

OPEN SPACE IN LEBANON

AND WHY WE SHOULD HELP PRESERVE IT



LEBANON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Marc Lang, Chair
Jan Fitter, Vice Chair
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Our Mission:

"To promote the protection of important open space tracts in Lebanon, giving priority to those that are most important to the community's rural agricultural character and those that hold the most important natural resources. Wherever possible, the town should seek to protect open space in ways that keep the land in private ownership."

Open Space protects our Town's pocketbook, character, and environment.

Did you know that Lebanon has an Open Space Fund? A budget allocation to Lebanon's Open Space Fund is not an expenditure but an investment. Investing in open space helps keep taxes lower and helps preserve Lebanon's character as a uniquely special place to live. Preserved open space is not tax exempt. Open space, including farms, is a less likely source of pollution than any other land use.

Townpeople say protect open space!

According to a November 2008 Resident Survey, Lebanon's residents overwhelmingly support preserving the Town's rural agricultural character and protecting the Town's open lands.

What is Lebanon's Open Space Program?

Lebanon's Conservation Commission works with property owners interested in land preservation. Since 2006, the Commission has assisted in preserving 1,000 acres of land. The Conservation Commission's goal is to preserve an additional 2,000 acres of land by 2020.

The Open Space Fund needs your support.

Lebanon's 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development (aka "Master Plan") calls for the Town's Open Space Fund to have a working balance of \$500,000. Yet the Open Space Fund is SHRINKING dramatically.

Open Space is a resource to use -- a place to go!

Open space is about **much more** than holding the line on taxes and preserving our rolling farmlands. This brochure includes a guide to Lebanon open spaces that everyone can enjoy!

(See inside for details!)

Open Space in Lebanon is defined as

"Land permanently preserved through deed or conservation restriction in its natural state and/or developed for recreational or farming use."

Open Space protects the Town's pocketbook.

Investing in open space helps control property tax increases. Did you know that open space actually subsidizes our Town services and schools? Open space requires about **\$0.17** on the tax dollar for Town services. This includes farm and forest land that receives tax abatement under PA 490. Residential properties, in contrast, require about **\$1.12** in services (including education) for every tax dollar collected (*Lebanon Cost of Community Services Study, 2007*). Thus, open space and farmland pay more than their fair share in taxes even if preserved.

All expenditures from the Town Open Space Fund must be approved at Town Meeting.

Open Space protects Lebanon's character and environment.

Investing in open space will help preserve Lebanon's rare rural character and healthy environment. Open space is not just attractive to the eye. It protects and replenishes the wells all Lebanon homes rely on, and it conserves all of our land and water resources. Open space helps sequester the carbon that is ruining our atmosphere. It provides living space for wildlife. Open space provides us with fresh, local food and produce, including wild game, and offers trails, streams, woods, and meadows that we can visit.

Townpeople say protect Open Space!

According to a survey of Lebanon residents conducted by UConn in 2008, 93% of Town residents believe that preserving open space and farmland in Lebanon is important, and 77% believe that the Town should fund these preservation efforts. At countless Town Meetings, residents have overwhelmingly supported protecting open space and Lebanon's rural character. In response, Lebanon's Master Plan recommends measures to conserve our open spaces and natural resources, which include maintaining a viable Open Space Fund.

What is Lebanon's Open Space Program?

The primary goal of the Conservation Commission and the Open Space Fund is to keep preserved land in private ownership. Research has shown that most large landowners in Connecticut would prefer NOT to see their land

go for development. They are the people who make the best stewards of open lands.

The Town does not "buy" conservation open space or farmland (although some conservation easements have been donated to the Town). Rather, the Open Space Fund provides dollars to assist in the purchase of development rights or conservation easements, where the landowner retains ownership and receives compensation for giving up the right to develop the land. The land is protected forever by deed from development, while the landowner retains other rights, such as farming and forestry, and continues to pay property taxes. In this way, landowners can continue to protect and work their land. The Town would not contribute to the outright purchase of conservation land unless that was the only way to protect a property important to the Town's future.

Since 2006, Lebanon has partnered with the federal and state government, individual landowners, and other conservation organizations to preserve over 1,000 acres of land. Although the Town's financial contribution is usually small when compared to the total transaction, it has often been the KEY to making these transactions happen.

The Open Space Fund needs your support.

The need for open space funds is continual. It cannot be put off until better times when land is more costly and parcels are being developed. Without funds to preserve open space, Lebanon has no way to protect itself from losing large properties to development, which will result in increased municipal service costs (i.e., taxes) and environmental degradation. Failure to maintain the Town's Open Space Fund at a healthy level handcuffs the Town in its land preservation efforts.

RIGHT NOW the Town has no way to protect a large property from development. There is not enough money in the Open Space Fund to leverage preservation of a high-acreage parcel.

Approximately 10,000 acres of undeveloped land in Lebanon remains unprotected.

Owners representing over 1,000 acres have been in contact with the Town to express interest in preserving their land. Let's let them know the townspeople care enough to support their efforts!

Open Space and Lebanon's Conservation Commission

The GOAL of Lebanon's Conservation Commission, as recommended in the 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development (aka "Master Plan"), is to protect at least 2,000 additional acres of open space by the year 2020. The Commission has established rating systems when recommending farms and forest lands for open space preservation. In addition, the Commission is charged with monitoring several existing open space parcels and easements, and educating the public to the benefits of open space. Lebanon's Conservation Commission is an advisory volunteer body appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

At budget time, in each of the past three years, the Conservation Commission has requested an annual allocation of \$100,000 be made to Lebanon's Open Space Fund as recommended in the 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development. The allocation has been reduced the past two years in a row. Last year only \$20,000 was allocated. At that rate the Open Space Fund could be empty within a year!

Lebanon's 2010 Master Plan recommends that the Town build its Open Space Fund to a working balance of \$500,000 either through annual budget allocation or through a revolving bond initiative.

How you can help protect Lebanon's Open Space

Throughout each budget season, referendum vote, and Town Meeting make your voice heard by showing your support for Lebanon's Open Space Fund! Together, we can help maintain the rural quality of life that drew so many of us to Town.

2010 Lebanon Facts & Figures

Land Area:	56 sq. mi. (10 th largest in CT)
Population:	7,500+/-
Miles of Road:	120
Number of Homes:	3,110
Number of Farms:	122 (2007)
Land Actively Farmed:	10,000+ acres
Percent of Grand List in Agriculture:	10% (2009)
Number of Persons per Cow:	3.75+/-
Number of Chickens per Person:	160+/-
Land Containing Wetlands:	6,765+/- acres
Permanently Preserved Open Space:	7,060 acres
Median Household Income:	\$77,110 (2009)

LEBANON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

NOVEMBER 2010



INFORMATION ON LEBANON'S OPEN SPACE PROGRAM

INTERESTED IN PRESERVING LAND? CONTACT THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION OR PLANNING OFFICE AT 642-2006.

Funding provided by an Agriculture Viability Grant made possible by Connecticut Department of Agriculture

LEBANON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
579 EXETER ROAD
LEBANON, CONNECTICUT 06249

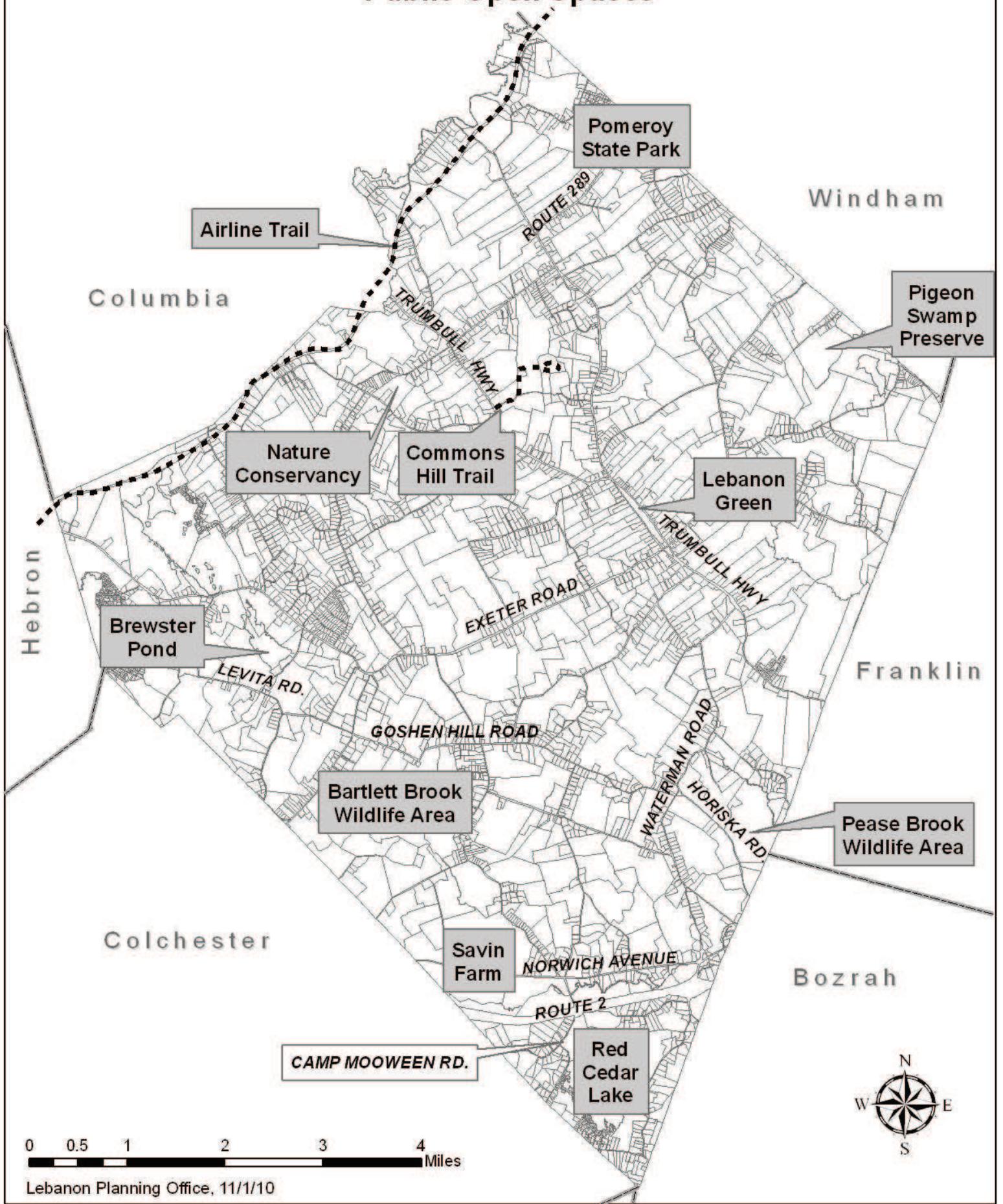
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TOWN OF LEBANON Public Open Spaces



PLACES WHERE CAN YOU ENJOY LEBANON'S OPEN SPACE

In addition to its many vistas, Lebanon offers several thousand acres of open space where you can relax with nature. The following sites are open to the public for walking or hiking, exploring, and other passive recreation. Motor vehicles are not allowed on any of these sites. Hunting is allowed at some; check DEP regulations. It is best to wear hunter orange when visiting any natural area between Oct. 1 and Jan. 2, whether hunting or not.

Airline Trail Part of Connecticut's Greenways system runs through woods and farmland along the entire northwest side of Lebanon from Rte. 207 in Hebron to Willimantic. Maintained in Lebanon by the Town's volunteer Rails-to-Trails Committee, trailheads are located on Rte. 207, Leonard Bridge Road, Tobacco Street, Rte. 87, Village Hill Road, Cook Hill Road, and Kingsley Road.

Bartlett Brook Wildlife Area Managed for wildlife and hunting and stream fishing. Excellent for viewing wildlife. Many trails, some well-tended. Exploring leads to significant colonial sites. Entrance is on Goshen Hill Road.

Brewster Pond A DEP parking area and rugged put in accessible by car from the Levita Road end of Old Meetinghouse Road. This old road also makes a nice walk through forest and farmland that includes a stream crossing. Both sides of the road are private land.

Commons Hill Trail Maintained by the Lebanon Conservation Commission. A 2.5-mile round-trip hike through mature forest on a blazed trail to Town-owned property with great views. Access is on Rte. 87 next to Liberty Hill cemetery, via old Schalk Road. Maps available at Town Hall.

Lebanon Green Managed by the Town of Lebanon. 1+ mile stone-dust path around the historic Green. Access and parking is made from the Library, Alden Tavern Parking Lot, and Jonathan Trumbull House.

Nature Conservancy Property South side of the junction of Clubhouse, Tobacco, and Clark, marked only by occasional TNC boundary medallions. No trails are maintained.

Pease Brook Wildlife Area Managed for wildlife and hunting and stream fishing. Excellent for viewing wildlife. Some well tended trails. Accessible from Horiska Road near Bozrah line.

Pigeon Swamp Preserve Preserved and managed by Joshua's Trust. A rich variety of natural features and wetlands, with several maintained trails. Accessible from Pigeon Swamp Road #2 in Windham.

Pomeroy State Park Forested state park abutting preserved farmland. No entrance, but access from Rte. 289 (Beaumont Highway) via a utility right-of-way.

Red Cedar Lake DEP-preserved Camp Mooween State Park, a large natural area that envelops the northern and eastern shore of Red Cedar Lake. An entrance is near the dam via Camp Mooween Road.

Savin Farm Divided into preserved farmland and a DEP-leased area for passive recreation. DEP area includes a pond and streams. The property is bisected by Norwich Avenue and Roger Foote Road.

Lebanon also offers numerous dirt roads through private working farmland and mature forest such as North Street and Valinsky Road. In addition, most farmers are proud of their land and are willing to share it, especially those who have preserved it for agriculture and forestry. If you live in Lebanon, you live near preserved farmland. Don't be afraid to ask!

November 2010