

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Conservation Agenda 2015

1. Ensure consistent and maximum funding for state land conservation programs (Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Program, Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program and Farmland Preservation Program).
2. Ensure that the level and integrity of the Community Investment Act fund are protected.
3. Pursue amendment to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S) Section 7-131g(c) to eliminate the 70% cap on federal/state matching grants for open space and agricultural land preservation.
4. Pursue policy and legislative reforms to ensure that there is a process to fully inform the public and provide an opportunity for public input before state conservation, recreation and agricultural lands (referred to herein as “public lands”) are exchanged, sold or otherwise conveyed, including:
 - (a) Require a public hearing before the Environment Committee when public lands are the subject of exchange or other conveyance;
 - (b) Expand the authority of the State Properties Review Board to include review of the land records and deed restrictions when evaluating a legislative conveyance;
 - (c) Encourage DEEP and the DoAg to place conservation restrictions on public lands in accordance with authority provided by P.A. 14-169; and
 - (d) Support efforts to promote a Constitutional Amendment that mandates a transparent process for considering conveyances of public lands.
5. Pursue legislation requiring landowners transferring property subject to a conservation easement to provide notice to the holder of the easement no later than 30 days prior to closing.
6. Pursue amendment to C.G.S. Section 47-27(b) to clarify that it bars adverse possession and prescriptive easement claims when the land is subject to a conservation easement held by non-profit land holding organizations.
7. Support DEEP implementation of policies and initiatives required pursuant to P.A. 12-152 and P.A. 14-169, including revisions to the state Green Plan and the establishment of a statewide Public Use and Benefit Registry and associated database to inventory/track land protected by land trusts and municipalities.
8. Support funding and staff for DEEP for acquisition, management and inventorying of state lands.
9. Explore conservation tax incentives in the state income tax.
10. Explore new funding mechanisms for both land acquisition and stewardship, and land trust organizational capacity and effectiveness.

Federal Level

1. Support efforts to make the Enhanced Easement Incentive permanent, explore other conservation incentives in the federal estate tax, and fight against reductions in charitable incentives.
2. Support appropriations for critical federal conservation programs, including: Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Dept. of Transportation Recreational Trails Program, USDA Conservation Title Programs, USDA Forest Service Programs (*including Forest Legacy Program*) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Programs (*including State Wildlife Grants Program*).