

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

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

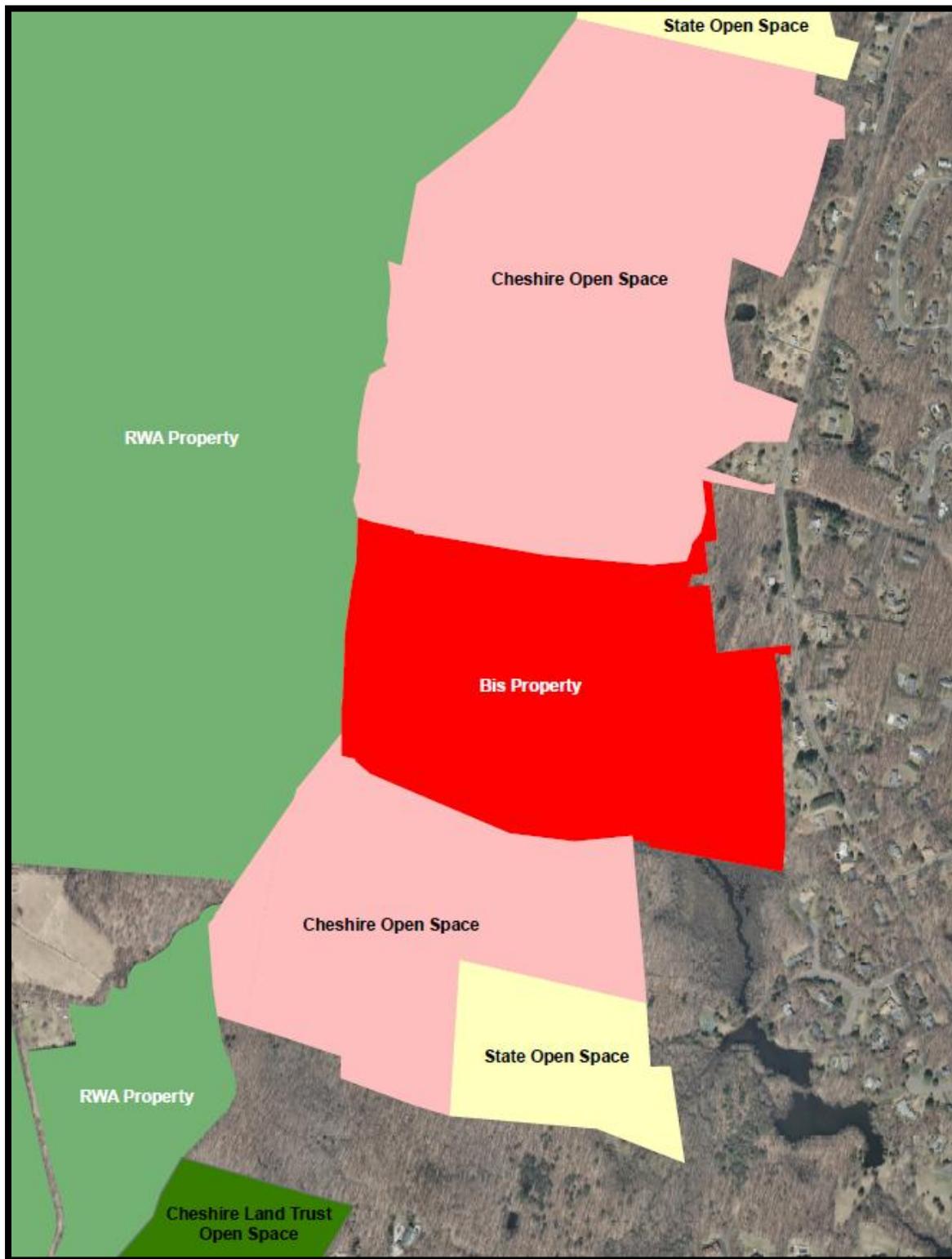
Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority	Bis Property	Cheshire & Prospect	77.97
Warren Land Trust Inc.	Mountain Lake Road	Warren	149.62
Warren Land Trust Inc.	Tanner Farm	Warren	70.00

**South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA)
Bis Property, Cheshire & Prospect
77.97 Acres**

This entirely forested property with frontage on Mountain Road in Cheshire contains 20 acres of wetlands, is part of West Rock Ridge (WWR) and connects RWA property to Town of Cheshire, Cheshire Land Trust and State-owned open space properties. This purchase contributes to an almost 900-acre protected block of core forest. The ridge is traversed by numerous trails, notably the Regicides and Quinnipiac Trails. Feeder trails also run from town roads and properties into the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System. The addition of this parcel provides benefits to local hiking, walking, bird watching, viewsheds and other local passive recreational opportunities. The wetlands, forested swamps and small stream running at the base of the slope of WWR, provide habitat for upland and wetland species migration. The wetlands and stream are within the Lake Whitney watershed and protecting them will help maintain pure drinking water for the public water supply. According to NDDB, the subject property and nearby area of West Rock Ridge contains state-listed species. Additional funding was provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Highlands Conservation Grant program.

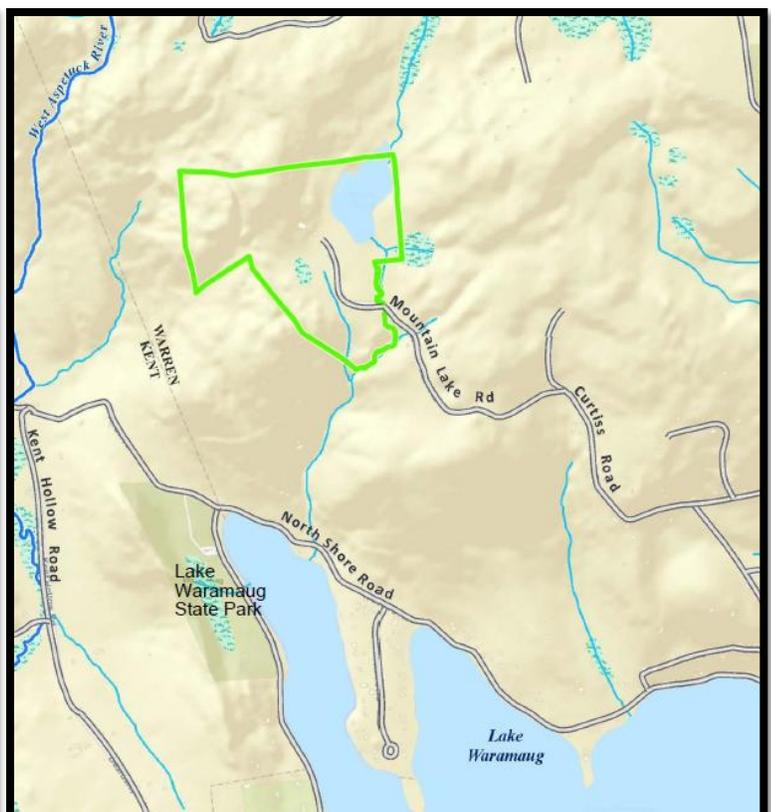
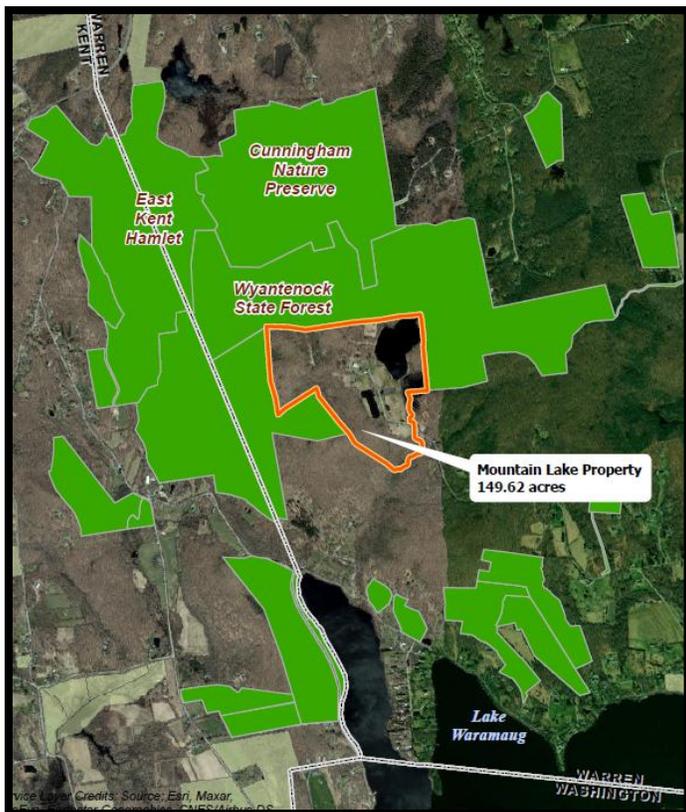






Warren Land Trust Inc. (WLT)
Mountain Lake Road Property, Warren
149.62 Acres

This property contains diverse and sensitive natural resources and is part of a contiguous protected block of approximately 1,200 acres with an extensive trail system. The property is home to high quality water resources that are vital to protect both the ecosystem and public water supply of the area. The property contains 71 acres of a larger, 2,213-acre, under-protected core forest block and several smaller, rare habitats: 2.5 acres of dry oak-pine forest, 3.3 acres of a Laurentian-Acadian wet meadow-shrub swamp, less than 1 acre of a North-Central Appalachian acidic swamp and 1.75 acres of early successional forest. This property protects high quality natural waters that drain into the East- and West Aspetuck watersheds, including Lake Waramaug. This wetland system recharges a public drinking water supply and contains the 16-acre Straits Pond, a 2-acre man-made pond, and multiple Class I and II cold-water streams. The property will present recreational opportunities to people of all ages and abilities. The existing hiking trails on the property will be connected to the trail systems on abutting protected properties. Featuring trails of different lengths and difficulty, hikers, walkers, bird watchers and nature lovers will be able to traverse woodlands, wetlands, and meadows, and even access a natural Amphitheatre. There will also be a wheelchair-accessible pathway to the water's edge of Straits Pond.



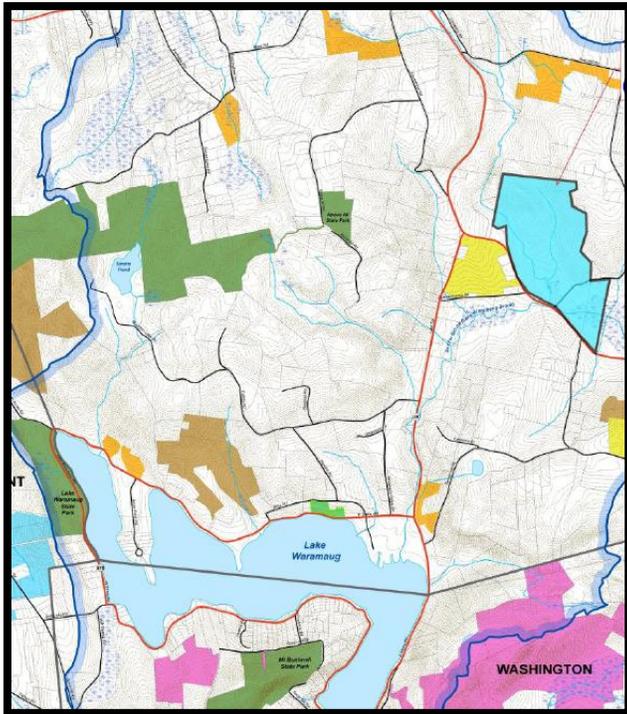


Warren Land Trust Inc. (WLT)
Tanner Farm, Warren
77.97 Acres

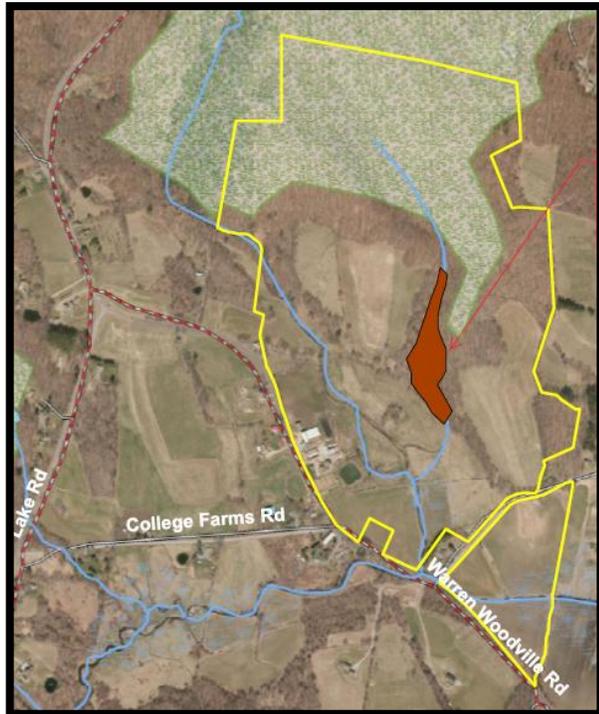
WLT acquired the 202-acre Tanner Farm with funding from CT DEEP's Open Space and Watershed Protection Program and the US Fish & Wildlife Service Highlands Conservation Grant program, for the fee purchase of 70 acres, for open space and passive recreation purposes, and from CT's Department of Agriculture, for the purchase of development rights on 132 acres, for farmland preservation purposes. A 4,000-foot segment of Sucker Brook (a Class 1 Stream) runs through the property. This brook is the largest single water source for Lake Waramaug generating over 60 percent of its water. The northern reaches of the property contains 55 acres of core forest located at the southern end of a larger 230-acre forest block. The property's upland core forest area, grasslands, cold water streams, and upland forested wetlands provides a wide array of wildlife habitat. The farm has almost a mile of frontage on both Route 341 and Angevine Road and is visible from Route 45 making it an important viewshed for the town. Tanner Farm has been in operation for over 150 years and WLT intends to continue agricultural use of the property, and to eventually create a trail connecting Tanner farm to WLT's Coords Preserve Trail which in turn connects to the CT Blue-Blazed Mattatuck Trail. Through this connectivity, the proposed 3.4 miles of Tanner Farm trails will link to an additional 11 miles of existing public trails, and 2400 acres of open space within 2 miles of the farm.



Watershed Protection



Core Forest Protection



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 December 2025.