

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

June 2016

Overview

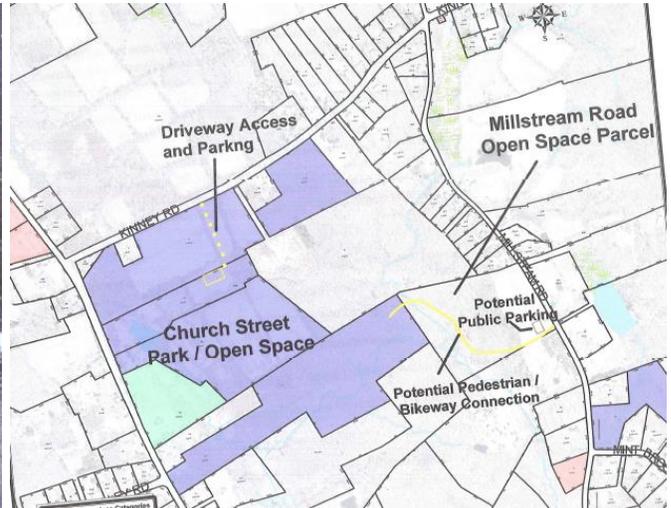
Section 22a-6v of the General Statutes of Connecticut requires the Commissioner of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection to submit a report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and bonding and to the State Bond 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 June 2016. Additional information on these projects follows.

Sponsor	Project	Acres
Town of Hebron	Millstream Road Property	19.0321
South Central Regional Water Authority	Loman Property, Killingworth	64.88
Connecticut Farmland Trust	Gunther Farm, Tolland & Vernon	19.72
Town of Mansfield	Meadowbrook Lane Property	58.198
Guilford Land Conservation Trust	Westwoods North, Guilford	15.20
Town of Glastonbury	Somers Property	24.24

Millstream Road Property
Town of Hebron
Fee Acquisition



This 19+ acre parcel, with 1000 feet of frontage on both sides of Raymond Brook will compliment a 95 acre parcel of Town-owned open space, providing access to the Brook for recreational purposes, hiking along the brook and fishing. Raymond Brook has long been recognized for its native brook trout population and its significant stratified drift aquifer. This subsurface resource protects the downstream Raymond Brook Marsh, a potential future drinking water supply area for the Town and wetland of statewide significance, which eventually merges with the Salmon River. The Town wants to create a bikeway that extends from Main Street through the Church Street and Millstream open space parcels, eventually connecting to the regional Airline Trail. The DEEP Natural Diversity Database identifies the presence of box turtles, a federally listed, threatened species as well as spotted turtles, recognized as a declining species.

Lorman Property, Killingworth
South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA)
Fee Acquisition

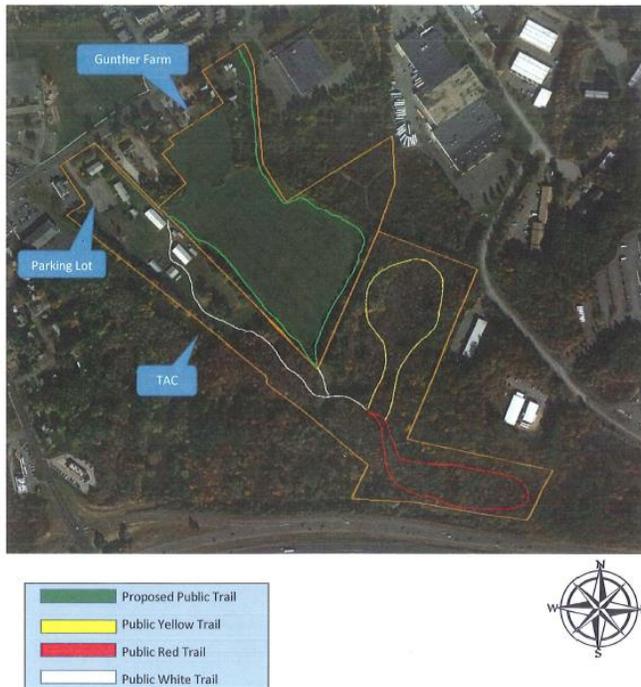


15+/- acres of this parcel will be Class I and 50+/- acres will be Class II Watershed land. This parcel borders Cockaponset State Forest and connects several existing protected parcels. This acquisition will protect streams, wetlands and a large block of wildlife habitat. The significant stream running through this property ultimately flows into Lake Hammonasset, a public water supply reservoir. The RWA will evaluate the property to determine if recreational uses will be permitted subject to Dept. of Public Health approval and it will be managed primarily to ensure the long-term health and viability of this public drinking water supply.

Gunther Farm, Tolland
Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT)
Fee Acquisition

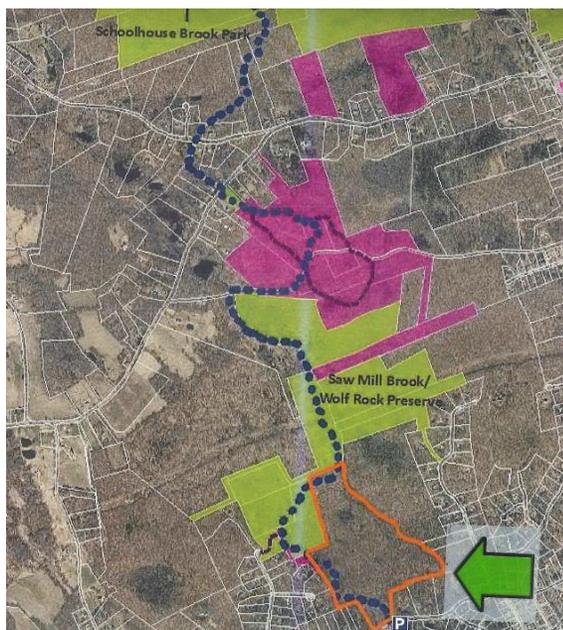
PROPOSED PUBLIC TRAILS

Gunther Farm, Tolland/Vernon



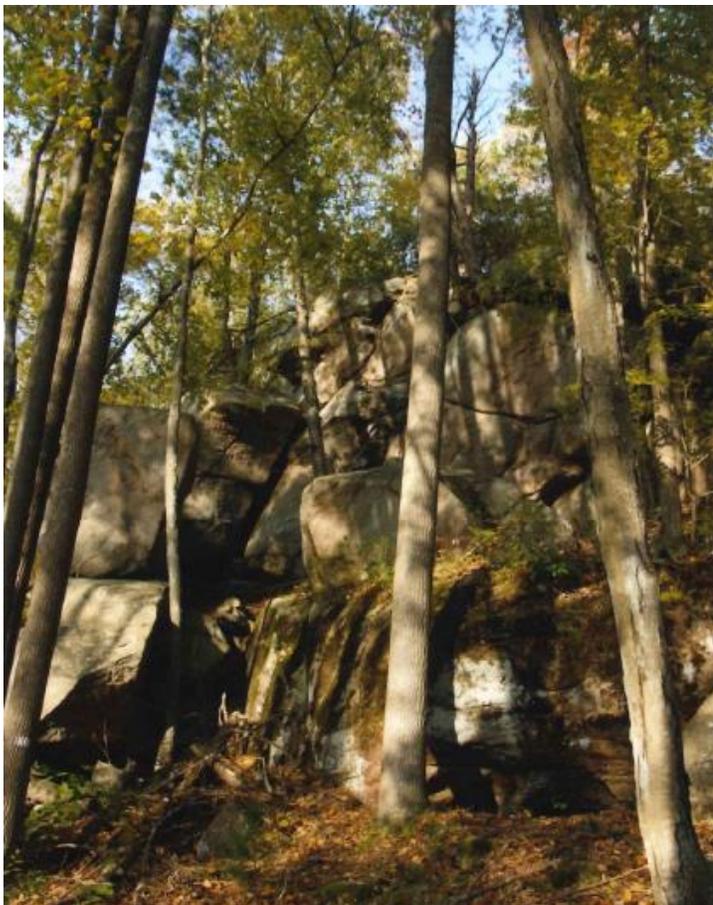
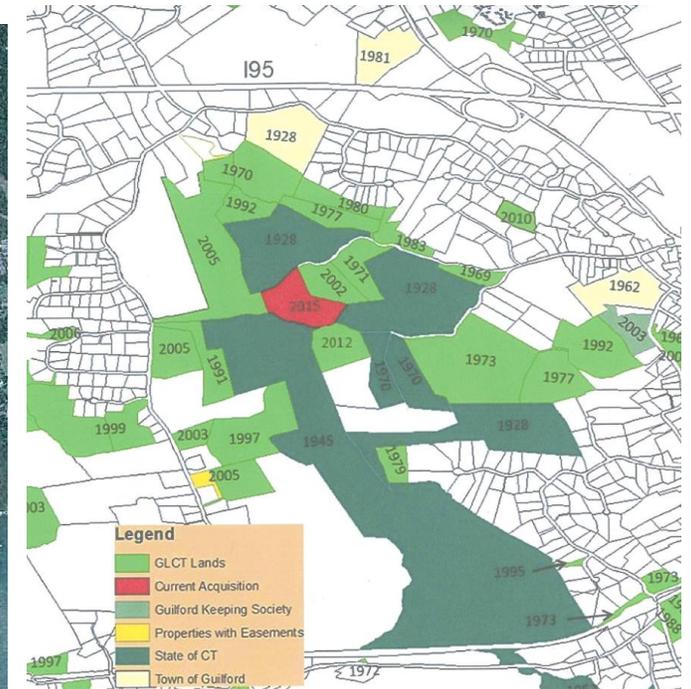
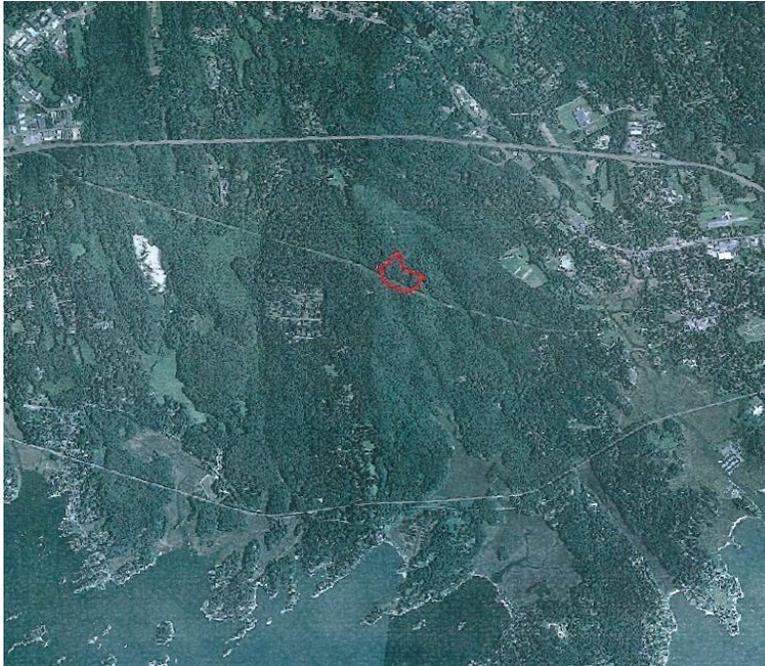
CFT purchased Gunther Farm with funding assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and the State of CT DEEP. Once purchased, CFT plans to sell the restricted property to the Tolland County Agricultural Center (TAC), to be managed as part of its 32-acre environmental and agricultural education facility. The property's most valuable natural resources are its grassland, wetlands and flood plain. 92% of the parcel is either prime farmland or statewide important farmland soils. There will be public access trails linked to an extensive network of existing passive recreation trails on the adjacent TAC property.

Meadowbrook Lane Property
Town of Mansfield
Fee Acquisition



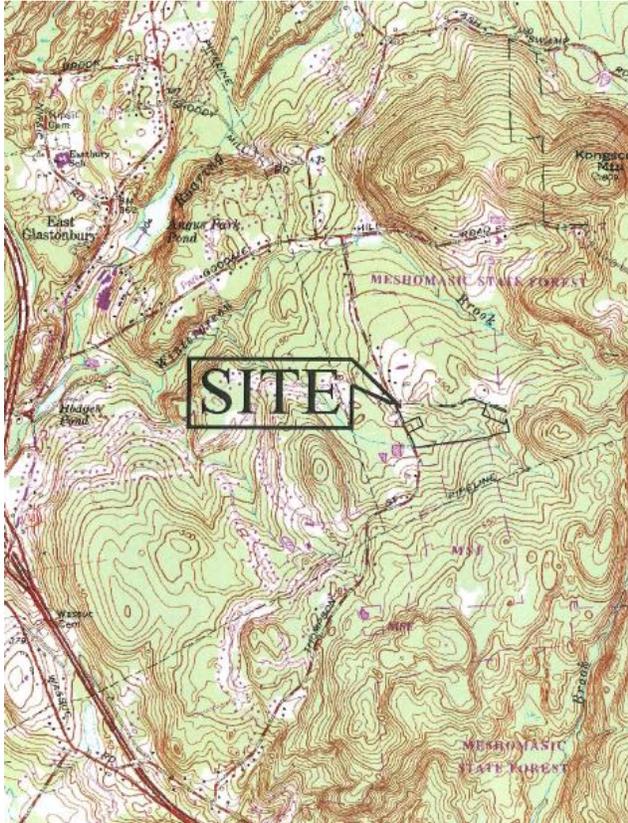
This property includes a 1/2 mile segment of the Nipmuck Trail and completes the protection of a project begun in 2001, to protect the interior forest between Crane Hill Road and Puddin Lane. It connects with the Town of Mansfield's Sawmill Brook Preserve (also purchased with Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant funds) and to Joshua's Trust's Wolf Rock Preserve, abutting 223 acres of town-owned and Joshua's Trust land, much of which is permanently preserved. The Nipmuck Trail is part of the CT Blue Trail State Greenway. This parcel protects valuable forestry, fishing, wildlife habitat and significant recreational and natural resources.

Westwoods North, Guilford
Guilford Land Conservation Trust (GLCT)
Fee Acquisition



Westwoods is an intact forest, adjacent to Cockaponset State Forest, and numerous GLCT and Town-owned and protected parcels. This forest plays an important role as a filter to the water flowing into the marsh complex to which it is connected and into Long Island Sound. The shellfish beds, crabbing, fishing, swimming and boating benefit from the quality of this natural filter. The forest lies within the New York/ Boston I-95 corridor. Westwoods is a large area of darkness at night that benefits migrating birds and nocturnal creatures. The intact, robust natural forest is important for wildlife who require large, interior forest habitat for survival. This 15.2 acre parcel has 4 trails that have been maintained by GLCT with landowner permission for nearly 50 years. The Westwoods trail system is one of the most popular trail systems along Connecticut's shoreline. Permitted uses will include hiking, mountain biking, birding, nature study, geocaching, photography, and picnicking, with horseback riding permitted on one of the trails.

**Somers Property
Town of Glastonbury
Fee Acquisition**



The Somers Property abuts the 32,000+/- acre Meshomasic State Forest to the north, east and south. It will protect a wildlife habitat significantly important to the one of the two largest populations of State-Endangered timber rattlesnake in Connecticut. The existence of a population to the south makes this the only location where populations can interact. This parcel will expand upon Meshomasic State Forest, recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a high-ranking special focus area within the Sylvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge for rare species, contiguous habitat, migratory landbird habitat, wetlands and waterbirds. This acquisition also protects a watercourse which flows through the southern section of the property.

Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program

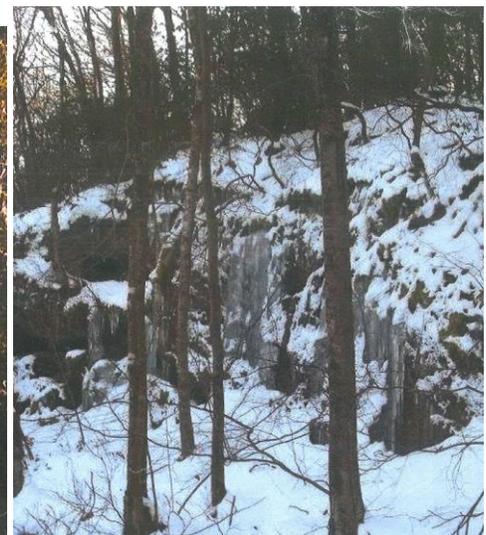
The Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program is the State of Connecticut’s primary program for the acquisition of lands for the beneficial use and enjoyment of the public as additions to the State’s system of parks, forests, wildlife, fisheries and natural resource management areas. The program 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 June 2016. Additional information on these projects follows.

Property Name	Location	Cooperator	Match Share	Fee Acreage	Easement Restrictions or R.O.W.	State Purchase Price	Purpose of Acquisition
Kuiaski Estate	Little Fawn & Reisman Trails, Haddam	N/A	N/A	39.75	N/A	\$200,000	Addition to Cockaponset State Forest
Kuzyk	Voluntown	N/A	N/A	15.97	N/A	\$120,000	Addition to Pachaug State Forest
Del Russo	Portland	N/A	N/A	102.97	N/A	\$590,000	Addition to Meshomasic State Forest

Estate of Constance N. Kuiaski Property

Haddam

Fee Acquisition



This 40+/- acre forest and marshland habitat is rich with wildlife and is an important source of water for wildlife. There are historic rock structures, profound scenery and pre-existing hiking trails which connect to Cockaponset State Park. The property is rich with flora, fauna, vernal pools and wildlife. Twenty-five percent of the property is in the headwaters of and drains into a public water supply area. The acquisition will expand the forest greenway and trail expansion opportunities.

Kuzyk Property
Voluntown
Fee Acquisition



The Kuzyk property consists of 15.97 acres of land located at 127 Bassett Mill Road, Voluntown. The property is a nearly rectangular shaped parcel with about 540' of frontage along the unimproved gravel portion of Bassett Mill Road. Three northern boundary abuts the Pachaug State Forest. The property was being marketed as a residential building site, which would have impacted the access and hunting setbacks within this portion of the forest. Acquisition of this parcel provides better access into the forest and additional opportunities for hiking, hunting, and other passive recreational uses.

Del Russo Property
Portland
Fee Acquisition



The Del Russo property consists of three parcels of land totaling 102.97 acres located off of Isinglass Hill Road, Portland. These key pieces fill in inholdings and reduce boundary maintenance within the Meshomasic State Forest. This area of the forest, along the Portland-Glastonbury town line, is identified as a key habitat for the endangered timber rattlesnake. Acquisition of this property helps improve access into this section of the forest, protects a variety of habitat, protects the watershed of the nearby Portland Reservoir, and provides passive recreational opportunities.