

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF LAND CONSERVATION

Conserved land provides many economic benefits here in Connecticut, the full scope of which we're just beginning to appreciate. As research accelerates - especially on the role of conserved land in mitigating climate change and protecting biodiversity - this list of benefits will continue to grow.

Thriving Local Economies

The protection of land and other greenspaces can have wide-ranging benefits to local economies, including job creation, recreation and tourism revenue, and increased property values.

- Outdoor recreation in Connecticut contributes an estimated **\$3.7 billion** to the state's gross domestic product, including **\$2 billion** in wages and salaries, and creates **49,000 jobs**.¹
- According to the **Hartford Park Commission**, a decade of park construction increased city property values enough to offset the costs of land purchase and development.²
- **For every dollar** generated on open and working lands across nine Connecticut towns, an average of just **37 cents were spent** providing public services to those lands.³

Clean Air & Water

Forests and wetlands clean air and water by filtering out pollutants. They also replenish groundwater supplies. The economic value of the resulting health and environmental benefits is profound.

- New York City has saved over **\$7 billion** on water treatment by ensuring that all reservoirs are surrounded by protected lands.⁴
- Across New England, trees filter out **760,000 tons** of air pollution annually, which is estimated to save **\$570 million** in health care costs related to lung and heart disease.⁵

Natural Storm Defenses

Forests, wetlands, and even oyster reefs reduce flooding and erosion. As climate change increases the frequency and severity of storms, these natural defenses help to protect us and our property.

- After Hurricane Sandy, the New Haven Land Trust (now known as **Gather New Haven** after merging with New Haven Farms) partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and many others to remove Pond Lily Dam. Volunteers planted native vegetation to help stabilize the river's banks. These actions dramatically reduced local flooding. A similar dam removal in Taunton, MA saved about **\$1.5 million** in emergency response costs.⁶

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Productive Working Lands & Waters

Farms, forests, and fisheries are essential to our economy, providing us with food, fuel, and fiber. When we protect these working lands and waters from development, we can boost the local economy and sustain our local food supply.

- The annual impact of Connecticut's agricultural industry (farming, logging, fishing, processing) on the state's economy is an estimated **\$4 billion**, which translates to sales of over **\$1,000 per resident**.⁷
- Connecticut's agricultural industry generates more than **20,000 jobs**, contributing roughly **\$800 million** in wages.⁸
- Nationwide, the number of farmers' markets has increased nearly **three-fold** over the last two decades, from 2,863 in 2000 to 8,140 in 2019.⁹

Improved Public Health

Outdoor recreation improves our physical and mental health, leading to meaningful medical savings. What's more, green spaces serve to keep us cool, which is critically important in warming cities.

- The **Mill River Park Collaborative** sustains Stamford's 28-acre urban park and its many programs, which emphasize fitness and wellbeing.¹⁰ Access to these sorts of spaces and programs can lead to a **40% decrease** in health care costs associated with hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes. It can also support children in managing ADD, ADHD, and stress.¹¹
- Five U.S. cities saw annual benefits of between **\$30 - \$90** for every tree planted to mitigate the urban heat island effect, whose health effects range from discomfort to heat stroke.¹²

For information on potential economic benefits to landowners interested in protecting their property, please visit the "Tax Issues" section of the CLCC [Resource Library](#).

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Resources Cited

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