

**Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
Via Remote Access****

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – May 13, 2020 meeting
3. Special Topic: Recreation Update: J. Triana
4. Consider and act on recommendation to the Representative Policy Board re: Completeness and mode of the Authority's Application for a Non-substantial Land Use Plan Amendment to create a new trail on Authority property at Lake Gaillard in North Branford (The Harrison Preserve Trail)
5. Consider and act on recommendation to the Representative Policy Board re: Completeness and mode of the Authority's Application for a Non-substantial Land Use Plan Amendment to relocate the Quinnipiac Trail on Authority Property in Prospect (The Quinnipiac Trail Relocation)
6. Updates on other land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
7. Other Land items
8. Notification of Committee Chair Election - July 2020
9. Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.
10. Adjourn

******In accordance with the Governor Lamont's, Executive Order No. 7B for the Protection of Public Health and Safety during COVID-19 Pandemic and Response, the public hearing will be held remotely under the requirements of Paragraph 1 of Executive Order No. 7B - Suspension of In-Person Open Meeting Requirements. Members of the public may attend the meeting via conference call, videoconference or other technology. For information on attending the meeting via remote access, and to view meeting documents, please visit <https://www.rwater.com/about-us/our-boards/board-meetings-minutes?year=2020&category=1435&meettype=&page=>. For questions, contact the board office at jslubowski@rwater.com or call 203-401-2515.

Topic: RPB Land Use Committee Meeting

Time: Jun 10, 2020 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Meeting *(via conference call)*

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 826 1721 2835

Password: 693513

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/ktpwYfyU>

SAFETY MOMENT

JUNE – YARD CLEANUP TIPS

There are hazards associated with yard cleanups, so take a few minutes to look at these safety tips.

More than 60,000 people are treated in emergency rooms each year for lawn-mower injuries:

- Rake before you mow to prevent any stones and loose debris from launching into the air
- Never operate a mower in your bare feet and avoid wearing loose clothing.
- Never start a mower indoors.
- Refueling your mower, make sure the engine is off and cool. Don't spill gasoline on a hot engine - and DON'T SMOKE while pouring gasoline.
- Never leave your mower unattended.
- Don't use electric mowers on wet grass.

At least 55,000 people each year sustain injuries from trimmers, lawn edgers, pruners and power saws:

- Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully before using the tools.
- Inspect the product for damage and don't use it if there are problems.
- Make sure blade guards are in place on all cutting equipment.
- Don't let tools get wet unless they are labeled "immersible".
- Unplug all tools when not in use.
- Make sure the tool is in the "off" position before you plug it in.
- Wear safety glasses when you are performing tasks when using hand or power tools.
- Use EXTRA CAUTION when working on ladders

**Tap Into
Safety**



Regional Water Authority



Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

 Regional Water Authority

UNAPPROVED DRAFT

**Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
Via Remote Access
Minutes of May 13, 2020 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Land Use Committee of the Representative Policy Board of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District (“RWA”) took place on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 via remote access. Chair Levine presided.

Present: Committee Members: P. Betkoski, B. Eitzer, R. Harvey, M. Horbal, M. Levine, G. Malloy, J. Oslander and J. Mowat Young
RPB: S. Mongillo and M. Ricozzi
Authority: S. Sack
Management: A. Amendola, T. Norris, J. Tracy and J. Triana
RPB Staff: J. Slubowski

Chair Levine called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Chair Levine reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy, seconded by Mr. Harvey, and unanimously carried the Committee approved the minutes of its April 8, 2020 meeting.

On motion made by Mr. Horbal, seconded by Mr. Harvey, and unanimously carried the Committee approved the minutes of its April 20, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Amendola, the RWA’s Forester, and Mr. Tracy, the RWA’s Invasive Species Management Technician, provided a discussion of the treatment of Japanese stilt grass on RWA properties, which included:

- Overview and goals
- Methodology
- Control methods
- Conclusions
- Next steps

Chair Levine and committee members thanked Messrs. Amendola and Tracy for the informative discussion.

At 5:05 p.m., Messrs. Amendola and Tracy withdrew from the meeting.

Update on *The Land We Need for the Water We Use Program* – J. Triana reported:

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
April 30, 2020	99	99	94	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
April 2020	5.70	7.41	4.27
Fiscal YTD (6/1/19 – 4/30/20)	46.01	56.80	42.65

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

- Cheshire - Corresponded with property owner of 40+/- acres.
- Durham - Corresponded with property owner of 16+/- acres.
- Killingworth - Corresponded with property owner of 5+/- acres.

DePodesta (HA 38) and Hendrickson properties (HA 26A/BE 20A) – Sent additional materials to DEEP for the OSWLA grants.

Rental houses:

- Seymour, 59 Rimmon Rd. (SE 11) – Completed bid and submitted to Purchasing to issue once the appeal period expires.
- Hamden, 95 Ives St. (HA 13) and 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Murtha staff called the P&Z office, but hasn't gotten any replies yet due to COVID closures.
- Guilford, 1115 Great Hill Rd. – Corresponded with new owner about progress.

Forestry Update

- Guilford – West of Sugar Loaf ash salvage (GU 4) – 40% complete
- North Branford - Beech Street Softwood (NB 4) – 85% complete
- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) - Contract not yet awarded.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet
- Bethany – East of Lake Bethany hardwood (BE 18) – 70% complete.
 - Found damage to vernal pool and use of steep slope for logging by commercial firewood cutter. Forester revoked his permit.
 - Planted approximately 1000 Christmas trees at the Lake Gaillard plantations.
 - Planted 100 Pitch Pine (larger transplants than the Christmas trees) at the Maltby Lakes and the Gaillard tunnel project for reforestation.
 - Met with Jeff Ward, Chief Scientist at the CT Agricultural Experiment Station to design several future timber harvest experimental deer enclosures.

Recreation

- Recreation permit holders – 4,479.
- Billboard campaign with 20% coupon continued
- Heavy use at all areas was noticed due to COVID restrictions. This led to record-breaking sales of permits and revenues.
- Free permit program was put on hold until after the COVID restrictions are lifted.
- Recreation staff have been stationed at the Maltby Lakes and Lake Saltonstall parking lots daily since April 13. This was due to the increased volume of people at the two areas.
- Reblazed and cleared all trails at Maltby Lakes and Lake Saltonstall.
- Trout were stocked at Maltby Lakes and Lake Saltonstall.
- Received DPH renewals for Lake Bethany hiking and Genesee/MMM Trail. However, there were typos in the Genesee/MMM Trail and DPH said they would re-issue them.

Special Activity Permits

- Southern Connecticut State University (Steven K. Burian, Professor) Sampling for caddisfly larva of family Sericostomatidae using d-frame kick net and screen to sieve sediment in stream channel, Sargent River between Valley Road and Hilldale Road, Bethany, (4/1/2020-9/30/2020).
- Menunkatuck Audubon Society (Tom Kelly) - Monitoring of Barn Owl nesting boxes - North Guilford owl box locations: Menunkatuck Reservoir (RT 77); Saw Mill Hill Road; Beaverhead Road; Great Hill Road (2 locations) (04/01/2020 to 07/01/2020).

- North Madison Vol. Fire Co. (Bob Blundon) – map roads and trails for fire rescue and firefighting property in North Madison; (4/9/2020 – 12/31/2020) Mr. Bob Blundon

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Agricultural fields – Replied to six inquiries about using our fields.
 - Bethany, Bethany Horsemen – Sent updated annual agreement to BH to review and execute.
- Invasive plants – Treated and mapped invasive populations in East Haven, West Haven, and North Branford.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	~ 59 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	~ 9 acres

- Durham, Vassel driveway – Vassel’s attorney noted that his client would not sign a license agreement where the licensor could revoke the agreement at any time. They were pursuing the adverse possession claim against the abutter to the north.
- Bethany, bee swarm boxes – Sent letter to Bethany resident to take down the bee swarm boxes in Bethany if they were his. By the end of the month, they were removed.
- Guilford, ATV’s and dirt bikes – Received videos from Guilford Land Trust staff showing dirt bikes, ATV’s and Jeeps driving over our and GLT’s properties at Bluff Head. Checked on area and relayed information to police.
- Durham, former Sullivan properties – Gail Sullivan sent a letter asking if she could buy her properties back that were sold to us in 2003. I went over how that was not possible.
- East Haven, Barberry Rd. drainage ditch – Met with Chris Roche after he received a request for the town to enter the field to open up the ditch and improve drainage. Said that would be OK, but we should get acknowledgement from EH’s inland wetland enforcement officer.
- Deer hunt – Received DPH Recreational Activity Permit for North Branford and Seymour/Ansonia areas.

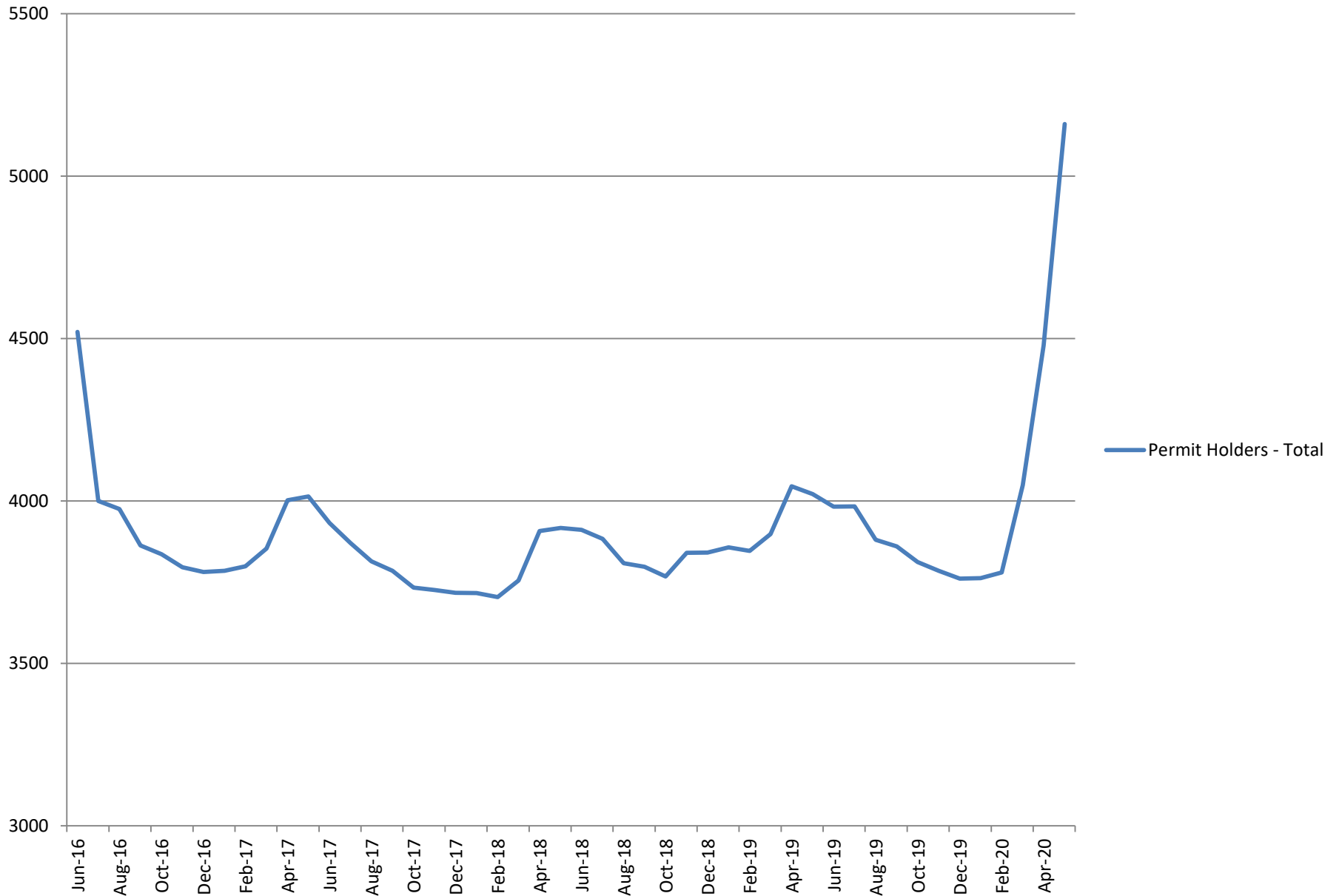
There were no other land items to report.

The next regular meeting of the committee is Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

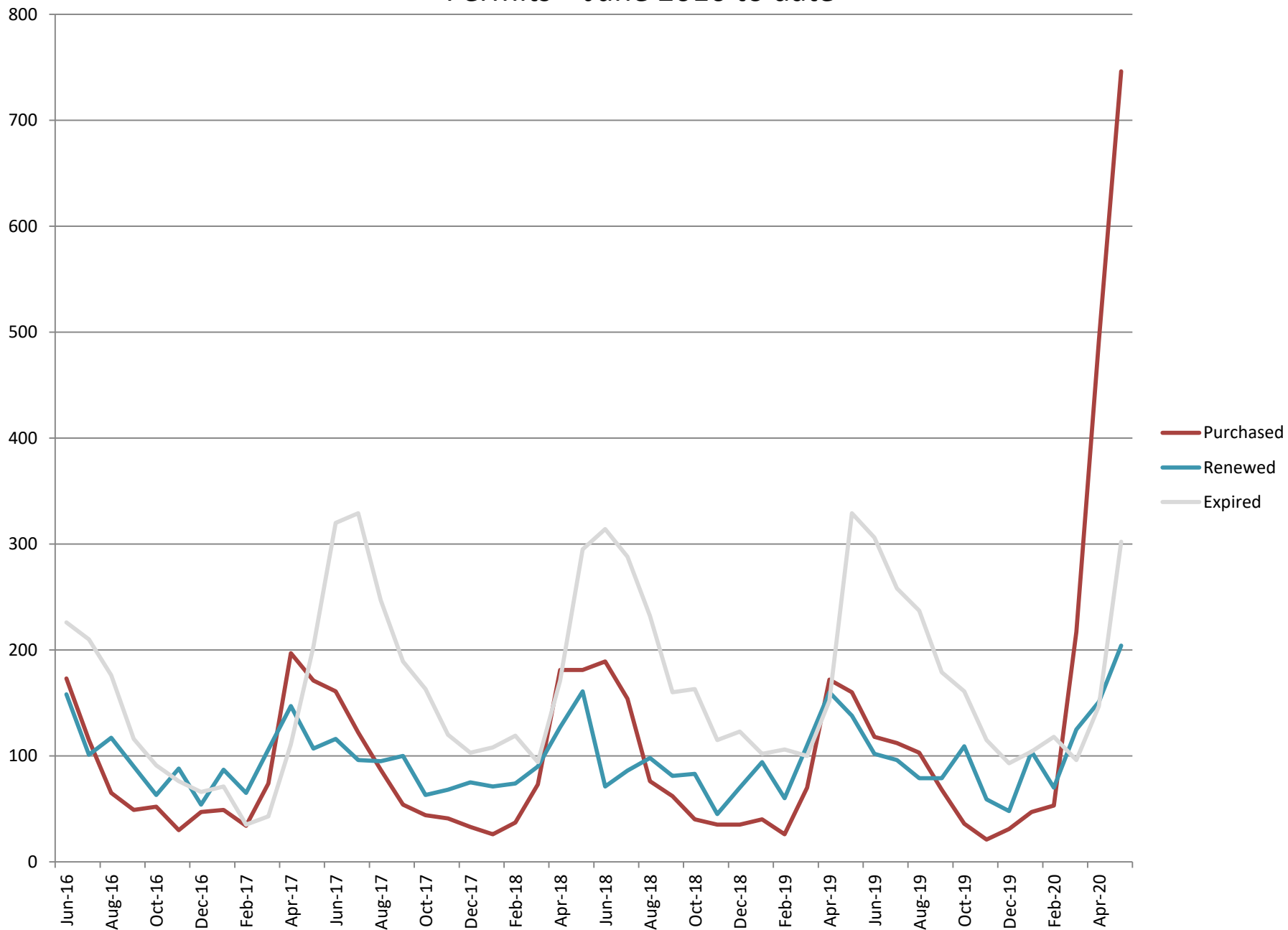
At 5:43 p.m., the meeting adjourned.

Mark Levine, Chairman

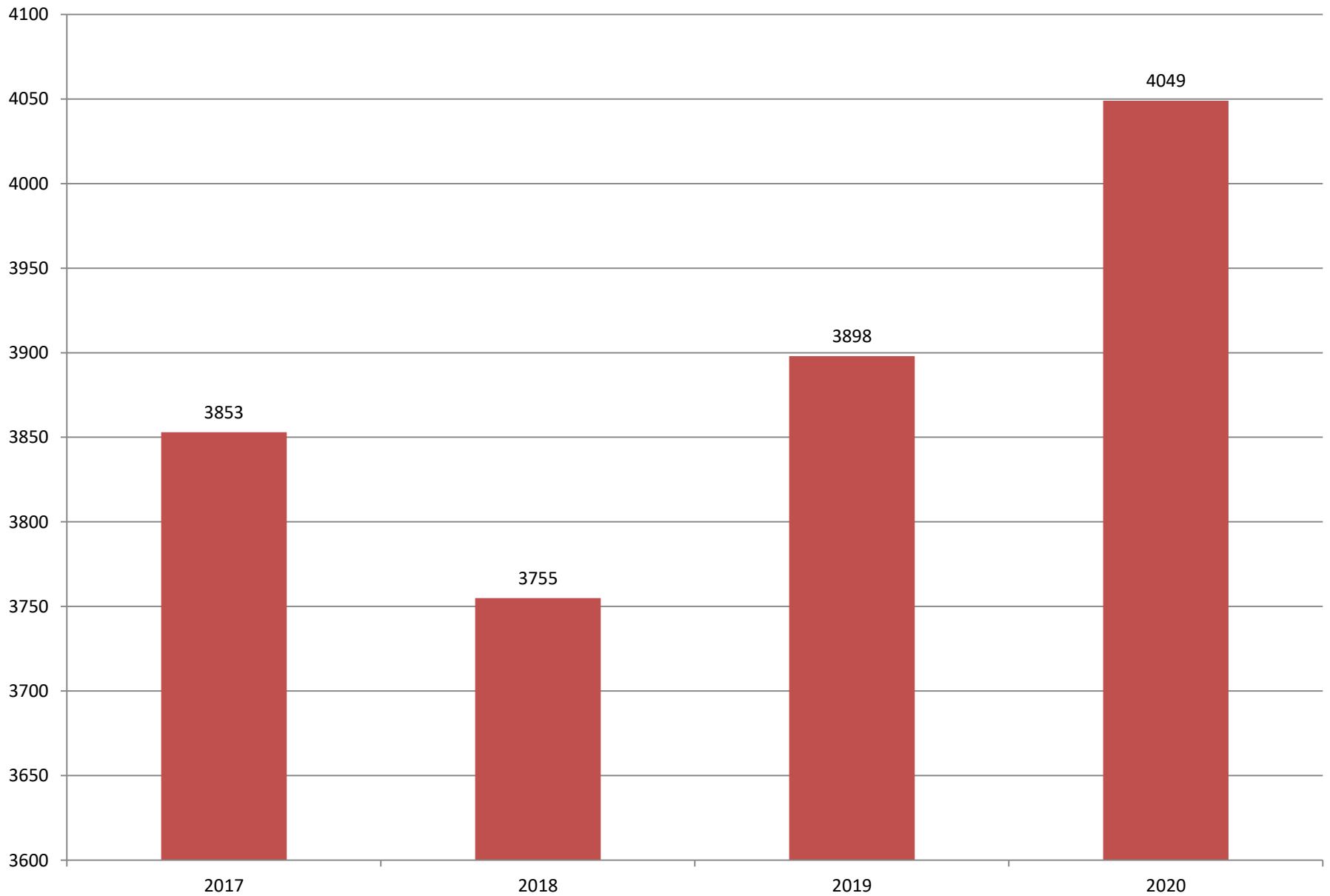
Permit Holders - Total



Permits – June 2016 to date



Permitees - March



Purchases and Renewals - March

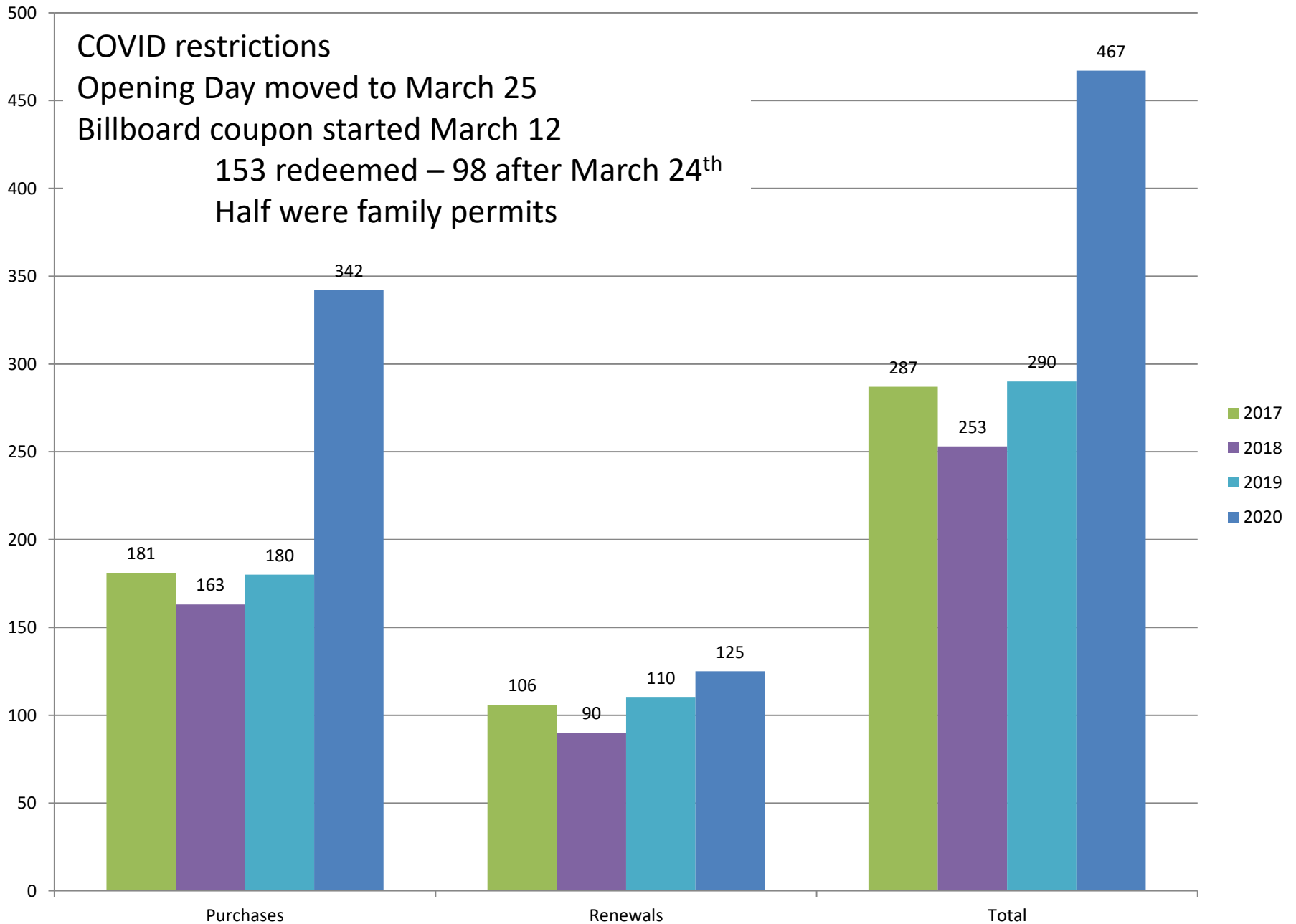
COVID restrictions

Opening Day moved to March 25

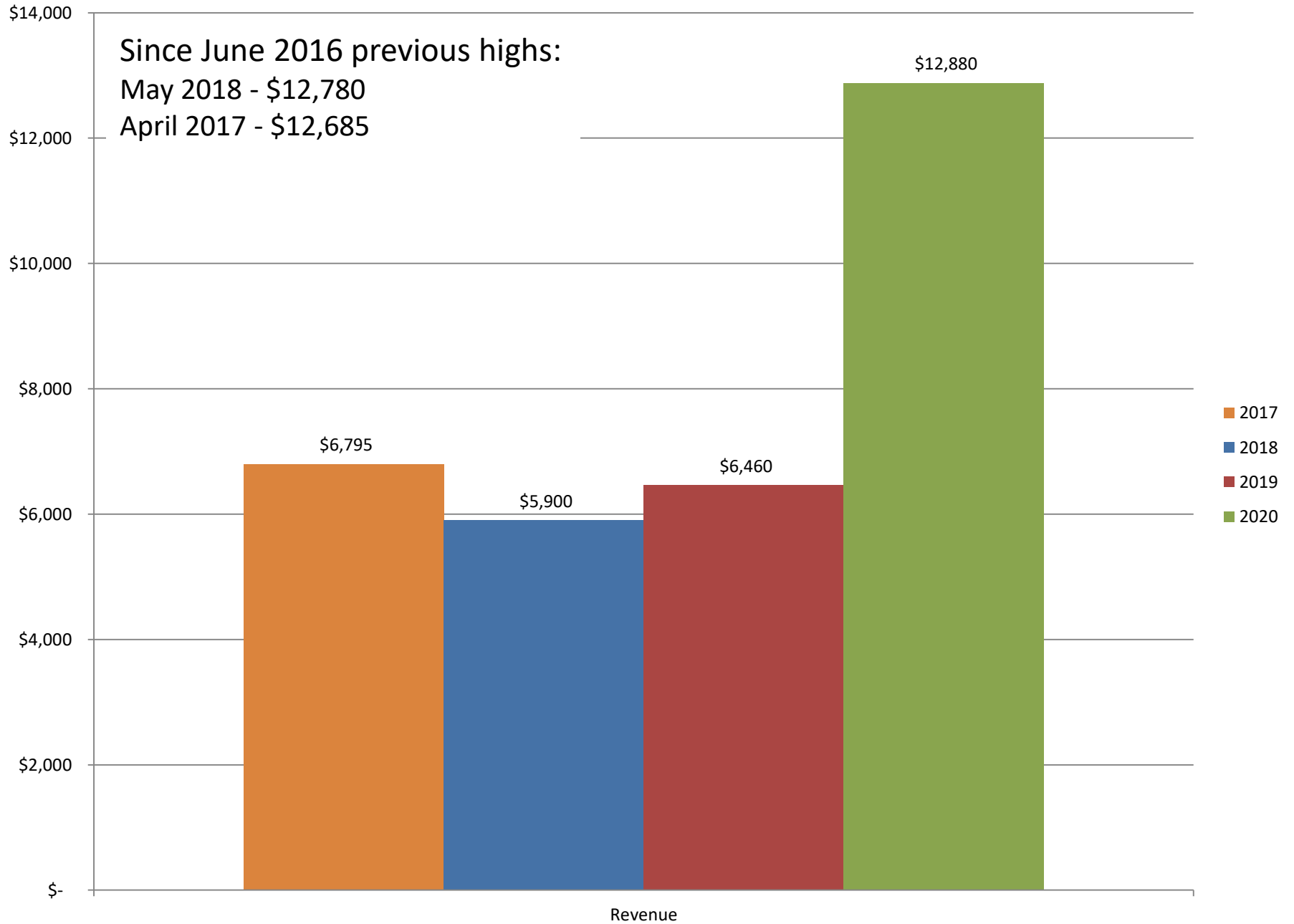
Billboard coupon started March 12

153 redeemed – 98 after March 24th

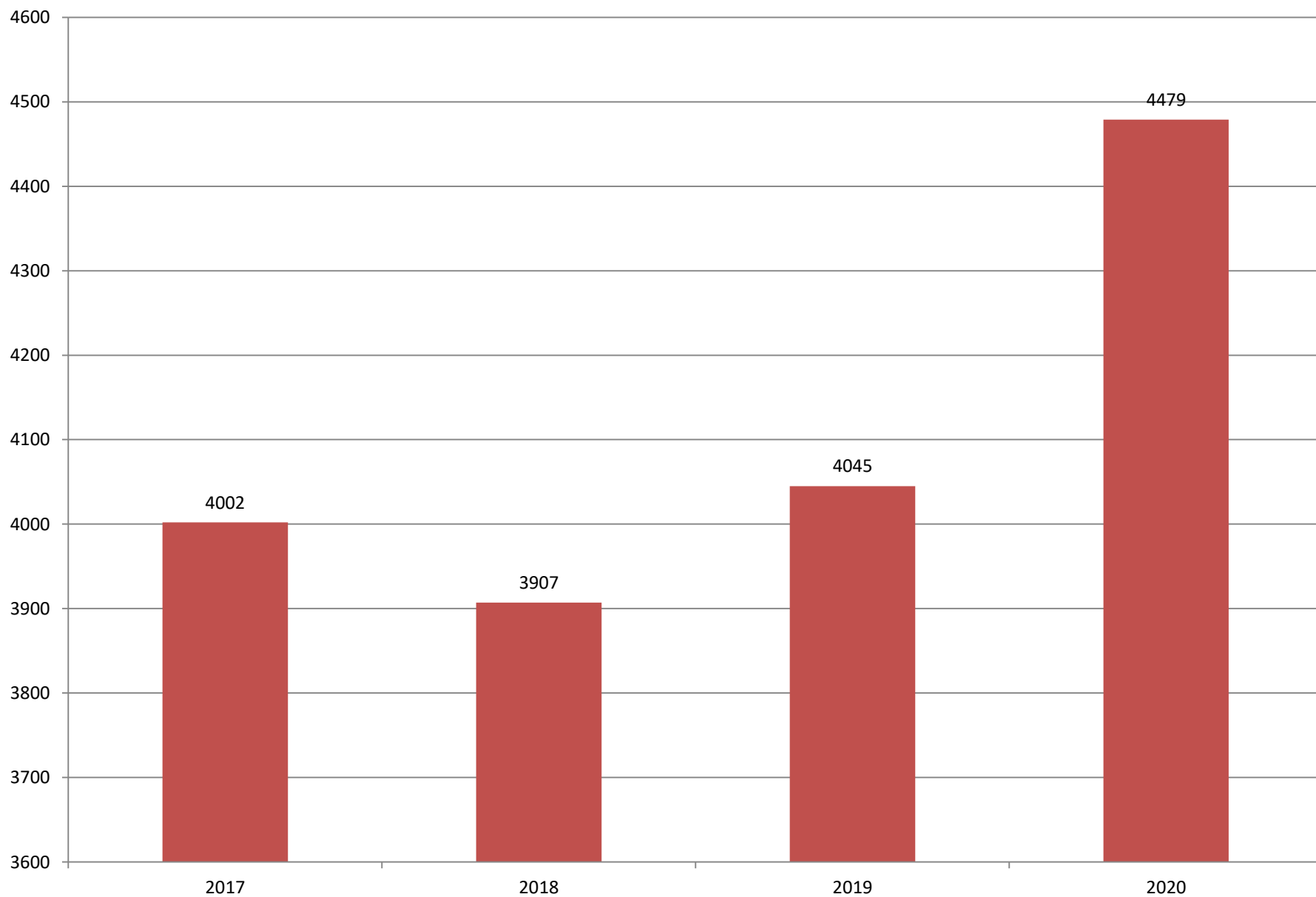
Half were family permits



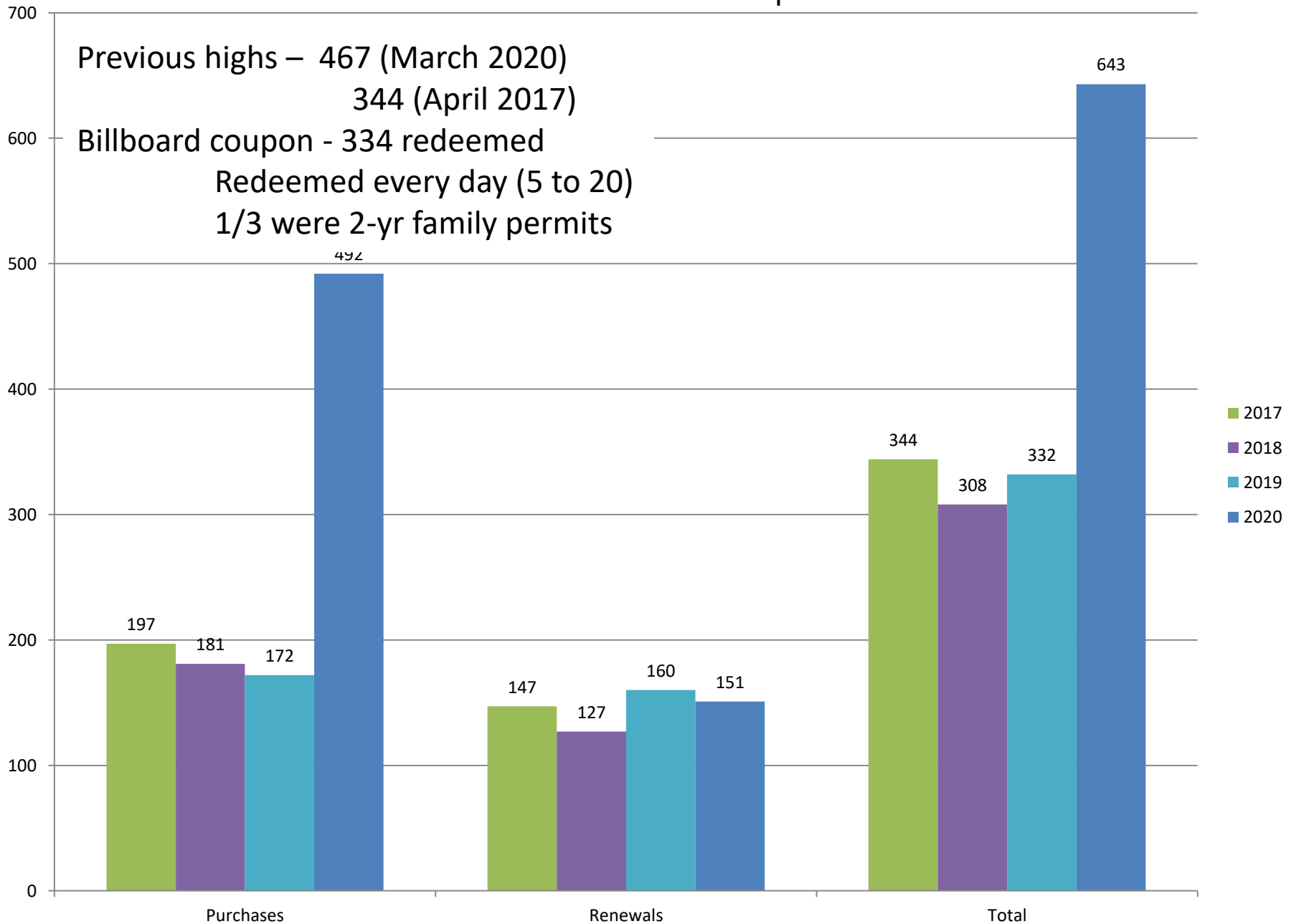
Revenue - March



Permitees - April



Purchases and Renewals - April



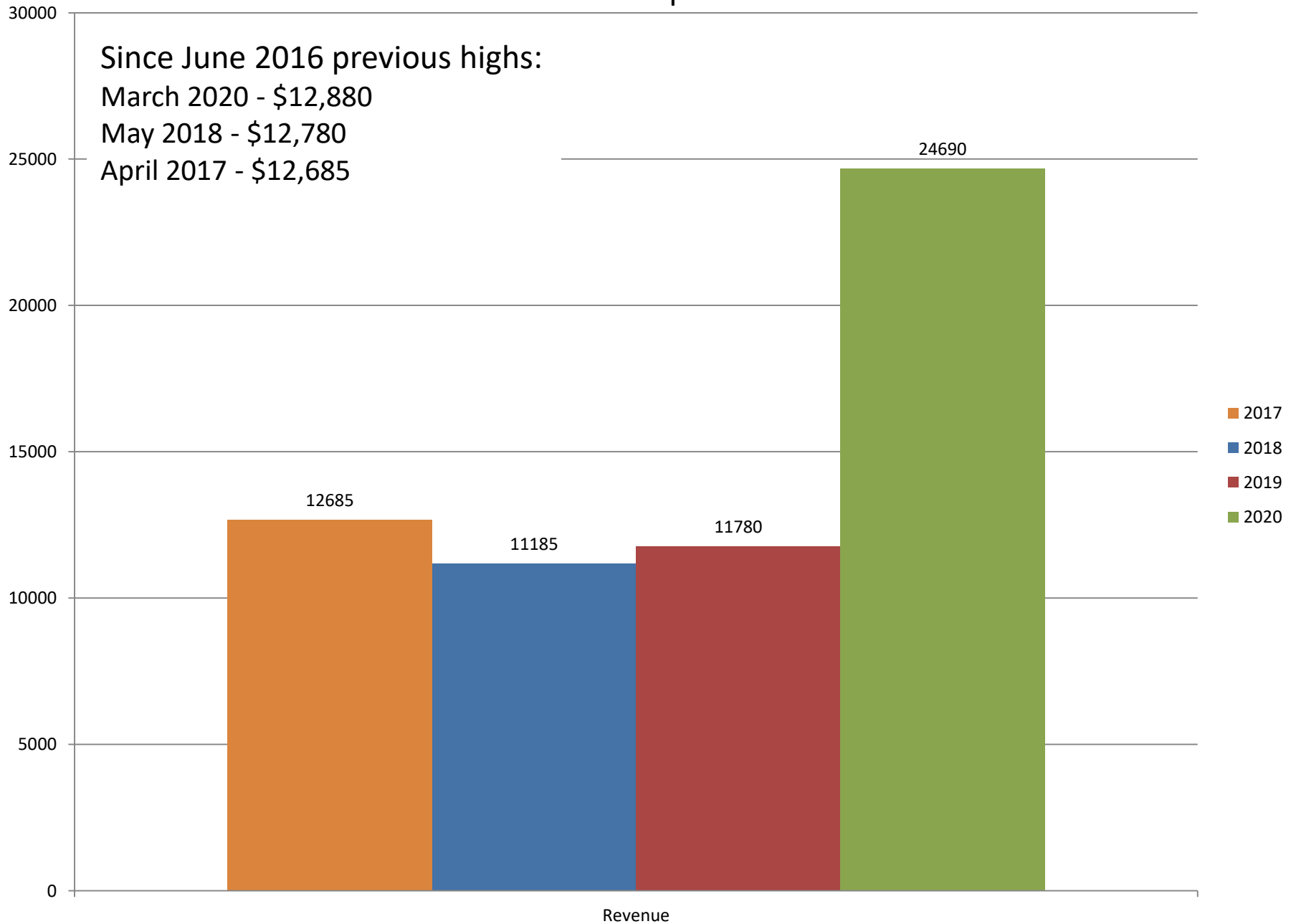
Revenue - April

Since June 2016 previous highs:

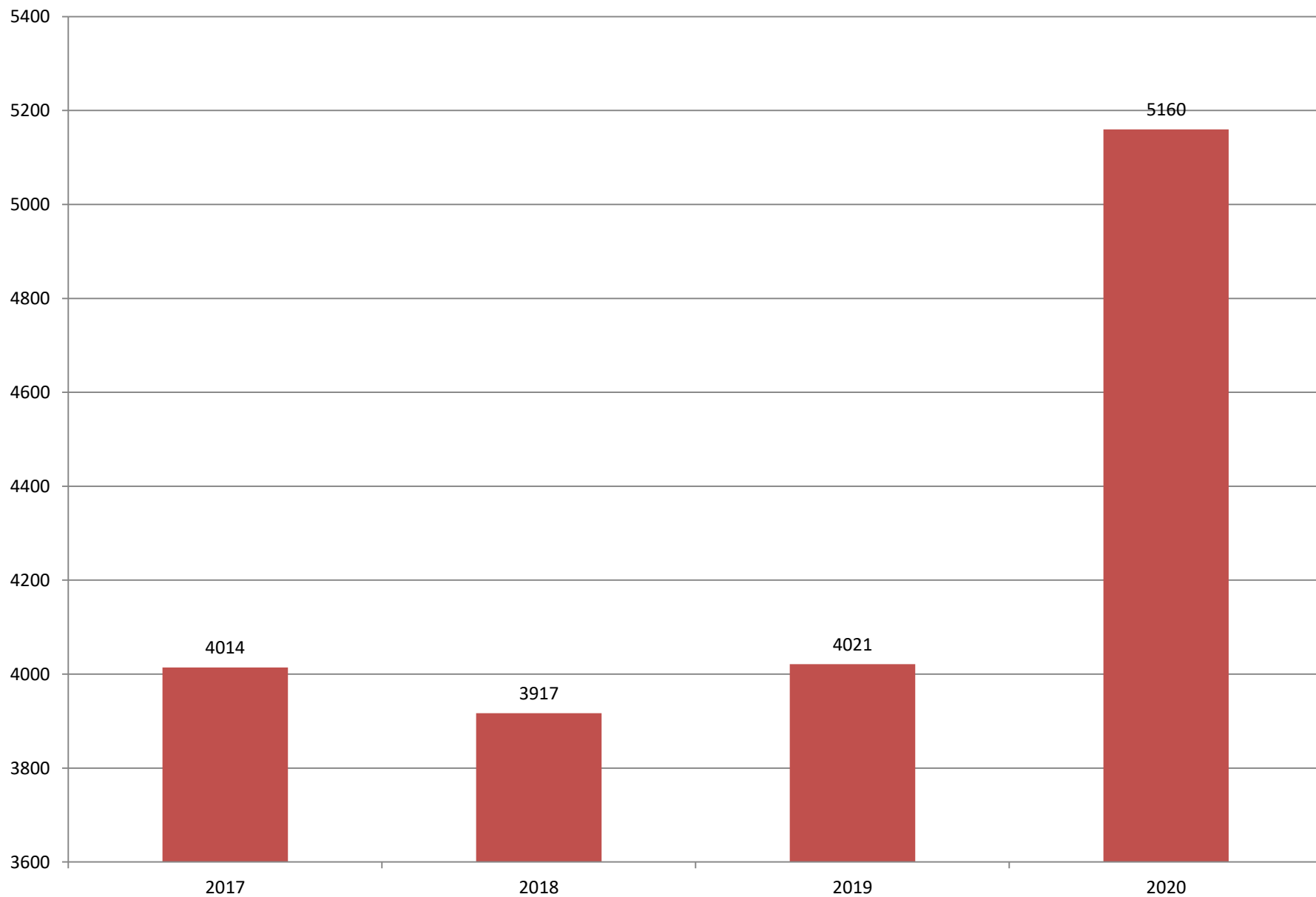
March 2020 - \$12,880

May 2018 - \$12,780

April 2017 - \$12,685



Permitees - May

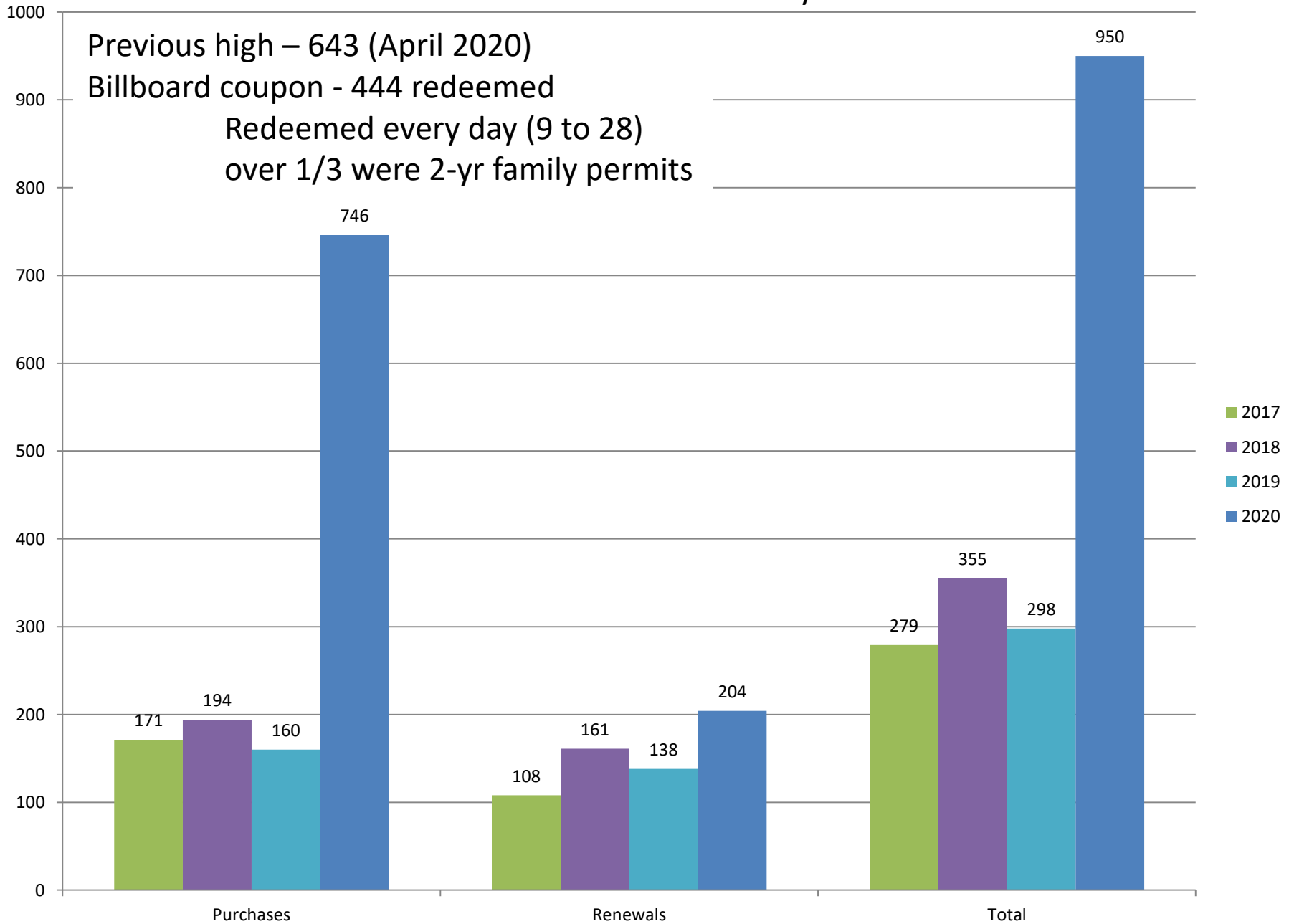


Purchases and Renewals - May

Previous high – 643 (April 2020)

Billboard coupon - 444 redeemed

Redeemed every day (9 to 28)
over 1/3 were 2-yr family permits



Revenue - May

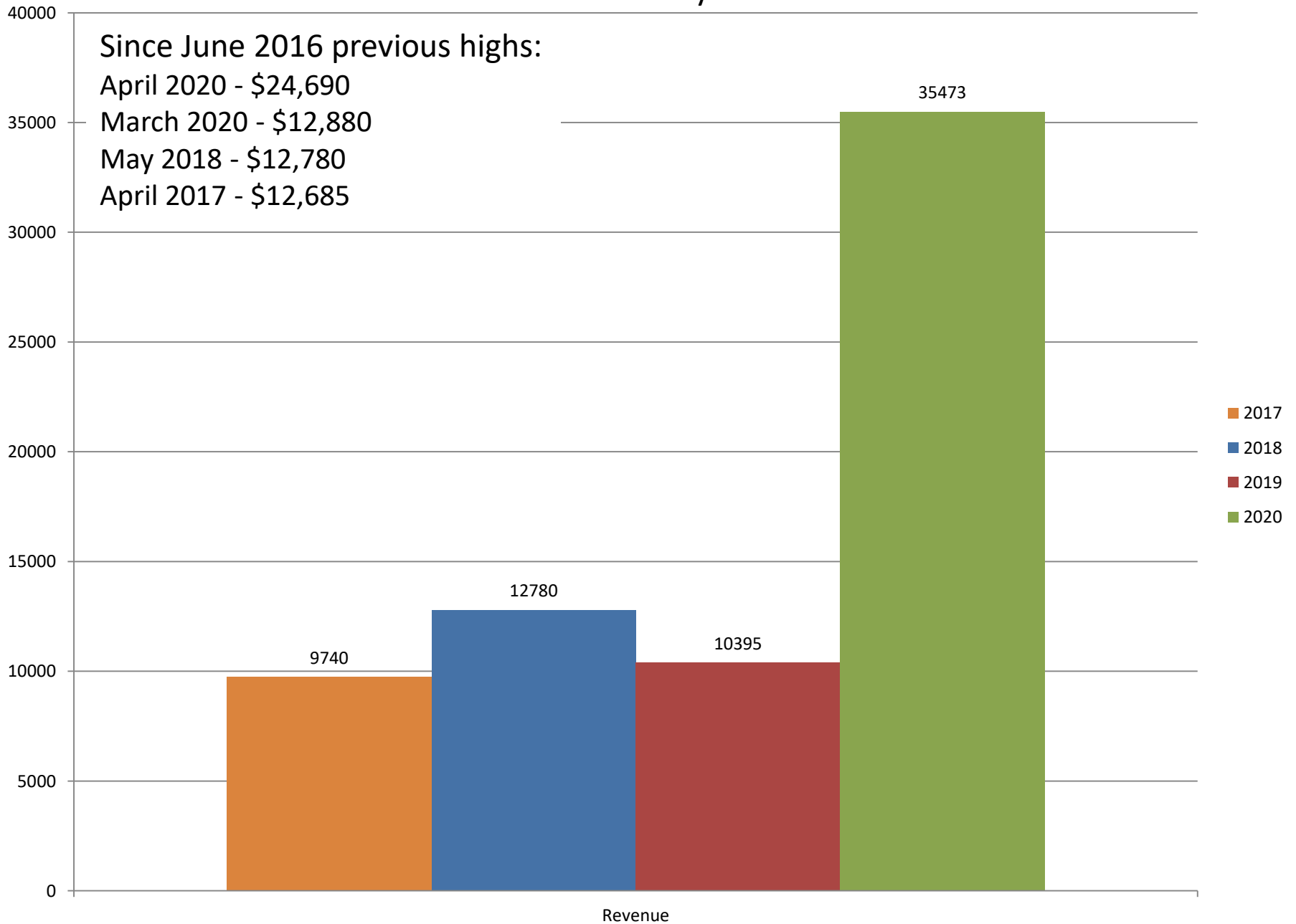
Since June 2016 previous highs:

April 2020 - \$24,690

March 2020 - \$12,880

May 2018 - \$12,780

April 2017 - \$12,685



Request for Approval of Land Use Plan Amendment

**Portion of NB 4
105 North St., North Branford**

**Application to the Representative Policy Board (RPB)
From the Regional Water Authority**

May 2020

Application for an Amendment to Land Use Plan

The Regional Water Authority (Authority) requests that the Representative Policy Board approve the Land Use Plan amendment described in this application, in accordance with the provisions of Connecticut State Act No. 77-98, as amended. This application and its annexed materials meet the requirements set forth in Connecticut State Act No. 77-98, as amended, and the Rules of Practice of the RPB.

Proposed Amendment

Type of Amendment

Creation of a new trail coming from the North Branford Land Conservation Trust's (NBLCT) Harrison Preserve property on North St. The trail will only be for the passive recreational use of hikers. Approximately 0.68 miles of trail will be created. The entire trail is on Class III property, off of the Lake Gaillard watershed. Because there will be no impact to the public water supply, this amendment is being submitted as a non-substantial amendment.

Location

Town in which property is located: North Branford
Land Unit Number: NB 4
Land Use Plan System: North Branford System
(See Attachment A)

Objectives of Amendment

- 1) Create a trail on Authority property on NB 4 that will connect with the trails on the NBLCT's Harrison Preserve.
- 2) Provide additional recreation opportunities in North Branford.

Watershed Classification of Affected Areas

Class I (acres): 0.00 acres
Class II (acres): 0.00 acres
Class III (acres): 0.41 acres

The entirety of the proposed trail is on Class III land, off of the Lake Gaillard watershed.

Land Use Plan Classification

Land within the affected area falls under the Non-water System Land designation.

Description of Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendment is to create a trail across the Authority's properties as noted above. The NBLCT is making the request to extend a trail from their Harrison Preserve property on North St. onto the Authority's property. The Authority

always entertains proposals from requesting organizations, but only proceeds if the requestor agrees to cover the costs of creating and maintaining the trail. The trail will lengthen the trail system of the Harrison Preserve and give hikers more trail options to use and explore. The NBLCT and the Authority investigated alternate routes and the proposed route was found to be the best alternative. There are over 70 miles of trails already on Authority property. See 'Attachment A' for a map showing the proposed trail and the Authority's properties that will contain it.

Existing Environment

A. Watershed function

The area with the proposed trail is on Class III land. It has no watershed function.

B. Physical/Biological

The subject area is covered by a forest of mixed hardwoods in upland and wetland environments. Most of the proposed trail is within the upland area, however it does cross the Lake Gaillard spillway channel in two locations. The area's physical and biological resources are further explored in the Preliminary Assessment prepared by Evans Associates Environmental Consulting, Inc. See Attachment B - "Preliminary Assessment – North Branford Land Conservation Trust – Trail Extension".

C. Present land use

The Land Use Plan designates the subject area as Non-water System Land. All of the Authority's property in this vicinity is forested.

D. Social/Political environment (including surrounding land use)

The land uses surrounding the Authority's affected parcel are residential and protected open space. Residential properties border the Authority's property to the southeast. The NBLCT's Harrison Preserve is to the south of the proposed trail.

E. Cost of maintaining the land in its present use

The land units in question have total annual costs to the RWA of approximately \$1,151,452. Security and maintenance of the property accounts for approximately \$236,300 of the annual costs and, and PILOT accounts for \$915,152.

Environmental Impact Statement

A. Summary of potential impact

As noted in the Preliminary Assessment (Attachment B), the potential impact to the environment is expected to be negligible and therefore this amendment is being submitted as a non-substantial amendment. The site contains a forest that will not be affected by the proposed trail. Proper placement and construction of the trail will avoid any negative impacts. This includes break-way boardwalks to cross the spillway channel at two locations.

B. Impact on public water supply

The area with the proposed trail is on Class III land. Therefore it will have no impact on the public water supply.

C. Financial impact on the RWA

There will be no financial impact to the Authority due to the proposed amendment. The security, maintenance, and PILOT costs will remain the same as before the trail creation. The NBLCT has signed an agreement to cover the costs of this application and agreed to maintain the trail. There will be no impact on the Authority's forestry program. There is no impact to the Authority's liability since landowners are protected by state statute for allowing recreation on their property for no fee. Therefore, the entire financial burden of the trail is borne by the NBLCT.

Land Use Controls

A. Conformity with Authority land use policies

The Land Use Plan states that the subject area is non-water system land and can be disposed of in the future. There is no conflict in having a trail go through this area.

B. Conformity with other applicable plans

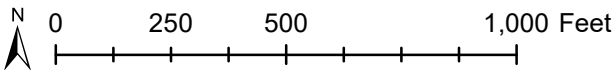
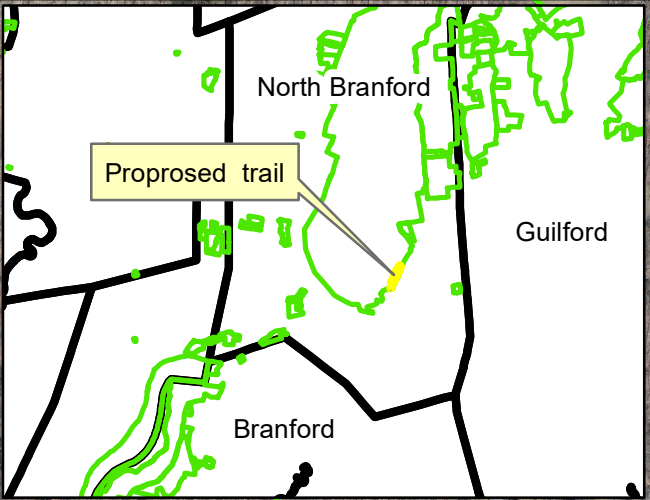
As noted in the Preliminary Assessment - Section H, the proposed trail conforms to the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2013-2018, the Plan of Conservation and Development for the South Central Region, and the North Branford Plan of Conservation and Development.

Authority's Final Evaluation and Recommendation

The Authority requests that this application, to establish a new trail on Authority property, be accepted by the Representative Policy Board. The Authority recommends that the RPB approve this amendment for the following reasons:

The creation of the trail on Authority property will not have an adverse impact on the water supply. The subject area is on Class III land. Best management practices will be employed to further prevent any potential impact during the trail's construction. Additionally, NBLCT will cover all of the Authority's costs and be responsible for the trail's construction and maintenance.

**Regional Water Authority
Land Use Plan Amendment -
Attachment A
Creation of Trail from NBLCT
Harrison Preserve
North Branford
May 2020**



PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

North Branford Land Conservation Trust – Trail Extension

Location: Regional Water Authority property located in North Branford, south of Lake Gaillard. The trail would begin and end at the North Branford Land Conservation Trust Harrison Preserve off of North Street.

Proposed Action: Approximately 1-mile extension of a North Branford Land Conservation Trust (NBLCT) Harrison Preserve trail to access RWA property. The trail would begin at the Preserve, cross a drainage channel (from Lake Gaillard) twice, then form a loop through a wooded area on the RWA property, and return on the initial portion of trail. Currently there is no access to this area on the RWA property for passive recreational use. The work would be done in coordination with members of the NBLCT.

Study Prepared By: Evans Associates Environmental Consulting, Inc.

Date: February 28, 2020



**Approximate location of trail extension (in red) on RWA property,
beginning and ending at NBLCT Harrison Preserve**

Introduction

This Preliminary Assessment form provides for consideration of potential impacts on specific aspects of the environment, subdivided into eight general areas:

- A. Geology, Topography, Soils
- B. Hydrology and Water Quality
- C. Air Quality, Climate, Noise
- D. Biotic Communities
- E. Land Use
- F. Natural Resources and Other Economic Considerations
- G. Public Safety and Health
- H. Community Factors

All phases of the proposed action are considered - planning, construction, and operation - as well as possible secondary or indirect effects. The proposed impacts for this project, although occurring within a moderately sizeable area, would be linear, and therefore minimal.

For each “yes” response, the indicated specific information is provided in the space for notes. Elaborations of negative responses may also be provided if appropriate (e.g., to indicate positive impacts on a given environmental factor); “no” answers for which explanatory notes are provided are indicated by an asterisk. Sources of information, including individuals consulted, are also listed in each section.

A. <u>Geology, Topography, Soils</u>	Yes	No
<p>1. Is the site subject to geologic hazards (e.g., seismic, landslide)? If yes, specify type of hazard, extent, relative level of risk, whether or not the proposed action is vulnerable to damage from such hazard, and any measures included in the proposed action to avoid or minimize the risk of damage.</p>		X
<p>2. Will the proposed action create a geologic hazard or increase the intensity of such a hazard? If yes, specify the type of hazard, the extent to which it will be increased by the proposed action, and whether or not the proposed action can be modified to reduce the hazard.</p>		X
<p>3. Does the site include any geological features of outstanding scientific or scenic interest? If yes, describe the features and their relative importance, the extent to which they will be impacted by the proposed action, and any measures included in the proposed action to avoid or minimize damage to important geologic features.</p>		X
<p>4. Is the site subject to soil hazards (e.g., slump, erosion, subsidence, stream siltation)? If yes, specify hazards, their extent, the relative level of risk to the proposed action, and any measures included in the proposed action to avoid or minimize damage from soil hazards.</p>		X*
<p>5. Does the site have any topographic or soil conditions that limit the types of uses for which it is suitable (e.g., steep slopes, shallow-to-bedrock soils, poorly drained soils)? If yes, specify the conditions, the of limitations on use, the extent to which the proposed action requires the use of such areas, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize adverse impacts of these uses.</p>		X*
<p>6. Does the site include any soil types designated as prime farmland? If yes, indicate the area of prime farmland soils and whether the proposed action requires any irreversible commitment of these soils to non-farm uses.</p>	X	

Notes (including sources of information):

A. Geology, Topography, Soils

A.4. The trail would be located in mainly level or gently sloping areas that are not shown on Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online (CTECO) maps as being susceptible to erosion. The trail would, however, cross a stream/drainage channel twice (see photos in Attachments). Erosion in the stream channel occurs from water flow, but could increase from foot traffic through or near the stream. Small foot bridges are proposed for the two crossings, so erosion potential would be minimized.

In addition, erosion potential could increase if vegetation is cleared. Removal of invasive plants (including Japanese barberry thickets) may occur as part of the trail-creation activities. Care should be taken if clearing of vegetation is to occur, especially near the stream channel.

A.5. Potential limitations to trail creation and use include:

Steep slopes: Steep slopes are only located on the side slopes of the stream channel. The two stream channel crossings are proposed to be spanned by small bridges, which would avoid impacts to the steep slopes.

Poorly drained soils: The proposed trail extension avoids almost all areas of poorly drained soils (wetland soils). However, a few short sections of trail may end up crossing through wetland soils. If so, care should be taken to avoid impacts to wetland habitat. In addition, two stream crossings are proposed, but as noted above, impacts would be avoided with the proposed bridges. See Attachments for Photos of stream crossings and CTECO map of Inland Wetland Soils.

A.6. The proposed trail would pass through Prime Farmland Soils. This area is currently wooded and is not used for farming, and likely would never be used as such, due to its location. In addition, passive recreation would likely not negatively impact farmland soils. See Attachments for CTECO map of Farmland Soils.

References:

Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Web Soil Survey. Available online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>, Accessed November 21, 2019.

http://cteco.uconn.edu/advanced_viewer.htm (Erosion Susceptibility, Inland Wetland Soils, and Farmland Soils maps). Accessed November 21, 2019.

B. Hydrology and Water Quality**Yes No**

1. Is the site located on a present or projected public or private water-supply watershed or aquifer recharge area?

X*

If yes, specify the location, type, and volume of the water supply, the extent to which the proposed action involves construction or other use of the watershed or recharge area, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize adverse effects on water supplies.

2. Does the proposed action create a diversion of water from one drainage basin to another or significantly increase or decrease the flow of an existing diversion?

X

If yes, specify the location, watershed area, and flow rates of the diversion, whether it involves a transfer of water between sub-regional drainage basins, the extent to which it will affect any required downstream flow releases and actual downstream flows, and the type and extent of expected impacts on the downstream corridor.

3. Does the site include any officially designated wetlands, areas of soils classified as poorly drained or somewhat poorly drained, or other known wetlands?

X

If yes, specify the extent and type of wetlands on the site and indicate whether the proposed action involves any construction, filling, or other restricted use of wetlands.

4. Will the proposed action seriously interfere with the present rate of soil and subsurface percolation?

X

If yes, specify the nature of the interference (compaction, paving, removal of vegetation, etc.), the extent to which the percolation rate will be hampered, and whether the project can be redesigned to minimize the interference.

5. Is the site located in a floodprone area?

X*

If yes, specify the frequency and severity of flooding, the area of the site subject to inundation, and the relative level of risk; indicate whether the proposed action will be subject to damage from flooding, the anticipated amount and type of damage, and any preventive measures included in the proposed action to minimize flooding damage.

6. Will the proposed action increase the effects of flooding, either on-site or downstream?

X

If yes, specify the anticipated amount and location of increased flooding, the estimated damage from this increase, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize the risk of flooding.

7. Will the proposed action generate pollutants (pesticides, fertilizers, toxic wastes, surface water runoff, animal or human wastes, etc.)? If yes, specify the type and source of pollutant, amount of discharge by volume, and parts per million, and the relative level of risk to biotic and human communities.

X*

Notes (including sources of information):

B. Hydrology and Water Quality

B.1. The proposed trail, although located on RWA property, would be located completely within Class III land. Therefore, a permit is not needed from the Department of Public Health (DPH), but an amendment to the RWA Land Use Plan would be required.

B.3. As noted in response A.5. (above), the proposed trail would avoid most wetland soils. Two stream channels would be crossed, but bridges are proposed to span them.

B.5. No areas are shown as being prone to flooding. However, the stream channel carries water that is discharged from Lake Gaillard. This channel could occasionally flood due to excessive flow from the reservoir.

B.7. Trash is located on the site proposed for the trail. Large debris (including appliances) was found at the beginning of the proposed trail on NBLCT property. Smaller trash (beer cans) was found in the area of the proposed trail loop on RWA property. Removal of the trash and debris would likely be part of the trail creation, which would improve the aesthetics of the area. Future animal and/or human waste/trash produced during normal trail use would ideally be minimal and would not pose a risk to biotic or human communities. Hikers with dogs (if permitted on the trail) would ideally be instructed to keep their companions leashed and to clean up after them. Hopefully, passive recreational use of the loop trail would discourage unauthorized uses of the area that lead to trash deposition. Photos of the trash and debris are shown in the Attachments.

References:

http://cteco.uconn.edu/advanced_viewer.htm (Soil Flooding Class map). Accessed January 13, 2020.

C. <u>Air Quality, Climate, Noise</u>	Yes	No
<p>1. Is the present on-site air quality below applicable local, state, or federal air quality control standards?</p> <p>If yes, specify the extent to which the air quality fails to attain such standards and the potential effects of sub-standard air quality on the proposed action.</p>		X*
<p>2. Will the proposed action generate pollutants (hydrocarbons, thermal, odor, dust, or smoke particulates, etc.) that will impair present air quality on-site or in surrounding area?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type and source of pollutants, the peak discharge in parts per million per 24-hour period, and the relative level of risk to biotic and human communities.</p>		X
<p>3. Is the site located in a high wind hazard area?</p> <p>If yes, specify the range and peak velocity and direction of high winds; identify any features of the proposed action subject to damage from high winds, the relative level of risk, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize wind damage.</p>		X
<p>4. Will the proposed action involve extensive removal of trees or other alteration of the ecosystem that may produce local changes in air quality or climate?</p> <p>If yes, describe the nature and extent of the changes, potential adverse effects, areas likely to be affected, possible cumulative effects of removal of natural vegetation and addition of new pollutant sources, and any measures that could be included to reduce the adverse effects.</p>		X
<p>5. Is the site subject to an unusually high noise level?</p> <p>If yes, specify the sources of noise, the noise levels, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize the effects of noise.</p>		X
<p>6. Will the proposed action generate unusually high noise levels?</p> <p>If yes, specify the source of noise, the range of noise levels, and any measures incorporated into the project to minimize generation of, or exposure to, excessive noise levels.</p>		X

Notes (including sources of information):

C. Air Quality, Climate, Noise

C.1. In accordance with the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS) has set national Ambient Air Quality Standards for six principal pollutants, which are called "criteria" pollutants. These pollutants are: ozone (O₃); particulate matter (<10 micrometers in diameter-PM₁₀ or < 2.5 micrometers in diameter-PM_{2.5}); sulfur dioxide (SO₂); nitrogen dioxide (NO₂); carbon monoxide (CO); and lead (Pb).¹ Locations throughout all of Connecticut are not in attainment with the standards set for ozone.² Therefore, the subject site also does not meet these standards. Extension of the hiking/walking trail through this area would not have any measurable impact upon air quality.

¹ https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2684&Q=321796&deepNav_GID=1744

² https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2684&Q=321774&deepNav_GID=1619

D. Biotic Communities**Yes No**

1. Are there any rare or endangered plant or animal species on the site?

If yes, specify the species, the degree of rarity, and the estimated population on the site; indicate the extent to which the proposed action will disturb the species and its habitat, and specify any measures included in the proposed action to minimize such disturbance. X

2. Are there unusual or unique biotic communities on the site?

If yes, specify type of community and its relative significance; indicate the extent to which the proposed action will destroy significant biotic communities and specify any measures included in the proposed action to minimize such damage. X

3. Is the site used as a nesting site by migrating waterfowl, or is it critical to the movement of migratory fish or wildlife species?

If yes, specify the species, the extent to which nesting or migration will be disturbed as a result of the proposed action, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize disturbance. X

4. Does the proposed action significantly reduce the amount, productivity, or diversity of the biotic habitat?

If yes, specify the amount and types of habitat lost, types of wildlife or plants likely to be seriously affected by the proposed action, and any measures to mitigate impacts on biotic communities. X

Notes (including sources of information):**D. Biotic Communities**

D.1. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) maintains a Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB), depicted on a set of maps that indicate the presence of Endangered and Threatened species, along with Species of Special Concern. The presence of any state listed species is indicated on the maps by a hatched area. The NDDDB map for North Branford was reviewed and indicated that listed species do occur within or near the proposed trail area.

A letter from DEEP (NDDDB Determination Number: 202001209), dated January 31, 2020, stated that according to their records, there are State-listed species (RCSA Sec. 26-306) documented within the proposed project area. They include Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*) and Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) which are State Special Concern species, and Little 17-year Periodical Cicada (*Magicicada septendecula*) which is a State Endangered species. The DEEP letter details the habitats of these species, threats to their survival, and protective measures to follow to safeguard the species. Information in this letter (included in the Attachments) should be reviewed and followed prior to and during trail relocation activities.

For the wood turtles, DEEP recommends conducting a survey prior to trail establishment to ensure that the stream crossings are not built in areas that are currently used for nesting for this species and to locate the trail with minimal impact to nesting areas, if found.

Additionally, consider the following best management practices along trails for both turtle species:

- To avoid collection by the public, do not post signs alerting the public to the presence of this species.
- Litter from recreation can pose a choking hazard. Ensure there is a plan for how garbage will be managed.

For the cicadas, DEEP states that in Connecticut, this species is found among certain ash, walnut, and hickory trees. To help support these invertebrate species, avoid ground disturbance where host tree species for the cicadas may exist; this should include avoiding recreational traffic and trails through suitable habitat for this species.

Reference:

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection – Natural Diversity Data Base:
<http://www.depdata.ct.gov/naturalresources/endangeredspecies/nddbpdfs.asp> (*Natural Diversity Data Base Areas, North Branford, CT*, map updated December 2019)

E. Land Use	Yes	No
<p>1. Does the site include any officially designated historic or archaeological sites, or other sites of known historic, archaeological, or cultural significance?</p> <p>If yes, specify their type and significance, the extent to which they will be disturbed by the proposed action, and any measures to reduce such disturbance.</p>		X*
<p>2. Does the site have any outstanding scenic or aesthetic characteristics, especially as viewed from public highways or recreation areas?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type and significance of scenic features, the extent to which they will be disturbed by the proposed action, and any measure to reduce the extent of such disturbance.</p>		X
<p>3. Is the site presently used for recreation?</p> <p>If yes, indicate the type of recreation, the amount of use, and the extent to which the proposed action will interfere with present recreational uses or limit recreation options on the site.</p>		X*
<p>4. Is the site presently used for residence or business?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type of use and the extent to which the proposed action will displace present occupants, especially disadvantaged persons or businesses, and any measures included in the proposed action for relocation of such occupants.</p>		X
<p>5. Will the proposed action break up any large tracts or corridors of undeveloped land?</p> <p>If yes, specify the area of undeveloped land surrounding the site, the amount of development the proposed action will involve, and the distance to the nearest developed land.</p>		X
<p>6. Does the proposed action include features not in accord with the Authority's Land Use Plan or land disposition policies?</p> <p>If yes, specify the nature and extent of conflict.</p>		X*
<p>7. Is the proposed action part of a series of similar or related actions that might generate cumulative impacts?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type and extent of related actions, implemented or planned, and the general nature of potential cumulative impacts; indicate whether a generic or programmatic impact assessment has been or will be prepared for this series of actions.</p>		X

Notes (including sources of information):

E. Land Use

E.1. There are no standing structures in the vicinity of the proposed trail; the pathway would pass through shrub thickets and natural wooded areas. The areas that are proposed for the trail relocation are not listed in the National Register of Historic Places³ or the State Register of Historic Places database.⁴ No nearby buildings are listed on the Historic Buildings of Connecticut website,⁵ and according to the CT Trust for Historic Preservation, North Branford has no local historic properties or districts,⁶ but historic barns are located on North Street (on private properties).⁷

The RWA's Land Use Plan⁸ discusses a historic mill, ice house, and sandstone quarry. These sites are located to the east and northeast of Lake Gaillard. These sites are not located in the area of the proposed trail.

E.3. Currently, the areas proposed for trail relocation are not used for recreation. Unauthorized use of the site (as evidenced by trash and debris, including appliances and beer cans) occurs, or has occurred in the past, in at least two areas along the trail.

E.6. Recreational use is not currently allowed in the portion of the RWA property proposed for the trail. A Land Use Plan amendment by the RWA would be necessary to bring the trail through the property.

³ <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/SearchResults/>, accessed January 21, 2020

⁴ https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Historic-Preservation/03_Technical_Assistance_Research/Research/Historic-Property-Database, accessed January 21, 2020

⁵ <http://historicbuildingsct.com/towns/north-branford/>, accessed January 21, 2020

⁶ <http://lhdct.org/maps/city/NoDistPropTown>, accessed January 21, 2020

⁷ <https://connecticutbarns.org/map/north-branford>, accessed January 21, 2020

⁸ Land Use Plan of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, Approved by the Representative Policy Board January 21, 2016

F. <u>Natural Resources and Other Economic Considerations</u>	Yes	No
----------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	-----------

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----|
| <p>1. Does the proposed action involve any irreversible commitment of natural resources?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type of resource, the importance and scarcity of the resource, the quantity that will be irreversibly committed, and any measure that could be included in the proposed action to reduce irreversible commitments of resources.</p> | | X |
| <p>2. Will the proposed action significantly reduce the value and availability of timber or other existing economic resources?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type and extent of resources affected, the estimated revenue loss, and any measures that could be included in the proposed action to improve the efficiency of resource utilization.</p> | | X |
| <p>3. Will the proposed action require expenditures greater than the projected revenues to the Authority?</p> <p>If yes, specify the estimated difference.</p> | | X* |
| <p>4. Will the proposed action require any public expenditure (e.g., provision of municipal services) that might exceed the public revenue it is expected to produce?</p> <p>If yes, specify the estimated difference.</p> | | X |
| <p>5. Will the proposed action cause a decrease in the value of any surrounding real estate?</p> <p>If yes, estimate the amount and distribution of altered real estate values.</p> | | X |

Notes (including sources of information):

F. Natural Resources and Other Economic Considerations

F.3. Trail creation and maintenance will be conducted by the North Branford Land Conservation Trust. RWA will not be responsible for any monetary expenditures.

G. Public Safety and Health	Yes	No
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- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---|
| <p>1. Is the site subject to unusual fire hazard (from flammable vegetation, difficulty of access, lack of water for fire fighting, or other causes)?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type of hazard, the extent to which the proposed action might increase the fire hazard, the extent to which it is subject to damage from such fires, and any measures included in the proposed action to reduce the risk of fire damage.</p> | | X |
| <p>2. Does the site include any features that present potential safety hazards under the proposed conditions of use, or will the proposed action create any hazards to public safety?</p> <p>If yes, specify the hazards, the extent to which the public, workers, or others will be exposed to the hazard, the degree of risk, and any measures that will be included in the proposed action to eliminate hazards or reduce the risk of injury.</p> | | X |
| <p>3. Does the proposed action have the potential to create increased risks to public health?</p> <p>If yes, specify the nature of the health hazards, population at risk, the degree of risk, and any measures that will be incorporated in the proposed action to avoid adverse impacts on public health.</p> | | X |

Notes (including sources of information):

G. Public Safety and Health

H. Community Factors	Yes	No
<p>1. Does the proposed action include any features that are not in conformity with local, regional, or state plans of conservation and development?</p> <p>If yes, specify the plan(s), the nonconforming features, and the extent of the nonconformity, and any measures that could be incorporated into the proposed action to improve conformity.</p>		X*
<p>2. Does the proposed action differ from the established character of land use in the surrounding area?</p> <p>If yes, specify the nature and extent of the conflict and any actions that might be taken to resolve it.</p>		X
<p>3. Will the proposed action require any service by public facilities (streets, highways, schools, police, fire) or public utilities that are expected to exceed capacity within 5 years?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type of facility or utility, its capacity, present and projected use, the additional capacity required to implement the proposed action, any public plans to increase the capacity, and any measures that can be incorporated into the proposed action to reduce excessive demands on public facilities.</p>		X
<p>4. Will the proposed action produce any substantial increase in nonresident traffic to the area (construction or other temporary workers, permanent workers, recreational users, etc.)?</p> <p>If yes, specify the amount and type of traffic, its potential impact on the surrounding neighborhood, and any measures included in the proposed action to reduce adverse effects from increased traffic.</p>	X	
<p>5. Will the proposed action produce an increase in projected growth rates for the area?</p> <p>If yes, specify the extent to which growth will be increased, the project ability of the community to cope with higher growth rates, and any measures include in the proposed action to reduce anticipated adverse effects from increased growth.</p>		X
<p>6. Is there any indication that the proposed action can be expected to generate public opposition or conflict over environmental concerns?</p> <p>If yes, indicate the type and source of conflict, whether it is limited to immediate neighbors of the site or extends to the larger community, and any measures that have been taken or could be taken to resolve the conflict.</p>	X	

Notes (including sources of information):

H. Community Factors

H.1. State, regional, and local conservation and development plans have similar principles with regard to open space and recreational activities. The proposed trail relocation does not go against these principles, and may even benefit the cause by enhancing the accessibility of the property for passive recreation. Selected principles that support the trail relocation project are listed in the table below for the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2013-2018⁹ (CT C&D Plan), the South Central Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (SCR POCD),¹⁰ and the North Branford Plan of Conservation and Development, Town of North Branford, Connecticut (NB POCD).¹¹

Note that the CT C&D Plan, although dated ending in 2018, is current. A Draft 2018-2023 State C&D Plan is under consideration by the General Assembly in the 2020 legislative session.¹²

Plan	Principle
State CT C&D Plan	“Limit improvements to permanently protected open space areas to those that are consistent with the long-term preservation and appropriate public enjoyment of the natural resource and open space values of the site;...”
Regional SCR POCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Foster collaboration among various agencies that purchase and maintain open space in the region (municipalities, land trusts, water companies, etc.) by convening groups to share information and techniques.”• “Facilitate coordination and communication between regional water utilities and member municipalities on land use planning and water quality projects.”
Local North Branford POCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “The Town should pursue the acquisition and/or preservation of the following properties: ... Class III water company land south of Lake Gaillard owned by the Regional Water Authority and designated by RWA for disposition...”• “Continue to maintain and utilize the Open Space Trust Fund Ordinance for future open space acquisition...Achieve greater leverage of local funds for open space acquisition through partnerships with the Regional Water Authority and with other public and private entities, such as the North Branford Land Conservation

⁹ <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/IGP/ORG/cdplan/20132018-FINAL-CD-PLAN-rev-June-2017.pdf?la=en>

¹⁰ <https://scrcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018-07-SCRCOG-POCD-report-online.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.townofnorthbranfordct.com/documents/Plan%20of%20Development/POCD%20ADOPTED%2011-19-09%20EFF%2012-21-09.pdf>

¹² <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/IGPP-MAIN/Responsible-Growth/Conservation-and-Development-Policies-Plan/Conservation-and-Development-Policies-Plan>

	<p>Trust, Inc...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Town should establish a maintenance and stewardship policy over the open space lands to assure proper maintenance of open space resources. In the establishment of this policy, the Town should explore the potential for public– private partnerships, including support for the North Branford Land Conservation Trust, Inc. and private sponsorship for the maintenance of individual areas.” • “Work with the Regional Water Authority to preserve and maintain their current and future land holdings and expand upon their overall passive and active recreational opportunities.”
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H.4. There would, presumably, not be a large increase in the number of people accessing the new trail. However, even a small increase could impact residents on North Street, as the access road (an easement) to the NBLCT property is narrow and passes near several houses.

H.6. Opposition to the project could occur from the residents residing adjacent to the area proposed for the trail extension. Impacts from hikers would, ideally, be minimal, however neighboring residents could take issue with trash, wildlife disruption, and privacy issues, among others.

ATTACHMENTS

DEEP letter (NDDDB Determination Number: 202001209)

Photos

CTECO Maps: *Inland Wetland Soils*

Farmland Soils map



79 Elm Street • Hartford, CT 06106-5127

www.ct.gov/deep

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

January 31, 2020

Eva Szigeti
Evans Associates Environmental Consulting, INC.
162 Falls Rd
Bethany, CT 06524
eva@eaec-inc.com

NDDB DETERMINATION NUMBER: 202001209

Project: TRAIL EXTENSION, REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY PROPERTY NORTHEAST OF NORTH BRANFORD LAND TRUST HARRISON PRESERVE, NORTH BRANFORD

Expiration Date: January 31, 2022

I have reviewed Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB) maps and files regarding this project. According to our records, there are State-listed species (RCSA Sec. 26-306) documented within the proposed project area.

Wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)- State Special Concern

Individuals of this species are riverine and riparian obligates, overwintering and mating in clear, cold, primarily sand-gravel and rock bottomed streams and foraging in riparian zones, fields and upland forests during the late spring and summer. They hibernate in the banks of the river in submerged tree roots between November 1 and April 1. Their summer habitat focuses within 90m (300ft of rivers) and they regularly travel 300m (0.2 mile) from rivers during this time. During summer they seek out early successional habitat: pastures, old fields, woodlands, powerline cuts and railroad beds bordering or adjacent to streams and rivers. Their habitat in Connecticut is already severely threatened by fragmentation of riverine, instream, riparian, and upland habitats, but is exacerbated by heavy adult mortality from machinery, cars, and collection. This is compounded by the species late maturity, low reproductive potential, and high nest and hatchling depredation rates.

Eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)- State Special Concern

In Connecticut, these turtles are found in well-drained forest bottomlands and a matrix of open deciduous forests, early successional habitat, fields, gravel pits, and or powerlines. Turtles are dormant between November 1 and April 1 and hibernate in only a few inches from the surface in forested habitat.

The greatest threat to this species is habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation due to development. This species is very sensitive to adult mortality because of late maturity (10 years old) and long life span (50-100years). Vehicular traffic, heavy equipment used for farming, and ATV use in natural areas are implicated specifically in adult mortality through collisions. Illegal collection by the pet trade and unknowing public for home pets exacerbates mortality rates and removes important individuals from the population. Predation rates are also unnaturally high because of increased predator populations (e.g. skunks, foxes, raccoons, and crows) that surround developed areas.

Regarding Recreation:

Recreational activities can increase incidental collection and contribute to local turtle population decline. Most often turtles collected are adult females traveling to and from nesting. These turtles of reproductive age are the most valuable individuals in the population to maintain population persistence. Even infrequent collection poses a long-term conservation problem.

Your project proposes to cross the Lake Gaillard outflow channel in two locations. There are regular observations of wood turtle in this area.

- You should conduct surveys to determine that your crossings are not in areas that are currently used for nesting for this species and locate your trail with minimal impact to these areas.

Additionally, you should consider the following best management practices along trails in this area:

- To avoid collection by the public, do not post signs alerting the public to the presence of this species.
- Litter from recreation can pose a choking hazard. Ensure there is a plan for how garbage will be managed.

State Endangered- *Magicalcaca septendecula* (Little 17-year periodical cicada)

- In Connecticut, this species is found among abundant *Carya* Nuttall (Juglandaceae) and *Fraxinus americana* tree species. *Carya* species is primarily *Carya glabra* (Miller) Sweet (Pignut hickories). *Juglans cinerea* is also a suspected host species.

To help support these invertebrate species:

- Avoid ground disturbance where host tree species for *Magicalcaca septendecula* may exist, this should include avoiding recreational traffic and trails through suitable habitat for this species.

This determination is valid for two years. Please submit an updated NDDB Request for Review if the scope of the proposed work changes or if work has not begun by expiration date.

Natural Diversity Data Base information includes all information regarding critical biological resources available to us at the time of the request. This information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Bureau of Natural Resources and cooperating units of DEEP, independent conservation groups, and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultations with the NDDB should not be substituted for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations of species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated in the NDDB as it becomes available.

Please contact me if you have any questions (shannon.kearney@ct.gov). Thank you for consulting with the Natural Diversity Data Base and continuing to work with us to protect State-listed species.

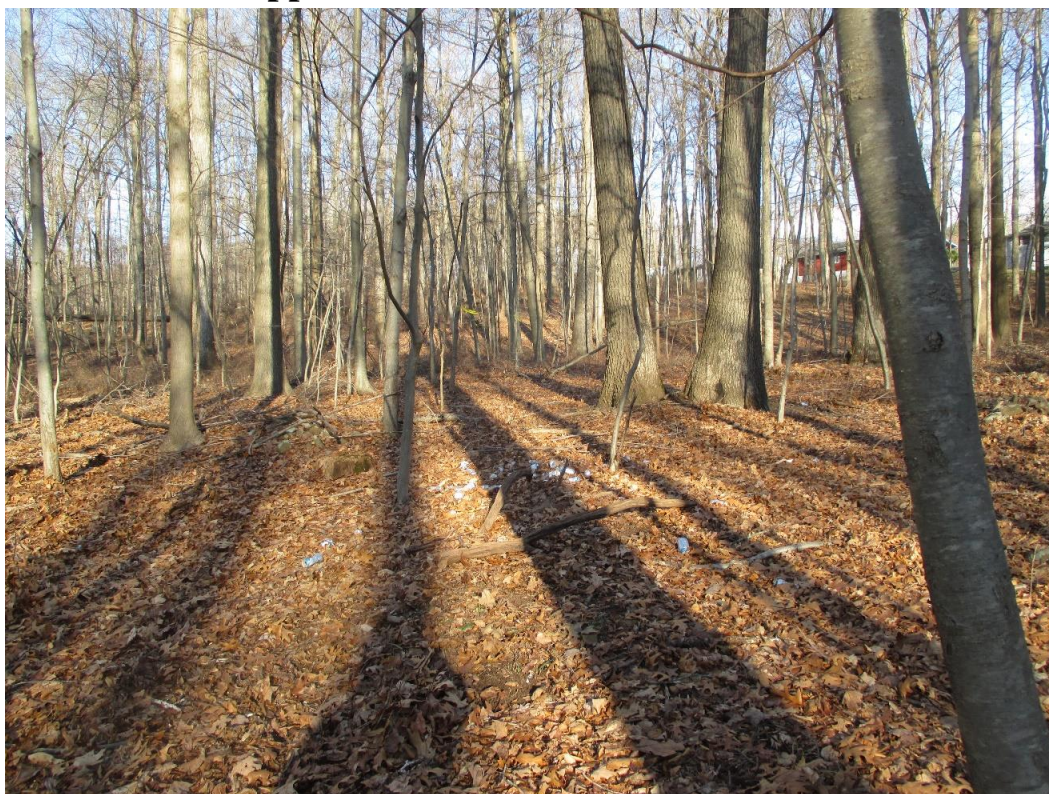
Sincerely,

/s/ Shannon B. Kearney
Wildlife Biologist

PHOTOS (all taken 01-06-2020)



Proposed trail location immediately adjacent to Harrison Preserve, applicances and other debris visible



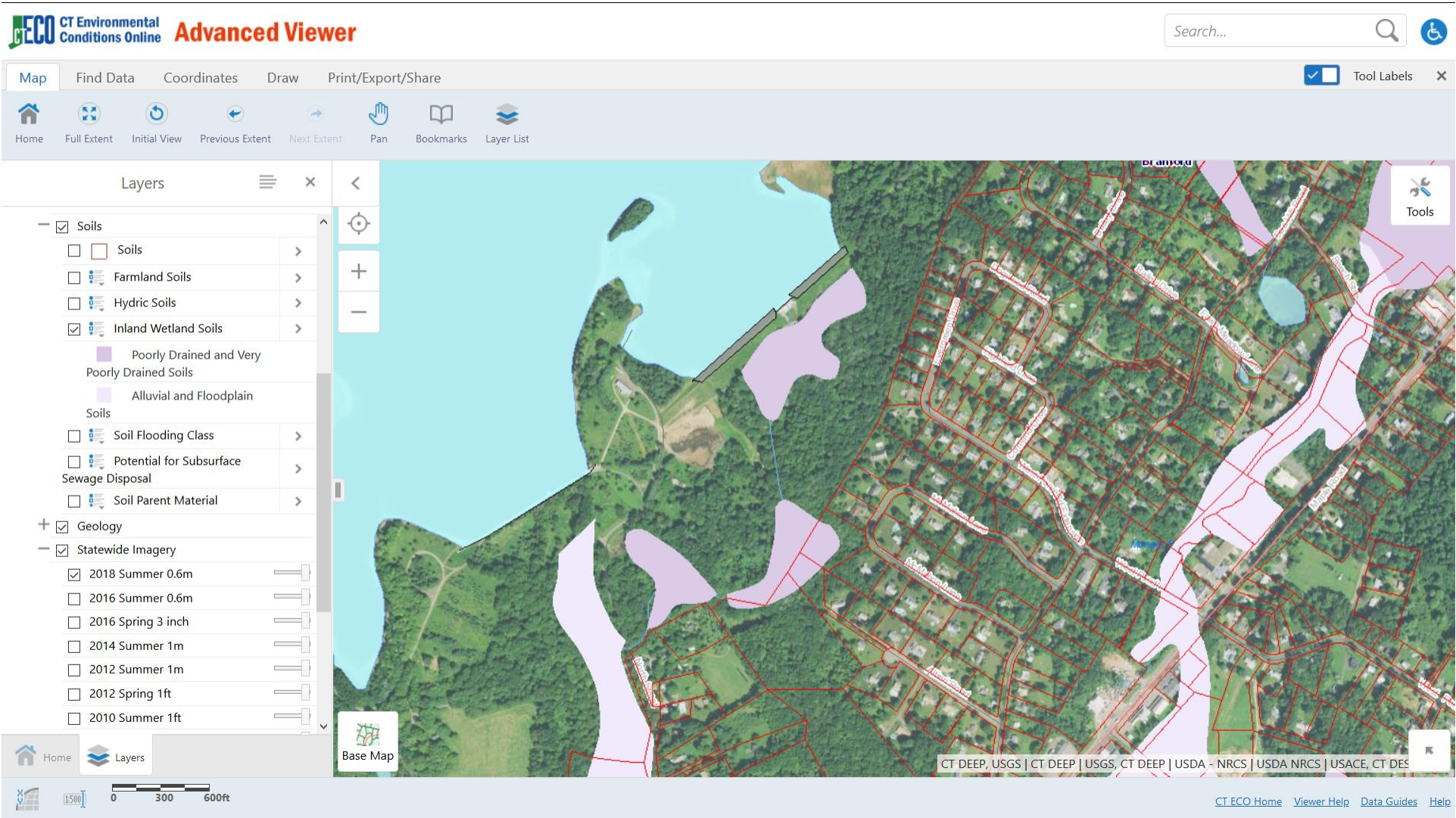
Woods south of Lake Gaillard (beer cans located in center of photo)

PHOTOS, CONT.

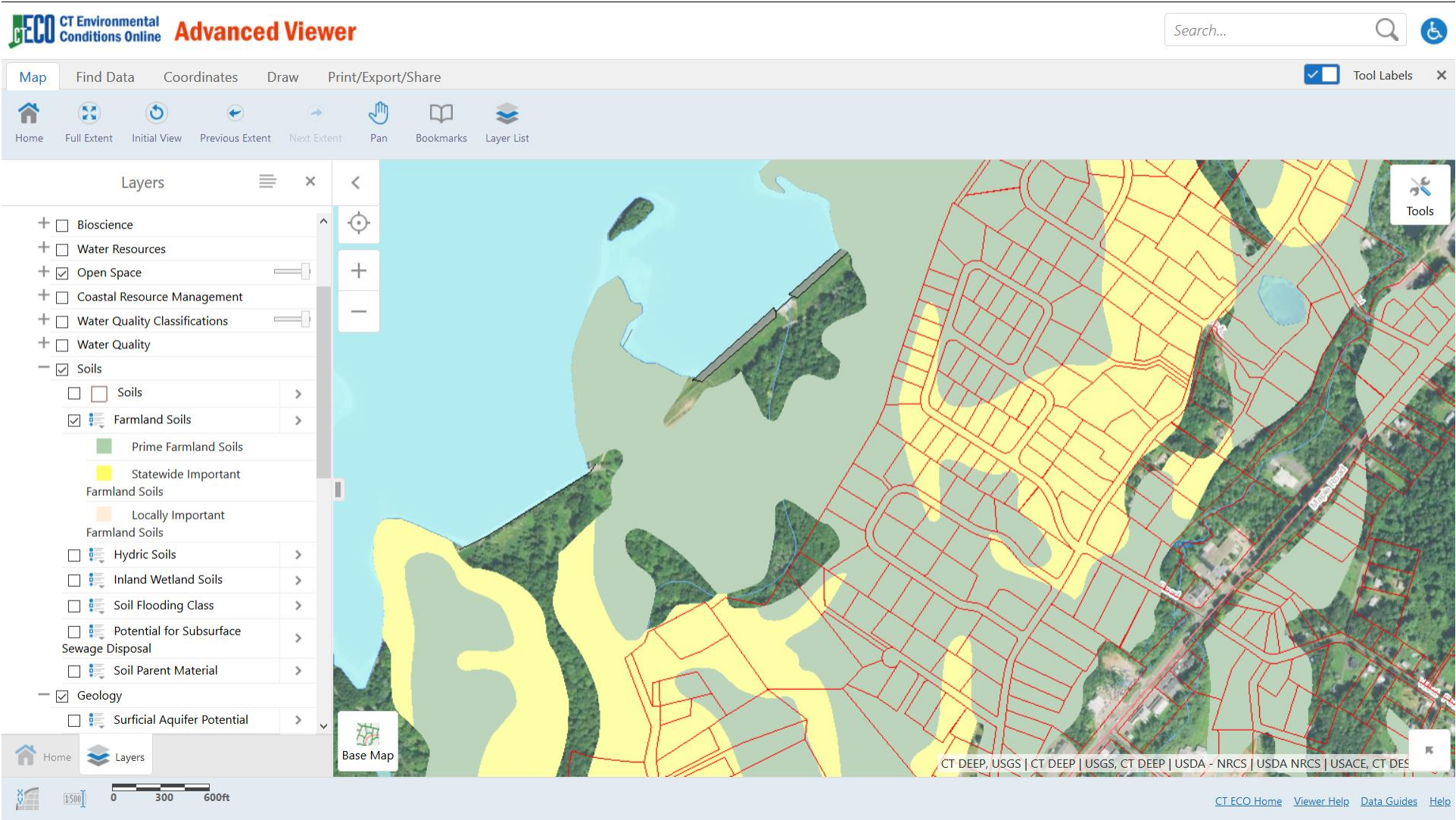


Two proposed stream crossings (of Lake Gaillard outlet)

Inland Wetland Soils



Farmland Soils



Request for Approval of Land Use Plan Amendment

Portions of PR 4 and PR 6 North and South of Route 68, Prospect

Application to the Representative Policy Board (RPB) From the Regional Water Authority

May 2020

Application for an Amendment to Land Use Plan

The Regional Water Authority (Authority) requests that the Representative Policy Board approve the Land Use Plan amendment described in this application, in accordance with the provisions of Connecticut State Act No. 77-98, as amended. This application and its annexed materials meet the requirements set forth in Connecticut State Act No. 77-98, as amended, and the Rules of Practice of the RPB.

Proposed Amendment

Type of Amendment

Relocation of the Quinnipiac Trail, a walking/hiking trail for passive recreational use, from its current route along the edge of Authority property in Prospect and Cheshire to another route over the Authority's property in Prospect. The old route is exclusively south of Route 68, and Cornwall Ave. The new route diverts from the existing trail south of Route 68, heading north to the state highway. It then crosses Route 68 and continues over Authority property until it reaches Prospect Land Trust property and connects with the Kathan Woods trail system. The total length of the relocated trail is 2.06 miles. The 1.17 miles of trail that exists between the end of Cornwall Ave. and the proposed trail will be kept as an alternate route. Because there will be no impact to the public water supply, this amendment is being submitted as a non-substantial amendment.

Location

Town in which property is located: Prospect
Land Unit Number: PR 4 and PR 6
Land Use Plan System: Prospect System
(See Attachment A)

Objectives of Amendment

- 1) Relocation of the Quinnipiac Trail from a section that crosses Land Units PR 6 to another route through PR 6 and PR 4.
- 2) Relocation of the trail will divert it from a road section of trail.
- 3) Relocation of the trail will connect the Quinnipiac Trail with the Prospect Land Trust's Kathan Woods trail system.

Watershed Classification of Affected Areas

Class I (acres): 0.03 acres
Class II (acres): 1.22 acres
Class III (acres): 0 acres

Land Use Plan Classification

Land within the affected area falls under the Natural Resource and Conservation Use - Forest designation and Preservation Use – Scenic designation.

Description of Proposed Amendment

To relocate a trail across the Authority's properties as noted above. The Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA) and Prospect Land Trust made a request to move a section of the Quinnipiac Trail. The Authority always entertains proposals from requesting organizations, but only proceeds if the requestor agrees to cover the costs of creating and maintaining the trail. The relocation will avoid a road walk section and connect trail systems. The relocation will enhance the experience of hikers along the trail. The CFPA and the Authority investigated alternate routes and the proposed route was found to be the best alternative. There are over 70 miles of trails already on Authority property. See Attachment A for a map that shows the relocated trail and the Authority's properties that will contain it.

Existing Environment

A. Watershed function

The existing trail is at the edge of the Prospect Reservoir and Lake Whitney watersheds. This trail was the first blue-blazed trail in Connecticut, established about 90 years ago. The land with the proposed trail drains to the Westbrook Reservoir, Prospect Reservoir, and Lake Whitney. Most of the relocated trail is within the Prospect Reservoir watershed. The trail route contains both Class I and II land.

B. Physical/Biological

The subject area is covered by a forest of mixed hardwoods in upland and wetland environments. Most of the trail is within the upland area. The wetlands are streams that are crossed by woods roads with culverts. The area's physical and biological resources are further explored in the Preliminary Assessment prepared by Evans Associates Environmental Consulting, Inc. See Attachment B - "Preliminary Assessment - Prospect – Quinnipiac Trail Relocation".

C. Present land use

The Land Use Plan designates the subject area as Natural Resource and Conservation Use – Forest and Preservation Use – Scenic designation. All of the Authority's properties are forested.

D. Social/Political environment (including surrounding land use)

The land uses surrounding the Authority's affected parcels are residential or dedicated open space. The open space parcels are owned by the Cheshire Land Trust, Prospect Land Trust, Town of Cheshire, and State of Connecticut. The town boundary between Prospect and Cheshire runs along the ridge and the eastern edge of the Authority's property.

E. Cost of maintaining the land in its present use

The land units in question have total annual costs to the RWA of approximately \$221,070. Security and maintenance of the property accounts for approximately \$31,600 of the annual costs and, and PILOT accounts for \$198,960.

Environmental Impact Statement

A. Summary of potential impact

As noted in the Preliminary Assessment (Attachment B), the potential impact to the environment is expected to be negligible and therefore this amendment is being submitted as a non-substantial amendment. The site contains a forest that will not be affected by the trail relocation. Proper placement and construction of the trail will avoid any negative impact to the public water supply.

B. Impact on public water supply

The addition of the trail will not affect the public water supply. Several Blue-blazed trails (long trails across the state coordinated by the CFPA) cross the Authority's property at other locations. There has not been any impact to the public water supply due to their existence.

C. Financial impact on the RWA

There will be no financial impact to the Authority due to the proposed amendment. The security, maintenance, and PILOT costs will remain the same as before the trail relocation. The CFPA has signed an agreement to cover the costs of our applications (LUP Amendment and DPH permit) and agreed to maintain the trail. There will be no impact on the Authority's forestry program. There is no impact to the Authority's liability since landowners are protected by state statute for allowing recreation on their property for no fee. Therefore, the entire financial burden of the trail is borne by the CFPA.

Land Use Controls

A. Conformity with Authority land use policies

The Land Use Plan states that the subject area is to be used as a forest. They are designated as Natural Resource and Conservation Use – Forest and Preservation Use – Scenic. There is no conflict in having a trail traverse these areas.

B. Conformity with other applicable plans

As noted in the Preliminary Assessment - Section H, the proposed trail conforms to the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2013-2018, the Plan of Conservation and Development for the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, and the Prospect Open Space Plan.

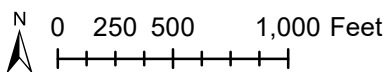
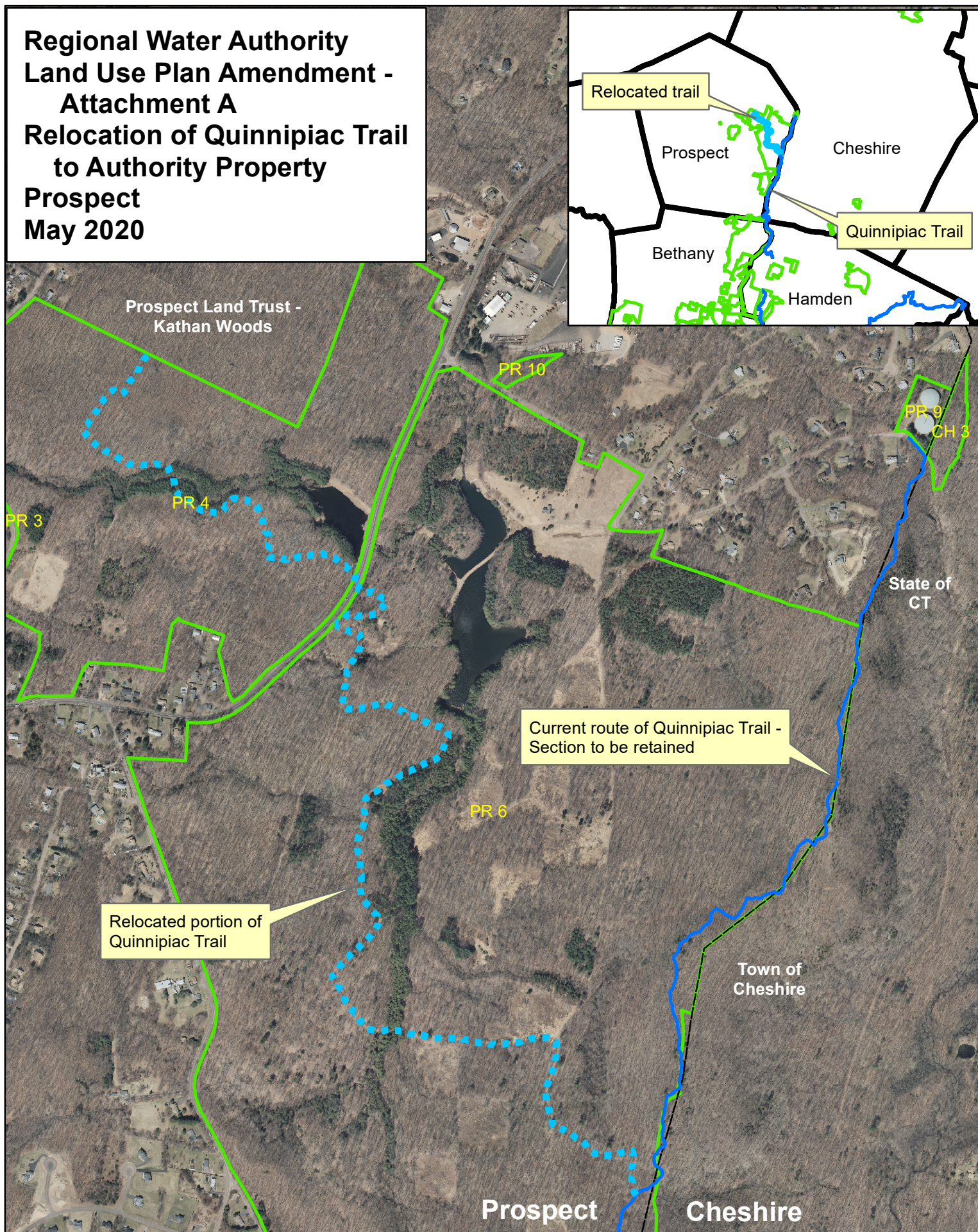
We have received a change-of-use permit from the Department of Public Health for the proposed trail relocation (Attachment C).

Authority's Final Evaluation and Recommendation

The Authority requests that this application, to relocate the Quinnipiac Trail on Authority property, be accepted by the Representative Policy Board. The Authority recommends that the RPB approve this amendment for the following reasons:

The relocation of the trail on Authority property will not have an adverse impact on the water supply. The subject area is on Class I and II land, but distant from the reservoirs and mostly on existing woods roads. Best management practices will be employed to further prevent any potential impact during the trail's construction. Additionally, CFPA will cover all of the Authority's costs and be responsible for the trail's construction and maintenance.

**Regional Water Authority
Land Use Plan Amendment -
Attachment A
Relocation of Quinnipiac Trail
to Authority Property
Prospect
May 2020**



PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

Prospect – Quinnipiac Trail Relocation

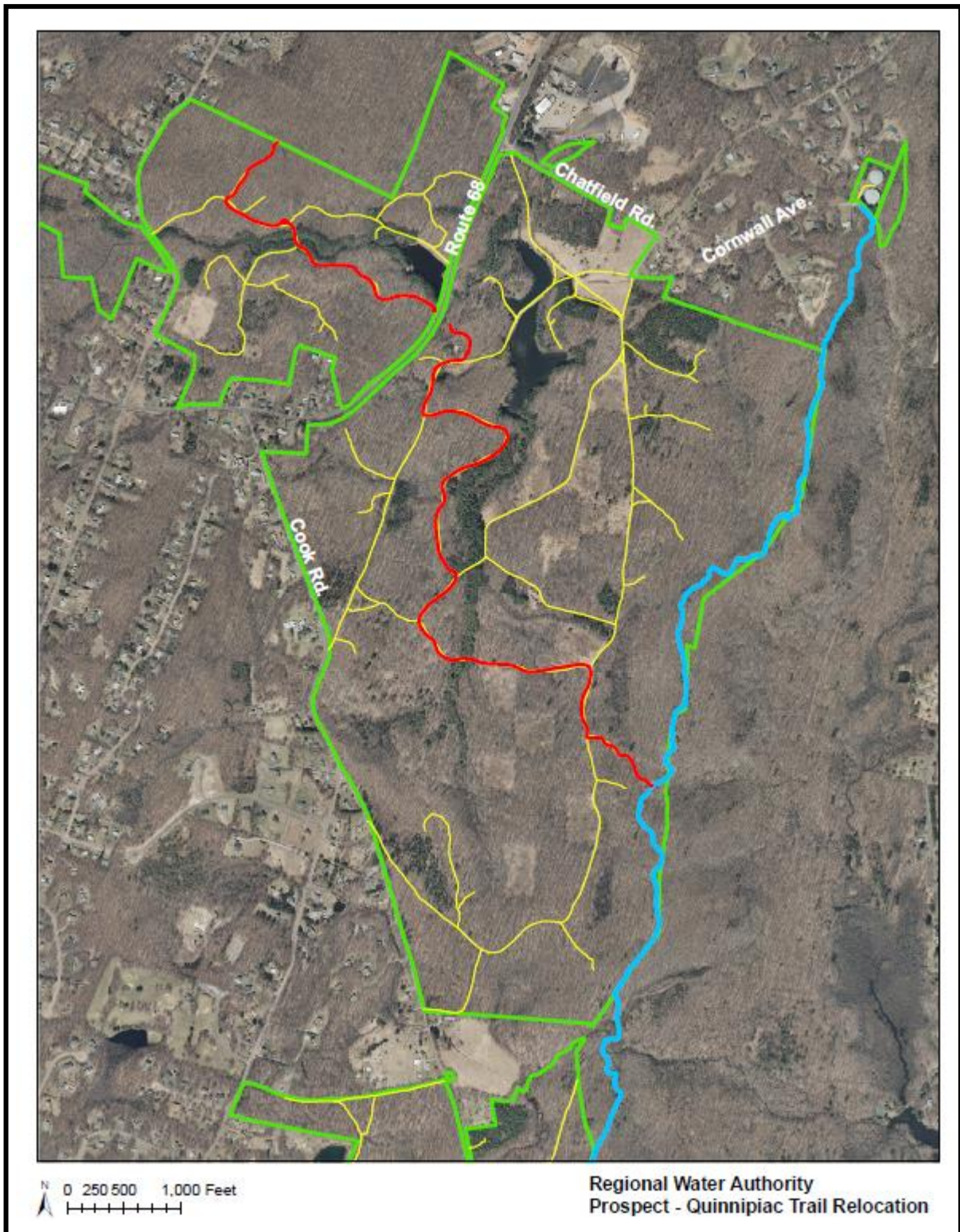
Location: Regional Water Authority property located in Prospect. The trail would extend from the Quinnipiac Trail (on the Cheshire border) through RWA woods to the Prospect Land Trust border.

Proposed Action: Relocation of approximately 2 miles of the Quinnipiac Trail (a blue-blazed walking/hiking trail for passive recreational use) from the existing Quinnipiac Trail through wooded RWA property and connecting with trails on The Prospect Land Trust Kathan Woods property (Land Trust property begins east of Matthew Street, just north of Blue Trial Drive, and extends to the northeast to Boardman Drive). Currently, the Quinnipiac Trail runs along the Cheshire/Prospect Town boundary and ends at a trail head on Cornwall Avenue. The existing trail would remain as a connecting spur. The majority of the new trail would follow existing woods roads, with one state road crossing (Route 68). The work would be done in coordination with members of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA).

Study Prepared By: Evans Associates Environmental Consulting, Inc.

Date: February 28, 2020





**Approximate location of proposed trail relocation (in red) on RWA property;
yellow trails are existing unpaved woods roads;
blue trail is the existing blue-blazed Quinipiac Trail**

Introduction

This Preliminary Assessment form provides for consideration of potential impacts on specific aspects of the environment, subdivided into eight general areas:

- A. Geology, Topography, Soils
- B. Hydrology and Water Quality
- C. Air Quality, Climate, Noise
- D. Biotic Communities
- E. Land Use
- F. Natural Resources and Other Economic Considerations
- G. Public Safety and Health
- H. Community Factors

All phases of the proposed action are considered - planning, construction, and operation - as well as possible secondary or indirect effects. The proposed impacts for this project, although occurring within a large area, would be linear, and therefore minimal.

For each “yes” response, the indicated specific information is provided in the space for notes. Elaborations of negative responses may also be provided if appropriate (e.g., to indicate positive impacts on a given environmental factor); “no” answers for which explanatory notes are provided are indicated by an asterisk. Sources of information, including individuals consulted, are also listed in each section.

A. <u>Geology, Topography, Soils</u>	Yes	No
<p>1. Is the site subject to geologic hazards (e.g., seismic, landslide)? If yes, specify type of hazard, extent, relative level of risk, whether or not the proposed action is vulnerable to damage from such hazard, and any measures included in the proposed action to avoid or minimize the risk of damage.</p>		X
<p>2. Will the proposed action create a geologic hazard or increase the intensity of such a hazard? If yes, specify the type of hazard, the extent to which it will be increased by the proposed action, and whether or not the proposed action can be modified to reduce the hazard.</p>		X
<p>3. Does the site include any geological features of outstanding scientific or scenic interest? If yes, describe the features and their relative importance, the extent to which they will be impacted by the proposed action, and any measures included in the proposed action to avoid or minimize damage to important geologic features.</p>		X*
<p>4. Is the site subject to soil hazards (e.g., slump, erosion, subsidence, stream siltation)? If yes, specify hazards, their extent, the relative level of risk to the proposed action, and any measures included in the proposed action to avoid or minimize damage from soil hazards.</p>	X	
<p>5. Does the site have any topographic or soil conditions that limit the types of uses for which it is suitable (e.g., steep slopes, shallow-to-bedrock soils, poorly drained soils)? If yes, specify the conditions, the of limitations on use, the extent to which the proposed action requires the use of such areas, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize adverse impacts of these uses.</p>	X	
<p>6. Does the site include any soil types designated as prime farmland? If yes, indicate the area of prime farmland soils and whether the proposed action requires any irreversible commitment of these soils to non-farm uses.</p>		X*

Notes (including sources of information):

A. Geology, Topography, Soils

A.3. The proposed trail pathway does not contain geological features of outstanding scientific or scenic interest. However, the proposed trail would pass through a few areas that contain scenic bedrock outcrops and other geologic features such as glacial erratic components (boulders). The creation of a trail through these areas is not expected to negatively impact any of the geologic features.

A.4. Erosion susceptibility is predicted in Connecticut for terrace escarpment type erosion. This prediction applies to areas of steep slopes, often alongside watercourses or drainageways, that have specific, easily-disturbed soils. There are four levels of erosion classification, from most susceptible to least, as follows: Most Susceptible, Highly Susceptible, Surficial Materials Susceptible, and Soils Susceptible. See Attachments for Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online (CTECO) map of Erosion Susceptibility.

Some of the soils in the area of the proposed trail fall within three of the categories: most Susceptible, Surficial Materials Susceptible, and Soils Susceptible to erosion. However, the trail would follow existing woods roads, and therefore most portions of the trail would not be new pathways. Creation of new areas of walking/hiking trails should take into consideration the susceptibility of the soils to erosion, especially on slopes, and in areas of limited or sensitive vegetation. Any newly-created trails are expected to be narrow with minimal (if any) vegetation removal, and therefore large, open areas of soil would not be exposed. In addition, the trail should be completed in such a way that new areas of erosion and sedimentation, due to soil displacement by people or by concentrated rainfall runoff, are not created. For example, an area of new trail is proposed just north of Route 68, on a relatively steep slope alongside the watercourse leading into the reservoir west of the highway. In this area, the proposed trail contains several switchbacks to avoid travel directly up or down the steep slope. In addition, the trail is not located directly adjacent to the watercourse, so if erosion did occur, it would not enter a waterbody. This layout would help reduce or eliminate the threat of erosion and sedimentation from hikers using the trail. Another portion of the trail, located immediately east of Route 68, traverses a ridge for a short distance. This portion of trail, especially the section of descent from the ridge, should be carefully laid out in order to prevent vegetation loss, or erosion and sedimentation of the hillside soils.

A.5. Potential limitations to trail creation and use include:

Steep slopes: In most areas, the proposed trail would follow existing woods roads that are mainly level to gently sloping. A few areas of new trail creation, however, would pass through steeper areas. As discussed above (Note A.4.), impacts to any remaining steep slopes, mainly erosion and sedimentation, can be avoided with proper trail position and construction.

Shallow-to-bedrock soils: A few of the soil types on site contain, or may contain, shallow to bedrock soils or rock outcrops, however most soils on site have depth to bedrock of more than 20" (most are more than 200"). No impact is expected to these areas from trail creation activities or from future trail use.

Poorly drained soils: The proposed trail relocation avoids almost all areas of poorly drained soils (wetland soils). The trail contains two proposed wetlands crossings. The two crossings are in association with the existing woods roads, and a bridge or culverts are present at each crossing. No impacts to wetland soils are expected from future trail use. See Attachments for CTECO map of Inland Wetland Soils.

A.6. The proposed trail would not pass through Prime Farmland Soils, but a portion of the trail would pass through Statewide Important Farmland Soils. This area is currently wooded and is not used for farming, and likely would never be used as such, due to its location. In addition, passive recreation would not negatively impact farmland soils. See Attachments for CTECO map of Farmland Soils.

References:

Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Web Soil Survey. Available online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>, Accessed November 21, 2019.

http://cteco.uconn.edu/advanced_viewer.htm (Erosion Susceptibility, Inland Wetland Soils, and Farmland Soils maps). Accessed November 21, 2019.

B. Hydrology and Water Quality**Yes No**

1. Is the site located on a present or projected public or private water-supply watershed or aquifer recharge area?

X

If yes, specify the location, type, and volume of the water supply, the extent to which the proposed action involves construction or other use of the watershed or recharge area, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize adverse effects on water supplies.

2. Does the proposed action create a diversion of water from one drainage basin to another or significantly increase or decrease the flow of an existing diversion?

X

If yes, specify the location, watershed area, and flow rates of the diversion, whether it involves a transfer of water between sub-regional drainage basins, the extent to which it will affect any required downstream flow releases and actual downstream flows, and the type and extent of expected impacts on the downstream corridor.

3. Does the site include any officially designated wetlands, areas of soils classified as poorly drained or somewhat poorly drained, or other known wetlands?

X

If yes, specify the extent and type of wetlands on the site and indicate whether the proposed action involves any construction, filling, or other restricted use of wetlands.

4. Will the proposed action seriously interfere with the present rate of soil and subsurface percolation?

X

If yes, specify the nature of the interference (compaction, paving, removal of vegetation, etc.), the extent to which the percolation rate will be hampered, and whether the project can be redesigned to minimize the interference.

5. Is the site located in a floodprone area?

X*

If yes, specify the frequency and severity of flooding, the area of the site subject to inundation, and the relative level of risk; indicate whether the proposed action will be subject to damage from flooding, the anticipated amount and type of damage, and any preventive measures included in the proposed action to minimize flooding damage.

6. Will the proposed action increase the effects of flooding, either on-site or downstream?

X

If yes, specify the anticipated amount and location of increased flooding, the estimated damage from this increase, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize the risk of flooding.

7. Will the proposed action generate pollutants (pesticides, fertilizers, toxic wastes, surface water runoff, animal or human wastes, etc.)? If yes, specify the type and source of pollutant, amount of discharge by volume, and parts per million, and the relative level of risk to biotic and human communities.

X*

Notes (including sources of information):

B. Hydrology and Water Quality

B.1. The proposed trail would be located completely within Class I and Class II land within a public water supply watershed. The Prospect System is currently not needed as a water supply source (and is not expected to be needed for at least 50 years); however, the system is being retained as a potential source for water supply. Recreational activities are limited by the conditions of permits issued pursuant to the regulations of the Department of Public Health (DPH). A permit for change-of-use is being sought from the DPH for the creation of the proposed trail. This approval will assure appropriate uses to avoid impacts to the water supply.

B.3. As noted in response A.5. (above), the proposed trail would avoid most poorly drained and very poorly drained wetland soils. Two watercourses would be crossed, but existing crossings already exist for the woods roads; one crossing is a bridge, and the other comprises culverts.

B.5. A few areas that are prone to occasional or rare flooding are found in association with the watercourses on the site. See Soil Flooding Class map in the Attachments. The proposed trail appears to avoid the majority of these areas.

B.7. Increases in stormwater runoff from the proposed trail will be avoided through proper trail placement and construction (see Note A.4.). Waste/trash produced during normal trail use would ideally be minimal and would not pose a risk to biotic or human communities.

References:

http://cteco.uconn.edu/advanced_viewer.htm (Soil Flooding Class map). Accessed January 13, 2020.

C. <u>Air Quality, Climate, Noise</u>	Yes	No
<p>1. Is the present on-site air quality below applicable local, state, or federal air quality control standards?</p> <p>If yes, specify the extent to which the air quality fails to attain such standards and the potential effects of sub-standard air quality on the proposed action.</p>		X*
<p>2. Will the proposed action generate pollutants (hydrocarbons, thermal, odor, dust, or smoke particulates, etc.) that will impair present air quality on-site or in surrounding area?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type and source of pollutants, the peak discharge in parts per million per 24-hour period, and the relative level of risk to biotic and human communities.</p>		X
<p>3. Is the site located in a high wind hazard area?</p> <p>If yes, specify the range and peak velocity and direction of high winds; identify any features of the proposed action subject to damage from high winds, the relative level of risk, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize wind damage.</p>		X
<p>4. Will the proposed action involve extensive removal of trees or other alteration of the ecosystem that may produce local changes in air quality or climate?</p> <p>If yes, describe the nature and extent of the changes, potential adverse effects, areas likely to be affected, possible cumulative effects of removal of natural vegetation and addition of new pollutant sources, and any measures that could be included to reduce the adverse effects.</p>		X
<p>5. Is the site subject to an unusually high noise level?</p> <p>If yes, specify the sources of noise, the noise levels, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize the effects of noise.</p>		X
<p>6. Will the proposed action generate unusually high noise levels?</p> <p>If yes, specify the source of noise, the range of noise levels, and any measures incorporated into the project to minimize generation of, or exposure to, excessive noise levels.</p>		X

Notes (including sources of information):

C. Air Quality, Climate, Noise

C.1. In accordance with the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS) has set national Ambient Air Quality Standards for six principal pollutants, which are called "criteria" pollutants. These pollutants are: ozone (O₃); particulate matter (<10 micrometers in diameter-PM₁₀ or < 2.5 micrometers in diameter-PM_{2.5}); sulfur dioxide (SO₂); nitrogen dioxide (NO₂); carbon monoxide (CO); and lead (Pb).¹ Locations throughout all of Connecticut are not in attainment with the standards set for ozone.² Therefore, the subject site also does not meet these standards. Relocation of the Quinnipiac Trail through this area would not have any impact upon air quality.

¹ https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2684&Q=321796&deepNav_GID=1744

² https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2684&Q=321774&deepNav_GID=1619

D. <u>Biotic Communities</u>	Yes	No
-------------------------------------	------------	-----------

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----|
| <p>1. Are there any rare or endangered plant or animal species on the site?
If yes, specify the species, the degree of rarity, and the estimated population on the site; indicate the extent to which the proposed action will disturb the species and its habitat, and specify any measures included in the proposed action to minimize such disturbance.</p> | | X* |
| <p>2. Are there unusual or unique biotic communities on the site?
If yes, specify type of community and its relative significance; indicate the extent to which the proposed action will destroy significant biotic communities and specify any measures included in the proposed action to minimize such damage.</p> | | X* |
| <p>3. Is the site used as a nesting site by migrating waterfowl, or is it critical to the movement of migratory fish or wildlife species?
If yes, specify the species, the extent to which nesting or migration will be disturbed as a result of the proposed action, and any measures included in the proposed action to minimize disturbance.</p> | | X* |
| <p>4. Does the proposed action significantly reduce the amount, productivity, or diversity of the biotic habitat?
If yes, specify the amount and types of habitat lost, types of wildlife or plants likely to be seriously affected by the proposed action, and any measures to mitigate impacts on biotic communities.</p> | | X |

Notes (including sources of information):

D. Biotic Communities

D.1. The CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) maintains a Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB), depicted on a set of maps that indicate the presence of Endangered, Threatened, and species of Special Concern. The NDDDB map for Prospect³ was reviewed, and portions of the subject site were hatched, indicating that listed species are present within or near the proposed trail area. However, a follow-up NDDDB request to DEEP resulted in a response letter from DEEP (a copy is included in the Attachments), dated January 30, 2020, which states "...Your project indicates that trails will use primarily existing forest roads and there will not be any heavy equipment use. I do not anticipate negative impacts to State-listed species (RCSA Sec. 26-306) resulting from your proposed activity at the site. **This determination is good for 2 years...**"

D.2. A vernal pool may be located near the proposed trail, just uphill from the West Brook Reservoir, on the opposite side of the trail from West Brook. The proposed trail would not

³ Department of Energy and Environmental Protection – Natural Diversity Data Base: <http://www.depdata.ct.gov/naturalresources/endangeredspecies/nddbpdfs.asp> (*Natural Diversity Data Base Areas, Prospect, CT*, map updated December 2019)

impact this area, however if it is determined to be a vernal pool, it could present an educational area.

D.3. Birds and other wildlife likely use the site for nesting and/or migration. However, the use of the existing trails and the creation of new trails should not negatively impact the wildlife species on site.

E. Land Use**Yes No**

1. Does the site include any officially designated historic or archaeological sites, or other sites of known historic, archaeological, or cultural significance?

X*

If yes, specify their type and significance, the extent to which they will be disturbed by the proposed action, and any measures to reduce such disturbance.

2. Does the site have any outstanding scenic or aesthetic characteristics, especially as viewed from public highways or recreation areas?

X*

If yes, specify the type and significance of scenic features, the extent to which they will be disturbed by the proposed action, and any measure to reduce the extent of such disturbance.

3. Is the site presently used for recreation?

X*

If yes, indicate the type of recreation, the amount of use, and the extent to which the proposed action will interfere with present recreational uses or limit recreation options on the site.

4. Is the site presently used for residence or business?

X

If yes, specify the type of use and the extent to which the proposed action will displace present occupants, especially disadvantaged persons or businesses, and any measures included in the proposed action for relocation of such occupants.

5. Will the proposed action break up any large tracts or corridors of undeveloped land?

X

If yes, specify the area of undeveloped land surrounding the site, the amount of development the proposed action will involve, and the distance to the nearest developed land.

6. Does the proposed action include features not in accord with the Authority's Land Use Plan or land disposition policies?

X

If yes, specify the nature and extent of conflict.

7. Is the proposed action part of a series of similar or related actions that might generate cumulative impacts?

X

If yes, specify the type and extent of related actions, implemented or planned, and the general nature of potential cumulative impacts; indicate whether a generic or programmatic impact assessment has been or will be prepared for this series of actions.

Notes (including sources of information):

E. Land Use

E.1. There are no standing structures in the vicinity of the proposed trail; the pathway would follow existing woods roads and traverse short lengths of natural wooded areas. The areas that are proposed for the trail relocation are not listed in the National Register of Historic Places⁴ or the State Register of Historic Places database.⁵ No buildings are listed on the Historic Buildings of Connecticut website,⁶ and according to the CT Trust for Historic Preservation, the property is not located in a local historic district.⁷ A historic barn is listed on the Preservation Connecticut website⁸ as being located at 5 Tress Road (within the RWA parcel). However, this barn is no longer present on the property. According to RWA personnel, the barn was dismantled and sold to a reclamation company.

The Prospect Open Space Plan⁹ mentions the Tress Farm as a historic feature, and states the following regarding archaeological features:

“Foundation of ‘old’ Matchstick Factory located at Matthew St. at West Brook. This is where the wooden sticks were manufactured and later sent out for sulfur tips to be added. Still located on South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (SCCRWA) land.”

The proposed trail would not be located near Tress Farm (which is, presumably, on Tress Road) or the archaeological feature. The proposed trail would pass far away from Tress Farm and would not meet up with Matthew Street.

The RWA’s Land Use Plan¹⁰ discusses 4 historic areas totaling 1.6 acres, which include foundations associated with a button factory, an old house foundation, and an old mill or barn foundation. No historic features would be altered or destroyed to accommodate the trail relocation.

E.2. The area is mainly forested, with scenic characteristics including water views and a bedrock outcrop ridge. No impacts would occur to these features from the proposed activity.

E.3. Currently, the areas proposed for trail relocation are not used for recreation, with the exception of deer hunting by bow (allowed with a DPH permit). However, other areas of the RWA property are used for recreation: 4.8 acres of Town-leased recreation areas are present on the western edge of the RWA parcel (east of Matthews Street), and 1.4 miles of the existing Quinnipiac Trail (blue-blazed trail) are located along the eastern property boundary.

E.6. Recreational uses of the RWA property already occur (see response E.3., above). However, a Land Use Plan amendment by the RWA will be necessary to bring the trail through the property.

⁴ <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/SearchResults/>, accessed January 15, 2020

⁵ <http://www.cultureandtourism.org/cct/cwp/view.asp?a=2127&q=293858>, accessed January 15, 2020

⁶ <http://historicbuildingsct.com/towns/prospect/>

⁷ <http://lhdct.org/maps/city/Prospect>, accessed January 15, 2020

⁸ <https://connecticutbarns.org/map/prospect>, accessed January 15, 2020

⁹ https://www.townofprospect.org/_files/open_space/os_plan.pdf

¹⁰ Land Use Plan of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, Approved by the Representative Policy Board January 21, 2016

F. <u>Natural Resources and Other Economic Considerations</u>	Yes	No
----------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	-----------

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----|
| <p>1. Does the proposed action involve any irreversible commitment of natural resources?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type of resource, the importance and scarcity of the resource, the quantity that will be irreversibly committed, and any measure that could be included in the proposed action to reduce irreversible commitments of resources.</p> | | X |
| <p>2. Will the proposed action significantly reduce the value and availability of timber or other existing economic resources?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type and extent of resources affected, the estimated revenue loss, and any measures that could be included in the proposed action to improve the efficiency of resource utilization.</p> | | X |
| <p>3. Will the proposed action require expenditures greater than the projected revenues to the Authority?</p> <p>If yes, specify the estimated difference.</p> | | X* |
| <p>4. Will the proposed action require any public expenditure (e.g., provision of municipal services) that might exceed the public revenue it is expected to produce?</p> <p>If yes, specify the estimated difference.</p> | | X |
| <p>5. Will the proposed action cause a decrease in the value of any surrounding real estate?</p> <p>If yes, estimate the amount and distribution of altered real estate values.</p> | | X |

Notes (including sources of information):

F. Natural Resources and Other Economic Considerations

F.3. The cost of the trail creation, and associated costs (such as permit fees), will be covered through a grant from the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. RWA will not be responsible for any monetary expenditures.

G. Public Safety and Health**Yes No**

1. Is the site subject to unusual fire hazard (from flammable vegetation, difficulty of access, lack of water for fire fighting, or other causes)?

X

If yes, specify the type of hazard, the extent to which the proposed action might increase the fire hazard, the extent to which it is subject to damage from such fires, and any measures included in the proposed action to reduce the risk of fire damage.

2. Does the site include any features that present potential safety hazards under the proposed conditions of use, or will the proposed action create any hazards to public safety? **X**

If yes, specify the hazards, the extent to which the public, workers, or others will be exposed to the hazard, the degree of risk, and any measures that will be included in the proposed action to eliminate hazards or reduce the risk of injury.

3. Does the proposed action have the potential to create increased risks to public health?

X

If yes, specify the nature of the health hazards, population at risk, the degree of risk, and any measures that will be incorporated in the proposed action to avoid adverse impacts on public health.

Notes (including sources of information):

G. Public Safety and Health

G.2. The proposed trail would cross Route 68, which could pose a safety hazard to hikers. The sight distance when crossing from the east is quite good; however, the sight distance when crossing from the west is not as far. RWA and CFPA personnel reviewed the crossing with an engineer from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT). The CT DOT determined that a crosswalk would not be permitted, however blue-blazed trail markers (common at state road crossings) could be used.

H. Community Factors	Yes	No
<p>1. Does the proposed action include any features that are not in conformity with local, regional, or state plans of conservation and development?</p> <p>If yes, specify the plan(s), the nonconforming features, and the extent of the nonconformity, and any measures that could be incorporated into the proposed action to improve conformity.</p>		X*
<p>2. Does the proposed action differ from the established character of land use in the surrounding area?</p> <p>If yes, specify the nature and extent of the conflict and any actions that might be taken to resolve it.</p>		X
<p>3. Will the proposed action require any service by public facilities (streets, highways, schools, police, fire) or public utilities that are expected to exceed capacity within 5 years?</p> <p>If yes, specify the type of facility or utility, its capacity, present and projected use, the additional capacity required to implement the proposed action, any public plans to increase the capacity, and any measures that can be incorporated into the proposed action to reduce excessive demands on public facilities.</p>		X
<p>4. Will the proposed action produce any substantial increase in nonresident traffic to the area (construction or other temporary workers, permanent workers, recreational users, etc.)?</p> <p>If yes, specify the amount and type of traffic, its potential impact on the surrounding neighborhood, and any measures included in the proposed action to reduce adverse effects from increased traffic.</p>		X*
<p>5. Will the proposed action produce an increase in projected growth rates for the area?</p> <p>If yes, specify the extent to which growth will be increased, the project ability of the community to cope with higher growth rates, and any measures include in the proposed action to reduce anticipated adverse effects from increased growth.</p>		X
<p>6. Is there any indication that the proposed action can be expected to generate public opposition or conflict over environmental concerns?</p> <p>If yes, indicate the type and source of conflict, whether it is limited to immediate neighbors of the site or extends to the larger community, and any measures that have been taken or could be taken to resolve the conflict.</p>		X

Notes (including sources of information):

H. Community Factors

H.1. State, regional, and local conservation and development plans have similar principles with regard to open space and recreational activities. The proposed trail relocation does not go against these principles, and may even benefit the cause by enhancing the accessibility of the property for passive recreation. The principles supporting the trail relocation are listed in the table below for the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2013-2018¹¹ (CT C&D Plan), the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development,¹² and the Prospect Open Space Plan (Prospect OSP).¹³

Note that the CT C&D Plan, although dated ending in 2018, is current. A Draft 2018-2023 State C&D Plan is under consideration by the General Assembly in the 2020 legislative session.¹⁴

A Regional Plan is in the process of being produced by the Naugatuck Valley Regional Council of Governments (NVCOG). The NVCOG was created in 2015 when three regional planning agencies (the Valley Council of Governments, the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley, and the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency) were consolidated. The NVCOG staff and Regional Planning Commission are currently in the process of reviewing the three regional POCDs to create one new NVCOG POCD.¹⁵ Currently, only the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley (COGCNV) document includes the Town of Prospect.

The Prospect Open Space Plan was adopted as part of the Prospect Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and remained the guiding document when the POCD was updated in 2014¹⁶

Plan	Principle
CT C&D Plan	“Limit improvements to permanently protected open space areas to those that are consistent with the long-term preservation and appropriate public enjoyment of the natural resource and open space values of the site...”
Regional Plan: COGCNV	“Recreation Trails (region-wide) — protect, create, extend, and enhance recreational trails throughout the region... Encourage the preservation of trail corridors maintained by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association and other groups.”

¹¹ <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/IGP/ORG/cdplan/20132018-FINAL-CD-PLAN-rev-June-2017.pdf?la=en>

¹² http://https://nvcogct.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/valley_region_pocd_2008.pdf,
<https://nvcogct.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/COGCNV-Regional-Plan-of-Conservation-and-Development-2008.pdf>, <https://nvcogct.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/CCRPA-RPOCD-FINAL-2013-23.pdf>

¹³ https://www.townofprospect.org/_files/open_space/os_plan.pdf

¹⁴ <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/IGPP-MAIN/Responsible-Growth/Conservation-and-Development-Policies-Plan/Conservation-and-Development-Policies-Plan>

¹⁵ <https://nvcogct.gov/project/current-projects/plan-of-conservation-and-development/>

¹⁶ https://www.townofprospect.org/_files/land_use/conservation_plan_2014.pdf

Plan	Principle
Prospect OSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible future extension of Kathan Woods blue trail • “Additional recreational opportunities will open up on water company lands.” • “Explore options for recreational use of watershed lands.”

H.4. There would not be a substantial increase in traffic from the proposed trail relocation. Some people may try to park on Route 68 near the trail, but this road crossing will not be set up for parking, nor will it be advertised as a trailhead for hikers.

ATTACHMENTS

DEEP letter (NDDB Determination Number: 202001019)

CTECO Maps: *Erosion Susceptibility*

Inland Wetland Soils

Farmland Soils

Soil Flooding Class



Connecticut Department of
**ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION**

January 30, 2020

Eva Szigeti
Evans Associates Environmental Consulting, INC.
162 Falls Rd
Bethany, CT 06524
eva@eaec-inc.com

NDDB DETERMINATION NUMBER: 202001019

Project: RWA - Prospect Quinnipiac Trail Relocation, east and west of Rte. 68 at 185 Cheshire Rd. in Prospect

Expiration: January 30, 2022

I have reviewed Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) maps and files regarding this project. Your project indicates that trails will use primarily existing forest roads and there will not be any heavy equipment use. I do not anticipate negative impacts to State-listed species (RCSA Sec. 26-306) resulting from your proposed activity at the site. This determination is good for 2 years.

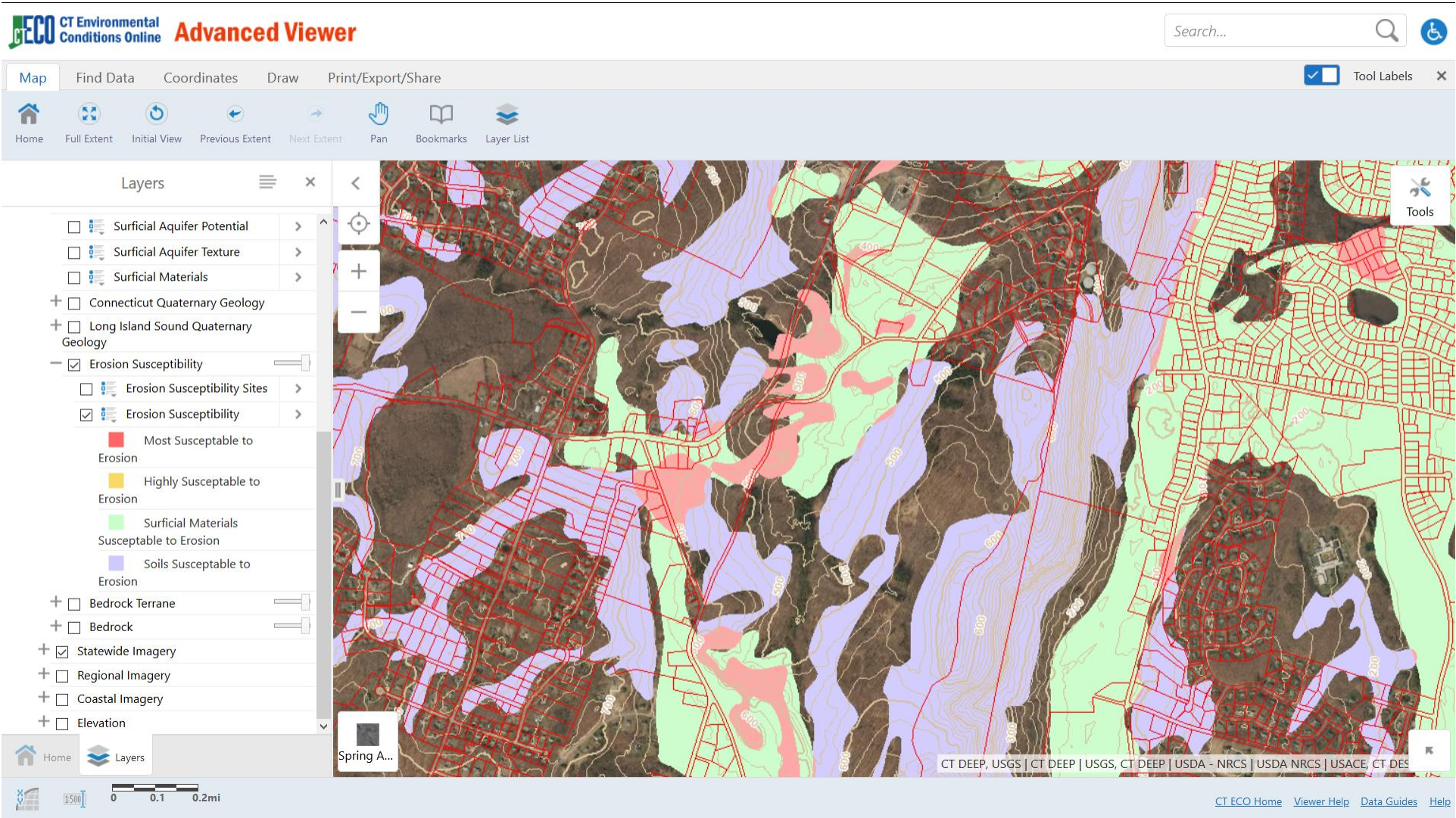
Natural Diversity Database information includes all information regarding critical biological resources available to us at the time of the request. This information is a compilation of data collected over the years by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Natural History Survey and cooperating units of DEEP, private conservation groups and the scientific community. This information is not necessarily the result of comprehensive or site-specific field investigations. Consultations with the Database should not be substitutes for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Current research projects and new contributors continue to identify additional populations of species and locations of habitats of concern, as well as, enhance existing data. Such new information is incorporated into the Database as it becomes available. The result of this review does not preclude the possibility that listed species may be encountered on site and that additional action may be necessary to remain in compliance with certain state permits.

Please contact me if you have further questions at shannon.kearney@ct.gov. Thank you for consulting the Natural Diversity Database.

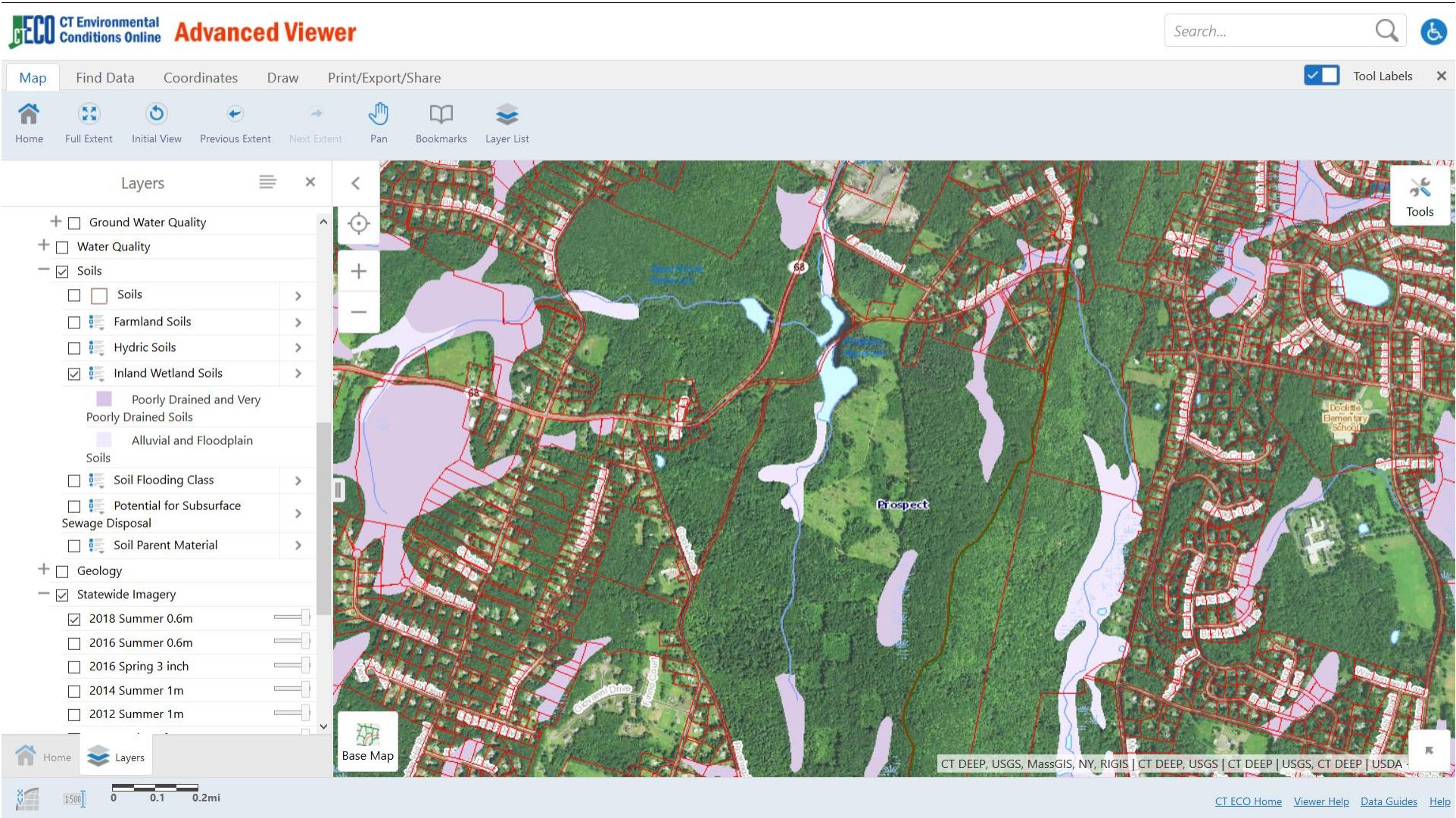
Sincerely,

/s/ Shannon B. Kearney
Wildlife Biologist

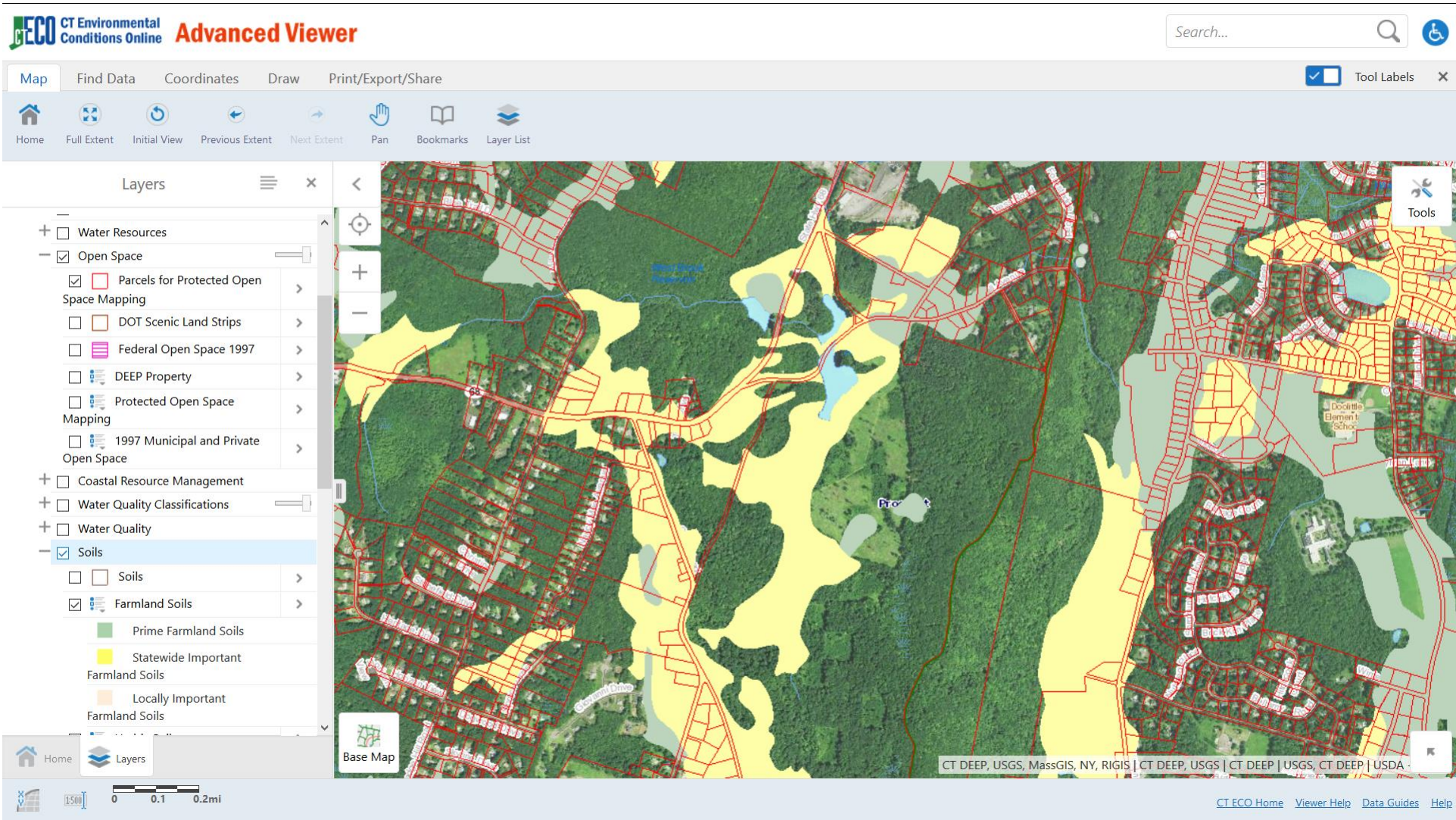
Erosion Susceptibility



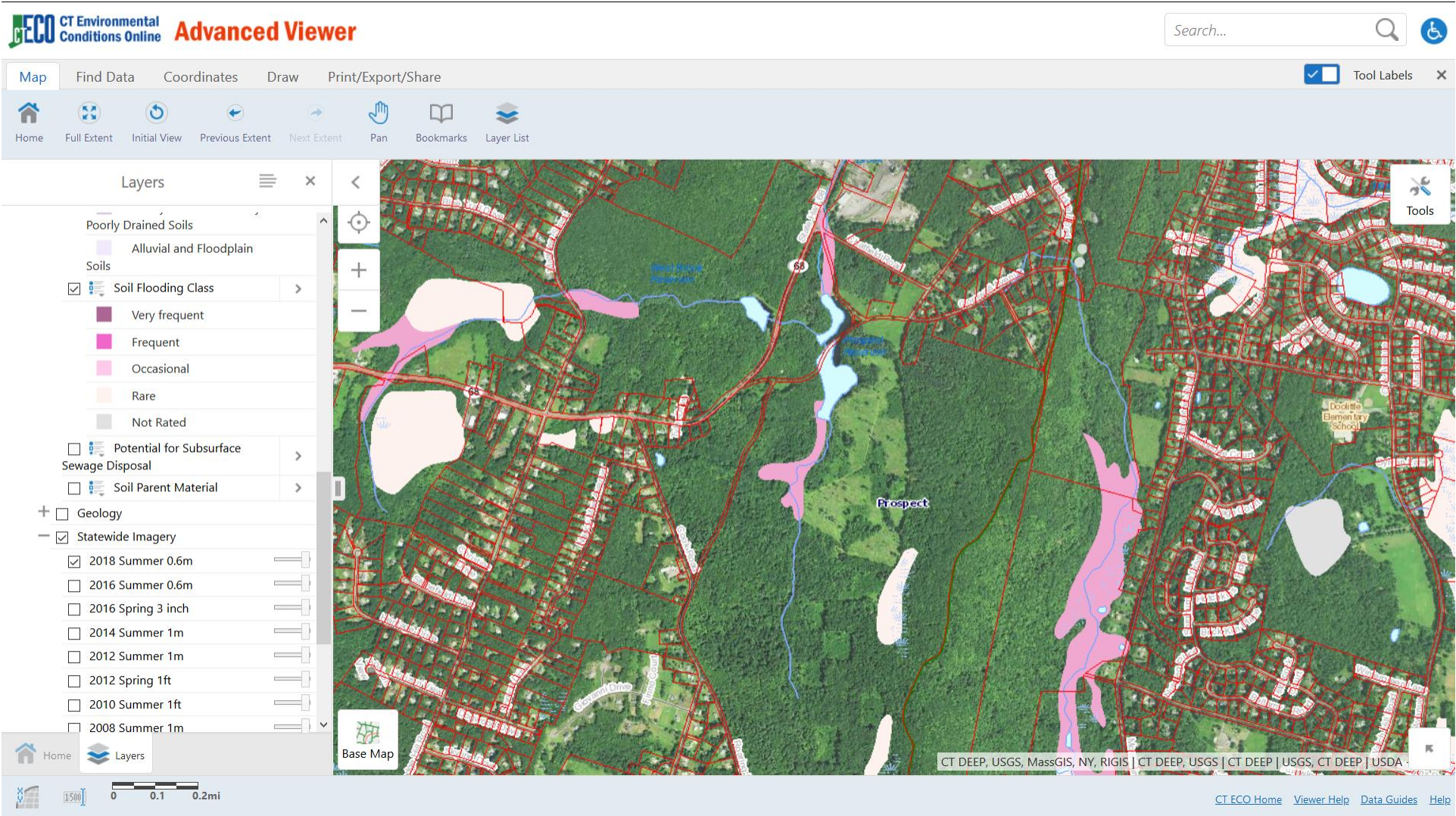
Inland Wetland Soils



Farmland Soils



Soil Flooding Class



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Renée D. Coleman-Mitchell, MPH
Commissioner



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

Water Company Land Permit


DPH Project #2020-0032
Permit No. WCL #2020-06

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 25-32(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes and Sections 25-37c-1 et seq. and 25-37d-1 et seq. of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies and in accordance with the application received on February 6, 2020 South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (RWA), PWSID # CT0930011 is authorized to change the use of 1000 feet of Class II water company owned land associated with Quinnipiac Trail connection to the Prospect Land Trust Property. This change of use of Class II land will protect adequacy and purity of the water supply by allowing RWA to better control the public access to RWA property in this area. Also, RWA in cooperation with Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA) will add supplementary level of monitoring in addition to current lake crew workers, police officers, and forester. Proposed changes are depicted on the map titled "**Regional Water Authority Prospect - Quinnipiac Trail Relocation; Scale 1'-1000'**"

The conditions noted in attached Schedule 1 are herein accepted by the RWA pursuant to Section 25-37d-8 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

In evaluating this application, the Department of Public Health has relied on information provided by the RWA in rendering this decision and that all parties which will carry out the terms of the agreement will abide by those terms for the present and future protection of the watershed area. All activities associated with this application will be consistent with all Federal, State, and local laws. However, if such information subsequently proves to be incomplete, inaccurate, false and/or deceptive, this permit may be modified, suspended, or revoked. This permit may also be suspended or revoked if it is found that any condition has been violated or if such action is necessary to maintain the purity and adequacy for the water supply. Any expansion, modification, or relocation may require a revised permit.

4/15/2020
Date


Lori Mathieu
Public Health Branch Chief
Environmental Health & Drinking Water Branch

Date

Ronald Walters
Sr. Environmental Analyst
South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority



Phone: (860) 509-7333 • Fax: (860) 509-7359
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410 Capitol Avenue, MS #12DWS, P.O. Box 340308
Hartford, Connecticut 06134-0308
www.ct.gov/dph

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer



SCHEDULE 1

1. Any expansion, modification, or relocation of facilities may require a revised permit.
2. The project shall be constructed in accordance with the application received by the Drinking Water Section on February 13, 2020.
3. All activities shall be confined to the Class II water company land identified, staked prior to the project, and pertain to the project indicated in the permit application.
4. Any agreements entered into by the RWA with CFPA or other parties for this project shall reference this permit and all conditions contained herein, as well as best management provisions submitted as part of the application.
5. The RWA or its authorized representative shall provide onsite inspections to assure that the purity and adequacy of the drinking water sources are not placed in jeopardy. These inspections are in addition to the routine inspections conducted throughout construction of the project.
6. All activities shall be conducted during dry weather conditions, pertain to the installation of the project improvements and be confined to the water company land identified in the permit application.
7. During construction and until a vegetative cover is reestablished, the project area must be inspected, on a regular basis, especially after rainfall to verify erosion control measures are properly maintained.
8. No construction shall take place until any erosion and sedimentation controls are in place. These controls shall be installed, properly functioning, inspected regularly, and remain in place throughout the project. RWA agrees to the detailed work on site must follow the erosion control plan provided with the application received February 6, 2020. The RWA environmental staff will perform inspections on a regular basis to assure that contractor is conducting work in accordance with their plan.
9. Any malfunction or breakdown of erosion and/or sedimentation control devices or water pollution control devices shall be repaired immediately. Construction activities shall be discontinued until repairs have been completed.
10. Any materials to be placed on site as fill shall be inspected and approved as clean by the RWA or its authorized representative. All fill shall be stabilized to prevent erosion and contained to prevent runoff. The extent of fill or excavation shall be minimized. All fill areas shall be restored and revegetated.
11. Disturbed areas must be seeded or sodded as soon as possible where appropriate to provide a vegetative cover against erosion. Seed mixtures and erosion control fabric shall be free from any herbicide or pesticide additive or treatment.
12. If appropriate, spill containment materials shall be available on-site.

c: Heather Aaron, MPH, LNHA, Deputy Commissioner, DPH

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June 10, 2020
Land Use Committee Meeting

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
May 31, 2020	96	99	93	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
May 2020	1.73	6.46	3.93
Fiscal YTD (6/1/19 – 5/31/20)	47.74	63.26	46.58

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

- Cheshire - Corresponded with property owner of 40+/- acres.
- Branford - Corresponded with property owner of 35+/- acres.

DePodesta and Hendrickson properties, Hamden/Bethany – Compiled documents to execute for the Hendrickson property grant. FMA approved resolution to have Ted execute all documents related to the Hendrickson property.

Rental houses:

- Seymour, 59 Rimmon Rd. (SE 11) – Held two pre-bid meetings. Had oil company in to check the furnace.
- Hamden, 95 Ives St. (HA 13) and 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Zone change application for 233 Skiff St. was submitted to P&Z. Answered email from DPH staff about the application. Public hearing will be in June.

Forestry Update

- Guilford – West of Sugar Loaf ash salvage (GU 4) – 40% complete
 - North Branford - Beech Street Softwood (NB 4) – 85% complete
 - Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) - Contract not yet awarded.
 - Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet
 - Bethany – East of Lake Bethany hardwood (BE 18) – 70% complete.
- Installed deer cages around remaining pitch pine to help with future development.
 - Performed a drone flight at Menunketuc.
 - Captured drone footage for Outreach and Communications staff for use on the RWA facebook page.
 - Inventoried several parcels in Prospect and wrote Qualified Forester's Reports for each (for PA-490 tax classification purposes).

Recreation

- Recreation permit holders – 5,160.
- Billboard campaign with 20% coupon continued.
- Heavy use at all areas was noticed due to COVID restrictions. Additional signs were added at various sites with issues. This led to record-breaking sales of permits and revenues.

- Recreation staff continued to be stationed at Maltby Lakes and Lake Saltonstall parking lots daily since April 13. This was due to the increased volume of people at the two areas. We are tracking which vehicles are still in the parking lots after dusk.
- Reblazed and cleared several trails at Lake Chamberlain and one at Lake Saltonstall.
- LUP amendments were approved by the FMA for relocating the Quinnipiac Trail in Prospect and creating a new trail from the Harrison Preserve in North Branford.
- Two of the large tagged trout were caught at Maltby this month and gift cards were mailed to anglers.
- All Water Wagon events through June have been cancelled.

Special Activity Permits

- Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (Mark Bradford, Ph.D.) – Research invasive plant and earthworm, soil nitrogen cycling - Lake Gaillard (5/20/2020 – 10/31/2020)
- Nicholas G. McDonald (Curatorial Affiliate Yale Peabody Museum, Author, Lecturer) – Geology research - Lake Saltonstall and Lake Gaillard (05/21/2020-05/22/2021)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Agricultural fields – Replied to seven inquiries about using our fields. Wildflower plots – Met with Highstead staff at farm in Ridgefield where they are doing wildflower seed propagation.
 - Bethany, 146 Wooding Hill Rd. (BE 14B) – Sent letter about encroachments.
 - Bethany, 63 Hoadley Rd. (BE 17) – Sent letter about encroachment.
 - Hamden – 49 Maher Ave. (HA 12) – Sent letter about encroachment.
 - Hamden – 20 Washington Ct. (HA 12) – Sent letter about encroachments.
 - Hamden – 66 Washington Rd. (HA 12) – Sent letter about encroachment.
- Invasive plants – Will Henley corresponded with water chestnut vendor. Cut invasives along Saltonstall Ridge, mostly ailanthus. Also cut invasives along trails at Lake Chamberlain.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	~ 160 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	~ 32 acres

- Durham, Vasel driveway – Vasel’s attorney noted that he made contact with the abutter to the north through which the current driveway traverses.
- ATV’s and dirt bikes – Notified by several parties in various locations about ATV and dirt bike use of our property. Met staff from North Branford Land Trust and Branford Land Trust to discuss barriers along Saltonstall ridge. Discussed matter with Police and Operations.
- Deer hunt – Applications mailed to interested hunters. Applications started to come in before the end of the month. Deadline for the applications is June 20.
- North Haven, Clintonville Pump Station (NO 4A) – Spoke to North Haven Land Trust staff about the trail next to our property.
- Lake Chamberlain Wood Turtle study – Supplied information to requestor from New Hampshire about study that took place at Lake Chamberlain from 1974 to 1993.

Attachments

- May 14, 2020 - Natural Beauty, Preserved – Cheshire Herald
- May 27, 2020 – Child’s Play – Daily Nutmeg website

Upcoming Agenda Items

July 2020 –

Natural Beauty, Preserved

Cheshire Herald - May 14, 2020

Much of Cheshire is shut down at the moment, in response to the outbreak of COVID-19. However, what remains open for use are the numerous hiking trails around town.

As the weather warms, residents stuck inside at the moment may want to take advantage of these natural resources, which provide not only much-needed exercise but a chance to escape into nature for a while.

In the summer of 2018, The Cheshire Herald ran a series of articles detailing the different trails around town. We thought now would be a good time to revisit those experiences, sharing with you what we saw on some of the trails open to the public.

It’s important to remember that all social distancing protocols should be adhered to while hiking, and that reports of mass gatherings at these or any other open space areas of town could force their closure.

There’s a popular commercial that has as its tag line, “Want to get away?”

Many are probably answering “yes” to that question about now but, unfortunately, there aren’t a lot of destinations from which to choose.

The problem with the whole world being in some form of lockdown to combat COVID-19 is that opportunities for escape become limited. Moving from your front to back yard when the weather is nice, or perhaps taking a stroll around the neighborhood, counts as “getting away from it all” for many these days.

Our worlds have become much smaller.

But there are still opportunities to leave things behind for a few hours and immerse oneself in nature. And perhaps nothing offers that sense of separation from our world quite like a walk through the DeDominicis Preserve in the south end of Cheshire.

No, this beautiful piece of land does not hide a vortex through which one can step into a different dimension. It is, as is all property in Cheshire, surrounded by civilization — roads and homes and barking dogs. But for some reason, those sounds of normal life seem to fade as one heads deeper into this part of nature, leaving hikers to share a brief moment with the outside world that isn’t filled with the need for modern conveniences.

In August of 2018, *The Herald* spent several hours walking a few of the many trails that run through and around this property, and noticed how unique the preserve truly is:

Within minutes of beginning one’s hike, leaving behind homes and well-manicured yards, nature takes over completely.

While the faint sounds of the outside world can still be discerned, they are all but drowned out by the chirping of birds overhead, the buzz of insects, and the cries of hidden wildlife. Whichever way you go, whatever trail you decide to take, DeDominicis feels set apart from the things of man ...

In use for over a century as part of a larger farm system focused on “haying, grazing, and woodlot purposes,” according to the description of the property provided by the Town, the DeDominicis land rests entirely within the Mill River Watershed, and one is greeted by the sounds of rushing water off in the distance a few minutes into their hike. More than 26 acres of the property also overlay the Level A South Cheshire Aquifer, meaning water is found running all throughout the DeDominicis property.

The 185 acres that comprise the property were purchased by the Town of Cheshire in 2003, in conjunction with the Regional Water Authority and the state Department of Environmental Protection. The land was purchased from the Aldo DeDominicis Foundation, as well as Clorinda and Enzo DeDominicis.

Trails are accessible via two different locations — one off of Corliss Lane and another off of Old Lane Road — and the red trail serves as a central artery for the hike. The terrain is at times rough and follows many ridges, which means the hike flows much like a wave, moving from ridges to valleys and providing extraordinary scenery throughout.

There isn't much dense vegetation, meaning the views are open, allowing the walker to see yards ahead. And though the trail offers the usual small impediments — roots, small branches, rocks — one can easily enjoy a look around while carefully watching each footfall.

And in the midst of that scenery, bursts of color can be seen through, as *The Herald* discovered back in 2018:

Most definitely, the landscape is a sea of green — from the tree leaves to the grass that at times covers the ground so lightly it appears like a fuzz on the ground — but every once in a while, a hiker will come upon a bright explosion of reds or pinks or white. The mushrooms, big and small, provide the most powerful infusions of color, standing out amongst the other vegetation like droplets from a painter's brush. But the color can be seen in other places as well — the blackness of the water rushing through streams; bright yellow fungus growing on a tree stump; the deep maroon of tree shards, having broken off from a shattered trunk; and the pinked-winged butterflies that occasionally flutter by.

Walkers will have to keep their eyes out for the more unique colors, but they are there waiting to be found.

Yet, if you decide to take a walk around the DeDominicis Preserve, your eyes should not be solely focused on the stagnant life around you, but instead constantly on the lookout for the wildlife that make this part of Cheshire their home. On our journey in 2018, we came across two white tail deer standing 50 or so yards away. Startled by our presence, the large deer bounded over the many fallen limbs and giant rocks that were in their path and quickly disappeared up and over a nearby ridge.

The fluidity of their movement and athletic ability to navigate the environment was truly a site to behold.

Further down the trail, another animal came into view. Perhaps a fox or a smaller-sized coyote, it too was frightened by the sound of a hiker and scampered away — less athletic than the deer, but equally effective in quickly disappearing into the terrain.

While there is never a guarantee of seeing wildlife, the immense size of the DeDominicis Preserve coupled with the open landscape make it more likely that you'll catch a glimpse of something before they do you.

And that's part of the fun of the Preserve. Though smack in the middle of Cheshire, it can and does feel like a world apart. For those looking to escape this world for a few moments, it is worth the time, effort and energy.

Child's Play

Daily Nutmeg website – May 27, 2020

Summer is on the way—but a different kind of summer, one in which many of the go-to amusements for families with children are closed or limited. What's a kid to do? We asked a few experienced grownups to give us some out-of-the-box suggestions for fun during this out-of-the-ordinary summer:

Branch out. Edgerton Park's arboretum includes many labeled trees, shrubs and plants. See how many you can find. Then take off on a scavenger hunt to find more of the same kind that aren't labeled. Take photos on your phone to arrange in an album later. Be sure to photograph any labels, too. When you get home, you can look up more information about each plant. Or bring a sketchbook and draw your own pictures of the plants you find. While you're at it, don't miss the chance to roll down the big hill.

Put New Haven on the map. You can't drive to the top of East Rock right now, but you can park in the Davis Street or Eli Whitney Museum lots and walk up for the best bird's eye view of New Haven. Bring along your backpack with some paper, pencils and crayons, then study and draw the landscape.

Walk and chalk. All it takes is a little bit of chalk and some imagination to turn the sidewalk into a playground. Draw a hopscotch grid, a box for jumping jacks, or a trail with a spiraling line. Instruct passersby to tiptoe, practice karate or do the Funky Chicken. Janie Alexander often draws fun instructions like these on the sidewalk outside her house with her kids. "I watch people do these all day long," she says. Alexander, the mom of a nine-year-old and a two-year-old—who happens to be the education programs manager for the Shubert Theater and has been posting activities weekly for Shubert Camp at Home—also suggests drawing racetracks for toy cars or inspirational messages for passersby.

Wing it. Lake Whitney's great blue herons have hatched their chicks. Bring a pair of binoculars and see if you can spot them or the osprey family that lives across the street. Wander down to the shoreline and watch for shorebirds. This guide will help you identify them. Or try a game of the Peabody Museum's Long Island Sound Invertebrate Bingo. If you can't leave your own nest, check out the live osprey cam at New Haven's West River Memorial Park.

Paddle up. Adventurous families can rent single (\$25) and double (\$35) kayaks in four-hour blocks from the Quinnipiac River Marina. Melissa Kaplan of Hamden says she and her family are even thinking of buying their own watercraft. At \$600 to \$800 per boat, that cost might have seemed prohibitive, until the family realized it's far less than the \$7,000 they would have spent this summer on sleepaway camp—now closed—for their two kids, aged 10 and 12.

Push paper. Use this tutorial to make an origami paper boat. Then cast off in the fountain on the Green, the edge of the Mill River in College Woods or a puddle in your yard after a thunderstorm.

Take a (new) hike. The brand new orange trail at Edgewood Park, starting just north of the Edgewood Avenue bridge, is a short and sweet walk along the river and a haven for squirrels and birds. Also recommended by local parents: numerous hikes in Woodbridge, on Regional Water Authority properties (permit required, \$50 for a two-year family permit, currently 20% off) and at Brooksvale Park in Hamden, where you can also visit the barnyard's miniature horses, sheep, goats, chickens and rabbits or search for frogs, turtles and snakes at the edge of the pond.

Despite the challenges, there's a bright side to the summer of 2020: It may force our kids—and us—to get creative.

Written and photographed by Kathy Leonard Czepiel. Image 1 features a fun stretch of sidewalk. Image 2 features a family at Brooksvale Park.