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NEWS RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONNECTICUT'S FORESTS: THE BEST WENT FIRST

HARTFORD – Connecticut's most valuable forests – those furthest from the destabilizing influence of development – have been shrinking at a faster rate than forests overall. This was the conclusion of the Council on Environmental Quality when it examined new data from the University of Connecticut.

The University's Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) recently released new data, based on analysis of satellite imagery, on trends in Connecticut's woodlands. The Council on Environmental Quality reviewed the new data at its most recent meeting and decided to use it in all future reports on the state's environment.

"The information about 'core' forests is superior to other data sources we have been using," said Council Chair Barbara Wagner. "Core forest acres are those at least 300 feet away from roads and development. As the CLEAR staff has said, these are the forests that are most useful for wildlife, recreation and other uses, and we should be paying particular attention to them."

"In our next report to Governor Rell and the General Assembly," continued Wagner, "we will show the total extent of forests but we will highlight the trend in core forests. Unfortunately, because of development patterns, core forest is declining significantly faster than overall forests. This reinforces the Council's recommendations for a more strategic approach to open space conservation."

"Forests are much more than a collection of trees," Wagner concluded. "They

are complete ecosystems, but the forests next to roads and developments are not so complete.”

For more information, look for the Featured Indicators for December on the Council’s home page at www.ct.gov/ceq.

The Council is a nine-member board that is independent of the DEP except for purely administrative functions. Established in 1971 alongside the DEP, the CEQ has published dozens of reports on state environmental problems and solutions – including Environmental Quality in Connecticut, the official annual state report on the condition of Connecticut’s environment – and has resolved hundreds of citizen complaints. The Council monitors and reports on important state actions that affect the environment, and, pursuant to state law, advises other state agencies on projects and policies.

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