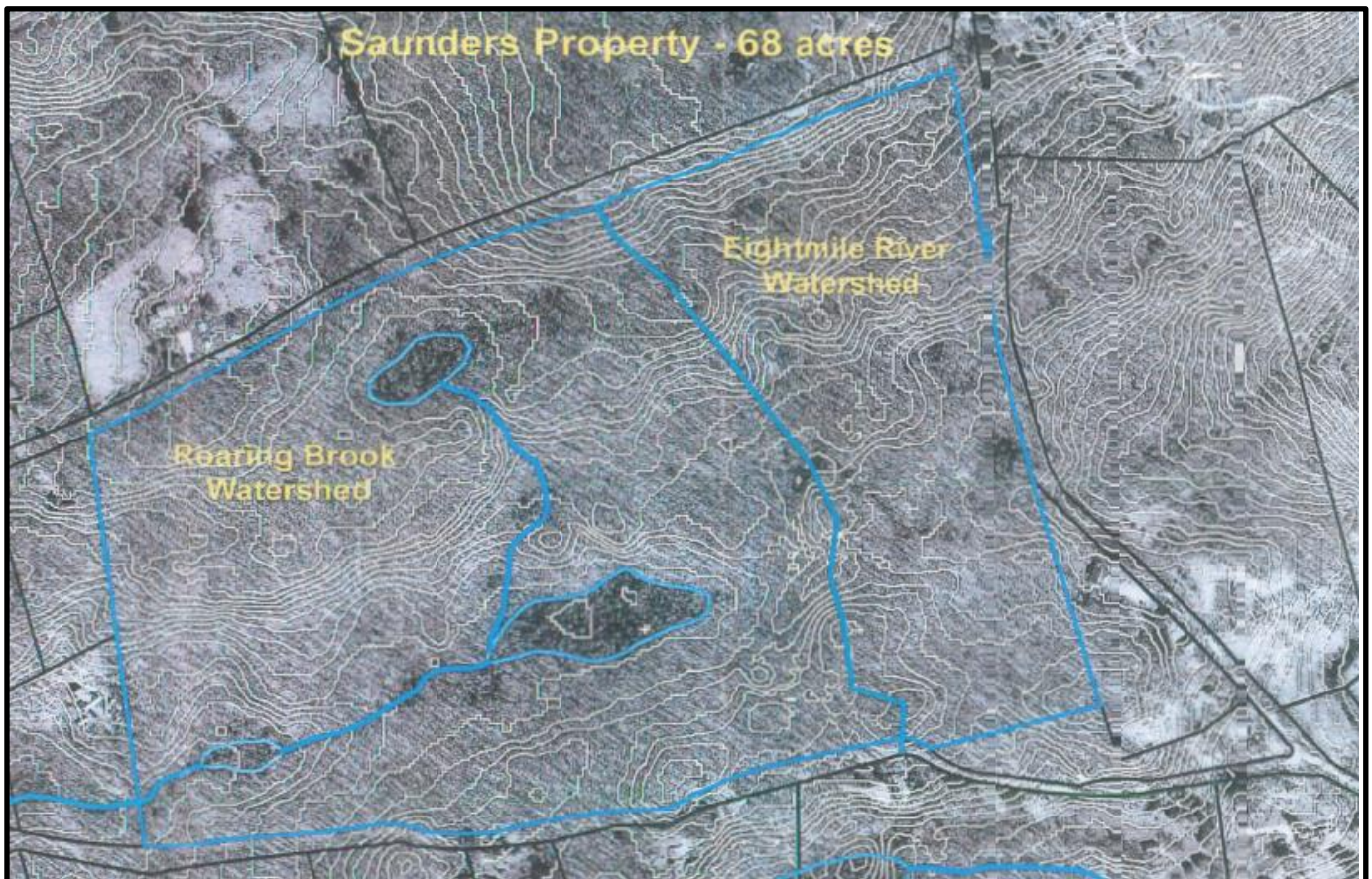
This property contains Prime Farmland Soils and Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance. It is a mix of open fields and forested areas, containing hardwood tree species such as white, red, and black oak, tulip tree, and shagbark hickory. There are 6-8 vernal pools and it is in the Connecticut River watershed. It encompasses 2600 linear feet of Rawlins Brook, a Class A stream. An NDDDB preliminary assessment found four Species of Concern in and around the property including American kestrel, bobolink, wood turtle, and bush's sedge. Approximately 16 acres of the property directly east of North Main Street will continue to be used for agricultural purposes. The property owners have a forest management plan for the property. Public access areas are depicted in one of the maps below.

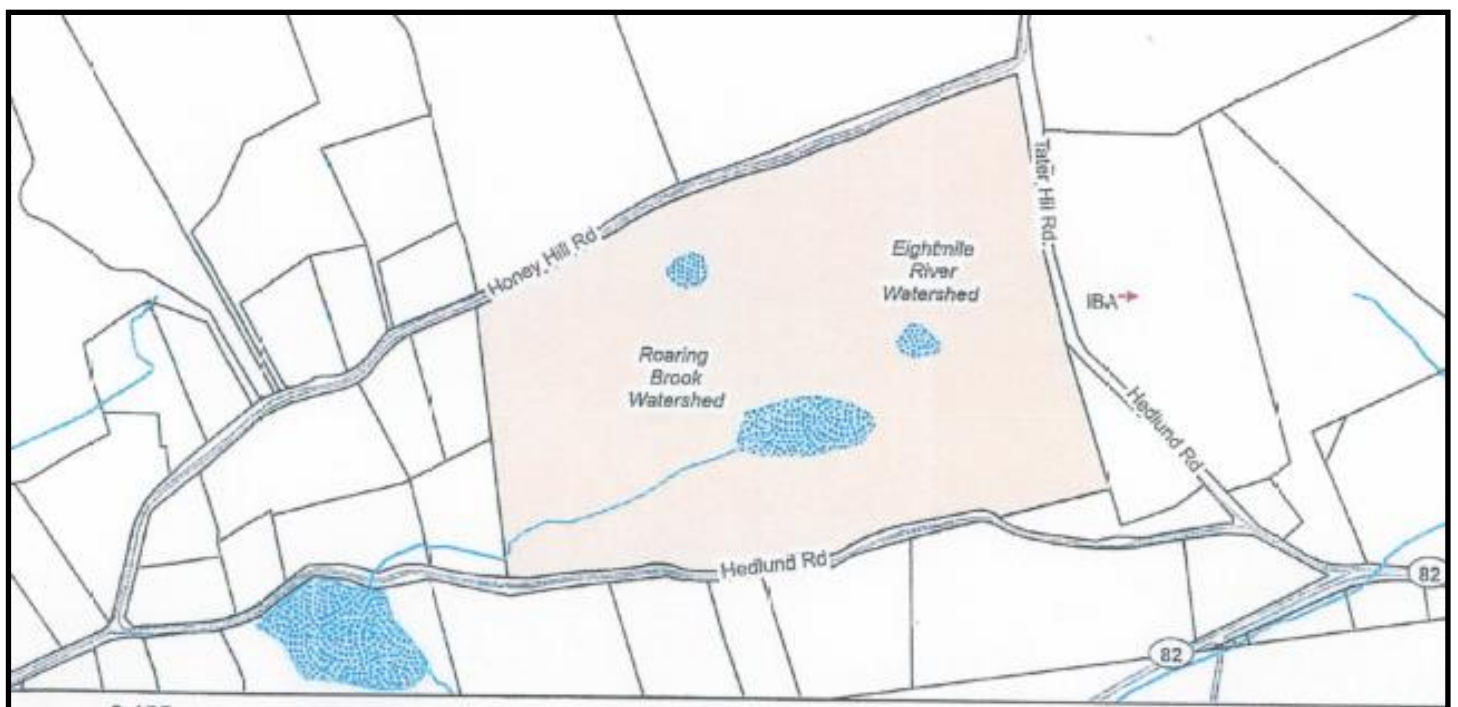
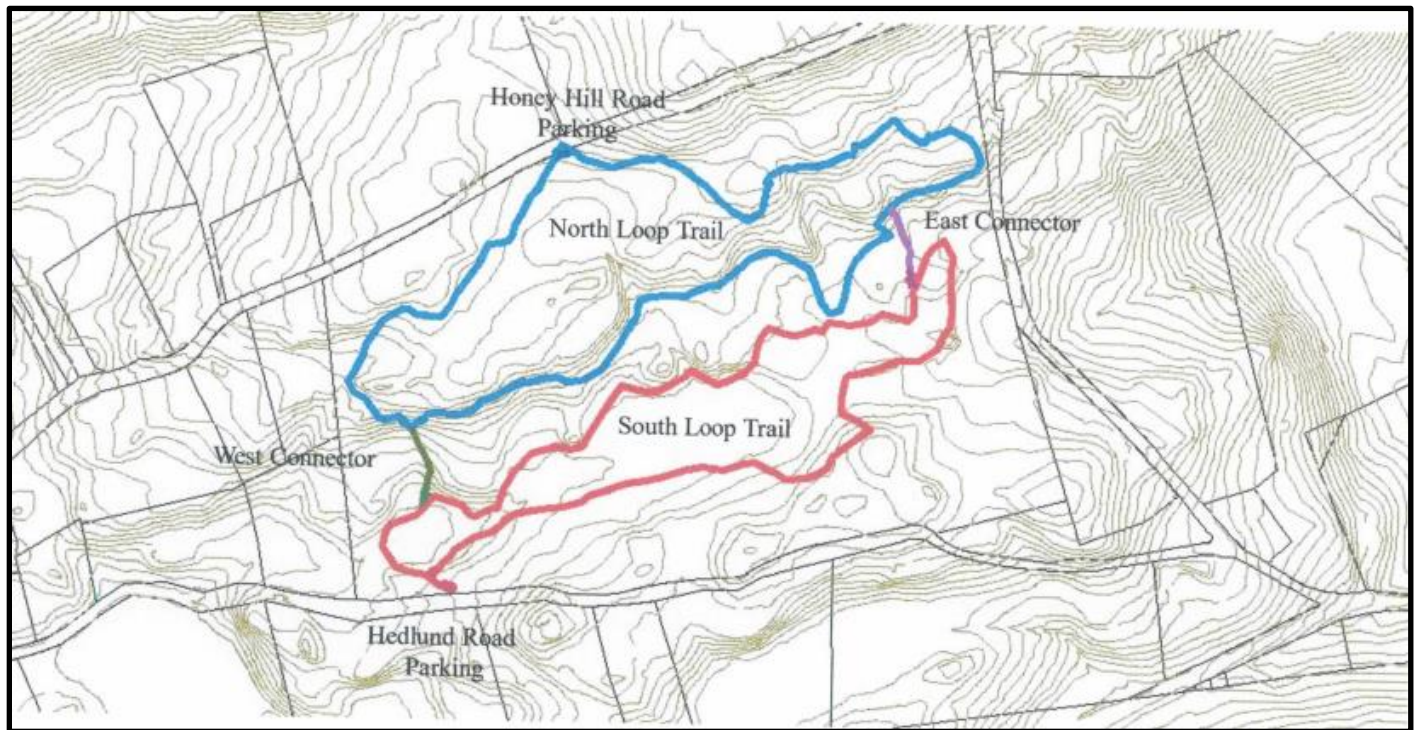




East Haddam Land Trust, Inc.
Saunders Property
69.473 Acres

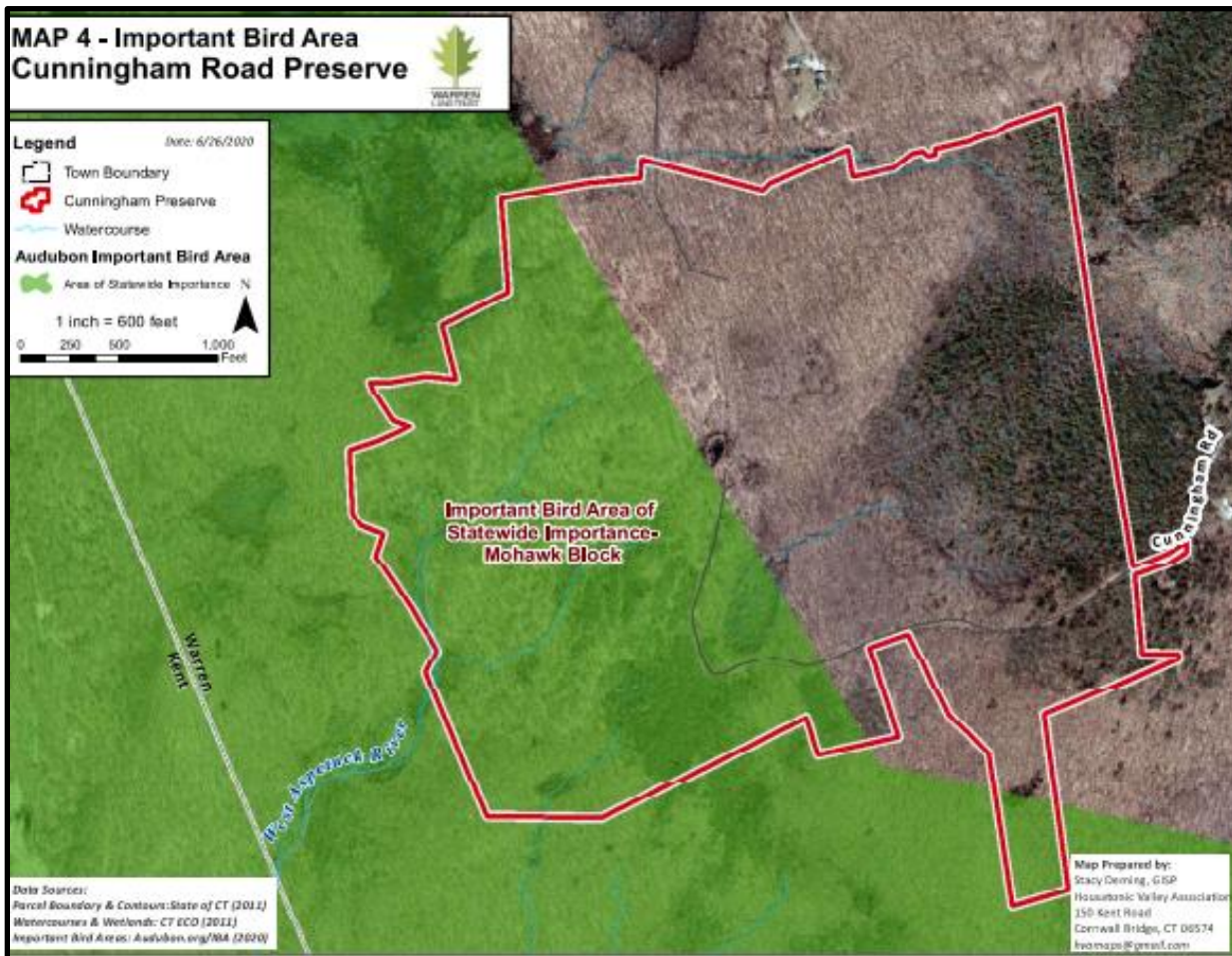
The Saunders property, located on the west side of Tater Hill Road, at its intersection with Honey Hill and Hedlund Roads, contains multiple habitats at risk from climate change: mature forest, shrubby understory, 6.9 acres of forested inland wetlands and at least two vernal pools. In the western section of the property, a cold-water stream feeds into Hedlund Pond which feeds into Roaring Brook #2 in the Roaring Brook Watershed. The eastern section contains an intermittent stream that feeds the Eight Mile River Watershed (a federally designated a Wild & Scenic River). The Eight Mile River Watershed and stream feeding the Roaring Brook Watershed feed into the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. Preservation of forested acreage surrounding cold-water streams and watersheds plays an important role in maintaining the water quality and temperatures of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. This property abuts the Fox Hopyard Golf Club (no public access) which connects to East Haddam's 212-acre Lena Reserve then the 1,000+-acre Devils Hopyard State Park and TNC's 1,122-acre Burnham Brook Preserve, a large, mostly undisturbed block of core forest in the eastern part of East Haddam. The most easterly section and a strip in the south-central section of the Property are identified as having State and Federal Listed Species. A sliver of the easterly section is within the Audubon CT Lyme Forest Block Important Bird Area. EHLT plans to add trails through the two distinct and separate geologic terranes on both sides of the Honey Hill Fault, providing passive recreational opportunities such as wildlife viewing, hiking, photography, environmental education and snow shoeing.

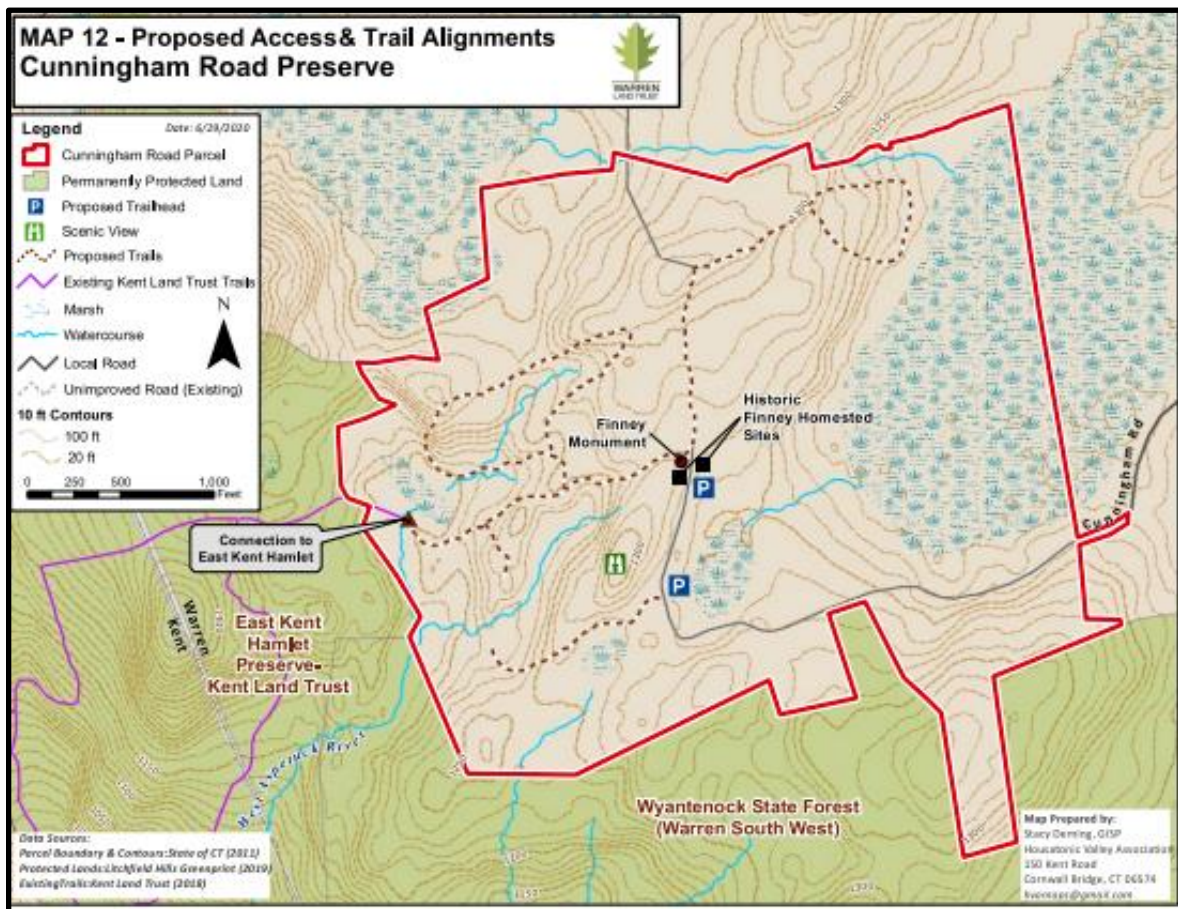


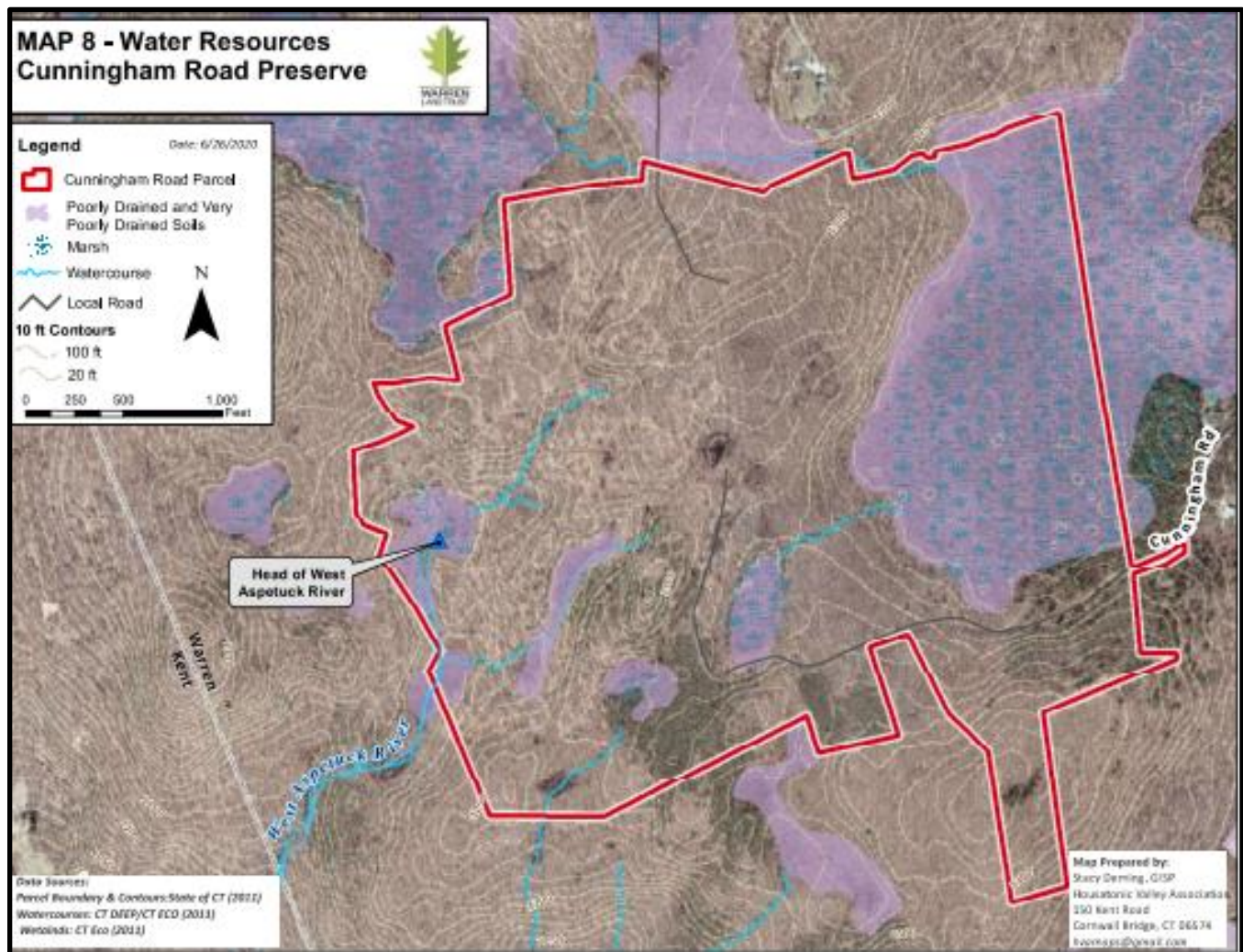


Warren Land Trust, Inc.
Cunningham Road Property, Warren
237.07 Acres

This 237.07-acre parcel is located between the 263-acre East Kent Hamlet Preserve and the 336-acre block of the Wyantenock State Forest. Its protection adds to an existing 790 acres of contiguous adjacent protected lands and builds upon a network of 948 acres of existing protected lands within a 1 mile radius. The property falls within the Mohawk Block Important Bird Area. In June 2020, a pair of Cerulean Warblers and Broad-winged Hawks were identified on the property. The property's forest habitats include 145 acres of Mixed Northern Hardwoods, 42 acres of Central Appalachian Oak and Pine Forest, and 50 acres of Forested Inland Wetlands. According to the Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Equivalent Calculator, the property is storing roughly 15,376 metric tons of carbon and can sequester an additional 100 metric tons of carbon annually. There is an extensive network of upland wetlands and cold-water stream habitats on the property as it straddles the headwaters of both the West and East Aspetuck Rivers. There are 104 acres of Prime, Statewide Important, and Locally Important Farmland Soils on the property.







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 May 2023.