

CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

2024 State Conservation Policy and Funding Priorities

Support Funding and Staff for Land Conservation and Stewardship Programs

- CHAMPION consistent bond funding for CT DEEP land conservation, trails, and parks programs, including Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA), Urban Green and Community Garden (UGCG), Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program, and Recreational Trails Program, to protect wildlife and their habitat, ensure clean water, mitigate against climate change, provide equitable access for public recreation, allow for local food production, and more.
- PROTECT the integrity of the Community Investment Act and ENSURE the funds stay intact and dedicated to supporting state programs for open space, agriculture, historic properties, and affordable housing.
- STRENGTHEN CT DEEP's capacity to promptly fill vacancies and create new positions, streamline grant administration, and engage in public-private partnerships that help the agency meet its mission, maintain service levels, and leverage federal funds for land conservation.
- ENSURE Passport to the Parks funds stay intact and dedicated.

Incentivize Nature-Based Solutions and Resilience

- CHAMPION amendments to Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-131d (OSWA Statute) to incentivize greater participation by a broader and more diverse group of municipal, land trust, and water company applicants in OSWA and UGCG grant programs and to better leverage municipal and federal funds.
- CHAMPION nature-based solutions as a priority and preferred alternative in state policies, goals, and legislation to allow Connecticut's ecosystems to naturally sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase biodiversity, and protect against climate change impacts that negatively affect the state's public health and infrastructure.
- PROTECT existing tax exemptions and SUPPORT new tax incentives for land conservation and stewardship.

Promote Community Conservation and Collaboration

- ADVOCATE for more robust inter- and intra-agency cooperation regarding state grants and programs to incentivize local partnerships for the acquisition and stewardship of land that serves multiple purposes (notably the Community Investment Act sectors of land conservation, farmland preservation, historic preservation and access to affordable housing.)
- EXPLORE expanded opportunities for financial assistance and alternative mechanisms to empower land trusts, municipal and tribal organizations, and other conservation buyers to accelerate the pace of conservation in their service areas.

