



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

August 2025

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.

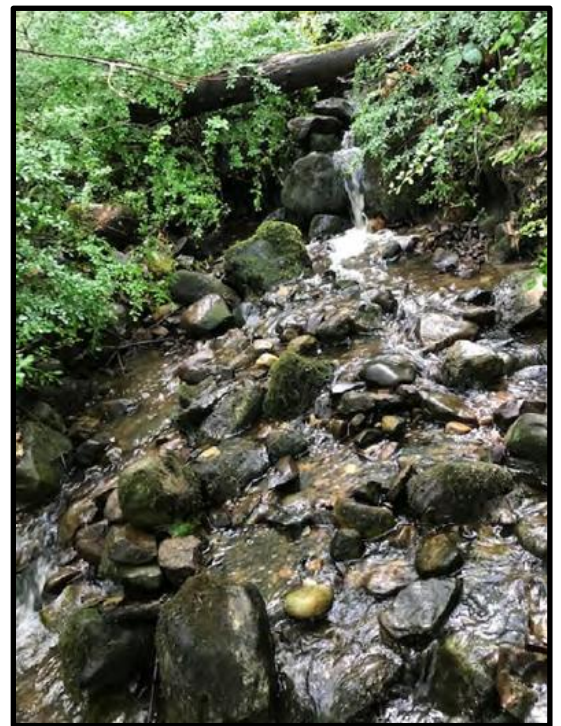
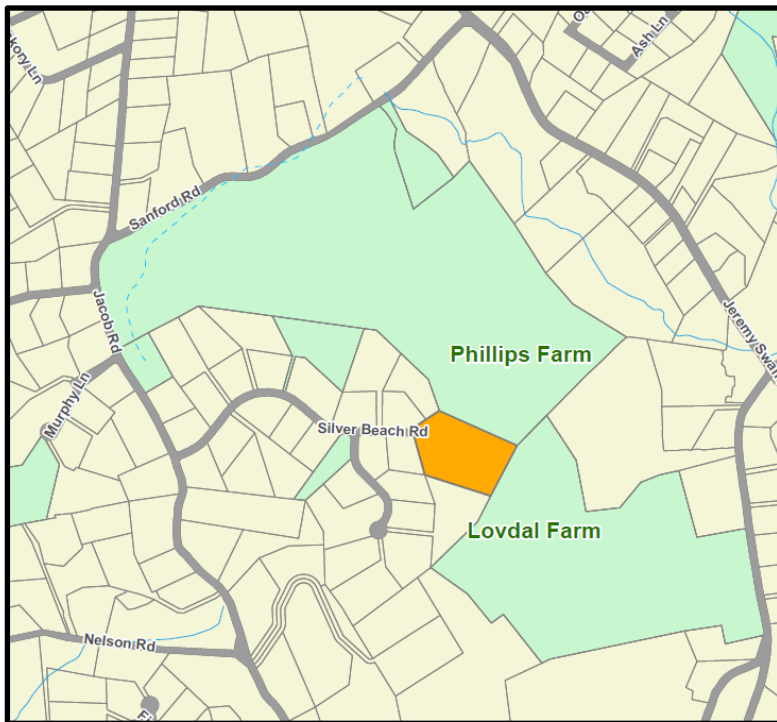
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program

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. Two Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program grants were funded in August 2025. Additional information on the projects follows.

Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
Southbury Land Trust, Inc.	Silver Beech Property	Southbury	5.199
Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy, Inc.	Glen Brook Property	Sherman & New Milford	117.26

Southbury Land Trust, Inc.
Silver Beech Property, Southbury
5.199 Acres

Protecting the Silver Beech Parcel has been a top strategic conservation goal of Southbury Land Trust (SLT) for over a decade. This parcel contributes a crucial link in an emerging greenbelt of preserved open space that stretches from Southbury into Oxford. This parcel improves connectivity between SLT's Phillips Farm Preserve and Lovdal Farm Preserve. All four of the surrounding Nature Preserve's hiking trails, including the 5K cross country nature trail, converge at the border of this parcel. It will also provide a new shortcut, to access the existing trail system. Preservation will protect the scenic ridgeline view along adjacent Lovdal Preserve's Drumlin Hill. This parcel contains upland forest habitat, vernal pools, streams and year-round springs and seeps. A spring-fed stream and other seasonal streams drain into Phillips Farm Preserve's uncommon "fen" wetland, which is home to state-listed species, including those on the CT Endangered Species List. Preservation of this parcel will protect abutting small to "Medium Core" (250-500 acre) forest blocks, moderate and young forest, and transitional habitats.

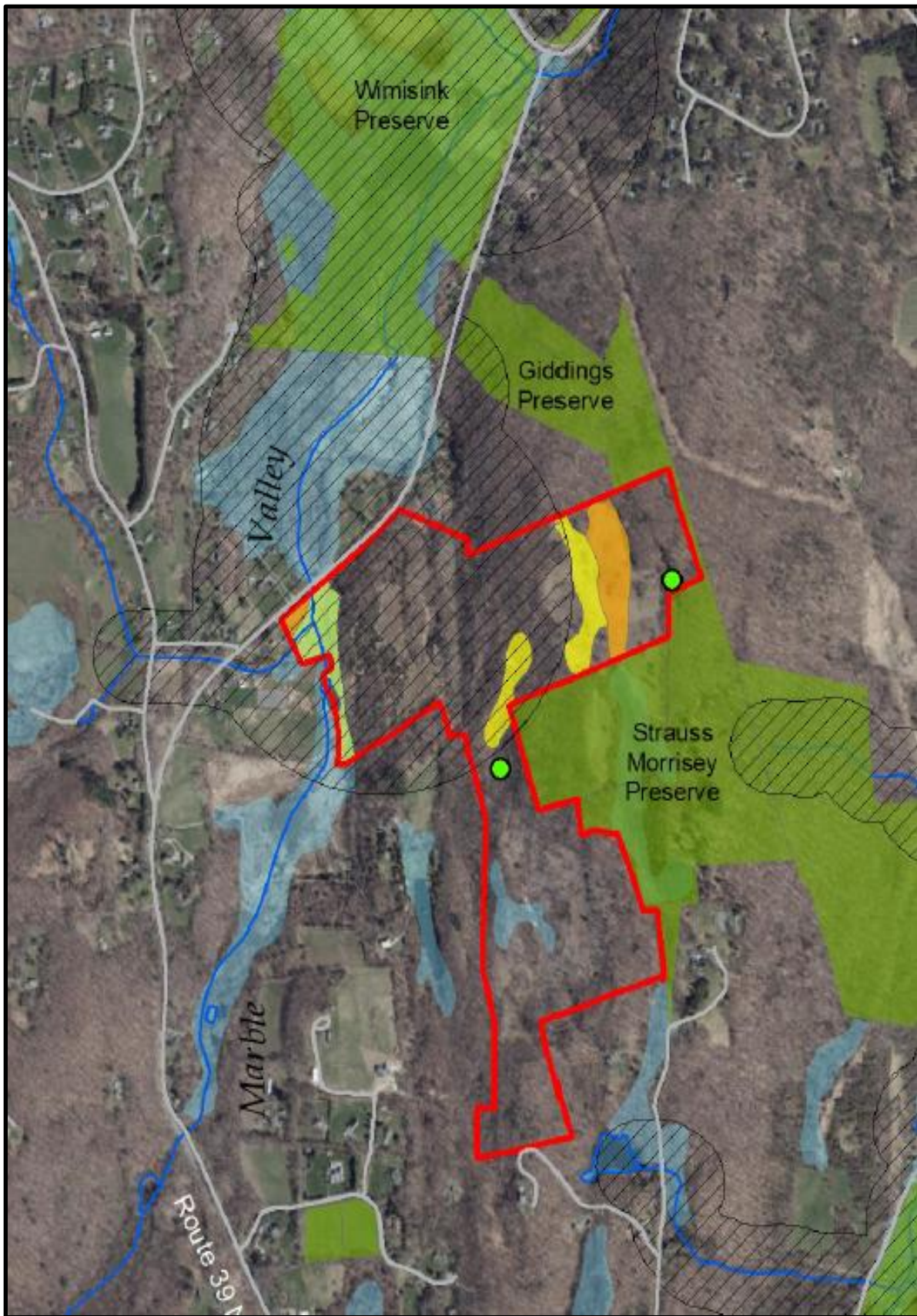


Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy, Inc.
Glen Brook Property, Sherman & New Milford
117.26 Acres

Glen Brook is one of the largest undeveloped parcels remaining in Sherman and the acquisition creates an opportunity for a premier public hiking preserve for the region. The property is bordered to the east by NCLC's 160-acre Strauss Morrissey Preserve and contains diverse forest stands including mature hemlocks and extensive oak/mixed hardwood stands on a steep, west facing slope. The property also contains high elevation post-agricultural fields, wooded wetlands, and at least two confirmed vernal pools. Numerous State listed species of flora and fauna have been noted on the subject property. The property's wetlands drain into the Wimisink calcareous swamp that supports numerous State listed species and is an area identified as one of Nature's Network Core Connectors. The Wimisink swamp drains into the Housatonic River. Conservation of this property would protect high-quality natural and scenic land, wildlife habitat, core forest, drinking water resources, promote climate resilience, and provide recreational opportunities to the public. NCLC plans to build a four-season recreational trail network, with two miles of trail through varied terrain and habitats, along with a 10,000 square foot off-street parking area to support upwards of 30 vehicles. Further, the planned trails on the subject property will be linked to those on the Strauss Morrissey Preserve, providing a connected trail network of 4.5 miles that stretches from Sherman to New Milford, containing superb hiking and scenic vistas. Additional Highlands grant funds were provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior Fish & Wildlife Service.







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 August 2025.