Speak up for Nature this Election Season

September 30, 2016

Dear Friends of Conservation:

When it comes to state funding for land conservation, there’s good news, bad news, and an opportunity.

Let’s start with the good news!
Earlier this month, we shared the announcement that the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is accepting applications for a new round of Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA).

OSWA is the main source of funding that has been essential to the work of land trusts, towns and water companies in acquiring and permanently protecting open space for conservation. Funded through the Community Investment Act (CIA) and bonding, the OSWA program has leveraged millions of matching municipal, federal and private dollars resulting in funding for over 500 projects totaling over 32,000 acres in more than 130 communities since the program’s start in 1998.

Protecting and ensuring the consistency of funding for the OSWA program is a top priority for CLCC—each and every year!

This year’s state budget problems required a particularly aggressive campaign to protect funding sources for OSWA, including fighting sweeps to the CIA and advocating to make sure bonding for the program was included in the biennial budget.

So, what’s the bad news?
While bonding was authorized for OSWA, to date none of those funds have been allocated to the agency – putting the future of the program at risk.

Considering the raids on CIA funds (which were minimized but not eliminated in 2016), bonding is even more essential to the ongoing survival of the OSWA program and the ability of your land trust and community to continue to plan for and pursue high caliber conservation projects.

What can you do to help?
Contact Governor Malloy! (governor.malloy@ct.gov) If you haven’t done so already, please join CLCC and many land trusts around the state in asking Governor Malloy to convene the State Bond Commission to authorize the release of funding for OSWA. [View CLCC’s letter: www.ctconservation.org/view-clccs-letter-governor-asking-release-open-space-funds]

And, what’s the opportunity?
Speak up for Nature! With the general election only weeks away, NOW is an excellent time for land trusts to educate candidates for office about the issues that matter to your organization and your community.
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.

For more information contact Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director, at abpaterson@ctconservation.org