

CEEJAC

LAND SUBCOMMITTEE

Chair: Yaw Darko, CT Land Conservation Council | April 4, 2024



WELCOME & ROLL CALL

Welcome – Yaw
Darko, CT Land
Conservation
Council, Chair

TERRY ADAMS

ALEX RODRIGUEZ

SHARON LEWIS

GUSTAVO REQUENO SANTOS

KATHY CZEPIEL

REGINALD SAINT FORTCOLIN

ANNA PICKETT

MEETING

GROUND RULES

During the discussion, all members should:

- **Listen respectfully, without interrupting**
- **Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views**
- **Only have one conversation at a time**
- **Be mindful to give others the opportunity to speak**
- **Focus on the task at hand rather than the position**

- **Avoid off-topic conversations**
- **Criticize ideas, not people**
- **Commit to learning, not debating**
- **Avoid blame, speculation and inflammatory language**
- **Avoid assumptions about any member of the group**

CEEJAC – Summary Purpose

- Serves an advisory role to the Commissioner of DEEP to ensure EJ considerations are integrated into DEEP's programs and policies and that community stakeholders can provide input on DEEP's work.
 - An avenue for DEEP to strengthen their partnerships with other governmental agencies and community leaders and organizations regarding EJ issues.
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Goals of Land Subcommittee

1

Include community stakeholders in the development of grant funding programs focused on EJ communities.

2

Identify strategies for conserving, revitalizing, and remediating land in urban environments.

3

Identify opportunities to reduce barriers to accessing open space.

AGENDA

- Presentation on Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) - Lindsay Suhr, *Director, Office of Land Acquisition and Management, CT DEEP*
- Announcements, Updates, and Events
- Upcoming Meetings

**PUBLIC COMMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED
THROUGHOUT THE MEETING**

PRESENTATION ON:

Presentation on Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA)

By: Lindsay Suhr, Director, Office of Land Acquisition and Management, CT DEEP



OPEN SPACE AND WATERSHED LAND ACQUISITION GRANT PROGRAM

Presented by: Lindsay Suhr, Office Director, Land Acquisition and Management, CT DEEP

HISTORY

- Created in response to 21% open space goal in statute (1997)
- 1st round in 1998 and generally offered once a year
- Prior to this program there were State funds for open space conservation, but not consistent
- Funding- State bond money & Community Investment Act money
- Since 1998 – \$157 million+ to protect over 42,000 acres



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Grant funds for permanent interests in land (fee acquisition or conservation easements)
- Permanent conservation easement granted in favor of DEEP w/ commitment for passive recreation
- Eligible entities
 - Municipalities
 - Non-profit conservation organizations (land trusts)
 - Water companies



PROTECTION PRIORITIES



- Recreation, forestry, fishing, conservation of wildlife or natural resources
- Water quality of the state's lakes, rivers and coastal waters
- Land which is eligible to be classified as Class I land or Class II land after acquisition
- Local agricultural heritage
- **Equitable geographic distribution of the grants**
- **Proximity of a property to urban areas or to areas with open space deficiencies and underserved populations**

RANKING SCORE CRITERIA

- **Administrative**

- Mapping
- Title, funding, and feasibility within timeline
- Alignment with local, State and regional conservation goals
- Support letters

- **Public Access & Outdoor Recreation**

- Accessibility
- Public outreach
- Trail or greenway connectivity
- Past grant compliance

- **Environmental Justice & Equity**

- Alignment with GC3 EJ recommendations
- Community impact/public transportation
- Population density
- Affordable housing

- **Climate Change & Natural Resources**

- Forests
- Wetlands
- Rivers & Fisheries
- Agriculture & Soils
- Wildlife



APPRAISALS

OSWA Grant Application
REQUIRES:

- 1 yellow book appraisal completed – appraisals cannot be more than a year old
- 1 appraisal review confirming that the appraisal is yellow book compliant



MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT

|to a..... |for..... | ...in an amount not to exceed...* |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Municipality | Open space | 65% of fair market value |
| Municipality | Class I & Class II Water supply property | 65% of fair market value |
| Distressed municipality or targeted investment community ** | Open space | 75% of fair market value |
| Distressed municipality or targeted investment community ** | Resource enhancement or protection | 50% of cost of such work |
| Nonprofit land conservation organization | Open space or watershed protection | 65% of fair market value |
| Nonprofit land conservation organization (if land is located within a distressed or targeted community) | Open space or watershed protection | 75% of fair market value |
| Water company | Class I & Class II water supply property | 65% of fair market value |

* Max grant amount

**List available on DEEP website



KNOWN EXISTING BARRIERS

- Small, isolated parcels did not score as high in criteria
- Length of time
- Complicated process/Need for expertise
- No contamination allowed
- High due diligence costs
- Environmental Justice Communities don't all qualify for increased funding amounts
- Protection projects done by non-profits in distressed, targeted, EJ communities need permission from Municipal CEO
- Funding cannot be used for traditional urban parks with infrastructure
- Review board without EJ representation

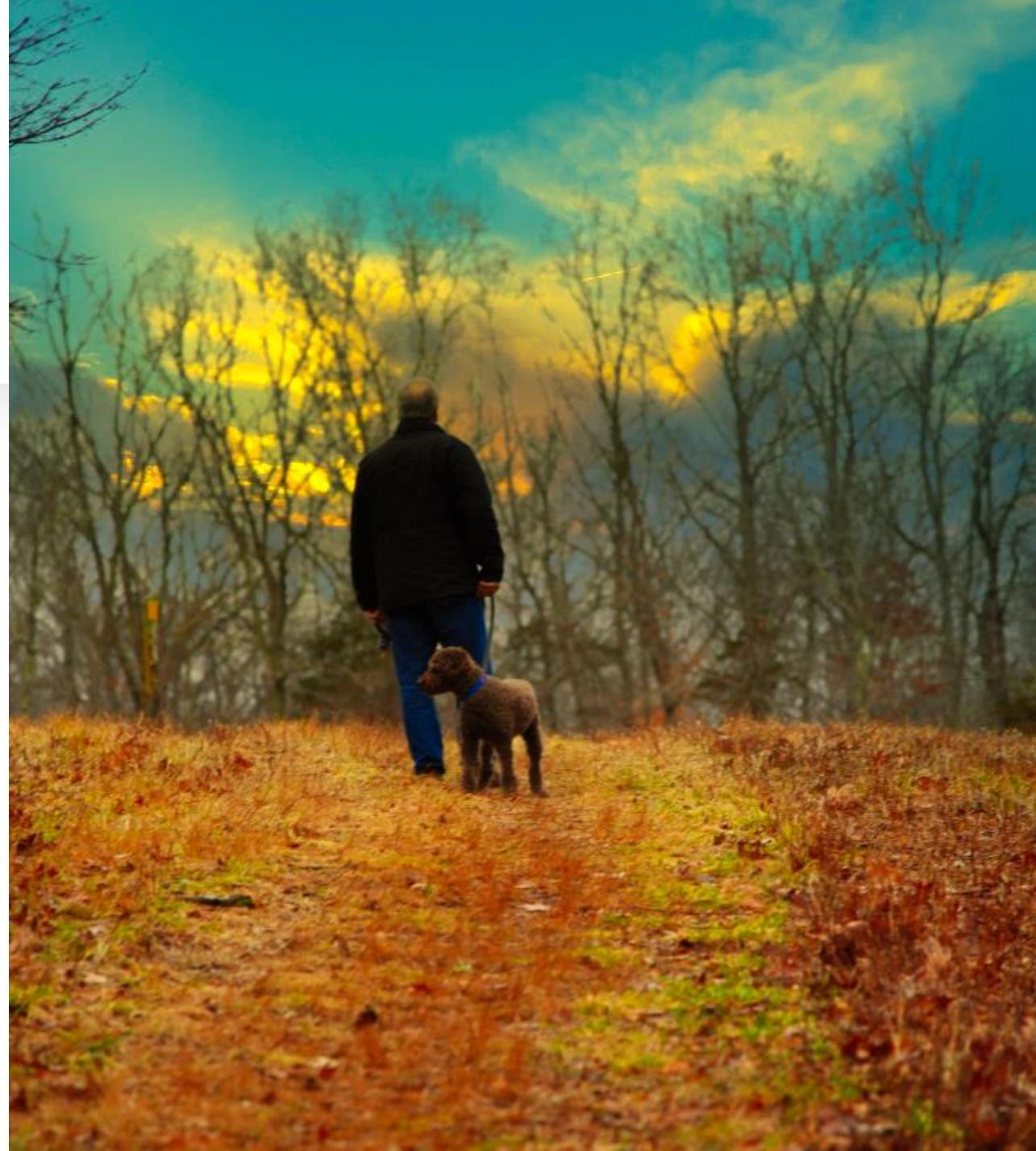
UPDATES & IMPROVEMENTS

- Application & Scoresheet – 2020 additions of EJ specific sections
- Current statute changes – SB11
 - Add EJ communities to areas that qualify for 75% FMV
 - Allow due diligence costs to be covered by grant money in EJ communities, distressed municipalities and targeted investment communities
 - Add two positions to the review board focused on environmental justice and equity
- Align, simplify and clarify application & scoresheet
- Change appraisal requirements
- Future statute changes
- Establish new grant program to cover other park needs
- Additional Outreach
- Partnerships to cover additional costs
 - Remediation funding
 - Planning & grant-writing assistance
 - Due diligence costs



HOW CAN CEEJAC HELP?

- Provide insight into additional barriers to using this funding in EJ communities
- Provide feedback on application, process and scoresheet changes that will help
- Provide thoughts on potential future statute changes
- Help facilitate outreach opportunities





MORE INFORMATION

portal.ct.gov/DEEP-OSWA

CONTACT

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A male hooded merganser duck is shown swimming in dark water. The duck has a black head with a prominent crest of black feathers, a white patch on its cheek, and a yellow eye. Its body is primarily brown with white stripes on the wings. The water is dark and shows ripples, with a clear reflection of the duck below. In the top left corner, there is a small blue horizontal bar.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPDATES, & EVENTS



THURS APRIL 18, 2024
1:00-3:00PM
CEEJAC LAND
SUBCOMMITTEE DEBRIEF
ABOUT OPEN SPACE AND
WATERSHED ACQUISITION
GRANT PROGRAM

**UPCOMING
MEETINGS**



Scan the QR code for the
CEEJAC Feedback Form



THANKS!