

February 7, 2020

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program. This is the program's twenty-second year and so far it has helped to protect over 36,000 acres of open space throughout the state. The program provides financial assistance to municipalities and non-profit land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space and to water companies to acquire land to be classified as Class I or Class II water supply property.

This is a highly competitive grant program and funding is limited. The Department will be making funds available with future Community Investment Act and Bond Commission funding. Only the highest priority projects will be awarded funding. Lower priority projects may be awarded funding as additional resources become available. Projects are evaluated by statutorily defined parameters and ranked based on their natural resource and recreational value and the site's value as it relates to climate change resiliency and adaptation. Preference will be given to land currently available for acquisition within a twelve-month period and to projects that leverage the greatest percentage of match funding.

The Department is currently accepting applications under this program. The deadline to submit an application is **June 1st, 2020**. Please review the attached materials carefully as they will guide you in completing your application.

Connecticut's natural diversity and scenic beauty add immeasurably to the quality of life of its residents. Thousands of tourists visit the state each year to enjoy its natural beauty bringing with them economic prosperity. During a time when our climate is rapidly changing, the Department is committed to protecting our natural areas in order to mitigate and adapt. Thank you for all you do to protect open space in Connecticut.

Sincerely,



Katherine S. Dykes
Commissioner

**Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA)
Grant Application
Deadline: June 1, 2020**



Property Title: _____

Applicant: _____

Applicant Address: _____

Name and Title of Chief Executive Officer: _____

Name and Title of Preparer: _____ Phone: _____

Purchase Price: \$ _____ Acquisition: In-Fee Easement Total Acres: _____

Your responses to the following questions will be used to evaluate, score and rank your application. Responses should be brief, factual and accurate. Applicants submitting proposals that include inaccurate information, facts, statements or disclosures could be penalized by having the application withdrawn from review or having the grant forfeited should one be offered. Please carefully review the Definitions and Program Conditions attached to this grant application prior to completing the application. Please use extra sheets as necessary when submitting answers.

This application is available in an alternative format upon request in fulfillment of the Department's Americans' with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirement.

Important Notice for all Applicants

- Grant awards will be made based on available funding. Only the highest ranked projects will be awarded funding.
- DEEP will score applications using a point-based system that considers preservation, resource conservation, and climate benefits, as well as certain administrative factors.
- Land purchased under this program may not be used for intensive outdoor recreation or residential use.
- Approved properties are expected to be acquired within one year after a grant is awarded. DEEP reserves the right to rescind a grant award after this one year period.
- Land already owned by the applicant is not eligible for an acquisition grant.
- All land acquired must be accessible to the public without limitation. Acquired permanent interest in land (Conservation Easements) shall provide for public access in accordance with Connecticut General Statute Sections 7-131d(e).
- If the applicant is applying for funding to purchase a conservation easement to protect an active farm where public access will be limited, **Section 5 must be completed.**

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide, included in this application package, if you have questions. More detailed questions can be directed to Allyson Clarke (860) 424-3774 or Holly Lalime (860) 424-4078.

1) Eligibility (Applications that fail to meet eligibility criteria will not be scored.)

- Applicant must be a municipality, non-profit land conservation organization (e.g., land trust), or water company.
- For municipal applicants, if the municipality’s Plan of Conservation and Development is more than 10 years old, a grant will not be awarded without written approval by the Office of Policy and Management.
- Water companies must purchase land that can be classified as “Class I” or Class II” after acquisition. Water Companies must show if and how they intend to allow access to the proposed land for recreational uses.
- If the proposed property is being purchased from a water company, the property must be classified as surplus (Class III) land. The Water Company (title holder) must be granted permission to dispose of the property by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) and the Department of Public Health (DPH).
- If a Land Trust is purchasing an interest in land located in a Targeted Investment Community/Distressed Municipality, it must obtain approval from the Municipality’s chief elected official or governing legislative body. Approval must be submitted with the application.
- All lands or interest in lands acquired under this program must be preserved in perpetuity, predominantly in their natural, scenic, and open condition.
- Applicants must show evidence of compliance with past OSWA funded properties (See Section 13).
- The applicant must clearly show how the public will access and enjoy the property. If public access is not clearly shown, the property will not be evaluated or offered a grant.
- The applicant must have a reasonable anticipation that all matching funds will be secured and a closing can take place within one year of the grant award.
- Grant funds cannot be used to purchase:
 - Land to be used for intensive recreation purposes (see FAQs for more information)
 - Land which has already been committed for public use
 - Land to be acquired by eminent domain
- Grant and match funds cannot be used for:
 - Development costs including any passive recreation features
 - Reimbursement of in-kind services or incidental costs associated with the acquisition of land (i.e., survey and legal fees, appraisals and appraisal reviews)

2) Conservation, Climate, and Recreation Value

Describe your proposal’s resource conservation, climate, and recreation initiatives.

Will the proposed property:

- Provide a linkage, create or contribute to a developing or existing greenway? Does this greenway offer opportunities for recreation or non-motorized transportation? If so, please describe such opportunities and plans to develop such recreational or transportation options.
- Protect or complement existing preserved open space or preserved agricultural land, especially if such protection will aid wildlife migration?
- Provide for high-quality, passive recreational uses? Please describe such uses and plans to develop such uses, if needed.
- Provide a valuable resource for recreation, forestry, fishing, wildlife habitat or other natural resources initiatives?
- Protect lands that preserve high-quality natural waters, drinking water resources, and core forests?

- Provide for protection of habitats most at risk from climate change, including forested swamps, lands adjacent to freshwater and tidal wetlands, riparian lands adjacent to cold water streams, beaches and dunes, and areas of potential tidal marsh migration?
 - Protect a naturally-occurring feature such as a shoreline, river, stream, mountainous territory, ridgeline, inland or coastal wetland, estuary, or geological feature?
 - Protect a habitat of a plant or animal species that is either threatened, endangered, or of special concern? **Only species that are represented by the Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) should be reported, unless a qualified specialist has identified such species.**
 - Protect a native ecological community that is unique or uncommon?
 - Enhance or conserve the water quality of the State’s lakes, rivers and coastal waters?
 - Please provide any other information pertinent to your proposal.
- **Supporting Material**
Provide one or more maps and photographs that show the following features and the subject property:
 - Topographic Features
 - Road Features
 - Property Boundary Map (A2 not required for application but required for grant)
 - Aerial Imagery Ortho-photo
 - Provide two or more high-resolution photographs showing flora, fauna, waters or watercourses, summit view sheds, and/or other natural resource-based features (JPEG)

3) Property Cost Estimates – Acquisition

The grant amount will be based upon the DEEP-approved fair market value. Appraisal costs are not reimbursable. The effective date of the appraisal and/or appraisal review must be dated within one year of the application deadline. Applicants applying for additional State and/or Federal grant funding must submit a Yellow Book appraisal and a Yellow Book appraisal review (first option below). **If a property is valued at less than \$100,000.00, only one (1) Yellow Book appraisal is required.**

Each OSWA grant application requires:

- One (1) property appraisal in compliance with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (“UASFLA”), a/k/a Yellow Book,
AND
- One (1) Appraisal Review, confirming that the prior appraisal is UASFLA a/k/a Yellow Book compliant.
OR
- Two (2) UASFLA a/k/a Yellow Book compliant appraisals.

For more information regarding the UASFLA a/k/a Yellow Book, or to obtain a copy, go to:
http://www.appraisalfoundation.org/jimis/TAF/Yellow_Book.aspx

If applying for federal funding, the appraisal must include the fee simple and easement value.

We **highly encourage** all applicants to refer to the “APPRAISAL SELECTION NOTES” and utilize the “SELECTING QUALIFIED APPRAISERS CHECKLIST,” in the appraiser selection process.

- **Supporting Material**

- One (1) Yellow Book appraisal and one (1) Yellow Book appraisal review (include appraisal and appraisal review summaries in your application)

OR

- Two (2) Yellow Book appraisals (include appraisal summaries in your application)

*One (1) Yellow Book appraisal provided property is less than \$100,000.00

4) Other Considerations

- Who is the current property owner?
- Has the owner previously sold or donated other permanently protected land? **YES**____ **NO**____
- Has a title search been conducted on this property? **YES**____ **NO**____ (title search cost is not reimbursable).
- Is the property free from any lien, claim, encumbrance or easement that would prevent the land from being used for open space purposes? **YES**____ **NO**____. If there is a lien or encumbrance, how will it be resolved prior to the property purchase?
- Is the current property owner a willing seller?
 - Is the site on the market? **YES**____ **NO**____.
 - Has a Purchase & Sale Agreement been executed? **YES**____ **NO**____.
 - Is there a signed and certified Letter of Intent to sell? **YES**____ **NO**____.
 - Do the seller and applicant intend to close within one year? **YES**____ **NO**____.
- Are there any reserved rights, restrictions or environmental impacts (power lines, landfills, structures, roads, etc.) on or near the proposed site? **YES**____ **NO**____. If yes, please give details.
- Is the site free from environmental contamination? **YES**____ **NO**____. If no, what is your plan to address such contamination.
- What physical changes are required to make the site suitable for passive outdoor recreation?
- Will the purchase of this property displace any businesses, homes or other establishments?

- **Supporting Material**

- Copy of deed/lease (current owners)
- Copy of title search (if conducted)
- Copy of any lease, lien, encumbrance, agreement or interest in the property
- Letter of Intent
- Purchase and Sales Agreement

5) Agricultural Use

Agricultural uses that do not diminish the public's use of a grant-funded property are permitted.

The DEEP Commissioner reserves the right to reduce grant awards for properties that don't provide full public access.

The DEEP Commissioner can approve limited public access under this program, based on a determination that unlimited public access would be disruptive of agricultural activities occurring on agricultural areas of the land. This is only approved if the applicant is purchasing a conservation easement and only if the property has an existing agricultural use that will continue. Such approvals for limited public access require public access that, at a minimum, provide parking and designated trail use.

- Is there currently any agricultural use or forest management on the property? If so, will these activities continue to occur after purchase and to what degree?
- Will agricultural use impede public access in any way? If so, how and to what degree?

- Will any structures (barns, sheds, etc.) be excluded from the preserved area?
- Does the property contain prime or important agricultural soils? If so, what percentage?
- **Supporting Material**
 - Indicate on a map where agriculture use currently takes place and where it will continue
 - Soils map showing prime or important agricultural soils

6) Public Access/Recreational Resources

The applicant must clearly show how the public will access and enjoy the property. If public access is not clearly shown, the property will not be evaluated or awarded a grant. Access must be through a permanent ownership abutting a public road that provides feasible access, unless otherwise approved prior to submitting an application. An on-site, off-street parking area for public safety is preferred.

Land being proposed for acquisition by a Water Company is exempt from the public access requirement. If public access will be permitted, however, please describe the permitted uses.

- What recreational resources exist on the property currently? Please indicate, on a map where these resources are located.
- Will recreational resources need to be developed? If so, on the required map, please indicate where, and to what extent these resources will be developed.
- **Supporting Material**
 - A map showing how the public will access the property and what recreational resources exist and/or will be developed

7) Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Accessibility for people with disabilities is a civil right defined, for these purposes, as equal opportunity for the use and enjoyment of recreational resources. Such consideration is relevant to such elements as parking, gates, viewing platforms, and pathways, and under certain circumstances, trails.

- Define how accessibility is to be integrated into the design of the project.
- If accessibility for people with disabilities cannot be incorporated, please explain why.

8) Community Impact

The DEEP strives to provide public access to open space in every community. Describe the need for passive recreation areas in the municipality where this purchase will take place.

- Is the property in close proximity to an urban area or population center?
- Please identify the major service area(s) neighborhood(s), city(s), region(s) that would be affected by this proposed acquisition.
- What is the population density of the municipality (per square mile)?
- Is this proposed acquisition in an area where significant growth/development has occurred or is planned? **YES** ____ **NO** _____. If yes, please expand upon the level of growth and the intensity of the development and how this project may compliment that development.
- How does this acquisition align with the applicable Council of Government's regional trail assessment, regional recreational plan, or regional plan of conservation and development?
- **Supporting Material**
 - Council of Governments Plan(s)
(Do not attach the entire plan or whole chapters of the plan. Only provide relevant excerpts)

9) Local Support

Explain what support this proposed acquisition has received and how the public has been involved in the planning and design process.

- How and when was the decision to purchase this property made? What kind of interest has the community expressed in the acquisition?
- Provide support letters from municipal, regional or executive boards and land trusts that identify how the proposed acquisition addresses an identified need/goal in the local and/or regional Open Space Plan or Plan of Conservation and Development.
- **Supporting Material**
 - Support letters: municipal planning department (P&Z), inland wetland commission, conservation and/or open space commissions, regional planning agency (RPA or COG corporate/executive board approval).

Provide only one letter of support from each.

10) Alignment with State & Local Conservation Goals

- How is the proposed acquisition consistent with the Municipal Plan of Conservation and Development?
- Has the Municipal Plan of Conservation and Development been completed and approved within the last 10 years? (See eligibility)
- Is the proposed acquisition consistent with or identified in other municipal or regional plans such as Water Quality, Recreation and/or Open Space Plans?
- Is the proposed acquisition consistent with the State's Plan of Conservation and Development (available from the Office of Policy and Management) and applicable State conservation and recreation plans (e.g., Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan [SCORP], and State's Wildlife Action Plan/Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy)?
- Is the proposed acquisition consistent with the State's 2016-2020 Green Plan (Comprehensive Open Space Acquisition Strategy, available at www.ct.gov/deep/greenplan)? Explain/provide supporting justification that this proposed acquisition meets one or more of the four land acquisition priorities and targeted goals as address in the 5-year Action Strategy Section.
- Provide supporting justification that this proposed acquisition complies with a documented need as addressed in a local or regional open space conservation & development plan (please provide written analysis).
- **Supporting Material** (Do not attach the entire plan or whole chapters of the plan. Provide only relevant excerpts)
 - Municipal Plan of Conservation & Development and/or Recreation Plan
 - Regional Conservation Plan
 - Other Municipal or Community Plans

11) Funding Mechanism

All funding sources for acquisition must be disclosed. There must be reasonable anticipation that funds will be available within one year of grant award. It will be to the applicant's advantage to have funding firmly in place.

- Explain how match funds will be provided. Will the applicant apply for other grant funds?
- **Supporting Material**
 - Resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds (municipal or corporate)
 - Budget line items where funds are held or committed
 - Statement showing funds available in an open space acquisition account

- Show commitment, amount and sources related to creative/alternative funding proposals

12) Operation, Maintenance, and Stewardship Capabilities

- Provide evidence of the applicant’s capability to operate and maintain the property.
- What organization(s) will manage the property and what is their management expertise? Will the maintenance of this property be a cooperative effort between a municipality, a land conservation organization(s) and/or a local community groups?
- Does stewardship funding exist or when will it be in place?

13) Past Grant Compliance

In order to be considered for a grant, applicants must show that they are in compliance with past grant funded properties. (See eligibility)

- Has the applicant received an OSWA grant in the past? If so, provide a brief update on the property(s). How has each site been maintained? How has the public reacted to the acquisition(s)?

- **Supporting Material**

- A photograph demonstrating public access or, in the case of water companies, a photograph demonstrating valuable resource protection for each OSWA funded property (JPEG)
- A photograph of the parking area for each OSWA funded property (JPEG)
- A photograph of the permanent sign or plaque recognizing OSWA funding for each funded property (JPEG)

How to Submit Your Application

Please return your complete application including this questionnaire along with responses and supporting documentation to the following address:

CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program
Office of Constituent Affairs/Land Management
79 Elm Street, 6th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

PROGRAM CONDITIONS

Property Use: Projects funded under this program will be protected as open space in perpetuity. Grants will not be given if the property has any structural buildings. Structural buildings must be either excluded or razed before funding can be released. No intensive recreation is permitted on the protected property. Passive recreation is allowed and is defined in the State's Conservation Easement and the Program FAQ.

Proposed Protected Property: The application is being submitted for a proposed project. The applicant is attesting to the location, current uses, current conditions, value and size. Errors or omissions in any of these elements in the application will be grounds to stop evaluation of the application. If the project scope (total acreage or public access area) is diminished by 10% or more after the grant is awarded, the project will no longer be eligible for funding, but the applicant can reapply for a grant at a later date.

Projected Property Management: If the applicant is a previous grant recipient and the previously awarded projects are not managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement, the current application may be ineligible for funding or the funding may be delayed until the previously awarded properties are brought into compliance.

Federal Funding: If the applicant is or will be applying for federal funding that would result in the State's interest in land being subordinate to a federal easement, the grant award will be adjusted to account for the remaining value of the property that will be provided to the State (i.e., recreational value). It will be the responsibility of the applicant to support a proposed value with relevant information. The final grant award will be at the discretion of the Commissioner after recommendations are made by DEEP staff and the Natural Heritage, Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board.

APPRAISAL SELECTION NOTES

Refer to and utilize the "Selecting a Qualified Appraiser Checklist" to pre-qualify appraisers BEFORE you need an appraisal so that you have a group of qualified appraisers you can contact when you do need one.

Contact state and federal users of appraisal services and appraisal review departments to get feedback on appraisers you may be considering. They may be able to tell you if an appraiser's work has been rejected and or the ability of the appraiser to meet their appraisal requirements

Do not wait to order your appraisals. Most qualified land appraisers will require anywhere from 3 to 8 weeks to complete a land appraisal assignment and the most qualified appraisers will be booked quickly for funding programs (CT DEEP Open Space Grant Program) that require many appraisals.

When seeking quotes, provide the appraiser with a detailed description of the subject property (including available maps), all the agencies/funding partners involved in the assignment, the specific property rights to be appraised and any other requirements of the assignment.

You need to be sure that the appraisal you request meets the requirements of all the funding agencies that will be intended users of the report. *Certain agencies and programs may have conflicting appraisal*

requirements. Be aware that some appraisals cannot meet the requirements of multiple users (example: The IRS, USPAP, and Yellow Book use different market value definitions) and that more than one appraisal may be necessary depending on the circumstances.

For a PDF Copy of the **UASFLA (Yellow Book)** go to:

<http://www.justice.gov/enrd/land-ack/Uniform-Appraisal-Standards.pdf>

For **IRS Appraisal Guidelines** go to <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p561/ar02.html#d0e1653> or Google IRS Publication 561 and http://www.irs.gov/irb/2006-46_IRB/ar13.html

For PDF Appraisal Specifications for the **NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)**:

<http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/OpenNonWebContent.aspx?content=37029.wba>

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SELECTING A QUALIFIED APPRAISER CHECKLIST

1. ___ Are you a Certified General Appraiser in the State of CT?
2. ___ Do you have any specific appraisal education pertaining to The *Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (UASFLA a/k/a Yellow Book)* and or conservation easement appraisals? *Have they taken the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions Course, completed the Valuation of Conservation Easements Certificate Program with the Appraisal Institute, or any other similar valuation courses offered by other organizations?*
3. ___ Do you have a copy of the Yellow Book? Are you knowledgeable about the *UASFLA* or Yellow Book Appraisal requirements? If not, what would you do to assure that the appraisal will comply with Yellow Book appraisal standards?
4. ___ What are the major differences between appraisals done to Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) and *UASFLA -Yellow Book* standards? *(Briefly-Yellow Book-requires: larger parcel analysis; different definition of market value; and 10 year sales history of subject vs. 3 for USPAP, as well as other differences).*
5. ___ Would you use sales to federal, state, municipal and or land trusts as comparables in Yellow Book appraisals? In USPAP appraisals? *(This is a red flag since DEEP and Federal agencies, in almost all cases, will not accept these types of sales in any appraisal).*
6. ___ How many Yellow Book Appraisals have you done? How many in the last 24 months? Which agencies, municipalities, land trusts or non-profit conservation organizations have you done Yellow Book or USPAP appraisals for? Have you done any appraisal work for the specific funding agency(s) involved in the assignment *(CT DEEP, CT Department of Agriculture, USDA-NRCS, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, etc.)?*
7. ___ Are you aware of and knowledgeable regarding the appraisal requirements for the program that is the basis for this assignment *(e.g., CT DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program, USDA-NRCS programs, etc.)? If a USDA Appraisal is required, ask "Are you aware of the specific requirements for the USDA-NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, which replaced the former Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, Grassland Reserve, and Wetland Reserve Programs under the 2014 Farm Bill?" These programs may have different supplemental appraisal requirements that an appraiser needs to be aware of.*
8. ___ Have you done land appraisals in this town, county or market area before? If so, how recently? Can you give me examples of the types of property you have appraised in this area *(town, size of parcel, fee simple; before and after/easements)?*
9. ___ Have you ever had any appraisals rejected by the agency that this appraisal will be done for (DEEP, USDA-NRCS, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife, etc)? If so, why was it rejected?
10. ___ Could you provide 3 references from the client groups you have done appraisals for (i.e. land trust, municipality, State of Connecticut, corporation)? *Try to get one reference for each client group and then follow-up to inquire about the client's experience with the appraiser, the quality of the appraisal, their ability to meet deadlines, and if any appraisals were rejected.*

Sponsor: _____

Total Score: _____ Pts.

Project: _____

Cost/Acreage: _____

Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program Scoring Sheet

This score sheet was developed to give applicants for open space grants (as defined in C.G.S. Section 7-131c-k) insights into the various factors considered by the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) when objectively ranking applications. DEEP reserves the right to consider additional factors that may not be listed on the score sheet in determining initial or final rankings.

DEEP typically reserves up to 10% of its grant funding resources to promote open space acquisition in Targeted/Distressed Communities, based on the quality of such properties and applications.

1) Disqualifying Characteristics

(Please refer to the eligibility section of the application for additional requirements)

1. Commercial Purposes (except for forest management or agricultural use) **PROJECT IS REJECTED**
2. Land is to be used for recreational purposes requiring intensive development **PROJECT IS REJECTED**
3. Land is associated with environmental contamination and will not be remediated prior to acquisition in a manner that is satisfactory to the Commissioner **PROJECT IS REJECTED**
4. Land is to be acquired by eminent domain **PROJECT IS REJECTED**
5. Land was acquired by applicant prior to the grant application deadline **PROJECT IS REJECTED**
6. Required appraisal(s) were not provided by the grant application deadline **PROJECT IS REJECTED**
7. Applicant is not in compliance with past OSWA awards projects? **PROJECT IS REJECTED**
8. The project is inconsistent with the Municipal Plan of Conservation & Development **PROJECT IS REJECTED**

Administrative Evaluation

2) Conservation, Climate, and Recreation Value: Did the sponsor provide the following maps or map features?

- (2 points) Topographic features
- (2 points) Town roads relative to property boundaries
- (2 points) Property boundary map (A2 not required for application but required for grant)
- (2 points) Ortho-photo map (property boundaries marked)
- (2 points) Two or more high resolution photographs of natural resource-based features

3) Property Cost Estimates: Did the sponsor provide appraisals (see disqualifying characteristic #6 above)? Property to be valued in excess of \$100,000 requires two (2) appraisals or one (1) appraisal and one (1) appraisal review.

- (10 points) Property is being offered as a bargain sale

4) Other Considerations: Did the sponsor provide details to support the feasibility of acquisition within one year?

- (5 points) Copy of deed/lease (current owners)
- (5 points) Copy of title search
- (2 points) Signed letter of intent by seller
- (5 points) Signed purchase and sales agreement

5) Agricultural Use: Does the property contain agricultural soils of statewide importance?

- (5 points) Prime or important agricultural soils cover more than 30% of the property (Soils Map Included)

6) Public Access/Recreational Resources: Did the sponsor show how the public will access and enjoy the property? (If agricultural activity will take place on the property, the applicant must show how public access will coincide with said activity.)

- (5 points) A map showing public access to the property (parking, existing and/or planned trails, permitted uses, and recreational resources)

7) Accessibility for People with Disabilities: Did the sponsor provide plans to create accessible elements on the proposed site?

- (5 points) Applicant demonstrated if and how accessibility will be integrated into the property

8) Community Impact: Is the project located in an area with significant need for open space?

- (10 points) Property is within a Distressed or Targeted Community
- (5 points) Property is within 5 miles of an urban population center
- (5 points) Property is located in a municipality that has less than 10% of its land in open space

9) Local Support: Did the sponsor provide support letters?

Provide 1 letter from each category. Maximum of 25 points.

- (5 points) Municipal Planning Department
- (5 points) Council of Governments
- (5 points) Conservation/Open Space Commission
- (5 points) Statewide Environmental Organizations
- (5 points) State Representative/Elected Official

10) Alignment with State & Local Conservation Goals: Did the sponsor demonstrate how the acquisition aligns with conservation goals?

- (4 points) Acquisition is consistent with municipal or regional plan
- (4 points) Acquisition is consistent with the State's SCORP and Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy
- (5 points) Acquisition addresses goals defined in the State's 2016-2020 Green Plan

11) Funding Mechanism: Is there a reasonable anticipation that funds will be available within one year of grant award?

- (5 points) Required municipal, corporate, or organizational approvals obtained
- (5 points) Proof that match funding is available

12) Operation, Maintenance, and Stewardship Capabilities: Did the sponsor provide evidence of its capability to provide long term stewardship?

- (5 points) Applicant demonstrated a capability to operate and maintain the property
- (5 points) Applicant will work with a licensed forester to create a forest management plan

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Resource Evaluation

Various State and Federal experts score each application based on the resource value related to their area of expertise. The following is a list of resource values and the attributes that are considered. Additional factors may also be considered. Reviewers for each resource will use the same process to review all applications.

Climate Change Resiliency/Adaptation (0-40 points)

The property is valuable for climate change resiliency/adaptation because,

1. It is adjacent to freshwater or tidal wetlands
2. It contains riparian lands adjacent to cold water streams
3. It protects drinking water resources
4. It protects open space that is vulnerable to development
5. It protects critical habitat areas such as nursery grounds, spawning grounds and areas of high species diversity

Climate Change Mitigation (0-25 points)

The property is valuable for climate change mitigation because,

1. It provides upslope “advancement zones” adjacent to tidal marshes
2. It protects upland forest habitat
3. It protects core forestland
4. It supports recreational trail usage for transportation purposes
5. It protects upland wetlands and watercourses

Forestry (0-25 points)

The property is valuable for forest conservation and management because,

1. It contains productivity of forest soils, has the potential for productive timber growth, and demonstrates the capability to sequester and store carbon by applying adaptive and mitigating forest practices
2. It contains diverse forest types, unique habitats, or cultural resources
3. It has or will have a Forest Stewardship Plan developed for the property that identifies landowner goals and objectives and includes various aspects of forest resource management
4. It will provide recreational, educational and research opportunities
5. It is a suitable parcel size to support active forest management and is adjacent to protected forest land or core forest area

Fisheries (0-25 points)

The property is valuable to inland or marine fisheries because,

1. It contributes to the protection of an important watershed, stream bank or coastline
2. It provides quality fish habitat
3. It provides unique fish habitat
4. It provides access to fishing opportunities
5. It provides opportunities for anadromous or catadromous fish restoration or other fisheries management initiatives

Wildlife Conservation (0-25 points)

The property is valuable for the conservation of wildlife because,

1. It is at risk of being developed and is located in an area that is already highly developed
2. It contains a diversity of habitat types
3. It contains a special feature that is important to wildlife (upland area, vernal pool, grassland/scrubland, cold water stream, coastal habitat)
4. It contains a wetland, stream, or other water feature
5. It is located in an area where threatened and endangered species occur

Natural Resources and Wildlife Diversity (0-25 points)

The site is valuable for conserving natural resources because,

1. It includes area identified as important for state or federal listed species
2. It includes area identified as a Nature's Network Core or Connector (<http://naturesnetwork.org/>)
3. It represents an important roosting area for birds of concern or a breeding area for species of concern
4. It exhibits a high concentration of species of concern
5. It includes a habitat type that is rare, infrequent, or otherwise critical

Agriculture (0-25 points)

The site is valuable for preserving local agricultural heritage because,

1. It is currently a food-producing farm
2. It is threatened by conversion to non-compatible uses
3. It meets criteria established for the Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program
4. It has a high percentage of farmland soils
5. It is one of the last viable farms in town

Greenways/Recreational Trails (0-25 points)

The site will provide linkages between open spaces because,

1. It connects to an existing trail system of statewide importance such as: CT Blue Blazed Hiking Trail System, CT Designated Greenway, National or Scenic Trail
2. It contributes to an existing passive or active recreational trail system on adjacent land
3. It connects to a CT Designated Greenway or an existing protected open space
4. It provides adequate access and parking
5. It provides protection for a linear natural feature (i.e. ridge line or stream belt)

Drinking/Source Water Supply (0-25 points)

The site is valuable for preserving and/or enhancing water quality because,

1. It protects land within the watershed which is already >25% but < 50% protected
2. It protects land within the watershed which is already >50% but < 75% protected
3. It protects wellheads, aquifers, or drawdown areas
4. It has the potential for Class I or Class II watershed land protection
5. It protects the headwaters of a stream or river

Watershed Planning (0-25 points)

The site is valuable for the conservation of land and water resources because,

1. It provides substantial benefit in support of a state or federal water resources plan or related designation
2. It supports water quality protection or restoration of DEEP priority waterbodies (www.ct.gov/deep/iwqr)
3. It provides protection or restoration for a vegetated riparian corridor or lake shoreline
4. It protects and conserves ground water quality and quantity
5. It is endorsed by watershed stakeholder(s) and/or supports regional water conservation and protection priorities

Total Available Resource Points: 265

Total Available Administrative Points: 130

**Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
Open Space Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) Grant Program
Answers to Frequently Asked Questions**

1. PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

What documents are required?

Applications must contain the required number of appraisal(s) and appraisal reviews, as applicable. Applications submitted without appraisals and applicable appraisal reviews will not be considered for an award. All appraisals must conform to the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (U.A.S.F.L.A. a/k/a “Yellow Book”) published by The Appraisal Foundation. To purchase a copy of the “Yellow Book”, visit the following webpage:

<https://www.appraisalfoundation.org/imis/ItemDetail?iProductCode=350&Category=PUB&WebsiteKey=e12b6085-ff54-45c1-853e-b838ca4b9895>

Applicants planning to apply for federal funding (in addition to OSWA funding), must provide the following: (1) Yellow Book appraisal containing both the fee simple and easement values, along with one (1) Yellow Book appraisal review, affirming that the original appraisal was prepared and presented in accordance with Yellow Book guidelines.

2. PASSIVE RECREATION

What is passive recreation?

Passive recreation refers to recreational activities that do not require intensive development and prepared facilities like sports fields or buildings. Passive recreational activities place minimal stress on a site’s resources and as a result provide ecosystem service benefits and are highly compatible with natural resource protection.

Passive recreation:

- Does not significantly impact natural, cultural, scenic, or agricultural values
- Requires only minimal visitor facilities and services directly related to safety
- Minimizes human impacts

Examples of natural resource-based, passive recreational activities:

- Hiking
- Wildlife Viewing
- Painting
- Photography
- Cross Country Skiing
- Snow Showing
- Fishing
- Canoeing
- Hunting
- Environmental Education
- Picnicking

3. ELIGIBILITY

How do I know if my municipality is a “Distressed Municipality” or a “Targeted Investment Community”?

- **Distressed Municipalities** - Ansonia, Bridgeport, Bristol, Chaplin, Derby, East Hartford, East Haven, Griswold, Hartford, Killingly, Meriden, Montville, Naugatuck, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwich, Putnam, Sprague, Sterling, Torrington, Waterbury, West Haven, Winchester and Windham.
- **Targeted Investment Communities** - Bridgeport, Bristol, East Hartford, Groton, Hamden, Hartford, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Southington, Stamford, Waterbury and Windham.

If the property is being purchased from a water company, how do we know if the water company has been granted permission to dispose of the property by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) and the Department of Public Health (DPH)?

The water company should have a letter from the PURA granting them permission to sell the property. When in doubt, call PURA, toll free at (800) 382-4586. They can tell you if the water company has permission to sell the property.

4. SITE CONVENIENCE & PUBLIC ACCESS

What is meant by Site Convenience and Public Access? Where can I find population statistics?

Population Statistics

The most recent population statistics can be found at the following webpage:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Health-Information-Systems--Reporting/Population/Population-Statistics>

Site convenience relates to the ability of the public to find and access the property by public transportation routes, roads, and publicly owned roadways or access ways. Please note that if the property does not have frontage on a public road or access way, then an adjacent, permanently protected parcel having public access from a public road or access way must be owned by the same grant award applicant.

Public access to the proposed property shall be open to the general public for passive recreational uses. DEEP’s conservation easement defines passive recreation as:

Properties subject to liens, encumbrances or deed restrictions such as “a life use,” “quiet enjoyment,” “exclusive use,” “with permission of the grantor,” or similar restrictions designed to prevent, prohibit, hinder or control public access, will not be eligible for funding under this grant program.

Additional questions on public access should be directed to Allyson Clarke (860) 424-3774 or Holly Lalime at (860) 424-4078.

5. AGRICULTURAL USES

What types of agricultural use are permitted at grant-funded properties?

All grant-funded properties can permit agricultural uses that do not diminish the public's use of the property. For example, working with a farmer to remove hay from fields is permitted, if the purpose is to maintain the fields for habitat or passive recreational purposes. Also, the selling of timber, when incidental to the management of the land and in accordance with an approved forest management plan, is permissible, provided that any proceeds of such timber sales be used for management of the land. Public access can be controlled on a temporary basis to protect public safety (e.g., closing a portion of a trail when trees are being removed next to the trail).

If the applicant is purchasing a conservation easement and there is an existing agricultural use, such use can continue, provided the DEEP Commissioner approves limited public access. The Commissioner can approve such limited access, based on a determination that unlimited public access would be disruptive of agricultural activities occurring on agricultural areas of the land. Such approvals for limited public access require public access that, at a minimum, provide parking and designated trail use. Areas of the property not used for continuing agriculture uses should be available for public access.

6. STATEMENT OF NEED

Where can I find the supporting documents and materials?

- **Connecticut's State Plan of Conservation and Development** is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/IGPP-MAIN/Responsible-Growth/Conservation-and-Development-Policies-Plan/Conservation-and-Development-Policies-Plan>, at any public library, or by contacting your Regional Planning Organization (RPO) or Council of Government (COG).
- **Municipal Plans of Conservation and Development/Conservation and Recreation** are typically available online or at your Town or City Hall. Please note that these plans now need to be less than ten years old to be "current" – if a municipality submits a proposal and their C&D plan is not current, that project will not be evaluated.
- **Regional Conservation Plans** can be found by visiting your region's Council of Governments (COG) website, or by contacting your Regional Planning Organization (RPO). RPO's are available online at: <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/IGPP-MAIN/Responsible-Growth/Regional-Planning-Organizations-RPO>
- **Connecticut's 2016-2020 Comprehensive Open Space Acquisition Plan (The Green Plan)** is available online in its entirety and in sections at www.ct.gov/deep/greenplan.
- **Connecticut's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy (The Wildlife Action Plan)** is available online at: https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=325886&deepNav_GID=1719

- **Connecticut Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)** is available online at:
https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2707&q=323864&deepNav_GID=1642

7. LOCAL SUPPORT

Where can I request Municipal and Regional letters of support?

- For municipal letters of support, contact your local boards and/or commissions (e.g., Inland Wetlands, Conservation, Open Space, and/or Planning Commissions).
- For regional (RPO/COG) letters of support, contact your Regional Planning Organization. The agencies and contact names are available online at: <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/IGPP-MAIN/Responsible-Growth/Regional-Planning-Organizations-RPO>

8. GRANT FUNDING AMOUNTS

Grants approved by the DEEP Commissioner will be based upon the fair market value, as determined by DEEP, and will not exceed the following grant funding amounts:

TO A	FOR	IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED * ⚡
Municipality	Open space	65% of fair market value
Municipality	Class I & Class II Water supply property	65% of fair market value
Distressed municipality or targeted investment community **	Open space	75% of fair market value
Nonprofit land conservation organization	Open space or watershed protection	65% of fair market value
Nonprofit land conservation organization and water company (If land is located within a distressed or targeted community)	Open space or watershed protection	75% of fair market value
Water Company	Class I & Class II water supply	65% of fair market value
<p>* Percentages shown represent the maximum grant award. ⚡ Grant awards may be reduced to a lesser percentage and/or may not exceed an administrative cap. ** Refer to #3 above for list of Distressed Municipalities and Targeted Investment Communities.</p>		

The amount of funding provided will be based on numerous factors related to the quality of the project (conservation, recreational, and water resources protected), amount of private, or other governmental funds leveraged, number and quality of other grant applications, and availability of DEEP resources. Not all grant recipients will receive the same percentage of funding and some grants may also be subject to a cap.

9. OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

Each applicant is required to secure funds from other sources to match DEEP's grant award. Matching funds can come from private entities or other governmental funding programs.

- **Private Sources** include matching funds from private individuals, foundations, corporations, businesses, contributions by other organizations, or governmental programs not managed or funded by the State of Connecticut or federal government.

Funding from these sources count toward the applicant's match requirement without restriction. However, caution should be exercised to ensure that acceptance of such funds would not place a restriction on the property that could be in conflict with the State's Conservation and Public Access Easement.

- **Other Governmental Sources:** Many governmental programs exist to assist with land conservation. Caution should be exercised to ensure that acceptance of other funds will not place a restriction on the property that could be in conflict with the terms of the State's Conservation and Public Access Easement.

Additional questions about the compatibility of governmental funding programs should be directed to DEEP's Constituent Affairs and Land Management Division by calling Allyson Clarke at (860) 424-3774 or Holly Lalime at (860) 424-4078.

- **Municipal Sources:** Municipalities (as the grant award applicant or host community) often contribute match funding for land conservation projects funded through this program. Funds from municipal sources count toward the match requirement, as long as the funds did not originate from the State.
- **State Sources:** Other State funds can be used to assist with project costs however, other State funds may not be used to match OSWA grant funds. Please discuss any matching funding sources with DEEP before submitting your application, or as soon as other State grant funding is being considered, if that occurs after the application is submitted.
- **Federal Sources:** Applicants may apply for grant funds from federal programs which are administered by the State or by federal agencies. For example, the US Department of Agriculture (grassland preservation, farmland and prime agricultural soils preservation, river restoration, forest and habitat preservation, etc.), the US Department of the Interior (Wild and Scenic, wetlands preservation, river protection, wildlife habitat restoration/protection, etc.), the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (shoreline preservation, natural area preservation, wetland protection), and the US Department of Defense (e.g., The Conservation Fund) have programs that may be used as an additional source of funding for the subject project.

If federal funds are anticipated for the project, then the applicant must inform DEEP of its intention to seek and obtain such funding in the grant application, along with the amount of federal funding being requested. Applicants must inform DEEP if federal grant awarding occurs after the application is submitted, as well.

If a federal grant is accepted by the applicant, the State OSWA grant award will be adjusted so that the combined OSWA and federal grant awards do not exceed ninety percent (90%) of the fair market value of the property, as determined by DEEP under the OSWA grant program.

In limited circumstances, the DEEP Commissioner may authorize the use of state and federal funds to fund one hundred percent (100%) of the fair market value of the property, as determined by DEEP under the OSWA grant program. If you are seeking this authorization, please refer to [Public Act No. 15-23](#) for more information and contact DEEP as soon as possible but prior to accepting such federal funds.

It is important to remember that public access must be provided on the subject property, irrespective of federal funding program requirements or policies to the contrary.