

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

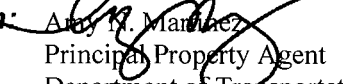


memorandum

subject: Environmental Monitor Responses
File No.: 99-59-35C
Release of State Land
Ashley Falls Road/Granger Lane
Town of North Canaan

date: January 30, 2023

to: Paul Hinsch
Policy Director of Asset Management
Office of Policy and Management

from: 
Amy M. Martinez
Principal Property Agent
Department of Transportation

The following is in response to comments/questions received from Ms. Margaret Minor, Co-chair of Watershed Lands Group at CT Water Planning Council, concerning the transfer of a 27.45-acre parcel of land in North Canaan, as listed in the Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Monitor (Environmental Monitor).

On November 6, 2022, Ms. Minor sent the following emailed question to Dennis McDonald, Supervising Property Agent in the Department of Transportation Property Management Section.

Question:

In the announcement of the agency transfer in the CEQ Environmental Monitor, the deadline for Scoping comments on the transfer of this property via auction is November 18. But DOT has also announced that this (or an apparently identical) property is to be sold at auction, with the deadline for bids being November 16. In other words, it appears that the property will go to the highest bidder before the public gets to comment and before DEEP gets its final, legally protected right to oppose in part or whole. Please explain as soon as possible.

DOT Response:

Thank you for your question. The Department of Transportation (Department) is aware of the discrepancy between the published bid date and Environmental Monitor comment period. The Department has postponed the public bid and will reschedule the bid once the Environmental Monitor process is complete.

On November 8, 2022, Ms. Minor sent the following emailed question to Marie Brand, Property Agent 2 in the Department of Transportation Property Management Section.

Question:

I write concerning the DOT announced auction of 27.45 acres of land in North Canaan, with bids due November 16. The location is described as: Location: U.S. Route 7 at Granger Lane.

I believe this is the same 27.45-acre property in North Canaan that is currently posted for Scoping in the CEQ Environmental Monitor as a proposed agency (DOT) land transfer. In the Scoping notice the location is described as follows (emphasis added):

3. Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan

Complete Address of Property: The property is located on four separate parcels along the easterly side of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan, Connecticut. The original notice, published on October 18, 2022, only included two of the parcels.

Commonly used name of property or other identifying information: The parcels are identified on the property field cards as Parcel ID# 29/041-0, Parcel ID#29/048-0, Parcel ID# 22/330-0, and Parcel ID# 29/049-0. The smallest parcel (#29/048-0) is a small narrow strip of land that provides direct access to the other parcels (#29/041-0, #22/330-0, and #29/049-0) from Ashley Falls Road.

Number of acres to be transferred: 27.45+/- (Please note that the acreage on the property field cards is inaccurate)

I wondered whether DOT really is offering two separate 27.45 acres for transfer in approximately the same area in North Canaan. The maps seem to confirm my suspicion that the DOT public-auction notice and the DOT Scoping notice are for the same tract of land. Today, in a DEEP meeting on Release-based Remediation, I was reminded that filed street addresses are a common way to look up a property in state records.

In the case of this North Canaan property the street addresses look different -- Route 7 in one case, North Elm Street in another. But Route 7 and North Elm Street are the same roadway, Also, the names of the intersecting roads are different -- Granger Lane versus Ashley Falls Road. But as best I can tell from the maps, the Lane and the Road are different, but they intersect the same property.

Another difference between the auction posting and the original Monitor posting, is that the auction notice lists the property as consisting of four lots, whereas the Monitor Scoping posting referred to two lots.

However, DOT has issued a revised Scoping notice, having determined that the property indeed consists of four lots.

Please let me know if I have got this wrong. If I am right, I don't see how the state can auction a property on November 16 (deadline for bids) while the Scoping process is just beginning, with a deadline for comments of December 9.

I advocate for protection of natural waters, currently as a consultant for Rivers Alliance of Connecticut and co-chair of the Watershed Lands Work Group at the Water Planning Council. Naturally, I am keenly interested to know about conservation possibilities on a tract of open-space land of more than 20 acres and described as having natural waters and being partly in a floodplain.

Please let me know whether this property is really going to be sold on November 16 with no use restrictions?

DOT Response:

Thank you for your questions and comments. The Department of Transportation (Department) is not in possession of two separate 27.45-acre parcels of land. The parcel of land listed in the Environmental Monitor is the same parcel scheduled for public bid on the Departments website. The Department is aware of the discrepancy between the published bid date and Environmental Monitor comment period. The Department has postponed the public bid and will reschedule the bid once the Environmental Monitor process is complete.

Regarding the property description, since the subject property is comprised of multiple lots of record, the location of the subject property is often described interchangeably in several ways (i.e., Ashley Falls Road, Granger Lane, Route 7, etc.). For the purposes of the Environmental Monitor posting, the North Canaan assessor records were used. As you mentioned, the Department updated the posting to include additional assessor lots of record. Please note assessor records are often inaccurate, particularly in terms of lot size. While the Department does refer to assessor records when identifying a parcel of land to be transferred, they are by no means solely relied upon. Instead, the Department prepares its own survey. The Departments survey is considered the authoritative document when describing the size and location of a parcel of land. The Departments survey has identified the subject property as containing 27.45 acres.

Should you have any questions regarding the above responses, please contact Dennis McDonald at (860)594-2475 or via email at dennis.mcdonald@ct.gov.

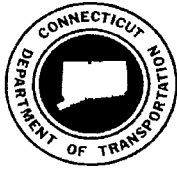
Attachments/ Original Emails/maps

Dennis McDonald/djm

cc: Graham Stevens – Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

bcc: Amy Martinez – Dennis McDonald – Marie Brand
Kevin Fleming

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



memorandum

subject: Environmental Monitor Responses

File No.: 99-59-35C
Release of State Land
Ashley Falls Road/Granger Lane
Town of North Canaan

date: January 30, 2023

to: Paul Hinsch
Policy Director of Asset Management
Office of Policy and Management

from: Amy N. Martinez
Principal Property Agent
Department of Transportation

The following is in response to comments received from Mr. Paul Aresta, Executive Director of the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, concerning the transfer of a 27.45-acre parcel of land in North Canaan, as listed in the Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Monitor (Environmental Monitor).

On November 16, 2022, Mr. Aresta sent the following statement by letter to Dennis McDonald, Supervising Property Agent in the Department of Transportation Property Management Section.

Statement:

The Council on Environmental Quality ("Council") notes that the Department of Transportation (DOT) is proposing to transfer an approximately 27-acre property, consisting of four parcels, located along the easterly side of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan. The property is identified as undeveloped wooded land with ponds, streams, other water, or wetlands. In addition, the property is identified as containing or being within a 100-year flood zone and is subject to a Flood Management Certificate from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The Council's review of the property using DEEP's spatial screening data confirms this information and indicates that the property is also located within an area designated as forestland habitat.

Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 23-8(b) establishes a goal of "twenty-one per cent of the state's land area shall be held as open space land." However, based on the Council's independent review, a total of approximately 562,900 acres or 84 percent of the total statewide goal of 673,210 acres has been preserved to date. Given the state's goals to protect forestland and preserve open space land, the Council recommends retaining the parcels noted above as open space by the state. Should the state decide not to retain the parcels as open space, the Council strongly recommends including restrictions on the future use of the parcels that would retain the undeveloped nature of the property.

DOT Response:

Thank you for your insight. The Department of Transportation (Department) will take into consideration the option of preserving the parcel for additional open space land. The Department however suggests transferring custody and control of the parcel to the DEEP. The Department does not have the resources to maintain the parcel.

Should you have any questions regarding the above responses, please contact Dennis McDonald at (860)594-2475 or via email at dennis.mcdonald@ct.gov.

Attachments/ Original Emails

Dennis McDonald/djm

cc: Graham Stevens – Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

bcc: Amy Martinez – Dennis McDonald – Marie Brand
Kevin Fleming



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

November 16, 2022

Keith Ainsworth
Acting Chair

Alicia Charamut

David Kalala

Kip Kolesinskas

Matthew Reiser

Charles Vidich

William Warzecha

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

Dennis J. McDonald
Supervising Property Agent
Connecticut Department of Transportation, Division of Rights of Way
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT, 06113
Dennis.McDonald@ct.gov

Re: Proposed land transfer - property consisting of four separate parcels along the easterly side of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan

Dear Mr. McDonald

The Council on Environmental Quality ("Council") notes that the Department of Transportation (DOT) is proposing to transfer an approximately 27-acre property, consisting of four parcels, located along the easterly side of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan. The property is identified as undeveloped wooded land with ponds, streams, other water, or wetlands. In addition, the property is identified as containing or being within a 100-year flood zone and is subject to a Flood Management Certificate from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The Council's review of the property using DEEP's spatial screening data confirms this information and indicates that the property is also located within an area designated as forestland habitat.

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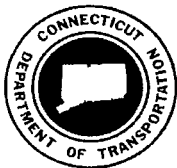
Thank you for your consideration of the Council's comments.

Sincerely,

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

c. Paul Hinsch, Connecticut OPM
Andrew Hoskins, Connecticut DEEP

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



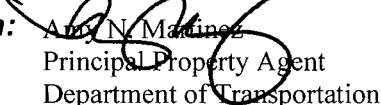
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Release of State Land
Ashley Falls Road/Granger Lane
Town of North Canaan

date: January 30, 2023

to: Paul Hinsch
Policy Director of Asset Management
Office of Policy and Management

from: 
Amy N. Madinos
Principal Property Agent
Department of Transportation

The following is in response to 45 emails and 8 letters received concerning the transfer of a 27.45-acre parcel of land in North Canaan (Subject Property), as listed in the Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Monitor (Environmental Monitor). Given the similar nature of the emails, the Department of Transportation (Department) has elected to respond to the emails collectively instead of providing individual responses. The 8 letters were responded to individually.

The emails and letters were sent to the attention of Dennis McDonald, Supervising Property Agent in the Department of Transportation Property Management Section during the allotted comment period which expired on Friday, December 9th, 2022 5:00pm. Three comments were received after the comment period closed and are not included in this document.

Emails:

1) From Aaron Kickerbocker, November 28, 2022:

I am writing in response to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan, from the Nov. 8 and Nov. 22 editions of the Environmental Monitor, with the intention of passing along my objection to the proposed sale of the land by the CT DOT. The 27 acre parcel at 316 Ashley Falls Rd. has been a sanctuary for the Town of North Canaan for more than 30 years. The land has been leased in the past for recreational purposes, including the long standing North Canaan Greenway trail, and in more recent times, the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course. These recreational amenities are crucial for the town, as there are no other such natural outdoor recreational areas nearby. The extensive walking trail is surrounded by gorgeous natural beauty, and the disc golf course has been an incredibly popular avenue of outdoor natural recreation since it was installed. Both of these activities complement the natural land, and bring people into the town to stimulate commerce. It would be such a shame for the land to be sold to a private developer. The land consists of unusual rock formations and extensive wetlands, which do not seem suitable for private residential or commercial development. It's a true gem of a natural sanctuary.

My name is Aaron Knickerbocker, and I happen to be one of the designers and the main creator public representative of the Camp Brook disc golf course. I have spent thousands of hours doing volunteer labor there, most of which has been invasive plant management, ridding the usable areas of the parcel of poison ivy, japanese barberry, multiflora rose, bittersweet and grape vines, buckthorn, etc. The land has essentially been saved by this work, as it was collapsing in on itself to do a period of neglect in which the invasive plants strongly took over. The creation of the disc golf course in cooperation with the greenway trail has provided surety that said invasive plants do not take over the usable space, and that the native nature and cleanliness of the land is preserved.

The North Canaan Greenway / Camp Brook property is incredibly dear to me on a personal level, of course, so much so that I purchased 10 acres of land nearby to hopefully live on eventually so that I would always be close by, to ensure I could continue caring for the land and making it available for public use.

I believe its current purpose (until closed last year) as a natural walking trail and a disc golf course is by far the best possible use of the land, for the people in Canaan (and other towns that travel here to utilize it), and also for the preservation of the natural quality of the land itself. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions at all about my connection to the property, and thank you for your consideration! I'm sure many others who love it will also reach out.

2) From Matthew Culley, November 28, 2022:

I am writing in response to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan published in the November 8 and November 22 editions of the Environmental Monitor. Specifically I am writing to object to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

My understanding is that the sale of the property by the DOT will almost certainly result in the destruction of the previously established Camp Brook Greenway and Camp Brook Disc Golf Course, both of which are important outdoor recreational assets in the Town of North Canaan.

As a means of preserving these assets, I am advocating for the ownership of the property by either the Town or the DEEP, with management and maintenance by the local volunteers who created and have been successfully caring for the greenway trail and the disc golf course for many years now. This is a simple alternative to the DOT sale that will preserve both the recreational and the conservation values of the parcel for generations to come.

3) From Todd Lunderborg, November 28, 2022:

Hi - I am writing to object to the sale of the camp brook property in response to the revised notice of land transfer in north canaan (ashley falls road and north elm street).

I used to use the camp brook disc golf course weekly and there is no other public option in the area. I have suggested to the town that we create a 501c7 social club to run and maintain the course. It would cost the town very little in operating costs and it brings a good number of people to north canaan who then go on to spend money while they are in canaan (brewery, diners, dunkin, grocery store, etc.). I think preserving the disc golf course will maintain one of the only few "tourist attractions" in canaan and I am willing to help set up and run the non-profit.

There are about a dozen others in my group of disc golfers and I have asked them all to send an email as well.

4) From Daniel Burton, November 28, 2022:

I am writing to respectfully object to the proposed sale by the CT DOT of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

The sale of the property would likely result in the loss of two beloved and beautiful recreational areas - Camp Brook Greenway and the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course. Please consider allowing the town of North Canaan or the CT DEEP to own the land, permitting these recreational areas to be maintained by the community of hard-working volunteers that have been doing so for years now.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

5) From Emily Allison, November 28, 2022:

This note is relative to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan published in the November 8 and November 22 editions of the Environmental Monitor.

This email is an objection to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation (DOT) of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan that contains freshwater forest, shrub, and emergent wetlands (USF&W National Wetlands Inventory & CTDEEP).

I'm concerned that the sale by the CTDOT to an entity other than the Town of North Canaan or the CTDEEP will lead to the clearing, alteration, disturbance, contamination, and/or redevelopment of the property, ultimately ending in the destruction of the Camp Brook Greenway Trail, the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course, and surrounding irreplaceable forested land.

As a potential recipient of this property, the Town of North Canaan (or CTDEEP) would be strongly supported by local residents and outdoor activists in the maintenance and upkeep of this property in its current state. An example of the support includes the coordination (where allowed) of routine "work days" that the disc golf community organizes with volunteers to maintain the trails, clear out fallen branches, and cut back invasive vegetation where needed. The volunteer groups are always led by a licensed arborist or forestry professional. Organizing "work days" for each disc golf course in CT has been an ongoing tradition for years and has worked well with the local municipalities.

In addition to the presence of a sensitive receptor (wetlands) on the property, there is an impaired/contaminated groundwater area mapped across the northwest end that may imply complications during redevelopment. As another ideal potential owner of this property, the CTDEEP has the professional qualifications and resources to deal with the future consequences of this nearby environmental concern in the appropriate fashion.

If the DOT must sell, please FIRST offer the ownership of this property to the Town of North Canaan (or to the CTDEEP) to support the option for continued recreational use of this valuable property.

6) From James White, November 28, 2022:

This course is so important to many people. Of you play, you know what quality of life it brings. I with many object to its sale.

7) From Edward Bailey, November 28, 2022:

I am writing in objection to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

We as a community have been informed that the sale of the property by the DOT will more than likely lead to the destruction of the Camp Brook greenway trail and disc golf course which have both been a staple in the community for years and are very important recreational assets to the town of north canaan. Closing these down would be quite devastating to the community in many ways. The trails were always filled with trail walkers, dog walkers, disc golfers and nature lovers of all sorts. It was a great place to bring the family for a day in the woods. Not to mention with the disc golf course when there are tournaments or leagues, people travel from all over to come play some disc golf and indulge on everything the town has to offer. Many of these people get food at caddy shack, roma's, stateline or many of the other local establishments and helping the town out in more ways than one.

The whole community is hoping you do the right thing and can find a way to keep the trails and disc golf course running and upkept by the many volunteers that have taken great care of the land so far. We all hope that you can see the long term benefits over the small profit the DOT would make by selling off a piece of what makes north canaan great.

8) From Chelsea Bailey, November 28, 2022:

I am writing in response to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan published in the November 8th and November 22nd editions of the Environmental Monitor.

I am writing with objection to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

The Greenway Trail, as well as the Camp Brook disc golf course, are a staple of the North Canaan area and an essential part of recreation in the immediate area. The Greenway Trail and disc golf course are a wonderful and safe place for families, dog walkers, cycling and more. To lose this area of our small corner would be deeply devastating to many people.

Our ever growing community and the many volunteers that had a helping hand in preserving and caring for the trails and disc golf course are hoping the right thing is done for this land. We hope you are able to see the long term benefits that keeping the Greenway Trail and Camp Brook disc golf course will have for the area and the people.

9) From Joseph Tota, November 28, 2022:

I am writing in regards to the Revised Notice of Land Transfer in North Canaan, published in the Environmental Monitor on November 22, 2022, originally published on October 18, 2022. The property in question was previously utilized for recreational purposes that included the Camp Brook Greenway and the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course.

I would like to voice my strong objection to a land transfer that results in the elimination of these valuable outdoor recreational assets to the Town of North Canaan. As we all discovered during the pandemic, these types of activities are essential to the health and well being of any community, and should be preserved as such. I have been personally involved with many volunteer efforts to maintain the property for the above-stated purposes and have witnessed environmental advocacy of the property that included invasive species elimination and protection of inland wetland areas.

As a means to preserve this valuable, established recreational asset I strongly advocate for OPM to make a determination that sale or transfer of the property not proceed for any other use other than for the recreational uses that have been previously established on the property.

10) From Ryan Kendrick, November 28, 2022:

I am writing to object to the proposed sale of the Camp Brook on Ashley Falls and North Elm property as proposed by the DOT.

This property has an established disc golf course which brings in visitors from out of town. Between casual rounds, tournaments, and leagues the visitors to this course help bring money into local businesses.

I live in Albany, Ny. Since the disc golf course was deemed off limits, my weekly trips to Canaan have completely stopped. Please keep this course open as it is a viable recreational opportunity for all community members.

11) From. Joey Tota, November 29, 2022:

I am writing in response to the Revised Notice of Public Land Transfer in North Canaan published in the November 8, and November 22 editions of the Environmental Monitor.

The purpose of this comment is to object to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation (DOT) of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm street in North Canaan.

The sale of this property by the DOT will almost certainly result in the destruction of the long established Camp Brook Greenway, and the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course. Both of which serve as important recreation assets for the town of North Canaan.

As a means to support and preserve these assets promoting passive recreation, I would advocate for ownership of said Camp Brook property by either Town of North Canaan, or the DEEP. With management and maintenance of the property supported by the local community and volunteer base who have created, and passionately cared for the property since it's inception.

Thank you for considering this alternative to the DOT Sale/Transfer of the Camp Brook Property, which will preserve the wetlands, pine forests, and beautiful geological features of the area.

12) From Sam Ward, 11/29/2022:

This email is in response to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan as published in the November editions of The Environmental Monitor.

I'm writing to ask that thoughtful considerations be made to, once again, allow for community recreation activities on the premises of the Berkshire Greenway trail, including use of The Camp Brook Disc Golf Course and walking trailways.

I object to the sale of the land by The Department of Transportation of The Camp Brook property, east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

This land has been a treasure for countless locals, for use of walking, viewing local nature, dog walking, and use as a disc golf course.

This past year, being unable to use the land, I particularly missed walking the trails and seeing the fabulous native Columbine in late April and throughout May. It grows in dappled shade areas often in between emerging boulders. It's quite a beautiful spectacle.

Sale of this land would not be in the best interest of our local Northwestern CT community.

My instincts tell me, that upon hearing from the community, it will be realized that preserving and growing the Greenway Trails and Camp Brook Disc Golf Course is in the best interest of the local community and The State of Connecticut.

13) From Rachel Irvin, November 29, 2022

I'm reaching out regarding the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan published in the November 8 and November 22 editions of the Environmental Monitor.

I object to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

Sale of the property by the DOT will almost certainly result in the destruction of the long-established Camp Brook Greenway and Camp Brook Disc Golf Course, both of which are important outdoor recreational assets for the Town of North Canaan. A resolution could be Ownership of the property by either the Town or the DEEP, with management and maintenance by the local volunteers who created and have been successfully caring for the greenway trail and the disc golf course for many years now, is a simple alternative to the DOT sale that will preserve both the recreational and the conservation values of the parcel for generations to come.

14) From Jason Whitman, November 29, 2022:

I am writing to you in response to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan published in the November 8 and November 22 editions of the Environmental Monitor. I am concerned with the future of this wonderful recreational spot and do see the proposed sale a a devastation to the town Cannan and local wildlife, not only do i myself enjoy playing at the camp brook dgc (disc golf course) and hiking the greenway but there are numerous other people who do as well . In the past year disc golf has become more popular and many families/people are taking up the sport and enjoying time in the woods, and well camp brook dgc is an established course with the help of the local CT disc golf community members volunteering to maintain it . So i do hope that you will see the value in this wonderful recreational spot and that it will continue to be a wonderful escape to nature for generations to come . I have faith you will do whats right and help preserve this beautiful recreational spot rather than allowing the sale by the DOT.

15) From Sherry Boyd, November 29, 2022:

I have only been a part of the CT Disc Golf scene for a few years, but in that time I have done my best to help create awareness, get more women playing and make bringing more disc golf courses to the state a

top priority. My partner and I run a mixed doubles league, design courses and direct tournaments for newer players that benefit local non-profits.

When I heard that the property containing Camp Brook was being auctioned off, I was devastated. With Disc Golf being the top growth sport in the state in the last year, this is the time to build and open more courses not dissolve existing good ones. It is my understanding that there is a strong volunteer community at Camp Brook that maintains the course, so maintenance costs will be very low.

Please share with me what the disc golf community can do to stop this property transfer. Thank you for your time and consideration.

16) From Sean Delaney, November 30, 2022:

I am writing with regard to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan, which was published in the November 8 and November 22, 2022 editions of the Environmental Monitor, to object to the sale of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan. My understanding is that the Department of Transportation (DOT) intends to sell this property, without regard for the fact that it will almost certainly result in the destruction of the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course and the Camp Brook Greenway.

This would be a tragic result for the residents of North Canaan, and Connecticut in general. Both the Trail and the Disc Golf course represent important recreational assets to town and area residents. In particular, I can tell you that disc golf courses like the one at Camp Brook encourage and facilitate outdoor activity and stewardship by many individuals who would not otherwise be motivated to venture off the beaten path and discover all of the mental and physical health benefits that time in the outdoors provide. Likewise, families like my own routinely travel to and discover other parts of our state to spend time together playing disc golf in locations like Camp Brook. Anything that gets kids and teenagers to put down their electronic devices and spend several hours outdoors - with their parents, no less! - must be given full support and every opportunity to flourish and grow, not be taken away.

Rather than allow DOT to carelessly or recklessly sell off this valuable asset, I strongly encourage you to facilitate ownership of the property by the Town of North Canaan or the CT DEEP, with management and maintenance of both the trail and the disc golf course carried out by the local volunteers who created and have been faithfully and successfully caring for those spaces for many years now - and who will encourage others to do the same in the future.

I appreciate your call for comments on this proposed sale, and for taking the time to learn about the importance of the Camp Brook property to so many people in Connecticut. I hope and trust you will make every effort to put the long-term best interests of the people who already enjoy Camp Brook, and those who would discover it in the future, ahead of whatever short-term gain DOT might gain from a thoughtless and needless sale of a beautiful and important green space.

17) From Brian Bickersmith, November 30, 2022:

I am writing with regard to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan. I do not support the sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

The Camp Brook Greenway and Camp Brook Disc Golf Course are extremely important recreational assets for the Town of North Canaan. These areas should be owned by either the Town of Canaan or the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection utilizing local volunteers who have created the greenway trail and disc golf course years ago to manage and maintain the land. It's extremely important that town's like yours preserve areas like this for generations to come.

I along with many others have traveled to North Canaan dozens of times over the years supporting the local businesses each trip. The Camp Brook course has always been a special destination for us. Magical. Inspirational.

I'm confident that the right thing will be done here and this property will be preserved. Please weigh the long-term interests of the Town and State above any potential short-term benefit.

18) From Margaret Miner, December 1, 2022:

The current Environmental Monitor carries a notice that the Department of Transportation (DOT) is intends to transfer out of state ownership a 27.45-acre property, consisting of four parcels, located at Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street (Rte. 7) in North Canaan. The land is undeveloped and rich in natural resources, including wetlands and the headwaters of Camp Brook (a tributary of the Blackberry River) and forest habitat; it is also within a 100-year flood zone. As such, it provides important ecological services.

More detail on the character and regional importance of the land has been reported in an email (11/14/22) by North Canaan resident Tim Abbott, Conservation Director at Housatonic Valley Association. The land was acquired by DOT in anticipation of the creation of the Super 7 roadway. Super 7 never reached beyond New Milford, and the land was leased to North Canaan for the North Canaan Greenway. The Greenway and its trails provide another public service: opportunities for outdoor recreation.

According to Mr. Abbott, in 2020, the town and DOT discovered that the lease had expired in 2008.

We urge DOT to renew the lease or otherwise provide for comprehensive protection of the natural resources on this property. If DOT was seriously considering selling the land as surplus, it would have been proper, I believe, to notify the town, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and any watershed organization, land trust, or other group committed to conservation of high-value open space.

We support the testimony and recommendations of Paul Aresta on behalf of the Council on Environmental Quality. This land should remain public. If it is to be sold, then strict protection of the resources should be required. Good stewardship is essential under the federal and state policy of no net loss of wetlands, and by the state's goals for open space conservation.

19) From Missy Mosher, December 1, 2022:

I am writing to urge you to maintain the property in North Canaan that contains the Camp Brook disc golf course as protected open space allowing for recreational use of the course. This is a beautiful piece of property that has, in the past, been gently trafficked by the disc golf community with the result being much enjoyment of the sport along with great respect for nature and the land. This parcel, including some wetlands, deserves to be protected for both environmental benefit as well as enjoyment of the residents of the state of CT.

If you haven't ever tried disc golf, i urge you to give it a try! Not only does it get people outside enjoying our wonderful natural resources but it is also a super fun (albeit at times super challenging) sport whose popularity has been meteorically on the rise across the country. The disc golf community is a dedicated and enthusiastic community. Please consider saving Camp Brook!

20) From Jeremy Schaller, December 1, 2022:

I'm writing to you to object to the proposed sale by the DoT of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan. This sale will almost certainly result in the destruction of a beloved Disc Golf course that helped introduce me to a sport that I am now completely enamored with and has inspired me to become proactively involved with growing the sport. Besides increases my outdoor activities, I've spearheaded the building of another course in New Hartford (Brodie Park South) which has introduced the sport to many more people.

The local volunteer stewards of the property were doing an excellent job. The course was well designed and attractive to beginners and veterans alike. It brought many people to the town who otherwise would not have gone out there and in turn, brought revenue to the surrounding businesses. It would be terrible for everyone if this unique recreational area was eliminated.

I hope that you will make the right decisions in preserving this green space for us and future generations who will have to opportunity to enjoy it.

21) From Todd Rake, December 3, 2022:

I am writing to you in support of keeping the Camp Brook Property as a recreational property. My hope would be that the stakeholders can work out an agreement with the Town, land trust or other entity.

I do not live near the property, but will share a quick story. While visiting my town where I grew up I was amazed on all the new parks, fields and recreational paths and trails. We all need to continue to get outside and enjoy recreational activities for mental and physical health.

22) From Ann E. Talmadge, December 3, 2022:

This is letter to express my objection to the sale of the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan, CT. Sale of this property will cause the destruction of a diverse animal and foliage habitat, remove a much needed outdoor recreation area for the town of North Canaan.

This property is widely used by many types of animals and birds including but not limited to bobcats, fox, bears, deer, owls, pileated woodpeckers, red-tail hawks and turkeys probably because of the land offers a lot of area that can conceal animals. It also offers water and marshy areas and a diversity of fungi and trees. If the land were sold, this robust habitat would be destroyed.

The property has some historical value to the town of Canaan, as well. It once was the local junkyard, and some old remnants remain but illustrates the history of the land and how time changed its landscape into a natural setting. Additionally, there is an old road lined with stone walls and old maple trees which is also reminiscent of North Canaan's farming history. Finally, a long rocky knoll runs through the center of the property offering a geological perspective to the land.

I would like to see the property under the ownership by the Town of North Canaan, and a Friends of Canaan Greenway non-profit organization could be established as an inexpensive way to maintain the land and promote educational opportunities. The land's proximity to local neighborhoods makes it perfect for outdoor recreation and many locals have been able to take advantage of it for that purpose illustrating how it makes a great outdoor recreation area for both young and old population in North Canaan. A non-profit made of locals is a feasible way to help maintain the land under the Town's conservatorship. I would like to see some ecological and historical research accomplished on the area offering additional opportunities for college level participation. This can be overseen by the non-profit. The long strip also serves as a safe north-south walking route towards downtown North Canaan avoiding the highly trafficked North Elm Street.

As a resident of the Town of North Canaan and benefactor of the land up for sale by the Department of Transportation, I sincerely encourage placing property in the care of people and the Town of North Canaan. Volunteers will happily protect the space preserving the habitat and ensuring its use as a recreational and educational area.

23) From Michael Reagan, December 3, 2022:

Objection to the Sale by the Connecticut Department of Transportation of the North Canaan Greenway Property located between Ashley Falls Road and Granger Lane in North Canaan, Connecticut

I object to the sale of the property because of the loss of walking access the Greenway provides to the public. The Greenway walking trail was created years ago with walking bridges over the Camp Brook allowing for year-round access. The town sidewalk on North Elm Street ends at Granger Lane. Walking further along North Elm Street is not a safe option due to the amount of traffic that comes through North Elm Street. Just on a side note – the original purpose of this property was for the Department of Transportation to by-pass the traffic that uses North Elm Street as a shortcut between Rt 7 and Rt 44.

If the property must be sold. I would like to see the proceeds of the sale used to fund a sidewalk along North Elm Street between Granger Lane and Ashley Falls Road. Although it would mean the loss of a beautiful natural multi-use recreation area, there would be at least some safety resolution to the amount of traffic that transverses the residential street of North Elm Street.

24) From Mindy Potts, December 4, 2022:

I am writing to object to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

Sale of the property by the DOT will almost certainly result in the destruction of the long-established Camp Brook Greenway and Camp Brook Disc Golf Course, both of which are important outdoor recreational assets for the Town of North Canaan. Ownership of the property by either the Town or the DEEP, with management and maintenance by the local volunteers who created and have been successfully caring for the greenway trail and the disc golf course for many years now seems like the best way to go.

My husband and I have come to play the course from New York State on many occasions. We love that the course had a nice place to eat right next door. It makes for a great time out with friends – meet to play disc golf and then eat and chat before heading home. The volunteers do a great job with this course. Please don't let this disc golf course be destroyed.

25) From Douglas Humes, December 5, 2022:

Having been the first selectman who negotiated with the State to lease the Town of North Canaan the parcel of land located off of North Elm street and appointed the Greenway Committee to oversee and maintain said parcel of 27 acres +/- and to develop a program so that all individuals an local organizations could help persevere the extensive wetlands and wildlife as well as recreational program. Over the years the greenway commitment to Camp Brook lolsection of the North Canaan greenway has had the Boy Scouts involved building wood walkways and bridges for merit badge programs. Hundreds of volunteers not just from North Canaan help to remove invasive plants etc. Nature Classrooms for local Elementary School Students directed by Mrs Daffney Drury. A disc golf Course built with nature in mind and maintained so. This property has value to the State and the surrounding communities not in dollars an cents but in what it has to offer as a natural wetlands to the present day folks and those in the future. We should not loose what we Can't Replace . I think the best way to handle this property would be for the State to sell to the town of North Canaan at the 1960's price for which they bought it or give it to the Town for a dollar and either case with the restrictions that it be maintained for conservation use as it now is and must always be used for that purpose by said Town of North Canaan . Thank You Douglas E. Humes Jr. former first Selectman Town of North Canaan

26) From Tom Woodruff, December 5, 2022:

I am writing in regard to the Revised Notice of Proposed land transfer published in the November edition of the Environmental monitor. I object to any sale of this property and would like to see it remain in the public domain. I have hiked in these woods and appreciate the Camp Brook Greenway. This property should be used for passive recreation for townspeople and Connecticut residents who appreciate these beautiful woodlands.

27) From Brian Nardi, December 5, 2022:

I am writing in regard to the Revised Notice of Proposed land transfer published in the November edition of the Environmental monitor. I object to any sale of this property and would like to see it remain in the public domain. I have hiked these woods and appreciate the Camp Brook Greenway. This property should be used for passive recreation for Connecticut residents who appreciate these beautiful woodlands.

28) From Earl Dakers, December 5, 2022:

As a lifelong resident of North Canaan, I would like to express my views of the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course. I can't express how dismayed and disappointed I was to learn that the course was being taken away from our town. The course was built and maintained by a volunteer effort. It was a true gem and asset to the town and our community. It was enjoyed by many and was a healthy recreational outlet for our town, even more so, during the Pandemic. As a former employee of the Town of North Canaan, I spent many years building the Greenway Trail with Boy Scouts and local community teenagers. I am very familiar with this parcel of land. A lot of hard work and volunteer effort went into creating something positive for our town. I hope all parties involved will make the right decision to bring back something special for our community.

29) From Matthew Cartier, December 5, 2022:

I am writing to express my concern about the future of the Canaan Ct Greenway, also known as Camp Brook.

I would like to constructively posit an opposition to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property, which in and of itself a recreational asset to the community and surrounding towns.

The property has served as a venue for many different user groups, not limited to the disc golf membership, but also dog walkers, trail runners, mountain bikers and bird watchers.

As a benefit to the Town of Canaan, the Camp Brook Preserve and the Greenway, many of these outdoor enthusiasts, albeit a great many hours by the disc golfers have invested a great deal of their time in the general maintenance and upkeep of these grounds. The scope of work ranging from invasive removals, to poison ivy and controls and general trail maintenance ~ at no cost to the town nor the state of Connecticut.

As a steward of the environment, and an active recreational enthusiast, I will remain hopeful that my family and I can continue to benefit from the endless property does not end up in a private sale, but remains in the greater interests of the community.

30) From Patrick Marchand, December 6, 2022:

I am writing in regards to the proposed land transfer published in the November edition of the Environmental monitor. I along with my family and co-workers object to the sale of this property. We have used this property for years as a beautiful and secluded hiking spot as well as casual disc golf. It was a very frequent hike and trip for my family. It would include a Camp Brook hike, swim at the YMCA in Geer Village, and then either go to State line pizza or to Great Falls Brewery. Without Camp Brook we haven't been up to Canaan. The highlight was walking in those woods. I run a YMCA camp and we're constantly trying to purchase more land for the benefit of the local community. I hear from parents constantly how important it is to have an outdoor location for them to walk and get off screens. I hope you would consider giving the land back to the town and I'd be thrilled to testify if needed at any point.

31) From Patrick Laramee, December 6, 2022:

I am writing in regards to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer published in the November edition of the Environmental Monitor. I wholeheartedly object to the sale of this property and would prefer it to remain in the public domain. This is a fantastic piece of property that should be utilized for passive recreation for townspeople and Connecticut residents.

32) From Daniel Sullivan, December 6, 2022:

I wholeheartedly object to the sale of the Camp Brook property by the department of transportation that will result in the destruction of the Camp Brook Greenway and disc golf course. This open space in our community is immensely valuable both to residents and local business owners. The disc golf course

provides a recreational opportunity for children and adults that is invaluable and unique and brings people into our community that spend money at local businesses.

As a secondary school teacher in Litchfield County, I have been taking students on field trips through the property both to enjoy the golf course and to hike on the well-maintained trails. I've personally introduced over 100 teenagers from Litchfield County to the sport of disc golf at Camp Brook, helping them to discover an accessible and inexpensive family activity. While walking through the property with students, I have personally witnessed the wildlife that calls this place home. I have seen students fascinated watching black bears stroll through the property. This open space is home to dozens of bird species, both migratory and resident, including American Redstarts, Black-and-White Warblers, Brown Creepers, and Common Yellowthroats. Foxes, coyotes, porcupines and raccoons are common sights. The loss of this valuable resource cannot and should not happen. I hope the DEP reverses course and preserves this property for the good of our community, for generations to come.

33) From Reginald Denny, December 7, 2022:

I hope your week has been going well. I would like to submit a public comment regarding the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan published in the Environmental Monitor.

I am writing to object to the proposed sale of this property by the DOT of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan. The sale of this property will definitely destroy the Camp Brook Greenway and Camp Brook Disc Golf Course, both of which are invaluable and indispensable recreational assets for the Town of North Canaan.

I believe that ownership of the property either held by the Town or DEEP, with management and maintenance by local volunteers, who created and successfully cared for the greenway trail and disc golf course for years, is a simple alternative to the DOT sale. This will preserve both the recreational and conservation values of the parcel for the entire community and subsequent generations.

I personally feel quite strongly about this issue, as Camp Brook was the place I developed most as a young adult. It even helped me find my true passion turned profession. I started playing disc golf at Camp Brook and reaped all the physical and mental benefits that come with being active in nature, and eventually became a full time professional disc golfer because a place like Camp Brook was available in the community. Additionally, I have run charity fundraising events at this location, raising money for local churches.

I hope that the DOT will see that the right path forward is preserving the long term interests of the Town and State above any short term benefit that may derive from selling off this piece of Canaan's natural history.

34) From Daniel Cotton, December 7, 2022:

I am writing today, in regards to the proposed land transfer of the Camp Brook property. I thought about what I would say in this email for about a week now. But I just want to keep it real, and express my opinion direct. I object strongly to any sale of this property! We see it far to much in this day and age. I come 45 minutes to Northwestern, CT. Mainly to hike, but this area specifically was home to my favorite disc golf course. I would bring myself, and my spending money to this neck of the woods for the day. More often than not because of this property. I'd call that a win for everyone! Caddie Shack right next door especially haha... Great food! I hope there has been enough support coming in to show how special this land was to so many. I personally met many new friends here. So thank you for taking the time, giving us a voice!

35) From Kathy Knickerbocker, December 7, 2022:

I feel compelled to speak out as I was shocked and deeply grieved to learn of the proposed sale by the DOT of the Camp Brook property in North Canaan.

I am strongly opposed to this proposed sale as this is a treasured place for our family to enjoy recreation playing disc golf and walking, not only with our children but also our grandchildren. The sale of the property will no doubt destroy not just the conservation value of this beautiful property, but also an irreplaceable source of recreation for not just our family, but the Town of North Canaan!

This property must be preserved! Rather than allow the proposed DOT sale, I am advocating for the ownership of the property by either the town or the DEEP, with management and maintenance by the many caring volunteers who have labored for many years to create and care for both the Camp Brook Greenway and the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course.

36) From Daniel Rolotti, December 7, 2022:

I am writing in regards to the Revised Notice of Proposed land transfer published in the November edition of the Environmental monitor. I strongly object to any sale of this property and would like to see it remain in the public domain. The sale would result in the loss of an outdoor sanctuary I have used in the Camp Brook Greenway and the life long passion I have found for the sport of Disc Golf with the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course. I believe these assets are of the utmost importance to residents of the Town as well as to draw visitors. I would prefer to see this land owned by the Town or by DEEP with management and maintenance completed by local volunteers, which has been successfully done for many years at this point. This area is truly a sanctuary of many people to visit, explore, exercise and enjoy time together.

I have the utmost confidence that you will consider the voices of Town residents and visitors and help place the long-term interests of the community over short term financial benefit.

37) From Jay Knickerbocker, December 7, 2022:

I am writing in response to the proposed sale of the Camp Brook property in North Canaan, Ct. by the DOT.

I sincerely hope that this will not take place. The town would lose a wonderful asset in the form of the Camp Brook Greenway and Disc Golf Course. People need this type of facility now more than ever before.

A very positive outcome for this property would be ownership by the Town or the DEEP. Care of the property would continue on by local volunteers who have demonstrated for many years their love and dedication to the facility. This is a simple solution that would allow local residents to enjoy and benefit from this beautiful place for years to come.

38) From Omar Bayoumi, December 8, 2022:

Please sell this plot of land or at least remove the disc golf course. It is a cesspool for underage drinking underage smoking and people getting high.

39) From William DeVries, December 8, 2022:

I am writing to you with hope that the Canaan, CT property containing the Greenway & Disc Golf Course will be become available for public use once again. Myself, and many others, have enjoyed use of the forested property. Natural spaces for recreation, like this one, have been great places to visit with friends and share with my children.

The efforts of the volunteer community have made the land into a very special place, and it would be quite heartbreaking to no longer enjoy it. I fear that the proposed sale of this area would be the end of the public's ability to enjoy the space, and I hope this area is preserved as an outdoor space for everyone to enjoy.

40) From Wyatt Mahoney, December 8, 2022:

Hello! My name is Wyatt Mahoney. I am 13 years old and I am writing to object to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

I have been playing disc golf since I was a toddler and started doing tournaments when I was 7. One of my first tournaments was at Camp Brook. I am now at 13 a professional disc golfer and have one 4 junior world championship titles. I have played camp brook many times and owe a lot of my initial growth to playing at the course. It was a Beautiful and well maintained course. And all work was done by volunteers. I even made a YouTube video of the course when I was 10. Check it out and see how nice the course was.

<https://youtu.be/XVFBu8snXqg>

It benefited so many and brought people together. I do not live real close but I came and we would eat next door after or play mini golf which brought money to the local businesses.

So Sale of the property by the DOT will almost certainly result in the destruction of the long-established Camp Brook Greenway and Camp Brook Disc Golf Course, both of which are important outdoor recreational assets for the Town of North Canaan.

Those areas were and would continue to be maintained by selfless volunteers. Ownership of the property by either the Town or the DEEP, with management and maintenance by the local volunteers who created and have been successfully caring for the greenway trail and the disc golf course for many years now, is a simple alternative to the DOT sale that will preserve both the recreational and the conservation values of the parcel for generations to come.

Please do what is right and not just right for the moment. The benefits of not selling to DOT will far outweigh any perceived benefit in the short term.

Thank you to hearing me out. I know I'm just a kid but camp brook is special. Those who helped make it a reality are special and all that enjoy it are special and the town and area deserve such a place in the community.

41) From Stephen Ditter, December 9, 2022:

Please consider reopening the Camp Brook disc golf course. This property is a special piece of the CT disc golf scene. It provides a great outdoor activity to both the Canaan and surrounding community. I would drive from Middletown to enjoy the challenge and beauty of this course.

Since the pandemic the sport of disc golf has grown astronomical. The need for outside activities is so important in our current climate. Please save this park/course so today's and tomorrow's outdoor enthusiasts can continue to enjoy all that it has to offer.

42) From Craig Fulcher, December 9, 2022:

I am writing in response to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan in the November edition of the Environmental Monitor. I object to any sale by the Department of Transportation of the Campbrook property located on Rte 7 in North Canaan.

I have spent lots of time back there learning how to play disc golf and helping maintain the course/area. It's a great place for many people to enjoy and would be tragic for the community to lose use of the land. I am sure you have looked at it from all angles and will see that the greenway is best utilized by the people of Canaan.

43) From Brian Pogue, December 9, 2022:

My name is Brian Pogue. I live in Great Barrington, MA. I helped design & build the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course at the North Canaan Greenway property.

I strongly object to the proposed sale of the North Canaan Greenway property.

The Greenway is a vital environmental and recreational usage area for locals and visitors alike who need places to enjoy activities like walking their dogs or playing disc golf.

Locals have worked tirelessly to maintain a safe & fun environment for all to enjoy. This community effort to maintain the Greenway will proceed for years to come allowing the continued use and enjoyment of the property for generations.

44) From Tom Zetterstrom, December 9, 2022:

I am writing to comment on the proposed sale by ConnDOT of the 27-acre Camp Brook parcel in North Canaan, which was leased from ConnDOT to the Town of North Canaan in 1992 to allow creation of North Canaan's Camp Brook Greenway. Historically, this parcel was acquired by the DOT in the 1950's as part of a Route 7 by-pass for a proposed Superhighway project that was defeated in 1973. Thereafter ConnDOT retained the parcel, "banking" it as a wetlands preserve and as a possible off-set against wetlands elsewhere that might be impacted by other ConnDOT projects. While under lease to the Town of North Canaan our use of that land to create the Camp Brook Greenway has been entirely consistent with the same wetland preservation goals intended by the DOT, including protecting its high wildlife value and woodland and wetland features.

As a Troop 22 Boy Scout in the 1950's I hiked much of Canaan's woodlands, and can recall exploring along the brook and around the nooks and crannies of the moss-covered limestone outcrops of the Camp Brook parcel. As a founding member of the North Canaan Greenway Committee I was involved with establishing the serpentine Camp Brook Greenway Trail in 1992, paralleling the brook and crossing those memorable limestone outcrops. This bottomland forest includes several heritage trees such as Canaan's Champion Oak, specimen Sugar Maples along an old stone wall and a mature White Pine stand. In recent decades several Eagle Scout service projects have taken place on the Camp Brook parcel with the cooperation of the Greenway Committee, including trail marking and signage and several wetlands footbridge improvements. In recent years the Camp Brook parcel has also become the site of a popular disc golf course. In the process of establishing the low impact disc golf design, invasive plant management occurred throughout the parcel, including removal of multiflora rose, Japanese barberry, Oriental bittersweet, and honeysuckle. Both the trail and the disc golf course are established and much loved recreational attractions in the Town of North Canaan.

Over the past year ConnDOT developed a plan to sell this land at auction, and actually began the auction process a few months ago. Applicable statutory requirements forced the halting of the auction to provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposed sale. As a member of

the North Canaan Greenway Committee, I am writing to request that this unique property be preserved for the enjoyment and benefit of the citizens of North Canaan and neighboring towns by conveyance to the Town of North Canaan, or at the very least that it be transferred to the Connecticut DEEP for its open space value, in either case under conditions that will ensure continuation of its established recreational uses.

Thank you for understanding how important this property is to our old and young citizens alike.

45) From David Jackson, December 9, 2022:

My name is David Jackson and I am the person who was hired by Ronnie Linzana to design the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course.

It was brought to my attention that there was a published revised notice of proposed land transfer in N. Canaan that would jeopardize the Camp Brook Greenway. Naturally, I had to reach out to you today on behalf of that piece of land that is cherished by many locals.

I have a lifetime of experience in landscape design and construction and I'm hoping you'll understand where I'm coming from when I say that piece of land is perfect for an outdoor recreation area for residents of North Canaan and CT in general.

One thing we've all seen in our lifetimes is just how easy it can be to develop a piece of land for commercial/residential buildings to be built on. However, we rarely (if ever) get to see how difficult it is to install a safe green space for people to congregate, recreate and preserve the natural habitat of many plants and animals.

I hope you'll consider the big picture and the long term future of the little piece of land in North Canaan that countless people utilize and love. The town needs the Camp Brook Greenway to remain what it is today for the generations of users in the future.

Thanks for your time and I appreciate anything you can do to help preserve the Camp Brook Greenway.

DOT Response to emails:

Of the 45 emailed comments received by the comment period deadline, 44 of them objected to the sale of the Subject Property and 1 was in support of the sale. Nearly all the emails objecting to the sale sought to preserve the existing greenway/disc golf course or keep the Subject Property as open space. 14 of the emails further suggested the Department of Transportation (Department) transfer the Subject Property to the Town of North Canaan (Town) or The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for recreational purposes. 1 email suggested the Subject Property be leased to the Town and another email suggested the Subject Property be sold to the Town for "1960's prices" or for \$1.00. There were several emails that suggested if the Subject Property must be sold, it should be restricted to recreational purposes. One email suggested any proceeds from the sale be used to fund a sidewalk on North Elm Street at Granger Lane.

The Department thanks everyone for their comments and acknowledges the local opposition to the proposed sale and the desire to retain the recreational nature of the property.

For background purposes, it should be noted that on November 20, 1992, the Department leased the Subject Property to the Town, at no cost, for passive recreation purposes. It was at this time that the Greenway Trail was created. This Lease Agreement expired in 2007 and in 2008 the Department notified the Town the Subject Property would not be leased again, but instead retained by the Department for potential wetland mitigation purposes. Upon the expiration of the lease the Town had no legal right to use the subject property.

In 2021, the Department was notified of the existence of the Disc Golf Course. While the Department recognizes the work and dedication of the volunteers who created and maintained Disc Golf course, the course was illegally constructed without the Department's knowledge or approval. Upon notification of the existence of this illegal use, the Department determined a sale of the Subject Property was the best path forward as there was no longer a need to retain this property for wetland mitigation purposes.

It should be noted the Department offered the Town the opportunity to purchase the Subject Property at fair market value. The Town declined to do so. Should the property go to public bid and if an acceptable bid is received, the Town will again have another opportunity to purchase the Subject Property at the accepted bid price as prescribed in Connecticut General Statutes Section 3-14b.

As prescribed in Section 13a-80(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Department offered the DEEP the opportunity to take custody of the Subject Property. The Department never received a response, so it was assumed that the DEEP was not interested in the Subject Property. The Department is certainly willing to entertain this option if the DEEP is interested in pursuing custody of the property.

The Department is not in the position, nor does it have adequate resources to maintain and secure a property of this size for recreational purposes. Absent any interest from the DEEP or the willingness of the Town to purchase this parcel, the Department recommends moving forward with a public bid for the sale of the Subject Property.

Letter received from Daphne Drury:

Daphne S. Drury
111 Granite Avenue
North Canaan, CT 06018-0127

December 2, 2022

This letter of comments is being submitted in response to the "Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan" published in the November 8 and November 22 editions of the Environmental Monitor. I am writing to register my dismay at the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the so-called "Camp Brook property" east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

I am a professionally trained horticulturist who moved to North Canaan 44 years ago, after 13 years in the Education Department at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in New York City. I taught various aspects of nature education to many hundreds of school classes, as well as in-service courses to their teachers, during that time, and have pursued my passion of teaching about the natural world to both children and adults, in both formal and informal settings, at every opportunity since moving to Connecticut.

When I arrived in Canaan with my first child, a two-year-old son, before I had a driver's license, there was nowhere within walking distance of our in-town home where I could take him for a walk on a woodland trail. We made do with trips to Bartholomew's Cobble by bicycle, but I was acutely conscious of the lack of easily accessible and welcoming outdoor recreational opportunities in my own back yard.

Fourteen years later, I was able to help change that with the development of a greenway trail on the Camp Brook parcel, leased by the Town from the DOT in 1992.

I was part of a group of outdoor enthusiasts in North Canaan who, 30 years ago, saw the possibilities in that lovely 27-acre strip of swampy woodland and rocky outcroppings and old sugar maples (one with an old sap spile well and truly anchored in its overgrown trunk), and pictured what it could become for the residents of our town.

Thirty years later I can look back at the hours of trail planning and clearing, the joy of hiking the trail with my children (and now my grandchildren), with new neighbors and visiting friends, and can savor the joys and challenges of guiding nature classes for first graders from North Canaan Elementary School for whom this was their first foray into an unexpected green fairyland so close to the center of town. One of those children, in fact, is now our third Selectman, and credits those greenway nature lessons (at least in part) for his adult love of the natural world and his choice of invasive plant management as a professional career.

Children from some of the local home-schooling groups have also visited the greenway on a regular basis and learned to tell the difference between deciduous and evergreen trees, and to comprehend the importance of plant life to all other life on earth. They've learned to tell the difference between coltsfoot and dandelions, and to watch for deer trails off to the side and moose tracks in the mud.

Students from Salisbury (Boys') School came as part of their school's Community Service component, working on trail maintenance and learning at the same time the value of open spaces to the well-being of everyone in town. Boy Scouts helped with signage, learning how to mark a trail, removing hazards for hikers and learning about the hands-on work that goes on behind the scenes to help make any town a real community. Eagle Scout projects have benefited from the availability of the Camp Brook property, and have in turn improved the property for the benefit of the rest of us.

I grieve at the prospect of all these opportunities being lost to our town forever, as a result of the DOT's desire to reap a small profit from sale of what it short-sightedly considers to be "excess" acreage. I urge the DEEP to take a broader and longer view of the Camp Brook property as an important

educational, recreational and conservation asset of our town. It would be wonderful if the property could be transferred to the town with appropriate restrictive covenants to allow continuation and long-term protection of the established public uses of this precious natural resource.

DOT Response to Daphne Drury

Thank you for your comments. As prescribed in Section 13a-80(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Department offered the DEEP the opportunity to take custody of the subject property. The Department never received a response, so it was assumed that the DEEP was not interested in the parcel. The Department is certainly willing to entertain this option if the DEEP is interested in pursuing custody of the subject parcel.

From Charles and Elizabeth Goodyear:

Charles & Elizabeth Goodyear
10 Elm Street
Canaan, Connecticut 06820

Mr. Dennis J. McDonald, Supervising Property Agent
Connecticut Department of Transportation, Division of Rights of Way
2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, CT, 06113

December 8, 2022

Re: Camp Brook Greenway & Camp Brook Disc Golf Course – North Canaan

Dear Mr. McDonald;

I am writing to object to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan.

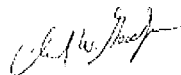
The Camp Brook Greenway and the Camp Brook Disc Golf Course are an important part of the natural beauty of Canaan and the Northwest Corner of Connecticut. The beauty of the area has attracted people to our community for over 150 years and Camp Brook is an important natural asset in a town that already has numerous industrial assets including limestone mines, the Specialty Minerals Processing Plant, the Becton Dickinson Facility and the Old Castle Cement Plant.

Not only does the Camp Brook property support natural assets but it attracts visitors to our community to enjoy the recreational opportunities of the Greenway and the Disc Golf Course. Canaan needs ways to diversify its local economy and bring low impact visitors to our region supporting restaurants, the local brewery and emerging lodging facilities.

Numerous members of the community, including Mr. Tom Zetterstrom and Mr. Aaron Knickerbocker, have spent thousands of hours and, in some cases, decades establishing, improving, and protecting the Camp Brook Greenway. The dedication of these people, who receive no financial benefits, is a testament of the local support for this property.

We would recommend that, rather than sell this property for the short-term benefit of the DOT, the property be dedicated to the DEEP or the Town of North Canaan to be managed and maintained by dedicated volunteers as it has been for decades. In the future the Camp Brook Greenway and Disc Golf Course will be part of a community that combines residential, commercial, industrial elements to create a sustainable community for residents and visitors alike that can be a model for other communities around Connecticut.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. We can be reached at charles.w.goodyear@cwgoodyear.com.



DOT Response to Charles and Elizabeth Goodyear

Thank you for your comments.

The Department offered the Town the opportunity to purchase the property at fair market value. The Town declined to do so. Should the property go to public bid and if an acceptable bid is received, the Town will again have another opportunity to purchase the subject property at the accepted bid price as prescribed in Connecticut General Statutes Section 3-14b.

As prescribed in Section 13a-80(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Department offered the DEEP the opportunity to take custody of the subject property. The Department never received a response, so it was assumed that the DEEP was not interested in the parcel. The Department is certainly willing to entertain this option if the DEEP is interested in pursuing custody of the subject parcel.

From Geoffrey Drury:

I am submitting this letter of comments in response to the "Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan" published in the November 8 and November 22 editions of the Environmental Monitor.

I am writing, both as a private citizen and as the Chairman of the North Canaan Greenway Committee, to take issue with the proposed sale by the DOT of the so-called "Camp Brook property" located east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan, and to recommend an alternative disposition of the property that will preserve its important public recreational, educational and conservation values for the long-term benefit of the residents of North Canaan and surrounding Northwest Corner communities.

A brief overview of the Camp Brook property's history may be helpful in understanding what is at stake here. The Camp Brook parcel is a long, narrow 27-acre wooded parcel that was acquired by the State more than 50 years ago as part of the right of way for the subsequently abandoned "Super 7" upgrade of U. S. Route 7 in Connecticut. It was leased to the Town of North Canaan by the DOT in 1992 under a 15-year lease, for nominal consideration, to allow the creation of a Camp Brook Greenway trail, which was developed over the course of several years by local volunteers under the direction of a North Canaan Greenway Committee appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

About ten years ago the Selectmen and the Greenway Committee were approached by a group of disc golf enthusiasts interested in creating a disc golf course on the property. Approval was granted on condition that the course must be designed, with guidance from the Greenway Committee, to respect the natural beauty of the property, to blend in with its woodland setting, and to complement rather than displace the established greenway trail. A uniquely natural course, carefully preserving the varied natural features of the property, was gradually developed with thousands of hours of volunteer labor, resulting in a lovely 18-hole free public course that takes full advantage of the unspoiled beauty of the property and attracts players of every skill level to enjoy its special character.

I should more accurately say that the Camp Brook course did attract such players, because the DOT shut the course down abruptly with a cease and desist letter in July of last year, stating that the Town's lease of the property had never been renewed when it expired 14 years earlier, that the course (and presumably the Greenway trail as well) were therefore trespassing on state land, and that the DOT was in the process of "evaluating the disposition" of the parcel. Seventeen months later, a proposed sale of the property by public auction is the unfortunate result of that evaluation.

The DOT is correct about the expiration of the Camp Brook lease. Another lease of DOT-owned land to the Town entered into one year earlier had a 30-year term, and everyone at both the Town Hall and the DOT seems to have assumed that the Camp Brook lease worked the same way. All of the volunteer work done on the property since 1992 has been performed under the good faith impression that the property was subject to the original DOT lease during the entire period. By the time a general review of Town leases undertaken in 2021 turned up the Camp Brook lease expiration problem, the DOT's formerly generous policy regarding municipal uses of "excess" state property had evidently changed. Their response to the discovery of the expired lease was to focus immediately on monetizing an unexpectedly available state asset rather than on preserving the thriving free public recreational resources that had by then been developed on the property.

The Camp Brook property is a lovely wooded strip of land with varied terrain, large rock outcroppings, mature white pines and mixed hardwoods, and high conservation and aesthetic value. Extensive volunteer work on removal and control of bittersweet, barberry, honeysuckle and poison ivy in the development of the disc golf course has greatly improved the property's user-friendliness for any kind of outdoor recreation. Much of the parcel is also, however, seasonally swampy and wet, with the small

brook from which the property gets its name running down the middle. A significant part of the property lies within the 100-year FEMA flood zone. It is all readily accessible on foot, but motorized access is difficult or impossible because of watercourse and wetland issues at its very limited frontage. The parcel is, as a result, impractical for residential or commercial development, but perfectly suited for the kinds of passive outdoor recreation that have in fact developed and thrived there over the last 30 years.

North Canaan has a three-decades-long sweat equity investment in the public outdoor recreational resources its volunteers have created on the Camp Brook property. This is not a matter of untested hopes and aspirations, but of well-established and proven facts on the ground. The Town-appointed volunteers on the Greenway Committee, working with the dedicated volunteers who have spearheaded the creation and maintenance of the disc golf course, have a long and successful record of making this work. All maintenance on the Camp Brook Greenway and disc golf course has been and is expected to continue to be performed by volunteers. This is not a property with inherent ownership and maintenance headaches, but an essentially self-sustaining operation that is providing convenient recreational public access for a recreationally underserved Connecticut community at a negligible public cost. The Town of North Canaan has very little municipally-owned land and no local land trust. Its residents, unlike most of their neighbors in other Northwest Corner towns, have no comparable and readily accessible outdoor public recreational spaces available to them if the Camp Brook parcel is taken away.

All of that 30-year volunteer investment, and all of North Canaan's access to these public recreational resources, will be swept away if the DOT's proposed sale goes through and the property ends up in private hands. It is my strong recommendation that the whole of the Camp Brook property instead be conveyed in fee by the DOT to the Town of North Canaan, for nominal consideration, by a deed containing appropriate restrictive covenants preserving the established recreational uses of the property and ensuring that its recreational, educational and natural benefits will remain available for public use and enjoyment for many years to come. Such covenants should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Property to be maintained as open space and used for passive (non-motorized) recreation, specifically including disc golf (to avoid disputes over the definition of "passive" recreation)
- No residential or commercial development or subdivision.
- No sale or lease of the whole or any part of the property, except possibly to a nonprofit entity formed to facilitate or manage permitted uses.
- No gravel mining, logging or other extraction of natural resources.
- No charges or fees for public use of the property, other than entrance fees to cover direct expenses of disc golf tournaments. No private inurement (financial benefit) to any individual. This is to be a public resource.

This kind of protection will ensure that the recreational and other established values of the Camp Brook property are protected for current residents of our Town and region and preserved for future generations as well.

DOT Response to Geoffrey Drury
Thank you for your comments.

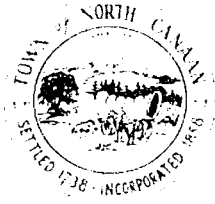
For clarification purposes, on November 20, 1992, the Department leased the subject property to the Town, at no cost, for passive recreation purposes. It was at this time that the Greenway Trail was created. This Lease Agreement expired in 2007 and in 2008 the Department notified the Town in

writing that the parcel would not be leased again, but instead retained by the Department for potential wetland mitigation purposes. The Town was clearly notified of the expiration of the lease and retained no legal right to use the subject property.

While the Department recognizes the work and dedication of the volunteers who created and maintained Disc Golf course, the course was illegally constructed without the Department's knowledge or approval. Upon notification of the existence of this illegal use, the Department determined a sale of the Subject Property was the best path forward as there was no longer a need to retain this property for wetland mitigation purposes and the Department is not in the position, nor does it have adequate resources to maintain and secure a property of this size for recreational purposes.

In June of 2022 the Department offered the Town the opportunity to purchase the property at fair market value. The Town declined to do so. Should the property go to public bid and if an acceptable bid is received, the Town will again have another opportunity to purchase the subject property at the accepted bid price as prescribed in Connecticut General Statutes Section 3-14b.

From the Honorable Charles Perotti:



Office of Selectmen

TOWN HALL • HOPELAND STREET • CANAAN, CONNECTICUT 06026
TELEPHONE: 860-874-7313 • FAX: 860-874-3130

December 6, 2022

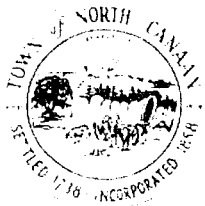
Mr. Dennis J. McDonald
Supervising Property Agent
Connecticut DOT, Division of Rights of Way
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT, 06113

Dear Mr. McDonald:

This letter of comments is being submitted in response to the "Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan" published in the November 8 and November 22 editions of the *Environmental Monitor*.

I am writing as the First Selectman of the Town of North Canaan, with the approval and on behalf of the entire Board of Selectmen, to convey our strong objection to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the 27-acre Camp Brook parcel of State-owned land lying east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan. We urge the DFEP to help craft a plan for disposition of the parcel that will preserve – not destroy – our community's long-established recreational uses of the property and ensure that it will remain available for public use and enjoyment for many years to come.

The Camp Brook parcel may well be "excess" to the transportation needs of the DOT, but it is far from excess to the outdoor recreation needs of the Town of North Canaan. It is the home of our Camp Brook Greenway, created three decades ago with several years of labor by a dedicated group of local volunteers and managed ever since by a Greenway Committee appointed by the Town Selectmen. It has also been the home for the last ten years – until a cease and desist order from the DOT shut it down in July of 2021 – of a thriving public disc golf course, created and maintained through the extraordinary efforts of a new generation of dedicated local volunteers with oversight from the Greenway Committee, complementing the Greenway trail and greatly increasing the number of regular users of the property. The parcel is also, not incidentally, a highly varied and naturally beautiful piece of land, completely unsuited for commercial development because of wetlands and extremely limited access but readily accessible on foot, and having high aesthetic and conservation values. The proposed sale will bring an end to all of that, providing a one-shot cash return to the DOT but depriving North Canaan in perpetuity of an irreplaceable natural asset and recreational resource.



Office of Selectmen

TOWN HALL • POPEASE STREET • CANAAN, CONNECTICUT 06026
TELEPHONE: 860-824-7313 • FAX: 860-824-7313

Page 2

The mechanics of a DOT auction sale provide the Town with a theoretical opportunity to acquire the property by exercising a right of first refusal to match the highest bid received in the DOT auction. Unfortunately North Canaan is so financially stressed by recent large increases in its Region 1 high school assessment that it is exceedingly unlikely as a practical matter to be able to come up with the funds necessary to exercise that right. The DOT also offered at one point to lease the Camp Brook parcel to the Town on a short-term basis for \$950 per month, which is equally beyond North Canaan's ability to pay.

Our hope is that OPM and the DEEP, recognizing the importance of the Camp Brook parcel as an established public recreational resource for North Canaan and its Northwest Corner neighbors, will direct its transfer to the Town, either without payment or for minimal consideration, subject to appropriate restrictive covenants allowing continuation of the established recreational uses of the property and ensuring that its recreational, educational and natural benefits will remain available for public use and enjoyment for generations to come.

Sincerely yours,
Charles P. Perotti
Charles P. Perotti
First Selectman
Town of North Canaan

DOT Response to First Selectman Perotti
Thank you for your comments.

While the Department recognizes the work and dedication of the volunteers who created and maintained Disc Golf course, the course was illegally constructed without the Department's knowledge or approval. Upon notification of the existence of this illegal use, the Department determined a sale of the Subject Property was the best path forward as there was no longer a need to retain this property for wetland mitigation purposes and the Department is not in the position, nor does it have adequate resources to maintain and secure a property of this size for recreational purposes.

As prescribed in Section 13a-80(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Department offered the DEEP the opportunity to take custody of the Subject Property. The Department never received a response, so it was assumed that the DEEP was not interested in the parcel. The Department is certainly willing to entertain this option if the DEEP is interested in pursuing custody of the Subject Property.

From Representative Maria Horn:



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MARIA HORN
64TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING ROOM 4100
CELL: (860) 671-1026
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8685
FAX: (860) 240-0206
E-MAIL: Maria.Horn@cga.ct.gov

CHAIR
PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

December 7, 2022

Mr. Dennis J. McDonald
Supervising Property Agent
Connecticut DOT, Division of Rights of Way
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06113

Dear Mr. McDonald:

I write to submit comments in response to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan published in the November 8th and 22nd editions of the Environmental Monitor. I do not support the Department of Transportation sale of the Camp Brook property in North Canaan.

I have heard from many of my constituents regarding this issue and the responses have been uniformly against the sale. It's my understanding that both the town and the state were unaware that the lease of this parcel of land had expired over 14 years ago. Upon discovering the lease had expired many years ago, the state decided to sell the land, instead of providing the town with an opportunity to extend or sign a new lease on the land.

This long-established greenway and disc golf course has been enjoyed for years by nature enthusiasts and disc golfers from across the state. In the recent campaign season, when I had the opportunity to speak with many residents at their doorsteps, concern about what will happen to this property was among the top local issues. With the potential sale, there is fear this cherished greenway will be destroyed and, along with it, all of the many years of hard work from volunteers who maintained and managed this beautiful space. I humbly ask that the DOT reconsider its decision to sell this property and consider renewing the lease with the town or transfer ownership to DEEP.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. I look forward to the people of North Canaan and the surrounding region being able to continue to utilize this green space for years to come. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office directly if you have any additional questions regarding my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Horn".

Maria Horn
State Representative, 64th Assembly District

PROUDLY SERVING CANAAN, CORNWALL, GOSHEN, KENT, NORFOLK, NORTH CANAAN, SALISBURY, SHARON, TORRINGTON

DOT Response to Representative Horn

Thank you for your comments.

For clarification purposes, on November 20, 1992, the Department leased the Subject Property to the Town, at no cost, for passive recreation purposes. It was at this time that the Greenway Trail was

created. This Lease Agreement expired in 2007 and in 2008 the Department notified the Town in writing that the Subject Property would not be leased again, but instead retained by the Department for potential wetland mitigation purposes. The Town was clearly notified of the expiration of the lease and retained no legal right to use the Subject Property.

While the Department recognizes the work and dedication of the volunteers who created and maintained Disc Golf course, the course was illegally constructed without the Department's knowledge or approval. Upon notification of the existence of this illegal use, the Department determined a sale of the Subject Property was the best path forward as there was no longer a need to retain this property for wetland mitigation purposes and the Department is not in the position, nor does it have adequate resources to maintain and secure a property of this size for recreational purposes.

As prescribed in Section 13a-80(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Department offered the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) the opportunity to take custody of the Subject Property. The Department never received a response, so it was assumed that the DEEP was not interested in the Subject Property. The Department is certainly willing to entertain this option if the DEEP is interested in pursuing custody of the Subject Property.

From Amanda Branson:

P.O. Box 821
5 Maple Street
Kent, CT 06757
(860) 927-1927
CTLAND.ORG



Northwest Connecticut
Land Conservancy

PROTECTING LAND AND WATER FOR PEOPLE, FOR WILDLIFE, FOREVER.

Directors

Hiram P. Williams, Jr.
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South Kent

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Bridgewater

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Program Administrator

Dawn Burdick
Bookkeeper



Dennis J. McDonald Supervising Property Agent
Connecticut Department of Transportation, Division of Rights of Way
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT, 06113
Dennis.McDonald@ct.gov

Re: Proposed land transfer - property consisting of four parcels along the easterly side of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan

Dear Mr. McDonald,

Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy is a nonprofit, regional conservation organization working with the communities of Litchfield and northern Fairfield Counties to safeguard natural and working lands, public recreation areas, and drinking water resources forever. Founded in 1965, NCLC is the largest land trust in Connecticut, protecting 13,000 acres (and growing) of vast, connected natural areas. NCLC's conserved lands include 21 public hiking preserves, 41 working farms, and over 3,000 acres of habitat for rare and endangered species.

NCLC was alerted by several conservation partners that the Department of Transportation (DOT) is proposing to transfer an approximately 27-acre property, consisting of four parcels, located along the easterly side of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan because the property has been deemed excess and no longer needed for transportation purposes.

The property has notable conservation attributes. The property is undeveloped woodland with ponds, streams, and wetlands. NCLC's review of the property indicates that the property is ranked as above average complexity for climate resilience. In addition, the property contains designated forestland habitat with areas of core forest, Inland Wetlands soils, and Prime Farmland and Statewide Important Farmland soils. Lastly, the property is identified as containing or being within a 100-year flood zone and is subject to a Flood Management Certificate from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). These are important conservation values to protect in perpetuity.

Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 23-8(b) establishes a goal of "twenty-one percent of the state's land area shall be held as open space land."

However, based on the Council on Environmental Quality's review, a total of approximately 562,900 acres or 84 percent of the total statewide goal of 673,210 acres has been preserved to date. Given the state's goals to protect forestland and preserve open space land, NCLC recommends retaining the parcels noted above as open space by the state. If the State decides not to retain the parcels as open space, NCLC strongly recommends the parcels be transferred to a conservation entity, like a land trust, to ensure the important conservation values present on the property.

Sincerely,



Amanda Branson
Director of Operations and Finance

DOT Response to Amanda Branson

Thank you for your comments.

The Department is not in the position, nor does it have adequate resources to maintain and secure a property of this size for recreational/open space purposes.

As prescribed in Section 13a-80(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Department offered the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) the opportunity to take custody of the Subject Property. The Department never received a response, so it was assumed that the DEEP was not interested in the Subject Property. The Department is certainly willing to entertain this option if the DEEP is interested in pursuing custody of the Subject Property.

From Amy Blaymore Patterson:

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

December 9, 2022

Sent via email: Dennis.McDonald@ct.gov
Dennis J. McDonald, Supervising Property Agent
Connecticut Department of Transportation, Division of Rights of Way
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06113

Re: Proposed land transfer by the Department of Transportation: Property Consisting of Four Parcels along the Easterly side of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan

Dear Mr. McDonald,

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its ~130 land trusts. We advocate for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and work to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

CLCC respectfully submits these comments to join other conservation organizations in raising concerns about the above reference proposed land transfer which was brought to our attention through the Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Monitor. The property is described as a 27.45-acre property, consisting of four parcels, located at Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street (Route 7) in North Canaan.

The property has also been described as undeveloped and having significant conservation value for its wetlands and watercourses, as well as forestland habitat - including areas of core forest which are large forest blocks important for wildlife habitat, drinking water supply protection, and ecological resilience. The property is located at the headwaters of Camp Brook (a tributary of the Blackberry River) and within a 100-year flood zone. In addition to its conservation value, it is our understanding that the land was part of the North Canaan Greenway, providing opportunities for public outdoor recreation.

The Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) Phase 1 Report: Near-Term Actions January 2021 (GC3 Report) recognizes that our state's forestlands, natural areas, and working lands are among our strongest defenses against the impacts of climate change. The benefits of these natural climate solutions to public health, the economy, and environment include protecting



biodiversity, reducing the risks and impacts of flooding, filtering pollutants from the air, and absorbing and storing carbon. Further, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 23-8(b), the state has set a goal of conserving 21% of its land area as open space – a goal it is not nearly on target to meet. (See CEO 2021 Annual Report)

Conveying land of such high conservation value – particularly without any restrictions on its end use – is contrary to the state’s efforts to mitigate against the impacts of climate change and to achieve its land conservation goals. We urge the agency to reconsider this proposed transfer and repurpose the property for permanent land conservation through CT DEEP or a local land trust or other conservation organization.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director

DOT Response to Amy Blaymore Paterson
Thank you for your comments.

The Department is not in the position, nor does it have adequate resources to maintain and secure a property of this size for recreational/open space purposes.

As prescribed in Section 13a-80(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Department offered the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) the opportunity to take custody of the Subject Property. The Department never received a response, so it was assumed that the DEEP was not interested in the Subject Property. The Department is certainly willing to entertain this option if the DEEP is interested in pursuing custody of the Subject Property.

From Selectman Christian Allyn:

Mr. Dennis J. McDonald,
Supervising Property Agent
Connecticut Department of Transportation,
Division of Rights of Way
2800 Berlin Turnpike,
Newington, CT, 06113
E-Mail: Dennis.McDonald@ct.gov

Mr. McDonald,

My letter today is being submitted in response to the Revised Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in North Canaan published in the November 8th and November 22th editions of the Environmental Monitor, also known as the North Canaan Greenway or Camp Brook Greenway. I will be referring to this parcel as the Camp Brook Greenway in this letter.

I am writing to object to the proposed sale by the Department of Transportation of the Camp Brook property east of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan, also known as the Camp Brook Greenway.

Sale of the property by the DOT will almost certainly result in the destruction of the long-established Camp Brook Greenway and Camp Brook Disc Golf Course, both of which are important outdoor recreational assets for the Town of North Canaan. Ownership of the property either by the Town of North Canaan or the DEEP, with management and maintenance facilitated by local volunteers who have successfully cared for the Camp Brook Greenway for decades would be a simple alternative to selling the property at auction. Such an arrangement would preserve both the recreational and conservation values of the parcel for generations to come.

As North Canaan's youngest ever appointed public official at age 19 and Selectman at 22 I consider the North Canaan Greenway responsible for inspiring me to achieve what I have so far in life. This inspiration came after being raised by a limestone quarry operator, music teacher and respective grandparents that our family was one of many who built our Town, Country, family and future for the sake of me and who was to come. Within the course of a month and two days, the events of September 11th, 2001 and subsequently on October 13th of the same year, the arson of the Canaan Union Depot, both the cultural, commercial and inspirational centers of the Town and Country of the late 20th century burned to the ground. With the aid and mentorship of my Grandfather and one other man of his generation, the owner of the local hardware store, I learned that I can intentionally change the course of events towards the benefit of all. It was one event in between speaking with both those men that truly opened my eyes to the way to live my future and that occurred on the North Canaan Greenway.

It was Daphne Drury who led my first grade in what I thought was an intrepid expedition, but really was a short hike on the North Canaan Greenway, the spring of 2002. On that hike I learned the importance of how the diversity, and subsequent balance of native plants and animals function to support the lives that many of us take for granted. This balance is what allowed for the creation of what I was raised to understand was created not just for me but what was to come after me, town, country, family and future. I learned too that this balance was nearly destroyed a half century before with a poorly conceived highway project which would have blasted through this precious patch of nature. That blasting analogy made me think of my father, blasting limestone in the quarry. Seeing mushrooms grow on the side of a dead tree made me realize that though things, experiences, times and even people do die it is not the end of life. Life moves on in new forms and new things, experiences, times and even people do come to renew the face of the earth. The most striking lesson I learned on that simple walk was seeing a small stump and learning how to count its six rings. I realized at that moment that whatever plant that small stump was, it had lived a life as long as my short life at that time, six years. That lesson never left me, life is short. If I was truly to live for what I felt called to why I was born here I must live it to the fullest efficiency, efficacy and veracity possible and if that were the case, there is more to life than blasting rock.

These lessons I carried silently in my soul as I found the joys of Horticulture through the Housatonic Valley FFA program which rekindled my interest in nature, especially the threat of invasive plants. This led me to UConn where I founded Invasive Plant Solutions, an invasive plant consultation and removal company which is now a DEEP contractor, while in the meantime serving the Town of North Canaan serving among other things, on the Greenway Committee from 2014-Present. All of this would not have happened without a simple walk on the Greenway. I am grateful for this opportunity to express these lessons as part of my opposition to the Camp Brook Greenway. If we are to raise future generations to do what needs to be done to heal our land, transcending the natural and human built world from poorly conceived human error we must have the ability to show our children precious little places of natural beauty. There is no better way to do that in North Canaan than on a simple walk on the Greenway. Now we have the opportunity to ensure that will happen henceforth, and always.

In Gratitude,

Christian Allyn
Selectman
Town of North Canaan

DOT Response to Selectman Christian Allyn
Thank you for your comments.

Should you have any questions regarding the above responses, please contact Dennis McDonald at (860)594-2475 or via email at dennis.mcdonald@ct.gov.

Dennis McDonald/djm

cc: Graham Stevens – Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

bcc: Amy Martinez – Dennis McDonald – Marie Brand
Kevin Fleming