

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

July 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

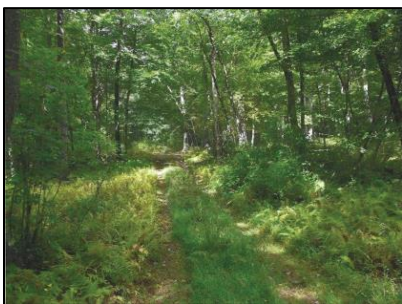
The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program provides grants to municipalities and private nonprofit land conservation organizations for the acquisition of open space land and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II watershed land. The State of Connecticut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

Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.	Townshend Phase IV	Pomfret	220.57

**Wyndham Land Trust, Inc. (WLT)**  
**Townshend Phase IV, Pomfret**  
**220.57 Acres**

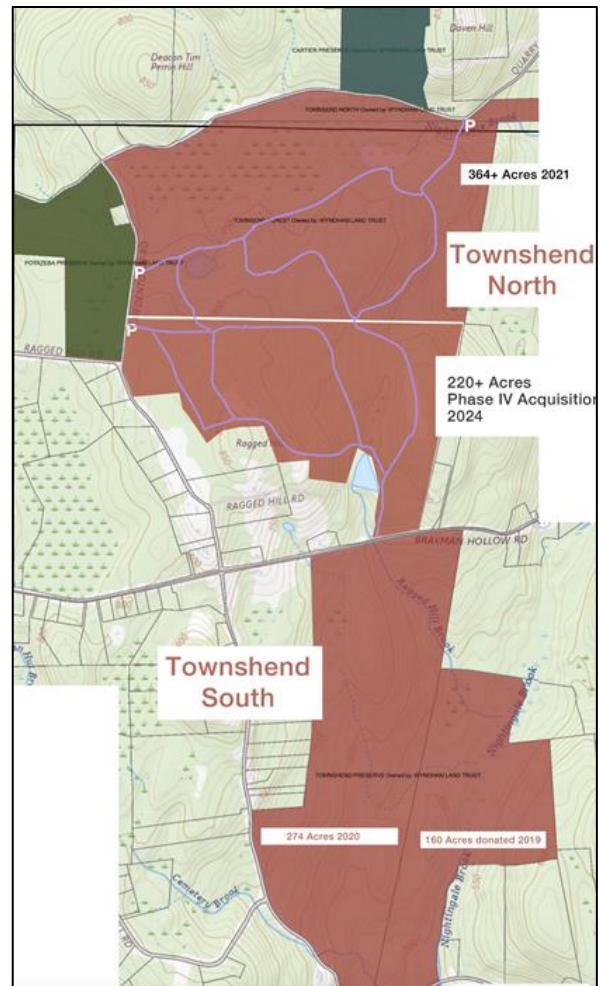


This is WLT’s fourth purchase from the Townshend Family, for a combined 1,100 acres in the Nightingale Forest Preserve. This 220+ acre parcel is the southerly portion of “Townshend North”, which features a dammed pond and headwaters to Nightingale Brook which drains into Mashamoquet Brook. A public parking area and trailhead will be created on Swedetown Road, which will connect to established trails on adjacent preserves. The property is situated within a 4,000-acre forest block and major wildlife corridor, capable of supporting at least 20 species of greatest conservation concern and expanding destinations for bird watchers seeking hard-to-find species inhabiting mature forest, such as black-throated blue warblers and broad-winged hawks.



A local historian and curriculum specialist for the NAACP Windham/Willimantic Branch researched the lives of enslaved people who lived and worked on these tracts during the 1700’s. According to the specialist, the original land proprietors used

slave labor to clear fields, build stonewalls and dams for local mills and tending livestock and crops. This acquisition ensures the land remains accessible to historians and the State Office of Archaeology for further research of enslaved history. WLT will support the specialist’s research, witnessing gravesites and inviting people from urban areas to visit and walk in the footsteps of the past, connecting to nature through a meaningful historic lens.



**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(s) in July 2024. Additional information about the project follows.

Property Name	Town(s)	Cooperators & Cost Share	State Share	Acres Protected	Purpose of Acquisition
Bartlett	Colchester	None	\$160,000	62.7	Addition to Salmon River State Forest

**Bartlett Property**  
**Bull Hill Rd, Cochester**  
**62.7 Acres**  
**Addition to Salmon River State Forest**

The Bartlett property consists of a forested parcel of land featuring over 2,100 feet of frontage along the popular Salmon River. This acquisition fills in a gap within the forest and helps provide watershed protection, forest cover for the river, and additional passive recreational activities including hiking and fishing.

