

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

January 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 January 2016. Additional information on these projects follows.

Sponsor	Project	Acres
Town of Colchester	Moroch Property, Colchester	10.21
Town of Sprague	Robinson Property, Franklin & Sprague	125.622

Moroch Property, Colchester
Town of Colchester
Fee Acquisition



This 10.21 acre parcel will be added to the Ruby and Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands Park, a 2001 Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant acquisition by the Town that protected 196 acres. The preservation of this parcel enhances the protection of the Deep River headwaters, a significant tributary to the Yantic River, which is part of the Thames River Basin and is vital to the ecosystem of the Dutton and MacDonald Swamps. Cohen Park is open to the public and provides passive recreational activities such as hiking, horseback riding, bike riding, mountain biking, wildlife observation and education, fishing and camping.

Robinson Property, Franklin & Sprague
Town of Sprague
Fee Acquisition



This property, located primarily in Franklin, is adjacent to the 278 acre Mukluk Sportsmen’s Club Property (renamed the Sprague Land Preserve) and the 230 acre Watson Farm, both purchased with OSWA grant funds. This will grow the Sprague Preserve to over 600 acres of contiguous open space. With over a mile of frontage along the Shetucket River, the Sprague Preserve provides public access for fishing, kayaking, birding and other water-related recreation. One of its most impressive natural features is the ridgeline of hemlock and pine that rises high above the banks of the Shetucket River. Its high bluffs along the river valley give rise to two significant waterfalls. The Sprague Land Preserve is an integral part of the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor and the Last Green Valley.

Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program

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

There were no Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program acquisitions closed in January 2016.