



# GOSA *Instant!* News

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## FUTURE OF OPEN SPACE IN CONNECTICUT IN JEOPARDY

*PLEASE WRITE TO YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS  
ASK THEM TO STOP PROPOSED CUTS TO STATE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE*

**ACTION DEADLINE: MARCH 13**

Today we are facing the biggest crisis for open space funding in many years. Governor Dannel Malloy's newly released state budget proposal for fiscal year 2016-17 plans damaging cuts to the state budget for state parks and future acquisition of open space. The proposal includes:

**\$2 million cut from the state parks budget of \$12 million.** Cuts in recent years have already pared the parks' budget to bare bones. Worst hit by the proposed cuts will be the seasonal summer staff, which is likely to be reduced to about 180 from 550, forcing some parks to close.

**\$13.5 million cut in 2015 from the Community Investment Fund with a further \$27 million cut proposed for 2016, basically zeroing it out.** This is the fund that has enabled us—in part—to purchase the Merritt Family Farm, the Sheep Farm, Candlewood Ridge and now, Avery Farm. If this fund is no longer available to protect land, water and wildlife in Connecticut, the loss would be incalculable.

**Crippling of the state Council on Environmental Quality**, a crucial environmental watchdog office that is effective because of its independence. The governor proposes moving the CEQ into the Office of Legislative Management, where it is likely to lose both its clout and possibly its staff.

**What to write:** Send your legislators an e-mail asking them to urge the Appropriations Committees to eliminate these cuts from the governor's proposed budget. You can let him/her know how important state funding has been for creating wonderful areas of open space in our town and that cutbacks to future purchases constitutes a big step backwards for the state and our town. These cuts are particularly disappointing because as recently as October 28, 2014, Gov. Malloy stated that "Conserving land is an important investment in our future...mov[ing] us closer to meeting our goal of protecting 21 percent of Connecticut's land as permanently protected open space. Preservation projects... are fundamental to maintaining our high quality of life, protecting the immense natural beauty of our state, and making Connecticut a great place to live, work and raise a family."

Also ask them to keep the Council on Environmental Quality funded as an independent agency.

### **Where to write:**

Groton District 41 Rep. Aundre Bumgardner [aundre.bumgardner@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:aundre.bumgardner@housegop.ct.gov)

Groton District 40 Rep. John Scott [john.scott@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:john.scott@housegop.ct.gov)

Ledyard District 40 Rep. John Scott [john.scott@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:john.scott@housegop.ct.gov)

Ledyard District 42 Rep. Mike France [mike.france@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:mike.france@housegop.ct.gov)

Groton Senate District 18 Senator Andrew Maynard <http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/Maynard-mailform.php>

Ledyard District 18 Senator Cathy Osten [cathy.osten@senatedems.ct.gov/Osten-mailform.php](http://www.senatedems.ct.gov/Osten-mailform.php)

**When to write:** On or before March 13

**Thank You!**