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Southington Land Trust Awarded Large Grant to Develop 60-Acre Parcel

The Southington Land Conservation Trust receives significant funds to restore and open the recently acquired preserve's trails to hikers.



Michael Lemanski, Patch Staff

Posted Fri, Mar 20, 2026 at 11:08 am ET

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The Southington Land Conservation Trust recently announced a major grant award that will fund the trust's development of the recently acquired Lovely Preserve on Welch Road, above. (Southington Land Conservation Trust)



SOUTHINGTON, CT — The [Southington](#) awarded a \$30,000 grant to restore and c

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The funding comes from the [Main Street Community Foundation through the Bradley Henry Barnes & Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust](#) and will support the “Healthy Trails and Habitat Project.”

The Lovley Preserve, located on the western side of Southington near Mount Vernon, was donated in 2025 by local developer Mark Lovley and named in honor of his father.

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Alissa Nelson, a board member of the land trust who wrote the grant, called the award significant.

“We are beyond words. It’s an amazing gift,” Nelson said. “We are so fortunate to receive this large land donation, and to then be awarded the Main Street Community Foundation grant is just remarkable. We are so thankful.”

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Val Guarino, president of the land trust, said the funding will allow work to begin immediately on priorities identified by environmental experts.

“We have had foresters and botanists survey the preserve, and now we can begin to implement some of the areas they outlined and prioritized, such as invasive removal,” Guarino said.



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The project will focus on removing non-native plant species, including Autumn Olive and Barberry, which can disrupt local ecosystems. Plans also include installing trail markers, interpretive signage, and kiosks.

Once completed, the preserve will be open to the public, expanding access to walking trails and outdoor recreation in town.

Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation, said the grant aligns with the organization's goals.

“We are proud to support the Southington Land Conservation Trust with their project to increase the community's access to Southington's natural resources,” Sadecki said. “The Southington Land Conservation Trust's restoration and development of the Lovley Property will support healthy outdoor access for Southington residents for years to come.”

The Southington Land Conservation Trust manages approximately 140 acres of con

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