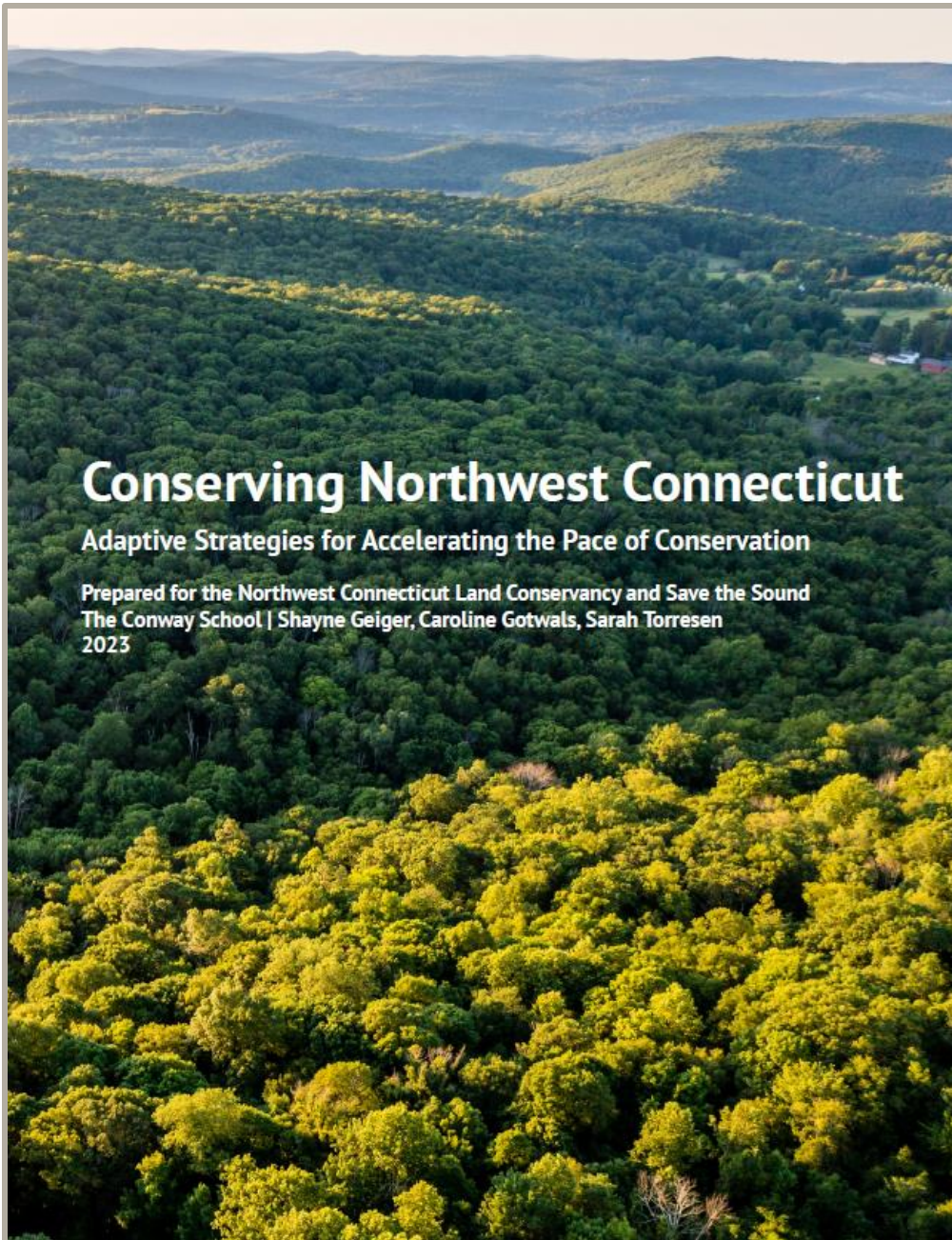




WELCOME



Conserving Northwest Connecticut

Adaptive Strategies for Accelerating the Pace of Conservation

Prepared for the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy and Save the Sound
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2023

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Kathy Czepiel, *Save the Sound*





What does this report tell us about land conservation in CT?

How might their group use this report?

OUR PARTNERS

- Bridgewater Land Trust
- Brookfield Open Space Legacy (now NCLC)
- Cornwall Conservation Trust
- Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust
- Goshen Land Trust
- Harwinton Land Conservation Trust
- Litchfield Land Trust
- Morris Land Trust
- Naromi Land Trust (now NCLC)
- New Hartford Land Trust
- Norfolk Land Trust
- Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy
- Plymouth Land Trust
- Roxbury Land Trust
- Salisbury Association
- Sharon Land Trust
- Steep Rock Association
- Warren Land Trust
- Watertown Land Trust
- Winchester Land Trust





Pace and Scale of Conservation Report

KEY FINDINGS

- During 2010–2020, participating land trusts protected 9,772 acres in 253 transactions.
- The average transaction is 39 acres.
- The pace of conservation increased during the lookback period. During 2010-2020, land trusts averaged 23 transactions per year. However, in the last five years, the average number of transactions increased to 28 per year.
- In 2020, land trusts in Northwest Connecticut permanently protected a total of 1,406 acres.



At the current pace, it will take the State 65 years to protect 10% (The State protects 795 acres/year).

Connecticut's farms are in the top 3 most at risk of loss in the nation.

Connecticut ranks at or near the bottom for conservation funding in New England and nationally.

As a result, land trusts are critical to the conservation outcome for the state and our region.

The **30x30 initiative** is a global conservation effort aimed at protecting 30% of the planet's lands and waters by 2030. The goal of this initiative is to preserve biodiversity, mitigate climate change, and ensure equitable access to the outdoors for all people.

30x30 addresses critical challenges facing human health and the survival of life on planet Earth. Protecting the top ranked 30% of areas would conserve 62% of total carbon stocks, 68% of all fresh clean water and improve the conservation status for 70% of at-risk species.





Current Protected Lands

NCLC'S Service Region: Litchfield County Northern Fairfield County

Total Land Area
632,771 acres

Total Protected*
(State, Federal, Land Trusts)
143,066 acres

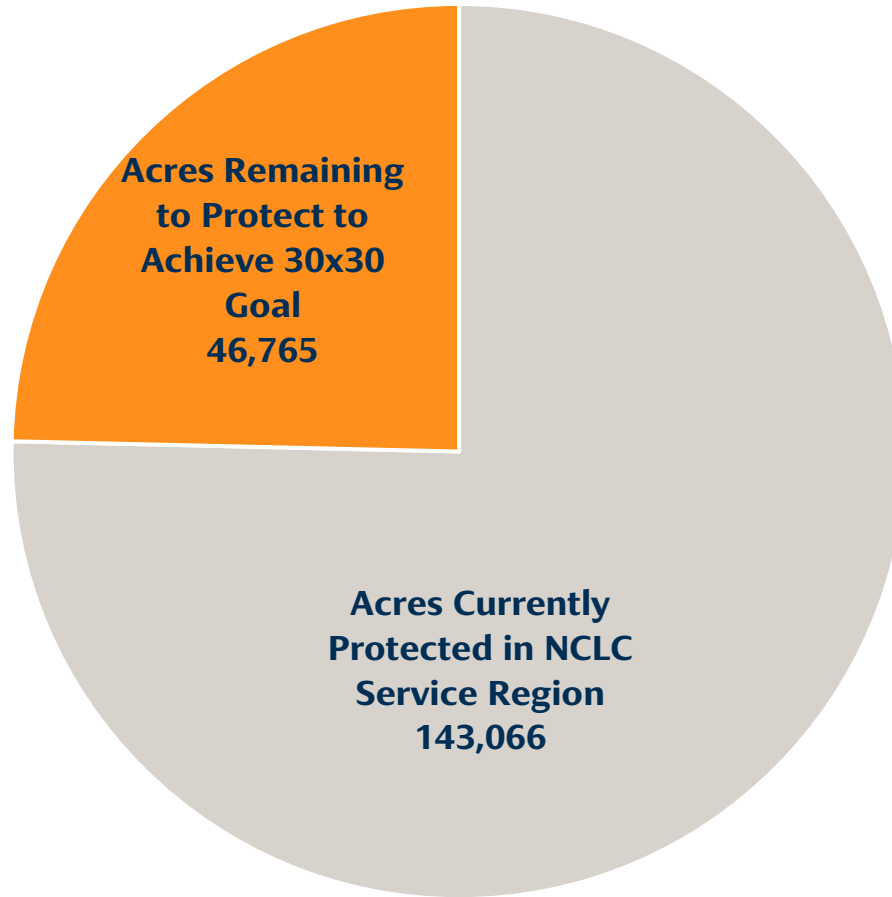
Total Percent Protected
22.61%

30 x 30 Goal
189,831 acres

Acres Remaining to Protect
to Reach 30 x 30 (30%)
46,765 acres

**As of December 2020*

**NCLC SERVICE REGION:
CURRENTLY PROTECTED LANDS
AND 30X30 GOAL**



■ Currently Protected ■ Acres Remaining To Be Protected



Quasi-Protected Lands

Quasi-Protected Lands

- Lands with statutory limits on sale and conversion from current use. Water supply and water company lands: >29,800 acres (data is incomplete).
- Lands owned by entities primarily for conservation or outdoor recreation but not legally protected:
9,315 acres

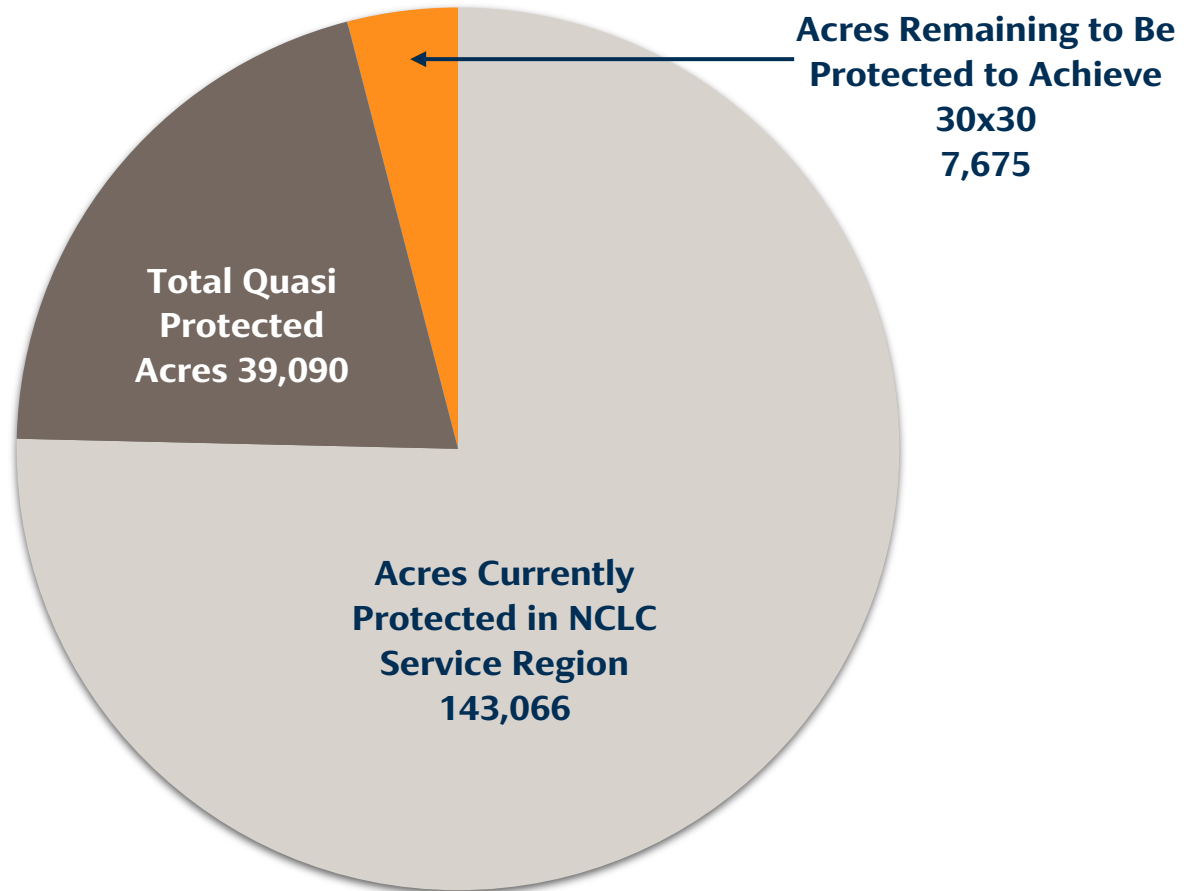
Total Quasi-Protected Lands
39,090 acres

Total Currently Protected Lands
143,066 acres

TOTAL: 182,126 acres

*Including Quasi-Protected,
region is 28.79% protected*

NCLC SERVICE REGION: REACHING 30x30 INCLUDING QUASI-PROTECTED LANDS



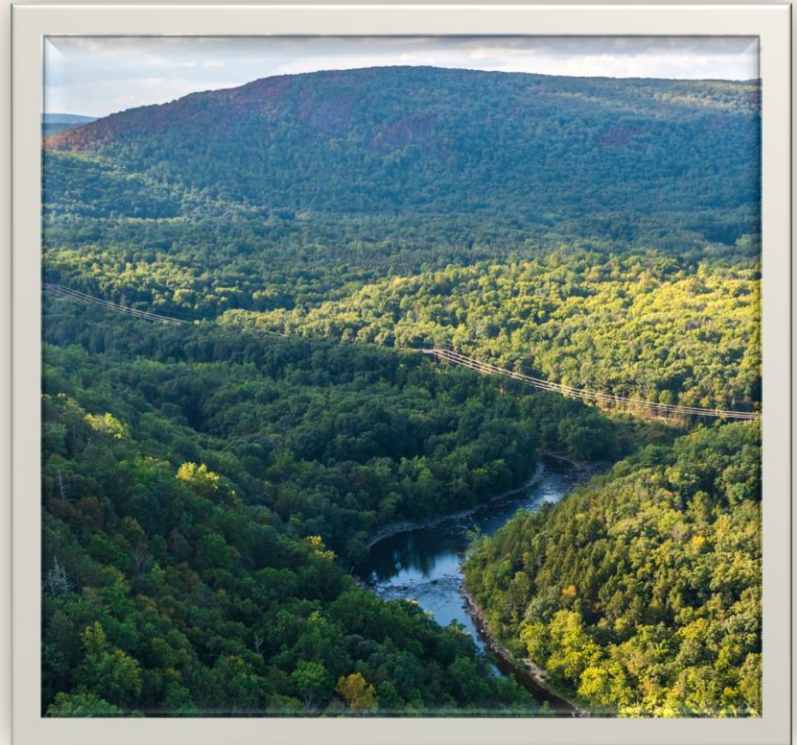
■ Currently Protected

■ Total Quasi Protected

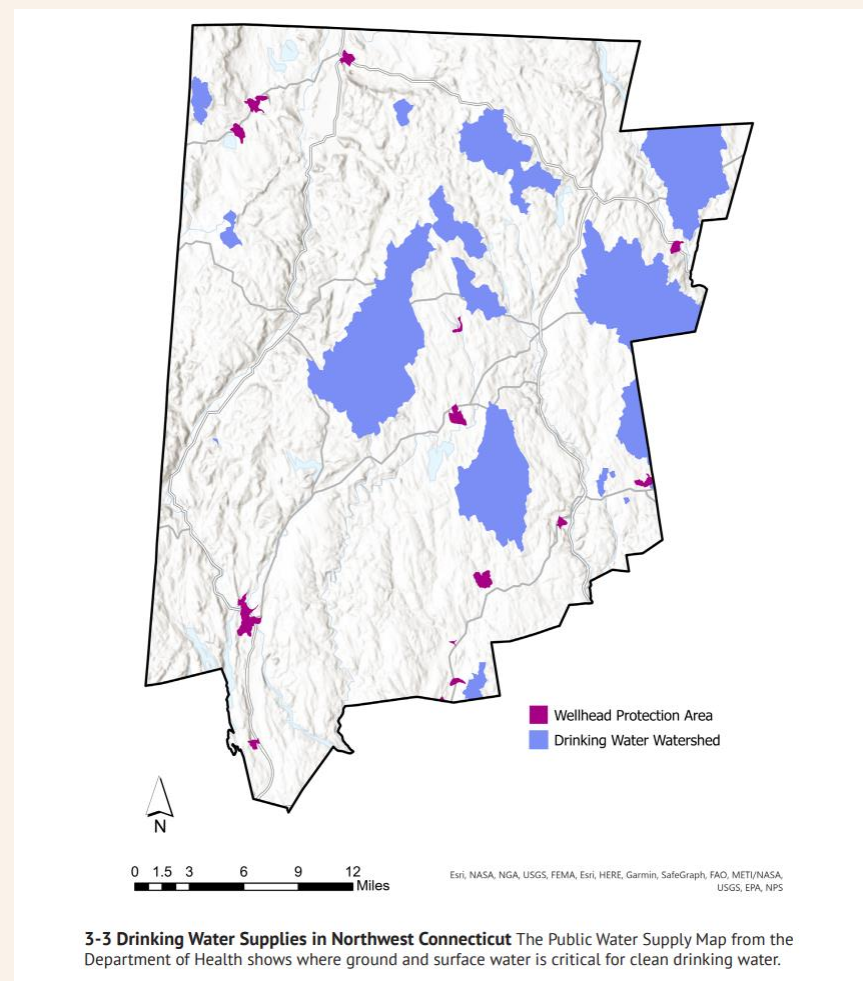
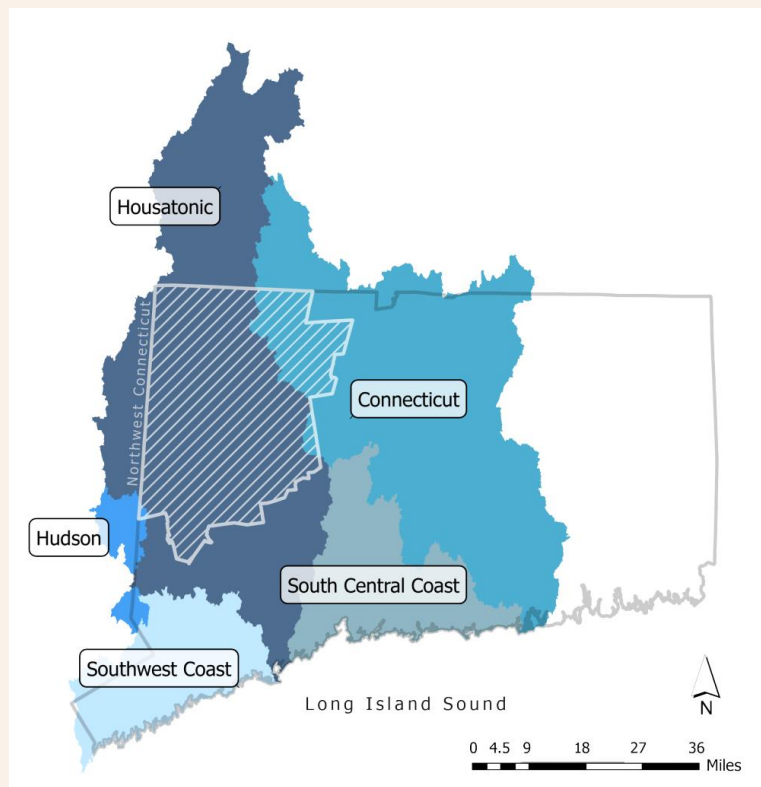
■ Acres Remaining To Be Protected

Why Conserve Northwest Connecticut?

- Clean Water & Air
- Wildlife Habitat
- Biodiversity
- Climate Resilience
- Food & Agriculture
- Human health & Recreation
- Tourism & Scenic Views

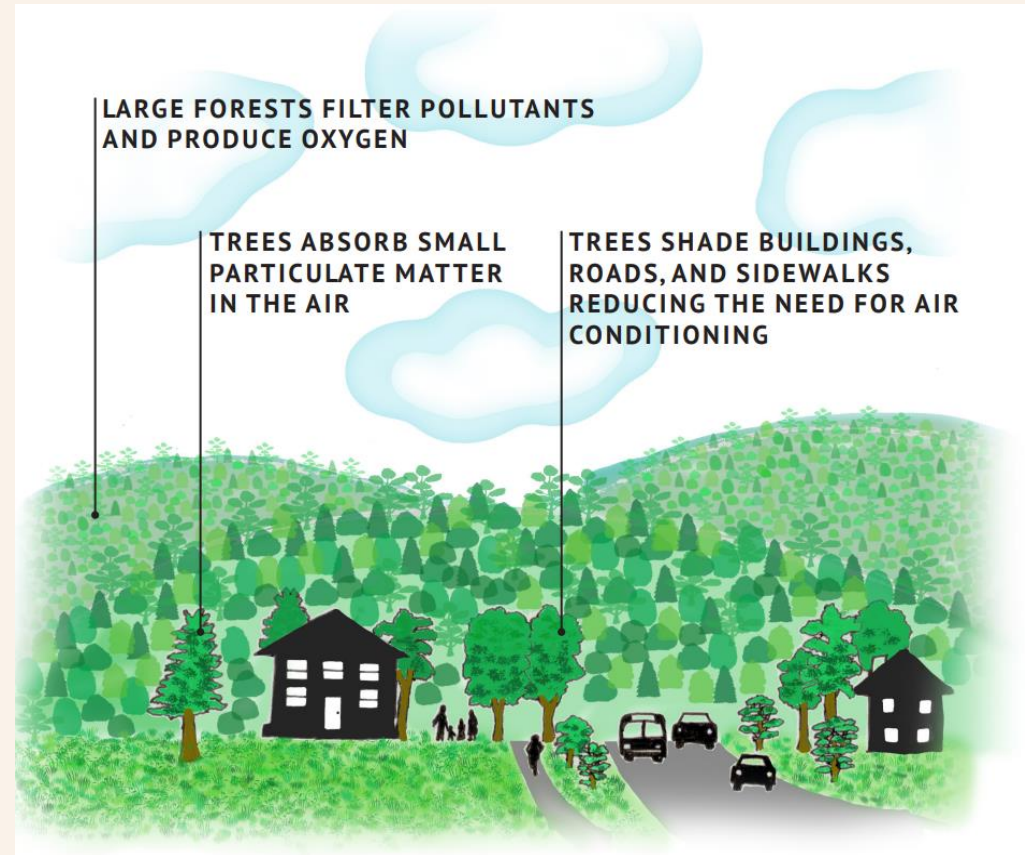


Clean Water



Clean Air

- 70% of land cover in NW CT is forest
- Connecticut's urban communities have the highest tree cover of any state – 62%



Wildlife Habitat & Biodiversity

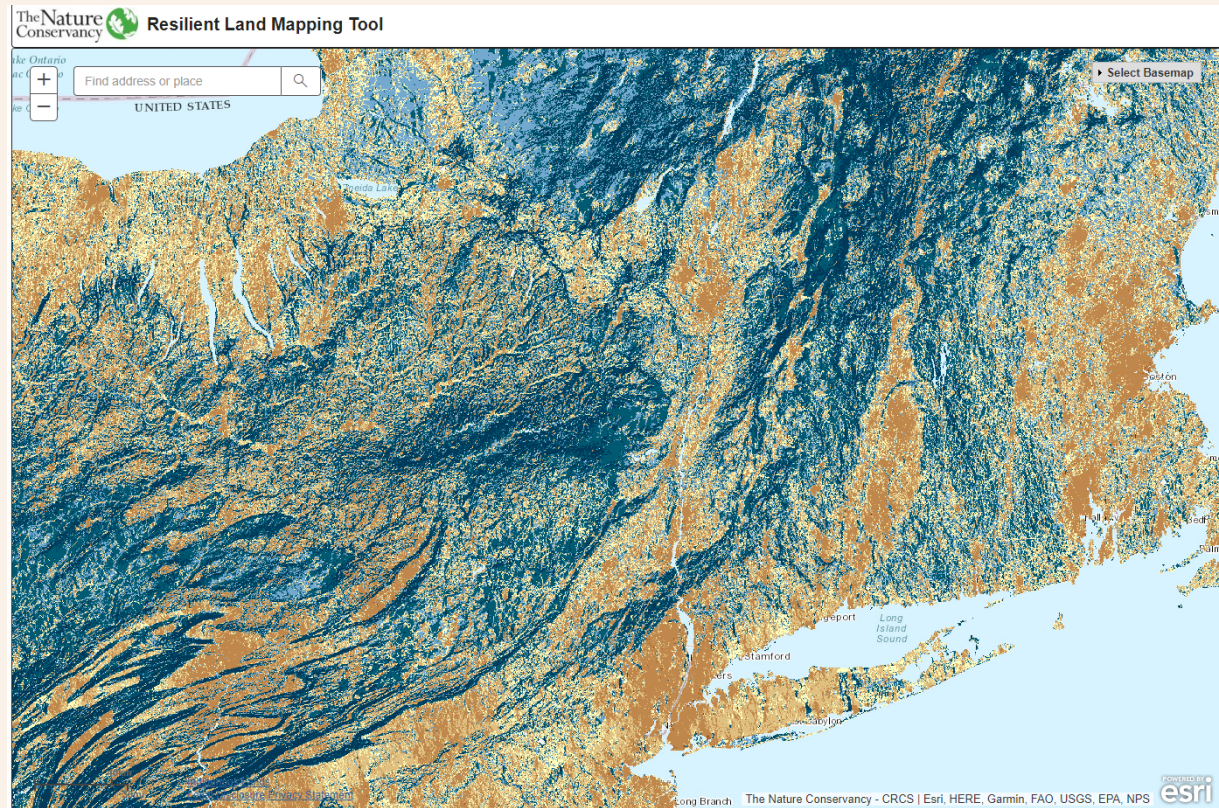


Protecting healthy, intact, forested ecosystems makes the region more resilient to climate change, maintains forest connectivity and wildlife habitat, and improves air and water quality.



Climate Resilience

Capacity to maintain species diversity and ecological function as the climate changes.



www.maps.tnc.org/resilientland

Economic Benefits of Conservation

- Reduced costs for infrastructure, services and maintenance
- Increased property values
- Green jobs



Agriculture, Forestry and Ecosystem Services



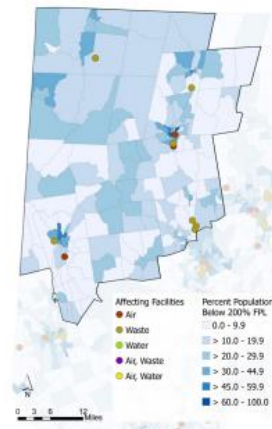
Human Health, Recreation & Tourism



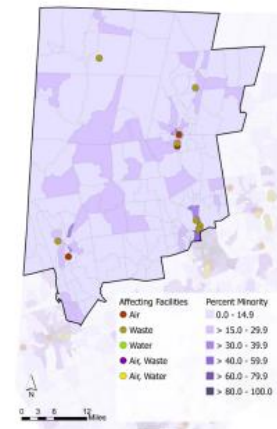
Equity in Conservation

Recognizing that all people do not benefit equally from land conservation and working to correct that imbalance.

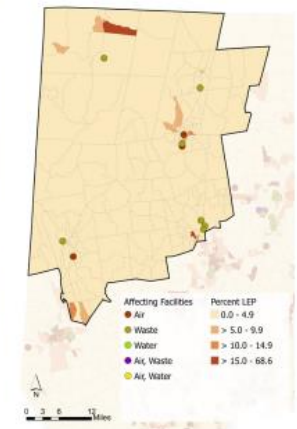
- 2 distressed EJ municipalities and 9 EJ Block Groups in the region
- Impacts of impervious surfaces and impaired waterways
- Access to conserved land, greenways and other amenities
- Affordable housing and declining rates of job creation



Percent Low-Income: The percent of the population whose income is below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). In 2020, 22.3% percent of the State population was low-income.



Percent Minority: The percent of the population that identifies their race as a race other than white alone and/or identifies their ethnicity as Hispanic and/or Latinx. In 2020, 34% percent of the State population identified as minority.



Percent Households LEP: The percent of households that identify as having limited English proficiency (LEP). In 2020, 5.1% percent of households in the State identified as having limited English proficiency.

7-1 Percent low-income, minority, and limited English proficiency block groups and affecting facilities All three demographic factors overlap spatially on Environmental Justice communities.

Equity in Conservation

Responsible conservation work today considers equity in:

- decision-making
- programming
- land management

Actions communities can take to increase equity:

- involving EJ populations and indigenous tribes in decision-making
- correcting the inequitable distribution of access to nature



Strategic Implications

- Ecological
- Economic
- Equitable

A focus on farmland retention in areas with prime agricultural soils and existing farmland at risk of conversion into sprawling development.



A focus on conserving land in ecologically important areas, including the Berkshire Wildlife Linkage through the Appalachian Mountains in Northwest Connecticut.



Legend

CT Towns



Distressed Municipalities



Current Distressed Municipality



In 5-year Grace Period as Formerly Meeting Distressed Municipality Threshold

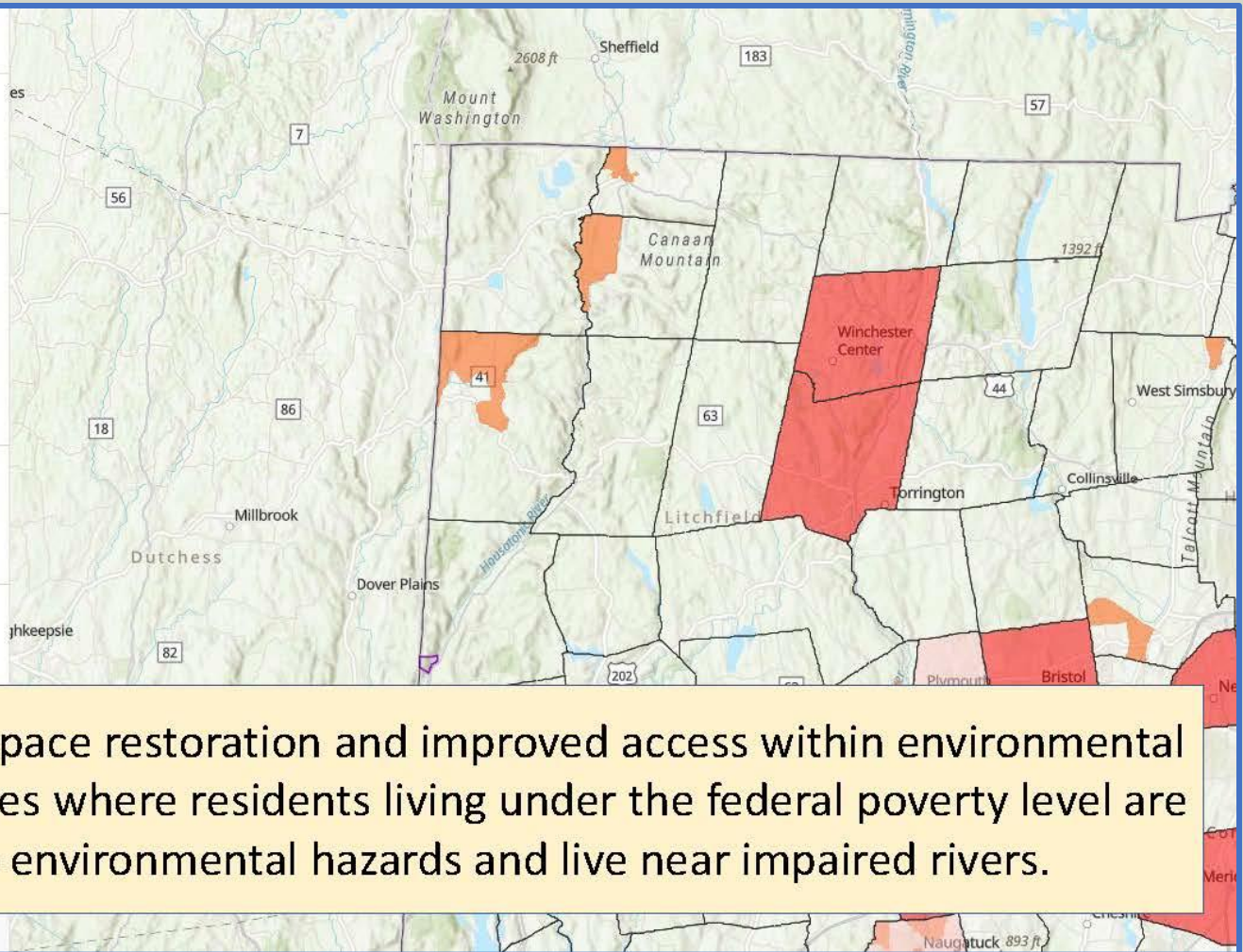
Environmental Justice Block Groups



Connecticut Tribal Lands



Federally Recognized



A focus on greenspace restoration and improved access within environmental justice communities where residents living under the federal poverty level are exposed to environmental hazards and live near impaired rivers.





Save the Sound[®]

Action for our region's environment.



credit: Long Island Sound Study



How might your organization use this report?

STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLANNING

Putting this information into practice and increasing the pace of conservation is working. Land trust partners throughout the region have secured conservation of over 1,800 acres in 10 projects in addition to NCLC's 10 projects securing 1,092 acres since the *Pace and Scale of Conservation* was published in 2021.

Secured
Conservation Projects
20 transactions
2,892 acres

How might your land trust use this report?

Planning - Education - Outreach - Advocacy

Making the Case for Conservation

Members

Municipal Leaders

Regional Partners

State Legislators

Donors, Grantmakers, & other Funders

CONNECTICUT

Land Conservation Council



QUESTION AND ANSWER
