



Promoting Active Agriculture while Integrating Park & Open Space Planning

Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association
2019 Conference

November 26, 2019

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Farm Properties & Open Space Planning
- Farming in CT
- Farm Preservation in CT
- Open Space Preservation in CT
- CT Recreation Trends
- Farm Properties and Recreation
- Case Study
- Funding Opportunities
- Q & A



PRESENTATION GOALS

- Recognize Opportunities for Farm Properties & Recreation
- Understand That Farm Preservation Can Include Recreation
- Understand The Advantages and Obstacles In The Adaptation Of Active Farm & Former Farm Properties
- Identify Funding Programs and Opportunities



FARM PROPERTIES & PARKS

What's the connection?

- Farmland has historically been diminishing at an alarming rate
- CT farming has been growing over the last two decades bucking the national trend
- Resurgence in local products and connection to agricultural practices
- Past use of former farmlands typically focused on creating field space for active recreation
- Potential throughout all landscapes: urban, suburban and rural



Seattle's First Urban Food Forest Will Be Open To Foragers

March 1, 2012 - 5:35 PM ET

KRISTOFOR HUSTED



FARM PROPERTIES & OPEN SPACE

- Protection of open space and active farms is a priority throughout the state
- Open space includes:
 - Farms
 - Forests
 - Meadows
 - Waterbodies
- Open Space can be privately or publically owned (town, state, Federal)
- Park and Recreation departments can partner with farmers, land trusts, conservationists, and schools to provide unique programming and open space protection
 - Lease
 - Conservation easements
 - Fee-simple purchases
- Agritourism can be a revenue generator

FARMING IN CONNECTICUT

- Approximately 22,000 jobs
- Multiple Sectors
 - Nursery
 - Fruit
 - Vegetable
 - Dairy
 - Shellfish
 - Apiaries
 - Maple Syrup
 - Aquaculture
- In 2018 CT had a 15% increase in beginning farmers
- Generally new farms are between 5-10 acres

ECONOMIC
IMPACT: **\$4 Billion**

157
FARMERS'
MARKETS

TOTAL
FARMS:
5,977

MARKET VALUE:
72% CROPS | **28%** LIVESTOCK

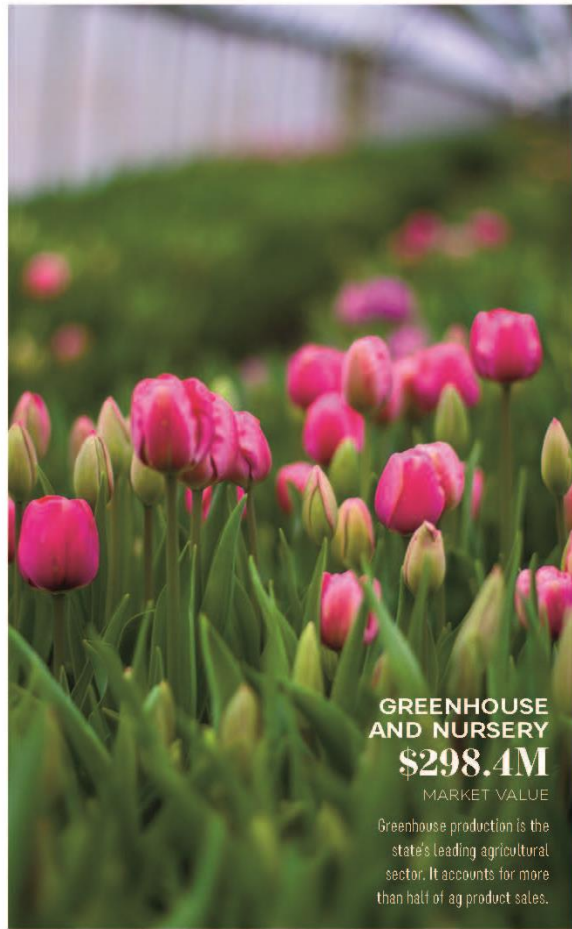
AVERAGE
FARM SIZE: **73 ACRES**

381.5K
ACRES OF
FARMLAND

STATE FFA
MEMBERSHIP
3,095

What's Growing in Connecticut

A glimpse at the state's leading agriculture products



GREENHOUSE AND NURSERY
\$298.4M
MARKET VALUE

Greenhouse production is the state's leading agricultural sector. It accounts for more than half of ag product sales.



MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS
\$81M
MARKET VALUE

Connecticut is home to more than 100 dairy farm families and 20,170 head of dairy cattle that produce 427 million pounds of milk annually.



VEGETABLES
\$40.6M
MARKET VALUE

In 2017, Connecticut farmers harvested 9,250 acres of vegetables, including potatoes, sweet potatoes and melons.

TOBACCO
\$26.8M
MARKET VALUE

A total of 46 farms produce the state's tobacco crop. In 2017, they harvested 3.8 million pounds of tobacco.



FORESTRY AND LOGGING
\$25M
SALES

Approximately 1.8 million acres of land, or nearly 60 percent of the state, is covered in forest.

FRUITS, TREE NUTS AND BERRIES
\$25M
MARKET VALUE

In 2017, Connecticut farmers harvested 1,800 acres of apples, which resulted in a total production of 29.5 million pounds of the fruit.



AQUACULTURE
\$23.2M
MARKET VALUE

Aquaculture production has expanded significantly since 2007 by nearly 100 percent in nominal sales. Shellfish generated the majority of sales in this sector.

CROPS AND HAY
\$13M
MARKET VALUE

In 2018, the state's harvested acres of hay increased from 48,000 to 52,000 acres.



CATTLE AND CALVES
\$11.7M
MARKET VALUE

Cattle ranching and farming has had a nearly 100 percent change in direct sales since 2007, according to a 2015 study on Economic Impacts of Connecticut's Agricultural Industry.

MAPLE PRODUCTS
\$1.2M
CASH RECEIPTS

In 2018, Connecticut's 73,000 maple syrup taps produced 18,000 gallons of syrup in 43 days.

FIND MORE ONLINE
Learn more about agricultural crops and commodities in Connecticut online at CTagriculture.com.



CHRISTMAS TREES
\$4.9M
MARKET VALUE

Connecticut ranks ninth in the world for Christmas trees, producing 6,049 in 2017.



FARM PRESERVATION IN CT

■ Organizations

- CT Farmland Trust
- American Farmland Trust
- Working Lands Alliance

■ Programs

- Farmland Preservation Programs
- Federal Farmland Protection
- State Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program
- State Agricultural Viability Grants Programs
- Agricultural Conservation Easements
- Urban Green Community Garden Program

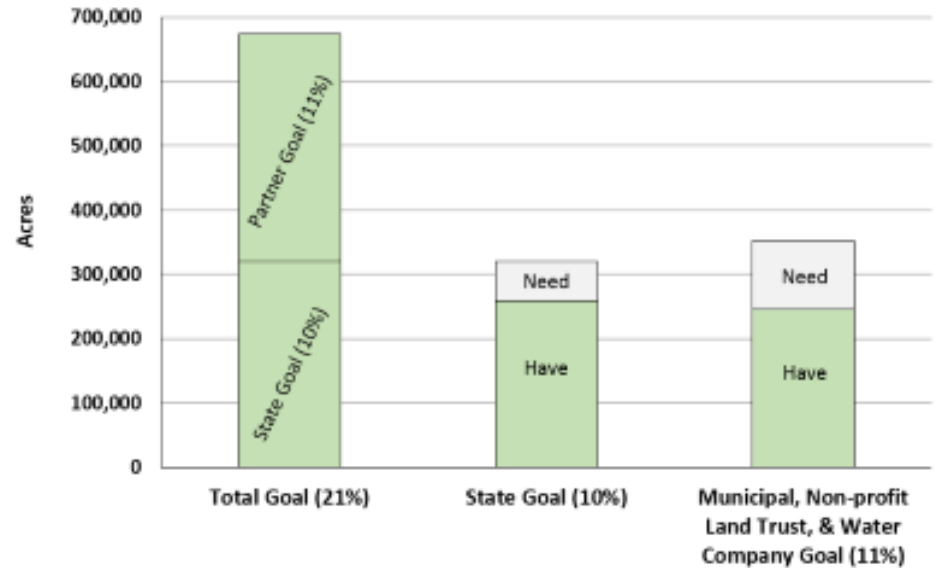
■ Additional Funding:

- Fee simple purchase through town referendum
- State Bonding
- Connecticut Investment Alliance
- Land Donations



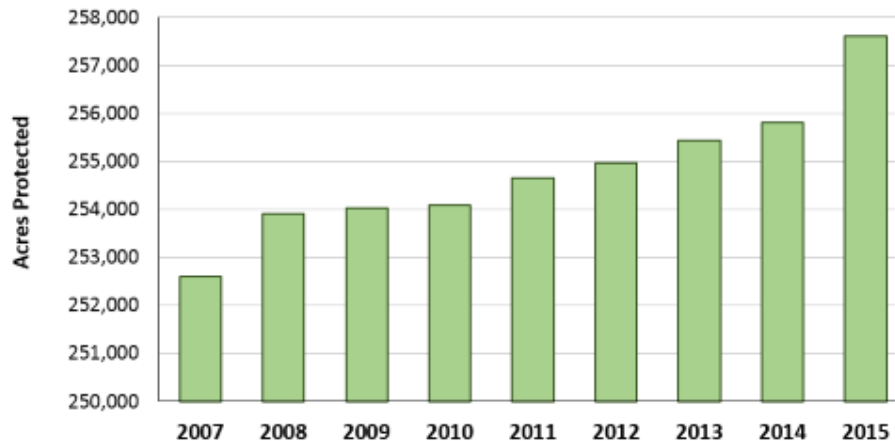
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION IN CT

- Acquisition Is Key To Preservation
- CT Goal Of 21% Of Total Land Mass



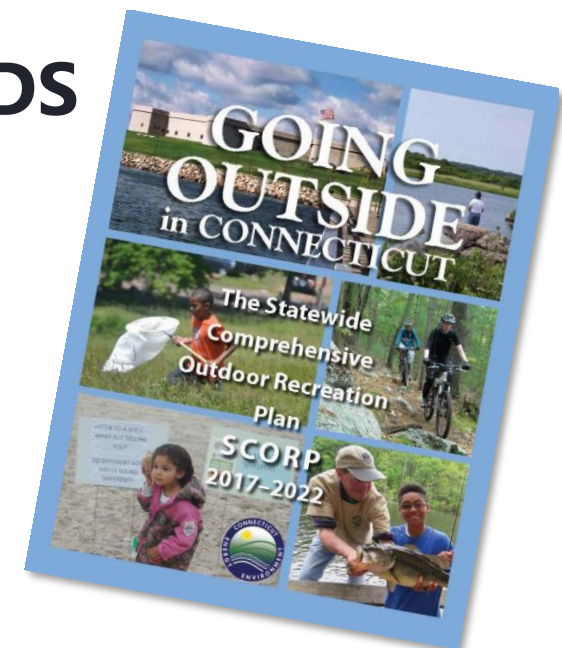
Connecticut Open Space Acquisition Goals

State Open Space Progress
Acres Acquired as Open Space by DEEP: 2007-2015

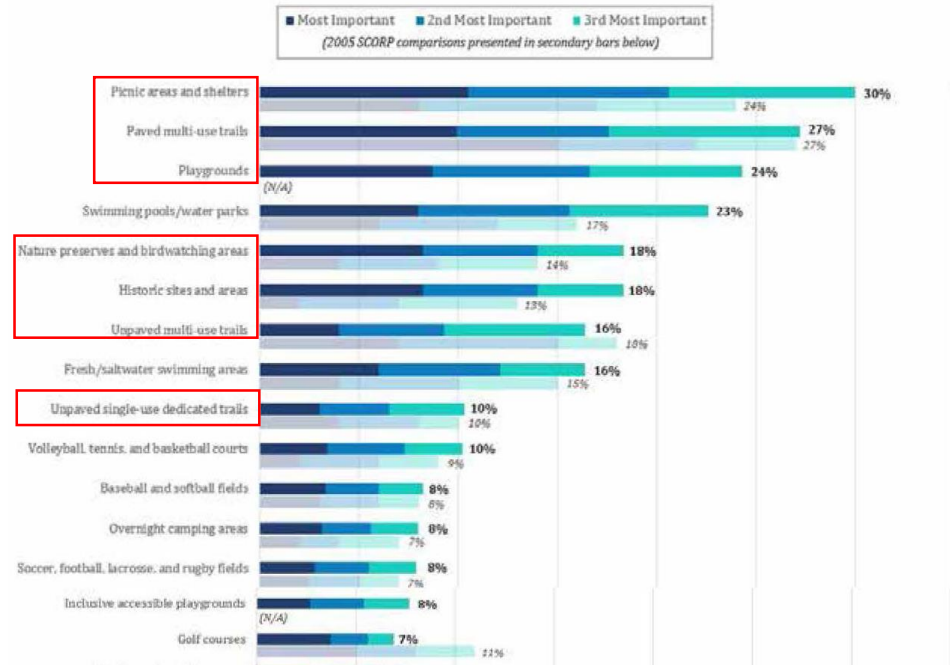


CT RECREATION TRENDS

- Results from DEEP Statewide comprehensive outdoor Recreation Plan SCORP 2017-2022
- Activities popularity predicted by local officials:
 - ↑ Walking/Hiking
 - ↑ Day/Summer Camps
 - ↑ Disc golf
 - ↑ Cycling
 - ↓ Organized sports
- Most Important facilities to Develop:
 - Picnic
 - Trails
 - Playgrounds
 - Nature Preserves
 - Historic Sites



Most Important Facilities to Develop in Municipal-Owned Outdoor Recreation Areas
by percentage of respondents; three choices could be made



FARM PROPERTIES & RECREATION

- Inherent connection between humans and farming
- Protected farm properties can help fill the growing needs for recreation and still provide an active agricultural landscape
- This combination makes sense and can make money = Agritourism
- Safe well thought out public access is key



FARMS ARE FUN!

- Successful programs throughout the state and country

- Brooskvale Park Hamden, CT
- Westmoor Park West Hartford, CT
- Bauer Park Madison, CT

- Typical activities:

- Trails
 - Hiking, Biking, Multipurpose
- Playgrounds
- Community Gardens
- Wildlife observation
- Geocaching
- Photography



Join All The Outdoor Fun at...

Westmoor Park
WEST HARTFORD HUMAN & LEISURE SERVICES

SUMMER NATURE DAY CAMP!

Trained Naturalist staff will lead your child through hands on activities exploring the woods, fields, and ponds of the park. Campers also spend time learning about farm animals and gardening.

DAY CAMP PROGRAMS:

- 8 Weeks from June 25–August 17
- Space is Limited
- Call for Availability and Registration

For Ages 3-13 Years

119 Flagg Rd • West Hartford
860.561.8260 • www.westmoorpark.org



CONSIDERATIONS FOR UTILIZING FARM PROPERTIES FOR RECREATION

- Safety
- Rec Programs not interfering with active farming
- Public access
- Preservation of natural character
- Historic structures
- Environmental concerns related to past agricultural use
- Plan ahead to preserve interconnected lands and reduce fragmentation



CASE STUDY



SOUTHINGTON HERITAGE FARM PROPERTIES

- Two small scale town-owned farm properties with limited production activities
 - Pleasant View Stables
 - Grosky Farm
- Desire to preserve town's farming heritage
- Creation of the Farm Heritage Committee
- Key master plan objectives:
 - Farm preservation
 - Environmental stewardship
 - Education
 - Training



EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Pleasant View Stables Property
 - 7.5 acres
 - Historically a horse stable and hay field
 - All structures demolished
 - Proximity to middle school and senior center
 - Current use: School garden & lease to local farmer for vegetable production



Pleasant View Stables Property
427 Pleasant St
Southington CT

Aerial imagery provided by the Town of Southington.
All aerial imagery provided by the State of CT.

0 75 100 150
Feet
1 inch = 50 feet



MILONE &
MACBROOM

PLEASANT VIEW



EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Grosky Farm Property
 - 3.5 acres
 - Residential structure demolished
 - New Farm stand at corner to replace one removed
 - Barn intact but in poor condition
 - Current use: Leased to local farmer as a hay field



Grosky Farm Property
752 Berlin St
Southington CT

Aerial imagery provided by the Town of Southington, CT. All imagery is provided by the Town of Southington, CT.

0 15 30 60 90
Feet
1 inch = 30 feet



MILONE &
MACBROOM

GROSKY FARM



PLEASANT VIEW CONCEPTS

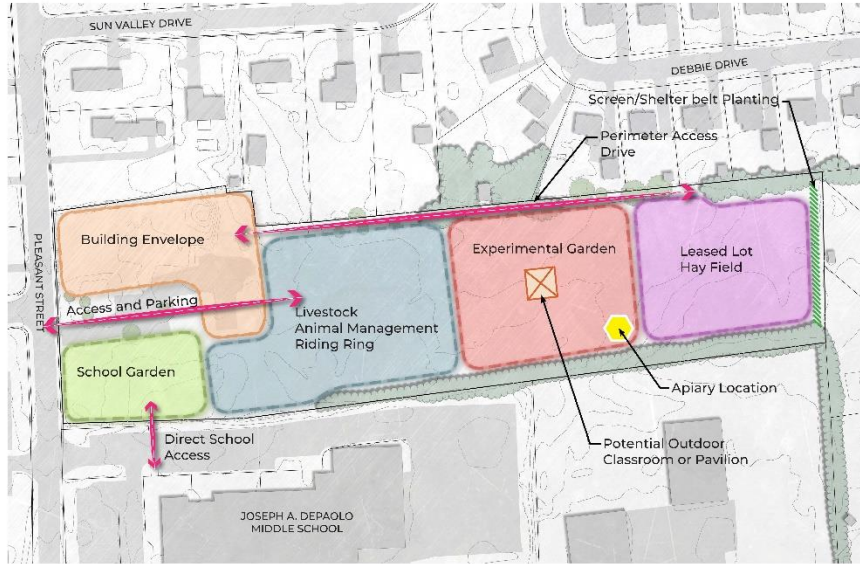


DIAGRAM - A

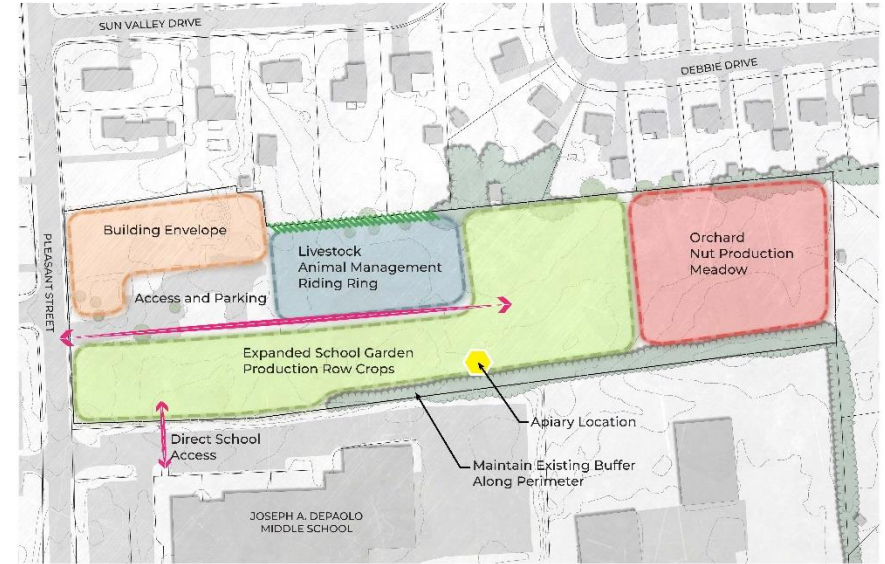


DIAGRAM - B

- Potential Building Envelope Structures:
- Community Building
 - Barn
 - Storage Shed
 - Solar Panels
 - Open-Air Pavilion
 - Outdoor Classroom

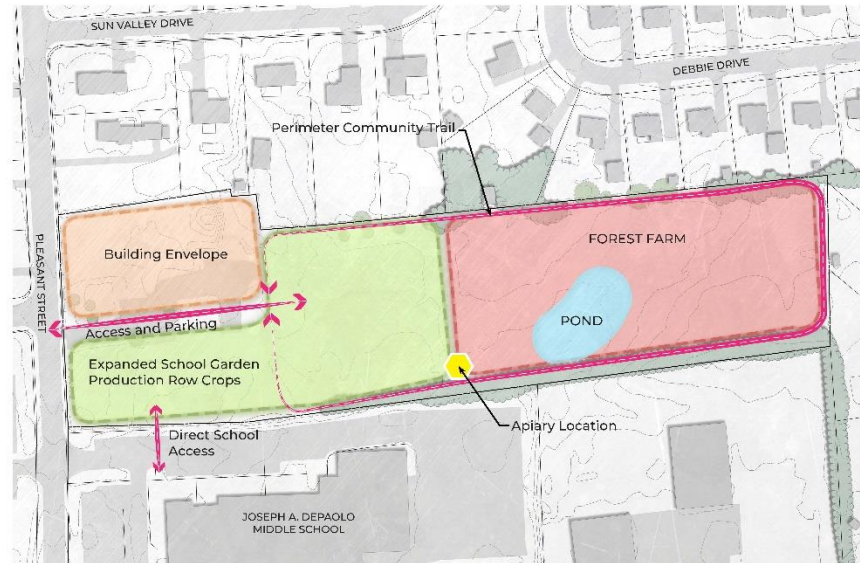
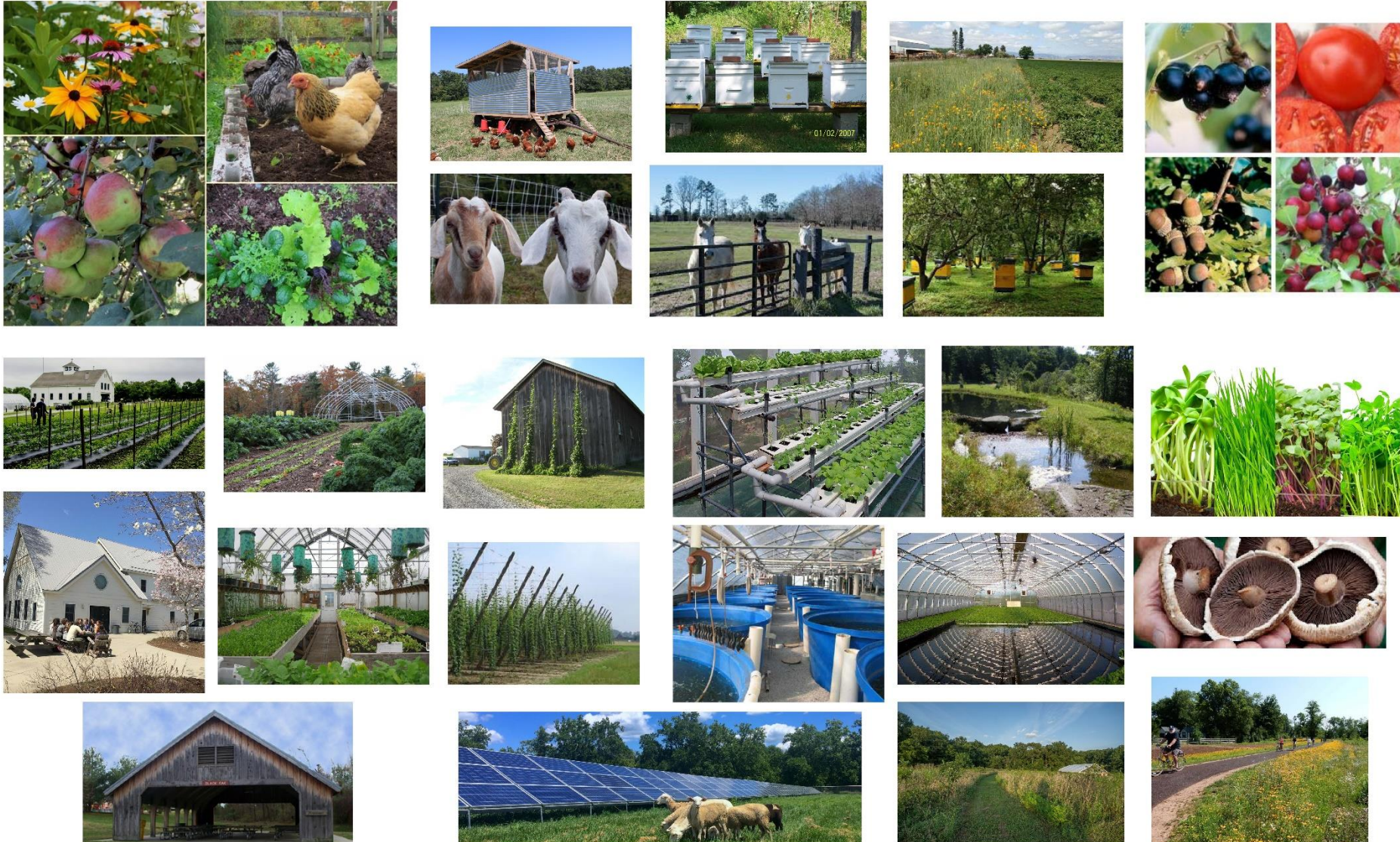


DIAGRAM - C

PLEASANT VIEW ACTIVITIES



GROSKY FARM CONCEPT



GROSKY FARM ACTIVITIES



PLEASANT VIEW MASTER PLAN



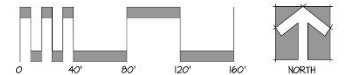
MASTER PLAN

PLEASANT VIEW FARM

PLEASANT STREET
SOUTHINGTON, CT DECEMBER 26, 2018



99 REALTY DRIVE
CHESHIRE, CT 06830
303.971.1753
WWW.MMNC.COM

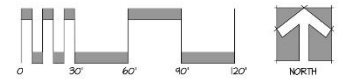


GROSKY MASTER PLAN



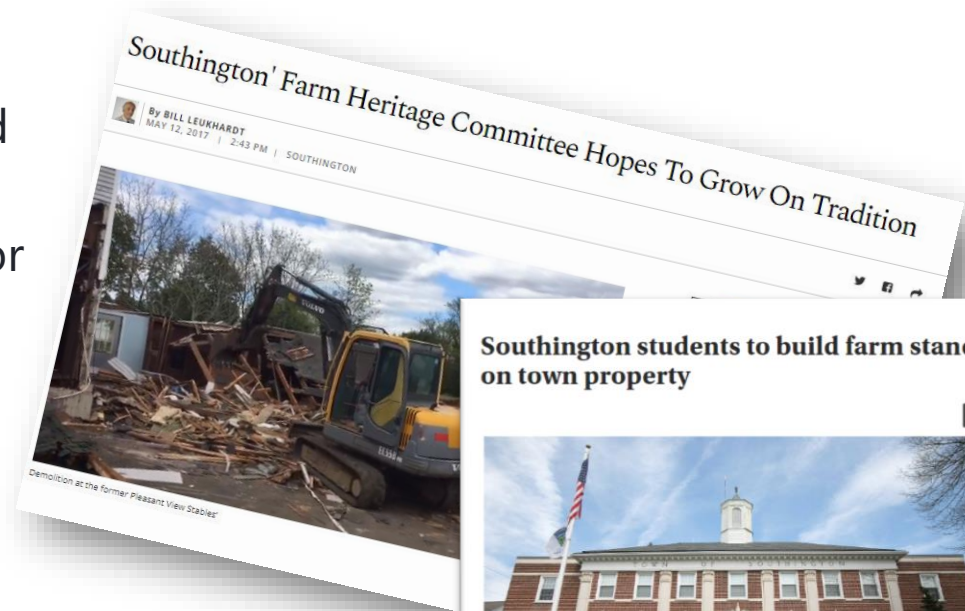
MASTER PLAN

GROSKY FARM
BERLIN STREET
SOUTHINGTON, CT DECEMBER 26, 2018



CASE STUDY SUMMARY

- Pleasant View
 - Focus on teaching, training and community access to facilities
 - Provide Test plots and incubator space
 - Soil improvements necessary
- Grosky Farm
 - Continue as small-scale farm
 - Support use of farm stand
 - Maintain hayfield operations
 - Plan for winter use of site
 - Construct loop trail



Southington students to build farm stand on town property



Southington unveils new plans for local farm land

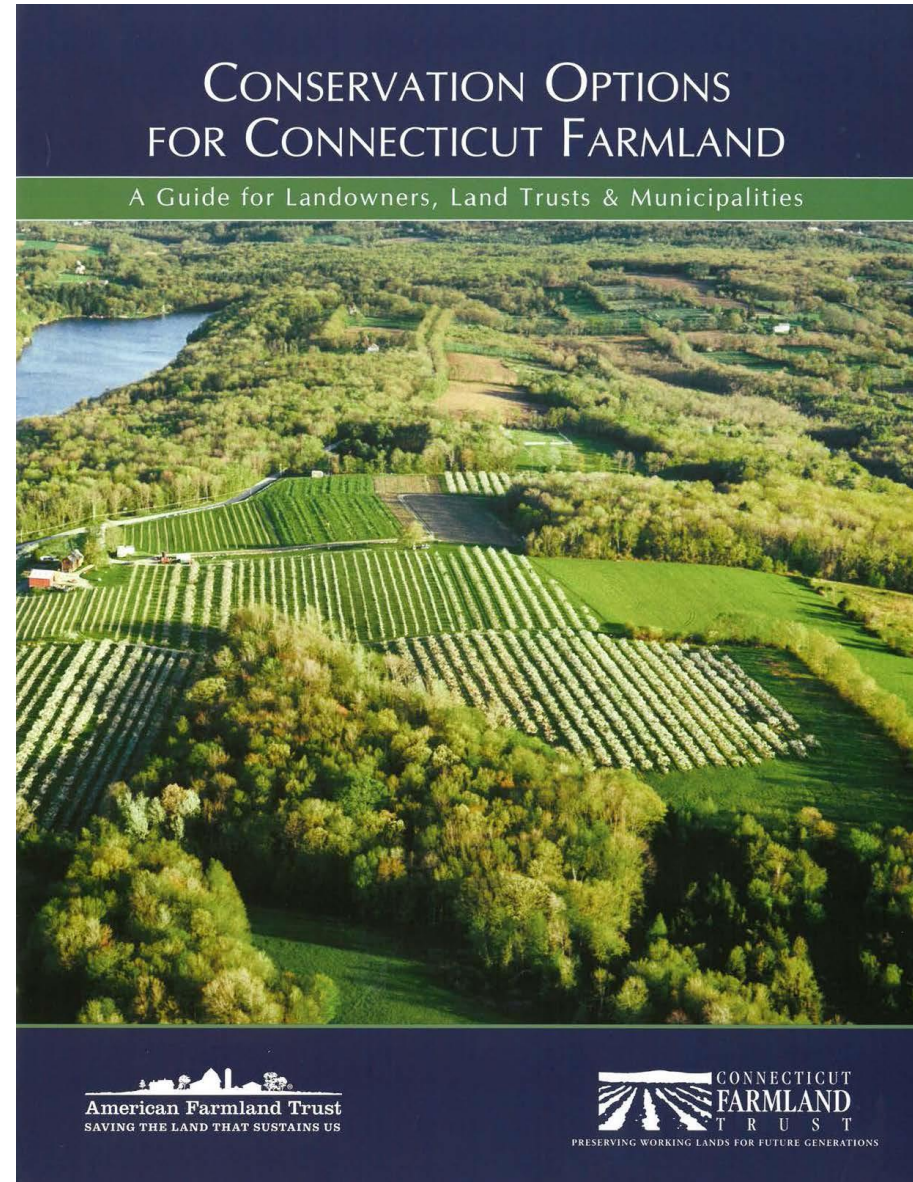
by jgoralski • April 6, 2016 • 0 Comments



OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESERVE, PROTECT & ENHANCE

Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program

- Created in 1978
- Purpose: State Purchase of agricultural easements on private farmlands
- Currently 370 farms on approximately 44,500 acres has been permanently protected
- State goal of preserving 130,000 acres of active farmland
- Program typically does not require public access



OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESERVE, PROTECT & ENHANCE

The Federal Farmland Protection Program

- Agricultural conservation easement program administered by the natural resource conservation service (NRCS)
- Purpose: State Purchase of agricultural easements on private farmlands
- Program available to municipalities, non-governmental agencies, and Native American tribes to protect working agricultural lands
- NRCS may provide 50% of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement



OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESERVE, PROTECT & ENHANCE

Urban Green community Garden Program

- Funding to develop open space for public enjoyment and education
- Program is administered through the state Open space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program
- Applicants must be municipalities for sites within the limits of "Distressed Municipalities" or a "Targeted investment Community"



Connecticut Humanities Grant Program

- Small Scale funding for educational, institutional, interpretive programming
- Can be open space related

OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESERVE, PROTECT & ENHANCE

Connecticut Agricultural Viability Grant

- Two Grants
 - Farm Viability Grant for Municipalities
 - Farm Transition Grant
 - Municipal use only as a matching grant program for capital projects or planning projects
 - Not for land acquisition

“Our partnering municipalities, COGs, and agricultural nonprofits have used these funds in highly productive ways to grow and support farming while benefiting their communities as a whole,”

Agriculture Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky

THANK YOU



For additional info feel free to contact

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