



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

March 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 March 2025. Additional information on the projects follows.

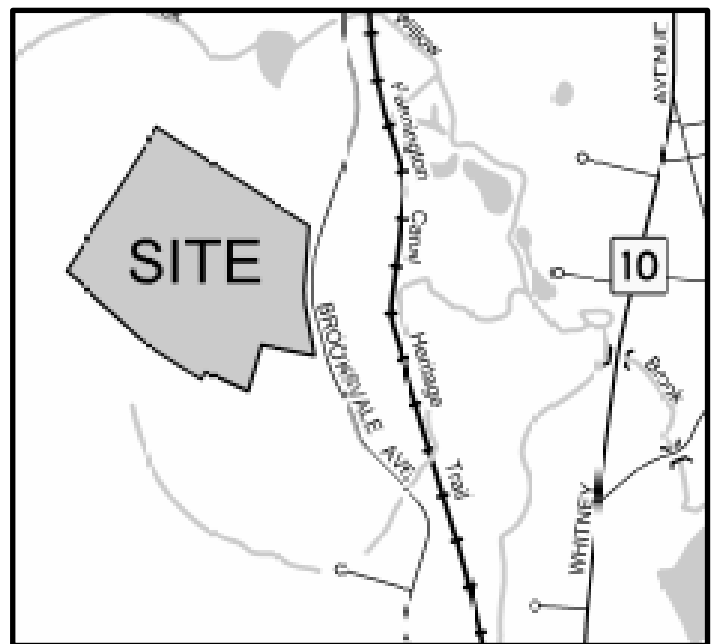
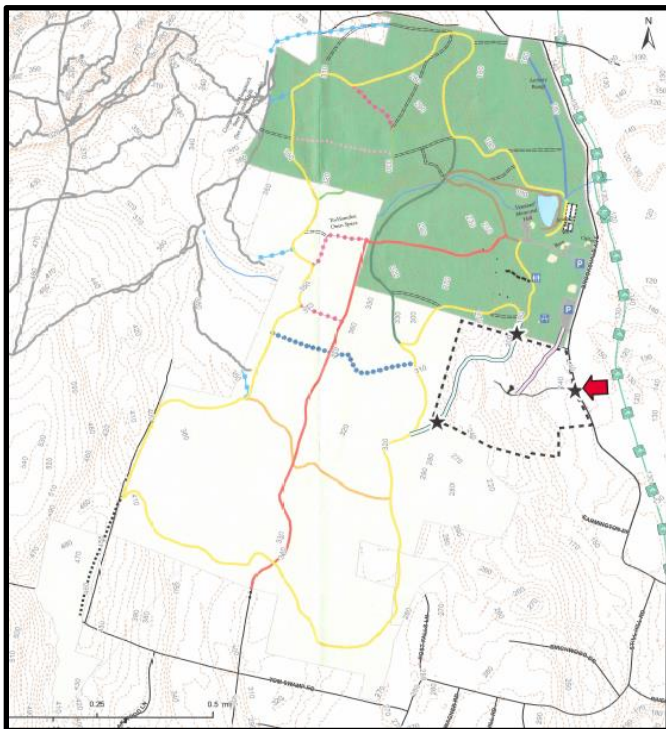
Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
Town of Hamden	370 Brooksvale Avenue Rear	Hamden	41.993
Town of Bethany	Simpson Preserve	Bethany	50.886

Town of Hamden

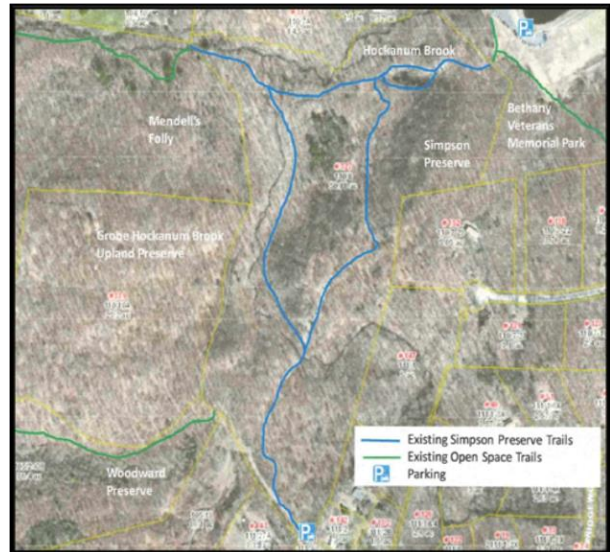
370 Brooksvale Avenue Rear, Hamden

41.993 Acres

This mostly wooded property, in northwest Hamden will be added to the 500+ acre Town-owned and very popular Brooksvale Park (a portion of which was acquired with a prior OSHA grant). Additional Town-owned open space abuts this property to the west and south. Brooksvale Park is a farm inspired park with farm animals, an organic vegetable & herb garden, a sugar shack for boiling maple syrup, and a bee apiary. There are fields for recreational use, hiking trails, picnic areas and ballfields. It provides access to the Farmington Canal Trail and the Blue Trail. The Town will add an off-street parking area on the property with trails that connect to Brooksvale Park, the adjacent open space, and Naugatuck State Forest, northwesterly of Brooksvale Park. The property is also classified as a Level A Aquifer Protection Zone, thus it will protect nearby watershed land.



**Town of Bethany
Simpson Preserve, Bethany
50.886 Acres**



This forested parcel, located at 327 Beacon Road, is adjacent to the Town-owned 149-acre Bethany Veterans Memorial State Park and three Bethany Land Trust Preserves (Mendell's Folley, Grobe Hockanum Brook Upland Preserve and the Woodward Preserve). Hockanum Brook a/k/a Lebanon Brook runs through this bi-geomorphic landscaped parcel which is part of the Naugatuck River Watershed. The property contains multiple habitats that support State listed and protected species. A new off-street parking area will be added at the Northrup Road terminus, with a public access loop trail through the property and along Hockanum Brook which connect to Veterans Memorial Park, offering swimming in the summer and year-round passive recreational opportunities such as hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, horseback riding, birding, fishing and wildlife observation. The adjacent Bethany Land Trust trails travel through wooded headlands noted for white birch trees and huge white pines as well as the ravine of Hockanum Brook near wetlands created by a beaver dam. North American river otter have been observed swimming in the beaver pond.

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 March 2025.