



The Municipal Primer

Your Guide to
Creating a
"Green and Growing"
Community



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Commissioner





Parks and Recreation



Pictured —
Cotton Hollow Preserve,
Glastonbury, Connecticut

Municipalities typically acquire, operate and maintain municipal parks and forests and provide recreational opportunities and programs. The CT DEP acquires, operates and maintains state parks and forests and provides public recreational opportunities and programs within these state amenities. To aid in coordination between municipal parks and recreation agencies and the CT DEP, this section of *The Municipal Primer* includes fact sheets on the following topics:

- *Greenways*
- *Outdoor Recreation*
- *Protected Open Space*
- *State Parks and Forests*

While many other fact sheets in *The Municipal Primer* may be helpful to parks and recreation agencies, some that may be of particular interest are:

Dredging (Public Works)

Fleet Selection and Operations (Public Works)

Landscape and Lawn Care (Public Works)

Low Impact Development (Boards, Commissions, Agencies and Committees)

Wildlife Issues: Animal Possession, Nuisance Animals & Wildlife Rehabilitators (Public Safety and Building Official)

Grants and Financial Assistance (Financial Assistance).



Description

A “greenway” is a corridor of open space that may serve various functions:

- 1) it may protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources, or offer opportunities for recreation or non-motorized transportation;
- 2) it may connect existing protected areas and provide access to the outdoors;
- 3) it may be located along a defining natural feature, such as a waterway, or along a man-made corridor, including an unused right-of-way, traditional trail or rail route, or historic barge canal; and/or
- 4) it may be a “green space” along a highway or around a village; or any combination of these items.

Municipal Connection

Greenways are often established, owned and/or maintained by the municipalities where they are located. Greenways can make communities better places to live by preserving and creating open space, and they can strengthen local economies by protecting the environment and providing areas for passive recreation and alternative transportation. Greenways can also preserve and highlight areas with historic or cultural value.

Municipal Responsibility

Municipalities are encouraged to participate in this non-regulatory program by planning for and designating greenways.

Statutory Citation

CGS Sections 23-100 through 23-102

Discussion

Greenways are a specific type of open space that can help conserve native landscapes and ecosystems by protecting, maintaining, and restoring natural, connecting, linear corridors.

Greenways can provide opportunities for recreation, exercise, and alternative transportation, as well as corridors for the movement of wildlife between habitats. In addition, these areas can separate and buffer incompatible use of adjacent land. Greenways may also promote economically efficient and productive uses for lands that may otherwise be marginal for development. They can also contribute to local tourism and to the preservation of scenic, cultural, and historic assets in the state.

The Greenways Small Grants Program (Greenways License Plate Program) provides for the planning, design, and implementation of greenway projects around the state, and offers education about these projects. Property acquisition and construction are not eligible for funding through this program but may be eligible for funding through the Open Space and Watershed Grant Program described on the fact sheet for *Protected Open Space*.

Potential CT DEP Permits, Registrations and/or Certifications

None, this is not a regulatory program.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance may be available. Please see www.ct.gov/dep/financialassistance and select the “Greenways” link.

Model Regulations for Municipal Consideration

None.

Web Page

www.ct.gov/dep/greenways

Contact

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
State Parks Division
Trails and Greenways Program
Phone: 860-424-3578

Description

Outdoor recreation activities include both organized sports such as soccer, football, or baseball, and more passive activities, such as hiking, picnicking or bird watching.

Municipal Connection

Municipalities typically provide recreational opportunities for their residents. Many of these activities take place outdoors. The municipal role in outdoor recreation differs from that of the CT DEP in two fundamental ways: 1) municipal recreational facilities and programs are intended to serve primarily the residents of that municipality rather than a larger regional or statewide population; and 2) the nature of the facilities and activities provided for at the local level tend toward the more intensive, active and/or organized forms of recreation. Athletic fields, tennis courts, golf courses, swimming pools or beaches, boating facilities, and hiking trails are typical of the types of recreational facilities that municipalities may provide.

Municipal Responsibility

There are no overarching CT DEP requirements for municipalities regarding outdoor recreation. However, municipalities are encouraged to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for their residents. Like all other municipal activities, depending on the specifics of a project to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, CT DEP permits or licenses may be required.

Statutory Citation

CGS Sections 23-1 through 23-27k

Discussion

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The CT DEP's recreation efforts are guided by the Connecticut Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2005-2010 (SCORP). Generally, CT DEP funding provided to

municipalities for recreational development will be evaluated based, in part, on consistency with the SCORP. Consequently, when considering outdoor recreation grants to municipalities, the project rating and scoring systems will give priority to projects based on the needs identified in the SCORP. These include: multi-use trails; swimming access at freshwater, saltwater or pools; picnic areas, shelters or playgrounds; boating access; and toilet and parking facilities. Projects that are accessible from local transit routes will also be favored.

Greenways

Greenways are linear open spaces that can help conserve native landscapes and ecosystems by protecting, maintaining, and restoring natural connecting corridors. They can provide opportunities for recreation, exercise, and alternative transportation by supporting hiking trails and/or bike paths. In addition, these areas can separate and buffer incompatible adjacent land uses and promote economically efficient and productive uses for lands which may be marginal for development. Greenways can also contribute to local tourism and to the preservation of scenic, cultural, and historic assets in the state. For more information, see the fact sheet on *Greenways*.

Managing Outdoor Municipal Recreational Facilities

Ensuring environmental stewardship of outdoor municipal recreational facilities is frequently a matter of following the guidance offered in the fact sheets provided in the "Municipal Facilities" section under Public Works, particularly the fact sheet on *Landscape and Lawn Care*. However, golf courses and marinas and other boating facilities present unique challenges and opportunities for improved environmental protection.

Ball Fields

Turf ball fields have the potential to adversely impact the environment through the improper use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. To mitigate this potential, ball field managers

Outdoor Recreation

should consider minimizing the use of these items on playing fields and other landscaped areas. To the extent feasible, ball field managers are encouraged to use alternative pest controls, such as integrated pest management. This is discussed in greater detail in the fact sheet on *Landscaping and Lawn Care* under Public Works.

Turf ball fields may also be routinely watered to maintain the playing surface. Such watering should be done with care to ensure that the use of water is optimized. Tailoring the watering amounts and schedules based upon such things as time of day (early morning is recommended), recent rainfall, weather conditions (evaporation and transpiration by plants is reduced on overcast and/or cool days), and other factors can significantly reduce water use. Depending upon the sophistication of the watering system, the best management practices developed for golf course water use may be helpful to turf ball field managers (see below).

Golf Courses

Similar to ball fields, golf courses have the potential to impact the environment through the improper use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. To mitigate this potential, golf course operators should follow the guidance offered above.

Additionally, golf courses require significant amounts of water to maintain optimum playing conditions. The CT DEP has developed best management practices for golf course water use (BMPs) that are intended to promote water conservation, preserve or improve water quality and protect water resources. These BMPs were developed by a work group consisting of course superintendents, environmental regulators, and specialists from local engineering, scientific, and irrigation consulting groups. They were developed for the use of golf course planners, architects, developers, and local regulators who may need assistance and guidance in developing new golf courses, or making changes to existing

golf courses, under the regulatory and environmental constraints that exist in the State of Connecticut.

Marinas and Other Boating Facilities

Many municipalities operate recreational boating facilities. In addition to the other “green” practices discussed above, Connecticut offers several programs specific to the marinas and other boating facilities. Municipalities that operate marinas, other boating facilities and/or municipal vessels are eligible for participation in these programs.

The Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG) program, funded by the Sport Fish Restoration Account of the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, provides funding for public and private agencies and marinas and other facilities that offer transient tie-up opportunities for non-trailerable (26’ or over in length) recreational boats.

Connecticut’s Clean Marina Program is a voluntary program that encourages inland and coastal marina operators, including municipalities, to minimize pollution. The program also recognizes Connecticut’s marinas, boatyards, and yacht clubs that go above and beyond regulatory compliance as “Certified Clean Marinas.”

As a companion to the Clean Marina Program, the Clean Boater Program encourages the state’s boaters to learn about and use clean boating techniques. Municipal officials and employees who use boats as part of their municipal duties are encouraged to take the Clean Boater Pledge. Tips on how to be a clean boater are available on the CT DEP website at www.ct.gov/dep/boating.

Participating in the Clean Vessel Act (CVA) grant program is a great way to upgrade a municipal marina’s boat waste handling facilities and provide customers with quick and convenient waste handling. A harbormaster or harbor management commission can develop a presence on the water by operating a CVA funded pumpout boat program. The CT DEP

Office of Long Island Sound Programs administers the CVA Grant Program in Connecticut. This program provides federally funded matching grants for qualifying projects that provide boat sewage disposal facilities. Up to 75% of the cost of an approved project may be reimbursed.

Municipal marina operators are advised that work in (or in some cases near) the water is regulated and the regulatory authority depends upon the type of waterway. Work within the review area of inland wetlands and watercourses is controlled by the municipal inland wetlands agency; work in coastal waters or tidal wetlands is regulated under the CT DEP coastal permitting program. See the Guide to CT DEP Permits, Licenses and Other Authorizations section of *The Municipal Primer* for more information.

Potential CT DEP Permits, Registrations and/or Certifications

Permits and licenses related to general property management are listed on various facts sheets under Public Works in *The Municipal Primer*.

Permits and licenses related to specific recreational uses on municipal properties are as follows.

- Boating facilities, swim floats and other structures in tidal coastal and navigable waters are subject to CT DEP's coastal permitting authorities.
- Boating facilities and other facilities in inland wetlands, lakes, ponds, streams and rivers are subject to local inland wetlands and watercourses regulations.
- Boating facilities and other facilities within stream channel encroachment lines are subject to CT DEP's stream channel encroachment line authorities.

Use of State Parks and Forests for organized recreation activities requires prior approval. For more information, see fact sheet on *State*

Parks and Forests under Parks and Recreation in *The Municipal Primer*.

Financial Assistance

Funding may be available for outdoor recreation through the following programs:

Greenways and Trails

www.ct.gov/dep/greenways Select "Sources of Funding" on the left side;

Boating Infrastructure Program and Clean Boaters Program

www.ct.gov/dep/boating Select "Grant Information" on the left side;

Clean Vessel Act Program

www.ct.gov/dep/cva Select "Grant Information" on the left side.

Model Regulations for Municipal Consideration

No.

Web Pages

Outdoor Recreation

www.ct.gov/dep/recreation

Greenways

www.ct.gov/dep/greenways

Boating

www.ct.gov/dep/boating

Clean Marina Program

www.ct.gov/dep/cleanmarina

Clean Vessel Act Grant Program

www.ct.gov/dep/cva

Contacts

SCORP

Office of the Commissioner
Planning and Program Development
Phone: 860-424-4110

Greenways and Trails

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Greenways and Trails Program
Phone: 860-424-3578

Outdoor Recreation

Boating

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Boating Division
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, CT 06371
Phone: 860-434-8638

Clean Marina/Clean Vessel Act

Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse
Office of Long Island Sound Programs
Phone: 860-424-3034



Description

Protected Open Space (POS) is land preserved in perpetuity predominantly in its natural scenic and open condition for the protection of natural resources. Recreation consistent with such protection may be allowed in POS. When POS is Class I or Class II water supply watershed lands, improvements necessary for the protection or provision of potable water may be allowed.

Municipal Connection

As key partners, municipalities play a major role in establishing and safeguarding POS in Connecticut.

Municipal Responsibility

Individual municipalities are not required to participate in this program but they are encouraged to do so.

Statutory Citations

CGS Section 23-8 and CGS Sections 23-73 through 23-99

Discussion

Connecticut's natural diversity and scenic beauty add immeasurably to the quality of life for its residents. The state's prosperity has always depended upon its natural resources. Forests and farms contribute to a healthy and diverse economy. Parks and open lands improve the quality of life and help attract businesses. Natural areas and waterways provide critical wildlife habitats, clean water for drinking and recreation, and scenic natural beauty, which are the foundation of the tourism industry.

The CT DEP envisions a mixed landscape that offers multiple benefits: providing outdoor recreation to Connecticut's citizens; protecting water supplies; preserving fragile, natural communities and homes for plants and animals; offering green spaces for city residents; and providing a functioning, natural

landscape for the harvesting of farm and forest products. In 2007, the CT DEP updated *The Green Plan*, which identifies priority conservation areas to help attain this vision.

Not all undeveloped land is protected open space; much of it will eventually be developed. However, for Connecticut to remain an attractive state in which to live, work and conduct business, it is critical that development be balanced with land conservation. This was recognized by the state legislature in 1999 when they created the Open Space and Watershed Grant Program, administered by the CT DEP. This program helps municipalities, nonprofit land conservation organizations and water companies purchase land and/or conservation easements in order to permanently protect valuable open space.

The Open Space and Watershed Grant Program legislation established a goal of permanently protecting a total of 21 percent of Connecticut's land area; 10 percent to be held by the State of Connecticut and 11 percent to be held collectively by municipalities, nonprofit land conservation organizations and water companies, whose Class I and Class II watershed lands are included in this share. The Open Space Acquisition Program intends to achieve these goals by 2023, which means that the state and its open space partners must remain committed to acquiring open space for the next fifteen years. The recently updated *The Green Plan*, mentioned above, guides acquisition under this program. Open Space and Watershed Grants are available to municipalities, land trusts and water companies for a variety of projects related to open space protection. Requests for proposals are issued annually. For municipalities, this is a cost-share program for the protection of open space including Class I and Class II water supply watershed lands. Distressed communities are also eligible for funding for resource enhancement and protection projects. The percentage of appraised value covered by the Open Space and Watershed Lands Acquisition Grant Program is set by statute (CGS Sections

Protected Open Space

7-131d through 22a-131k) and, depending upon the individual project, may be up to 50-75 percent.

Potential CT DEP Permits, Registrations and/or Certifications

None, this is not a regulatory program.

Financial Assistance

Funding for protecting open space is provided by the CT DEP, as funds allow. See Web page for Open Space and Watershed Grant Program noted below.

Model Regulations for Municipal Consideration

No.

Web Pages

Open Space and Watershed Grant Program
www.ct.gov/dep/financialassistance Select the “Open Space” link.

The Green Plan
www.ct.gov/dep/landscapestewardship From the “Quick Links” drop down menu, select “Open Space.”

Contact

Bureau of Outdoor Recreasion
Land Acquisition and Management Division
Municipal Grants Program
Phone: 860-424-3081



Description

State parks are state-owned recreational facilities that are designed and maintained for public visitation.

State forests are state-owned, multiple-use lands that provide commercial forest products, protect watersheds, provide wildlife habitats and host recreational facilities.

Municipal Connection

State parks and forests may be located within one or more municipalities. These state-owned resources can support the environmental, social and economic health of communities.

Municipal Responsibility

Municipalities have no specific responsibility to state parks and forests beyond those of the general public (i.e., honor the applicable rules and regulations and the property boundaries). Municipal public safety officials (police and fire) are typically first responders to emergency situations in state parks and forests. However, the CT DEP Division of Environmental Conservation Police are the police authority for these areas.

Statutory Citation

CGS Sections 23-1 through 23-27k

Discussion

The State of Connecticut owns a variety of lands managed by the CT DEP for specific purposes. These lands include state parks and forests. These areas are primarily intended to be used for passive recreation (e.g., hiking, birding, picnicking, and the like). Some state parks also offer supervised swimming. Residents of host communities are encouraged to responsibly enjoy these areas in ways consistent with the purposes for which they have been established. An entrance or parking fee is collected at some state parks and forests.

State Parks

State parks offer valuable recreational opportunities to both Connecticut residents and non-residents. Many organized recreational activities can be accommodated at state parks provided the organizers apply to the CT DEP State Parks and Education Division to register their proposed activities. Events must be in keeping with the mission of the CT DEP and State Parks Division. The state has approved such diverse activities as hang gliding, tai chi day, dog shows, boy scout events, and historical reenactments.

State Forests

The CT DEP manages state forests to promote a vigorous, resilient, forest environment capable of sustaining the wide range of demands that the public places on these lands. These demands include a variety of recreational experiences, protection of natural diversity (including threatened and endangered species), preservation of unique sites (geologic, cultural and archeological), provision of raw materials and forest products, and maintenance of wildlife and fisheries habitats.

Potential CT DEP Permits, Registrations and/or Certifications

Many activities proposed within state parks or forests require pre-approval by the CT DEP.

Financial Assistance

Not applicable.

Model Regulations for Municipal Consideration

Not applicable.

Web Pages

State Parks

www.ct.gov/dep/stateparks

State Forests

www.ct.gov/dep/forestry

State Parks and Forests

Contacts

State Parks

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation

State Parks Division

Email: dep.stateparks@po.state.ct.us

Phone: 860-424-3200

State Forests

Bureau of Natural Resources

Forestry Division

Phone: 860-424-3630

