



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

August 2026

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 August 2026. Additional information about the projects follows.

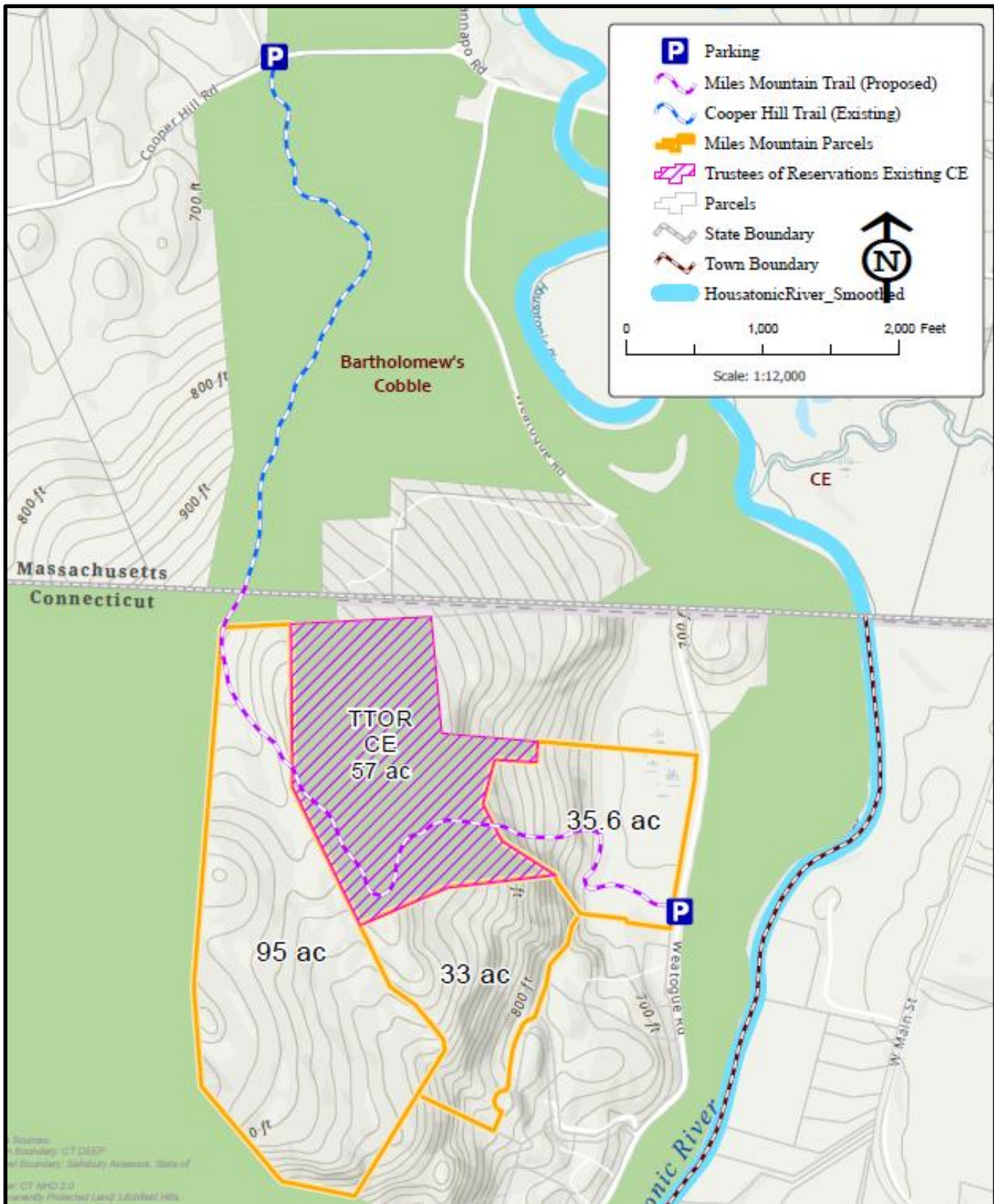
Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
The Salisbury Association, Incorporated	Miles Mountain	Salisbury	163.078
Town of Wallingford	138 Williams Road	Wallingford	41.479
Guilford Land Conservation Trust, Inc.	Westwoods West	Guilford	33.46

The Salisbury Association, Incorporated (SA)
Miles Mountain, Salisbury
163.078+/- Acres



This 220.5-acre property on Weatogue Road is subject to a 57-acre conservation easement held by Trustees of Reservations, so the DEEP OSHA conservation easement will encumber 163.07 acres that surround the already preserved parcel on 3 sides. It has a gorgeous hay meadow on Weatogue Rd and core forest that rises to the top of the Miles Mountain ridgeline. Bartholomew's Cobble abuts the property to the north, a popular and environmentally important preserve in Massachusetts. The property's forested slopes support 127 acres of core forest, a mixed northern transitional forest of hardwoods and conifers. The complex terrain includes a floodplain, ravine and a ridgeline with rock outcrops and coarse woody debris. It adjoins large blocks of protected land that link the property to the Housatonic River. There are 6 State-listed NDDDB species at or near this property and prime, statewide and locally important farmland soils, with 22 acres in agriculture as pasture or hay production. SAI will add a public parking area on Weatogue Road and a public access trail. The trail will follow the edge of the farm field, climb Miles Mountain and connect to the Trustees of Reservations trail on the Bartholomew's Cobble Preserve, further connecting to a parking area on Copper Hill Rd in Massachusetts.

Additional funding was provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior, acting through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by virtue of a Highlands Conservation Act grant.



Town of Wallingford
138 Williams Road Property, Wallingford
41.479 Acres

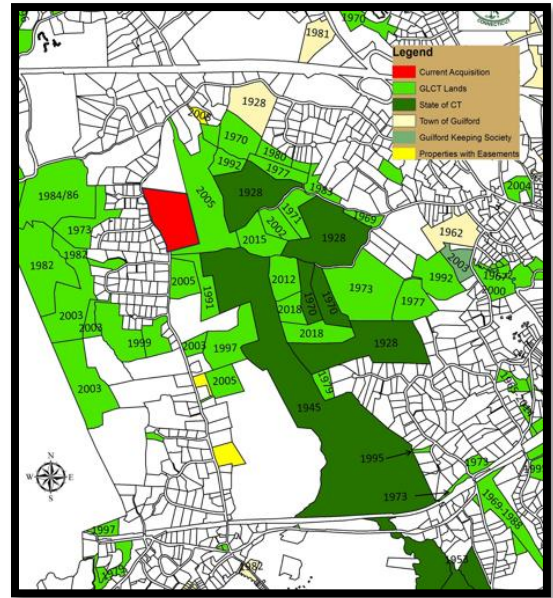
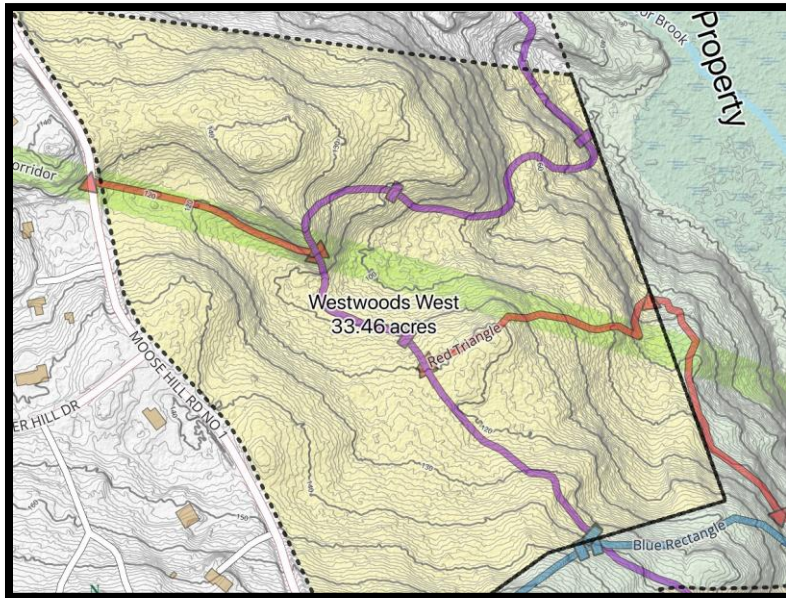


This acquisition will protect Class I and II lands under the Wallingford Water Division's supervision protecting this undeveloped watershed area from environmental degradation and providing water quality purification in its open and forested areas. This parcel is traversed by the Muddy River, a Class AA watercourse, and primary tributary for McKensie Reservoir. The Muddy River supports native fish and provides a valuable wildlife corridor, connecting habitat around McKensie Reservoir upstream through rural and low density developed lands to Spring Lake and beyond. Preservation of this parcel will contribute to the assurance of clean and ample public drinking water. In addition to water quality protection, this parcel includes unfragmented diverse mature forest, open meadow land, wetlands, and a floodplain corridor. It abuts other protected lands including agricultural lands, forest, wetland, and reservoirs. Each piece contributes to the ecological importance of this area, functioning as a migratory route, wildlife corridor, reservoir of biodiversity and as a breeding area for birds that require large areas of mature forest, early successional habitat or grasslands.

There is a public parking area on Williams Road that connects to an existing farm road, then a defined walking trail through the forested area, adjacent to a former agricultural field. Passive recreational uses include walking, hiking, viewsheds, bird watching, and stream fishing.



Guilford Land Conservation Trust, Inc. (GLCT)
Westwoods West
33.46+/- Acres



This 33.46- acre property, on Moose Hill Road, is mostly wooded and highly developable. It is on the northwest side of the 1,000+-acre Westwoods Forest (mostly GLCT-owned with a portion in Cockaponset State Forest). It is home to a mature upland oak-hickory forest as well as an increasingly rare early successional habitat created by a powerline cut (the lines and structures were removed in 2022). It contains boulder fields of Stony Creek Granite and a small surface stream that is part of the watershed flowing into Lost Lake and then the Long Island Sound at the Great Harbor Wildlife Management Area and Joshua Cove. The property hosts a range of imperiled flora and fauna and serves as a buffer for this rare core forest located along the I-95 corridor. There are already several well-loved hiking trails in the Westwoods Trail system that have been located on the property for decades.



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 2026.