



Request for Proposals

Land Lease Opportunity for Approximately 8 Acres of Agricultural Land Currently Planted with Christmas Trees in New Milford, Connecticut

Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC), founded in 1965, is a regional nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving natural lands, recreation areas, and water resources throughout Litchfield County and northern Fairfield County. NCLC is the largest land trust in Connecticut, protecting more than 14,400 acres, including 31 public hiking preserves, 56 working farms, and over 3,000 acres of habitat supporting rare and endangered species.

NCLC invites proposals for a long-term agricultural lease of approximately eight acres located at 2 Upland Road, New Milford, Connecticut, on the south side of Upland Road at Route 202. The property has operated as a Christmas tree farm for more than 20 years. The previous farmer retired and sold the final harvest of trees in December 2025.

With the release of this RFP, NCLC seeks to expand opportunities for agricultural use of conserved farmland while promoting sustainable and environmentally responsible farming practices. NCLC will select the proposal that best satisfies the criteria and requirements of this RFP and advances the organization's conservation mission.

NCLC will seek opportunities to promote products grown on the property through tree tags, signage, labeling, and other marketing initiatives that highlight the farm's status as permanently conserved farmland, creating public recognition for both the agricultural operation and the conservation of the land.

NCLC will prioritize applications that rely, to the greatest extent practicable, on organic or regenerative farming practices and demonstrate compatibility with protecting the property's natural resources. Applicants must support NCLC's conservation goals, including:

- Maintaining and improving soil health and fertility;
- Preserving open space and the agricultural character of the property;
- Protecting water resources through effective erosion and runoff management;
- Implementing agricultural best management practices, such as rotational grazing, nutrient management planning, vegetated filter strips, and similar conservation measures;

- Minimizing, to the maximum extent practicable, the use of herbicides, pesticides, and synthetic inputs.

In addition, prospective lessees must demonstrate a commitment to being positive ambassadors for both agriculture and NCLC within the local community.

Proposals must satisfy the criteria listed below and be submitted in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, as well as the instructions, conditions, specifications, and requirements set forth in this RFP.

Property Background and Site Showing

The land available for lease is part of NCLC's Hunt Hill Farm Preserve. Protected in 2008, this 44-acre property is currently leased to local farmers for livestock grazing and Christmas tree production.

There are approximately eight acres of open land planted with Christmas trees, divided into three management compartments, as shown on the attached maps. These eight acres of Christmas trees have been in active production for more than 20 years. Approximately 1,700 trees, varying in size and species, are currently established within the leased area. *A current tree inventory is attached.*

Soil types are shown on the attached map, consisting of Merrimac fine sandy loam with slopes from 0 to 8% and Hinckley loamy sand with 15-45% slopes. Most of the eight acres are prime farmland. *See attached map and soil type descriptions.*

Continuation of Christmas tree production is preferred; however, NCLC will consider other sustainable agricultural uses provided the applicant submits a clear and practical transition plan.

Existing infrastructure is limited. There is a small shed at the front of the property that was used as a gathering spot to pay for Christmas trees. There are no other buildings, fencing, water service, or utility connections on the site. Temporary or portable improvements—including storage sheds, electric fencing, rainwater collection systems, mobile poultry housing, and similar structures—may be permitted on a case-by-case basis, subject to NCLC review and approval.

Some site improvements may be necessary to restore or optimize agricultural productivity, including mowing, fenceline and laneway clearing, reseeding, soil pH adjustments, and fertility improvements.

The annual rental fee will be negotiated based on the agreed-upon lease terms, including lease duration, proposed tenant investments, and planned improvements. Annual rent shall be no less than \$800/year, unless an alternative arrangement is approved whereby the lessee provides property improvements of equivalent value.

Lease holders must maintain a minimum of \$1,000,000 in general liability insurance and name NCLC as an additional insured. Lessees must also provide annual proof of Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage when required by law.

The property must be maintained in a neat and orderly condition. Only vehicles, equipment, and materials reasonably necessary for agricultural operations may be stored on-site.

All agricultural activities shall be conducted in accordance with a farm management plan developed jointly by NCLC and the selected lessee. The plan will identify agricultural best management practices intended to protect natural resources while supporting agricultural productivity and will be updated as necessary to reflect the approved farming operation.

Property Showing

An optional site visit for interested applicants will be held on Friday, July 24, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. This visit will provide an opportunity to tour the property and ask questions of NCLC staff and, if available, the former farmer. Please RSVP to maria@ctland.org if you plan to attend.

The proposed farming operation should:

- Be well suited to the size, soils, topography, and configuration of the property;
- Demonstrate economic viability and a reasonable likelihood of long-term success;
- Promote sustainable agricultural practices and support long-term soil health and productivity;
- Utilize crops, livestock, and management practices that advance NCLC's conservation goals and objectives; and
- Avoid adverse impacts to adjacent habitats, wetlands, water resources, and other natural features.

Proposal Submission Details

Proposals will be accepted until Friday, August 7, 2026. Responses received after this deadline will not be considered.

Applicants may be invited to interview to discuss their proposal, qualifications, and requested lease terms.

NCLC anticipates notifying the selected applicant by late August 2026. Following selection, NCLC and the successful applicant will negotiate and execute a mutually acceptable agricultural lease agreement.

The lease agreement will address operational requirements, maintenance responsibilities, reporting requirements, insurance obligations, conflict-of-interest disclosures, conservation requirements, and other standard lease provisions.

Proposal Submission Content

Applicants should provide the following information:

A. Personal and Professional Information

- Applicant name(s), mailing address, telephone number, and email address.
- Business information, if applicable, including legal business name, tax status, federal tax identification number, and ownership information.
- Current employer, if employed outside the farming operation.
- Description of farming experience and qualifications.
- Names and contact information for business partners or other individuals who will participate in the farming operation (excluding employees).
- Three professional or agricultural references.
- Any additional information or supporting documentation the applicant wishes NCLC to consider.

B. Proposed Farming Operation

- Detailed description of the proposed agricultural operation.
- Identification of crops and/or livestock to be produced.
- Planting, growing, harvesting, or production schedule.
- Proposed marketing and distribution methods for products produced on the property.
- Description of how the operation will support NCLC's conservation goals and mission.
- Description of any requested infrastructure, including temporary structures, fencing, utilities, irrigation systems, or other improvements.
- Description of anticipated site preparation, restoration work, or capital improvements.

- Desired lease term.
- List of owned or leased equipment that will be used on the property.
- Any additional information the applicant believes should be considered.

NOTE: NO SUBLEASES WILL BE PERMITTED OR CONSIDERED.

Selection Criteria

NCLC will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

Applicant Qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience, knowledge, and capability to successfully implement and maintain the proposed operation throughout the lease term.
- Access to sufficient equipment, labor, and financial resources to support the proposed farming enterprise.
- Demonstrated understanding of NCLC's mission, conservation objectives, and role within the community.
- Ability to respond to property-related needs and emergencies in a timely manner.

Preference may be given to local farmers and applicants residing within 15 miles of the property.

NCLC will prioritize applications that utilize organic or regenerative practices and demonstrate compatibility with the conservation of the property's natural resources.

NCLC is committed to equal opportunity and will evaluate all proposals without regard to race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, or other protected status.

Questions and Proposals should be directed to:

Maria Grace, Director of Stewardship
 Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy
 PO Box 821
 Kent, CT 06757
 (860) 927-1927 x. 1504
maria@ctland.org (preferred)

Christmas Tree Inventory at Hunt Hill Farm

Species (6 species)	Size	Notes	Quantity
Colorado Blue Spruce	18" - 24"	in transplant bed	52
Colorado Blue Spruce	4' - 5'	heavy and dense	188
Colorado Blue Spruce	7' - 9'		63
White Spruce	24" - 30"	overgrown in transplant bed	54
White Spruce	24" - 36"		59
White Spruce	6' - 9'		52
Mixed Spruce, mostly White Spruce	3' - 4'		260
Norway Spruce	5' - 7'	light and thin	186
Scotts Pine	5' - 6'		74
Douglas Fir	18" - 24"		71
Douglas Fir	30" - 48"		250
Douglas Fir	4' - 6'	deer damaged and thin	178
Concolor Fir	18" - 30"		194
Concolor Fir	6' - 7'		50
TOTAL Christmas Tree Inventory			1731

Hunt Hill Farm Christmas Tree Compartment Soil Types

Map Unit	Soil Type	Slope
34A	Merrimac fine sandy loam	0–3% slopes
34B	Merrimac fine sandy loam	3–8% slopes
38E	Hinckley loamy sand	15–45% slopes

Soil Descriptions:

34A — Merrimac fine sandy loam, 0–3% slopes

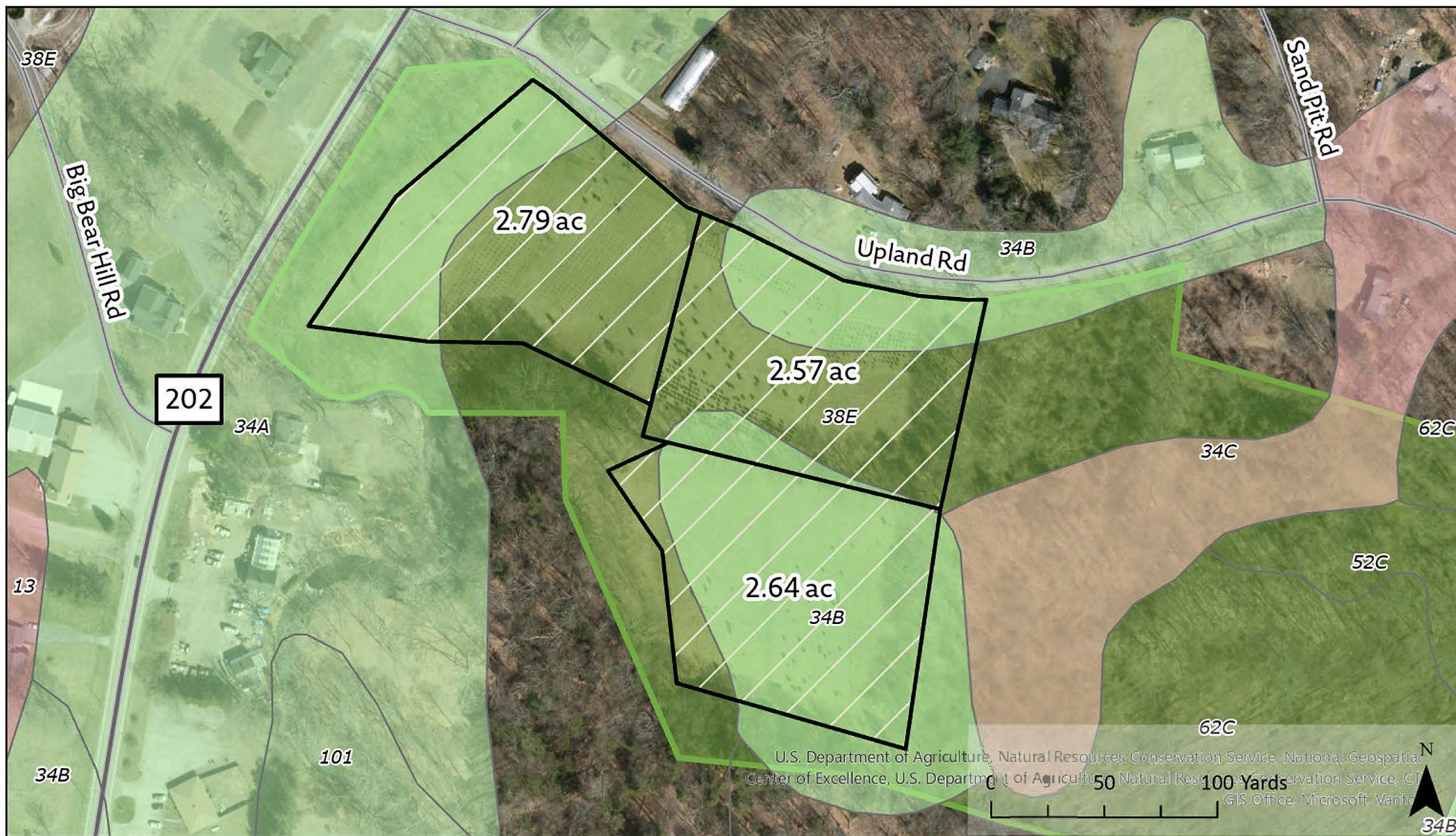
Nearly level terrain
Well-drained to somewhat excessively drained
Developed in sandy glacial outwash deposits
Often classified as prime farmland when other conditions are favorable.

34B — Merrimac fine sandy loam, 3–8% slopes

Same soil series as 34A but on gently sloping land
Good drainage and moderate permeability
Slightly higher erosion potential than 34A due to slope

38E — Hinckley loamy sand, 15–45% slopes

Steep, excessively drained soil
Coarse-textured, sandy glacial outwash material
Low water-holding capacity
Drought-prone for crops and landscaping



Legend

- Hunt Hill Farm
- Agricultural Fields
- Prime Farmland Soils
- Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance

- Non-Farmland Soils
- Roads

Map by: Mary Walsh, June 15, 2026

Disclaimer: This map is for assessment and planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for description, conveyance, authoritative definition of legal boundary, or property title. This is not a survey product. Users are encouraged to examine the documentation or metadata associated with the data on which this map is based for information related to its accuracy, currentness, and limitations.

Sources
Tax Parcels: CT Council of Governments
Roads: CT Department of Transportation
Aerial Imagery: CT GIS, CT Environmental Conditions Online, March 27- April 13, 2023