

Sponsor: _____

Total Score: _____

Project: _____

Cost/Acreage: _____

2024 Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program Score Sheet

This score sheet was developed to give applicants of the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) [Sections C.G.S. 7-131c-k](#), insights into the various factors considered by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) when objectively ranking applications. Various experts within DEEP and other State Agencies are assigned to score each application based on the resource values that pertain to their area of expertise. The following is a list of the evaluated resource values and their associated scoring.

DEEP reserves the right to consider additional factors that may not be listed on the score sheet in determining initial or final rankings.

A. Administrative Factors & Community Support (150 points)

1. Mapping & Photos: Did the applicant provide the following maps (including site outline) or photos to support their project description? **(30 points)**

- a. Map with contour lines or topographic map with USGS 1:24,000 scale (5 points)
- b. Location map/town road map (showing road frontage) (5 points)
- c. A2 survey (not required for application but required if awarded) **OR** ortho-photo map showing property boundary (5 points) (Note: ortho-photo map = 3 points, A2 survey =5 points)
- d. Map showing the acquisition's location relative to existing open space (5 points)
- e. Map showing current and proposed recreational uses and how the public will access the proposed acquisition (signage, parking and trail locations included) (excluding water company lands eligible to be classified as Class I or Class II lands) (5 points)
- f. Two or more high resolution photographs of natural resource-based features (5 points)

2. Title, Funding and Feasibility of Acquisition per DEEP's Timeline (<2years): Did the applicant provide the following information to support project feasibility? **(30 points)**

- a. Copy of deed (5 points)
- b. Copy of recent title search, ALTA title policy endorsement, or certificate of title (with copies of all recorded and unrecorded liens or encumbrances) (5 points) (Note: title search = 3 points, title policy or Certificate of Title =5 points)
- c. Signed letter of intent by seller **OR** signed purchase and sales agreement (5 points) (Note: Letter of Intent = 3 points, Purchase and Sales Agreement = 5 points)
- d. Copy of statement showing purchase funds available in an open space acquisition account or from other funding sources (5 points)
- e. Copy of statement showing stewardship funding and capability to operate and maintain the property (5 points)

- f. Resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds (municipal or corporate) (5 points)

3. Public Access Compliance at Previously Funded OSWA Acquisitions: (30 points)

- a. Did the applicant demonstrate proof that all their previously funded OSWA acquisitions continue to be easily and readily open for public access (excluding water company lands eligible to be classified as Class I or Class II lands)? (9 points)
- b. Are the applicant's previously funded projects publicized on the applicant's website, the municipality's website or CT Trail Finder, etc., showing how the property is accessible to the public (excluding water company lands eligible to be classified as Class I or Class II lands)? (7 points)
- c. Did the applicant provide two pictures of each property's funding acknowledgement sign (a close-up photo showing the DEEP logo and another photo showing the sign's proximity to the roadway, parking lot and/or trailhead)? (7 points)
- d. Did the applicant provide pictures of each property's parking area, public access trail(s) and components that conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability-related standards and codes (excluding water company lands eligible to be classified as Class I or Class II lands)? (7 points)

4. Local, State & Regional Conservation Goals (30 points)

- a. Acquisition aligns with Local, State, Regional or Federal conservation goals or plans. (5 points)
- b. Acquisition is consistent with Municipal Plan of Conservation and Development. (5 points)
- c. Acquisition aligns with applicable Regional Councils of Government plans of conservation and development. (5 points)
- d. Acquisition is consistent with State's 2016-2020 Green Plan. (5 points)
- e. Acquisition is consistent with State's Wildlife Action Plan, Forest Action Plan, State's Hazard Mitigation Plan, Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan (CELCP), Connecticut Environmental Literacy Plan (CT-ELP) and/or Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) (5 points)
- f. Acquisition supports the GC3 Working and Natural Lands Recommendations in the Near-Term Actions Report, January 2021 (5 points)

5. Community Support: (30 points)

- a. Did the applicant describe how they solicited meaningful community input/gained community support for the acquisition? (15 points)
- b. Did the applicant provide at least 5 letters of support? (5 points – 1 per letter)
 - 1. Were at least 2 of the letters of support from local community organizations? (5 points)
 - 2. Was at least 1 of the letters of support from local, regional or State government leaders? (5 points)

B. Public Access and Outdoor Recreation (100 points)

Pursuant to CGS section 7-131d(e), the public access requirement is exempt for water companies requesting funds to purchase drinking water watershed land classified as Class I or II land. Water companies that do not allow public access score at the same percentage of points that they received in the rest of their application. For example, if a water company that does not allow public access, receives 80% of available points in the rest of their application, it would receive 80% of the available points in this section. Water companies that will allow public access at the proposed acquisition will be scored based on the criteria below.

1. Public Access: (40 points)

- a. Did the applicant describe the existing or planned passive recreational uses for the site and how the public will access the proposed acquisition, including both specific site access points (e.g. trailheads) and general site access (e.g. public transit availability, ease of bicycle access, etc)? (6 points)
- b. Is the access location owned by the applicant and, if not, did the applicant identify how the access point will be permanently protected? (6 points)
- c. Did the applicant describe where the funding acknowledgement sign will be located and ensure it will be clearly visible from the roadway and parking area? (6 points)
- d. Did the applicant describe the plan for an on-site and off-street parking area? (6 points)
- e. Did the applicant demonstrate how ADA and other disability-related standards and codes will be integrated into the design, physical landscape and structural components of the project? (16 points)

2. Public Access Outreach: (30 Points)

- a. Did the applicant describe how information and maps showing public access and parking will be permanently posted on the applicant's website, municipality website and/or [CT Trail Finder](#)? (7 points)
- b. Did the applicant describe its public outreach plan for communicating the open space grant award and the public access opportunity, including press, social media, and other community engagement? (7 points)
- c. Did the applicant describe how it will incorporate the proposed acquisition property into its programming/education initiatives? (7 points)
- d. Did the applicant describe how it will incorporate multi-modal communication and communication with Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals into its outreach and signage plan? (9 points)

3. Trail or Greenway Connectivity: (30 points)

- a. Does the project provide a linkage or contribute to a potential or developing greenway? (7 points)

- b. Does the project provide a linkage to an existing greenway including a trail system of statewide importance such as: CT Blue Blazed Hiking Trail System, a CT Designated Greenway, National or Scenic Trail or waterway? (7 points)
- c. Does the project provide a connection that expands opportunities for passive and active recreational uses or non-motorized transportation (motorized mobility equipment not to be considered motorized transportation)? (7 points)
- d. Is the property adjacent to other protected open space? (9 points) (Note: adjacent on one side = 3 points, adjacent on two sides = 6 points, adjacent on 3 or more sides = 9 points)

C. Environmental Justice and Equity (100 points)

1. Alignment with GC3 EJ recommendations (40 points)

- a. Did the applicant describe how this proposed acquisition will improve or support access to green space in a densely populated area? This could include urban forestry and tree planting projects and/or community gardens. (10 points)
- b. Will this proposed acquisition create and/or expand an urban green space? (10 points)
- c. Did the applicant describe how the proposed acquisition will help reduce environmental challenges like localized flooding, erosion, access to fresh grown food or urban heat island effects? (10 points)
- d. Did the applicant describe how this proposed acquisition will protect agriculture in more urban and suburban communities that will support socially disadvantaged producers, including people with disabilities and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)? (10 points)

2. Community Impact: (60 points)

- a. Is the property located in or within a 10-minute walk to an environmental justice community, distressed municipality or target investment community? If yes, did the applicant describe the area and provide a map? (12 points)
- b. Is the property located next to or within a 10-minute walk to an area with mixed income housing? If yes, did the applicant describe the area and provide a map? (8 points)
- c. Did the applicant describe how this property will help reduce open space deficiencies in an urban area? (8 points)
- d. Did the applicant describe how its planned programming for this property will benefit local community residents within cities/urban centers? (8 points)
- e. Is the property accessible every day via public transportation? If yes, did the applicant describe what public transportation system and how the public will get from the stop to the site? (8 points)
- f. Is the property within an exempt municipality designated by the Commissioner of Housing that has at least 10% mixed income housing? (8 points)
- g. Did the applicant describe how they did or will partner with environmental justice and/or equity organizations (including groups representing people with disabilities) in the planning for the future use of the site? (8 points)

D. Climate Change and Natural Resources (150 points)

1. Forests - The proposed acquisition: (40 points)

- a. Contains productive forest soils and has good potential for timber growth. (8 points)
- b. Demonstrates the capability to sequester and store carbon. (8 points)
- c. Contains diverse forest types or unique forest habitats. (8 points)
- d. Has or will have a long-term management plan developed for the property that identifies landowner goals and objectives and includes various aspects of forest resource stewardship. (8 points)
- e. Is adjacent to protected forest land or core forest area. (8 points)

2. Wetlands & Drinking Water - The proposed acquisition: (40 points)

- a. Is adjacent to freshwater and/or tidal wetlands. (5 points)
- b. Includes riparian lands adjacent to cold water streams, beaches and dunes or vernal pool habitats. (5 points)
- c. Conserves upland for tidal marsh migration or inland advancement zones for future protective storm buffers for coastal communities. (5 points)
- d. Will reduce flooding and contribute to State or local Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans (NHMP). (5 points)
- e. Protects lands that preserve high-quality natural waters and drinking water resources. (5 points)
- f. Protects a resilient river network that will likely maintain diversity and functional integrity. (5 points)
- g. Protects land valuable for preserving and/or enhancing water quality because it either 1) is within a watershed which is already >25% but <75% protected, 2) is near wellheads, aquifers or drawdown areas, or 3) has potential for Class I and/or Class II watershed land protection. (5 points)
- h. Protects the headwaters of a stream or river. (5 points)

3. Agriculture and Soils -The proposed acquisition: (30 points)

- a. Has Prime or Statewide Important Farmland Soils covering more than 30% of the property and the applicant provided a soils map to show where the soils are located. (9 points)
- b. Reduces conversion of agricultural land, forest land and other productive landscapes. (7 points)
- c. Is valuable for preserving local agricultural heritage because, for example, it is currently a food-producing farm. (7 points)
- d. Meets criteria established for the Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program. (7 points)

4. Wildlife and Fisheries -The proposed acquisition: (40 points)

- a. Contains a diversity of habitat types. (5 points)

- b. Contains a special feature that is important to wildlife (upland area, geologic feature, vernal pool, grassland/scrubland, cold water stream, inland wetland, coastal habitat, wildlife corridor, ridgeline). (5 points)
- c. Includes area identified as important for State or Federally threatened, endangered or special concern species. (5 points)
- d. Represents an important roosting area for birds of concern or a breeding area for species of concern. (5 points)
- e. Includes a habitat type that is rare, infrequent or otherwise critical. (5 points)
- f. Supports conservation of wildlife in an area that is already highly developed. (5 points)
- g. Protects unique fish habitat or areas important for anadromous or catadromous fish restoration. (5 points)
- h. Protects access to fishing opportunities. (5 points)

A. Administrative Factors and Community Support	150 points
B. Public Access and Outdoor Recreation	100 points
C. Environmental Justice & Equity	100 points
D. Climate Change and Natural Resources	150 points