



Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

Field Visit to the Kycia Farm Property of the Town of Wethersfield, CT Highland Street and Collier Road Approximately 31 total acres

Post Visit Report by the DEEP Forestry Division

Present Parties: Jim Woodworth, Brian Kenny, Will Adams, Lauren Pagani, Mark Alpert, Paul Bourdin, representing the Town of Wethersfield and the Friends of Kycia Farm, Inc.; and David Irvin, Central District Service Forester; October 21, 2025, starting 10:00 am.



Stewardship Objectives

1. Retain fields, shrublands and forest in undeveloped open space
2. Improve forest health and wildlife habitats
3. Address extensive invasive issues
4. Enhance public recreational and educational opportunities through sustainable agriculture (including community farming, pollinator gardening) and forest/wildlife habitat management.

All photos included were taken on the town property October 21, 2025, unless otherwise stated.

Cover Photo

At left, this old apple tree stands symbolic of both the local farm heritage and the forests of our past. Its hollow state today provides excellent habitat for any number of wildlife species.

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

This is an initial evaluation of the vegetation at 3 different nearly contiguous parcels owned by the Town of Wethersfield, known as the Kycia Farm. The combined and rounded area of the three parcels together on Highland Street and Collier Road is 31 acres (see maps following this narrative report). Kycia Farm is located in the geographic southwest quarter of Wethersfield, adjacent to the Highcrest School. It was purchased by the town approximately 7 years ago, and was an operating farm of the Kycia family for over a century, starting in 1913.

It is pertinent to note that this is not a management plan, nor is it intended to substitute for such. It is a recap based on a tour of the property without collection of necessary data used to formulate clearer objectives of a management plan. Recommendations are based on a limited site visit and qualitative observations. This document is intended as an introduction to possibilities and options identified thus far. There is no obligation for the town to follow through with any recommendations.

The Kycia Farm now provides the town of Wethersfield with valuable open space, which is rare in this highly developed part of town. It provides a local place to visit natural space away from the streets and neighborhoods, and to enjoy local gatherings and events and even community farming and pollinator gardening. It provides a refuge for wildlife in the area, and even a travel corridor that continues for at least 1-1/2 miles to the north through other property--see map, the next page. The parcels that include this corridor are highlighted in green, and this is also possible in unhighlighted parcels to the southeast of Kycia (note that the golf course is not open space and habitat, and is only included because of periphery forest within the parcel). It would be valuable to keep Kycia Farm in protected open space.

There is also an official Connecticut Greenway that passes down Highland Street through this property. The Wethersfield Heritage Trail, designated in 2021, is a cross-town 10-mile long bike and foot route that showcases many of the historic town's open spaces and unique heritage. For more information on Greenways: [Official Connecticut Greenways](#).

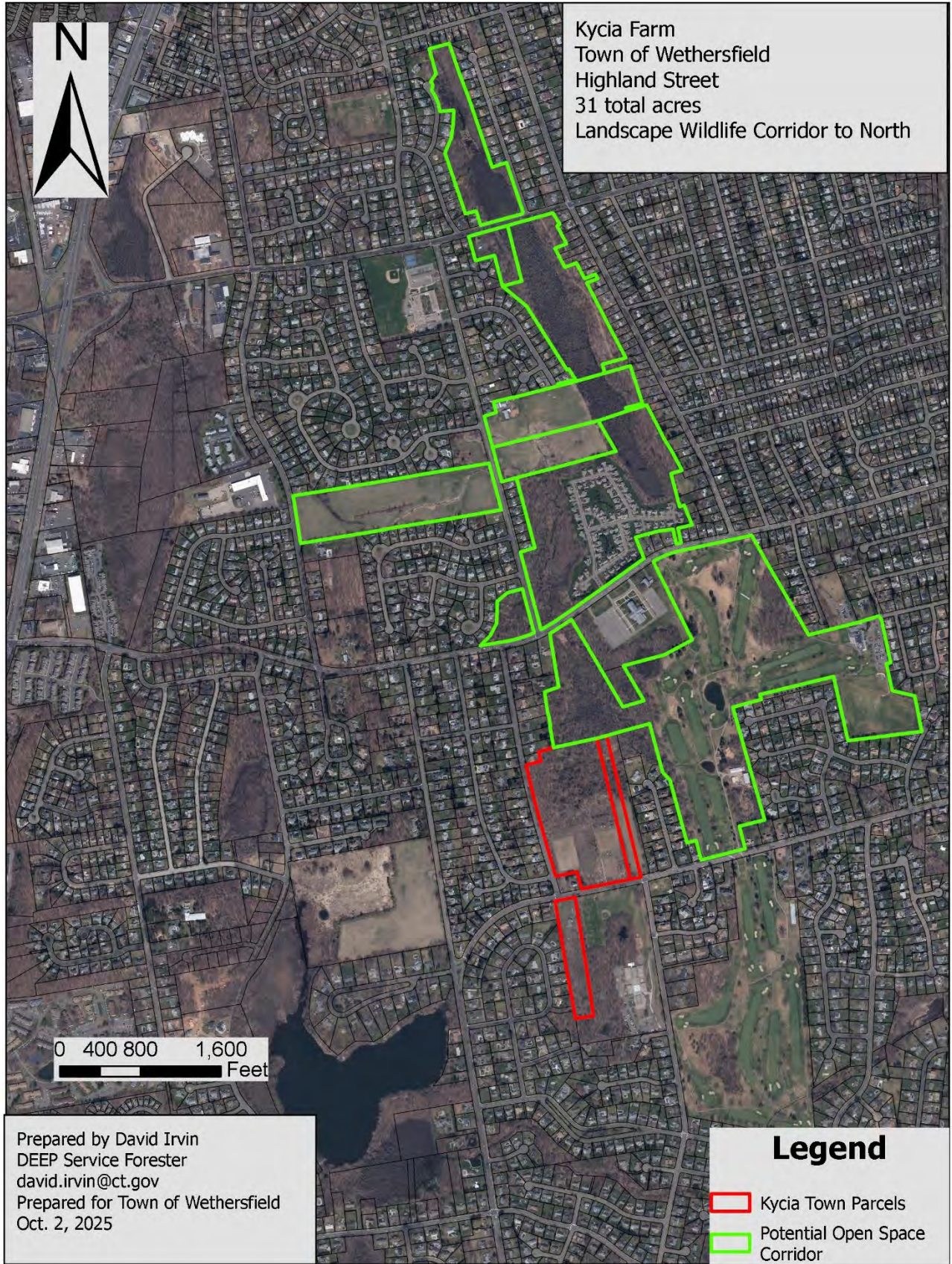
The CT DEEP Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) has no state-listed species of Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern status on the property, based on an automated preliminary site assessment. Prior to management work, it is recommended that the town get a full NDDDB review as a first step [About the Natural Diversity Data Base \(ct.gov\)](#). Despite the lack of specifically listed species at present, the town should keep in mind that turtles of most kinds face threats in our state, as do bats (from their white-nose fungal disease), and more species of these animals are increasingly becoming listed. Amphibians and invertebrates specific to wetlands, waterbodies, and watercourses are also sensitive and face threats from development and alteration of their environments. Many migratory birds are in decline in the state for multiple reasons, including loss of habitat. The lack of natural habitats in the vicinity increases the proportional value of an individual open space like Kycia Farm. Members of the Friends of Kycia Farm report sighting bald eagles, bears, owls, coyotes, deer, bobcats and beaver on the property.

As in the case of most of Wethersfield, the Kycia Farm lies within the Connecticut Main Stem Regional Drainage Basin, which is part of the broader Connecticut River Major Drainage Basin. Collier Brook lies to the northeast of Kycia. The 1860 Reservoir lies less than a quarter mile to the southwest of Kycia.

It is understood that a large portion of this property is being considered for the construction of a new school. Every community has to consider options and priorities for core needs, and it is not possible for DEEP Forestry to develop arguments on one side of this issue or the other. Forestry can only express the values of the property in its open space status and provide recommendations for managing the property as a wild space, to maximize benefits for wildlife habitat, forest health, climate resilience, as well as education and other local undeveloped community benefit options. It is the role to promote stewardship wherever possible, and if this property is preserved as open space, DEEP hopes that this report will prove of value to the town. It has been an honor and privilege to tour the Kycia Farm!





Kycia Farm
Town of Wethersfield
Highland Street
31 total acres
Landscape Wildlife Corridor to North



0 400 800 1,600
Feet

Prepared by David Irvin
DEEP Service Forester
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Prepared for Town of Wethersfield
Oct. 2, 2025

Legend

-  Kycia Town Parcels
-  Potential Open Space Corridor

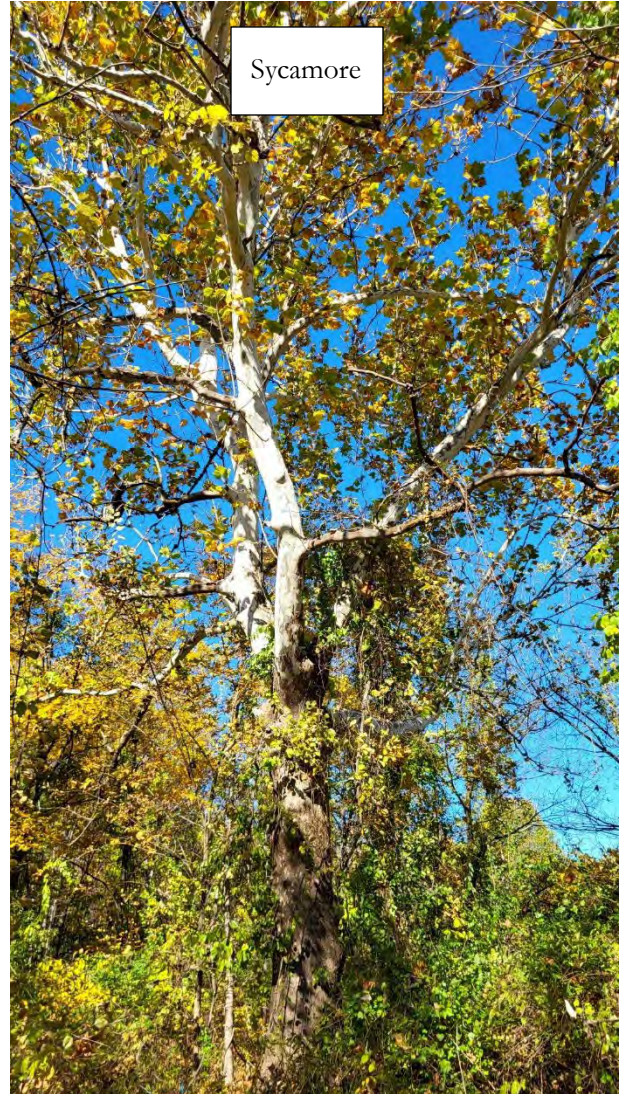
Tree Cover

The tree species list *identified and noted* in this forest is as follows (note that this is not likely a complete list of any species that can be found):

- Black walnut** (*Juglans nigra*)
- Northern red oak** (*Quercus rubra*), found roadside only
- Pin oak** (*Quercus palustris*)
- Swamp white oak** (*Quercus bicolor*)
- Shagbark hickory** (*Carya ovata*)
- Bitternut hickory** (*Carya cordiformis*)
- Sugar maple** (*Acer saccharum*) a.k.a. hard maple
- Red maple** (*Acer rubrum*) a.k.a. soft maple
- American basswood** (*Tilia americana*)
- White ash** (*Fraxinus americana*)
- Eastern cottonwood** (*Populus deltoides*)
- Bigtooth aspen** (*Populus grandidentata*)
- Black cherry** (*Prunus serotina*)
- Slippery elm** (*Ulmus rubra*)
- American elm** (*Ulmus americana*)
- American sycamore** (*Platanus occidentalis*)
- Northern catalpa** (*Catalpa speciosa*)—not native
- Norway spruce** (*Picea abies*)—not native
- Eastern hemlock** (*Tsuga canadensis*)
- Eastern redcedar** (*Juniperus virginiana*)

Most of the existing forested acres can be characterized as predominantly sawtimber size (12" diameter and up), pole-size (poles are 6" to 11" diameter) or some irregular mix of sawtimber-poletimber. Some of the forest consists of scattered overstory trees with an understory shrubland. Most forest is also either in wetlands or more recently abandoned farmland (within the past half century or less).

The property is not currently considered "climate resilient" or healthy on a majority of acres, due to the heavy occurrence of invasive plants. The invasives are widespread and are outcompeting valued native plants as well as preventing regeneration to provide a future forest on these acres.



Forest Understory/Ground Cover

Across this forest, there is a diversity of native understory vegetation, more than is noted here. This includes goldenrod, pokeweed, black raspberry, blackberry, spicebush, staghorn sumac, white snakeroot, American jumpseed, wild grape, poison ivy, Carolina horsenettle, and greenbrier. Most of the plants listed here provide abundant value to multiple species of wildlife, although not on every acre.

Invasive plants noted at Kycia Farm include Japanese knotweed, mugwort, tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus*), Asiatic bittersweet, border privet, multiflora rose, Japanese barberry, winged euonymous (burning bush), garlic mustard, bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, black locust, buckthorn, and Norway maple. Invasives frequently tend to be most prevalent in wetlands and quality farmland soils, and on abandoned farmland, which applies to the entire property. The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group at the University of Connecticut is a great resource for the identification and control of invasive plants, and you are encouraged to visit their website: [Home | Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group \(uconn.edu\)](http://Home | Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (uconn.edu)). Here is also a resource regarding control of some of the more common invasives we see in the state: [link](#). Note that this booklet is the

updated 2025 edition that includes several additional plants. The hard copy you were given with your Landowner Primer folder on the day of the site walk may have been the older 2020 edition.

White mulberry was also found at Kycia. While this tree is not on the official Connecticut invasive plant list, it tends to have invasive qualities here and can spread aggressively.

For future forest trees, natural regeneration establishment and release through silvicultural methods with invasive control is probably the most effective way to go on a larger scale, but here is some information regarding planting native trees and shrubs:

[2025 Connecticut Native Tree, Shrub, and Perennial Availability List](#)—this is an excellent publication with many links to other useful information within.

[Earth Tones Native Plant nursery](#) (locally sourced native plants)—this is one company in Woodbury that specializes in natives. Seeds can be purchased from the [Northeast Seed Collective](#). These seeds are sourced from local ecoregions.

[cttreeownersmanualpdf.pdf](#) (for many types of tree care)

[arborist-list-March2024.pdf\(ctpa.org\)](#) (all licensed arborists, from the CT. Tree Protective Association website), for saving trees in immediate yard areas or for tree service to take down public hazards.

Here is a great slideshow of native plants for “wet meadows”, if you would like ideas on your wetter sites: [PowerPoint Presentation](#).

Along with the possibility of additional pollinator planting, which will be discussed later, you may also want to consider benefits of Miyawaki-style forests-- [miyawaki forest onepager-print.pdf](#).

It is important to remember that thorough invasive plant control on any given acre frequently takes 2-3 years of persistence. It is not a one-time task. In many cases, it is also a program of control that involves multiple methods, a combination of mechanical and chemical controls. **Note that 2% Garlon 3A is wetland-approved**, including open water and shores. [Garlon® 3A Herbicide — Land Management](#). No trees or shrubs should be planted until invasives on that site are completely eradicated. When planting, also remember that it should be in an area accessible to water the first one or two growing seasons, and you should plan for some kind of deer protection measures, whether that means individual tree protectors or fencing off small areas.



While dense understory shrubs and herbaceous cover are very beneficial for wildlife, these benefits are outweighed by the ecosystem detriments of invasive plants in much of the Kycia Farm at present.

Forest Health

A. *Invasive Plants:*

This issue was introduced in the previous section. Invasive plants are a forest health threat and a top priority in many of our forests. Invasives directly threaten the establishment and growth of native trees and shrubs, and must be addressed before native forest and habitats can continue to be managed or restored. Invasives are serious to woodland owners because these nonnative plants did not evolve in our ecosystems and often have competitive edges. They tend to spread rapidly in multiple ways and are resistant to control efforts. Invasive shrubs such as Japanese barberry and winged euonymus can form dense, continuous thickets that allow no seedlings to develop. Over time, as a native forest overstory loses trees to natural mortality, those trees cannot be replaced. Thus a native canopy of forest is gradually replaced by a low shrub layer of invasives. These plants do not provide the nutrition for wildlife that native plants do, and therefore do *not* support healthy wildlife populations. Most of our native plant-feeding insects such as moth and butterfly caterpillars can *only* feed on native plants. Most of our terrestrial birds raise their young on these insects, especially the caterpillars. When native vegetation is replaced by non-native plants, it disrupts the entire wildlife food web. Birds also feed on berries. Berries from non-native invasive shrubs and vines do not provide the fat content that our birds need to survive, especially as they build energy for migrations. While invasives are in the state to stay, and complete eradication is not feasible, efforts need to be made to remove as appropriate and at least allow native plants to germinate and survive without invasives dominating woodland acres. Control is necessary to achieve most natural resource management objectives.

Here is information on the “Buckthorn Blaster”, a small bottle for holding herbicide and dabbing onto cut stump surfaces: [Official Buckthorn Blaster® by NAISMA](#). The Buckthorn Blaster is great for “cut-and-dab” treatments for larger stems, and conserves herbicide while preventing use of broadcasting across the environment. Any larger stems of shrub and tree invasives could be treated with this type of device on the stump once cut. The best time is late in the growing season, and the herbicide needs to be more concentrated than the mix prepared for foliar sprays.

It is usually an effective and proven combination of both mechanical and chemical controls that are best for invasive removal. If chemicals are diluted and applied according to labels and by licensed applicators, there should be no issue. Invasive plants are arguably a much bigger enemy to your open spaces and their damage will compound over time. As examples of how to effectively use chemical treatment of invasives, you can use the previously discussed Buckthorn Blaster or equivalent dispenser to simply dab on herbicide on cut stump surfaces, which means no broadcasting or “oversprays”. Additionally, it is often an effective practice to remove shrubs and thickets of shrubs by handtools or equipment first, and then as the invasives begin re-sprouting, hit the much smaller shoots with herbicide. This method also reduces the volume of spray needed dramatically. It is also easy to make choices about the chemicals accepted for herbicide controls, such as making a choice to avoid glyphosate in favor of other herbicides.

Cut invasive vines, as a separate level of invasive control that can be done whenever walking through your woods. Best time of year is late summer/early fall. Be sure to cut a section of the vine out (6”-1’) to prevent possible reconnection. Remember that Virginia creeper, poison ivy, greenbrier, and grapevine are native and provide ecosystem benefits. Asiatic bittersweet and wisteria should be cut whenever it is found climbing a tree or shrub of any size, including saplings. You can use your own discretion at cutting native vines if you feel they are becoming a nuisance or hindering some tree development.

Triclopyr (tradenames Garlon, Brush-B-Gon, etc.) is most effective when applied either as a foliar application in late summer, when the plants are drawing their resources back down into their roots, or as a cut-and-paint treatment, painting the cut stems with undiluted herbicide or a mixture of 1:1 herbicide to water. The cut-stump treatment will work for most of the year except when the plants are first starting to leaf out. While non-native invasive plants do not provide the wildlife value of native plants, shrub-nesting birds such as yellow warblers and gray catbirds may make use of them for nesting. Therefore it is advised that treating woody invasives be avoided during the nesting season from May 1 to August 1.

Mugwort is particularly challenging, as mechanical controls will essentially not work. To control **mugwort**, it is possible to use Milestone, applying as a foliar spray in the spring when the plants first leaf out. Milestone is likely the most effective herbicide specifically for mugwort. Targeting the invasive plants and allowing the existing native plants such as goldenrods and asters to take over is one strategy, particularly in any open fields, around parking areas, and along trails. It is recommended that mugwort be sprayed in May when it is approximately 8” high. You can also cut it back about mid-summer, and spray the shorter sprouts that return. The downside: While legal and easy to acquire, Milestone does require caution, and can actually remain persistent for anywhere from 18 months, to up to 3-5 years. *Do not use anywhere that grasses or herbaceous plants might be harvested for hay*. It is also important to know that Milestone is still active in droppings of cattle and deer, and while it will not harm the animals, it can kill plants that droppings land upon. It is considered safer by some professionals to use Garlon instead for mugwort, but Garlon is not quite as effective and may not fully kill root systems. Feel free to do some of your own

research on Milestone. Be careful about any routine mowing where mugwort or Japanese knotweed is present, as this will spread the plants.

Japanese knotweed is also certainly of particular challenge. Here is a page from the previously referenced CT. Invasive Plant Working Group site on knotweed: [Japanese Knotweed, Mexican Bamboo \(*Polygonum cuspidatum*\) | Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group](#) . Also, here is a link to control methods published by the State of New Hampshire: [japanese-knotweed-control.pdf](#). You can also check out the Penn State web page on the same plant for comparison's sake: [Japanese Knotweed](#). Take step-by-step suggestions recommended in these documents seriously for control of this extremely challenging plant, and consider hiring a professional invasive control company for it, even if outside professionals are not used for all species of your invasives. Some literature will tell you that control is possible mechanically, but one needs to commit to the level of persistence needed, such as cutting back at least 3 times per year for years.

Tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus*) is the primary invasive host tree of spotted lanternfly, a new insect from Asia that threatens vineyards and some orchards and other agricultural crops. Here is more information about this insect trying to spread across the state: [Spotted Lanternfly Pest Alert CT](#). To help control or reduce the reproduction and spread of lanternfly, a logical first step should be to eradicate any tree-of-heaven in the vicinity. Here is tree-of-heaven identification information: [Tree-of-Heaven](#). The insect

will not cause specific or direct harm to humans, other than the fact that they tend to cluster in large swarming numbers exuding a sticky honeydew, and are considered a nuisance. They may be attracted to wild grape vines, some fruit trees, and can use many forest trees as a host, but are primarily considered an agricultural pest rather than a forest pest. Because of this insect, I am recommending making tree-of-heaven the invasive plant control **priority**. Here is much more information available on the insect and tree-of-heaven from our CT. Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) website: [Spotted Lanternfly - SLF](#). When stems of tree-of-heaven are cut, the Buckthorn Blaster can be used on the stumps, if dropped later in the growing season. Spotted lanternflies were confirmed at Kycia, on tree-of-heavens on the property.

Note that it is not necessarily essential to hit invasives property-wide all at once. It may be best to focus efforts on selected priority areas. One way to determine priority is based on where any other form of active management will take place first. If there is an area you want to thin or plant trees, shrubs, or create a pollinator area, those are likely the areas you will want to kill invasives first. Acquiring adequate funding for a major invasive treatment may change your approach and in that circumstance, you may want to think property-wide in scope and have qualified and reputable professionals take care of invasives instead of yourselves. Keep in mind that in areas where invasives outnumber natives, it may be easier and more effective to kill the entire clump or area of plants, and the native plants will likely return to the site once invasives are completely eradicated or controlled. You can consider subdividing your property into management grids or small “stands” of even an acre at a time, and attack the invasives by section to keep attention focused and spread out the workload. You can begin in one section, and after the first year, start a second section and do follow-ups on the first. In the third year, begin work on yet another section and continue followups in the second and at least inspect the first for more spot treatments, and so on. If taking on these challenges independently of outside professionals, it can also be a sanity-saving method to stay organized and work progressively and persistently! You can keep a calendar to plan ahead, tracking history of treatments and mapping each section of your land. Note the dates in particular that you begin the work in each area



Large tree-of-heaven at Kycia Farm hosting spotted lanternflies (pictured).

annually. Document each treatment with methods used and number of entries to the site for additional treatments, including the chemical mix and concentration used (if any) and what was done mechanically.

A document at this link is a guideline to disposing of invasives, rather than leaving on the premises once pulled: [Invasive Terrestrial Plant Disposal Guidelines | Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group](#). Some invasive shrubs are unfortunately in the category of not leaving on site because of their ability to re-root or re-sprout. But I also understand how difficult and labor intensive it may be to dispose of that volume of plant material otherwise. If necessary, I suggest you create piles, concentrating the material as much as possible, and you can start with a frame of wood or pallets at ground level, so that when you stack the shrubs they will not be touching the ground. And do your best to leave root systems in the air, exposed to dry out more quickly. You may also keep the material under a tarp to “fry” it in the sun and heat.

Regardless of the methods, degree, and pace, the best thing you could probably do to increase the health of this forest and ecosystem benefits would be to eradicate invasives, even if only enough to allow native plants to occupy the site.

B. *Deer*:

Part of Connecticut’s issues with invasive plants are closely tied to deer browse pressure. Typically, deer consume the natives and leave invasives alone, thereby contributing directly to the dominance of nonnatives. To understand the issue of deer damage to native vegetation, a couple facts: A deer needs to consume about 6%-8% of its body weight daily during spring through fall. This can mean up to 10 pounds of vegetation per day. Here is an introduction to options for dealing with deer issues: [Deer Nuisance Problems \(ct.gov\)](#), and a fact sheet about our white-tailed deer as a species: [White-tailed Deer \(ct.gov\)](#). Deer are partly directly responsible for the gradual transition of our forests from oak-hickory to black birch forests, as they heavily browse oak, but usually avoid black birch.

Anything planted from a nursery will need deer protectors for the first few years. Besides individual tree protectors, entire areas can be fenced off to deer to protect regeneration or plantings from browse. Deer fence requires constant, frequent inspection and maintenance, and costs also to remove in a few years. But grant and cost-share funding that would support work for regenerating forests or creating early successional habitat would tend to also cover deer protection measures. This could be considered for even small areas.

Hunting is often recommended for private land with browse issues, not simply for the take of deer, but to create a pressure that can push deer out of the area and to neighboring property a little more. Hunting has become a nearly essential part of forest management programs in many areas of the state. But this town property may not be able to consider this option in such proximity to development surrounding Kycia. Very short range options such as archery only, and hunting by daily permit only, could be considered. To discuss how to regulate small scale hunting here, it does not hurt to contact the DEEP Wildlife Division on more information regarding how to make a limited hunting program work: [Wildlife Division Office Directory](#).

Here is a link to deer resistant native perennials: [DEER RESISTANT NATIVE PERENNIALS | Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group](#).

C. *Insects, Invasive Invertebrates* :

Most upper canopy ash has already died from emerald ash borer attack. ([Emerald Ash Borer EAB \(ct.gov\)](#) EAB was first discovered in Connecticut in 2012, and was completely unknown as a species on the continent prior to 2002. The majority of the ash grew on higher quality farmland and wetland soils and riparian zones where invasives are favored, so the decline of ash led to replacement on many of those sites by more invasives instead of tree regeneration. This dead ash is currently providing an increase of snags and coarse woody material for wildlife. Ash is also making a strong regeneration surge and is trying to repopulate forests across this state, providing some hope for the future following the initial wave of EAB attack. A future return of EAB may also find it more controlled next time due to biological controls (such as parasitic wasps) that have been introduced. Such regeneration was relatively widespread at Kycia Farm.

Spongy moth (formerly known as “gypsy moth”) is a nonnative and damaging insect that has been in Connecticut for well over a century. Large-scale outbreaks of the caterpillar, which mostly impacts oaks, are more rare these days due to biological controls. However these controls fail during severe drought periods, which are becoming more common. Major outbreaks in eastern Connecticut killed thousands of acres of oak forest between 2016-2018, and another outbreak in the northwest hills of the state did the same following 2021-2022. During 2022 alone, the Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) reported 45,000 acres of defoliation in northwestern Litchfield County from spongy moth. So heavy impacts from this insect are still quite

possible. The lack of oak dominance on this property reduces your vulnerability to spongy moth at Kycia Farm. Here is a link to much more information on this notorious invasive insect: [The Spongy Moth: Information for Tree and Woodland Owners \(ct.gov\)](http://www.ct.gov).



Ash seedlings continue to germinate in forests all over the state, including here at Kycia Farm. They continue to make a noble effort for the species to return to our forests, and will likely be at least partially successful if some can make it without deer browse damage.

Non-native invasive Asian jumping worms probably occur on this property, especially where most invasives will be found. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station has more information on their website: [Jumping Worms in Connecticut](http://www.ct.gov). Jumping worms actually destroy organic matter layers of soil and transform soil into large granular textures that make it difficult for native plants to find root. They also make soil more susceptible to erosion. In general, jumping worms are far worse in combination with deer browse and invasive plants, and damage more soil in that circumstance. One prevention measure to help reduce spread of jumping worms is to plant more bare root stock, if planting is pursued here, and to try not bringing soil, gravel, and fill onto the land unless it is certified clean fill. Eggs of jumping worms, along with invasive plant seeds, are frequently introduced to new properties unsuspectingly when topsoil, fill, and gravel is brought in, as well as woodchips from off the premises.

White pine is a partially shade tolerant species, unlike many pines. In fact, having some overhead shade in its earliest years is important to protect it from damage by the white pine weevil, an insect that will kill the leader or terminal bud of white pine. In conifers, no true leader will replace it, the growth hormones go to the lateral branches instead and the tree is doomed to become a wide-spreading “bush” instead of a tall, straight tree. To protect pine from this, it helps to have partial overstory shade until the young tree is about 15-20 feet tall, at which time it can be fully released. It is a very common issue that landowners will plant white pine in the full sunlight of a field without realizing this susceptibility. Here is information on the white pine weevil from two different states: [White Pine Weevil](http://www.ct.gov) [White Pine Weevil: Forest Health & Monitoring: Maine Forest Service: Maine DACF](http://www.maine.gov)

This information is provided in event you decide to diversify your forest by planting native conifers in future years.

In a similar vein, you may be interested in planting another native conifer in the future, eastern hemlock. Hemlock is impacted by two different insects native to Asia. Hemlock woolly adelgid--[Hemlock Woolly Adelgid \(ct.gov\)](#) and elongate hemlock scale- [Elongate Hemlock Scale \(psu.edu\)](#) . But drought has been the biggest enemy of shallow-rooted hemlock, and the consensus of the forestry community is that hemlock is likely to persist despite these insects on the better growing sites. Climate change adds some uncertainty to this present assessment however, as weather warms and drought periods become more frequent. If choosing to plant hemlock in Wethersfield, you may consider at least having them treated by the nursery or an arborist to help protect them from hemlock woolly adelgid, and be sure to plant on the wetter sites. Since 1995, the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) has had some success in controlling hemlock woolly adelgid by releasing beetles that feed exclusively on the adelgid, as biological controls (*Sasajiscymnus tsugae*). Controlling the adelgid gives the hemlocks more of a chance to survive other adverse conditions such as drought and scale insects.

D. *Disease:*

An apparent major forest health issue statewide is beech leaf disease (BLD)-- [Beech Leaf Disease](#). BLD is caused by a microscopic nematode from Asia that has recently spread throughout the state, and the long-term prognosis for infected beech trees is still unclear. There is no known effective treatment for beech in a forest setting [fact-sheet-bld-may-2025.pdf](#). Beech *bark* disease has been in the state for much longer and has been infecting beech trees for decades. Here is a fact sheet on it: [Beech Bark Disease fact sheet.pdf](#) . Beech bark disease is much slower to lead to mortality than beech leaf disease. For long-term planning, beech should not be included in your projection of future forest species. Currently, beech is lacking at Kycia, if not entirely absent, but this information is being provided for the sake of other properties and general education and awareness objectives.

In the future, it is unfortunately very possible that Connecticut will face devastating impacts by oak wilt, a disease that is known in some other states but has not yet been identified here. It is as close to us as Long Island. As in the case of spongy moth, the best defense against losses from this future disease are diversifying the ages and species in your forest, and the Kycia Farm Preserve lacks oak trees in many areas. Here is information on oak wilt, in a detailed story map format: [Oak Wilt in the Northeastern and Midwestern States \(arcgis.com\)](#) . Here also is a link to a PowerPoint program on oak wilt from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES): [On the Lookout for Oak Wilt \(ct.gov\)](#). White oaks appear to be most resistant to this disease, which is a complete reversal of the situation with spongy moth (white oak is the preferred host of spongy moth). Most vulnerable are the “Red Oak” group, which includes your red oak, scarlet oak, and black oak.

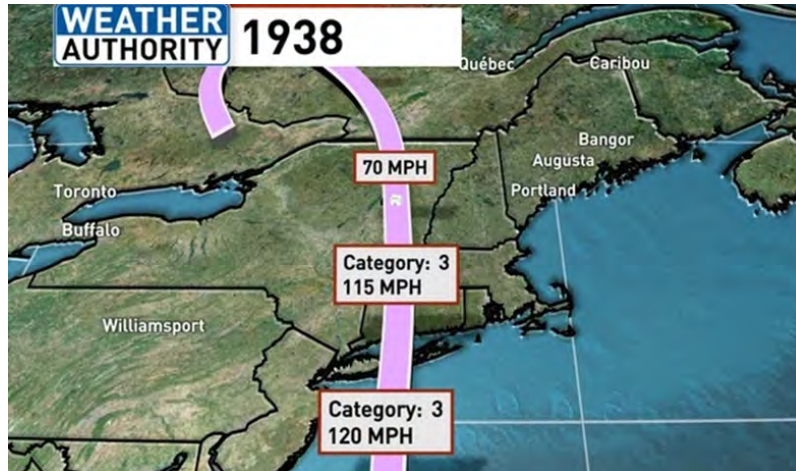
Anthracnose is a fungal disease that can impact a number of native hardwood species, especially notably maples, flowering dogwood, and sycamore. Impacts by this disease are most pronounced during a wet spring and early summer, which helps fungi thrive. Here is information on anthracnose: [anthracnosediseasesoftrees060311rpdf.pdf](#). Here is information on the more serious dogwood anthracnose, which has been heavily responsible for eliminating most flowering dogwood from Connecticut’s native forests: [Dogwood Anthracnose](#). During wet springs, if you notice an issue with maples have fewer leaves or small leaves, that may be what is happening, and they usually pull through.

This town property has eastern redcedars, as well as apple trees and/or crabapple. As a result, it is likely that Kycia regularly hosts a disease known as Cedar-Apple Rust, which requires alternating hosts of junipers and apples. Here is more information on this: [Cedar Apple Rust](#). Here is more information from Ohio State: [Cedar-Apple Rust | Ohioline](#). The latter article explains that damage is primarily to apples, and it is not necessarily a suggested or effective treatment to remove junipers. In fact, the eastern redcedars are desired native conifers that have wildlife benefits and are in decline across the state due to the maturing of most of our forests. [Cedar-Apple Rust](#).

E. *Storms:*

You may notice a couple recurring themes on these forest health discussions: the best defense is a more diverse and resilient forest in terms of species and age classes. Storms are no exception. Increasing strong storm events have been predicted, including hurricanes like the Hurricane of 1938, which entered the state as a damaging Category 3 storm. It is also predicted that a storm similar to that in today’s forests would be far more damaging, because trees of today average larger and much older, and invasive plants becoming opportunistic on growing sites are far more prevalent today. When managing your forest for the future, the reoccurrence of a storm of this magnitude should be considered an inevitability, and just a matter of time. Forests are dynamic and trees are living things that are not forever. When a natural catastrophe takes out the older generation of upper canopy trees, it is just important that something can be there ready to take their place. Continually encouraging understory regeneration to develop, in order to replace the forest should most of the canopy be lost to a hurricane, is a key principle in forestry and in promoting a healthier and more resilient forest.

Ice storms and wet snow can damage trees, as well. Interestingly, the most damage by hurricanes will be on larger and older trees, but the most damage by winter storms can be on the *younger* trees, using a sapling or pole stand of birch bent over or broken by the weight of ice or snow as an example. Having a mixed forest can mean less loss by any one event or cause. Here is information on forest resiliency to accompany this discussion: [29198_Forestry_Mag.indd](#). In the climate change discussion, it is important to remember that there is more to consider than just carbon storage and carbon sequestration. A forest that is not healthy and resilient will also not be able to effectively mitigate climate change through taking up and storing carbon long-term.



F. *Fire:*

Fire information is relevant due to the discussion of the value of Coarse Woody Material (CWM) on the ground elsewhere in the report. DEEP Forestry understands and recognizes concern about fire. Hundreds of fires are ignited and reported annually in Connecticut, although most are extinguished or controlled quickly and efficiently due to organization and training, accessibility, and the rapid communications available in the 21st Century. Larger wildfires do occur, usually during the typical early spring fire season, or during summer or fall drought periods as experienced in fall 2024. The world of East Coast fires is normally different from the arid western states. Typically, New England provides much higher average humidity and rainfall, and higher fuel moistures as a result, which reduces intensity and severity. Although the statement can be considered simplified for this discussion, green vegetation is usually unavailable for burning, with some rare exceptions such as huckleberry and mountain laurel. In addition, our primary mode of fire spread in Connecticut is *hardwood leaf litter*. Larger woody material may burn if dried out and not advanced in decomposition, but does not contribute to fire spread. Therefore, harvest slash and downed trees left on the ground do not necessarily promote or increase fire danger as much as the fine fuels like the leaf litter surrounding it. It is still considered more valuable to wildlife and the ecosystem to leave as much woody material on the ground as possible. In fact, when DEEP administers timber harvests on state forest land, contracts require that loggers leave behind any material under 3" on the ground and no whole-tree harvesting or chipping is permitted. The majority of nutrients in the tree to return to the soil are in those smallest stems and buds in the treetops. Besides nutrient cycling and small animal cover, CWM also helps to protect the soil immediately after a harvest and helps prevent deer from browsing new regeneration that will germinate and grow through this "slash".

An exception in fire concern is in the event of a major insect or disease kill in a forest. When standing trees that are dead outnumber live trees of the same size category, this can become a concern during drought periods. The perfect example is widespread mortality following consecutive years of spongy moth defoliation. In event of that situation, DEEP Forestry considers it important to salvage dead and dying trees wherever possible to prevent these particularly heavy "jackpots" of standing dead fuels, which can allow a fire to torch vertically or crown, causing more damage and much greater danger to firefighters.

Fire is historically a natural part of some ecosystems and vegetation associates in Connecticut. Fire can make some nutrients more readily available and prepare the site for the germination and development of plants that are disturbance-dependent. The pitch pine sand plain and oak forests are both at least partially fire-adapted and are disturbance-dependent forest types. Prescribed fire is sometimes used by DEEP to help regenerate oak and pitch pine.

The best preparedness in event of a wildfire in forested property is to have road/trail access available, and good maps of the

land showing trails, which may be used for firefighter foot or off-road vehicle access, and serve as firebreaks. Also understand where your best water sources are located, such as the nearest fire hydrants and standing water. Forest management activities can improve accesses that are later used in event of emergencies. In the case of Kycia, there is good road access and nearby developed areas to facilitate access.

The Hawthorne Drive Fire in Berlin was much-publicized during fall 2024, as one of the larger fires, and involved a firefighter fatality for the first time on a state-managed fire in 40 years. It was a product of an unusual fall drought that is likely due to climate change. That season provided approximately the 7th notable drought period since 2015. The droughts are becoming more frequent and prolonged. [Fire Danger, Weather, and Reporting](#). For daily fire danger ratings by county: [Forest Fire Danger Report](#).

For much more information on wildfires, including a comprehensive analysis of northeastern fire risk from a few years ago, please see the following links:

[Forest Fire Prevention Tips \(ct.gov\)](#)

[NFPA - Firewise USA®](#)

[NortheastRegionalRiskAnalysisReport11012012.pdf \(forestsandranglands.gov\)](#)

Climate Resilience

Many forest health issues can be directly or indirectly linked to climate change. Any forest health concern that causes a high degree of mortality impacts both carbon storage and carbon sequestration (the active removal of carbon from the atmosphere). This forest is presently storing carbon while healthy trees of all sizes are actively sequestering more. Typically, younger trees are more vigorous and growing faster, and therefore sequester carbon more rapidly. A lack of well-established and widespread regeneration would reduce the future carbon sequestration potential of any property. Recommendations in this report to develop a healthier, more diverse and more resilient forest and habitats will generally make a forest more adapted to climate change and also make a better contribution to mitigating it. In New England, our forests are a carbon “sink”. When comparing carbon emissions from greenhouse gasses in the region vs. carbon sequestration and storage, our forests offset approximately 14% of annual emissions. For more information, [Forest Health and Climate Change \(ct.gov\)](#). Here are excellent booklets on the topic if you have further interest:

- Forest Carbon booklet (UMASS, Univ. of VT): [42306_Magazine.indd \(masswoods.org\)](#)
- A Guide to Forest Carbon in the Northeast, [FORESTCARBON-compressed.pdf \(northeastforestcarbon.org\)](#)
- [Young forest and carbon.pdf](#)

It is important to emphasize, especially in light of the list of forest health related issues prior to this section, that making an open space climate-ready or climate resilient does not mean a lack of management and leaving the forest alone. On the contrary, it frequently means active management to mitigate many past adverse impacts of human uses to re-establish a healthy native ecosystem first. Forest management has never been more important than today. It is also noteworthy that harvest and removal of trees as part of well-planned forest management objectives do not necessarily detract a large amount of carbon stored in the forest: The harvest of wood to produce long-term forest products, such as building homes, and use in furniture, flooring, cabinetry, even lower-grade products such as railroad ties, will tie up this carbon for many years to come in the form of the finished wood products.

Climate resilience and maximizing carbon storage and sequestration potential frequently includes thinning forests, as this allows for the most healthy and quality trees to improve their growth, by providing room for crown expansion in the upper canopy. A healthier forest is more likely to resist insect and disease attack. Favoring trees that grow fast and live longer is also climate-smart. Trees that live a long time will store carbon longer, such as red oak, white oak, and sugar maple. Tulip-poplar is an excellent native tree that grows very fast in full sunlight and has the ability to be the largest and tallest hardwoods in eastern North America. Shorter-lived trees and typically lower-quality trees that tend to have more rot and defect do not store carbon very long. Sometimes landowners plant conifer plantations, with fast-growing evergreen species that are great for carbon sequestration and also provide a forest diversity that is frequently lacking in our hardwood-dominated region.

This town forest can be considered to have low climate resilience for a number of reasons, as summarized below:

- Lack of layered, complex forest structure, including brushy native ground cover and a midstory. Where this structure somewhat occurs now, it is composed of invasive plants.
- Lack of understory forest regeneration, for future forest replacement. Bare ground in the understory is as lacking in forest potential and habitat value as one dominated by invasives.
- Invasive cover in most of Kycia is rated as moderate to heavy.

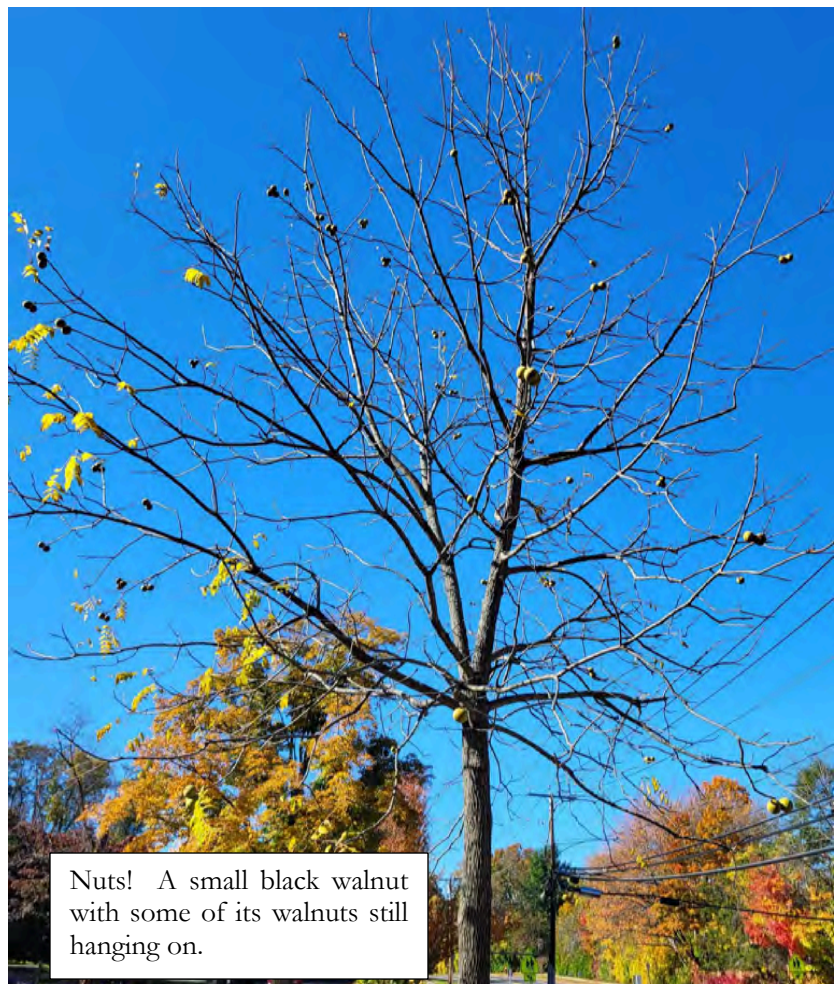
- Besides lack of diversity in age classes, lack of conifers and nothing but pure hardwoods further reduces the forest diversity and resilience.
- When early successional habitats are lacking, it does not contribute to biodiversity and ecosystem resilience across the state, as these habitats are the most lacking by far. Maintaining grassland areas, brushland, and rotating cuts in the forest to continue providing young forest habitats every few years can remedy this.
- The forest floor of an unmanaged forest could often use more coarse woody material (CWM) for nutrient cycling, small animal cover, and soil carbon storage, unless species mortality or storm damage has provided added material.

Wildlife Habitat

As a general rule of thumb, the best forested habitat includes upper canopy, a midstory, and a dense understory of shrubs, small trees, and herbaceous cover on the forest floor. This vertical diversity and structural complexity is important to so many types of wildlife. A forest with either an open understory or one consisting only of invasives provides no low foraging opportunities, including berries, leaves for browse, insects to attract birds. A forest is most valued that has an upper canopy with openings and light gaps to mimic natural disturbances and mortality. The added light induces more growth in the understory and insect populations. In many forests these days, the demise of overstory ash and then beech, as well as the outbreak of spongy moth in parts of the state, has led to canopy gaps that help develop this structure without even thinning. Many forest health issues may detract from diversity and native ecosystems in one manner, but are improving habitat situations in other areas secondarily.

Early successional habitat, which is normally composed of young forest, shrubland, old fields, and grassland, is lacking across Connecticut and is well below historic percentages of ground cover. Even before colonization there was typically 10-15% early successional habitat that were produced by natural means, such as hurricane and other wind events, fire, and beaver meadows. Today, this habitat is limited to only about 3%. The 2015 CT DEEP “Wildlife Action Plan” ([Connecticut Wildlife Action Plan](#)) identified over 50 wildlife species of “Greatest Conservation Need” that depend on young forest or shrubland and grassland.

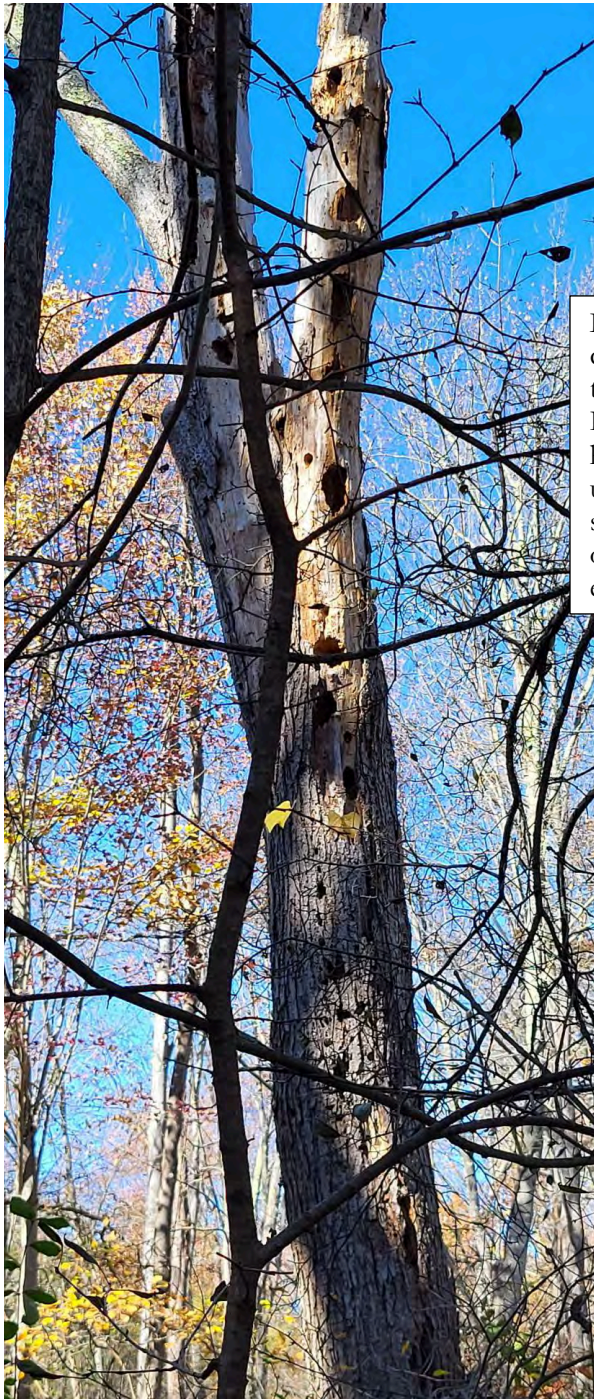
Here is a link from the DEEP Website’s Wildlife Division pages, on “Managing Grasslands, Shrublands, and Young Forest Habitats for Wildlife: A Guide for the Northeast”: [Managing Grasslands Shrublands and Young Forest Habitats for Wildlife A Guide for the Northeast \(ct.gov\)](#) . If interested in a property-specific bird survey, it is suggested that you contact Audubon Connecticut (affiliated with the National Audubon Society), [Staff, Location, and Contact Information | Audubon Connecticut](#) . Getting a bird habitat assessment by a qualified biologist along with a licensed forester might be a great supplement to this report and a component of a management plan. [Habitat Assessment Program and Resources | Audubon Connecticut](#) . Here is another great web page with abundant bird management information, at the state society level: [Home - Connecticut Audubon Society](#) . Audubon created a “Forestry for the Birds” program, with special enhancements to increase the value of routine forest management practices for bird habitat. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has adopted similar ideas, and this brochure produced by TNC in Indiana is largely very relevant here in southern New England, as well: [Forestry for the Birds](#) . See also the [Wildlife in Your Young Forest checklist](#) , which is an outstanding and highly recommended publication, to see which species are likely to be found in different stages of



Nuts! A small black walnut with some of its walnuts still hanging on.

young forest, including the very first year following a cut, in 5 years, 10 years, etc. This is also a particularly educational and useful publication from Audubon, the [Guide to Managing Forests For Trees and Birds in Connecticut: guide to managing forests for trees birds in ct.pdf](#). Ground nesting birds include eastern towhee, whip-poor-will, woodcock, grouse, turkeys, doves, ovenbirds, black-and-white warblers, and many other types of birds, and low shrub nesters include wood thrush, brown thrashers and yellow-breasted chats. Young forest habitat typically no longer provides low ground cover for nesting birds after about 15-18 years, if not even sooner. It peaks about 10 years following a cut such as a clearcut.

The existing fields would make extremely valuable habitat, and if ever no longer used for farming/haying, it would be a perfect idea to continue maintaining them for grasslands. You could also consider expanding your fields to include adjacent areas that have begun to revert to shrublands and forest. The larger and more contiguous the fields without islands and hedgerows of interruption, the more valued they become for more types of wildlife.



LEFT: A snag with many cavities is valuable shelter to many types of wildlife.
RIGHT: Shagbark hickory, which is often used by tree roosting bat species. Bats will use both of these photographed examples.



As a general educational discussion, you can consider “feathering” the edges of fields or forests to soften the edges. Wherever

mature sawtimber forest meets a sharp edge, this can be done. It is more valued to many types of wildlife to go from shrub to mixed shrubs and trees, to more trees, in that order. The method for this can vary, but in general, remove 75% of the trees within 25 feet of the field. Remove 50% of the trees within the next 25-foot zone (25 – 50 feet from the field edge), and 25% of the trees within the next 25-foot zone (50 – 75 feet from the field edge). These 25 foot increments used as an example can also be increased to 50 feet or more, to include a broader zone. As new trees and shrubs grow in the gaps, it creates habitat for species such as indigo buntings, rose-breasted grosbeaks, yellow warblers and gray catbirds. Retain any desirable shrubs and small trees. Flowering shrubs such as blackberry, black raspberry, elderberry and blueberries can be encouraged here to provide additional resources for pollinators. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife has an informative brochure on the topic - [Edge Feathering](#).

At right, you can see the existing fields in the 22-acre Map 99, Lot 3 parcel and the narrow 3-acre Map 99, Lot 2 piece. Three fields are shown with estimated acreage. Note that if you draw an additional line around this area, including the border strips and areas to the north that have been more recently abandoned, the fields could be expanded to create 10 contiguous acres, which is suitable size for some bird species, including bobolinks. You can also consider expanding fields in only a portion of this area, leaving the larger zone between the 1.5-acre and 1.0-acre fields for drought-hardy conifer planting of redcedar and pitch pine to supplement the current naturally occurring scattered redcedar. There are numerous options to increase the benefit of the fields, but it is certainly also understood if neighborhood community farming needs must be satisfied in this area. Getting the most from your spaces are always natural resource management challenges that need to be weighed and considered carefully.



The management for woodcock, as one of many young forest habitat birds and ground nesters, might be of great value and easy to do, by simply maintaining openings or making new ones in forest adjacent to or in wetlands. You can also consider *expanding* natural gaps by cutting trees around the gap edges. This is an Audubon recognized method for enhancing many other types of birds, as well. For information on this migratory bird, [American Woodcock \(ct.gov\)](#). See also [American Woodcock Habitat Use and Survival \(ct.gov\)](#).

You are encouraged to expand benefits for pollinators anywhere there is space. Connecticut has over 300 species of native bees and their populations are declining. While much focus has been on the non-native honeybee, it is the native species that

require our attention. Learn more at - [Focus on Native Bees, Not Honey Bees](#) . I suggest you also visit [Pollinator Pathway \(pollinator-pathway.org\)](#). Here is a link devoted specifically to Wethersfield, CT and its Pollinator Pathway participants (Kycia Farm could join this page as a future direct participant): [Wethersfield](#). See also [Butterfly Gardens](#) and [Pollinators You Might Encounter in Your Garden or Home Meadow | Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group](#). There are actually two plants critical for monarch butterflies: Milkweed and goldenrod. Adding native milkweeds can improve breeding habitat for this declining migratory butterfly (Goldenrod is important as a food source during migration). The following suggestions are site appropriate:

Dry soil: Orange butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Well Drained/Moderately Well Drained soil: Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)

Moist soil: Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)

It is also beneficial for cover to promote thicket-producing native shrubs around pond, river and stream edges, such as alders, sweet pepperbush, highbush blueberry, dogwood species. This can be encouraged by removing the invasives in these areas, and by supplemental planting of the shrubs. In most areas, planting trees and shrubs are not necessary, and promotion of native regeneration and the natural spread of native plants is the suggestion. But some planting to give special habitat areas a boost might be desirable, or to add a conifer component for diversity where it may be lacking. A list of floodplain and wetland/riparian plantings is included on the planting list in the appendix for wetter sites.

It would also be beneficial to add and maintain nestboxes for birds such as the eastern bluebird, tree swallows, and house wrens to enhance their populations. These should probably be placed in the fields, not a closed forest canopy. Go to https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/wildlife/pdf_files/nongame/bluebird-box-plans.pdf for nest box plans.

Any oak, hickory, and walnut trees on this property are a great wildlife asset, due to the nuts (hard mast) they produce, and the native lepidoptera (butterflies, moths) they support. White oak alone is heavily sought by wildlife, because the acorns do not have the bitter tannins of red oaks. White oak supports over 500 species of lepidoptera caterpillars (butterflies, moths)! These caterpillars are among the most important source of food for songbirds. White oak acorns sprout in the fall, however, and are not available as a food source for as long. Red, scarlet and black oak acorns do not sprout until the following spring. White oak is our official state tree and provides so many great ecosystem benefits, yet is in gradual decline. While lacking on this property, white oak or swamp white oak could be planted as part of future management planning. Black cherry is second only to the oaks in terms of the diversity of caterpillar species. The fruits are also an important source of food for many species of birds in late summer. Cherry should be preserved and encouraged. Black cherry can even be planted anywhere that it is decided to plant nursery stock to supplement natural seedlings, but will often become established on its own after openings are created.

Planning and scheduling any type of significant forest management or tree felling outside of the bird nesting season can protect wildlife using your forest and shrublands. Bird nesting for most tree canopy, shrub, and ground nesters is May through July. Even though it is recommended to remove or kill any invasive shrubs, it is possible that birds are using them to build nests, so it is best to also focus extensive invasive controls outside of the May through July window. Harvests or controls from August 1 onward through fall and winter have little concern for accidental mortality of nesting birds, other than possibly a few nonmigratory species or backyard generalists. This schedule is also conducive to invasive controls that are often more effective in late summer and fall, when the plants are increasing their transport of nutrients down to their root systems in preparation for winter.

To promote the best current conservation measures, also be aware and search for turtles on the ground in summer before using any form of machinery, since they are slow-moving and are well-camouflaged. In winter, some care should be taken to not disturb turtle hibernation sites such as downed logs and pits from tipped up root mounds, which are favorites of box turtles. So wherever there are trees blown over, leave the root tip-ups undisturbed, if possible. Turtles look for easy digging sites and features to burrow under for hibernation. Unfortunately, the illegal turtle trade is a multi-million dollar international underground business, and this has contributed to the drastic population decline of some species. Freshwater turtles are some of the most commonly trafficked species in the U.S. It is illegal to remove turtles from their native habitats in Connecticut, with only snapping turtles having a permitted season for take. For more information, here is a link to the Collaborative to Combat Illegal Trade in Turtles (CCITT): <https://parcplace.org/species/collaborative-to-combat-the-illegal-trade-in-turtles/> .



Conifers provide a source of winter cover and unique forage that native hardwood forests alone do not provide. A more diverse forest will have some conifer component. This eastern redcedar is a pioneer tree that requires full sunlight, and therefore can be planted in open areas. For climate resilience, trees such as redcedar and pitch pine are very drought hardy and can occupy exposed, rugged sites. Other native conifers include white pine, hemlock, Atlantic white-cedar (wet sites), and red spruce and black spruce, although the spruce species are rare and would not likely be found here. Some nonnative conifers can also be beneficial, including Norway spruce.

DEEP also encourages bat conservation. Because of the “white-nose syndrome”, an imported disease of bats, our native bats have become increasingly rare and more species are becoming either federal- or state-listed. Any natural resource management program should also respect needs of bats and enhance habitats in any way possible. It may be possible to request an acoustic bat survey by the DEEP Wildlife Division. A starting point to find out information on this is to contact the Wildlife Division, and it became apparent during the compiling of this report that Jim Woodworth is already in touch

with a biologist about this and other bat conservation discussions. For more information on bats, their value and habitats, [Bats Count \(ct.gov\)](#). Bats such as the Federally-Endangered northern long-eared bat have active seasons as tree roosting bats from approximately April 15 to October 31. Any shagbark hickory found on the property should be preserved, as this species is frequently used for hiding by tree-roosting bat species. The same is true for any snags that retain sheets of bark, especially ash and oak snags. Bat houses can also be constructed and installed. These should be placed with a south or west facing view of direct sunlight, as bats really like their roosts to be hot when rearing pups. Because of the sunlight preferences, it is often better to place boxes on structures rather than in the woods where there is a closed canopy or partial canopy. They can be placed on posts in open fields. So your fields at Kycia would probably be a better locale than the forest. Even in ideal locations, do not be surprised if several years go by with no use in the beginning.

Standing dead trees (“snags”) and any size cavity trees provide important sources of forage and shelter, as do the aforementioned CWM, or coarse woody material. Wildlife biologists in DEEP usually recommend leaving about 4 snags per acre, including one that is a larger diameter sawtimber tree. Snags and downed material provide food for decay insects that, in turn, feed wildlife that seek the insects. Ash snags on the property not only provide great cover for bats, but brown creepers will nest and forage under the loose bark of these dead ash trees. Cavities for nesting in naturally hollow trees are invaluable for many species of both birds and mammals, including owls, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, great-crested flycatchers and flying squirrels. Eastern bluebirds will nest in snags that are left standing after a timber harvest. For more information on mast, the value of snags, edge areas, and even how to create brush piles useful for small animal cover, please see the information provided at this DEEP website link: [Wildlife Habitat Fact Sheets](#).

Here is information on vernal pools, which are temporary spring ponds of water in the woods that have no real inlet or outlet, and frequently dry up during summer. There are a number of amphibians and invertebrates that are vernal pool “obligates”, requiring these subtle areas in the woods to breed and survive. [Vernal Pools](#).

Forest/Vegetation Management

The best early step for the town of Wethersfield is likely to *hire a consulting forester to write a management plan*. [ForestPractitiCertificatExamAnnouncementReport](#). In the previous link, pages 8-12 show the private foresters that you are looking for. A management plan is a valuable guideline that can put the town on the right path for improving forest health, wildlife habitat diversity, and climate change adaptation. It will also qualify the town for any grant funding that may be available, as most sources require a plan.

Remember, if you believe that your plans will be limited to a pollinator garden, invasive control, and some planting, you would still benefit from a management plan that outlines the most beneficial locations for the work and creates a schedule of work, as well as qualify you to cover the costs of some or most of this work. Here is a link to a consulting company's website. Ferrucci & Walicki is home to Eric Hansen, who I believe you may already know about. [Contact - Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC](#). Here is a link to another well-known consulting company in Middlefield, Connwood Foresters, which has a number of certified foresters on staff: [CONNWOOD.COM](#).

Here is information on "Best Management Practices" to protect soils, wetlands, and create proper stream crossings for timber harvesting: [Best Management Practices for Water Quality While Harvesting Forest Products](#). This guide will likely be used as a reference by any certified forester and logger on the property. Both foresters and loggers in Connecticut must be certified in an examination process that recognizes three levels of professionals: Forester, Supervising Forest Products Harvester, and Forest Products Harvester. [Forest Practitioner Certification](#). Only a forester can write a management plan, and a minimum of a Supervising Forest Products Harvester level can sign timber sale contracts with landowners.

It should also be considered important to find and mark the boundaries along property lines before proceeding with active management work. This should be done with paint or signs and not something that degrades and vanishes quickly like just flagging tape. Well-marked boundaries are important to give you peace of mind of your limits during management, and help prevent encroachments from neighbors. [KNOWING YOUR BOUNDARIES.pdf](#). If an A-2 survey does not exist for all of the property, you could consider either hiring a surveyor or research the abutters for surveys of your common lines that would be helpful in identifying them. A consulting forester will often take care of something like this as part of his/her services.

Here are some initial thoughts and points regarding management, for improved perspective. The following is a summary of takeaways that the town should get from this overview:

- Do not underestimate the ecosystem damage caused by the invasive plants. This is an issue in the forest that needs to be addressed and should be taken seriously.
- When discussing the needs for bird habitats, remember that most birds you see in backyards are "generalists" that can occupy many types of habitats. The birds addressed in this report are habitat specialists and are usually migratory birds that spend winter in tropical regions but depend on our region for nesting and reproduction. They live in forests, shrublands, and grasslands, and not backyards.
- It is understood that there are other town uses co-existing on this property. Keep in mind that this report is ecosystem and healthy long-term forest based, and recommendations have that more narrow focus.
- Long-term forest and habitat health frequently require intensive work, such as cutting trees and controlling invasives aggressively. Avoiding this type of impactful work on your landscape often means not achieving objectives of improving and diversifying your open space.
- You are encouraged to examine all spaces with new eyes. Remember that there is no such thing as "vacant" space and "back acres". These areas are the valuable natural habitats, and even small spaces can be a new opportunity, such as creating new pollinator gardens.
- The current forests and fields are entirely ephemeral and dynamic. With an insect outbreak, sudden tree disease, or hurricane, the scenery can change quickly. Without work toward a forest and habitats of the *future*, Kycia will not necessarily be a valued natural resource for our next generations.
- It sounds like the footprint of a new school on the larger parcel will be large and negate the benefits of habitats and a wildlife corridor here. Remember that DEEP's conservation strategy includes preserving forests, shrublands and grasslands first. If the Kycia property can be kept out of further development, then these other guidelines can apply.

An executive summary of vegetation management is to decide extent of forest vs. fields and map these plans first, then aggressively attack invasive plants anywhere management is scheduled as appropriate. Broadly speaking, invasives should be controlled to allow native plants and trees to germinate and take over naturally, while supplemented as needed by planting stock.

This is a long-term and labor intensive rehabilitation effort. It can be even more beneficial to the Wethersfield community by providing educational opportunities to tie into the work, including on-site informational signs, scheduled walks or presentations, and perhaps a trail self-guided with more information on QR codes at different points. Information should also be provided on the town and Friends website/Facebook pages.

The following are suggestions to manage going forward, including recaps of previously suggested ideas:

1. No specific work is recommended for the wetlands soils dominating the northeastern end of the larger parcel north of Highland Street and east of Collier Road, other than invasive control to provide for a healthier wetland. That work could be lower priority than other areas where more vegetation management will occur.
2. Invasive controls should be scheduled and proceed with plans for mechanical and herbicide control effectively. No area should be addressed “blindly” without specific plans for follow-ups and methods. Where invasives dominate heavily with few natives, consider taking out everything and starting over. Where invasives are not dominant but simply present, consider more spot controls to protect nearby native plants.
3. Consider expanding fields. Include feathering the edges of fields with any forest management work.
4. Mowing of fields: Meadows, grasslands and old fields require periodic maintenance to retain their wildlife value. Brush-hogging the fields on a rotational basis will keep these early successional habitats from reverting to forest. The schedule will depend on resources, but it is generally recommended to mow every 3 to 5 years, although not all at once. Mowing one field per year may be the simplest approach, however, depending on resources, other methods may be more desirable. For example, mowing half of each field one year, not mowing the second year, mowing the other half the third year, and not mowing the fourth year will leave food and cover in each field, and leave them undisturbed every other year. This method requires more record keeping to keep track of where to mow and when. For best results, mow in late winter, before mid-March. Leaving the dead stalks standing through the winter will provide cover for wintering birds, and also provide food in the form of seeds. The hollow stems of grasses and wildflowers also provide nesting sites for 30% of our 350+ species of native bees, therefore leaving part of the fields unmowed each year will protect any bee larvae living in those stalks. Mowing in late winter is not always feasible due to weather conditions and scheduling issues. Therefore, if a late winter mowing does not seem feasible, the second best time to mow is after the killing frost, usually in November or later. This will retain habitat for late-season pollinators and allow late-blooming flowers to go to seed.
5. Avoid mowing, cutting trees, and extensive invasive shrub control until after August 1, for nesting birds. To protect bats and turtles as well, consider postponing dropping of trees and heavy equipment activity until November 1-April 15. Forest management in winter.
6. Promote more pollinator gardens or meadows, which can be established even in very small spaces.
7. Consider saving redcedar wherever possible, including dropping trees around them to release redcedar to full sunlight.
8. In managing for forest trees, an early step should be the elimination of nonnative invasive trees first, including any black locust, Norway maple, tree-of-heaven, buckthorn and white mulberry, providing space for native vegetation to fill in. Make tree-of-heaven a property-wide priority to reduce attraction of spotted lanternfly.
9. Create wildlife brush piles as convenient. [Brush Piles for Wildlife](#)
10. Cut bittersweet vines of any size at any time found. Don't forget to cut a section out of the vines, and consider treating the root end with a Buckthorn Blaster. These vines are a continuous direct threat to trees, from sapling size to large sawtimber size.
11. Plant in a strategic manner, to either supplement spaces desired to convert to native trees, or to occupy spaces not being naturally populated, or to promote diversity currently lacking. It is suggested the town could plant conifers, if even in small patches. Natives are always preferred but nonnative spruces (such as Norway spruce, white spruce) can provide similar cover values to eastern hemlock. The town could also plant thicket-producing shrubs or wetland species to replace invasive species presently on those much more moist sites (see appendix). Pitch pine and redcedar could be planted on the dry sand plain environment between fields, as discussed during the site visit. Those areas are already

occupied by a scattering of natural redcedar. Pitch pine sand plain is one of the state's 13 most imperiled ecosystems. [Beaches, Dunes and Other Coastal Communities](#)

12. Seed open spaces to increase the milkweed component on the property!
13. Consider installing bat boxes and bird nesting boxes.
14. Leave all snags and cavity trees, unless directly posing a public hazard.
15. Contact Audubon/Wildlife regarding the possibility of a bird survey/bat survey respectively.
16. If dogs are allowed by visitors, they should be on leash at all times, for the sake of wildlife.
17. Keep in mind that black walnuts are allelopathic and can chemically inhibit the growth of certain nearby plants, due to the chemical juglone that is contained in its roots, leaves, and nuts. This can be mitigated by choosing juglone-tolerant plants ([10 Plants to Grow Under Black Walnut - The Conservation Foundation](#) and see tree and shrub lists here--[Landscaping and Gardening Around Walnuts and Other Juglone Producing Plants](#)) or avoiding planting at least directly under or adjacent to black walnut trees.
18. Agroforestry, and particularly the concept of "silvopasture" development is a distinct possibility to consider on portions of Kycia Farm. Here is more information from the USDA Forest Service: [Silvopasture](#) ; here is a training course USDA offers on the topic, although it is based outside our northeastern region: [Silvopasture: Establishment and management principles for pine forests in the Southeastern United States](#). Especially review the appendix 3 document by our state's own Joseph Orefice, instructor at the Yale School of Forestry that practices silvopasture himself. His contact information at the end can be used to reach him for any direct questions on this. [Agroforestry | USDA](#)



Young pole-size hickory stand near Collier Road.

Don't forget to consider a management or stewardship plan through a private consulting forester, get financial assistance available to municipalities, and mark your boundaries.

Financial Assistance

There are a handful of sources of grants and cost share opportunities that could be available. Such funding often covers numerous forestry related activities, including pre-commercial thinning/TSI (Timber Stand Improvement), girdling to create snags, stream crossing construction and streambank restoration, planting trees and shrubs, invasive plant control, trail construction, skid road closure/reclamation, deer fencing, etc. Unfortunately, municipalities do not qualify for NRCS assistance or CLCC (the latter for land trusts). But most sources of funding require a management plan for your forest first.

- Visit CT DEEP's [grants website](#), as the list of funding opportunities is updated as they become available. Note that more grants may become available and announced as 2025 continues. *The site should be monitored.*
- Visit [CT DEEP's Urban & Community Forestry Program's grants website](#), as the list of opportunities is updated as they become available. You can contact deep.ucf.grants@ct.gov with specific questions. More opportunities will be emerging as the year goes on, and do not be discouraged if you do not consider yourself "urban". It is noteworthy that a new grant is coming soon for municipalities that have less than 50,000 citizens, which includes Wethersfield. For information on this, you are encouraged to contact Danica Doroski (Danica.doroski@ct.gov) or Les Welker in the Urban Forestry program (les.welker@ct.gov, 860-424-3534).
- Contact the Connecticut Botanical Society to assess viability for their small grant program: [Grants – Connecticut Botanical Society \(ct-botanical-society.org\)](#). There is at least one land trust and a private landowner I can think of that has successfully secured funding from the Botanical Society in the past several years. They may fund specific projects such as invasive control.
- Connecticut Recreational Trail Grants are worth reviewing and considering: [Connecticut Recreational Trail Grants](#). This may be applicable for developing an educational/interpretive trail system that ties in with the management goals on the property.
- Engage the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG): This should be a valuable resource to inform landscape-scale planning efforts – free consultant services may be available, grant opportunities may exist, and valuable information and services can be provided. There may be multiple forms of grant opportunities, including those relating to Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) and community Sustainability: [Home - CRCOG | Capitol Region Council of Governments](#).
- You may also want to consider grant possibilities available through the Connecticut Dept. of Agriculture, due to agroforestry interests: [Grants](#) ; here is a contact page for personnel at the Dept. of Agriculture: [Contact Us](#) .

The DEEP website has many educational materials available on numerous aspects of managing for healthy forest resources: <https://portal.ct.gov/deep/forestry/ct-forestry-division>

Here is a valuable link to the Connecticut Forest Action Plan from 2020, which is a companion piece to the previously-referenced Wildlife Action Plan. Most recommendations and missions by the DEEP Forestry Division can be linked to this comprehensive document which is produced after extensive surveys and interviews with stakeholders of our state's forest ecosystems and resources: [2020-approved-ct-forest-action-plan.pdf](#)

Here is a "Story Map" presentation of this plan that is fascinating and very helpful in understanding the principles of the statewide plan: [Connecticut's 2020 Forest Action Plan \(arcgis.com\)](#)

For information on how habitats have changed in Connecticut see [Habitat History slide show](#) on the Belding WMA webpage.

Check out the [Native Landscaping slide show](#) for more information on the importance of native plants.

Want to learn much more? Become a Master Woodland Manager! You can consider joining the Master Woodland Manager training program, run by DEEP/CFPA/USDA Forest Service/UCONN/CT. Agricultural Experiment Station and other partners. The program includes scholarship availability and a curriculum of coursework spread out over nearly a year, mostly on evenings and weekends when working individuals are more available. See the flyer: [mwm-flier.pdf](#). This is now a nationally recognized and award-winning program. Here is also an article on this program from the Hartford Courant recently: <https://www.courant.com/2025/08/26/ct-program-that-teaches-forest-management-sees-record-enrollment-despite-loss-in-federal-funding/?share=rftneinrfeghenn8tml>. DEEP Forestry would love to see at least one member of every land trust and town conservation commission take part in this program! If interested, you have until next mid-July to consider and get in your application.

Interested in an educational program for a Conservation Commission meeting or for your community citizens? Presentations by your forester are possible. Fill out this application online: [Education and Outreach Request \(Page 1 of 2\)](#)

Please feel free to share this report!

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