

## NATURAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS FOR A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE CONNECTICUT

### How is climate change affecting Connecticut?

**Connecticut is one of the fastest warming states in the country.**<sup>1</sup> As greenhouse gasses build up in the atmosphere, impacts on the state's climate also include:

- **Continued sea level rise**, putting 2.2 million Connecticut shoreline residents at risk<sup>2</sup>
- **More frequent extreme weather events**, threatening infrastructure, public safety, wildlife habitat, agricultural viability, and local economies
- **Worsening air quality**, impacting our most at-risk populations and increasing healthcare costs
- **Biodiversity loss**, tied to the spread of invasive species, many of which are agricultural pests

### Our state's natural areas are among our strongest defenses against climate change

**Every \$1 spent on land and water conservation returns at least \$5** in both monetary and nonmonetary benefits, namely climate change mitigation, flood protection, clean water provision, and soil conservation.<sup>3</sup>

- **Forests, grasslands, wetlands, and soils can protect biodiversity and capture carbon**, providing over one third of the "cost-effective climate mitigation" needed in the next decade to keep global temperature increases under 2°C<sup>4</sup>
- **Vegetated open space, protected floodplains, and wetlands absorb water**, reducing the risks and impacts of flooding
- **Trees have a local cooling effect and act as natural air filters**, absorbing 760,000 tons of air pollution annually in New England<sup>5</sup>

### Land conservation is a climate change mitigation strategy

Public strategies for fighting climate change have focused on reducing energy use and embracing renewables. **These efforts are necessary, but not sufficient.** They must be paired with land conservation - an underestimated mitigation strategy - to ensure that we **protect natural defenses.**

The **Governor's Council on Climate Change** provides the state with an opportunity to ramp up investments in natural and working lands protection. These investments will help Connecticut meet its ambitious goal of achieving a **100% zero-carbon target by 2040.** The Council's [Phase 1 Report](#) describing near-term actions was published in January 2021.

# CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

## What can you do?

### Help your community save more land:

- Find a local land trust and volunteer.
- Volunteer on a land use commission in your municipality.
- If you own land, consider how to conserve it for the benefit of future generations.

### Make your voice heard:

- Ask your local, state, and federal officials to support land conservation as a climate change mitigation strategy.
- Encourage the thoughtful development of renewable energy facilities that avoid sensitive lands.

### Lead by example in your own backyard:

- Take care of your trees, and plant more too. They'll keep you and your neighbors cool.
- Consider planting a pollinator garden to create healthy habitat for birds, bees, and butterflies.
- Be careful with what you apply to your lawn, keeping chemicals out of wetlands and waterways.

### Support, and purchase, locally grown food:

- Food in the U.S. travels an average of 1,500 miles to get to your kitchen table, burning fossil fuels along the way. Buying your food from local farmers markets and farms you will help to reduce your carbon footprint, while also contributing to the local economy.

## Resources Cited

1. Mufson et. al. (2019). [2°C: Beyond the Limit. Extreme climate change has arrived in America](#). Washington Post.
2. Governor's Council on Climate Change. (2018). [Building a Low Carbon Future for Connecticut](#).
3. Waldron et. al. (2020). [Protecting 30% of the planet for nature: costs, benefits and economic implications](#). Campaign for Nature.
4. Griscom et. al. (2017). [Natural Climate Solutions](#). Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.
5. Highstead. (2019). [Urban Park Fuels Downtown Revitalization in Stamford, Connecticut](#).

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#LoveYourCTLandTrust

## Our Mission

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community across the state.

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