



State of Connecticut  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**ANNE MEIMAN HUGHES**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
ONE HUNDRED THIRTY FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
PHONE: 860-240-8585 / 1-800-842-8267  
FAX: (860) 240-0206  
E-MAIL: [anne.hughes@cga.ct.gov](mailto:anne.hughes@cga.ct.gov)

**MEMBER**  
AGING COMMITTEE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE  
COMMITTEE

Dear Allyson Clarke and CT DEEP and CT Land Conservation colleagues,

I am writing in support of The Town of Easton's application for DEEP to favorably consider awarding an Open Space and Watershed Acquisition grant to Easton, for which The Aspetuck Land Trust would purchase 19 acres of open space and fragile ecosystem and wetlands area of the Mill River, known as South Park Avenue site, owned by the Town of Easton.

The South Park Ave. site was purchased in 2008 by Town of Easton and costs the taxpayers \$350,000 each year in interest payments for the bonded debt of the purchase. The land and river are home to native brook and brown trout species, and worthy of land trust protection and preservation in perpetuity, a legacy of stewardship to which the Aspetuck Land Trust is known.

The town continues to seek and consider appropriate and sustainable proposals for the remainder of the (29 acres) of South Park Ave. site, and this grant for the Aspetuck Land Trust purchase would satisfy a key public concern, both for the protection of the fragile ecosystem housed within the site, and relieve some of the ongoing debt burden that is born by taxpayers for the purchase of the site.

I enthusiastically endorse this grant application as an excellent use of grant resources by DEEP, the Town of Easton, the land trust and all the conservation stewards. This 'South Park Avenue' addition to Aspetuck Land Trust is a worthy investment in the sustainability, the habitat, open land and Mill River protection, and the public will of our community. Please do not hesitate to reach out for any further details or information I can provide as a proud representative of all the species of the 135<sup>th</sup> District.

Peace,

Anne Hughes  
State Representative, 135<sup>th</sup> District  
Easton, Weston, Redding

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Hughes".



## Town of Fairfield

Fairfield, Connecticut 06824  
Conservation Commission  
The Wetlands Agency

Sullivan Independence Hall  
725 Old Post Road  
(203) 256-3071  
FAX (203) 256-3123

July 20, 2020

Commissioner Katherine S. Dykes  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Attn: Allyson Clark, Open Space and Watershed and Land Acquisition  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Re: Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition 2020 Grant Application  
Property located at 18 South Park Avenue, Easton, CT 06612

Dear Commissioner Dykes:

I am pleased to write in support the Aspetuck Land Trust's (ALT) application to seek funding from the State through the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program in order to acquire the 18.7-acre parcel along the banks of the Mill River in lower Easton.

There is little opportunity to affect major protection efforts in this area of the Canoe Brook Subwatershed, identified as of the highest priority in the Mill River Watershed Management Plan. This plan was recently completed by my office in July 2019 utilizing the Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Program grant with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to help address the TMDL and other nonpoint source pollutant loading and stormwater management concerns in the Mill River. As detailed in the plan, this subwatershed would benefit from streambank stabilization using prioritized riparian best management practices. Protecting and preserving river corridors is the highest priority, particularly the upstream reaches, followed by restoration reacting to impairments. In addition, preservation and protection of the riparian buffers are important measures for protecting water quality in the Mill River Watershed.

I fully support ALT's acquisition of this land with the support of the grant.

Sincerely,

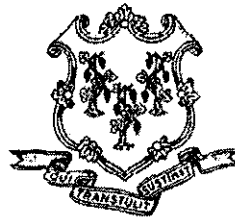
Brian Carey  
Conservation Director  
Town of Fairfield

BVC/bg

**SENATOR TONY HWANG**  
TWENTY-EIGHTH SENATE DISTRICT

300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 3400  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Telephone: 860-240-8805  
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**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATE**

**DEPUTY SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

**RANKING MEMBER - HIGHER EDUCATION  
& EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

**RANKING MEMBER - HOUSING COMMITTEE**

**RANKING MEMBER - PUBLIC SAFETY  
& SECURITY COMMITTEE**

**MEMBER - TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

June 23, 2020

Allyson Clark  
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program  
Constituent Affairs/Land Management Division  
79 Elm Street, 6th Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Dear Ms. Clark,

I am pleased to be writing in support of the Aspetuck Land Trust as they seek to obtain an Open Space Grant to obtain and preserve a part of 18 South Park Avenue in Easton, CT, abutting the Mill River. The Aspetuck Land Trust has a well-established history and reputation and their stewardship of land and resources is to be commended.

The remarkable piece of land the Aspetuck Land Trust intends to obtain abuts the Mill River, one of the best rivers in the state for trout. Attaining this parcel would enable the Aspetuck Land Trust to coordinate with Trout Unlimited to help preserve this this wonderful and unique resource for generations to come.

As we see our open spaces in Connecticut begin to diminish in the face of development or overdevelopment in some circumstances, the preservation of open space is even more important.

I fully support the Aspetuck Land Trust in their continued mission to preserve natural heritage and open space in Easton, CT. Your approval of this application is strongly encouraged.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Hwang".

Tony Hwang  
State Senator, 28th District

CC: David Brant, Aspetuck Land Trust Executive Director  
David Bindelglass, Easton First Selectman



CONSERVATION COMMISSION

225 Center Road - Easton, Connecticut 06612

July 17, 2020

Commissioner Katherine S. Dykes  
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Attn: Allyson Clark, Open Space and Watershed and Land Acquisition  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Re: Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition 2020 Grant Application  
Property located at 18 South Park Avenue, Easton, CT 06612

Dear Commissioner Dykes:

The Easton Conservation Commission is pleased to support the Aspetuck Land Trust's application to seek funding from the State through the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program in order to acquire the 18.7 acre property located off South Park Avenue in Easton, CT.

This property encompasses part of the Mill River, immediately downstream of the Easton reservoir. It is known to contain excellent water quality and is an important cold water fishery. Additionally, it is a Class 1 Wild Trout Management Area. It is also the headwaters of the Town of Fairfield watershed which begins with release-water below the upstream hydraulic company dam. Preservation of this area through the proposed acquisition will avoid adverse impacts to natural resources and help protect the water resources and surrounding habitat of the Mill River that is home to wild native brook trout and wild brown trout.

We believe that the Aspetuck Land Trust will be the perfect steward of the Mill River and this newly acquired area will enhance land already owned by the Land Trust immediately to the north and south of the site.

Sincerely,

*Dori Wollen jmd*  
Dori Wollen, Chair

DW/fmd

Cc. John Cunningham, Chair  
South Park Advisory Committee

Allyson Clarke, Property Agent  
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program  
Office of Constituent Affairs/Land Management  
CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street, Sixth Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

June 29, 2020

Dear Ms. Clarke,

The Nature Conservancy would like to express support for the permanent protection of two projects in Fairfield County, the 11.56 acre Fratelli Zeta property in Wilton and the 16.5 acre South Park Avenue property in Easton. Aspetuck Land Trust (ALT) is an Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant program applicant for both projects.

The Fratelli Zeta property in Wilton has been identified by ALT as an important addition to their ongoing efforts to protect a 705-acre forest block on the Weston Wilton border. Permanent protection of this parcel will enhance the ecological benefits provided by the existing Honey Hill Preserve and contributes to the available habitat provided by the wildlife corridor extending from the Honey Hill area to The Nature Conservancy's Lucius Pond Ordway-Devil's Den Preserve (Devil's Den Preserve) and the uninterrupted parcels protected in the Saugatuck Forest Lands by others.

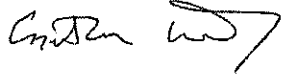
Aspetuck Land Trust and other partners have envisioned providing an additional east west spur of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) which will allow pedestrians to hike from the NRVT system in Wilton, through Honey Hill and connect to the lower Saugatuck-Aspetuck trail system via Devil's Den Preserve trails. The main entrance at Devil's Den can accommodate hikers via three trail heads where signage and a greater visibility can help TNC manage user conflicts between the NRVT, the Honey Hill Preserve and the existing trail system connecting through Centennial Watershed State Forest and to Huntington State Park. Weston's vision for and commitment to greater and safer "walkability" in the town positions the partners well to secure a safe route across town.

The 16.5 acre South Park Avenue project in Easton is less than a mile from the southern end of the Easton Reservoir and is part of a connected network of tracts in conservation ownership along the Mill River. Easton Reservoir is protected by Centennial Watershed State Forest and the immediate area surrounding the reservoir has been identified by The Nature Conservancy as being an area with high Climate Flow. Some of the 16.5 acres also possess above average Climate Flow traits. "Climate Flow" refers to the gradual movement of plant and animal species over time in response to climate. Protecting these areas can help create corridors for species to find and colonize new habitat as current habitats change with the climate and become unsuitable for them. Transferring this acreage into permanent conservation ownership and managing it effectively will prevent this ecological benefit from being impaired.

The Nature Conservancy recognizes the important role that Aspetuck Land Trust plays in protecting and managing open space. They remain an important conservation partner in this region and their work

supports The Nature Conservancy's land protection and other conservation efforts in Fairfield County. We strongly endorse ALT's proposal to permanently protect and own the Fratelli Zeta and 16-acre South Park Avenue properties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cynthia Fowx', followed by a stylized flourish or arrow pointing to the right.

Cynthia Fowx  
Conservation Outreach &  
Devil's Den Preserve Manager



Nutmeg chapter Trout Unlimited  
P.O. Box 1594  
Fairfield, Connecticut 06825

May 14, 2020

Katherine S. Dykes  
DEEP Commission  
Attn: Allyson Clark  
Open Space and Watershed and Land Acquisition

Dear Ms. Dykes,

Trout Unlimited, a national conservation organization focusing in the health of North America's cold-water resources and fisheries. The Nutmeg Chapter, which covers eastern Fairfield County, fully supports the Aspetuck Land Trust's effort to preserve a buffer zone along the Mill River on Park Avenue in Easton.

- 1) The upper Mill River is special.
  - a. The Mill River is one of only nine streams in the entire state that has been designated a "Class One" wild trout stream by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). It is a very special stream, a blue gem located in the very heavily developed New York City Metropolitan area. The prime trout habitat section is a Wild Trout Management Area, which is uniquely composed of a tailwater on one end and a deep lake on the other end. The stream supports wild & native brook char as well as wild brown trout.
    - i. Jeff Yates, author- Fly Fishing Fairfield County.
      1. The Mill River in the area in question "is designated as a Class 1 Wild Trout Management Area with catch and release fishing. Despite the lack of stocking, the wild trout are thriving in the Mill River, primarily due to the cold water discharges from the dam upstream"
    - ii. Ron Merly, author- Flyfisher's Guide to Connecticut
      1. "Here is where some of the finest wild trout fishing in Fairfield County can be found." "The Mill River is fragile and pristine. It has good populations of stoneflies, BWOs, brown caddis, and mayflies. It is also one of the few places in the stat where an occasional wild rainbow trout can be found."

2. As a tailwater stream, cold water coming from the bottom of the Easton Reservoir dam provides the trout with safe conditions, trout even during the hottest summer days. The cool water release from the reservoir has restored the river to its natural (predevelopment state) and must be protected. The river is fragile. In 2003 1 gallon of chlorine spilled in the river at the dam and killed nearly all the trout for 2+ miles downstream.
3. Wild trout reproduce in the Mill. A survey of Redds was conducted in the fall of 2019 and numerous Redds were found. Trout lay eggs in cleared gravel which take 5-6 months to hatch. Excessive sand and silt caused by erosion covering these Redds can kill the eggs. Providing a 200-foot buffer along the stream reduces the chances for sand and silt entering the river and destroying the trout Redds.

a. <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=7cbce64976be41438bb8919b4e4ec580&extent=-73.2729,41.2279,-73.2323,41.2487>

<https://arcg.is/1rCCDu0>

In summary, we fully support the effort to set aside a buffer zone along the Mill River in Easton to protect and preserve a precious resource for our community.

Sincerely,



Richard Rosen

President, Nutmeg Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Covering Westport, Fairfield, Bridgeport, Stratford, Millford, Easton, Weston, Trumbull and Shelton



John Kovach

Chairman, Connecticut Council of Trout Unlimited

Coordinating all eight Connecticut chapters of Trout Unlimited





## *Town of Easton*

*David Bindelglass*  
*First Selectman*

*225 Center Road*  
*Easton, Connecticut 06612*  
*www.eastonct.gov*

*203-268-6291*  
*FAX 203-268-4928*  
*dbindelglass@eastonct.gov*

July 21, 2020

Allyson Clark  
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition  
Grant Program Constituent Affairs/Land Management Division  
79 Elm Street, 6th Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Dear Ms. Clark,

As the First Selectman of Easton I am writing to express the support of our Board of Selectmen for the application by the Aspetuck Land Trust to receive an Open Space Grant to obtain and preserve a part of 18 South Park Avenue in Easton, CT, abutting the Mill River. The Aspetuck Land Trust has a well-established history and reputation for their stewardship of land and resources.

This remarkable piece of land the Aspetuck Land Trust intends to purchase abuts the Mill River, one of the best rivers in the state for trout. Attaining this parcel would enable the Aspetuck Land Trust to coordinate with Trout Unlimited to help preserve this wonderful and unique resource for generations to come.

As we see our open spaces in Connecticut begin to diminish in the face of development or overdevelopment in some circumstances, the preservation of open space is even more important.

We fully support the Aspetuck Land Trust in their continued mission to preserve natural heritage and open space in Easton, CT. Your approval of this application is strongly encouraged.

Sincerely,

Dave Bindelglass  
First Selectman