



Connecting people to the land since 1895

16 Meriden Road
Rockfall
Connecticut 06481-2961
Tele: 860-346-TREE
www.ctwoodlands.org

July 19, 2021

Governor Ned Lamont
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Bonding for DEEP's Recreational Trails & Greenways Program

Dear Governor Lamont,

On behalf of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (Connecticut's oldest nonprofit conservation organization), **I write to thank you for including \$3 million in bonding for DEEP's Recreational Trails & Greenways Program on the agenda for the July Bond Commission Meeting.**

There are several reasons why your leadership, support, and action are particularly critical at this time:

- Public interest in using recreational trails is at an all-time high, but due to climate-fueled storms, high usage, and other factors, the need to repair, improve, connect, extend, and provide information to facilitate broad public access to trails is also extremely high.
- There are significant unmet needs for trails projects that this bonding will help to address. The last time DEEP issued an RFP for \$3 million available for RT&G grants, it received ~\$12 million in grant proposals and was unable to fund ~\$4 million in highly ranked proposals.
- Your support replenishes bonding available for matching grants (all previous bonding had been allocated), and will enable DEEP to issue a new Request for Proposals this fall to ensure grants are selected in time to energize on-the-ground projects for the 2022 field season!
- This funding continues a tradition of public-private partnerships involving volunteers, land trusts, municipalities, and other stakeholders to make trail projects happen.

This is an enormously important investment for Connecticut! Recreational trails have been critical during the pandemic to sustain physical and mental health. In addition, trails engage people in the outdoors to nurture their ongoing connection and stewardship.

Thank you for your leadership and support which enables DEEP to meet the challenge as a leading funder and strong partner to support outdoor recreation assets for Connecticut.

If you have any questions or would like to do a special announcement around this topic, I can be reached via chammerling@ctwoodlands.org or 860-346-TREE (8733).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Hammerling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Eric Hammerling
Executive Director



Connecting people to the land since 1895

16 Meriden Road
Rockfall
Connecticut 06481-2961
Tele: 860-346-TREE
www.ctwoodlands.org