

Ethel Walker Property, Connecticut

Project Details

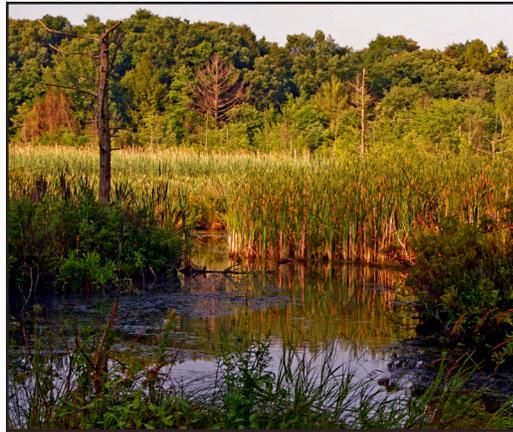
Location:
Town of Simsbury,
Hartford County

Acreage:
91

HCA Request:
\$1.0 million

Project Highlights

- Publicly accessible hiking and equestrian trails
- Diverse habitat
- Class I watershed land
- A State-listed endangered species present
- Contiguous with 1,400+ acres of open space



Ethel Walker wetlands near Stratton Brook, in CT
By Alden Warner

The State of Connecticut requests Highlands Conservation Act funds to protect Phase II of the **Ethel Walker Property**—91 acres of ecologically rich forest, streams, meadows and floodplains. The Town of Simsbury, in partnership with The Trust for Public Land and The Ethel Walker School, permanently protected 336 acres in the first phase of this effort in July 2007. At closing, the Town made a \$1 million non-refundable deposit on an option to purchase the remaining 91 acres.

The Ethel Walker land contains class I watershed land and is the primary recharge area for the Stratton Brook Aquifer. This aquifer supplies numerous private wells and provides drinking water to more than 10,000 residents.

There are extensive public hiking and equestrian trails here. Large stands of mature conifers support more than 60 forest nesting and migratory bird species. The American Bittern, a CT endangered species, has been documented here by the Hartford Audubon Society. Stratton Brook supports native Eastern Brook Trout, in decline throughout CT.

Ethel Walker is contiguous with several preserved properties; if all 427 acres here are preserved, the property would form the core of 1,400 acres of open space. This unique property has been an open space priority for the town and the State of Connecticut for many years.

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The Highlands region is 3.5 million acres of forest, farmland, and rugged hills extending from south-central PA, through NJ and NY into northwestern CT. These eastern-most ridges of the Appalachian Mountains form a greenbelt for the Philadelphia-New York City-Hartford metropolitan area. The Highlands provide clean drinking water for more than 15 million people and are home to more than 250 endangered, threatened, and rare species.

