



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

March 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

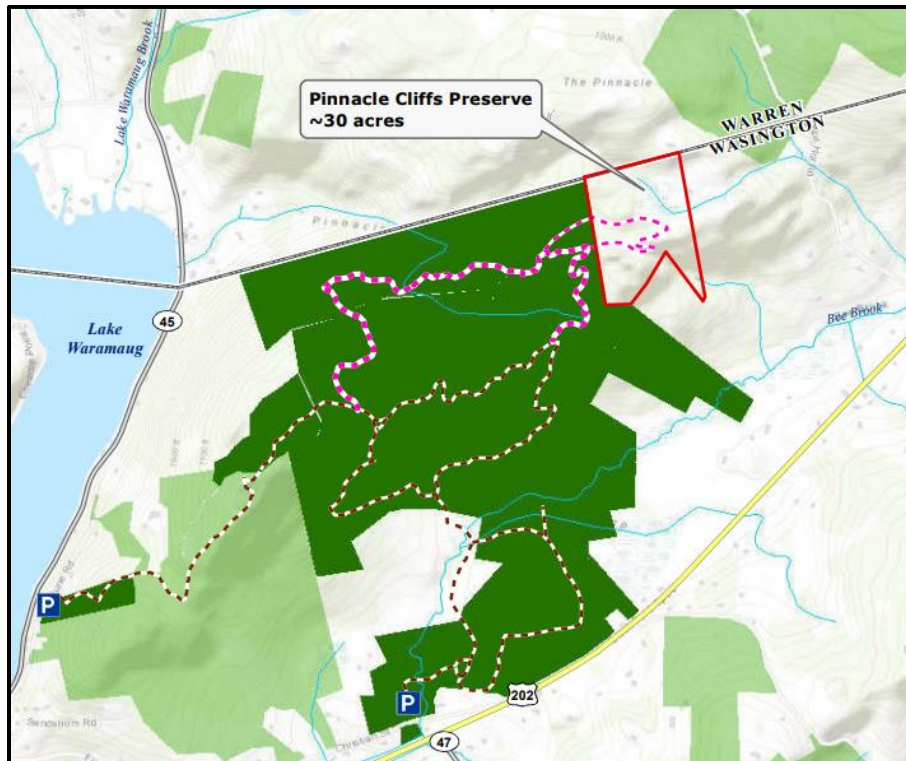
The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program provides grants to municipalities and private nonprofit land conservation organizations for the acquisition of open space land and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II watershed land. The State of Connecticut 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
Steep Rock Association, Incorporated	Maricostas Preserve Expansion - Pinnacle Cliffs Property	Washington	30.462

Steep Rock Association, Inc.
Maricostas Preserve Expansion – Pinnacle Cliffs Property, Washington
30.462 Acres



Located easterly of Rabbit Hill Road, on the Washington and Warren Town line, this property expands upon the existing 700-acre Macricostas Preserve, part of a 1,056-acre intact core forest block. The property hosts bobcats, bats, sedge skippers and bronze copper butterflies and many other species. It is situated within the Audubon's Shepaug State Forest Important Bird Area and contains habitat for concern species like Louisiana Waterthrush. There are vernal pools, 5 acres of inland wetlands and 0.5 miles of streams which feed Meeker Swamp, one of the last remaining calcareous wetlands in northwestern CT. Meeker Swamp overlies and feeds Washington's largest aquifer. Public access will be via a trail spur from the existing 6.6-mile Macricostas Preserve trail network, affording hikers with access to a visually stunning boulder field and stream bed surrounded by soaring bedrock cliffs. SRA often lends its preserves for scientific research and would add this Property to future monitoring for tree stand, stream temperature, insect and amphibian, acoustic bat, marsh and other nesting bird, and other natural resource conditions.





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 March 2024.