



79 Elm Street • Hartford, CT 06106-5127

www.ct.gov/deep

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

June 8, 2022

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program. This is the program's twenty-fifth grant round, and so far, it has helped to protect over 41,000 acres of open space throughout the state. The program provides financial assistance to municipalities and non-profit land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II water supply property.

This is a highly competitive grant program and funding is limited. Only the highest priority projects will be awarded funding. Projects are evaluated by statutorily defined parameters and ranked based on many factors including resource value, public access and recreational value, environmental justice and equity and climate change benefits.

Last year the application was revised based upon recently received public comments. The Department also recently added a two-year project completion timeline to its application. Land must be available for closing within an eighteen-month period. Only submit applications for projects that are achievable within the timeframe included in the application.

The Department is currently requesting applications under this program. Please submit applications by **September 30, 2022**. Please review the attached materials carefully as they will guide you in completing your application.

Connecticut's natural diversity and scenic beauty add immeasurably to the quality of life of its residents. Thousands of tourists visit the state each year to enjoy its natural beauty bringing with them economic prosperity. Additionally, with the impacts of the climate crisis already being felt in Connecticut, protecting our natural areas in order to mitigate and adapt becomes all the more critical. Thank you for all you do to protect open space in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Katherine S. Dykes

Katherine S. Dykes

Commissioner

**Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA)
Grant Application
Deadline: September 30, 2022**



Property Title: _____

Applicant: _____

Applicant Address: _____

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: _____

Name and Title of Preparer: _____ Phone: _____

Purchase Price: \$ _____ Acquisition: In-Fee Easement Total Acres: _____

Your responses to the following questions will be used to evaluate, score and rank your application. Responses should be brief, factual and accurate. Applicants submitting proposals that include inaccurate information, facts, statements or disclosures could be penalized by having the application withdrawn from review or having the grant forfeited should one be offered. Please carefully review the Definitions and Program Conditions attached to this grant application prior to completing the application. Please use extra sheets as necessary when submitting answers.

This application is available in an alternative format upon request in fulfillment of the Department's obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Important Notice for all Applicants

- Grant awards will be made based on available funding. DEEP anticipates awarding only the highest ranked projects in the 2022 grant round.
- DEEP will score applications using a point-based system that considers public access, environmental justice and equity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, preservation, resource conservation, and certain administrative factors and timeframes.
- Land purchased under this program may not be for intensive recreational uses (e.g, golf courses, driving ranges, tennis courts, ballfields, swimming pools and uses by motorized vehicles).
- OSWA projects are expected to be implemented within two years after a grant is awarded. DEEP reserves the right to rescind a grant award if the grant timeline is not being met. See Section 11 and Task Completion Timeframes in the Program Conditions.
- Organizations with OSWA projects awarded prior to 2019 should not apply until projects are completed or grant funds are turned back/rescinded.
- Land already owned by the applicant is not eligible for an acquisition grant.
- Acquired permanent interest in land [Conservation Easements] shall provide for public access in accordance with Connecticut General Statute Sections 7-131d the applicant is applying for funding to purchase a conservation easement to protect an active farm where public access will be limited, **Section 5 must be completed.**

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide, available at www.ct.gov/deep/openspace. Detailed questions can be directed to Allyson Clarke (860) 424-3774.

1) Eligibility (Applications that fail to meet eligibility criteria will not be scored.)

- Applicant must be a municipality, non-profit land conservation organization (e.g., land trust), or water company.
- For municipal applicants, if the municipality’s Plan of Conservation and Development is more than 10 years old, a grant will not be awarded without written approval by the Office of Policy and Management.
- Water companies must purchase land that can be classified as “Class I” or Class II” after acquisition. Water Companies must show if and how they intend to allow access to the proposed land for recreational uses.
- If the proposed property is being purchased from a water company, the property must be classified as surplus (Class III) land. The Water Company (title holder) must be granted permission to dispose of the property by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) and the Department of Public Health (DPH).
- If a Land Trust is purchasing an interest in land located in a Targeted Investment Community or a Distressed Municipality, it must obtain approval from the Municipality’s Chief Elected Official (CEO) or governing legislative body. Similarly, if a Municipality is purchasing an interest in land, located in another City or Town that is a Targeted Investment Community or Distressed Municipality, it must obtain approval from that Municipality’s CEO or governing legislative body. Approval must be submitted with the application.
- All lands or interests in lands acquired under this program must be preserved in perpetuity, predominantly in their natural, scenic, and open condition.
- Applicants must show evidence of compliance with past OSWA funded properties including public access (See Section 13). The Department may require that an applicant correct public access non-compliance matters, for previously funded acquisitions, prior to DEEP’s release of additional grant funds.
- The applicant must clearly show how the public will access and enjoy the property. If public access is not clearly shown, the property will not be evaluated or offered a grant.
- The applicant must have a reasonable anticipation that all matching funds will be secured and a closing can take place within one year of the grant award.
- Grant funds cannot be used to purchase:
 - Land to be used for intensive recreation purposes (see FAQs for more information)
 - Land which has already been committed for public use
 - Land to be acquired by eminent domain
- Grant and match funds cannot be used for:
 - Development costs including any passive recreation features
 - Reimbursement of in-kind services or incidental costs associated with the acquisition of land (i.e., survey and legal fees, appraisals and appraisal reviews)

2) Climate Change, Conservation, and Recreation Value

Describe your proposal’s resource conservation, climate, and recreation initiatives.

Will the proposed property:

- Provide a linkage, create or contribute to a developing or existing greenway? Does this greenway offer opportunities for recreation or non-motorized transportation? If so, please describe such opportunities and plans to develop such recreational or transportation options.
- Protect or complement existing preserved open space or preserved agricultural land, especially if such protection will aid wildlife migration?

- Provide for high-quality, passive recreational uses? Please describe such uses and plans to develop such uses.
- Provide a valuable resource for recreation, forestry, fishing, wildlife habitat or other natural resources initiatives?
- Protect lands that preserve high-quality natural waters, and drinking water resources?
- Provide for protection of habitats most at risk from climate change, including forested swamps, lands adjacent to freshwater and tidal wetlands, core forests, riparian lands adjacent to cold water streams, beaches and dunes, and areas of potential tidal marsh migration?
- Protect a naturally occurring feature such as a shoreline, river, stream, mountainous territory, ridgeline, inland or coastal wetland, estuary, or geological feature?
- Protect a habitat of a plant or animal species that is either threatened, endangered, or of special concern? **Only species that are represented by the Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) should be reported, unless a qualified specialist has identified such species.**
- Protect natural lands with high carbon storage/sequestration value such as core forests, wetlands, etc.?
- Is the property to be protected within or a core forest block or contribute to one (Core forest is defined as being at least 300 feet away from non-forested areas within a forest block of at least 250 acres)?
- Is there an existing Forest Stewardship Plan or will the applicant have one prepared by a licensed forester, that identifies landowner goals and objectives and includes various aspects of forest resource management?
- Protect a native ecological community that is unique or uncommon?
- Enhance or conserve the water quality of the State's lakes, rivers and coastal waters?
- Please provide any other information pertinent to your proposal.

- **Supporting Material**

Provide one or more maps and photographs that show the following features and the subject property:

- Topographic Map with site outline
- Road Map with site outline
- Property Boundary Map (A2 not required for application but required for grant)
- Aerial Imagery Ortho-photo with site outline
- Two or more high-resolution photographs showing flora, fauna, waters or watercourses, summit view sheds, and/or other natural resource-based features

3) Property Cost Estimates – Acquisition

The grant amount will be based upon the DEEP-approved fair market value. Appraisal costs are not reimbursable. The effective date of the appraisal and/or appraisal review must be dated within one year of the application deadline.

Each OSWA grant application requires:

- One (1) property appraisal in compliance with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (“UASFLA”) a/k/a Yellow Book, with the DEEP (and other federal funding sources, if applicable) listed as intended user(s) of the report.
- AND**
- One (1) Appraisal Review (with DEEP and other federal funding sources listed as intended users), confirming that the prior appraisal is UASFLA a/k/a Yellow Book compliant.
 - For more information regarding the UASFLA a/k/a Yellow Book, or to obtain a copy, go to:

If applying for federal funding, the appraisal must include the fee simple and easement values.

We **highly encourage** all applicants to refer to the “APPRAISAL SELECTION NOTES” and utilize the “SELECTING QUALIFIED APPRAISERS CHECKLIST,” in the appraiser selection process.

- **Supporting Material**

- One (1) Yellow Book appraisal and one (1) Yellow Book appraisal review (the appraisal and the review should be emailed as separate attachments, with the grant application)

4) Other Considerations

- Who is the current property owner?
 - Has the owner previously sold or donated other permanently protected land? **YES**____ **NO**____
 - Has a title search been conducted on this property within the past year? **YES**____ **NO**____
 - Is the property free from any lien, claim, encumbrance or easement that would prevent the land from being used for open space purposes? **YES**____ **NO**____. If not, how will it be resolved prior to the property purchase?
 - Is the current property owner a willing seller?
 - Is the site on the market? **YES**____ **NO**____.
 - Has a Purchase & Sale Agreement been executed? **YES**____ **NO**____.
 - If not, is there a signed and certified Letter of Intent to sell? **YES**____ **NO**____.
 - Do the seller and applicant intend to close within one year? **YES**____ **NO**____.
 - Are there any environmental impacts (power lines, landfills, structures, roads, etc.) on or near the proposed site? **YES**____ **NO**____. If yes, please give details.
 - Is the site free from environmental contamination? **YES**____ **NO**____. If not, what is your plan to address such contamination?
 - What physical changes are required to make the site suitable for passive outdoor recreation?
 - Will the purchase of this property displace any businesses, homes or other establishments?
- **Supporting Material**
 - Copy of deed/lease (current owners)
 - Copy of recent title search, certificate of title or ALTA title policy endorsement
 - Copy of any lease, lien, encumbrance, agreement or interest in the property
 - Letter of Intent
 - Purchase and Sales Agreement

5) Agricultural Use

Agricultural uses that do not diminish the public’s use of a grant-funded property are permitted. **The DEEP Commissioner reserves the right to reduce grant awards for properties that don’t provide full public access.**

The DEEP Commissioner can approve limited public access to agricultural properties under this program, based on a determination that unlimited public access would be disruptive of agricultural activities occurring on agricultural areas of the land. This is only approved if the applicant is purchasing a conservation easement and only if the property has an existing agricultural use that will continue. Such approvals for limited public access require, at a minimum, a small, unpaved parking area for 2-3 cars, DEEP signage and a designated public access trail.

- Is there currently any agricultural use or forest management on the property? If so, will these activities continue to occur after purchase and to what degree?

- Will agricultural use impede public access in any way? If so, how and to what degree?
 - Will any structures (barns, sheds, etc.) be excluded from the preserved area?
 - Does the property contain prime or important agricultural soils? If so, what percentage?
- **Supporting Material**
 - Indicate on a map where agriculture use currently takes place and where it will continue
 - Soils map showing prime or important agricultural soils

6) Public Access and Outdoor Recreation

The applicant must clearly show how the public will access and enjoy the property. If public access will not be provided on the proposed property or is not clearly shown, the property will not be evaluated or awarded a grant. Once the property is acquired, the Sponsor must install prominent signage indicating public access and acknowledging DEEP funding (including the DEEP logo). Access must be provided on the proposed acquisition, but if the property has no frontage on a public street, access can be through an abutting property, if owned by the applicant. An application that will not provide public access, via the applicant's fee-owned public roadway, must be approved in writing by the Commissioner, prior to its submittal. An on-site, off-street parking area for public safety is preferred. The public access sign must be located on the grant applicant's property and should be clearly visible from the roadway and parking area. Water Companies are exempt from the public access requirement, but public access is still encouraged.

Describe how the public will access and enjoy the property

- What recreational resources currently exist on the property?
- What recreational resources will be developed? The creation of public access trails where none exist, is encouraged.
- Will the DEEP sign be clearly visible from the roadway, at the proposed sign location?

Supporting Material

- A map showing current and proposed recreational uses, how the public will access the property (show the proposed parking area, DEEP sign location, public access trails, etc.)

Public Outreach Upon acquisition, the applicant must post maps and information on the applicant's website that clearly show all public access and parking areas for the acquired parcel. If the applicant does not have a website, public access information and maps should be posted on the municipality's website.

Describe your public outreach plan for communicating the open space grant award and the public access opportunity including press releases, social media and other community engagement.

Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Accessibility for people with disabilities is a civil right defined, for these purposes, as equal opportunity for the use and enjoyment of recreational resources. Such consideration is relevant to such elements as parking, gates, viewing platforms, and pathways, and under certain circumstances, trails.

- Demonstrate how accessibility is to be integrated into the design of the project.
- If accessibility for people with disabilities cannot be incorporated, please explain why.

Trail or Greenway Connectivity

Does the project create a linkage or contribute to a developing or existing greenway including an existing trail system of statewide importance such as CT Blue Blazed Hiking Trail, a CT designated greenway, National or Scenic Trail or waterway? Does the greenway offer opportunities for passive and active recreational uses or non-motorized transportation? Does the property have already preserved/protected open space on one, two, three or all sides?

Past Grant Compliance, Closure and Completion

In order to be considered for a grant, applicants must show that they are in compliance at all previously funded properties including availability of public access (see eligibility). DEEP reserves the right to rescind a grant award based upon noncompliance or require compliance prior to funding a new application.

- If applicable, provide a brief update on the status of each previously funded, closed OSWA project, including signage, parking, public access trail and other recreational opportunities.
- If applicable, please provide a brief update on the status of all pending projects (not yet closed). Please describe the reasons for any delays.
- How has each site been maintained? How has the public reacted to the acquisition(s)?
- Is the DEEP funding acknowledgement sign visible from the roadway and parking area?

- **Supporting Material**

- A map showing all recreational resources (public access trails, etc.), the DEEP funding acknowledgement sign and parking locations, for each previously funded project.
- For water companies, a map or plan showing the valuable resources protected, for each previously funded project.
- A photograph of the parking area for each previously funded project.
- Two photographs of the permanent sign or plaque recognizing OSWA funding (one close-up and one showing its location relative to the parking area or roadway) for each previously funded project.

7) Environmental Justice and Equity

The DEEP strives to provide public access to open space in every community. Describe the need for passive recreation areas in the municipality where this purchase will take place.

- Is the property located in a Distressed Municipality or a Targeted Investment Community? (Link to list/map)
- Is the property located in an area with a significant need for open space?
- Is the property located within or in close proximity to an urban area or population center? Please provide the distance(s) to the urban area or population center?
- Is the property accessible by public transportation? What is the distance to the nearest transportation stop?
- Please identify the major service area(s) neighborhood(s), city(s), region(s) that would be affected by this proposed acquisition.
- **Does the project align with the GC3 EJ [Phase1_Report_Jan2021.pdf \(ct.gov\)](#)** including, but not limited to, support for urban forestry and community interest in tree planting and maintenance, parks, and/or community gardens in densely populated areas; expansion of urban green spaces that incorporate nature-based solutions; and protects smaller farms in more urban and suburban communities including support for urban agriculture initiative and socially disadvantaged producers, including Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). See Working and Natural Lands recommendations 29, 35, 37 and 41, 45 and 46.
- What is the population of the municipality and density per square mile?

- Is this proposed acquisition in an area where significant growth/development has occurred or is planned? If yes, please expand upon the level of growth and the intensity of the development and how this project may compliment that development.
- How does this acquisition align with the applicable Council of Government's regional trail assessment, regional recreational plan, or regional plan of conservation and development?
- Is this an opportunity to create a pocket or community park suitable for a community garden or urban forest?
- Is the property listed within an exempt municipality designated by the Commissioner of Housing that has at least 10% affordable housing?

Supporting Material

- Excerpts from Local, State or Regional Councils of Government Plans of Conservation and Development, applicable Environmental Justice and Equity Recommendations from the GC3 Phase 1 Report: Near-Term Actions January 2021 (do not attach the entire plan or whole chapters of the plan, only provide relevant excerpts).

8) External Support

Explain what support this proposed acquisition has received and how the public has been involved in the planning and design process.

- Has this acquisition ever been considered as a location for multi-family or affordable housing? Was the community in support of, or opposed to the development? Were environmental justice organizations supportive of the acquisition as open space? How and when was the decision to purchase this property made? What kind of interest has the community expressed in the acquisition?
- Provide support letters from municipal, State, regional executive boards and/or land preservation organizations that identify how the proposed acquisition addresses an identified need/goal in the local community.

- **Supporting Material**

- Municipal support letters: CEO or governing legislative body, Planning and Zoning, Inland Wetland Commission, Conservation and/or Open Space Commission.
- State or Regional support letters: Regional Planning Agency (RPA), Council of Governments (COG), land conservation organizations, environmental justice and equity organizations.

Provide only one letter of support from each

9) Alignment with State & Local Conservation & Climate Goals

- How is the proposed acquisition consistent with the Municipal Plan of Conservation and Development?
- Has the Municipal Plan of Conservation and Development been completed and approved within the last 10 years? (See eligibility)
- How does the proposed acquisition support [GC3 recommendations](#)?
- Is the proposed acquisition consistent with or identified in other municipal or regional plans such as Water Quality, Recreation and/or Open Space Plans?
- Is the proposed acquisition consistent with the State's Plan of Conservation and Development (available from the Office of Policy and Management), the CT Climate Change Preparedness Plan, the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan [SCORP], the State's Wildlife Action Plan/Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy and/or the State's Hazard Mitigation Plan?

- Is the proposed acquisition consistent with the State’s 2016-2020 Green Plan (Comprehensive Open Space Acquisition Strategy, available at www.ct.gov/deep/greenplan)? Explain and provide supporting justification that the proposed acquisition meets one or more of the four land acquisition priorities and targeted goals as address in the 5-year Action Strategy Section.
- Provide supporting justification that this proposed acquisition complies with a documented need as addressed in a local, State or regional Councils of Government open space conservation & development plan (please provide written analysis).
- **Supporting Material** (Do not attach the entire plan or whole chapters of the plan. Provide only relevant excerpts)
 - Municipal Plan of Conservation & Development and/or Recreation Plan
 - GC3 recommendations and GC3 Phase 1 Report: Near-Term Actions January 2021
 - Regional Conservation Plan
 - Other Municipal or Community Plans
 - OPM (draft) Conservation and Development Policies: The Plan for Connecticut 2018-2023

10) Funding Mechanism & Timeframe

All funding sources for acquisition must be disclosed. There must be reasonable anticipation that funds will be available to meet the timelines below. It will be to the applicant’s advantage to have funding firmly in place. Explain how match funds will be provided. Will the applicant apply for other grant funds? The Commissioner may approve extensions to the task completion timeframes, to facilitate additional state or federal funding approvals.

- | | Completion Timeframe |
|---|-----------------------------|
| ➤ (1) Purchase and Sale Agreement (if not provided in application) | within 3 months |
| ➤ (2) Mapping (A2 survey) | within 9 months |
| ➤ (3) Preliminary title work | within 12 months |
| ➤ (4) Grant Agreement execution & payment | within 15 months |
| ➤ (5) Property closing & conservation easement execution and land recording | within 18 months |
| ➤ (6) Signage, public access trail & parking compliance | within 24 months |
- **Supporting Material**
 - Resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds (municipal or corporate)
 - Budget line items where funds are held or committed
 - Statement showing funds available in an open space acquisition account
 - Show commitment, amount and sources related to creative/alternative funding proposals

11) Operation, Maintenance, and Stewardship Capabilities

- Provide evidence of the applicant’s capability to operate and maintain the property.
 - What organization(s) will manage the property and what is their management expertise? Will the maintenance of this property be a cooperative effort between a municipality, a land conservation organization(s) and/or local community groups?
 - Does stewardship funding exist or when will it be in place?
- **Supporting Material**
 - Statement showing funds available in a stewardship account

How to Submit Your Application

Please email your complete application and appraisals electronically including this questionnaire with your corresponding responses and supporting documentation to:

Allyson.clarke@ct.gov

PROGRAM CONDITIONS

Property Use: Projects funded under this program will be protected as open space in perpetuity. Grants will not be given if the property has any structural buildings. Structural buildings must be either excluded or razed before funding can be released. No intensive recreation is permitted on the protected property. Passive recreation is allowed and is defined in the State’s Conservation Easement and the Program FAQ.

Proposed Protected Property: The application is being submitted for a proposed project. The applicant is attesting to the location, current uses, current conditions, value and size. Errors or omissions in any of these elements in the application will be grounds to stop evaluation of the application. If the project scope (public access, etc.) changes after the grant is awarded, the project may no longer be eligible for funding, but the applicant can reapply for a grant at a later date.

Projected Property Management: If the applicant is a previous grant recipient and the previously awarded projects are not managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement – including public access requirements, the current application will be ineligible for funding.

Federal Funding: If the applicant is or will be applying for federal funding that would result in the State’s interest in land being subordinate to a federal easement, the grant award will be adjusted to account for the remaining value of the property that will be provided to the State (i.e., recreational value). It will be the responsibility of the applicant to support a proposed value with relevant information. The final grant award will be at the discretion of the Commissioner after recommendations are made by DEEP staff and the Natural Heritage, Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board.

Task Completion Timeframes: Applicants should have funds available and the ability to close the project within 18 months and finish installing signage and public access within 24 months of the award date. The applicant may be required to turnback the funds if the project does not meet the timeline below. The applicant’s ability to comply with the recommended timeframes will be considered in for eligibility for future OSWA grant applications. To achieve this initiative, the following task completion timeframes are required:

	Completion Timeframe
➤ (1) Purchase and Sale Agreement (if not provided in application)	within 3 months
➤ (2) Mapping (A2 survey)	within 9 months
➤ (3) Preliminary title work	within 12 months
➤ (4) Grant Agreement execution & payment	within 15 months
➤ (5) Property closing & conservation easement execution and land recording	within 18 months
➤ (6) Signage, public access trail & parking compliance	within 24 months

APPRAISAL SELECTION NOTES

Refer to and utilize the “Selecting a Qualified Appraiser Checklist” to pre-qualify appraisers BEFORE you need an appraisal so that you have a group of qualified appraisers you can contact when you do need one.

Contact state and federal users of appraisal services and appraisal review departments to get feedback on appraisers you may be considering. They may be able to tell you if an appraiser may be unable to meet the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (UASFLA a/k/a Yellow Book).

Do not wait to order your appraisal. Most qualified land appraisers will require anywhere from 3 to 8 weeks to complete a land appraisal assignment and the most qualified appraisers will be booked quickly for funding programs (CT DEEP Open Space Grant Program) that require many appraisals. Once the appraisal is received, it must be reviewed and approved by another appraiser, who will prepare the appraisal review. The review appraiser will likely also require 3 to 8 weeks to prepare the review appraisal, affirming that the original appraisal was prepared in accordance with UASFLA a/k/a Yellow Book.

When seeking quotes, provide the appraiser and the reviewer with a detailed description of the subject property (including available maps), all the agencies/funding partners involved in the assignment, the specific property rights to be appraised and any other requirements of the assignment.

You need to be sure that the appraisal and the appraisal review comply with the UASFLA and the requirements of all the funding agencies that will be intended users of the report. Certain agencies and programs may have conflicting appraisal requirements. Be aware that some appraisals cannot meet the requirements of multiple users (example: The IRS, USPAP, and Yellow Book use different market value definitions) and that more than one appraisal may be necessary depending on the circumstances.

For a PDF Copy of the **UASFLA (Yellow Book)** go to:

<http://www.justice.gov/enrd/land-ack/Uniform-Appraisal-Standards.pdf>

For **IRS Appraisal Guidelines** go to <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p561/ar02.html#d0e1653> or Google **IRS Publication 561** and http://www.irs.gov/irb/2006-46_IRB/ar13.html

For PDF Appraisal Specifications for the **NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**: <http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=37029.wba>

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SELECTING A QUALIFIED APPRAISER CHECKLIST

1. ___ Are you a Certified General Appraiser in the State of CT?
2. ___ Do you have any specific appraisal education pertaining to The *Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (UASFLA a/k/a Yellow Book)* and or conservation easement appraisals? *Have they taken the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions Course, completed the Valuation of Conservation Easements Certificate Program with the Appraisal Institute, or any other similar valuation courses offered by other organizations?*
3. ___ Do you have a copy of the Yellow Book? Are you knowledgeable about the *UASFLA* or Yellow Book Appraisal requirements? If not, what would you do to assure that the appraisal will comply with Yellow Book appraisal standards?
4. ___ What are the major differences between appraisals done to Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) and *UASFLA -Yellow Book* standards? *(Briefly-Yellow Book-requires: larger parcel analysis; different definition of market value; and 10-year sales history of subject vs. 3 for USPAP, as well as other differences).*
5. ___ Would you use sales to federal, state, municipal and or land trusts as comparable sales in Yellow Book appraisals? In USPAP appraisals? *(This is a red flag since DEEP and Federal agencies, in almost all cases, will not accept these types of sales in any appraisal).*
6. ___ How many Yellow Book Appraisals have you done? How many in the last 24 months? Which agencies, municipalities, land trusts or non-profit conservation organizations have you done Yellow Book or USPAP appraisals for? Have you done any appraisal work for the specific funding agency(s) involved in the assignment *(CT DEEP, CT Department of Agriculture, USDA-NRCS, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, etc.)?*
7. ___ Are you aware of and knowledgeable regarding the appraisal requirements for the program that is the basis for this assignment *(e.g., CT DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program, USDA-NRCS programs, etc.)?* *If a USDA Appraisal is required, ask "Are you aware of the specific requirements for the USDA-NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, which replaced the former Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, Grassland Reserve, and Wetland Reserve Programs under the 2014 Farm Bill?" These programs may have different supplemental appraisal requirements that an appraiser needs to be aware of.*
8. ___ Have you done land appraisals in this town, county or market area before? If so, how recently? Can you give me examples of the types of property you have appraised in this area *(town, size of parcel, fee simple; before and after/easements)?*
9. ___ Have you ever had any appraisals rejected by the agency that this appraisal will be done for *(DEEP, USDA-NRCS, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife, etc.)?* If so, why was it rejected?
10. ___ Could you provide 3 references from the client groups you have done appraisals for *(i.e. land trust, municipality, State of Connecticut, corporation)? Try to get one reference for each client group and then follow-up to inquire about the client's experience with the appraiser, the quality of the appraisal, their ability to meet deadlines, and if any appraisals were rejected.*