

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

February 2016

Overview

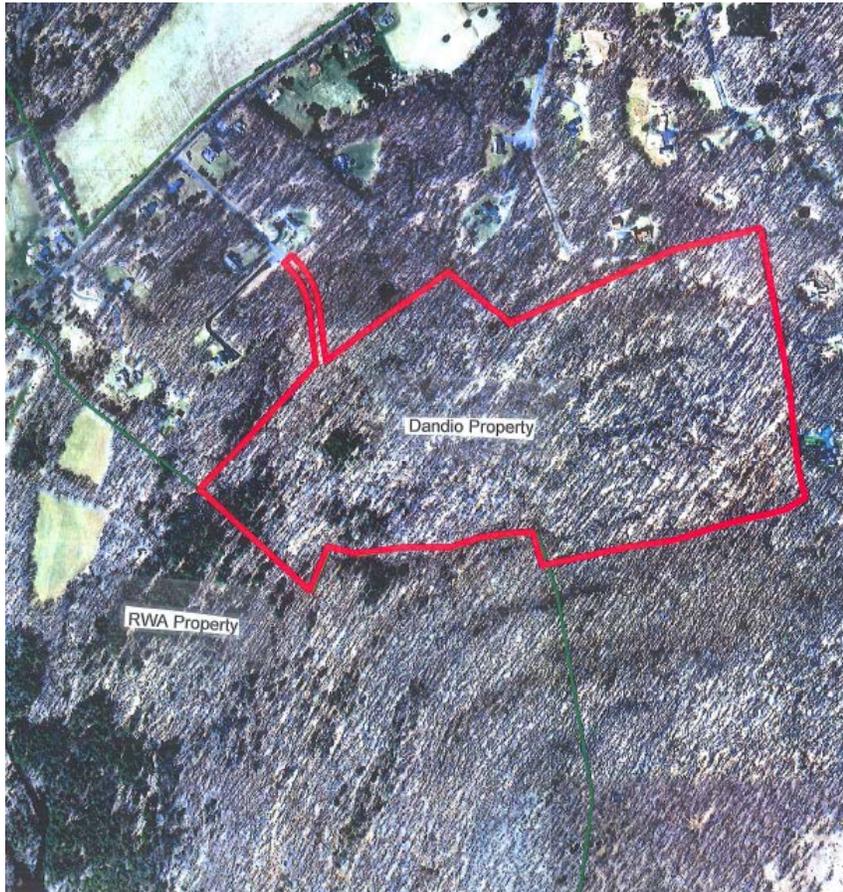
Section 22a-6v of the General Statutes of Connecticut requires the Commissioner of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection to submit a report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and bonding and to the State Bond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

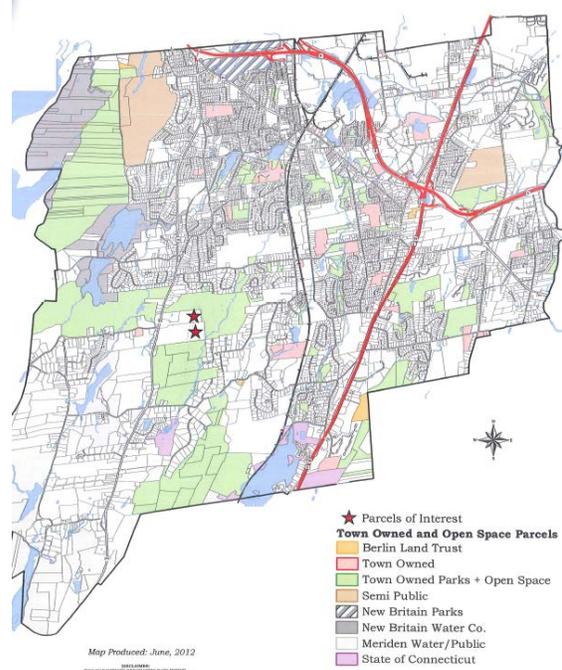
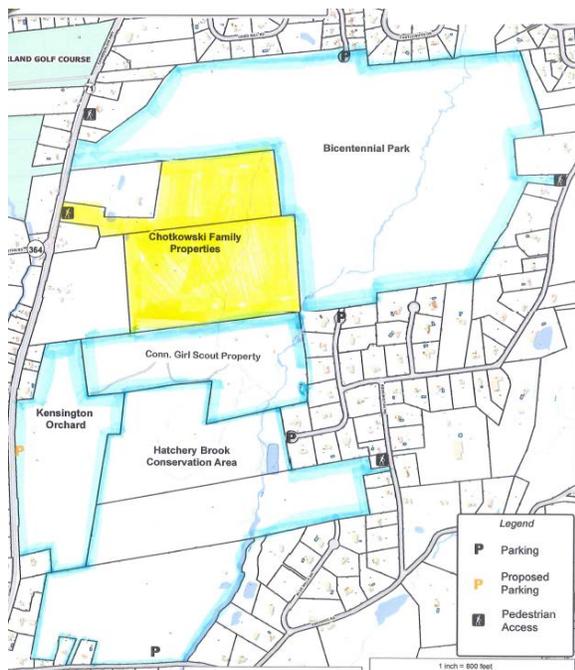
Sponsor	Project	Acres
South Central CT Reg. Water Authority	Dandio Property , Guilford	60.81
Town of Berlin	Chotkowski Property	71.1
Town of Westbrook	Horse Hill Woods Phase II	185.84

Dandio Property, Guilford
South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA)
Fee Acquisition



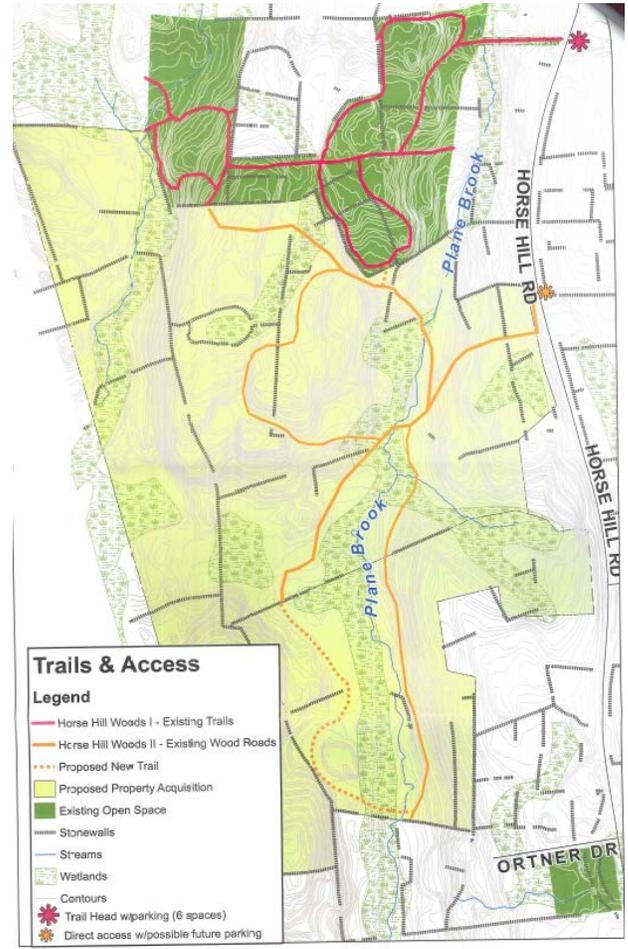
This 60.81 acre parcel borders other RWA watershed land to the south and Guilford Land Trust easements to the north on Great Hill Road in Guilford. Most of the land is within the public water supply watershed of Lake Menunketuc Reservoir. Approximately 36 acres will become Class I land, approximately 23 acres will become Class II land and less than 2 acres is located off the public water supply watershed and will be considered Class III land. Unnamed watercourses and a tributary to Lake Menunketuc flow through this property. The RWA has a very active recreation program and will evaluate this property to determine if recreational uses will be permitted on the property, subject to Department of Public Health approvals.

Chotkowski Property
Town of Berlin
Fee Acquisition



This 71.1 acre property, on the easterly side of the Chamberlain Highway, creates a 488 acre greenway with other Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisitions to the north (Bicentennial Park) and south (Girl Scout Property, Kensington Orchard and Hatchery Brook Conservation Area). This property contains former farmlands including hayfields and orchards and some wooded land. A hiking trail will provide direct access to this parcel and the Town recently approved a new parking lot at Kensington Orchard. The area is already extensively used for hiking, cross country skiing, birding, a community garden and other passive recreation uses. The Town of Berlin, various youth groups and the Connecticut Forest and Park Association have completed extensive restoration, trail blazing and bridge crossing projects, and is creating a new loop trail, which will connect to and become part of the Metacomet Trail, a nationally designated Scenic Trail.

Horse Hill Woods, Phase II
Town of Westbrook
Fee Acquisition



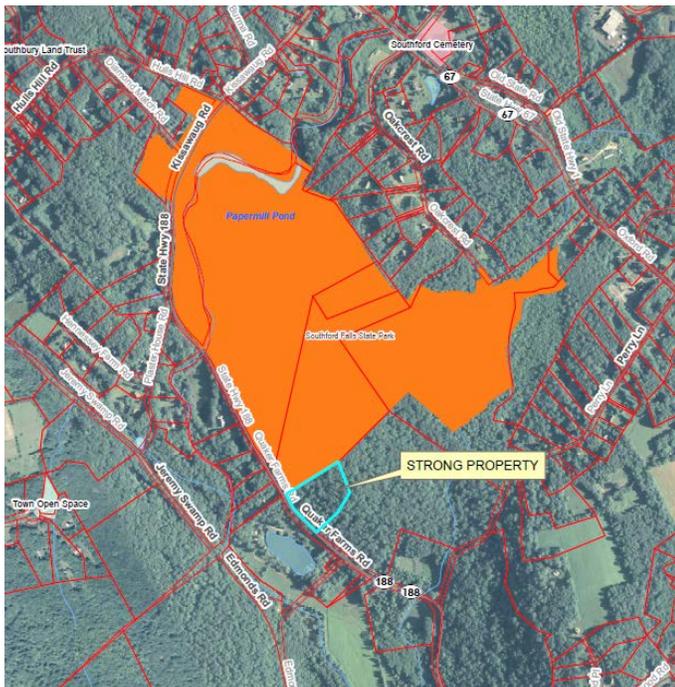
This 185.54 acre acquisition (highlighted yellow above) is located in the State-designated Menunketesuck-Cockaponset Regional Greenway and contiguous to Horse Hill Woods Phase I (highlighted green), a previous Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) grant. This trail hub, forest and wetland corridor extends further north into other sections of Cockaponset State Forest and east to the State’s 421 acre Messerschmidt Pond Wildlife Management Area. Southerly of this acquisition, efforts are on-going to link with Westbrook’s 83 acre Chapman Mill Pond Open Space (another OSWA grant) and the State’s recently acquired Sciongay property (west side of Chapman Mill Pond, Clinton). This property’s forest, wildlife and habitat resource values are high due to its location within a larger, unfragmented forest landscape and two structurally diverse wetland systems. The CT Audubon has determined that protection of these properties, adjacent to the Stewart B. McKinney National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Salt Meadow Unit (Refuge), and the undeveloped corridor between the Refuge & Cockaponset State Forest, ensures that the Refuge will continue to provide important habitat area for Saltmarsh sparrow, a CT threatened species, and protect the integrity of migratory flyways for many species.

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 February 2016. Additional information on these projects follow.

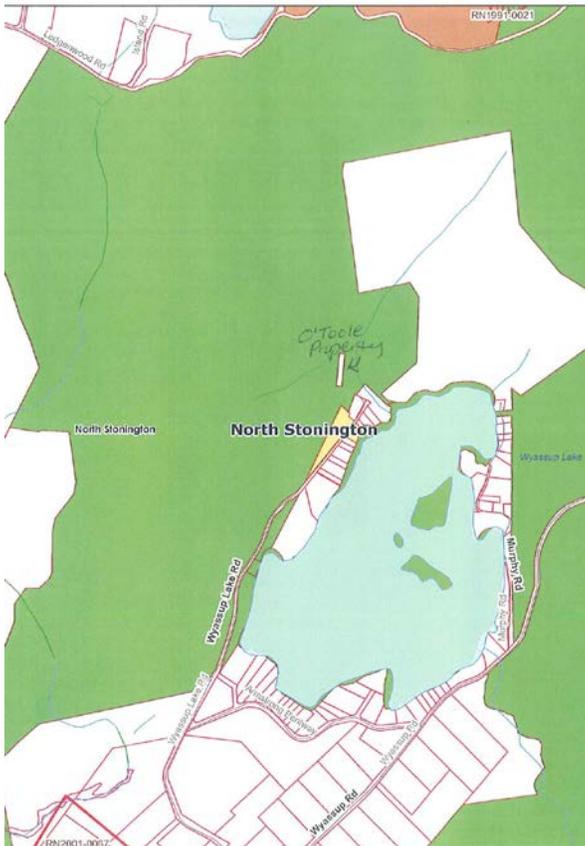
Property Name	Location	Cooperator	Match Share	Fee Acreage	Easement Restrictions or R.O.W.	State Purchase Price	Purpose of Acquisition
Strong	Oxford	--	--	5.62	--	\$0	Addition to Southford Falls State Park
O'Toole	North Stonington	--	--	0.35	--	\$20,000	Inholding Pachaug State Forest
Kennedy	Hamden	--	--	20.057	--	\$44,000	Addition to West Rock Ridge State Park

Strong Property Oxford Fee Acquisition



The Strong property consists of 5.62 acres of land located along Quaker Hill Road, Oxford. The property abuts the Southford Falls State Park. The land was generously donated to the State by the Estate of Miriam Strong. The acquisition provides additional access into the southern end of the park, and gives opportunities for hiking, bird watching, and other passive recreational uses.

**O'Toole Property
North Stonington
Fee Acquisition**



This 50± by 300± foot parcel had a right of way over Pachaug State Forest for access. The prior owner had an old hunter's cabin which will be demolished. The acquisition eliminates an inholding and right of way over State property.

**Kennedy Property
Hamden
Fee Acquisition**

This acquisition consists of 3 parcels (highlighted green), 900 Hill Street, 905 Hill Street and 1140 Hill Street, totaling 20.057 acres. All three parcels will be added to West Rock Ridge State Park. The Blue Blazed Trail enters the northwesterly corner of 900 Hill Street and runs along the southerly boundary of 905 Hill Street, connecting to the recently acquired Gaines property Conservation Easement donation and additional West Rock Ridge State Park lands to the south and northeast. The Blue Blazed Trail is managed by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association.

