

## Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange Funding Guide/Matrix

For regional fund raising purposes the Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (LTE), through meetings and surveys, has developed this funding matrix to use as a tool in concert with *The Lower CT River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange Natural Resource Based Strategic Conservation Plan, A GIS Overlay Analysis*, to guide them and the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) in disbursement of funds raised for land and conservation easement acquisitions.

The LTE, a program of RiverCOG, is an informal collaboration of 14 land trusts representing the 17 communities of the Region. The creation of the LTE was an outcome of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 2006 funded Lower Connecticut River Ground-Truthing Project. The project sought to engage citizens in eight towns of the lower Connecticut River watershed to develop maps and plans designed to protect open space across town boundaries through creation of greenways and to engage citizens in a collaborative effort to identify and act on opportunities to protect open space across town boundaries. This project built on an existing long lived conservation ethic in the lower River region and engaged individuals in a more encompassing regional vision of pride and protection of its extraordinary natural assets. Although working at the community level is critical to the sustainability of local organizations it is also important for the preservation of biodiversity and

ecosystem maintenance to work beyond local boundaries and include in local perceptions of conservation the importance of regional, large landscape, and even global connections and conservation goals.

The Region surrounds the lower 36 miles of the CT River from the River's mouth at Long Island Sound to the northern borders of the municipalities of Cromwell and Portland and over 20 miles of Long Island Sound coast line from the western border of the Town of Clinton, to the eastern border of the Town of Old Lyme. It is home to portions of 2 Refuges, the Menunketesuck/Duck Island complex and the Salt Meadow Unit of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge and the southernmost 354 sq. miles of the Connecticut River watershed based Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge; the Wild and Scenic

Eightmile River; 5 Connecticut State designated greenways – the Menunketesuck / Cockaponset Regional Greenway, the Connecticut River Gateway Zone Greenway, the Eight Mile River Greenway, the Old Lyme Greenway, and parts of the Blue Blazed Trail System Greenway. The

Chester Land Trust  
Clinton Land Conservation Trust  
Connecticut River Land Trust  
Deep River Land Trust  
East Haddam Land Trust  
Essex Land Trust  
Haddam Land Trust  
Lyme Land Conservation Trust  
Lynde Point Land Trust  
Middlesex Land Trust  
Old Lyme Land Trust  
Old Saybrook Land Trust  
Salem Land Trust



estuary of the lower River was designated as a Ramsar Estuary of Global Importance (1994), has been proclaimed by The Nature Conservancy to be one of the World's Last Great Places, and listed

as a Long Island Sound Stewardship Site (2005) by the Long Island Sound Stewardship Initiative. In 1998 the Connecticut was designated as an American Heritage River, one of 14 in the Country. Running through the region is part of the Metacomb, Monadnock, Mattabesett Trail System designated in 2009 as a National Scenic Trail that strives to extend over 200 miles from Massachusetts to Long Island Sound; the Region, as previously mentioned, also surrounds the Connecticut River Gateway Conservation Zone, a 30,000 acre area surrounding the lower 20 miles of the Connecticut River. Since 1974 the Connecticut River Gateway Commission has been charged with protecting the scenic and ecological properties of this unique landscape. Most recently the CT River Watershed was named the Nation's first National Blueway as part of the Department of the Interior's Americas Great Outdoors Initiative.

Since its first meeting in Sept. 2009, the LTE has worked internally, locally, regionally, State, and New England wide to promote landscape scale conservation for both wild and working lands and for biodiversity protection through working with private landowners, State land managers, educators, US Fish and Wildlife, the nonprofit community, and through the municipal, regional, and State land use planning process. It has been a tenet of the Regional Planning Organization since the inception of the LTE, with strong support and initial funding from Connecticut Resource, Conservation, and Development (RC&D), that only through community outreach and the practice of strong business principals by each of the member land trust will we be able to maintain and increase the pace of conservation and stewardship of our undeveloped and working lands to benefit both wildlife and people.

The mission of RiverCOG in regards to the LTE is to create a stronger connection between the local, regional conservation community, and the Regional, State, and Federal land use planning process; further their ability to provide an educational and planning opportunity for environmental and landscape protection for members of their land trusts and conservation commissions to promote landscape linkages, tool creation, data acquisition, and sharing to enable effective collaboration and cooperation, in a regional manner, towards the creation of trails and greenways, and protection of existing habitat, water quality, and scenic and cultural landscape corridors; and identify possible collaboration mechanisms and business structures that will not take away from an individual land trust's unique and important relationship and place in its own community, but enable them to practice best management and business principles. We believe this will allow each to operate to its greatest potential concerning long term planning goals, future land acquisition, and the sustainable stewardship of their already existing protected open space. Business structures and collaboration mechanisms could include shared staff to help with record keeping, membership mailings, newsletter production, record keeping, fund raising, and grant writing as well as office space to provide a place for meetings, and where members could share computer hardware and software.

To this end the LTE has been meeting on a regular basis for the past 9 years and through its workings and projects in partnership with the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC), Wildlands and Woodlands, University of Connecticut Extension (UConn), Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), US Fish and Wildlife Service, and local community leaders are able to now come together to support each other in achieving regional conservation goals. This Funding/Guide matrix is one more tool that will allow the region to increase our pace of strategic conservation through coordination and collaboration at the regional scale.

**Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange**  
**Funding Guide/Matrix**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 1 (total point \*1)**

**A. Is the project connected to existing open space?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**B. Is the project within an LTE conservation plan primary or connecting corridor?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**C. Is the project in an existing Natural Diversity Database(NDDDB) area and/or site for an endangered species or species of Greatest Concern?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**D. Does it have pending development applications or approvals?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**E. What local criteria, as designated in the LTE conservation plan, are in the project area?**

Core Forest: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

Hydrology/Wetlands: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

Early Successional Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

Critical Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**Total Group 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2 (total points \*.75)**

**A. Will the property be accessible to the public?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**B. What is the total area of local criteria contained in the project area as designated in the LTE conservation plan? (Core Forest, Hydrology/Wetlands, Early Successional Habitat, and Critical Habitat)**

Points awarded by the number of projects being vetted.

Example: if there are four projects, then the project with the greatest area of local criteria would get 4 points. The property with the least area of local criteria would get 1 point. The ones in between would get 3 or 4 accordingly.

**C. What is the index score of the primary or connecting corridor as determined by the LTE conservation plan?**

Index score 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 4 Points

Index score 5: \_\_\_\_\_ 3 Points

Index score 6: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Points

Index Score 7: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**D. What is the size of the project area?**

Points awarded by the number of projects being vetted.

Example: if there are four projects, then the largest project would get 4 points. The smallest property would get 1 point. The ones in between would get 3 or 4 accordingly.

**E. Is the project located within a State Designated Greenway?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**Total Group 2: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Group 3 (total points \*.5)**

**A. Does the project have historic significance?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**B. Do municipal planning documents include the project in an area for open space protection?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**C. Does the project provide a viewshed either looking out from the project, or looking into the project area from a public viewing location?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**D. Are there any site concerns from historic property usage?**

No: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**Total Group 3: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Group 4 (total points \*.25)**

**A. What is the price per acre?**

Points awarded by the number of projects being vetted.

Example: if there are four projects, then the project with the lowest cost per acre would get 4 points. The property with the highest cost per acre would get 1 point. The ones in between would get 3 or 4 accordingly.

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Are there Prime Agricultural Soils located within the project boundary?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**C. Is it a multi-town project?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**D. Is it suitable for education or scientific purposes?**

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Point

**Total Group 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Total Group 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Group 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Group 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Group 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_