



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 1047**

*January Session, 2003*

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONSERVATION OF GRASSLANDS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 23-75 of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*  
3 *October 1, 2003*):

4 (a) The Commissioner of Environmental Protection shall acquire  
5 land by purchase, gift or devise for the purposes set forth in section 23-  
6 74. The title to any land acquired pursuant to sections 23-73 to 23-79,  
7 inclusive, shall be vested in the state. In determining whether sites  
8 shall be acquired, the department shall consider whether the site is: (1)  
9 Identified as having high priority recreation, forestry, fishery, wildlife  
10 or conservation value, including, but not limited to, the conservation of  
11 grasslands and other early successional habitats, and lands that can be  
12 restored to grassland and early successional habitat and as being  
13 consistent with the state comprehensive plan for outdoor recreation  
14 and the state plan of conservation and development; (2) a prime  
15 natural feature of the Connecticut landscape, such as a major river, its  
16 tributaries and watershed, mountainous territory, an inland or coastal  
17 wetland, a significant littoral or estuarine or aquatic site or any other  
18 important geologic feature; (3) habitat for native plant or animal  
19 species listed as threatened or endangered or of special concern in the  
20 data base or pursuant to the program established under section 26-305,  
21 particularly areas identified as essential habitat for such species; (4) a

22 relatively undisturbed outstanding example of a native ecological  
23 community which is now uncommon; or (5) threatened with  
24 conversion to incompatible uses or contains sacred sites or  
25 archaeological sites of state or national importance. In acquiring a site  
26 that has been identified as having a high priority recreation value, the  
27 department shall give priority to sites near population centers. For  
28 purposes of this section, "grasslands" means natural or managed  
29 upland communities where the dominant plant species are members of  
30 the grass family, exclusive of lawns or other habitats that are managed  
31 intensively in the growing season and "early successional habitats"  
32 means habitats dominated by shrubs, young trees, grasses and other  
33 vegetation that require natural disturbance or management to prevent  
34 succession into mature forest habitat.

35 Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 7-131d of the general statutes is  
36 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*  
37 *October 1, 2003*):

38 (b) Grants may be made under the protected open space and  
39 watershed land acquisition grant program established under  
40 subsection (a) of this section or under the Charter Oak open space  
41 grant program established under section 7-131t to match funds for the  
42 purchase of land or permanent interests in land which purchase meets  
43 one of the following criteria: (1) Protects land identified as being  
44 especially valuable for recreation, forestry, fishing, conservation of  
45 wildlife or natural resources, including, but not limited to, the  
46 conservation of grasslands and other early successional habitats, and  
47 lands that can be restored to grassland or early successional habitat; (2)  
48 protects land which includes or contributes to a prime natural feature  
49 of the state's landscape, including, but not limited to, a shoreline, a  
50 river, its tributaries and watershed, an aquifer, mountainous territory,  
51 ridgelines, an inland or coastal wetland, a significant littoral or  
52 estuarine or aquatic site or other important geological feature; (3)  
53 protects habitat for native plant or animal species listed as threatened  
54 or endangered or of special concern, as defined in section 26-304; (4)  
55 protects a relatively undisturbed outstanding example of a native

56 ecological community which is now uncommon; (5) enhances and  
57 conserves water quality of the state's lakes, rivers and coastal water; (6)  
58 preserves local agricultural heritage; or (7) in the case of grants to  
59 water companies, protects land which is eligible to be classified as class  
60 I land or class II land after acquisition. The commissioner may make a  
61 grant under the protected open space and watershed land acquisition  
62 grant program to a distressed municipality or a targeted investment  
63 community, as defined in section 32-9p, for restoration or protection of  
64 natural features or habitats on open space already owned by the  
65 municipality, including, but not limited to, wetland or wildlife or plant  
66 habitat restoration or restoration of other sites to a more natural  
67 condition, or replacement of vegetation, provided the total amount of  
68 grants to such municipalities for such purposes may not exceed twenty  
69 per cent of the total amount of grants made in any fiscal year. For  
70 purposes of this section, "grasslands" means natural or managed  
71 upland communities where the dominant plant species are members of  
72 the grass family, exclusive of lawns or other habitats that are managed  
73 intensively in the growing season and "early successional habitats"  
74 means habitats dominated by shrubs, young trees, grasses and other  
75 vegetation that require natural disturbance or management to prevent  
76 succession into mature forest habitat.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	October 1, 2003
Sec. 2	October 1, 2003

**ENV**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*