



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

**September 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.

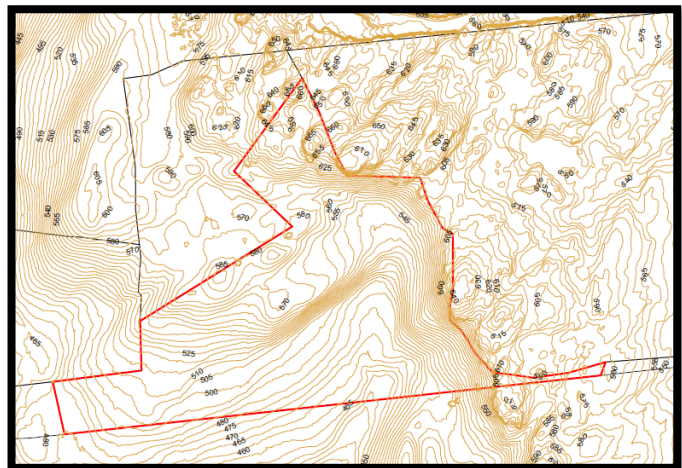
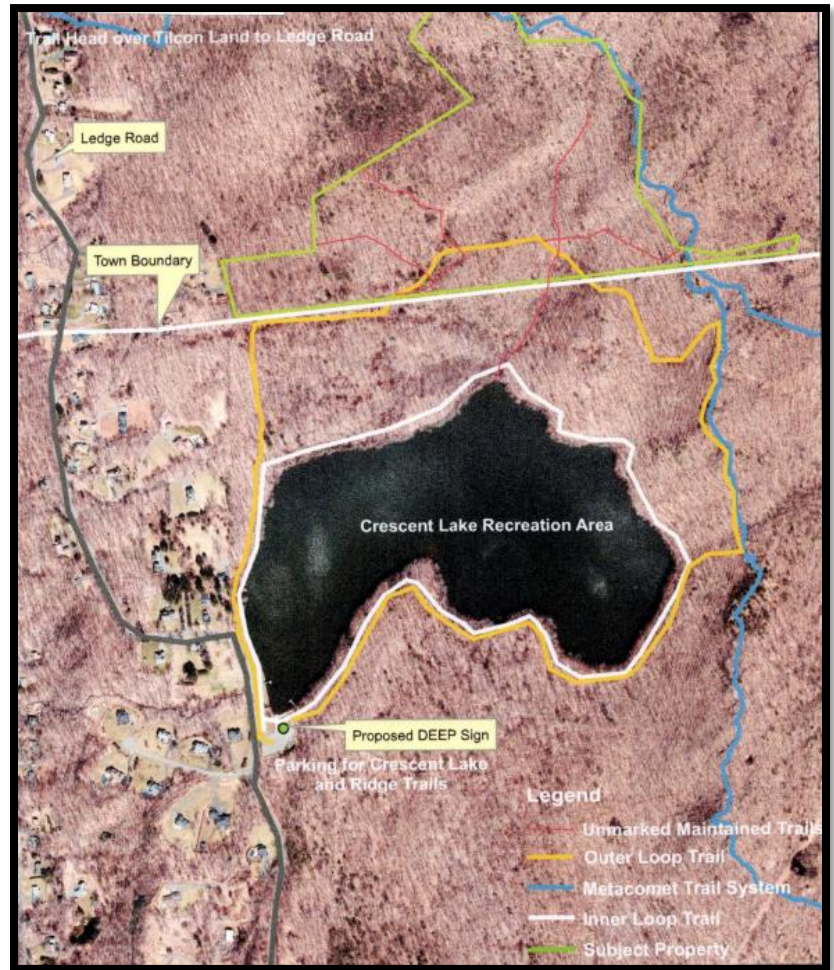
### Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program

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 September 2025. Additional information on the projects follows.

Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
Town of Plainville	Valley Water Property	Plainville	47.9
Winchester Land Trust, Inc.	Laurel Ridge Property	Winchester	507.22

**Town of Plainville**  
**Valley Water Property, Plainville**  
**47.9 Acres**

This 47.9-acre Class III Watershed land purchase (approved by PURA) is densely wooded with rolling topography. It is located in the Southeast section of Plainville, northerly of Southington's Crescent Lake Recreation Area, on the eastern face of Bradley Mountain. It contains a portion of the Metacomet Trail and is part of the ridgeline protection area. Public parking and access will be from Southington's Crescent Lake Recreation Area, with the trail along the westerly side of the lake, going through the Southington property, and connecting to trails on the Valley Water Property and Metacomet Trail.





**Winchester Land Trust, Inc.**  
**Laurel Ridge Property, Winchester**  
**507.22 Acres**

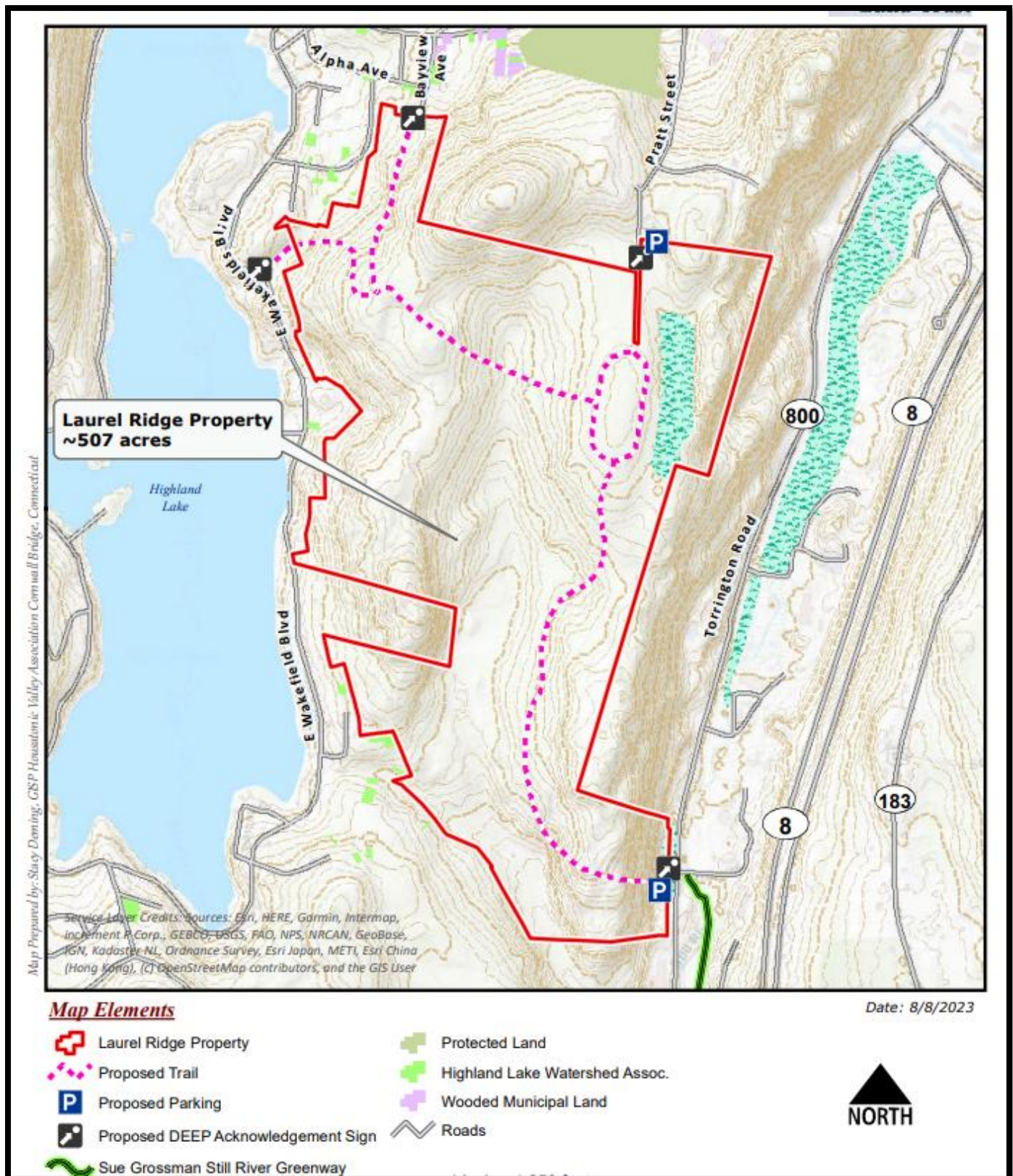
The Laurel Ridge property has been a prime target for conservation for some time. The State, Winchester Land Trust, and the Highland Lake Watershed Association have all tried to acquire or preserve the property. The property features a long, forested ridge, and beautiful viewsheds from both east and west. Streams feed into Highland Lake and East to the Still River, eventually feeding into the National Wild and Scenic Farmington River. The property contains 426 acres of core forest, part of an 860-acre core forest block, near other protected lands, including two State Parks and two previously funded OSWA projects. The terrain is varied, and supports abundant wildlife and plants, with rare species being documented on or near the property. The property contains historical remnants of a demolished flour mill dating back to the 1700s. WLT plans to add educational signage by the remains, to highlight their historical/cultural significance. The site also contains the historic Carey Racetrack, a ½ mile oblong historic horse trotting racetrack (discontinued in the early 1800's) which will become an accessible flat, wide trail for people with limited mobility. The property is within an environmental justice community in Winchester, Connecticut. Additional Highlands grant funds were provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service.



View of Laurel Ridge from Highland Lake



The former Carey Racetrack, to become an accessible flat, wide trail for people with limited mobility





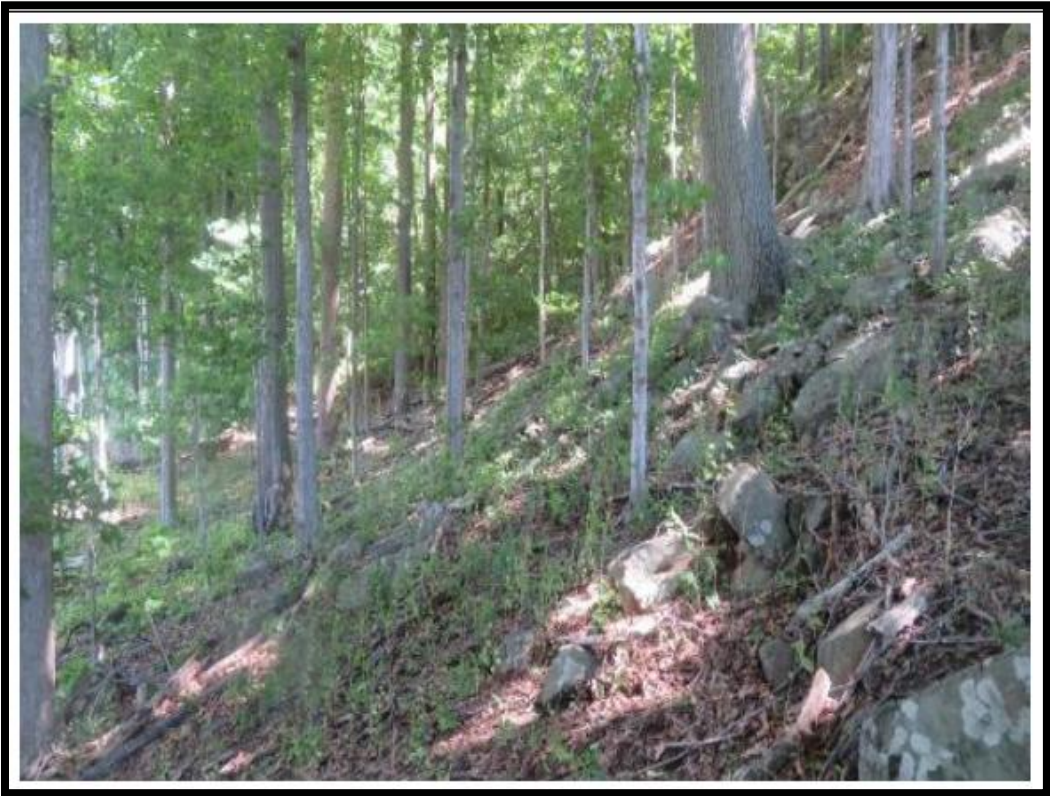
**Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program**

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 was one Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program closing in September 2025. More information on the project follows.

Property Name	Town	Cooperators & Cost Share	State Share	Acres Protected	Purpose of Acquisition
Jacobs	Woodbridge	None	\$22,000	6.19	Addition to West Rock Ridge State Park

**Jacobs Property  
24 Lunar Drive  
Woodbridge  
6.19 Acres**

The Connecticut DEEP acquired 6.19 acres of land off of the end of the Lunar Drive cul-de-sac in the Town of Woodbridge. The parcel is mainly wooded and rises steeply up the hillside to the top of West Rock Ridge State Park. It helps provide a connection between other protected properties and offers protection to the ridgeline and passive recreational opportunities.





## Town of Woodbridge, CT

