

**Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
Lake Saltonstall, 100 Hosley Avenue, Branford
(Meet at the Fish Shack)**

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment
2. Approval of Minutes – September 14, 2022 meeting
3. Security Discussion: D. Verdisco - Including Executive Session- *Upon 2/3 vote, convene in executive session pursuant to C.G.S. Section 1-200(6)(C) to receive a briefing and discuss security strategies and implementation.*
4. Updates on land and RWA properties, including invasive species update
5. Other land items
6. Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, November 9, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.
7. Adjourn

*In the event of rain *ONLY*, the meeting will be held remotely. For information on attending the meeting via remote access, and to view meeting documents, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/yp39d7nm>. For questions, contact the board office at jslubowski@rwater.com or call 203-401-2515.

SAFETY MOMENT

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Held every October, National Cybersecurity Awareness Month a collaborative effort between government and industry to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity and to ensure that all Americans have the resources they need to be safer and more secure online.

Avoid being a victim by:

- Not revealing personal or financial information in an email
- Do not respond to email solicitations for information
- Pay attention to website URL's
- If you are unsure if an email request is legitimate, verify it by contacting the company directly
- Think before you act

If you are a victim:

- Report it to the appropriate people within your organization
- Contact you financial institution immediately
- Watch your bank account for unauthorized charges
- Consider reporting the attack to your local police department and file a report with the Federal Trade Commission or the Internet Crime Complaint Center

Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

Safety is a core company value at the Regional Water Authority .
It is our goal to reduce workplace injuries to zero.

**Tap Into
Safety**



Regional Water Authority

 Regional Water Authority

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

Minutes of September 14, 2022 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, September 14, 2022, at Seymour Wellfield, 151 Roosevelt Drive, Seymour, Connecticut. Chair Betkoski presided.

Committee Members: P. Betkoski, P. DeSantis, Brian Eitzer, R. Harvey, M. Horbal, M. Levine, G. Malloy, J. Oslander, and J. Mowat Young

RPB: Tom Clifford

Authority: K. Curseaden

Management: J. Hill, S. Lakshminarayanan, J. Triana, S. Vitko

Staff: J. Slubowski

Chair Betkoski called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Malloy, and unanimously carried, the Committee approved the minutes of its August 10, 2022 meeting, as amended.

Mr. Vitko, the RWA’s Sr. Environmental Analyst, provided a discussion on the RWA’s aquifer protection. He discussed the aquifer protection area program (APA) regulations and the roles of municipalities enrolled in the APA versus the water utilities who supply water.

Update on *The Land We Need for the Water We Use Program* – Mr. Triana, the RWA’s Real Estate Manager, reported:

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
August 31, 2022	74%	92%	74%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
August 2022	2.13	3.15	3.95
Fiscal YTD (6/1/22 – 8/31/22)	6.31	13.51	11.38

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

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 50+/- acres.
- Cheshire, adjacent to Bis property – Continued to discuss process to perfect our claim with Murtha.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Pumps La. properties (NB 4) – Shared draft MOU with NBLCT. Answered their questions. Awaiting word to move application forward.
- Branford, Brushy Plain Rd. (BR 7) – Corresponded with Branford Land Trust staff about this property.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – The Asst. Town Attorney called and we went over the need for condemnation again in order for the project to move forward. He said he understood and would get back to me.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – **30% complete.**
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet. **Start pushed back to fall or winter.**
- Madison - Nathan’s Pond Slash Wall Harvest (MA 6) – 95% complete.
- Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – Not started yet. Winter start expected.
 - One brush fire occurred on the peninsula at Lake Bethany. Covered about 1-2 acres.
 - Discussed possibility of applying for a Landscape Scale Restoration Grant.
 - Began experimenting with treating Beech Leaf Disease (BLD) to test the efficacy of an annual, single application of a basal bark drench treatment of Reliant® with a non-ionic surfactant, Pentra-Bark®. Applied mixture to beech trees in Chamberlain, Watrous, and Maltby Lakes.
 - Monitored slash wall harvests for hardwood stump sprouting and other regeneration and for encroachment by invasive plants. Pulled Ailanthus seedlings in Seymour slash wall. Evidence of deer browse was detected inside the North Madison slash wall toward the end of August.
 - Participated in a Zoom meeting with other Southern New England water companies to discuss forest stressors and data information needs surrounding climate change, invasive pests, and carbon sequestration.

Recreation

- Bat event at Lake Gaillard with Devaughn Fraser of DEEP had 16 attendees.
- Received reports of a bear at Maltby Lakes.
- Cut and removed trees along the Sanford Feeder Trail in Bethany.
- Report of horses on Lake Chamberlain dam was reported to Bethany Horsemen who addressed the issue with the riders and owner of the barn the horses came from.
- Sent letter to abutter in Guilford about accessing our property on horseback.
- Lost two staff at the end of the month. One went back to school and the other resigned. Therefore, we will not be able to rent boats on Tuesday’s the rest of the year.
- Weed-whacked a section of recreational trail at Hammonasset west of the footbridge.

	August		July	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Permit Holders	5,102	5,926	5,218	5,873

Special Activity Permits

- Connecticut Butterfly Association (CBA) (Gina Nichol) conduct survey of nocturnal moths and other insects, Lake Saltonstall Fishing Dock Area, (8/18/22)
- CT Forest & Park Assoc. (CFPA) (Elizabeth Merow) conduct tour of property, Master Woodland Manager Program, forestry ecology, Rt. 79 Madison, (10/1/22)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - Agricultural agreements – Met potential tenant for the Christmas tree plantation at North St. Sent draft agreement for them to review.
 - East Haven, 9 Pardee Place (EH 6) – Received the signed agreement from Brennan.

- West Haven/Orange/Bethany, Eversource access to ROW's – Executed the agreements for the Authority and alerted staff. Submitted to towns for filing on the land records.
- Trespassing – Numerous instances of trespassing were observed including dog walkers, mountain bikers, hikers, dirt bikes, ATV's, and anglers.
- Invasive plants – Documented and/or treated invasive populations in Seymour, Hamden, and North Branford. The water chestnut harvest for 2022 was completed at Furnace Pond. Performed post-harvest drone flight of Furnace Pond. Cleared Japanese knotweed on Davis Street. Planted a rhizomous native sunflower, *Helianthus maximilliani*, to see if it could compete with knotweed once it established.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	40.5 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	8 acres

- Deer hunt – The Ansonia-Seymour and Prospect hunting area boundaries have been re-flagged.
- Easements – Checked on the status of easements at Schoolhouse Rd., North Haven, Englewood Dr., East Haven; NW Cheshire PS, Cheshire; Sugar St., Derby; and three old easements in Branford. Filed easement for pipe in new construction off of Coleman Rd., Cheshire.
- Cell phone towers – Cell phone towers –
 - North Haven, Rabbit Rock Tank (NO 1) – Signed agreement with T-Mobile to share a generator at this site.
 - East Haven, Saltonstall Ridge (EH 2) – Still waiting to hear back from Sprint/T-Mobile, Finance Dept., and EH assessor regarding various aspects of Sprint/T-Mobile's departure from the site.
 - Orange, Ogg Meadow Rd. (OR 2) - Signed consent letters with Crown Castle for various improvements.
- Drone flights - Performed drone flight at the Derby tank site for Engineering.
- Cheshire, Ricci/Moran property easement – Replied to Eversource about plan to trim trees along the street.
- Branford, Rt 1 guide rail (BR 17) – Commented on plans of the town to install a guide rail at the property south of Rt. 1 by the outflow of Furnace Pond.
- Guilford, Great Hill Rd., Abraham Baldwin memorial – Discussed allowing a pull-off for this memorial plaque that is within the town's ROW for Great Hill Rd.

There were no other land items to report.

Committee assignments for the next quarter Authority meetings were made, as follows:

- October 27, 2022 – Mr. Levine
- November 17, 2022 – Mr. Oslander
- December 15, 2022 – Mr. Betkoski
- January 26, 2023 – Mr. Malloy

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 12, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. at Lake Saltonstall in Branford. The committee will host its annual pizza dinner. All RPB members are invited to attend.

At 5:30 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy, seconded by Mr. Eitzer, and unanimously carried, the committee meeting adjourned.

Peter Betkoski, Chairman

October 12, 2022
Land Use Committee Meeting

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
September 30, 2022	72%	89%	68%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
September 2022	7.02	7.99	3.83
Fiscal YTD (6/1/22 – 9/30/22)	13.33	21.50	15.21

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

- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 50+/- acres.
- Prospect – Corresponded with property owner of 40+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Poms La. properties (NB 4) – Met with Murtha staff to discuss subdivision plans for the two parcels and the “island” parcel. Executed the MOU with NBLCT for selling them the two parcels.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – The Asst. Town Attorney called and said that an appraiser was hired for the condemnation. Their work would not be done until October. Engineering has contacted demolition contractors to get an estimate associated with demolition of the property.
- Orange, 501 Derby Ave. – Contacted owner about a newly constructed kennel that was not approved by us.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 30% complete.
 - Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet. Start pushed back to fall or winter.
 - Madison - Nathan’s Pond Slash Wall Harvest (MA 6) – 95% complete.
 - Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – Not started yet. Winter start expected.
- Monitored the interior of the Nathan’s Pond slash wall harvests for signs of deer intrusion on multiple occasions. Communicated deer evidence to RWA’s partners, and submitted a work order to Operations Group to fix and reinforce gate area. ISMT performed a drone flight to look for possible deer within the slash wall area.
 - Documented the large number of ailanthus seedlings at the Seymour slash wall.
 - Marked timber for GU12/12A silvicultural treatments near the Menunketuc reservoir, laid out more harvest boundary, and worked with Operations to install a culvert at the proposed intermittent watercourse crossing.
 - Drafted, edited and submitted a preliminary Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) grant application to DEEP Forestry to generate a support letter from the State Forester.
 - Investigated white pine decline issues around Maltby Lake reservoirs.

Recreation

- Carrion beetle walk/talk in Bethany and kid’s archery event in North Branford occurred on Sept. 3rd, but only had a total of 6 participants due to the newsletter coming out too late.
- Water Wagon attended the New Haven Labor Day Road Race.
- NBLCT had ribbon cutting for the trail that goes onto our property from the Harrison Preserve.
- Bethany Horsemen addressed the issue of horses on the Chamberlain dam with the offending barn owner. Also said they would overpaint various purple blazes that were incorrectly painted on various trails.
- Anthony Pepe accepted a position in Treatment and will move to that department in October.
- CFPA indicated that they would like to get approval for the errant trail location for the New England Trail in Guilford. Contacted Beth Evans to start work on the preliminary assessment.
- Cleared downed trees across trails at Chamberlain and Hammonasset.

	September		August	
	2022	2021	2022	2021
Permit Holders	5,026	5,684	5,102	5,926

Special Activity Permits

- U. S. Geological Survey (Kaitlin Laabs) - Take water level measurement of a monitoring well located on SCCRWA property-Middletown Avenue, North Branford (One short visit between (9/7/2022 to 10/7/2022)
- Wesleyan University – (Dr. Phillip G. Resor) - Project is for geologic mapping of bedrock outcroppings, mapping, and describing those outcroppings and collecting fist sized samples for laboratory analysis land within USGS 7.5 minute Durham quadrangle (7/21/2021 – 5/31/2022)
- Univ.of New Haven Army ROTC Program Coordinator (Robert Clark) - Squad Tactical and Platoon Tactical Training - 1955 Litchfield Turnpike/West River Training Area, Woodbridge (9/27/22 – 9/27/23).

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
 - East Haven, 9 Pardee Place (EH 6) – Executed the license agreement with Brennan.
 - Cheshire, South Cheshire Wellfield (CH 4) – Tracked down automatic payment from Southwick Condos for their license agreement.
 - Seymour, Roosevelt Dr. (SE 3) – Communicated with licensee about trees that Eversource was removing and additional items that were placed over the property line.
 - Trespassing – Recorded instances of trespassing including dog walkers, hikers, a tree stand, dirt bikes, ATV’s, and cut lock at Maltby Lakes.
- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford and Bethany. Worked on Landscape Scale Restoration grant application that would focus on invasive plant management, but include other topics such as bat habitat. Performed a drone flight at Furnace Pond to document the water level and water chestnut mortality due to drought.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	143 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	5 acres

- Deer hunt – Held three pre-hunt meetings. There will be 182 participants in the 2022 archery hunt (131-Gaillard, 23-Bethany, 20-Prospect, and 8-Ansonia/Seymour). Sent letters to wood cutters in hunt areas.

- Easements – Checked on the status of easements at NW Cheshire PS, Cheshire; Spruce Bank Rd., Hamden; Tenn Gas Company pipeline, Bethany; Raynham St. PS, New Haven; Mill Plain Rd., Branford.
- WPCAG Watershed Lands Workgroup – REM gave presentation about our watershed acquisition and protection efforts.
- Cell phone towers – Cell phone towers –
 - East Haven, Saltonstall Ridge (EH 2) – East Haven assessor staff verified that the card for the tower will not be in our name for the 2022GL. Sprint had contractor remove their equipment, but they also removed and damaged the town’s equipment. EH PD and FD are aware of the situation.
- Regional Conservation Partnership – Discussed reconvening the steering committee and the whole RCP with Bryan Pines who attended a RCP workshop.
- ISMT performed a drone flight at the Derby talk site documenting construction progress.
- Chamberlain piezometers – Met with special permittee about moving bluebird boxes next to the piezometers to avoid hitting them while mowing.

Attachments

- September 13, 2022 - Aid to more Connecticut farmers sought - The Center Square website
- September 13, 2022 - A boil water order issued in May. Months later, Butterfield Ranch residents still don't have clean water – News10, San Diego
- September 20, 2022 - Governor Lamont Launches State Grant Program to Assist Communities With Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change – State press release
- September 26, 2022 - Land Trust Celebrates Summer Hill Property – ZIP06 website

Upcoming Agenda Items

November 2022 - ?

Aid to more Connecticut farmers sought

By Kimberley James | The Center Square website - Sep 13, 2022

If approved on the federal level, more Connecticut farmers could gain assistance for the harsh realities dealt them by the ongoing drought.

A natural disaster request was submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Gov. Ned Lamont said, for Litchfield and New Haven counties where drought conditions have caused damage to farms.

The effort could give "consideration of certain emergency assistance from the Farm Service Agency, such as low-interest loans," a release from the governor's office says. Approval could open assistance to farm operators in Litchfield and New Haven counties, as well as to those counties that are contiguous."

"This summer's weather conditions have been rough on farmers in Connecticut, and the approval of this federal declaration will enable those producers who are experiencing significant losses to apply for emergency assistance so they can continue supporting their businesses and the many jobs they provide," Lamont said in a release. "While some of our counties have already received this designation, Litchfield and New Haven counties are now above the 30% crop-loss trigger required for a similar declaration. I appreciate Secretary Vilsack's consideration of this request, as well as his ongoing support for Connecticut's agricultural industry."

The move comes one month after the agency approved disaster declarations in New London and Windham counties, according to the release, that have affected farmers in Hartford, Middlesex and Tolland counties.

While much of New England is facing drought conditions, the state is experiencing far less rainfall than it received last summer.

"There are many sections of rivers and streams where the riverbed is dry," Alicea Charamut, executive director of Rivers Alliance of Connecticut, told The Center Square. "This impacts communities of critters that are important food for fish and other amphibians. It also means that some spawning areas may be unavailable for some species of fish that spawn in the fall if this lack of precipitation continues. The low flows combined with hot daytime and warmer-than-usual nighttime temperatures puts trout and other species that rely on cold, clean water in peril. Groundwater levels are also low."

Data shows, Charamut said, that the majority of the state's rivers and streams have been below the 25th percentile for this time of year for at least a month.

Charamut said it's very important for residents to take conservation very seriously at this point –even after a rainstorm or two.

Charamut said the state has been doing an excellent job of monitoring conditions and meeting regularly to determine next steps as well as issuing press releases and communicating behind the scenes with water utilities and other stakeholders.

"As a state, we could do a better job of mitigation measures for drought," Charamut said. "We need to focus on year-round conservation – two-days-a-week watering such as what has been implemented in Fairfield County is a good example of this – and updating fixture standards. Outside of mitigation measures to ensure that we have enough drinking water, we could be doing a much better job of making sure we're not making land-use decisions that impede the infiltration of stormwater so that our groundwater gets recharged and protecting forested and vegetated buffers along our major rivers and backyard streams."

Both of these measures, Charamut said, can help lessen the stress on our fish, frogs and turtles when water levels get low and we experience long periods of oppressive heat.

In the request to Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsak, Lamont said Litchfield and New Haven counties are experiencing the same drought conditions as the counties approved in August for aid, which includes a 30% loss of any crop to meet the threshold.

A boil water order issued in May. Months later, Butterfield Ranch residents still don't have clean water

By: Melissa Mecija - Sep 13, 2022 – News 10 – San Diego

JULIAN, Calif. (KGTV) — People who live in a small East County community have been fighting for clean water for months.

Butterfield Ranch is about 80 miles outside of San Diego. Many of the people who live there haven't had it easy.

"Life [is] difficult sometimes," said resident Tina Bussey.

Bussey is confined to a wheelchair. As she deals with physical challenges, she said the lack of clean water makes it worse.

"It's just been a nightmare," Bussey said.

The County of San Diego issued a boil water order on May 20. The news release from the county said that the "water system supplies water to 313 service connections which include 75 manufacture home spaces, 233 RV spaces, an office with store, a clubhouse and three swimming pools."

Every day, Bussey — and a few hundred others who live in Butterfield Ranch — must boil their water to kill any potentially harmful contaminants.

The owner of this property confirmed the reason for the order was E. coli present in the water. It is unclear how the bacteria got in the water system.

"[It's] dramatically affected my life," she said.

"You need water to live, so it's extremely important," said Hilary Ward, the executive director of Backcountry Communities Thriving. "Boiling the water is one thing, but then when you're living in 100-plus [degrees]. How do you cool it?"

Along with other organizations, Backcountry Communities Thriving has spearheaded water donations to the hundreds who live at Butterfield Ranch, but she said it isn't enough.

"I think being so far away from the city, it is hard to get people to come out and work to get out to get help out here to get services," Ward said. "It is part of living out in the county. We understand that, but I do think that there is an inequity between what the treatment is in the county as opposed to the city."

Matthew Philbin has owned Butterfield Ranch since 2018. He told Team 10 that multiple water samples are tested in a lab every month. He said they are working on the issues now.

"A state-of-the-art treatment and automated water quality monitoring system is almost designed and permitted then will be constructed immediately," Philbin said.

He said there has been "clean and reliable water service for the past 60 years with minimal issues until recently."

According to Safe Drinking Water Information online — data provided by the State Water Board's Division of Drinking Water — recorded violations at Butterfield Ranch date back to 2005. The website has not been updated to this latest violation, but of those listed, nine were related to coliform. The Environmental Protection Agency calls coliform "an indicator that other, potentially harmful fecal bacteria could be present."

According to Philbin and the data online, these issues were eventually fixed and compliance was reached. Philbin said most improvement projects are already completed with the final component scheduled for later this month.

Until all is fixed, the boil water order remains.

"It's bull---," Bussey said. "Everybody up here is handicapped or disabled one way or another, or elderly."

Ward is urging attention to the plight of those living in the rural parts of our country.

"My hope is that the corrective actions will get done as soon as they can," Ward said. "[I hope] the water system will be fixed and that this community can then rely on having clean fresh water."

Governor Lamont Launches State Grant Program to Assist Communities With Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change

September 20, 2022

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Ned Lamont today announced the launch of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Climate Resilience Fund, a state grant program that will help communities in the state plan and prepare for the effects of climate change. The fund is an historic state-level investment that will help communities initiate planning and envision projects for community climate resilience that can be implemented and constructed with federal funds.

A total of \$10 million in state bond funding will be available in this first round. At least 40% of the funding will be prioritized for vulnerable communities, including environmental justice communities that will feel the effects of climate change first and worst. Creation of the DEEP Climate Resilience Fund was an action initiated by Governor Lamont's Executive Order 21-3, which he signed in December 2021 and was implemented at the recommendation of the 2021 Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) report.

"This program will help Connecticut's communities get to the front of the line for the historic investment our federal government is making to construct climate resilient infrastructure and implement nature-based solutions," **Governor Lamont said**. "Once implemented, these projects will protect our homes and businesses, keep the lights on, contribute to a clean and healthy environment for our urban communities, and provide habitat for our fish and wildlife. This investment of state bond funds is a down payment on that future, catalyzing Connecticut's project pipeline through inclusive community climate planning."

"Federal funding for climate resilience has grown by 400%, with more than \$49 billion in funding available from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act," **DEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes said**. "Those federal dollars have the potential to transform our communities, but we'll only receive them if we have compelling applications to submit. DEEP is proud to be helping Connecticut communities from the beginning, by funding planning assistance and community engagement that will build a pipeline of compelling, impactful projects to help keep our communities safe."

The DEEP Climate Resilience Fund creates two funding opportunity tracks:

Track 1 – Planning: Will provide funding for comprehensive climate resilience planning at either the regional, municipal, or neighborhood (hyper-local) level.

Track 2 – Project Development: Will provide funding for municipalities and other related entities, to advance identified resilience projects to the concept stage and to be ready to apply for federal funding for implementation.

Together, these two funding tracks will create the climate resilience project pipeline, composed of plans and project concept designs that can win competitive federal grants to substantially fund implementation and construction. In fact, funding under this program may be used to prepare those federal grant applications. All grantees are also required to develop a local match funding strategy to meet the non-federal match requirements of federal funding opportunities. The local match strategy may include using the stormwater authority and climate resilience board expansions authorized under Governor Lamont's Public Act 21-115.

Investing in climate mitigation and adaptation is critical. By 2050, Connecticut will experience stronger storms with stronger winds and heavier rain, longer, more frequent droughts, up to 20 inches of sea level rise along the coast, increased frequency of coastal flooding with levels like those seen in Superstorm Sandy every five to ten years, and an average of 20 additional days per year that are over 90°F. Connecticut is already feeling these impacts with heat waves experienced this summer and the record-breaking rainfall of storms last year.

The DEEP Climate Resilience Fund strongly encourages planning and project development that incorporates elements of nature to reduce flooding and erosion risks while protecting and preserving natural habitats. These "nature-based solutions" work at a neighborhood and community-scale and will preserve town and city coastal beaches for swimming, wetlands for birding and paddling, and rivers for fishing, while also giving flood water a place to go so that roads, homes, and businesses don't flood.

DEEP to host a virtual launch event and webinar on Friday, September 23 at noon

A launch event and webinar for the DEEP Climate Resilience Fund will be held on Friday, September 23, 2022, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. Remarks will be given by Commissioner Dykes and members of the Governor's Council on Climate Change. Those who are interested in this state grant program are strongly encouraged to participate. To register for this virtual event, [click here](#).

Several other webinars will be held throughout September and October to assist grant applicants. For a full schedule of webinars, [click here](#).

Track 1 applications are due on November 10, 2022. Track 2 applications must be received by December 1, 2022.

For complete details on the DEEP Climate Resilience Fund, including application information, [click here](#).

Land Trust Celebrates Summer Hill Property

By Ben Rayner - 09/26/2022 – ZIP06 website

All the way back in June of 2017, the Madison Land Conservation Trust (MLCT) became the proud owners of two new parcels of land in North Madison. According to the MLCT, the parcels were purchased from the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority and connect three of their existing properties, creating one large conservation area with over 300 contiguous acres of protected woodlands and watercourses.

Chair of the MLCT Outreach Committee and MLCT Board member Julie Ainsworth said the generosity of donors combined with a grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program made it possible for the organization to raise the down payment needed to close on the 2017 purchase. This past June, the mortgage papers for that loan on the Summer Hill Preserve property were burned in a ceremony to celebrate the group's ownership of the parcel.

Ainsworth said there were several reasons why the organization is excited about this important aspect of the process and why the parcel is so critical to the MLCT's mission.

"For years, three of our properties—the Bailey Trails Preserve on the Hammonasset River (along Summer Hill Road), the Summer Hill Preserve (just north and east of Route 80), and the Indian Rock Shelters Preserve (a little farther north, and west of Summer Hill Road)—have drawn hikers to discover the wonder of our local woods, rivers, and uplands. At the same time, these beautiful areas provided protection for numerous species of fish, birds, mammals, and plants—some of them species of concern," Ainsworth said. "What is neat about these two parcels that were purchased is that these properties now link together in a contiguous greenway, because Summer Hill property is connected to other Land Trust properties, so there is a 300-acre area that goes right from the Hammonasset reservoir all the way along the Hammonasset River."

Ainsworth said the concept and implementation of contiguous greenways is a crucial factor for Land Trusts, as they can provide a safe corridor for all forms of wildlife, from mammals, to birds, to insects, and plants. The paying off of the loan is also a notable feat for the organization, according to Ainsworth.

"Preserving this greenway and protecting the Hammonasset watershed is really critical," said Ainsworth. "As a non-profit we rely on grants and donations, and we are not a "town" group so we rely entirely on these donations and grants to fund actions like this. So, to be able to pay off a mortgage is significant because it frees up funding for other properties."

Fillmore McPherson, former Madison First Selectman and current vice president of finance for the MLCT, said one of the goals of the MLCT is to make residents aware of how important these acquisitions are to the town.

"Obviously, protecting the Hammonasset watershed has been one of our most important missions," said McPherson. "Some of these parcels start up near Route 80, but are critical to protecting the Sound and the marsh areas that these waterways meander through. This parcel is very important because it protects a major piece of the watershed and because it connects with other Land Trust properties. We have seen that smaller, fractured parcels of preserved land are less effective in stabilizing habitat and promoting wildlife, than larger contiguous properties like the one on Summer Hill. The Regional Water Authority has been very helpful in recent years in helping Land Trusts acquire property, and helping us finance it. They provided an interest free five-year payment plan in this particular instance, and have really helped with the whole process."

There will be a stargazing event sponsored by MLCT on Sunday, Oct. 9th at 7 p.m. at the Madison Surf Club, the Autumn Moonlight Walk. Bring a flashlight and join MLCT members for an evening stroll on the Garvan Trail at the Surf Club. A bagpiper will lead the way. After the walk, refreshments will be served in the Surf Club building, and members of the Astronomical Society of New Haven will set up telescopes for viewing the moon, planets and stars in the night-time sky. Meet by the flag pole in front of the Surf Club.