

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

March 2017

Overview

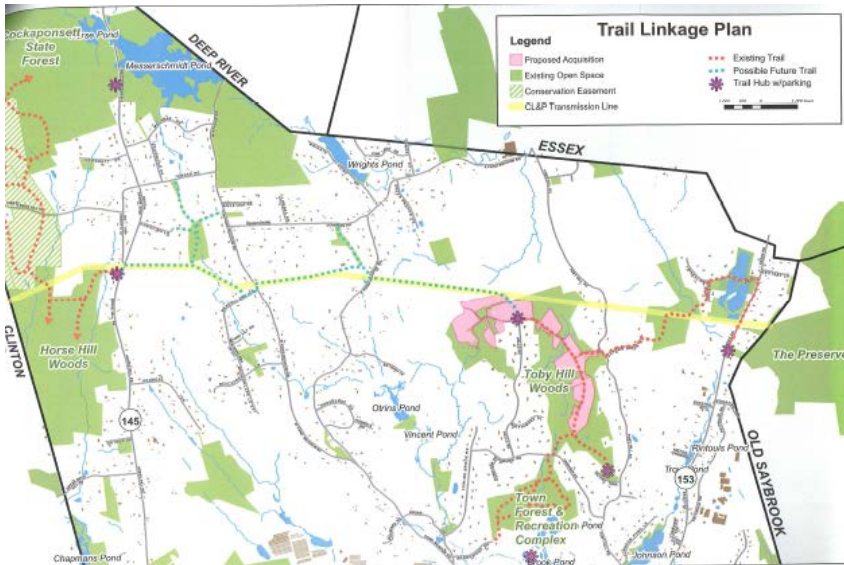
Section 22a-6v of the General Statutes of Connecticut requires the Commissioner of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection to submit a report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and bonding and to the State Bond Commission each month. The report provides information on the acquisition of land or interests in land by the state, a municipality, water company or nonprofit organization using funds authorized for the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program established under Sections 7-131d and the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program established under Sections 23-73 to 23-79 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program

The Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program provides grants to municipalities and private nonprofit land conservation organizations for the acquisition of open space land and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II watershed land. The State of Connecticut receives a conservation and public access easement on property acquired to ensure that the property will be protected and available to residents of Connecticut as open space in perpetuity. The following grants were closed in March 2017. Additional information on these projects follow.

Sponsor	Project	Acres
Town of Westbrook	Toby Hill Woods	84.24
Haddam Land Trust, Inc.	Beaver Ledges	136.272
Kent Land Trust, Inc.	West Aspetuck Wetlands	25.333

**Town of Westbook
Toby Hill Woods
Fee Acquisition - 84.24 Acres**

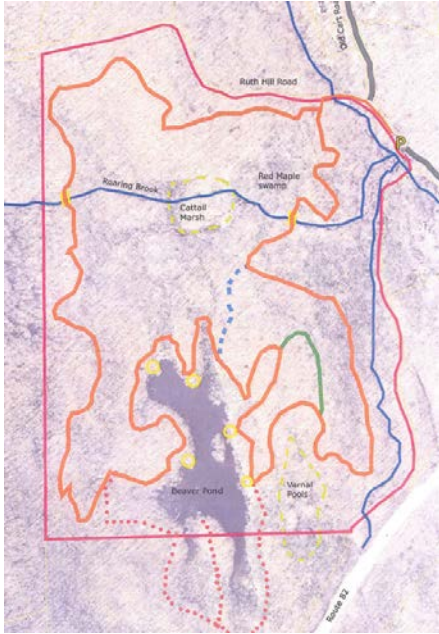


This property, within a 273 acre developing greenway, closes a significant gap needed to connect other Town-owned open space and significantly enhances the creation of a regional trail system. This sensitive ecological site contains mixed hardwood forest, red maple swamps and scrub-shrub wetlands, varying topographies, knolls and vistas. Future plans include linkage to the system of trails to the east at The Preserve in Old Saybrook and to the west at Cockaponset State Forest. The unfragmented corridor of contiguous forest with McVeagh Brook, a perennial stream and eight vernal pools, provides water, a safe habitat, food cover and safe migration for wildlife. There are multiple resource access values with four access points, wood roads, passive recreational uses such as hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and other forms of low-impact recreation.

Haddam Land Trust, Inc.

Beaver Ledges

Fee Acquisition - 136.272 Acres

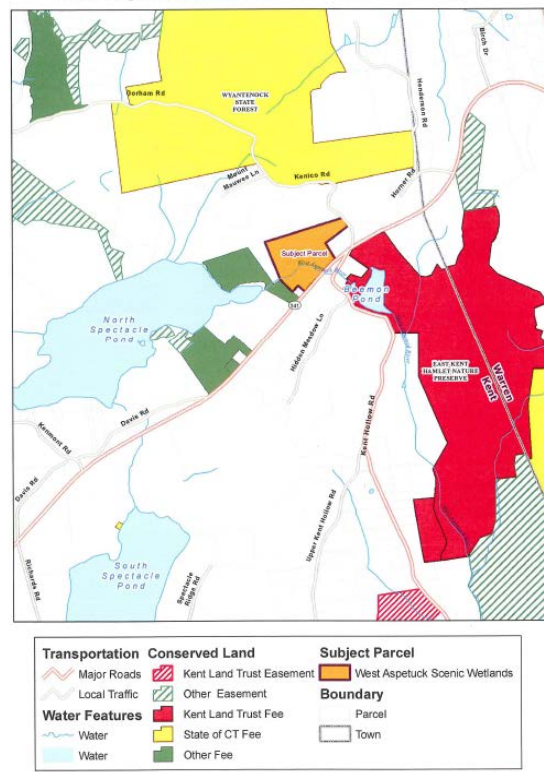


This acquisition is a key piece in a block of undisturbed and unfragmented forest, elemental to wildlife conservation in the Connecticut River Watershed and the Menunketesuck-Cockaponset Regional Greenway. It is bounded primarily by Cockaponset State Forest and contains the majority of an eight acre, active beaver pond (the Connecticut River Watershed Council owns a portion of the pond to the south). The preservation of this property leads to the creation of 318 acres of unfragmented forest, providing passive recreation opportunities such as fishing, hiking and nature observation. Beaver Ledges is the key parcel that ties several existing conservation lands together. The riparian communities of three brooks join on the property. It includes mature hardwood forests, rolling topography, dry uplands, rock outcroppings, glacial erratics, freshwater marshes, 8 vernal pools and the headwaters of Roaring Brook, a coldwater wild trout stream.

Kent Land Trust, Inc.
West Aspetuck Wetlands
Fee Acquisition – 25.333 Acres



West Aspetuck Scenic Wetlands Surrounding Area



This acquisition, on Segar Mountain and Kenico Roads, includes a 9± acre scenic wetland pond and gently sloping upland forest. The pond is downstream from North Spectacle Lake and constitutes the upper reaches of the West Aspetuck River, designated by the DEEP as a Class AA stream. There is extensive beaver activity, lodges and a large beaver dam. A driveway from Kenico Road traverses the upland portion of the property through a closed-canopied, mixed hardwood forest and provides access to the interior, passing old stone walls and overlooking the wetland pond. The property offers passive recreation, wildlife study and nature photography.

Supplemental funding was received from the U.S. Department of the Interior Fish & Wildlife Service under the Highlands Conservation Act.

Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program

The Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program is the State of Connecticut's primary program for the acquisition of lands for the beneficial use and enjoyment of the public as additions to the State's system of parks, forests, wildlife, fisheries and natural resource management areas. The program acquires land that represents the ecological diversity of Connecticut, including natural features such as rivers, mountainous areas, coastal systems and their natural areas, in order to ensure the conservation of such land for recreational, scientific, educational, cultural and aesthetic purposes. The following acquisitions were closed in March 2017. Additional information on these projects follow.

Property Name	Location	Cooperator	Match Share	Fee Acreage	State Purchase Price	Purpose of Acquisition
McNamara	Lyme	N/A	N/A	123.16	\$610,000	Addition to Nehantic State Forest
Marchand	East Hampton	N/A	N/A	22.0	\$115,000	Addition to Meshomasic State Forest
Tilcon, Inc.	Groton	LWCF Seymour Trust GOSA	\$333,500 \$266,000 \$117,750	199.67	\$67,750	Critical Habitat Protection

McNamara Property

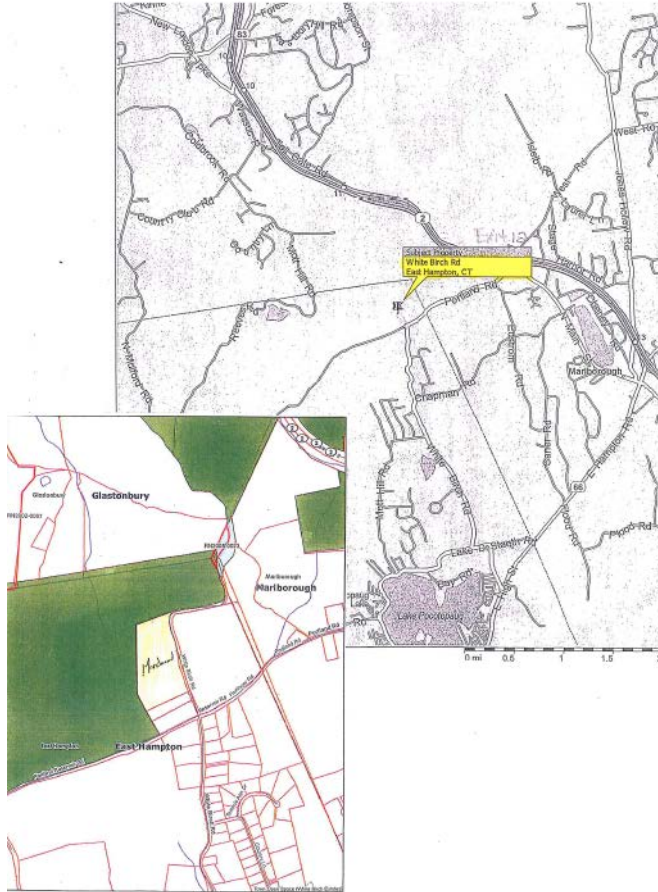
99 Keeney Road, Lyme

Fee Acquisition – 123.16 Acres



This mostly wooded property, within the Eight Mile River Watershed, contains a vernal pool and Beaver Brook, a tributary of the Eight Mile River, a National Wild and Scenic designated river. This property, southerly of the Beaver Brook Farm, was the highest priority for acquisition in the Nehantic State Forest Management Plan. It provides additional access to and enhances the already established trail network, allowing for passive and active recreational uses such as hiking, biking, hunting and fishing.

Marchand Property
White Birch Road, East Hampton
Fee Acquisition – 22.0 Acres



This entirely forested property, with walking trails and stone walls, is located at the northeast corner of East Hampton, near the Glastonbury and Marlborough town lines. It abuts Meshomasic State Forest to the west and north and provides improved access and maintenance capabilities to the forest, extending ownership up to the gravel roadway (White Birch Road extension). The DEEP Natural Diversity Database identifies a timber rattlesnake habitat in this vicinity. The timber rattlesnake is a species of greatest conservation need. This purchase will allow passive and active recreational uses such as hiking, biking and hunting.

Tilcon, Inc. Property
Groton
Fee Acquisition – 199.67 Acres



The Tilcon property consists of 199.67 acres of land located along Gold Star Highway, Rogers Road and Paulson Road in Groton. This new, stand-alone property features a significant Connecticut critical habitat, a 44 acre pitch pine/scrub oak woodland which is the largest remaining unprotected woodland of this type in the State. Pitch pine/scrub oak barrens have been identified as one of the thirteen most imperiled ecosystems in Connecticut. Hardwood forest, shrub wetlands and bare rock cover the remaining acreage, with various streams and trails running throughout the property. The Groton Open Space Association (GOSA) contributed funds towards the purchase of the property and entered into a Stewardship Agreement with DEEP to assist in the day-to-day management. Additional funding was made available by the George Dudley Seymour Trust Fund and through a Land and Water Conservation Grant (LWCF) administered by the National Park Service. The acquisition provides opportunities for hiking, bird watching, and other passive recreational uses in the area.