

LOCAL NEWS

Southington



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Southington Land Trust Wins \$30K for Lovley Preserve Trails

The 60-acre Welch Road property was donated in 2025 by developer Mark Lovley and will become public open space with hiking trails once the project is complete.

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Once developed, the Lovley Preserve will be open to the public

Southington Land Trust Awarded \$30,000 to Develop Lovley Preserve Trails

The Southington Land Conservation Trust has received a \$30,000 grant from the Main Street Community Foundation to restore habitat and build walking trails at the Lovley Preserve, a newly acquired 60-acre property on Welch Road in the western part of Southington, near Mount Vernon.

The award was announced at the Main Street Community Foundation's annual meeting on March 19, 2026, as part of a \$2.7 million distribution to nonprofits across the region. The grant came specifically through the Bradley Henry Barnes & Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust, which is administered through the foundation.

About the Lovley Preserve

The Lovley Preserve was donated to the trust in 2025 by local developer Mark Lovley and is named in honor of his father. The property, situated on the western edge of Southington near Mount Vernon, expands the trust's conservation footprint to approximately 200 acres under its stewardship.

The Southington Land Conservation Trust was founded in 1973 and manages approximately 140 acres of conserved land across Southington. With the addition of the 60-acre Lovley parcel, the trust's total holdings grow substantially. The preserve was formally donated on February 26, 2025.

Once developed, the Lovley Preserve will be open to the public, providing residents with new access to hiking trails and outdoor recreation on the town's west side.

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Healthy Trails and Habitat Project

The \$30,000 grant will fund the trust's "Healthy Trails and Habitat Project" at the Lovley Preserve. The project is designed to accomplish two goals: build sustainable public trails and protect the native plant and animal habitats on the property.

The trust held a public membership meeting on March 19, 2026, the same day as the foundation's grant announcement, to engage residents in land preservation efforts. Specific trail routes, construction timelines, and permitting details have not been publicly released.

Main Street Community Foundation Annual Grants

The Main Street Community Foundation, based in New Britain, serves communities in the central Connecticut region. Its annual grant cycle distributes funding from a mix of donor-advised funds and restricted endowments to nonprofits across the area.

At its March 19, 2026, annual meeting, the foundation distributed a total of \$2.7 million in grants. The \$30,000 award to the Southington Land Conservation Trust was among the grants announced at that meeting.

Terry Gomez Lombardi of Southington was also elected to the foundation's board of directors at the annual meeting, adding local representation to the grant-making organization.

Open Space in Southington

Southington's open space programs have grown in recent years through a combination of private donations and public conservation initiatives. The Lovley donation represents one of the larger private land gifts to the trust in its recent history.

Conserved open space provides community benefits beyond recreation — including watershed protection, carbon storage, and habitat connectivity for wildlife. The Welch

Road location on the town's western edge adds to the contiguous open space near the Mount Vernon area.

The Southington Land Conservation Trust has not released a timeline for when the Lovley Preserve trails will be open to the public.

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Barrett Ashford founded The Quinnipiac Post to deliver consistent, independent coverage to the communities of south central Connecticut. He oversees the publication's editorial direction and reports on local government, land use, and regional development. Tips and corrections can be sent to barrett@thequinnipiacpost.com.