

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

**September 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. Three Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program grants were funded in September 2024. Additional information on the projects follows.

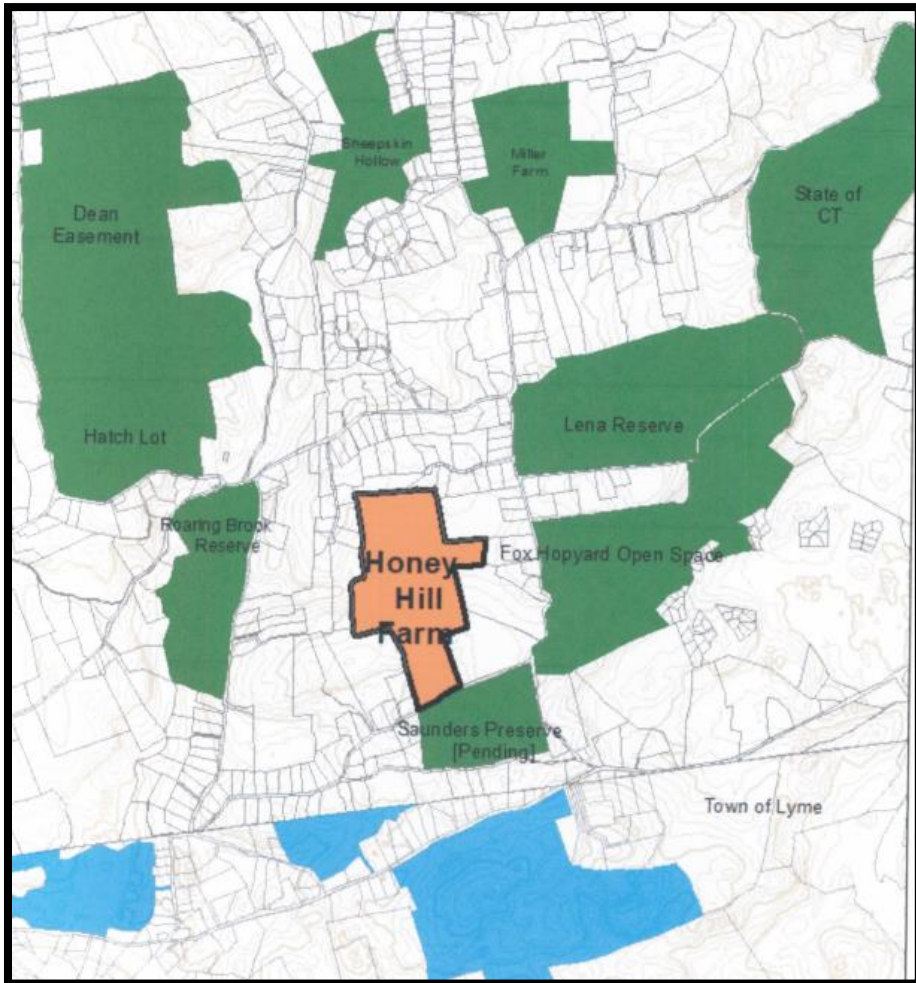
Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
East Haddam Land Trust, Inc.	Mangano-Mazella Farm Preserve	East Haddam	123.653
Winchester Land Trust, Inc.	Cannavo Springs Watershed Property	Winsted	20.894
North Branford Land Conservation Trust, Inc.	Beech Street & Poms Lane Properties	North Branford	36.682

**East Haddam Land Trust, Inc. (EHLT)**  
**Mangano-Manzella Farm Preserve, East Haddam**  
**123.653 Acres**

This property is mostly mature forest with shrub understory and inland wetlands, located entirely within the Whalebone Creek Watershed. An inland stream drains into Roaring Brook and ultimately Whalebone Cove, which supports diadromous migratory fish species. This acquisition adds to a large open space corridor including the Town's Lena and Roaring Brook Reserves, Fox Hopyard and The Nature Conservancy's Burnham Brook Preserve. It lies within a CT Breeding Bird Atlas block and reportedly supports Audubon CT species of greatest conservation concern including wood thrush, worm-eating warbler and cerulean warbler. EHLT will develop a land management plan that enhances the Property's tree stands for a variety of habitats, such as shrubland for New England cottontail rabbits. The rolling terrain and existing woods roads will be available for hiking, snow shoeing, environmental educational and other passive recreational activities.

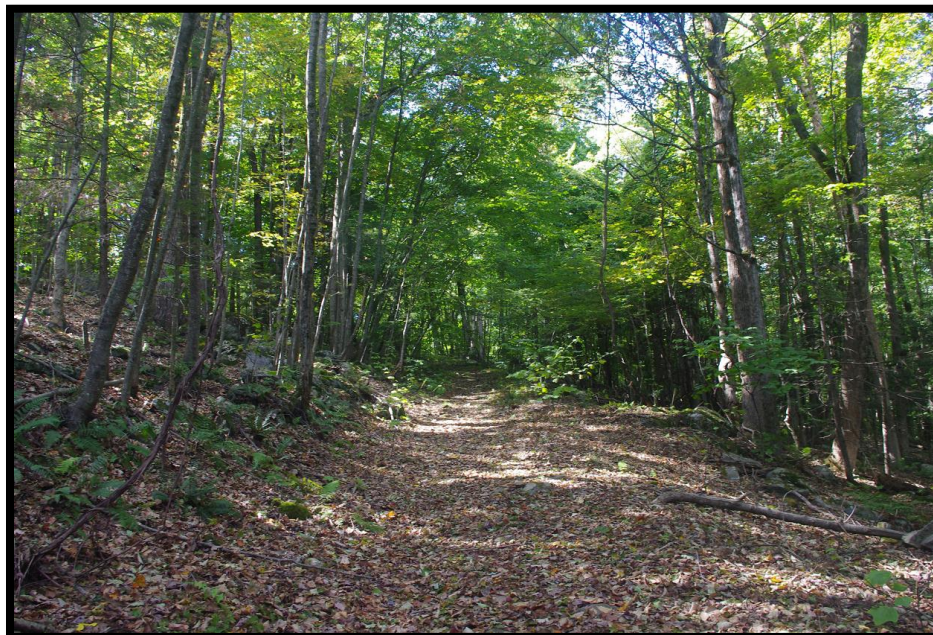
This property contained an old farm dump which needed to be remediated. EHLT was one of the first applicants and recipients of funding from DEEP's CERCLA 128(a) Brownfield Grant Program, to complete the remediation necessary, to receive the DEEP OSWA grant.





**Winchester Land Trust, Inc.**  
**Cannavo Springs Watershed Property, Winsted**  
**20.894 Acres**

The property is a forested hillside that protects a town treasure, the Cannavo Spring. The spring has been a source of drinking water for cottages without wells on Highland Lake for generations. People from all over still trek to the spring to fill jugs of the delicious water, which has been called Winchester's Fountain of Youth and Winsted's Old Faithful. 17 of the 20 acres are forested and part of a greater, under-protected 860-acre core forest block. The downtown Winsted property will expand outside recreational opportunities for Winchester and Torrington, both distressed municipalities and environmental justice communities. An old woods road from Pratt Street will be made into a linear trail for walking, bird watching, nature photography and other passive recreational activities. Additional funding for this acquisition was provided pursuant to a Highlands Conservation Act grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Conservation Investment.

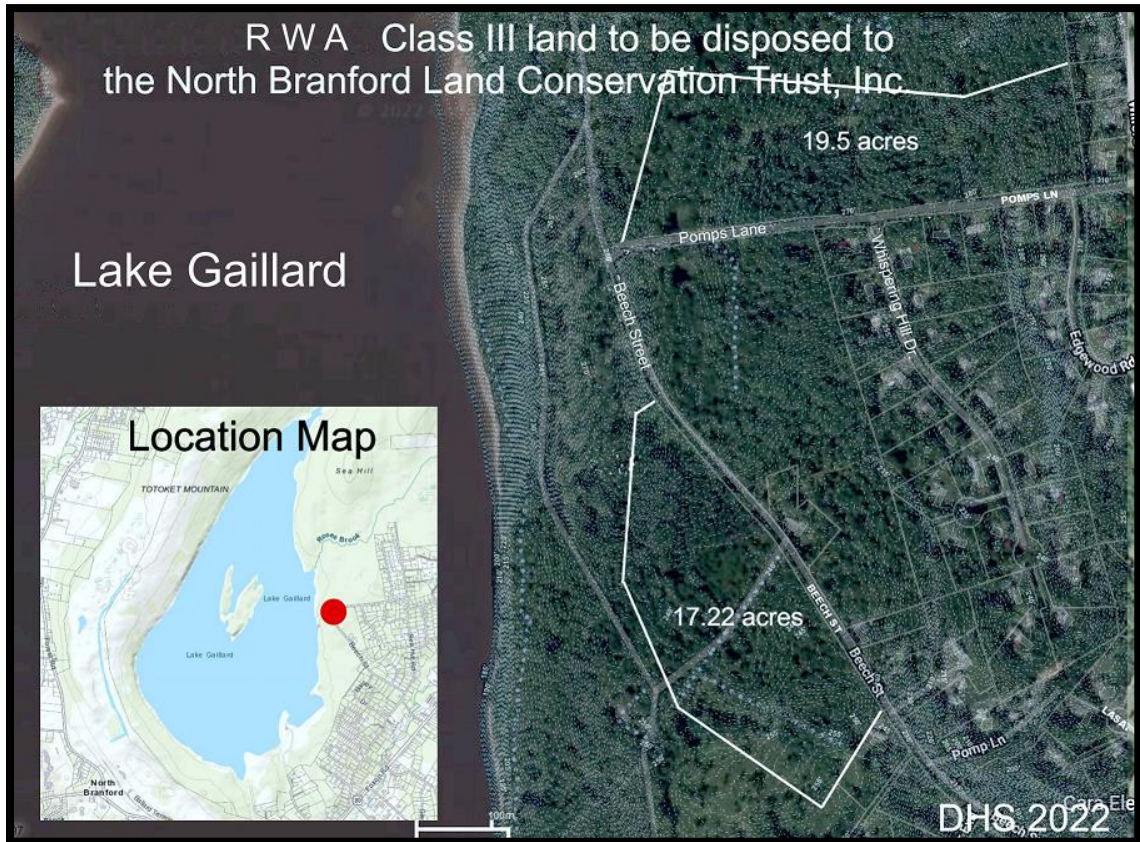




**North Branford Land Conservation Trust, Inc. (NBLCT)  
Beech Street & Poms Lane Properties, North Branford  
36.682 Acres**

The two parcels, on Beech Street and Poms Lane, were part of the RWA's Lake Gaillard reservoir. While they do not drain into Lake Gaillard, they are situated in the Branford River watershed and drain into Notch Hill Brook. North Branford has limited Town-owned land devoted to nature-based outside recreation and hosts no federal or State open space land. The Town population and need for local trails and natural areas continues to grow. These properties will provide much needed green space for the Town. The NBLCT will preserve the properties from loss by development and open them to public passive recreation. NBLCT will by create an 8-12 car parking area with a bicycle rack and loop trails for passive recreational use. At the Beech Street Property, two (2) ADA-accessible parking spaces will be added with a wheelchair accessible path (composed of either packed gravel or boardwalk) leading to a vernal pool. In 2018, the RWA conducted a timber harvest removing half of the trees and opening space for young forest growth. NBLCT will develop a Forest Management Plan that meets the US NRCS's goals and guidelines for supporting forest habitat growth, Northern long-eared bat habitat, protection of vernal pools and inland wetland resources, and control invasive plant species at the Properties.







### **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 in September 2024.