

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

June 2026

Overview

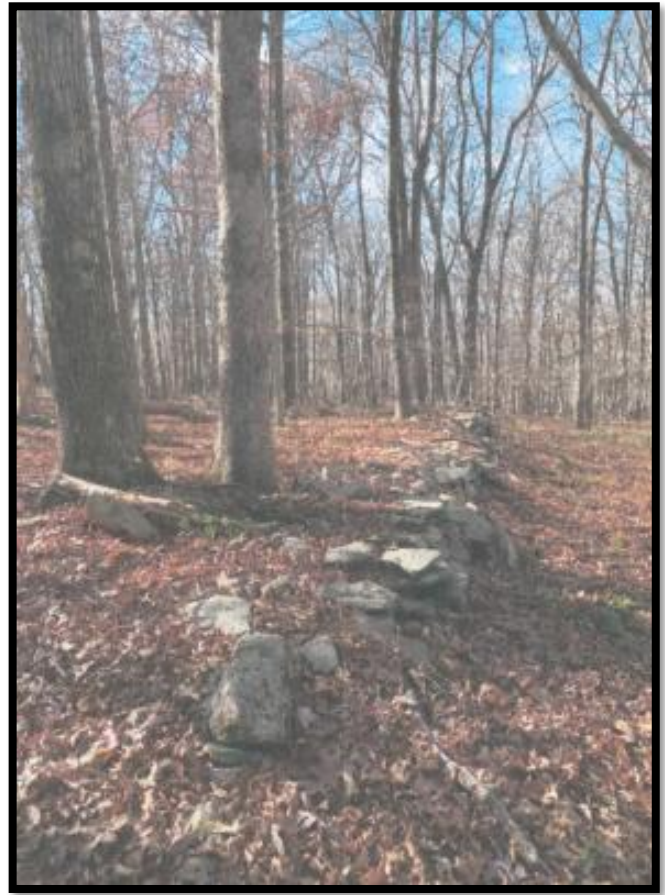
Section 22a-6v of the General Statutes of Connecticut requires the Commissioner of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection to submit a report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and bonding and to the State Bond 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. One Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program grant was funded in June 2026. Additional information about the project follows.

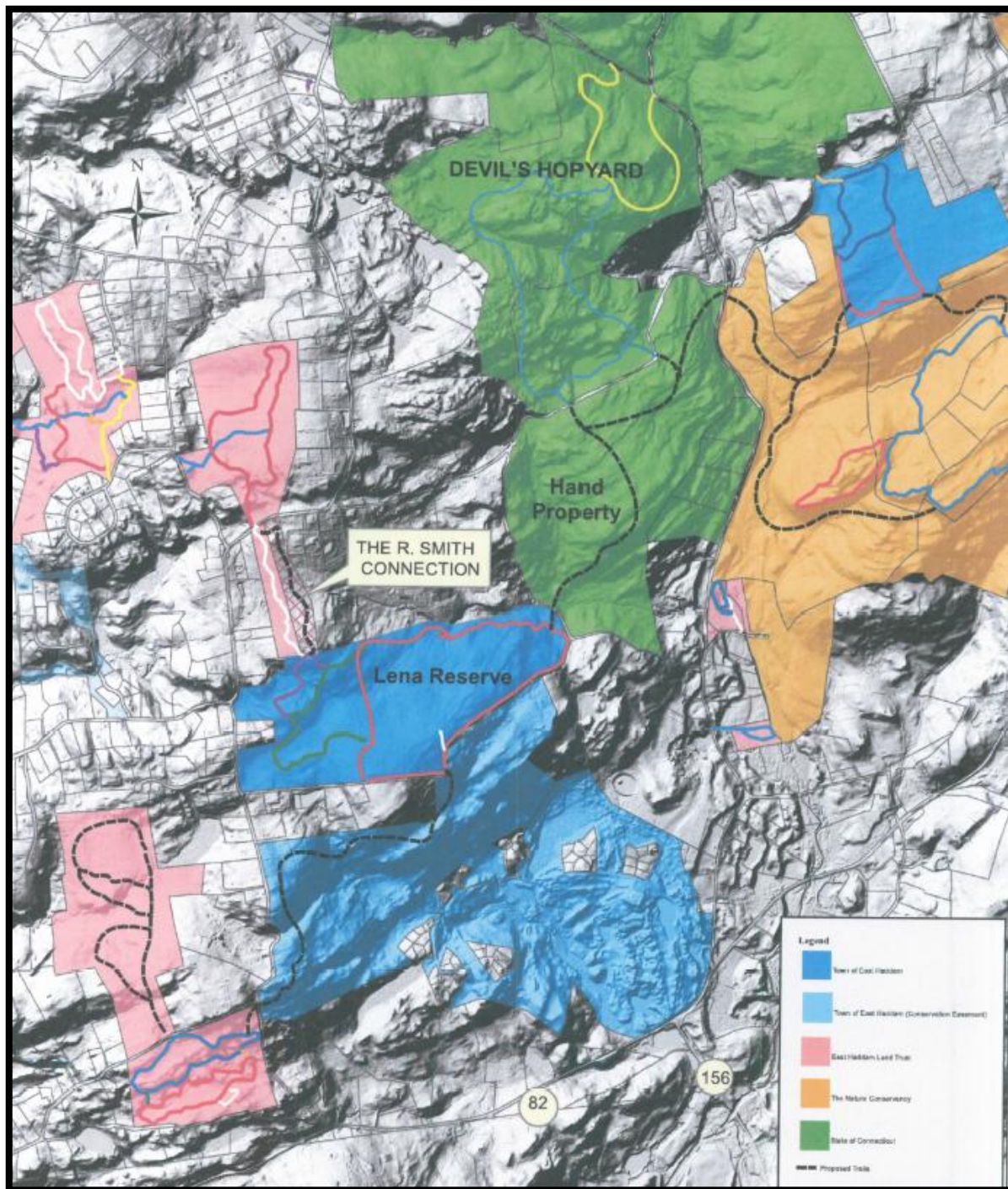
Sponsor	Project	Town	Acres Protected
East Haddam Land Trust, Inc.	Rob Smith Preserve	East Haddam	14.105

East Haddam Land Trust, Inc. (EHLT)
Rob Smith Preserve
14.105+/- Acres



This property, located on Tater Hill Road in southeastern East Haddam, contains 14+ acres of mature hardwood forest in an area of core forest. Conserving this property enhances bird habitat in a large greenway of connected preserves, protects two watersheds, a vernal pool and wooded wetland. Two-thirds of the property is in the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Watershed, one-third is in the Whalebone Creek/Hemlock Valley Brook/Roaring Brook Watershed, and the entire property is in the Audubon Lyme Forest Block Important Bird Area.

EHLT's Walls Way Preserve abuts the property to the west, EHLT's Miller Farm Preserve is across Tater Hill Road to the north and the Town's Lena Reserve abuts this property to the south. These properties create a 322-acre greenway and connect 6.5 miles of hiking trails. This greenway further connects (through Lena Reserve) to DEEP's Hand Property & Devil's Hopyard SP. These State properties connect to TNC's Burnham Brook Preserve. The Lena Reserve also connects with Conservation Easement-protected Fox Hopyard Golf Course & EHLT's Saunders & Mangano-Mazzella Preserves. Together these conserved properties create a greenway of 2700+ acres.



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 three Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program closings in June 2026. Additional information about the projects follows.

Property Name	Town	Cooperators & Cost Share	State Share	Acres Protected	Purpose of Acquisition
Mangieri	Newtown	None	\$1,050,000	151.93	Addition to Paugusset State Forest
Wilkins	Salem	Migratory Bird Stamp Funds \$150,000; Private funds \$10,000	\$114,000	70.63	Addition to Nehantic State Forest
Sinclair	Norfolk	None	\$90,000	2.72	Extension of Norfolk Mountain Express Greenway

Mangieri

319 Berkshire Rd, Newtown

Paugusset State Forest

151.93 Acres

The Mangieri property consists of 151.93 acres located at the southern end of Paugusset State Forest. This beautiful property is mainly forested, with nearby residential development. It features a significant amount of mature oak trees which in turn support a diverse wildlife habitat. Historically the property was used for charcoal production, with remnants found throughout the land. The acquisition expands the size of the forest and will provide passive recreational opportunities including hiking and birdwatching.





Wilkins
220 Old New London Road, Salem
Nehantic State Forest
70.63 Acres

The Wilkins property consists of 70.63 acres located between Old New London Road and the old Route 11 connector. It features a beautiful upland forest and sensational beaver pond with a large heron rookery. All manner of waterfowl utilize the beaver pond, as well as spotted turtles and other herps. The acquisition expands the size of the forest, helps with wildlife protection, and will provide passive recreational opportunities including hiking and birdwatching.



Sinclair
North Street, Norfolk
Haystack Mountain SP / Blackberry River Flood Control
2.72 Acres

The Sinclair property consists of a 2.72 acre parcel sandwiched between Haystack Mountain State Park and Blackberry River Flood Control properties. This vacant parcel was acquired to assist with the future construction of the Norfolk Mountain Express Greenway. The former railroad line abuts the parcel and the portion along North Street was impractical for development due to steep slopes and wetlands. The Sinclair property will provide a section that can bypass the rail line.

