



P.O. Box 444
Westport, CT 06881-0444
203-331-1906

June 29, 2020

Re: Request for Letter of Support for the Preservation of 11.5 AC Pagano property (also known as Fratelli Zeta property as its ownership was recently transferred to Fratelli Zeta LLC) in Wilton through an Open Space Grant from the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection.

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Dear Mike,

Aspetuck Land Trust (ALT) is applying to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for an Open Space and Watershed Acquisition (OSWA) Grant to help us preserve a land-locked parcel at the heart of one of the last significant forest block expanses in Fairfield County that spans the Wilton-Weston border. If we obtain state funding, we will purchase this 11.56-acre property and preserve a significant core landscape that serves to protect species requiring interior forest habitat for their survival.

Applications are weighed by a point system in which municipal and community backing rank high. Accordingly, we are asking you to help our efforts by writing a letter supporting ALT by stating why you think this is a project worthy of state funding. We are working with Wilton Land Conservation Trust on this project.

As background, I have attached a map (Map 1) indicating geographic location of the property, its position within a CT Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDb) "blob" and the sub-regional watershed of the West Branch of the Saugatuck River. Our facts and observations include:

- Protects a headwater tributary stream to the West Branch of the Saugatuck River, providing watershed and watercourse protection.
- Connects two existing ALT preserved properties and, once the 85-acre Fromson/Strassler property is acquired (see attached: Map 2) it will be connected on 3 sides.
- It builds upon the core forest block which, with the inclusion of Fromson/Strassler, will exceed 200 acres -- significant for protection of interior forest species.
- Species identified on the site or on adjacent properties in the forest block are important to overall wildlife biodiversity metrics and include species that are rare, and species that are environmental quality indicators (See attached: Appendix 9 Pagano Tract CT DEEP Response)
- If acquired, ALT will take advantage of the property's excellent trail potential, creating a hiking trail connecting to the larger trail system within the Wilton-Weston forest block. (See attached: Map 2)
- The rolling terrain of this property will provide a hiker with opportunities to experience what early settlers to Connecticut first encountered.

We invite you to use this information however you like in preparing your own letter. The letter need not be long. If possible, it should be on your organization's letterhead. The letter should be **returned to me** via PDF by email to dbrant@aspetucklandtrust.org with a cc: to Donna Merrill at Wilton Land Conservation Trust at merrill@optonline.net not to DEEP, but should be addressed as follows:

Commissioner Dykes
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program
Constituent Affairs/Land Management Division
79 Elm Street, 6th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

The deadline for submission of Letters of Support is August 1, 2020, but I would like to have your letter in hand via email pdf by Monday, July 27, 2020. Please call David Brant at ALT at 612-730-1990 if you have questions or need more information.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David".

David Brant, Executive Director
Aspetuck Land Trust