

Establishing Common Ground

Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership

Prepared by Kevin Martin (Highstead) with special thanks to the following partners for their contributions: Bruce Beebe (Wilton Land Conservation Trust), Mary Buchanan (Highstead), Rich Chiaramonte (Stamford Land Conservation Trust), Bob Ekinrode (Newtown Forest Association), Ed Faison (Highstead), Christina Gibson (Highstead), Bill Labich (Highstead), Bill Kraekel (Aspetuck Land Trust), Mary Ellen Lemay (Trumbull Conservation Commission), Donna Merrill (Wilton Conservation Commission), John O'Neill (Bethel Land Trust), and Jane Ross (Redding Land Trust).

We are Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership

Regional Conservation Partnerships (RCPs) are informal networks of people representing private and public organizations and agencies working together to develop and implement a shared, long-term conservation vision across town, state, and international boundaries.

The Fairfield County RCP (FCRCP) works to protect large-scale ecological processes that provide us with clean air, clean water, and native biodiversity. Much like these processes, our work transcends political and organizational boundaries across New England and eastern New York.

FCRCP partners are protecting large landscapes in unprecedented ways. We identify adjoining areas of land that are most valuable to protect from development and make sure they remain connected through conservation and land stewardship. Our work is firmly rooted in the needs of both wildlife and local communities.

Our mission is to increase the pace and scope of conservation, and to promote quality land stewardship in our area.

You are invited
to join us!

For more information, please
visit our website or contact:
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Conservation

Our land trust and conservation commission partners pursue conservation easements and land acquisitions for permanent protection in the region. We reach out and provide education to landowners to find conservation solutions that work for them.

FCRCP also provides project endorsement for proposals that will secure or restore undeveloped lands of high conservation value. These projects connect important natural resources and fund or support similar activities.

Woods Forums

FCRCP partners facilitate community discussions called Woods Forums to engage landowners with key issues in conservation and stewardship:

Managing for
wildlife & safety

Managing invasive
& native plants

Planning for
the future

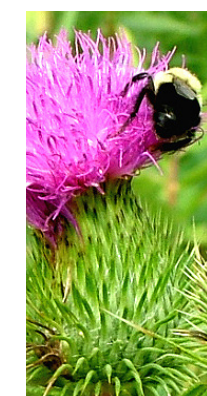
Stewardship

FCRCP offers resources to promote stewardship that restores and protects the natural functions of the land and sustaining ecosystem services.



Reducing solid land cover by implementing permeable pavement, rain gardens, tree pits, or other green infrastructure. This minimizes runoff into streams and reduces flooding.

Restoring river buffer zones creates areas of root beds that slow runoff flows and filter things like fertilizers and pesticides. These areas absorb excess nutrients and pollution which harm rivers and lakes.



Planting pollinator habitats, areas of native flowering plants with nesting areas nearby, provide nourishment and refuge for pollinators. Healthy pollinator populations sustain many farmed and wild plant species.

Removing invasive vegetation and replanting native species provides habitat for native species. This creates sanctuaries for species affected by habitat loss and degradation.

Why conserve land?

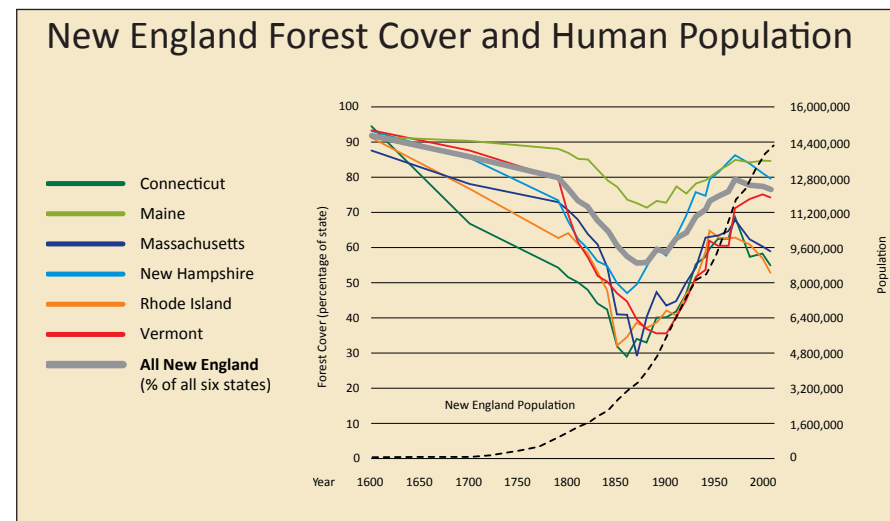
Our vast forests, open space, and farmlands provide clean air and water, wildlife habitat, climate change mitigation, and flood resilience to our region. They also provide local communities with healthy outdoor recreation, nutritious food, wood products, and jobs.



FCRCP partners protect our shared natural resources to strengthen connections between people and the land for generations to come. Conserving land balances our needs for natural services, quality open space, commercial development, and residential development.

Wildlands and Woodlands Vision

The Wildlands and Woodlands vision inspired FCRCP and many other RCPs to increase the pace and scope of the conservation of our shared environment for generations to come. This vision calls for a long-term conservation effort to retain at least 70 percent of New England as forest.



After a 100-year re-greening that nearly brought forest cover back to pre-European settlement levels, New England forest cover is in decline in every state again.

The W&W Vision: **70%** of New England forests permanently protected



To learn more about the Wildlands and Woodlands vision, scan here (QR) or go to www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org.

Foster D et al. 2010. Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the New England Landscape. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Forest; Harvard University Press.

Mitigating Climate Impacts

Connecticut's climate is quickly shifting, but natural land can help us mitigate damaging impacts. FCRCP partners conserve the natural processes that protect us from the infrastructure damage, threats to business, and water shortages that result from climate change and sea level rise.

Natural Systems and their Services

Salt Marshes

Shield against storm surges

Wetlands

Absorb floods
Filter the water supply

Watersheds

Buffer against droughts
Control floods

New climate-related dangers can be addressed by a regional effort to reduce impacts on our communities. FCRCP works with regional planning groups and governments, such as WestCOG, MetroCOG, and all our cities and towns to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Federal Emergency Management Agency. 2006. NFIP Community Rating System: A Local Official's Guide to Saving Lives, Preventing Property Damage, and Reducing the Cost of Flood Insurance. (FEMA B-573 / 09044-2).

U.S. Global Change Research Program. 2014. National Climate Assessment: Northeast.

Western Connecticut Council of Governments. 2016. Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Draft 2016-2021 Update for the Southwestern Region.