

**Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge
Transcripts of Formal Public Hearing on Draft CCP/EIS
Burlington, CT; November 12, 2015**

*[Transcript of Comments Recorded from R09_0021.MP3]
[A total of 10 speakers provided comments]*

Speaker # 1, Sarah Pellegrino

[7:55 start]

Hello. I'm Sara Pellegrino with The Nature Conservancy here in Connecticut.

The four chapters of The Nature Conservancy that encompass the Connecticut River watershed appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

The Conservancy's mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We undertake and support conservation initiatives that benefit nature and people, with a focus on conservation benefits, such as clean water and habitat protection, and also economic benefits, such as risk reduction in the face of a changing climate.

Having carefully reviewed the documents comprising the CCP, we commend the entire staff of the Conte Refuge, lead conservation planner Nancy McGarigal, and staff from US Fish and Wildlife Service Region 5 for producing a well-considered plan, which thoroughly examines the natural resources in the Connecticut River Watershed and carefully plans for the conservation of these resources. The CCP was an enormous undertaking, contemplating and planning for the future of conservation in the entire Connecticut River Watershed, and the Service has done an exceptional job in representing the biological diversity of the region through this plan.

The Conservancy concurred with the Service and strongly endorses alternative C as the preferred alternative.

We would specifically like to acknowledge the work of the Service in the following areas:

- Criteria and considerations for selections are clearly described
- Documents are well organized and accessible in a searchable web format
- Plan is inclusive of important partners in the watersheds and actively promotes partnerships and collaborations
- Thorough research and attention to the detail regarding structure and composition of forests in the desired condition is especially admirable
- The Biological Integrity, Biological Diversity, and Environmental Health section is particularly important as a framework for thinking about conservation and educating the public about the particulars and nuances involved in conserving species and ecosystems
- In regard to the Land Conservation Plan, we are fully supportive of the effort to consolidate land acquisitions in Conservation Focus Areas surrounded by Conservation Partnership Areas to maximize efficiency and conservation effectiveness, knowing full well that this approach leaves some of the smaller, high biodiversity sites out of the

Service's scope. We are hopeful that we and other conservation partners with the capacity to conserve and steward these smaller sites will be able to do so.

The Conte Refuge is unique amongst refuges for its focus on the entire watershed, and for its focus not just on conservation, but also on environmental education and recreation for the more than 2.3 million residents who call the watershed home. We wish to highlight the environmental and economic benefits that we believe result from the activities of the Conte Refuge. Protecting land for future generations and protecting vital wildlife habitat in strategic locations has a lasting impact on the character and quality of our natural environment, and it strengthens our economy by providing opportunities for people to enjoy the beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities of the region. Refuges are open to all of us; wildlife enthusiasts, hikers, paddlers, hunters and anglers visit refuges, and we can anticipate more visitors with the expansion of locations and services proposed by the plan. Refuges also provide a boost to the economy; for every \$1 of federal funding appropriated to the Refuge System, an average of \$4.87 is returned to local economies.

The Connecticut River and its tributaries have been a priority for the Conservancy since 1960 with our first land acquisition at Burnham Brook Preserve in East Haddam, CT. Since then we have continued to protect important places from the headwaters to the mouth of the river. The Conservation Focus Areas and Conservation Partnership Areas in the CCP capture important conservation targets as identified by our Connecticut River Program, including Connecticut River main stem and tributary ecosystems, floodplain forests and riparian wetlands, tidal and estuary ecosystems, and migratory fish.

The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut enjoys a strong partnership with the Conte Refuge. We have cooperated on many land acquisitions, and are proud to have participated in the establishment of the Salmon River and Whalebone Cove Divisions, areas which are critical to the health of the lower Connecticut River system. We are pleased to see the expanded boundaries for both Conservation Focus Areas as they better connect with other conservation land.

We are also pleased to note that the Salmon River Conservation Partnership Area captures the entire watershed of the Salmon River, the Whalebone Cove Conservation Partnership Area captures the entire watershed of the Eightmile River, and the Farmington River Conservation Partnership Area includes the significant tributary systems. These tributary systems have been identified as important to the health of the Connecticut River watershed.

In addition, The Nature Conservancy has identified ecologically significant floodplain areas in the watershed as candidates for protection and restoration, which offer substantial benefits for fish, wildlife, and human communities. These floodplain areas align closely with the Quonotuck, Pyquag, and Scantic Conservation Focus Areas.

We are offering three suggestions for consideration:

- Expand the Farmington River CPA to include ecologically significant floodplain areas along Stony Brook in Suffield and East Granby,
- Expand the Scantic Conservation Focus Area to include the confluences of the Farmington, Scantic, and Podunk Rivers, and

- Add a Conservation Focus Area or Conservation Partnership Area which includes ecologically significant floodplains along the Scantic River in East Windsor and Enfield, in coordination with the recommendations of the Connecticut DEEP.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the CCP, and we look forward to continuing our work together supporting and enhancing the Conte Refuge here in Connecticut. Thank you.

[13:11 end]

Speaker #2, Don Crockett

[13:23 start]

Hi, my name is Don Crockett. I have been involved with the Friends of Roger Tory Peterson Unit in Old Lyme, Connecticut.

I'm here to speak in support of - the only plan I've read is alternate C, which talks about things that might be done with the Peterson Unit. I'm very much in favor of some work being done at the unit now. At this point, there's no public access. I'm very much in favor of there being a trail system and particularly messaging about both Peterson's impact in nature enjoyment and conservation in North America. I brought along a few props along today. Peterson's field guide to eastern birds was published in 1980, and all the painting in this guide was done - not on the property that's owned by the Fish and Wildlife - but at a neighboring property. Peterson spent a good part of his most productive years in the Connecticut area. I think the Peterson refuge unit is a little bit different than your typical conservation land in that it's not particularly spectacular land. What it's important about is the historic and cultural value that it has based on the fact that Peterson owned and lived on property in the area. Again, Peterson field guides were some of the most popular field guides in the 1900s. The Peterson field guide brand is still alive today. This is a field guide to Peterson's owls that was just published in September, and so that name carries a lot of meaning.

I want to convey that, not that he was just famous for publishing about nature, but also he had a specific role in a great conservation story relative to the Connecticut River in his involvement in DDT and its impact on osprey. Being someone who lived in the area at the mouth of the Connecticut River, it was very obvious to him in the 60s that something was critically wrong with the osprey because there were osprey adults building nests but there were no young osprey that hatched from the nest and were flying around. He put a lot of effort into exploring the science of what was going on - in experimenting, bringing eggs from the Chesapeake Bay up to this area, and bringing eggs from this area down to the Chesapeake Bay - and creating a scientific basis of why the eggs weren't hatching in this area. He testified to a - I forget if it was a Congressional or a Senate Subcommittee - about the impact of DDT and through his efforts, it was contributed to the banning of DDT. If you look at the population of osprey in that area now, it is a conservation success story. I think there's a lot of value to that and the fact that somebody that had that much impact on conservation and nature enjoyment was somebody that lived in Connecticut and in that area specifically because he appreciated the value of the little bit of

wilderness and the nature value of the area. If that message can be communicated to people, I think that serves a lot of value.

I know another goal of the refuge unit there was to also communicate other properties in the Conte refuge, so it's different than the natural value that's there. It's really kind of the cultural potential there of communicating the value of conservation, and I hope that planning will incorporate some sort of development of unit to communicate that message to the public. Thank you.

[18:06 end]

Speaker #3, Wally Czajkowski

[18:10 start]

My name is Wally Czajkowski. I'm from Hadley, Massachusetts, but I couldn't attend the meeting there earlier this week.

I'm probably the worst public speaker you're ever going to hear in your life. I'm incredibly nervous in front of people, but I feel what I need to say is very important which is why I'm here.

Fish and Wildlife intends to purchase a lot more land, and I think they've got to decide what land to purchase. Our only experience has been – They just look at the land they can buy; they don't look at other potential uses for it. For example, if it's good farm land, they just come in and buy it; they take it out of production and we're pretty short on farmland in the Connecticut Valley.

The more land that's taken out of production puts more pressure on land that's left. So if you farm it really hard, we're going to ruin all our farmland and we're losing enough to development – now even solar fields are taking up a lot of land – but I don't see why we can't look at a large tract and say this is good for farming, this would be good for wildlife. Why can't we share it? Why does it have to be all or nothing? Right now, it's always all or nothing. The Federal government seems to have a lot more money than the state government and they're going to outbid the state every time, and the state is trying to preserve farmland. Isn't there some way people can cooperate and say we can take our tax dollars, make 'em go further, have wildlife refuge, have farmland, and save money for the tax payers too? I just don't understand why it's done the way it's done, and I know there's economic benefits for having conservation land, but there's economic benefits for having farmland because when you take farmland out of production, you lose jobs – granted they're not high paying jobs, but they are jobs. Also then the food has to be trucked in from further away, and that's not good for the environment. I think it's good in this area of New England to keep a reservoir farmland. Once again, I don't see why you can't change the way you buy land. Can't there be a committee that looks at it, and have some farmers, some hunters, some conservation people to sit down together and say here's a piece of land, here's the money we have to work with, how can we make everybody a winner?

I don't know if what I said made sense, but that's what I wanted to say. Good night.

I did ask for a copy of an appraisal that was purchased in Hadley because I thought it was appraised incredibly high, much higher than any appraisal that was done on that property, and

this is what I was given [*speaker showed document that was heavily redacted*]. And that shows how open it is when you're dealing with the Federal government.
[21:42 end]

Speaker #4, declined to speak

Speaker #5, Stuart Winquist

[21:56 start]

I'm from East Hampton, Connecticut. I'm affiliated with the Middlesex Land Trust. The Middlesex Land Trust works in preserving open space in northern Middlesex County.

First, I want to welcome the participation of Fish and Wildlife Service in preserving land in the Connecticut River Watershed and taking a more active role. We certainly need the help. We are going to be submitting written comments, but I have just few items I want to bring up here.

When I was reading though the CCP, there was a statement in there about a reluctance to purchase property from other conservation buyers - people like other land trusts who may have purchased a property - and there's some feeling that if it's already preserved, why should the Federal government go in and buy that. We can serve a different purpose, in that we can move quickly sometimes when you have a buyer who is going to sell in three months no matter what happens. They have certain life circumstances that dictate that. Sometimes we can move forward on those properties and secure them, and we'll take the risk that the appraisal on the land changes and we lose money if you come around and purchase it at a later date. I think there's a lot of benefit to forming large blocks under same ownership from a management perspective. One of the biggest problems we have in Connecticut is fragmentation of habitat. We get lulled into a sense of security when we see like a 500-acre state park and it's surrounded by what today is open space, but it's private open space. The value in that park changes or that value in the state forest changes as that gets split up and developed. In East Hampton, as bad as the economy is in terms of the demand for real estate and housing prices, they're still taking out big areas of trees, big parcels, and putting in big developments - just two in the last couple of years.

The other thing is with filling in the gaps. We support option B for purchases in the Salmon River Division because it stretches up into the Salmon River, filling in some gaps between the state forest blocks that are in there. You have a lot of gaps. As land managers, we have a 1,000 acres, and - David, I don't know how many parcels we have, probably about 100 [*David replies: About 150 parcels*] about 150 or something, it's a lot. We have a lot of borders with a lot of neighbors, but we spend an awful lot of time with encroachment issues. They take a tremendous amount of time, and it's time which I think isn't well spent for Fish and Wildlife when they're trying to actually focus their time on managing species. So it's one thing - the bigger blocks you can get and pick up in-between already conserved parcels that makes everybody's life easier and lets us focus on what we're trying to do which is to preserve it for species.

The other thing is that we're not going to be 100 percent successful. Fish and Wildlife only purchases from willing sellers in the area and at appraised values, so basically fair appraised market prices; we've gone through this with the state on things that we've done. Sometimes

landowner says “Well, I don’t like your price. So, I’m not interested in you purchasing it. I want to keep on the market.” You’re always going to have those situations where you may have a parcel that you’d like to acquire and you wouldn’t be successful.

We also like the addition of Maromas. It’s an important area and largely unprotected area right now.

[26:28 end]

Speaker #6, Patrick Comins

[26:38 start]

Thank you. Patrick Comins. I’m representing Audubon Connecticut, which is the state office of the National Audubon Society. I currently serve as Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut.

Audubon commends the USFWS on such a thorough job outlining the issues facing the Connecticut River Watershed and appreciate the opportunity to provide input into the CCP for the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge here tonight.

Audubon Connecticut strongly supports alternative C, the Service’s preferred alternative. As you know, the Conte refuge is unlike any other in the country. As a watershed-based refuge, the mission and goals are much broader than a typical refuge. Alternative C is the approach that most closely matches the original goals, mission, and legislated purposes of the Conte Refuge.

While this option gives the Service approval to acquire up to 197,296 acres, it is important to note that this can only done with willing sellers who wish to sell their land to the Service and only when resources are available to complete a deal. For this reason, it is important to offer as much flexibility to the refuge to acquire critical habitat when opportunities arise. We would actually prefer a blend of alternatives C and D, with the opportunities for partnership, enhanced management and visitor service options provided by option C and the acreage flexibility offered by option D.

We especially commend the service for their vision for partnership opportunities for conservation, recreation, and environmental education within the watershed. With a 7.2 million acre watershed, inhabited by nearly 2 million people, we will need effective and robust partnerships to ensure that this watershed remains a special place to live, work, and recreate within. We hope that the Service will consider this vision of working beyond the traditional boundaries of the refuge when making operational funding decisions for this unique refuge so that we can fulfil the original intent envisioned by the refuge’s enabling legislation.

We will submit some more specific recommendations in writing, especially regarding the boundaries of the Conservation Focus and Partnership Areas, which we recommend should be expanded in some cases.

A few points of special consideration:

- We would like to ensure that the Refuge continues to have a focus on restoring and improving fish passage and also on wildlife connectivity within the watershed. The Connecticut River provides approximately 70% of the freshwater that makes Long Island Sound an estuary of national significance. In addition to its importance for water quality for this magnificent estuary, the river and watershed are critical to the quality of aquatic life in Long Island Sound. Much has improved for fish life in the Sound over the past decades, but more work still needs to be done and the Connecticut River must play a central role in the improved abundance of anadromous, catadromous, and diadromous fish in the Sound. These fish improve habitat for birds, as many of these fish species serve as critical forage for seabirds, waterfowl, loons, osprey, and other piscivorous fish.
- Grassland birds: Grassland birds are among the most regionally threatened groups of birds in New England and the Northeast. The Connecticut River Watershed has traditionally played a key role in supporting the northeast metapopulations of these birds, with nearly all of the critical remaining nesting areas for grassland birds being within the Watershed, for example: Westover Air Force base, Bradley International Airport, and Rentschler Field in East Hartford, the latter. Many of the remaining sites are under threat of development and/or habitat degradation. The Service needs to have the flexibility to partner with state and local agencies and NGOs to seize opportunities to protect and restore grassland bird habitat within the watershed as these opportunities arise.

Audubon especially supports the vision for “Supporting the Working Landscape–Integrating Conservation with Commercial Agricultural and Forest Lands.” In fact, we would suggest expanding this vision to encompass opportunities to work with a wide variety of private, municipal, and NGO-owned lands within the watershed, not just those lands that are associated with commercial agriculture and forestry. This is very much in line with Audubon’s Working Lands focus and our Forests for the Birds Programs in Connecticut and Vermont.

We also commend your vision to work in urban and other under-served areas through the Urban National Wildlife Refuge Partnership Program and other programs. However, we also feel that these projects are cross-cutting, not just focused on environmental education as classified in the document. These straddle the realms of education, recreation, and conservation. The Northeast U.S. plays a critical role in supporting long-distance migrant songbirds, some of which leave our area directly from our highly populated region to make non-stop flights to South or Central America. Our urban and suburban parks and neighborhoods are often the only places available for these birds to rest as they look for a stopover after their long night-time flights as daylight approaches. Working with municipal, private, and NGO partners the Conte refuge offers the Service a unique vehicle to improve migratory stopover habitat in these areas through these and other programs. We strongly suggest that these opportunities are considered in the Service’s future funding allocations for the Refuge.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide input to this important process.

[31:47 end]

Speaker #7, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe

[31:53 start]

Hi, my name is Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe. I'm the Important Bird Area Program Coordinator for Audubon Connecticut. I live in Marion, Connecticut. I'm also a boat owner. I have a boat in Portland, Connecticut, that's on the Connecticut River from May through October of each year.

First of all, I do want to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Silvio O. Conte CCP. As Important Bird Area Coordinator, I want to say how thrilled I am that alternative C includes these conservation focus areas, several of which are in Connecticut including either parts or entire areas that are considered Important Bird Areas by Audubon Connecticut. Important Bird Areas are areas that are used by species of conservation concern either for breeding, as stop-over habitat, or as wintering habitat. They're areas that are selected by a committee of ornithologists, well-known birders in Connecticut, representatives from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Connecticut DEEP, and others. So the places that are selected are really important spots, they're very important to birds, and I'm really happy to see that the CFAs in Connecticut include some Important Bird Areas.

As Patrick sort of mentioned, I think that some of the CFAs could probably be expanded a little bit, and the same thing with the CFPs and we'll include those in our Audubon comments. Again, I'm just thrilled to see that some of these areas that are pretty important for birds are considered as areas of acquisition for the refuge.

If I put on my boat owner hat for just a second – one thing is I was out on the Connecticut River by Gildersleeve Island, which is out by Portland, and I just found out this morning that the west side of the river was part of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. I'd been there all summerlong and I just realized this this morning. And I just want to point that out because I think there's just so little awareness about the refuge in Connecticut. I think if you polled 100 people, you'd be lucky if 1 person knew that there was a Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Connecticut. There are a lot of people who go up and down the river all summer long, hundreds of thousands of people, and there's not a single sign anywhere that says that the Connecticut and its watershed are part of this refuge. I think that's a tragedy because it's so awesome to have this refuge that's a whole watershed, a whole landscape, and I think that's something I'd love to see in the CCP be emphasized more. Getting out the word about this refuge and how it's trying to protect this vast area of habitat.

Lastly, I would just love to see a place where people can visit. In Connecticut, I'm under the impression that none of the units in Connecticut are places that people can visit. If you want people to form connection with a place, with a refuge, most of the time it's going to be through visiting. They can read about it, but when they actually get out there and see it, it's going to make a lot more difference. They're going to be like "Wow, this is really awesome. What can I do here? What can I do to be involved?" It's going to be about – People are going to get a connection if they visit a place. So if in future acquisitions, you can have some places that people can visit – where maybe there's some interpretive signs and they can learn about the refuge and learn about the wildlife it's protecting – I think that's going to go a really long way to getting more people excited about it and wanting to be involved in stewardship and habitat protection.

Thank you.
[35:41 end]

Speaker #8, Kim Lutz
[35:56 start]

Hi, my name is Kim Lutz from Northampton, Massachusetts. Tonight, I'm speaking on behalf of the Friends of the Conte Refuge, and I'm honored to serve as their Chair.

On behalf of the Friends of the Silvio O. Conte Refuge, we are pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the Silvio O. Conte Fish and Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

The Friends are a thriving network of more than 70 public and private organizations and individuals whose collective efforts forge mutually beneficial partnerships watershed-wide. We strengthen the health of the Connecticut River Watershed and its communities through conservation, restoration, research, engagement, advocacy, and recreation. Our mission is to cultivate and sustain a healthy Connecticut River for all.

We'd like to commend the Silvio O. Conte Fish and Wildlife Refuge staff, led by Andrew French; the planning staff at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 5, especially lead planner Nancy McGarigal; and the countless additional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge staff who played a role in developing this truly comprehensive plan. We were impressed by the amount of information available to the reader about the watershed, the refuge, and the opportunities afforded the Fish and Wildlife Service to be a significant contributor to the health and vitality of the Connecticut River Watershed.

The Friends strongly support the four goals listed in this CCP: 1) habitat conservation; 2) education, outreach, and interpretation; 3) recreation; and 4) partnerships to conserve and enjoy the Connecticut River Watershed. We believe these four goals are essential for meaningful action in our watershed and we'd like to comment on each of those goals in turn.

On Conservation – We applaud your efforts to expand the scope of conservation through the thoughtful mixture of high value areas reflective of our watershed's natural features that are contained in the Conservation Focus Areas and Conservation Partnership Areas. Protection of these areas will add resilience to terrestrial and aquatic systems of the basin and provide critical linkages with the evolving network of protected core areas and connecting areas across the watershed. The newly-defined Conservation Focus and Conservation Partnership Area boundaries reflect the best available science that indicates that large, minimally-fragmented blocks are the best for supporting species diversity, including trust species, and will likely be more resilient to climate change. The Friends believe we must build on the Service's existing achievements to provide enough protected land to allow the migration of species in response to climate change, to protect active river corridors, and to mitigate impacts of ownership fragmentation. We further support your commitment to work solely with willing sellers and to work with affected communities and landowners through a public process.

On Education, Outreach, and Interpretation – The draft CCP contains a large number of actions devoted to environmental education with individuals, groups, or communities within or near the proposed Conservation Partnership Areas and Conservation Focus Areas. In clear statements, this is a priority for the Service. We support this, but also encourage the Service to go beyond the usual environmental education curriculum to include landscape-scale science and its interpretation and technical assistance in using that information to make good decisions.

On Recreation – We much appreciate the CCP’s support of the original water-based trail initiatives and opportunities, such as the Connecticut Paddlers’ Trail, and regional land-based trail, such as the New England National Scenic Trail and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. We agree that all three action alternatives would allow permanent public recreational access across a proposed expanded Federal land use base for public uses and other compatible recreational uses to the extent possible and consistent with refuge objectives and goals. However, despite the goals and intent of the CCP and the various alternatives, it is not clear how the refuge will undertake the promotion of non-wildlife dependent activities, such as paddling and hiking through the Connecticut River Paddlers’ Trail, New England National Scenic Trail, and other compatible regional trails. In our written comments, we will detail ways that we think the plan could give specific voice to those areas.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on this impressive plan. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the refuge and the many partners that contribute to the goals of the Silvio O. Conte refuge. Thank you.

[40:58 end]

Speaker #9, Emily Geser

[41:12 start]

Hi, I’m Emily Geser.

I was fortunate enough to work on a Youth Conservation Corps crew based out of the Fort River Division in Hadley, Massachusetts, for two summers. During this time, our crews helped build the universally accessible Fort River trail. We also learned to identify and remove several different invasive species including water chestnut, Oriental bittersweet, multi-floral rose, and garlic mustard. As a member of the YCC crew, I bonded with my crewmates and formed many lifelong friendships. This experience gave me the opportunity to develop leadership skills. Being a part of this group of young adults working together on refuge projects ignited my interest and passion for the environment and working in an environmental field. As a senior in high school, I’m applying to colleges with a major in environmental studies. I believe that youth involvement in programs provided by the refuge is crucial for a beautiful Earth, for our future, and for all species. I support the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge with this Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

[42:38 end]

[Hearing Officer made opportunity for prior speakers to speak again]

Speaker, Reed Cass (previously declined, but decided to speak this time)

[43:18 start]

Hello, my name is Reed Cass. I live in Cromwell, Connecticut.

I just want to thank the Fish and Wildlife Service for putting the environment first for a change. It's usually devolvement, money, other things - but it seems like in conservation plan that you put conservation first. My wife and I own some conservation land in Vermont. I hear you about the farm, but we own conservation land that still allows people - we have a dairy farmer that has a hayfield and also grows corn on our property - so I don't see why there can't be some kind of cooperation there. I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

[44:08 end]

Speaker, Patrick Comins

[44:19 start]

I liked that the document mentions the refuge revenue sharing. I just hope that the Service continues to consider the importance of this, especially in New England, in their budgeting. It could be a fatal mistake for the Service to cut back on their equivalent of payment *in lieu* of taxes, both in rural and urban areas. The Northeast U.S., in particular, has a real high reliance on property taxes and, if the municipalities are feeling that they're going to lose out on revenue by having the Service acquire lands, then you may lose a lot of support locally.

Secondly, I would just like to insure that the principles of the Blueway are included in the final document as well. As you may know, the Connecticut River Watershed is the nation's only National Blueway, and it had a lot of great vision and goals for that program. We hope that some of that can be implemented even through there is no national Blueways System.

[45:30 end]

[*End of Hearing*]