

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Dear Mr. Goegel:

On behalf of the CT Land Conservation Council (CLCC), thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) proposal for selective tree removal at Bluff Point State Park in Groton.

As the umbrella organization for the state's land conservation community, including its 137 land trusts, CLCC advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

As you know, Bluff Point State Park and Coastal Reserve is the largest undeveloped parcel of coastal woodland on the Connecticut shoreline. Its unique and significant ecological resources include habitats supporting state-threatened and-endangered species. According to the DEEP website, "in 1975 the Connecticut Legislature designated a portion of Bluff Point as a 'Coastal Reserve' in recognition of its ecological importance and to preserve its ecological integrity."

(<http://longislandsoundstudy.net/2012/10/bluff-point/>)

We are not only concerned about the impacts of this project on this exceptional conservation area, but also the precedent it may set for similar projects affecting State Parks and other conservation areas around the state. State Parks belong to all of us and the public has an expectation that these lands will be preserved in trust for the benefit of Connecticut's citizens for those purposes to the greatest extent possible.

Therefore, while recognizing the public safety concerns underlying the proposal, we respectfully ask that all tree-removal plans be coordinated as closely as possible with the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and other stakeholder organizations with expertise to ensure that impacts to the local ecosystem are not only minimized but undertaken in a way that may enhance habitat for the affected species within the park and coastal reserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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