



RI Department of Environmental Management
Land Conservation and Acquisition Program
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2012

State of Rhode Island *Lincoln D. Chafee, Governor*
Department of Environmental Management *Janet L. Coit, Director*
Division of Planning and Development *Joseph G. Dias, Chief*

State of RI Land Conservation Commissions/Committees

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Kenneth Ayars, Chief, Division of Agriculture
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Agricultural Land Preservation Commission

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Kevin J. Nelson, Supervising Planner, Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program
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David Wallace, Public Member
William Wright, Public Member
Martha Neale, Public Member

Report prepared by Michelle Sheehan, Division of Planning and Development and Allison Logan, Program Intern.



State Land Conservation

The State of Rhode Island is extremely rich in natural resources. The beauty of its beaches, bays, forests, farms, and rivers helps to sustain its economy and provides residents with a high quality of life. **Thanks to robust public investment in Open Space Bonding over the past several decades, the state has made great strides in preserving its rural character, water resources, open space and forests, and farm land.** This investment has enabled the tourism industry to thrive, has protected the quality of life for all residents, and has preserved Rhode Island's critical habitat resources.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Land Conservation Program, operating through the Division of Planning and Development, works to preserve the state's natural areas, to guarantee their permanent protection, and to ensure proper management of land having high intrinsic resource value. With an emphasis on the following critical elements: working farms, forests, drinking water protection, recreation, and natural heritage/biodiversity, DEM works to ensure these resources remain available for future generations. The Program prioritizes parcels of land whose resource value, size, location, and relationship to existing conservation land make them significant to the state's welfare.

Rhode Island's natural assets play a big role in the state's tourist economy by providing opportunities for the public to camp, fish, hunt, hike, and enjoy the great outdoors, and at the same time bring revenue to the local economy.

DEM's Division of Planning and Development manages and supports statewide land conservation programs, coordinates land conservation activities with other state, federal and non-profit programs, and works to preserve land consistent with state plans and state regulations. As the pressure on undeveloped land subsides during the current economic downturn, the Department faces new opportunities for purchasing previously unaffordable property as well as new challenges of working under significant budget constraints and with reluctant sellers.



Three programs accommodate Rhode Island's public land acquisitions:

State Land Conservation Program

This program is administered by the DEM Land Acquisition Committee, which makes recommendations to the Director regarding real estate transactions that will enhance DEM's Management Areas, Parks and Forest Lands.

Funding for these real estate acquisitions is provided by State Open Space bonds, with contributions from municipalities and land trusts, from local partners such as The Nature Conservancy and the Champlin Foundations, and from various federal programs including the U.S. Forest Services' Forest Legacy program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, and the National Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund.

In addition, this program combines its funding with the Local Open Space Grants Program and the Agricultural Land Preservation Program to complement its conservation projects.

Local Open Space Grant Program

Rhode Island Open Space Grants support cities and towns, land trusts, and non-profit organizations in their protection and acquisition of natural areas that are deemed priorities on the municipal level. This critical partnership works to leverage funds from municipal, non-profit, and federal agencies for the protection of Rhode Island's resources. DEM provides up to 50% funding to successful applicants and adds a layer of protection to the conserved parcels to ensure they remain undeveloped in perpetuity. All grant

applications are reviewed and scored by the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Preservation Commission Advisory Committee according to the following criteria: habitat protection, greenway or regional linkage, planning consistency, resource protection, water resource protection, and multi-community application. Final awards are determined by the Natural Heritage Commission. The State's share of funding is provided by State Open Space Bonds.

“DEM's Open Space Grants . . . not only help us preserve and protect precious open space and farmland, but . . . also benefit one of our state's key economic assets: our tourism industry. I am proud that we will be preserving these beautiful spaces for Rhode Islanders to enjoy for generations to come.”
—Lincoln D. Chafee, Governor

Agricultural Land Preservation Program

Rhode Island's farms contribute to the state's economic development and provide Rhode Islanders with local food and farm vistas – as well as tourism opportunities and wildlife habitat. According to the 2012 Agricultural Economic Impact Study, agriculture contributes \$170 million annually to the local economy. From 2002-2007 the market value of agricultural production in Rhode Island climbed from \$55.5 million to \$65.9 million. It is now estimated to be more than \$100 million. With such significant contributions to the economy as well as to the health of our natural communities, protecting Rhode Island's farmland is a good investment.

This program, run by the Agricultural Land Preservation Commission (ALPC) and staffed by the DEM, preserves agricultural lands through the purchase of

farmland development rights. Purchasing development rights from farmers enables them to retain ownership of their property while protecting their lands for agricultural use. At the same time, it provides farmers with a financially competitive alternative to development. The State's farming industry, which contributes \$170 million annually to the local economy, is dependent on access to productive land. This program helps to ensure that farming remains viable in the state.

All program applications are reviewed and scored by the ALPC according to parcel size; soil quality; agricultural operation and viability; protection of water supplies and quality; open space, cultural and scenic features; flood protection; relative development pressure; and consistency with state and local plans.

Funding for this program is obtained through the Open Space Bond; The Nature Conservancy, through grants from the Champlin Foundations; the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program; and through the leveraging of land trust and municipal funds.



Rocky Point Farm



DEM is fortunate to work with many strong conservation partners as a way to both stretch state dollars and ensure that as much land is being preserved as possible. The State Open Space Bond plays a major role in acquiring land. But the department has also been very successful in using the bond money to leverage private landowner donations and funds from other sources. Most properties are acquired through the collaboration of several different groups.

Many major fiscal partners were active this year. They include The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Federal Highway Administration and the RI Department of Transportation, and local land trusts.

The Land Conservation Program also receives vital internal support from many other DEM staff members. The Divisions of Management Services, Fish & Wildlife, and Legal Services all provide countless hours of assistance to the program and enable it to function efficiently.

We would like to thank our FY 2012 conservation partners:

The Nature Conservancy

The Champlin Foundations

US Fish & Wildlife Service

*The USDA NRCS Farm and
Ranchlands Protection Program*

RI Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

Town of North Kingstown

The Westerly Land Trust

The Town of Coventry

The Tiverton Land Trust

The Glocester Land Trust

The Town of Cumberland

The Cumberland Land Trust

Southside Community Land Trust

The Town of Warren

The Town of Bristol



FY 2012 Accomplishments

Rocky Point Farm

Achieving Land Conservation Goals

Since 1994 the State has managed to preserve 22,908 acres. To date, more than 20% of the state has been preserved as open space, for recreation, or for agricultural use.

Leveraging Funds

As the state open space bond account dwindles in size, DEM increasingly relies on partner funding to help fund its acquisition projects. This fiscal year, DEM preserved more than \$14 million in land value and used only \$4.6 million in state funds – leveraging 67% funding from federal and local partners.

The hard work that goes into leveraging these partner funds has

ensured that the public bond investments over the years have been stretched to their utmost potential – protecting an impressive 15,502 acres over the past 10 years alone. These 218 projects represent \$171.5 million in land value and include a state investment of \$46.6 million. DEM has leveraged 73% of its investment over this 10 year period, pulling in \$124.9 million in

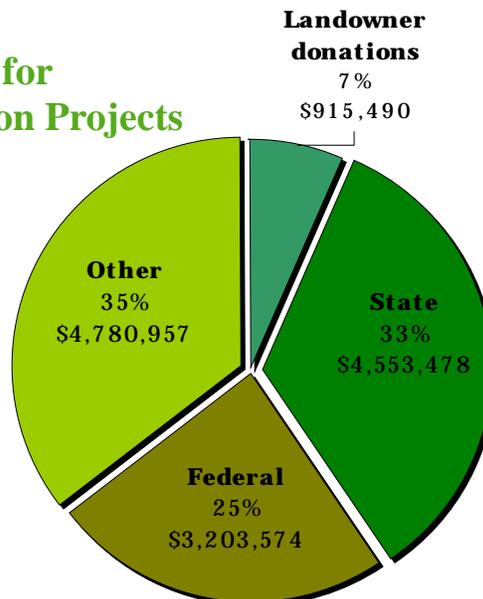
federal and local contributions.

Currently, the bond account that sustains this program is nearly depleted. If this program is to continue to preserve critical open space and farmland it will need additional funds, without which the state will lose its leverage to bring federal funds to Rhode Island.

BY THE NUMBERS: LOOKING BACK 10 YEARS

Number of acres preserved in the past 10 years:	15,502
Number of projects:	218
Land value of these projects:	\$171,500,000
State investment:	\$46,600,000
Federal and local investment	\$124,500,000
Ratio of state to partner funds:	27% to 73%

Funding Sources for Land Conservation Projects in FY 2012



The following 29 projects were completed by the Land Conservation Program in Fiscal Year 2012 (July 1st 2011 - June 30th 2012) for a grand total of 1,669 acres.

Property	Town	Purpose	Acres
Harrisville Quarries	Burrillville	Active recreation	102.4
Perry/St. Angelo	Bristol	Open space	41.4
Kee Farm	Warren	Agriculture	60.7
Bates, Herman	Glocester	Habitat, public access	37.5
Southside Community LT, Greenwich St.	Providence	Agriculture	0.1
Rocky Point Farm	Warwick	Agriculture	8.0
Pratt	Cumberland	Open space	35.9
Emerson (north)	Cumberland	Habitat, recreation	103.5
Emerson (south)	Cumberland	Habitat, recreation	132.0
Laurenzo	Glocester	Active recreation	56.4
Fagnoli	Glocester	Habitat	9.1
Taylor	West Greenwich	Habitat	75.8
Helger	Tiverton	Public access, open space	30.0
Clifford Farm	North Smithfield	Agriculture	18.0
Clorite Farm	North Kingstown	Agriculture	7.7
Ashville Corp.	Hopkinton	Recreation	66.8
Greene	Richmond	Recreation, habitat	84.5
Clark	Tiverton	Public access, open space	16.3
Tiverton Rod & Gun	Tiverton	Active recreation	120.1
Beaudoin	Coventry	Recreation	175.1
Boy Scouts	Burrillville	Habitat, public access	189.0
Cucumber Hill Farm	Foster	Agriculture	67.6
Woodbridge	Exeter	Habitat	80.0
Tarbox Motors' Inc.	North Kingstown	Facilities	4.1
Camp Wahaneeta	Westerly	Habitat, open space	72.2
Freeborn Farm	North Kingstown	Agriculture	27.2
DelVecchio Farm	North Kingstown	Agriculture	44.0

Total: 1,669 Acres

The Year in Review: Featured Properties



Cucumber Hill Farm

Trails and Greenways

Clark—Tiverton

Wahaneeta—Westerly

Beaudoin—Coventry

Emerson —Cumberland

Agricultural Lands

Rocky Point Farm—Warwick

Cucumber Hill Farm—Foster

Greenwich Street—Providence

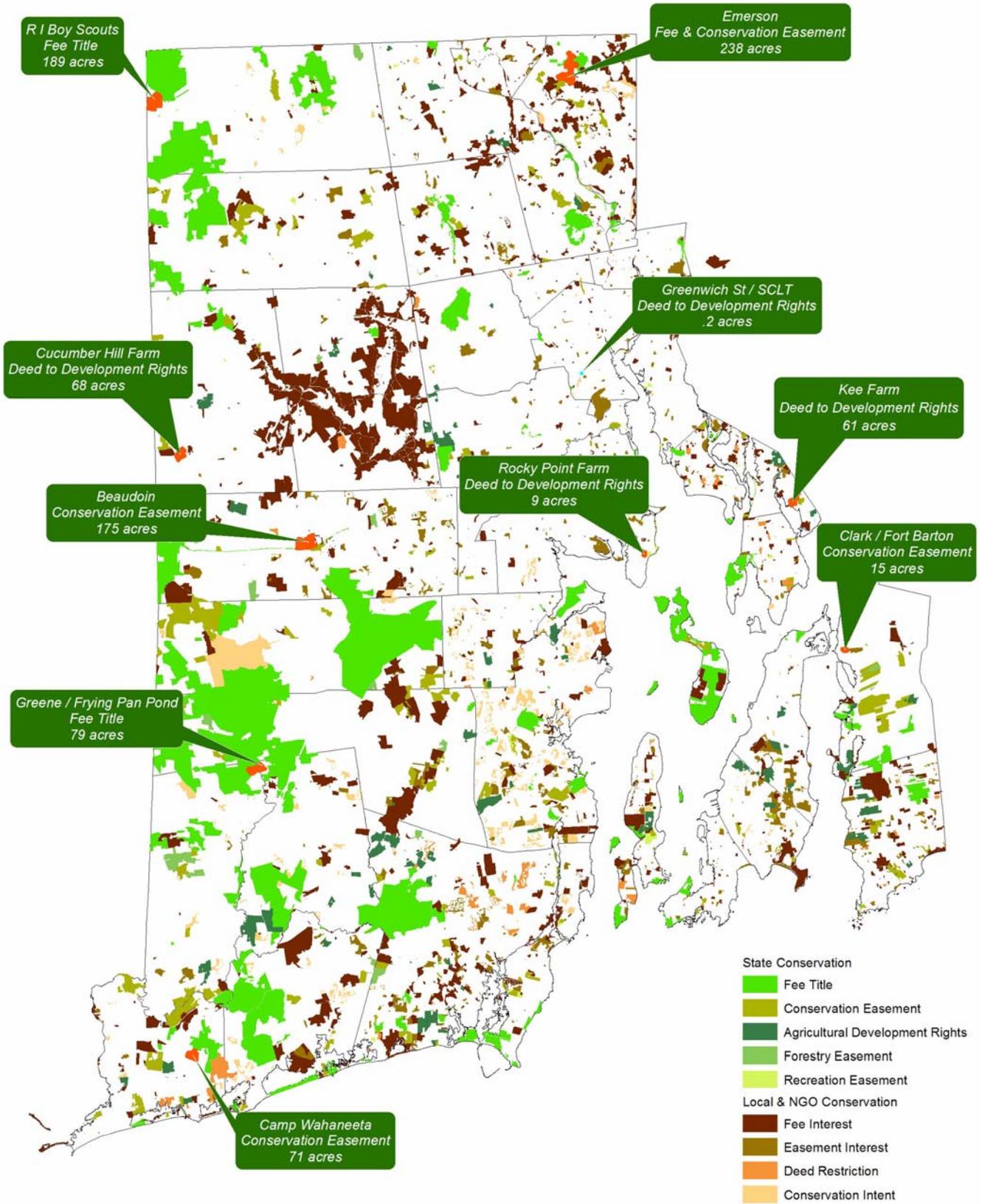
Kee Farm—Warren

Habitat and Biodiversity

Boy Scouts—Burrillville

Greene—Richmond

Map of Featured Properties



Greenways and Trails

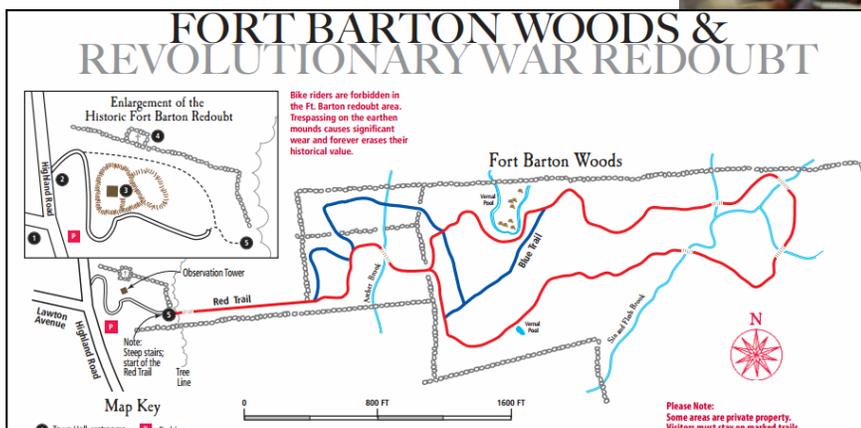
The network of bike paths and hiking trails that traverse Rhode Island provide the public with access to the state's open space and recreation land. They also form an important part of the strategic targeting of conservation lands in their own right.



Beudoin Property, Photo Credit: Jake Peabody

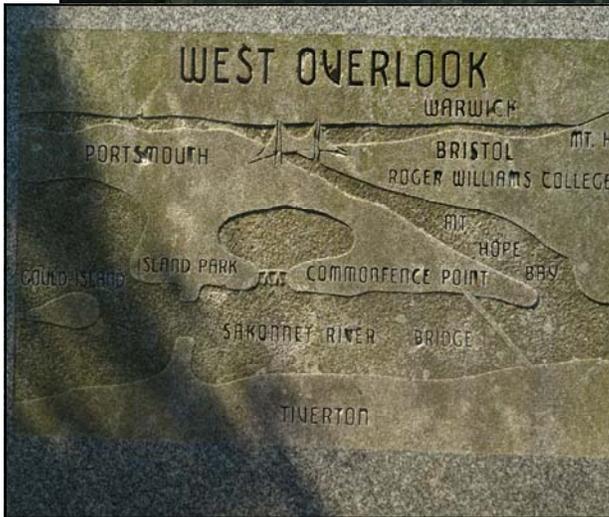


Frog on Beudoin Property, Photo Credit: Jake Peabody





View from atop tower on Clark property
Photo Credit: Allison Logan



Portsmouth and the Sakonnet River. Fort Barton Woods consists of mature coastal oak-holly forest, several vernal pools, Sin and Flesh Brook, and 3 ½ miles of trails for use by the public. Both the historic site and associated woodlands are public

trail network, and a picnic area for families. The parcel will ultimately improve public access to the Fort Barton properties, as current access points are limited by steep terrain. An entrance by way of the Clark property would permit access that could potentially comply with ADA specifications, extending access to the redoubt and trails to both the elderly and disabled.

Clark

16 Acres in Tiverton

The Clark property, rich in both historic and ecological value, abuts 80-acre Fort Barton Woods and the Fort Barton Revolutionary War Historic Site. The Revolutionary War redoubt on the property exhibits the site's staging of a major military operation in 1778, and affords panoramic views of Mt. Hope Bay, Tiverton Basin, Blue Hill Cove in

properties owned by the Town of Tiverton.

The newly acquired parcel is lined with stonewalls remaining from as early as the 18th century, contains an ecosystem that is similar to that of Fort Barton Woods, as well as a seasonal pond and stream. The property will be integrated into the surrounding woodland with the future development of a trail linking to the existing Fort Barton Woods

The Department of Environmental Management received a conservation easement for the property in exchange for a Local Open Space Grant awarded to the Tiverton Land Trust to assist in its purchase. The easement, which was purchased for \$187,500 will ensure that the history and ecology present on the Clark property will be preserved in perpetuity for use by the public.



Above: Cabin on Wahaneeta property
Below: Harvey C. Perry, II, Paul Meyers, and Kelly Presley from Westerly Land Trust,
Photo Credits: Allison Logan

Preserving RI's

Indian Tribe Reservation. Ultimately, the landscape is anticipated to encompass thousands of contiguous, protected acres. This large swath of land enhances the protection of an array of diverse species found on the property, including critical habitat for forest interior birds, and at least one Species of Greatest Conservation Need, as identified by DEM. Adjacent farmland further increases the diversity of habitats to those that encompass open space and forest edge.

The property consists of mature upland forest habitat: primarily Oak and Red Maple, and wetlands. Several small ponds are present on the site, providing potential habitat for breeding amphibians, as well as at least one vernal pool. The site falls within a Natural Resource Corridor, and is hydrologically connected to Aguntaug Swamp through a stream channel underneath Bradford Road.

Groundwater discharge seeps located in the lower areas of the site provide an important source of water to Red Maple Swamp and a perennial stream that runs through the property. The stream leads to a small historic impoundment, likely the site of a former grist mill, as well as a second impoundment that forms a small pond suitable for swimming.

In addition to the pond, the property affords several opportunities for recreation and education. The current trails located on the property provide opportunities for walks and wildlife observation, and possess the potential for extension into the adjacent 800-acre Woody Hill Management Area. A lodge constructed by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s sits on site and is conducive to educational programs and overnight camps.

In exchange for a Local Open Space Grant of \$127,500 to the Westerly

Wahaneeta

72 Acres in Westerly

The 72-acre Wahaneeta property is a critical component of the Westerly Land Trust's initiative to create a landscape-scale conservation area. The newly protected property abuts large tracts of undeveloped land, including DEM's Woody Hill Management Area, and Shelter Harbor Golf Course. The larger project area extends east to the town of Charlestown; north through Chapman Pond, Woody Hill Management Area, Newton Marsh, the Westerly Grills Preserve; and east to Phantom Bog, Burlingame State Park, and the Narragansett



Beadoin Property
Photo Credit: Jake Peabody

Natural Areas

Land Trust for the purchase of the property, the Department of Environmental Management has acquired a conservation easement, ensuring that the Wahaneeta property remains protected.

Beadoin

175.4 Acres in Coventry

At 14.2 miles, the Washington Secondary Bike Path is the state's second longest bike path, and when fully complete – will be the longest. The path currently runs from northern Cranston to Central Coventry and RIDOT is designing its extension west along the Trestle Trail. The 175-acre Beadoin Property, located along Trestle Trail and in the epicenter of Coventry, provides a direct link from the more urban portion of eastern Coventry with the rural nature of central and western Coventry. Its protection, via the exchange of a DEM Local Open

Space Grant awarded to the Town of Coventry for a conservation easement held by DEM, will enhance the future extension of the Washington Secondary Bike Path, to be known as the Trestle Trail Bike Path. Along the Trail are a series of small villages, historic homes, and the historic Read Schoolhouse; a one room schoolhouse built in 1831.

Ultimately, the path will be 25 miles long, running from Providence to the Connecticut state line. The Beadoin property adds to a 250-acre swath of

land straddling the Trestle Trail, enhancing the future Bike Path and creating increased recreational opportunities. Existing walking trails on the property will be connected to spur off the Bike Path. Additionally, the property sits adjacent to Stump Pond – an excellent natural resource for the town - surrounded by 163 acres of conservation land.

The Beadoin property itself contains a breadth of valuable resources - stands of Chestnut Oak dot the property and several wetland types feed off a cold water stream known as Quidneck Brook. Quidneck

Earthen Dam on Wahaneeta Property, Photo Credit: Allison Logan





"These grants represent another milestone in our efforts to help protect and preserve Rhode Island's open spaces and natural heritage. By protecting the farms, forests, shorelines, and open spaces that dot our landscape, we are enhancing the state's tourist economy by preserving lands that will be enjoyed by thousands of Rhode Islanders and visitors each year and making an important investment in the future of our beautiful state."

- DEM Director Coit

Pond on Emerson property
Photo Credit: Allison Logan

Brook is one of the most pristine rivers in the state; fostering an uncommon and ecologically fragile community. Additionally, the property contains at least one vernal pool – host to spawning amphibians and dragonflies. The educational value of this property is high as its position within the greenway and the existing trail system make it ideally situated for interpretive signage describing the watershed, local plants and animals, and the historical landscapes located on site.

Emerson

235 Acres in Cumberland

Several aspects of Cumberland's history are revealed through the 235-acre Emerson property. Lined with stone walls and old cart roads, the property exhibits the retention of much of its original character over the past few centuries. The area once supported farming, and served as a copper mining and granite quarry, and the site is adjacent to a historic Revolutionary War site, Beacon Pole

Hill. The property is rich with ecological assets, recreational promise, historical significance, and opportunities to increase access to surrounding protected land. One of the few large undeveloped parcels remaining in Northern Rhode Island, Emerson sits on both sides of Tower Hill Road, between Diamond Hill Road and West Wrentham Road. Purchased with state Open Space Bond Funds and a grant from The Champlin Foundations through the Nature Conservancy, the two Emerson parcels will be jointly managed by the town and the state.

The newly acquired land will connect the state's 388-acre Diamond Hill Reservation with the Northern edge of Sneece Pond and Ash swamp, resulting in the protection of over 1,700 acres of contiguous land in Northern Cumberland. The linkage to Diamond Hill Park will allow for the extension of trails throughout surrounding properties. Specifically, the Warner Trail, a branch of the Appalachian Trail will be lengthened and the added acreage will continue

to increase users' sense of wilderness. The Emerson property will also provide opportunities for improved access to these recreational resources. The state of Rhode Island is planning to construct 3 parking lots following this acquisition, one of which will be located on Diamond Hill Rd., and another on Tower Hill Road. These parking areas are critical to the increased safety and accessibility of Diamond Hill Park, as there are currently no parking areas that provide direct access to this property for the public.

Emerson contains an array of animal and plant species, with some rare plant species prevalent on the parcel; and a wide variation in topography is displayed throughout the landscape. Rock-outcroppings, fields, and various small streams and ponds including the Catamint Brook and trails are a few of these features that are now available for the public to enjoy.

Agricultural Lands



Kee Farm Property

Rhode Island's agricultural resources are in threat of being lost forever. The DEM and the ALPC work with farmers and conservation interests to preserve farmland both for agricultural production and for the open space and habitat resources it provides.



Rocky Point Farm



Cucumber Hill Farm, Cucumber Hill Farm Website



Blueberry Picking at Rocky Point Farm

Preserving RI's

Rocky Point Farm

8 acres in Warwick

This iconic blueberry farm, run for decades by Betty and Mark Garrison, now has a second life, thanks to their efforts to ensure that the land remains in farming forever. Adjacent to the former Rocky Point Amusement Park, which is protected as public open space by DEM and the City of Warwick, Rocky Point

Farm will compliment the conservation land on Warwick Neck.

“This farm is a perfect example of how important the small farm has become to the people of this State. With its rich history, bountiful produce and dedicated landowners, it is easy to understand why Rocky Point Farm is a cherished local

landmark,” said Director Coit.

The funding for this project came in equal amounts from the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm and Ranchlands

Protection Program and the Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

Mayor Scott Avedesian noted that “this land is historically significant – and, like nearby Rocky Point Park, holds many happy memories for Rhode Islanders and people throughout the region.

The Garrison’s purchased the land, which was once part of the 19th-century estate of Senator Nelson Aldrich, in 1983, and the following year built a house, began rebuilding historic stone walls and clearing land for the small farm they named Rocky Point Farm. The farm originally included two acres of Norway spruce for Christmas trees and more than two acres for blueberries. Eventually, the Garrisons devoted their energies

“Betty and I are grateful that our little farm, the object of affection and work for so many years, will not go up for sale to the highest bidder for residential development. Our thanks to these forward-looking public servants who recognize the importance of preserving farmland and open space, even in urban areas, for current and future generations of Rhode Island.”

-Mark Garrison



Working Farms

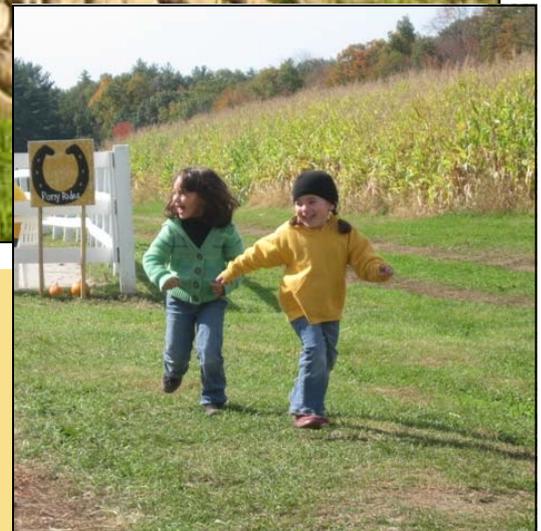
solely to their heavy-producing blueberry patch and later added an orchard of pawpaws, an unusual fruit new to Rhode Islanders. Over the years, the Garrisons have developed a loyal following of people who come to pick their own blueberries; in recent years, as much as 13 tons of berries have been harvested annually.

Cucumber Hill Farm 68 acres in Foster

Turning 70 acres of an overgrown dairy farm into a beautifully thriving beef and vegetable operation, in your spare time is no small feat. When it requires clearing 10 acres of woodland, restoring 15 acres of stone-filled fields, installing hundreds of feet of fencing, restoring

a farm pond, and successfully drawing hundreds of visitors to your farm annually, it is nothing short of astounding. L. Marc and Christine Paulhus did all this in 3 years - and a trip to the farm provides evidence of their tremendous effort. Contributing funding to this project was a no-brainer for the Agricultural Land Preservation Commission.

The farm also contains an historic homestead dating to 1780 and a well preserved barn, providing a scenic backdrop to the farm fields from the road and adding to the success of their agri-tourism operation. With 35% of the farm containing prime agricultural soils, the Paulhus' put it to good use with vegetable and hay production, as well as cattle pasture.



Above and Below: Cucumber Hill Farm
Cucumber Hill Farm website

Cucumber Hill Farm is closely adjacent to 240 acres existing protected land owned by the Audubon Society of RI and the Foster Land Trust. Protecting the farm effectively creates a greenway of preserved land in Western Foster, keeping the landscape rural.

Matching funds for this project were contributed by DOT's Federal Highway Enhancement project.



Kee Farm Property

Greenwich Street

.1 acres in Providence

This formerly blighted lot has been transformed by Southside Community Land Trust and the International Institute of Rhode Island into a thriving community garden for international refugees. Providence residents fleeing from nations as far flung as Bhutan, Eritrea, Burundi, and Togo congregate in this garden to grow food – with seeds they brought with them from their homelands. This mini UN is just 4,514 square feet of land in the West End of the city – but a very productive patch of America with 36 individual plots.

This lot abuts SCLT’s existing Burnett Garden , which has been in operation for over 10 years and is home to mostly Hmong and Cambodian gardeners growing food to feed their families.

DEM contributed \$17,000 to help SCLT purchase the lot - and in

exchange, SCLT granted the State Agricultural Land Preservation Commission the Development Rights – which will ensure that this garden remain a food-growing space forever. SCLT received additional funding from the Cedar Tree foundation to fence the lot, install raised beds and a water source, and to bring in clean, fertile soil.

Kee Farm

61 acres in Warren

A trip down the Tousisset Peninsula in Warren is like going back in time. Rolling forest and farm fields that dot the landscape provide a frame for the backdrop of the Kickemuit River. Kee Farm looms large in this landscape, with its 61 acres of agricultural fields that sweep down to salt marsh and the River, and red maple swamp. It will now remain as agricultural land in perpetuity, thanks to the hard work of the Town of Warren and the Kee family. With funding support from the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s

Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, a DEM Open Space Grant, and the State Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, the town of Warren was able to protect this valuable asset.

Kee Farm has been in operation by the Kee family since 1877 and has been actively farmed for 135 years. It currently operates as a beef cattle operation with some acreage devoted to hay and corn. The farm not only contains prime agricultural soils, it also has a diverse array of habitats supporting both native and migratory species including osprey, and owls. In addition, it is an important link in the Tousisset Peninsula Greenway. Its significant open space footprint will enhance the scenic vistas of the planned expansion of the East Bay Bike Path. With more than 2,000 feet of frontage on the Kickemuit River, the farm provides an impressive viewshed.



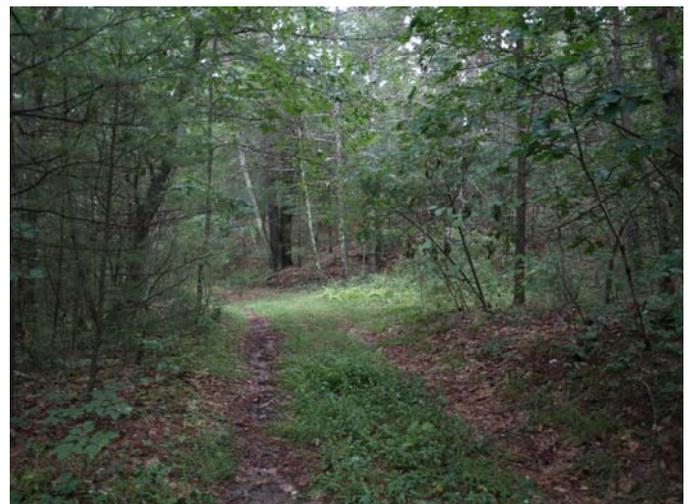
Greenwich Street Property, Photo Credit: Michelle Sheehan

Habitat & Biodiversity

Rhode Island's animal and plant communities face continued threats to their habitat. In such a small state, fragmentation of forests and wetlands is leaving small patches of green space not large enough to support healthy populations. The DEM recognizes the need to protect sizable swaths of land capable of providing the necessary shelter and open space.



Frying Pan Pond on Greene Property



Trail on Boy Scouts Property



“As one of the largest land conservation organizations in Rhode Island, we are proud to be able to continue our century-old tradition of providing protected environments for our Scouts to enjoy and learn about through our Scouting educational programs”
-John H. Mosby, Scout Executive/CEO, Narragansett Council Boy Scouts of America

Boy Scouts Property
Photo Credit: Allison Logan

Preserving RI's

Boy Scouts

189 Acres in Burrillville

Walking through the Boy Scouts property in Burrillville provides an experience rarely mirrored in other parts of the state. The forest's high concentration of American Larch and Black Spruce is most commonly found in northern New England and largely absent from the rest of Rhode Island. This composition gives the 189-acre property a unique character likely to be valued by those who visit. The property is enriched with an abundance of diverse species and habitats, and because of the unusual nature of these habitats, they also host several species of plants that are locally uncommon. Identifying and protecting these eco regions is an important element of ensuring that diverse habitats are sustained.

Croff Farm Brook and its associated spring-fed wetlands run through the property and foster an array of aquatic habitats that are unusual in Rhode Island. Several rare species that have been identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy inhabit the site. The Boy Scouts parcel abuts over 7,000 acres of land that is also owned and protected by the state, with Buck Hill Management area to the north and George Washington/Durfee Hill Management area to the south. This property is considered among the highest priority conservation parcels in the state, as its proximity to surrounding protected lands and its wide array of critical habitats establishes it as a keystone in the protection of species in Rhode Island.

The Boy Scouts of Rhode Island have a long history of serving youth in programs that provide environmental education and foster ideals of conservation and stewardship. The program has engaged in practices like Leave No Trace camping to align with these ideals since 1910. "We are pleased to collaborate with the Department of Environmental Management to preserve this important habitat and protect the many rare species living in this part of the state" said John H. Mosby, Scout Executive/CEO, Narragansett Council Boy Scouts of America.

The Department of Environmental Management purchased this property in cooperation with US Fish and Wildlife, the Nature Conservancy and the Champlin Foundations.



Wood River on Greene Property
Photo Credit: Allison Logan

Critical Habitats

Greene 84.5 Acres in Richmond

Frying Pan Pond, located on the Wood River, has been a target for conservation for several decades. Known to provide exceptional experiences regarding fishing and boating, the 84-acre Greene property in Richmond will both increase public access to these two bodies of water, through its ¾ mile of frontage; as well as provide permanent protection. The Wood River is considered one of the state’s most pristine rivers and valuable assets, providing habitat for numerous rare species.

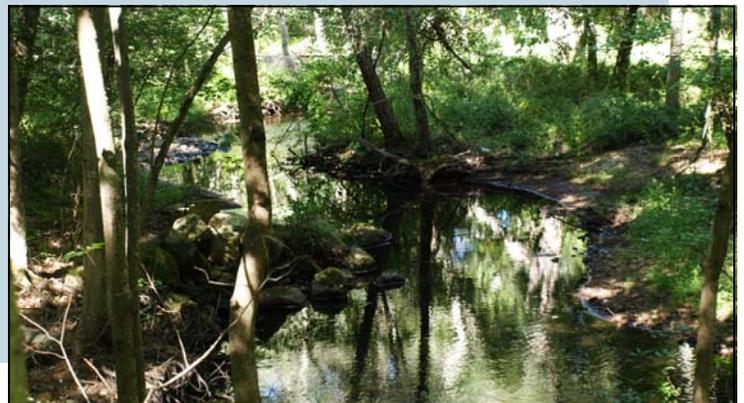
The property is located within Arcadia Management Area, 16,000 acres of contiguous protected land in the southwestern part of Rhode Island. The Greene parcel not only extends its boundaries to encompass

and protect the critical frontage on these two bodies of water, but begins to fill an invaluable hole of unprotected land within the management area. Arcadia is the most heavily utilized public access area owned by the state, so this frontage and additional coverage is a notable resource. The management area protects a variety of ecological resources and habitats, while providing extensive recreational opportunities for users. Some of these activities include hunting and fishing, as well as boating, hiking, and biking. There are several existing trails on the property that will now be accessible for public use.

“It has always been

the wish of the Winsor family to preserve [the property’s] natural beauty and resources,” said Audrey Greene, the owner of the property. “We are very pleased that in the hands of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, the Winsor Farm will be protected and preserved.”

The Greene property was purchased with DEM Open Space Bond Funds and funds from the Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Enhancement Program.



Brook on Greene Property
Photo Credit: Allison Logan

The Future of Land Conservation in RI

Conservation in RI finds itself at another cross-roads. With several decades of leveraging State Open Space Bond funds, the Division of Planning and Development has brought in \$53.8 million of federal funds to the state and has leveraged an additional \$95.8 million in local investment. The partnerships that have been fostered – with The Nature Conservancy, with local land trusts, and with federal grant programs, is unique amongst other states.

In order for these partnerships to be maintained, to keep federal dollars flowing, and to keep protecting RI's important natural areas for our future generations, additional state funds are needed. As the funds dedicated from the 2008 Bond dwindle, we look to the passage of another State Open Space Bond to enable the Land Conservation Program to continue to protect our critical natural areas, water resources, farmland, and habitat.

Our working farms, our rural landscapes, our rivers and forests have made it through the development boom of the 2000s. The Department has protected so many iconic properties, beloved to Rhode Islanders across the state – from Rocky Point amusement park to the Jamestown Farms so many of us pass on the way to Newport, to the woodland trails of Arcadia. And our work is far from done. When the development market picks up, we will need funding to make sure that development is steered away from the natural places that mean the most to us. As we work with Statewide Planning to help identify the best areas for development and the best areas for protection, we can be sure that what is best about the state will be saved, while enhancing it with appropriate development in the right places.



**Greenwich Street Property
Photo Credit: Amber Ma**

For more information about DEM's Land Conservation Program please visit the Division of Planning and Development's website at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bpoladm/plandev/index.htm>

Division contacts:

Lisa Primiano, Deputy Chief, Division of Planning and Development, 222-2776, ext 4307

Michelle Sheehan, Assistant, State Land Acquisition Program, 222-2776, ext 4436