

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, CT

***Join by Teams**

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/21651828986541?p=fb0OZi9qzfh0MDzzAF>

Meeting ID: 216 518 289 865 41

Passcode: Yv2Yu7MZ

Or

Dial in by phone

[+1 469-965-2517,46326030#](tel:+14699652517,46326030#) United States, Northlake

Phone conference ID: 463 260 30#

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – March 11, 2026 meeting
3. Deer Hunt Update – Nicole Smith
4. Updates on land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other land items
6. Upcoming Meetings
 - a. Monday, April 13, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. (*Finance Committee regular meeting - review of FY 2027 Budget*)
 - b. Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. (*Jt. Special meeting LUC/Consumer Affairs Committee - review FY 2027 Budget*)
 - c. Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. (*LUC regular meeting*)
7. Adjourn

*Members of the public may attend the meeting in person or via remote access using instructions at the top of the agenda. To view meeting documents, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/3u3h9n3x>. For questions, contact the board office at 203-401-2515 or by email to jslubowski@rwater.com.

SAFETY MOMENT

FLOODED BASEMENTS

Flooded basements pose a severe hazard from electrocution, falling into depressions, open pits, sewage, gasoline spillage, fuel oil spills, chemicals and exposure to other unseen trip hazards.

- **If a Service Line Breaks/Leaks:**
- Never step into a flooded basement or other room if water may be in contact with electrical outlets, appliances or cords. The water could be energized and could shock or electrocute you.
- Never attempt to turn off power at the panel board if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call the electric utility to shut off power at the meter
- If water is spraying on to the electrical panel – shut the cellar wall valve and get out. Make one attempt to shut the cellar wall valve, if unsuccessful, get out.
- **Standing water is considered anything other than a wet floor with a few puddles. This includes standing water surrounding a water meter and wet carpets.**
- Never go into a flood-damaged basement or a flooded basement until the utility company, fire department, or a licensed electrician has cut the power to the house or the effected unit.
- Even after the power is confirmed de-energized one should never enter the flooded basement along.

Tap Into
Safety



Regional Water Authority



Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

 Regional Water Authority

**Presentation to the RWA Authority
&
Land Use Committee**

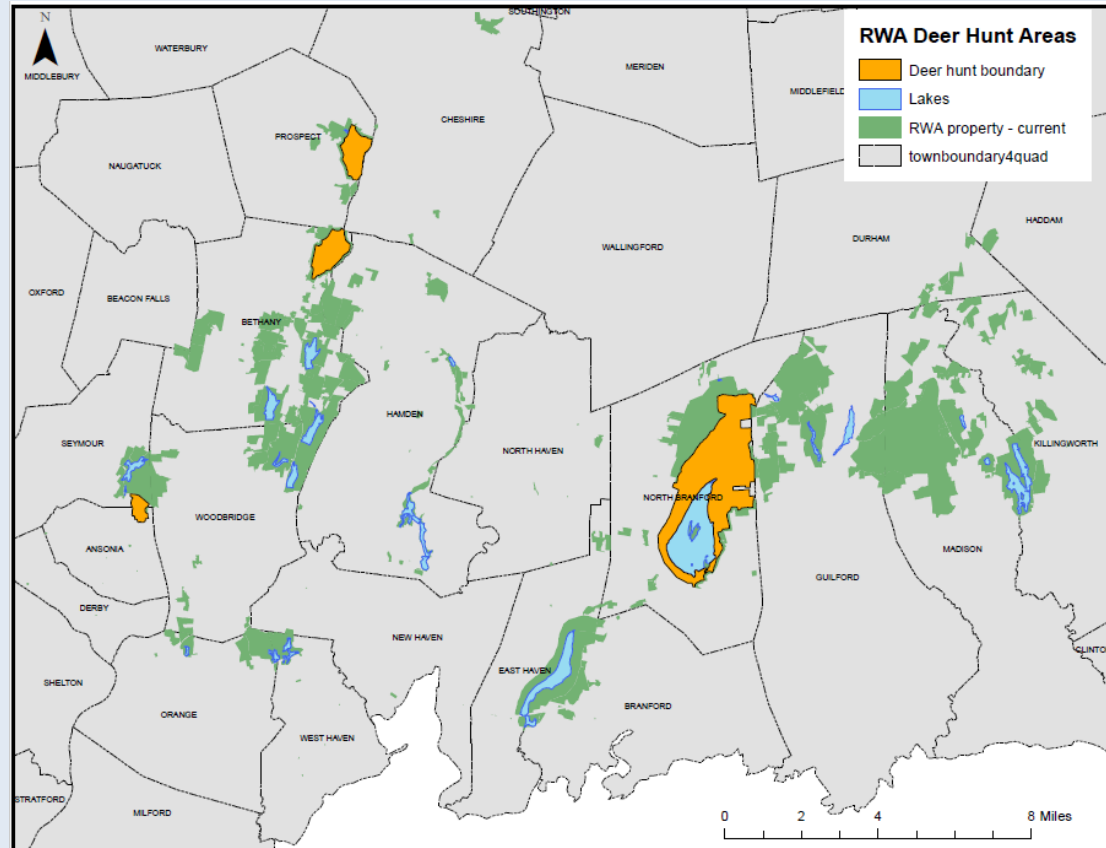
Review & Summary of the 2025 Controlled Archery Hunt



**Nicole Smith
Natural Resources Analyst**

Deer Hunting on 4,327 Acres

Property	Acres	Start
Lake Gaillard (NB)	3233	2009
Ansonia/Seymour	154	2014
Bethany	520	2015
Prospect	420	2015



Reducing Deer Density

- Enhances forest regeneration
- Controls erosion and locks up nutrients that can fuel algal blooms in reservoirs



Hunting Season Estimated Effort Brief Summary 2025

Surveys due Friday, February 6, 2026

Results - 88% return rate of surveys Total Hunting Effort – 5616.25 total hours

Properties	Surveys Returned	Total Hunting Hours
North Branford - Gaillard	113	4203
Bethany	21	505.5
Prospect	19	697.75
Ansonia/Seymour	7	210

Photo courtesy of John Jillson Gaillard 11/4/2024



RWA 2025 Deer Hunt

Permits and Harvest Amounts

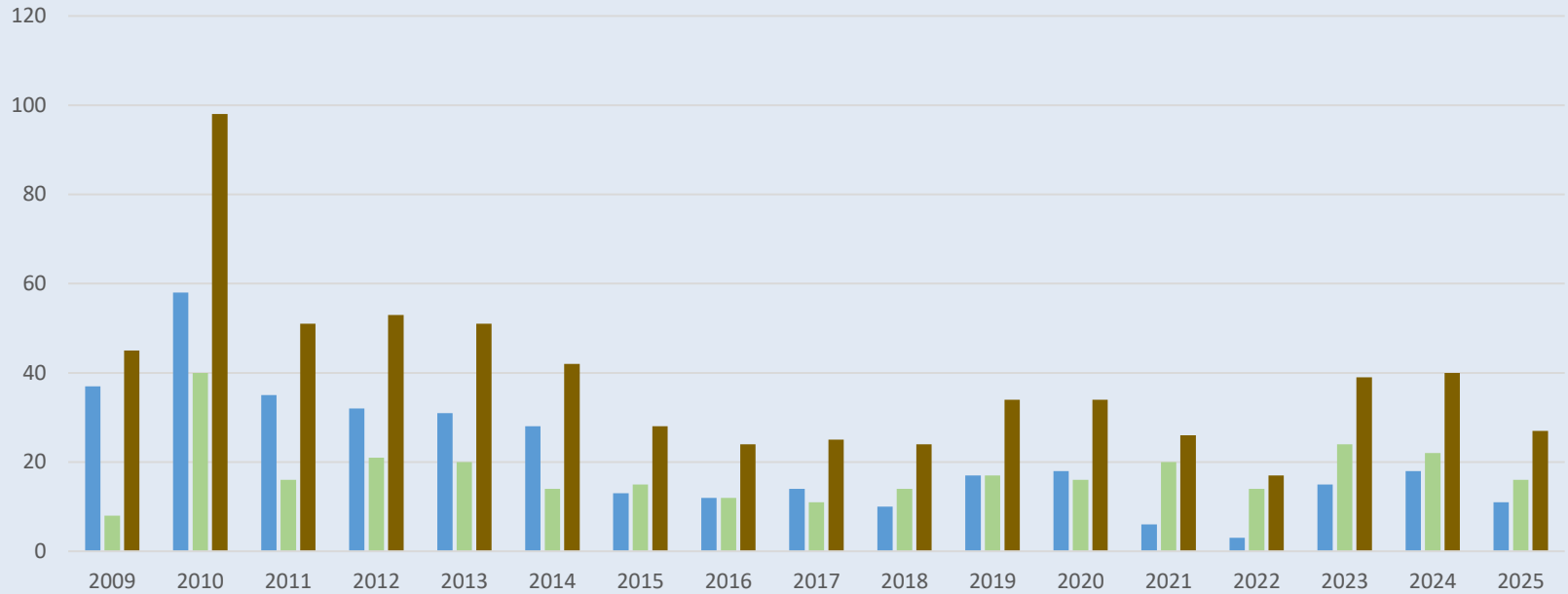
2025 Deer Harvest by Area				
Location	Permits	Doe	Buck	Total
North Branford	131	9	10	19
Prospect	20	2	4	6
Bethany	23	0	1	1
Seymour/Ansonia	8	0	1	1
Totals	182	11	16	27

2025 Harvest Totals

2025 Deer Harvest by Area				
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Total Deer by Sex Harvested Past 6 Hunts				
Year	Permits	Doe	Buck	Total
2025	182	11	16	27
2024	188	18	22	40
2023	164	21	33	54
2022	182	4	20	24
2021	205	9	25	34
2020	180	26	19	45

Total Deer Harvested Since 2009



Year	Doe	Bucks	Total
2009	37	8	45
2010	58	40	98
2011	35	16	51
2012	32	21	53
2013	31	20	51
2014	28	14	42
2015	13	15	28
2016	12	12	24
2017	14	11	25
2018	10	14	24
2019	17	17	34
2020	18	16	34
2021	6	20	26
2022	3	14	17
2023	15	24	39
2024	18	22	40
2025	11	16	27

■ Doe ■ Bucks ■ Total



Final Thoughts

We have reached the 17th year mark for collecting and analyzing data

- **Hunt Impacts**

- More localized deer sightings overall in Bethany, Prospect, and Gaillard this year
- Many more deer observed this season in all locations but harder to take ethical shot with bows – deer seem more cautious and just out of reach

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcvRGb0Tylw>

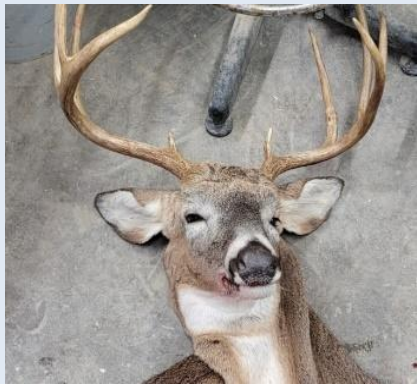
- **RWA Forestry and CT DEEP each have established research plots**

- RWA Forester is comparing data collected. Analysis of results was done in March 2020.

- **Annual DPH reporting requirement**

- DPH Recreational Activity Permits has been renewed and expires Dec. 2, 2031.
- Report on hunter effort and amount of deer harvested sent to DPH on Friday Feb 6, 2026. Report due to DPH February 15 each year

- Hunters are grateful for the opportunity. Appreciate our efforts toward conservation and stewardship of the land. No negative publicity this season.



Questions?



Photo courtesy of Connor Gasparini Gaillard 2023

**April 8, 2026
Land Use Committee Meeting**

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
March 31	91%	90%	91%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
March 31	4.66	4.57	4.35
Fiscal YTD (6/1/24 – 3/31/26)	24.64	34.06	38.30

Land We Need for the Water We Use Program (Dispositions/Acquisitions)

- Killingworth, Abner Lane Rd. (KI 6) – Killingworth Land Trust is still considering the proposal.
- Madison – correspondence with property owner of 14+/- acres.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. – Survey was updated. Public bid went out.

Forestry Update

- First person used retrac for paying for their firewood permit.
- Corresponded with Chestnut Foundation members to discuss planting chestnuts in forest settings.

Recreation

- Held winter tree identification walk at the LWWTP with 15 attendees.
- Ordered two new boats for the fishing program.
- Received emails commenting on the Sugarloaf recreation area as requested in the newsletter.
- Met with Woodbridge Trail Master to discuss trails across our property.
- Three people were offered recreation positions and two accepted and followed through to orientation.
- Permit requests for two bass tournaments at Lake Saltonstall were submitted to DEEP.

	March		February	
	2026	2025	2025	2024
Permit Holders	4,870	4,842	4,811	4,730

Special Activity Permits

- Hamden Fire Department (Chief Shelly Carter) – ice water rescue training refresher, Clark’s Pond (3/16/26 thru 3/19/26).
- New Haven Bird Club (Patrick T. Leahy) – Maintain and monitor bluebird nesting boxes on 7 sites – Downes Road, Bethany, adjacent to Lake Bethany property and field below Lake Dawson dam, Woodbridge, farm field on Sperry Road and Lake Chamberlain below the dam, Lake Watrous and other properties – (3/12/2026 – 12/31/2026).
- Connecticut State Police K9 Unit (Mr. Ryan Cloukey and designees)-training K9 teams in the discipline of tracking, Lake Gaillard, (3/13/2026 – 3/13/2027).
- Connecticut Butterfly Association (Tom Kelly)-observation of area for West Virginia White (Pieris Virgenienis) butterfly, Reeds Gap Road, North Branford, (4/1/2026 – 5/1/2026).

- Connecticut Butterfly Association (Tom Kelly)-observation within Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, Cedar Swamp Road, Madison, (5/1/2026 – 6/1/2026).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Madison, 752 Summer Hill Rd. (MA 9) – Contacted owner to check the property line.
 - West Haven, Shingle Hill tanks (WH 7) – Murtha sent another email to the City Council Administrator. City staff replied that they would review the draft.
 - Seymour, EMS equipment at SWF (SE 1) – Executed new agreement with the Town for emergency radio equipment at the wellfield.
 - East Haven, Barberry Rd. fields (EH 9, 10, 11, & 13) – Met with more GreenVest staff about other possible projects to work on. GV installed the monitoring wells at Barberry Rd. Replied to question from abutter about the project.
 - North Branford, 217 Forest Rd. (NB 17) – Sent termination of license agreement to owners since they were selling the property.
 - North Branford, 171 Beech St. (NB 4A) – Abutter moved his truck to his property after being notified.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	1.2 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	1.2 acres

- Land Use Plan – LUP update was determined to be complete by the LUC and forwarded to the full RPB. RPB set the date of the public hearing. Notifications were sent to the papers, town clerks, and interested groups.
- Branford, 325 East Main St. easement – Executed the easement amendment and sent to the owners.
- Deer hunt – Lottery application forms were sent to prospective hunters for the 2026 season.
- Bethany, Green Haven/Rocky Corner development – Reviewed and commented on draft easement and survey. Met with representative of Sunwood Development to discuss the survey.
- New Haven, Sachem St. easement – Yale staff supplied a draft easement with their markups at the end of the month.
- Bethany, Downs Rd. status – Researched question about the status of Downs Rd. in Bethany for Engineering. After the NHWC constructed the new road, the town was responsible for maintenance, including the culvert.
- Forest fire tabletop exercise – Participated in tabletop exercise considering a forest fire on the Saltonstall ridge.
- Boundaries – Checked and remarked boundaries in Madison and North Branford.

Attachments

- March 6, 2026 - Will melting snow lead to flooding in CT? Here's how much water is locked up in the snow cover – CT Insider
- March 13, 2026 - UConn maps over 2,500 miles of CT trails with new online finder – NH Register
- March 11, 2026 - Despite below-freezing temperatures, CT researchers say ticks welcomed New England's snowy winter – CT Public Radio
- March 23, 2026 - Problem Plants Pulled From Park – New Haven Independent
- March 30, 2026 - Threat of brush fires remains high in Connecticut Monday, DEEP warns – Waterbury Republican

Upcoming Agenda Items:

May 2026 – Natural Resources Specialists – Juliette Doyle and Julia Guimaraes

Will melting snow lead to flooding in CT? Here's how much water is locked up in the snow cover *CT Insider* | By Dan Amarante | March 6, 2026

Since mid-January, much of Connecticut has been blanketed by a persistent snowpack that is finally beginning to melt as milder air and numerous rain events move into the region.

The depth of that snow varies quite a bit depending on where you are in the state. Shoreline areas have seen more modest snow cover at times, while higher elevations in northern and western Connecticut have held onto deeper snow for weeks.

Meteorologists keep a close eye on more than just the depth of the snow, though. The real concern during a thaw is the amount of water locked inside that snowpack.

NOAA's Northeast River Forecast Center tracks snow depth and the amount of liquid water stored within the snow across the region, monitoring conditions that could contribute to river and stream flooding when melting accelerates.

As of Thursday morning, the liquid water equivalent contained in Connecticut's snowpack ranges from less than 2 inches near the shoreline to nearly 6 inches in the hills of Litchfield and Tolland counties. If all of that snow were to melt quickly, it would essentially be like several inches of rainfall.

Fortunately, much of Connecticut's soil is in a position to absorb at least some of that water. The latest update from the U.S. Drought Monitor shows nearly 40 percent of the state classified under moderate drought, with the remainder categorized as abnormally dry. Snow cover is not factored into drought observations because the water it contains can't reach the soil until it melts.

That dryness has been building since the start of the year, largely unaffected by the parade of snowstorms that left us with this snowpack. Hartford is currently running a precipitation deficit of 1.44 inches in 2026, while Bridgeport is about an inch below normal, with a deficit of 1.01 inches.

In other words, while rapid snowmelt can sometimes raise flooding concerns, this time around a good portion of that water may end up being just what the ground ordered.

For now, the key factor will be how quickly the snow melts.

A gradual warmup over several days typically allows melting snow to soak into the ground or run off slowly into rivers and streams. Problems are more likely when a rapid thaw combines with heavy rain, sending large amounts of water into waterways all at once.

Forecasts over the next several days suggest a steady warming trend across southern New England, which should lead to a gradual reduction in the state's snowpack. While some rises on rivers and streams are possible as the melt continues, widespread flooding concerns appear limited for now.

UConn maps over 2,500 miles of CT trails with new online finder

By Joseph Tucci, Staff Writer, New Haven Register – March 13, 2026

The University of Connecticut is helping people explore the great outdoors this spring.

UConn created the Connecticut Trail Finder, an online research tool aimed at helping visitors find trails throughout the Nutmeg State.

While the project was first launched to the public in 2021 with around 40 trail posts (which are properties with trails), it has since grown to over 400 posts, spanning over 2,500 miles.

Among the state parks with trails visitors can find are Hammonasset Beach State Park, Sleeping Giant State Park, Gillette Castle State Park, Rocky Neck State Park and Bluff Point State Park.

Each entry describes the location and shows things like a trail's length, difficulty, nearby towns, fees, surfaces and if pets are allowed. The project is updated regularly, according to UConn Geospatial Educator, Program Lead and Trail Finder Lead Emily Wilson. It also allows users to search for attributes like waterfalls and whether the paths can be traversed with bikes, ATVs, horses and snowmobiles.

The project was created by a collaboration between UConn's CT Trails Program, UConn Extension and the UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research. UConn works with trail managers — including state parks, land trusts, towns and groups such as the Connecticut Forest & Park Association — to gather and verify trail mapping information.

Wilson said she hopes the tool will help get more people to the trails and consider volunteering to help preserve the locations.

"We feel really confident in the information that's on there and it's a way for trail managers to make sure the correct information is conveyed to trail users," she said. "We're not trying to take over the work that the local groups are doing...but mostly get people to them."

Wilson said that the idea to create the finder came out of a Connecticut Trail Symposium conference several years ago, after seeing similar projects in states like Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

Users can register the trails they complete online. Users can also complete several challenges to earn digital badges, which they can share on their social media pages. Among the challenges are "7 in 7" (completing seven trails in a week), "On Your Way" (completing your first trail), "Waterfall Chaser" (finishing five trails with waterfalls) and "Yee-Haw!" (completed 5 trails on horseback.)

"That's just an idea to create some motivation, people like to have goals and be working towards something. And so it's been successful in other trail finders, and I know other apps like fitness and exercise apps use badges with great success," Wilson said.

Despite below-freezing temperatures, CT researchers say ticks welcomed New England's snowy winter

Connecticut Public Radio | By Jennifer Ahrens - March 11, 2026

Connecticut's above-average snowfall this winter was good news for the region's tick populations.

"Snow provides a perfect opportunity for them to stay warmer under the snow and stay safe from the cold," said [Goudarz Molaei](#), director of the tick surveillance program at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, or CAES.

Even without snow, ticks are a very resilient species.

"Ticks have learned to go through dormancy and protect themselves from extreme cold," Molaei said. "The only time that ticks may suffer some mortality, minimal mortality, that's when we don't have the snow cover and it is dry and it is cold."

Temperatures need to drop to at least 10 degrees below freezing to pose any risk to ticks.

No matter the time of year, ticks can always pose a risk to humans. Molaei said his lab was sent ticks for testing in February.

Warmer weather means more people will be outside for longer periods of time increasing their chances of tick exposure. Roughly 70-80% of human Lyme disease cases occur in the summer, according to CAES.

[The vast majority of Lyme disease infections](#), about 75%, occurred while the person was in their yard, while the rest occurred away from the home.

State researchers advise anyone who has a tick that needs to be tested should first [submit it](#) to their [local health department](#). The health department then sends it to the state laboratory.

Problem Plants Pulled From Park

by [Mona Mahadevan](#) March 23, 2026 – New Haven Independent

The removals reflect efforts to protect the park's native trees from invasive species and pathogens. The projects have been spearheaded by Friends of East Rock Park, Urban Resources Initiative (URI), New Haven Parks Department, and Yale School of the Environment.

One project involves clearing invasive plants and making room for 15 more tree plantings across from Wilbur Cross High School.

Another is a broader study of beech leaf disease, which is a fatal threat affecting one of the park's most critical tree species.

"If we don't foster our [native plants], we're going to continue to see a decrease in all the birds we love, and fauna and insects," Chris Ozyck, associate director for URI, told the Independent on Friday.

For the last five years, Friends of East Rock Park has been [de-vining](#) by cutting the non-native vines strangling indigenous species, including ash, hemlock, elm, and beech trees. In the plains near Orange Street near the Mill River, the group has been focused on clearing overgrowth caused by invasive plants.

Known as "Cross Trail," the space represents "a transition area from College Woods — which is more groomed and manicured — to the rest of the park," David Shimchick, a leader of Friends of East Rock Park, said Friday.

The group has also piled together fallen branches and brush, which can be used by wildlife for habitat. Native trees have been tagged in pink.

With help from several high school students, Ozyck said URI will spend the first Saturday of April planting 15 native trees, of species ranging from sycamore and river birch to redbud and yellowwood. The locations for the plantings are marked with orange-red "whiskers" in the ground, and they were chosen for spots where the existing canopy is thin.

Friends of East Rock Park and URI timed their work around the park's birds. "We do all our de-vining and work like that in the wintertime, when birds are not nesting," said Ozyck.

While the forest is thinner at the moment, planting more native species will increase habitat availability and improve nutrient quality for local wildlife, said Ozyck.

For example, buckthorn — an invasive species — makes birds sick, which limits their ability to complete migratory patterns and raise baby birds. Since native birds co-evolved with indigenous species, native plants offer them the best sources for food and habitat.

New plantings are being funded with federal funds, because the area falls within an [environmental justice community](#), said Ozyck.

The Parks Department agreed to water the trees, he added.

In parallel, a study of beech leaf disease is also taking place in East Rock Park, as well as Edgewood Park and Quarry Park.

According to city Tree Warden Annie Mixsell, beech leaf disease is caused by a microscopic worm that infests leaf buds. It has been [weakening and killing beech trees](#) throughout North America.

In addition to being a native species to East Rock Park, beech trees provide habitat for many plants and animals, improve soil health by decreasing erosion, and represent a major food source for birds and deer.

To promote forest recovery, researchers are implementing three management treatments — beech removal, deer fencing, and native tree planting — in areas throughout the park. The goal is to see which techniques increase the proportion of young trees that survive to maturity and improve the diversity of native plants in areas affected by beech leaf disease.

Most of the set-up for that work took place in December and January.

The project is a step forward in the Parks Department's Urban and Community Forest Master Plan, which is supported by a grant from The New Haven Commission of Parks, Programs, & Recreational Facilities. (Federal funding, awarded to the project in September 2023, was abruptly canceled in 2025, according to Mixsell.)

"[East Rock Park] is a wonderful space for people from urban areas to interact with nature and connect," said Ozyck. That's because it is "safe, stewarded, and loved."

Threat of brush fires remains high in Connecticut Monday, DEEP warns

By [Peter Yankowski](#), Staff Writer - March 30, 2026 – Waterbury Republican

The risk of brush fire was high again across Connecticut Monday, with Hartford County at very high risk of fires, according to the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's [daily forest fire danger report](#).

The risk level [also had been considered high statewide on Sunday](#), according to the agency.

The designation comes with some restrictions for residents. When the danger report lists the risk as high, very high or extreme, local brush burning permits no longer are valid if the burning is within 100 feet of grassland or woodland.

The National Weather Service had not issued any fire-related weather alerts for Connecticut as of Monday morning, but all of Massachusetts was under a [special weather statement](#) warning of an increased risk of fire due to low humidity and breezy winds.

Connecticut is [in the midst of the spring fire season](#), which typically runs from mid-March to mid-May. Conditions are ripe for fires in spring because the lack of snow and vegetation allow the sun to quickly dry out light fuels. The materials that most often burn are referred to as "1-hour" fuels because they can go from wet to dried out and ready to burn in as little as one hour.

Windy spring weather also poses a risk, because the wind provides more oxygen to fires and can cause them to spread rapidly. Relative humidity — the amount of moisture in the air — and temperature [also can influence the risk of wild fires](#). When the air is dry, it can suck moisture out of fuels, setting them up to burn if a fire were to ignite.

Spring fires can have benefits for the state's woodlands. DEEP [deliberately sets fires in same state lands each spring](#), in what are known as controlled burns.

Brush fires that are not planned can pose a threat to people and property because so much of Connecticut's wildland is interspersed with places where people live, state officials have said.