THE PROBLEM

Ecosystems are in decline. Scientists recommend protecting at least 30-50% of our land and water by 2030. This urgent international effort, called "30 x 30" was affirmed at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference in Montreal (December 2022).

Protecting and connecting an ecologically functional "30 x 30" requires **balancing among natural processes, research, and resources.** Natural heritage areas must be identified first.

Just 1% of Connecticut has strong "protection" for natural processes and biodiversity. This is based on criteria established by US Geological Service Protected Areas Database (US-PAD) and International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Protecting key pieces is a top priority, and natural stewardship will prevent accidental damage and loss. Legacy trees and old-growth forests (less than 0.02% of Connecticut) need stronger protection.

A strategic plan benefits everyone: inequitable access to wild nature and inadequate tree equity in urban areas hampers statewide efforts to preserve biodiversity, store carbon, and protect public health.

"Wildlands" are just 1% of Connecticut. This is not enough for long-term community well-being.

A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

Prioritize old/old-growth/core forests. President Biden signed Executive Order 14072 (Earth Day 2022) to map mature and old-growth forests on federal land:

 . . . *Strengthening America's forests, which are home to cherished expanses of mature and old-growth forests on Federal lands, is critical to the health, prosperity, and resilience of our communities. … We go to these special places to hike, camp, hunt, fish, and engage in recreation that revitalizes our souls and connects us to history and nature.*

Forests are the natural ecosystem for most of the state. Adding key areas to Connecticut's Natural Area Preserve program establishes strategic carbon and biodiversity reserves across the state and works toward "30 x 30." An expert Advisory Committee evaluates and recommends additions to the program.

Stewardship similar to National Parks welcomes everyone and allows management as needed.

MORE INFORMATION

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Legend: Developed | Unconserved Agriculture | Conserved Agriculture | Unconserved Forest | Woodland (conserved) | Wildland (conserved) | Other (some conserved)

Current

(schematic above adapted from www.WildlandsandWoodlands.org)