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Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy Invests in the Future of Farming with Climate-Smart Agriculture Grant Awards

April 2, 2025 (Kent, CT) – Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC) proudly announces climate-smart agricultural grant awardees for the second round of the *Building Resiliency on Northwest Connecticut Farmland* ("*Building Resiliency*") Implementation Grant program. This initiative provides direct funding to farmers across Northwest Connecticut to adopt practices that enhance sustainability, productivity, and climate resilience.

In March 2023, NCLC received a generous award of $750,000 from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) through the Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry Grant program, established under Public Act 22-118. This program allocated $7 million to agricultural and conservation entities, and NCLC was one of 12 recipients selected for an award.

"Connecticut's farms are in the top three for most at risk of loss in the country. NCLC's *Building Resiliency* grant program provides direct investments to help our state's farmers and farms adapt and thrive in a changing climate," said **NCLC Executive Director Catherine Rawson**. "NCLC is proud to work alongside our farming community to strengthen food security and ecological resilience for generations to come."

"Connecticut's agricultural producers are committed to being part of the climate change solution through on-farm energy, soil health, and carbon sequestration projects to further increase their sustainability and resiliency," remarked **Connecticut Department of Agriculture Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt**. "Through the support of the Lamont Administration, CT DoAg has been proud to partner with organizations such as NCLC to make strategic investments in farm operations to support climate smart farming practices and long-term resiliency projects which will have a long-term positive impact."

The *Building Resiliency* program includes funding for 22 climate-smart agricultural assessments conducted by Berkshire Agricultural Ventures (BAV). NCLC announced 18 assessment awardees in the fall of 2024. Since then, NCLC has awarded four additional farms:

- Hamlin Preserve (Sharon)
- Mary Moore Preserve (Sharon)
- Riverbank Farm (Roxbury)
- Rowledge Pond Aquaculture (Sandy Hook)

Beyond assessments, the program provides direct funding for implementing climate-smart practices that sequester carbon and reduce emissions, while also lowering operational costs, improving water quality, and enhancing biodiversity.

Last year, NCLC announced 10 implementation grant awardees. After a final competitive grant round in fall 2024, NCLC has now selected 15 additional awardees. This cohort includes beef, dairy, poultry, fish, forestry, vegetable, fruit, and flower farms across Litchfield and northern Fairfield Counties:

- **Adamah, Inc.** (Falls Village) will receive $16,000 to implement energy efficiency upgrades in their greenhouses, improve their irrigation system, purchase a solar-powered generator, and purchase an electric mower, along with other field improvements. These investments will reduce fossil fuel use, improve water conservation, and enhance soil health, contributing to both climate mitigation and adaptation.
- **Canaan View Dairy, LLC** (East Canaan) will receive $24,000 to purchase a dragline toolbar. This equipment promotes efficient manure application, which reduces nutrient loss and fuel consumption, decreases greenhouse gas emissions, and improves soil and water quality.
- **Carlwood Farm, LLC** (Canaan) will receive $10,000 to purchase seeds and soil amendments for crop rotation with cover crops. This project reduces compaction, controls erosion, and improves soil biology. Improved soil health can increase carbon sequestration and reduce chemical inputs.
- **Sarah Lang - Conundrum Farm** (Kent) will receive $30,000 for energy efficiency upgrades in the greenhouse, including establishing an airtight seal, ridge vent, and automation software. These upgrades will lower the greenhouse's energy consumption while improving growing conditions for year-round production.
- **Cricket Hill Garden, LLC** (Thomaston) will receive $15,000 for a row mulcher for mulching and compost application. Organic mulch suppresses weeds, reduces erosion, and improves the soil's water-holding capacity. In turn, improved soil quality reduces the need for chemical inputs and increases carbon sequestration.
- **Chandravir and Roberta Ahuja - Great Ring Farm** (Sandy Hook) will receive $3,000 to plant native perennials. These deeply rooted perennial plantings will improve soil structure and support diverse plant and animal life.
- **Hathor Hill Farm, LLC** (Lakeside) will receive $20,000 to restore and relocate access roads, remediate a portion of pasture, and plant contour buffer strips. These improvements will reduce future erosion by enhancing the soil's water infiltration, promoting healthier pastureland.
- **Howling Flats Farm, LLC** (Canaan) will receive $8,000 for an electric mower and trimmer. This equipment will reduce fossil fuel use and soil compaction while supporting the increased maintenance needs of the farm's newly planted silvopasture.
- **Kalenauskas Farm, LLC** (Watertown) will receive $21,000 for a vertical beater multi-product spreader. This equipment will optimize nutrient management, reducing nutrient runoff and improving soil organic matter through the efficient spread of manure and amendments.
- **Michael Crotta - Lakeside Farm** (Lakeside) will receive $12,000 for a walk-behind tractor and accessories for soil health improvement. This equipment allows for reduced soil disturbance, protecting soil carbon stocks and facilitating sustainable practices like cover cropping.
- **Rowledge Pond Aquaculture, LLC** (Sandy Hook) will receive $23,000 for a fuel-efficient tractor and forestry and hatchery equipment. This equipment will lower fuel use and enhance the operation's forest management, helping to offset greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Steep Rock Association, Inc.** (New Preston) will receive $12,000 for roof-mounted solar panels. This project will directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by powering the processing and distribution center for the land trust's farm, Judea Garden.

- **The Stead Farm, LLC** (Barkhamsted) will receive $9,000 for mobile chicken coops to enhance multi-species rotational grazing. Multispecies rotational grazing improves soil health, enhances biodiversity, and controls weeds and parasites, increasing pasture and animal resilience and improving carbon sequestration.
- **Town of New Milford - Sullivan Farm** (New Milford) will receive $6,000 for a roller crimper for cover crop management. This practice reduces the need for chemical herbicides and promotes soil organic matter, enhancing carbon sequestration and long-term soil fertility.
- **Wright Farm, LLC** (Goshen) will receive $3,000 to plant pollinator habitat. Pollinator-friendly plantings support biodiversity, enhance ecosystem services essential for food production, and promote carbon sequestration.

"It is imperative we reverse the loss and degradation of our farmlands, particularly given the increasing challenges of extreme and unpredictable weather patterns," remarked **Co-owner Joe McCartin of Hathor Hill Farm**. "Climate-smart agriculture funding will help more farms adopt practices that can mitigate the effects of severe weather conditions. The more we shift to climate-smart practices like no-till planting to minimize erosion and rotational grazing to restore soil organic matter, the better we will be at ensuring that food production is more stable and resilient."

To see a full list of awardees, visit ctland.org/climate-smart-grant/awardees. Later this spring, NCLC will celebrate *Building Resiliency* awardees and program partners with an on-farm celebration.

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About Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy

Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC) is a nonprofit, regional conservation organization working with the communities of Litchfield and northern Fairfield Counties to safeguard natural and working lands, public recreation areas, and drinking water resources forever. Founded in 1965, NCLC is the largest land trust in Connecticut, protecting 13,400 acres (and growing). To strengthen the region's capacity to conserve high-quality conservation lands and ensure the permanence of those conserved lands for the future, NCLC merged with Brookfield Open Space Legacy in 2019 and Naromi Land Trust in 2020. NCLC's conserved lands include 22 public hiking preserves, 49 working farms, 57 miles of rivers and streams, and over 3,000 acres of habitat for rare and endangered species.

For more information about NCLC and how you can support conservation efforts in our region, please visit ctland.org.

About Connecticut Department of Agriculture

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) mission is to foster a healthy economic, environmental, and social climate for agriculture by developing, promoting, and regulating agricultural businesses; protecting agricultural and aquacultural resources; enforcing laws pertaining to domestic animals; and promoting an understanding among the state's citizens of the diversity of Connecticut agriculture, its cultural heritage, and its contribution to the state's economy. **For more information, visit www.CTGrown.gov.**