



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

April 2024

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

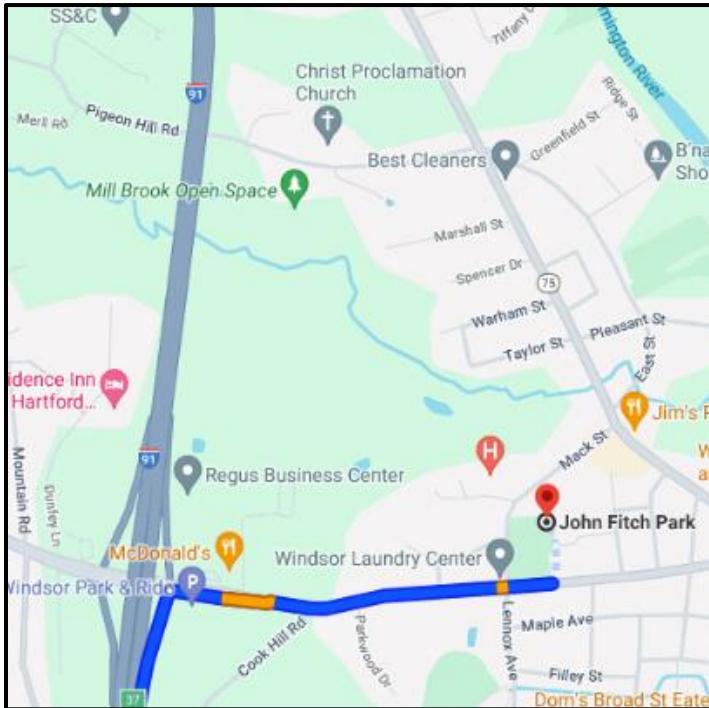
The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program provides grants to municipalities and private nonprofit land conservation organizations for the acquisition of open space land and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II watershed land. The State of Connecticut 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 was one Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program grant funded in March 2024. Additional information on the project follows.

Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
Town of Windsor	Mill Brook Open Space	Windsor	93.97

Town of Windsor
Mill Brook Open Space, Windsor
93.97 Acres

The Town of Windsor and the Trust for Public Land partnered to purchase this 93.97 acre parcel, which was previously a privately-operated golf course. It is located on the southerly side of Pigeon Hill Road, adjacent to downtown Windsor and some of the Town's most densely settled residential neighborhoods. The property was one of the few large, undeveloped parcels in the area, providing important wildlife habitat in an otherwise highly fragmented and developed landscape. The property contains a varied mix of wet and upland meadow, shrubby wetlands, riparian corridors, and about 4,000 feet of Mill Brook, an important tributary to the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers. The property is utilized by aquatic, avian and terrestrial species and is part of the Mill Brook Greenway corridor. Its open fields, high grass and early successional habitat are especially suitable for migratory bird stop overs and songbird nesting. It provides passive recreational opportunities such as walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, bird watching and wildlife viewing. The Town will conduct a variety of nature-related programs and walks and use the property as an outdoor classroom for local youth. Many of the trails are flat and wide allowing accessibility to those in wheelchairs or children in strollers. Existing trails lead from the parking area on Pigeon Hill Road and extend throughout the property. The property is near two affordable housing complexes that serve both seniors and children.





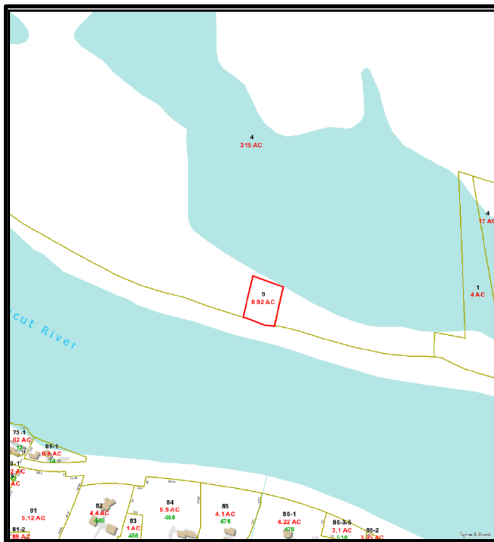
Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program

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 two Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program closings in March 2024. More information on the projects follows.

Property Name	Town(s)	Cooperators & Cost Share	State Share	Acres Protected	Purpose of Acquisition
Palmer	Haddam	None	\$0 Donation	0.92	Addition to George Dudley Seymour State Park
Pagano	East Haven	None	\$0 Donation	3.4	Addition to East Haven Wildlife Management Area

Palmer property
Connecticut River, Haddam
0.92 Acres

Roger Palmer & Russell Palmer generously donated their 0.92-acre parcel along the Connecticut River to the DEEP to be added to the George Dudley Seymour State Park. This vacant parcel was surrounded by the park and features attractive views of the river. The addition of this land provides opportunities for passive recreational use including hiking and bird watching.



Pagano property
111 Hemingway Ave (Rear), East Haven
3.4 Acres

Valerie Pagano generously donated her 3.4-acre parcel of vacant land to the DEEP to be added to the East Haven Wildlife Management Area. This property helps expand the area by connecting two sections of the WMA. It will provide additional protection for waterfowl and will help with future marsh migration.

