

# Connecticut Conservation Partnership Program (CCPP)

## Info. Session Agenda

- CCPP Overview
- Who Can Apply?
- Easement Options Under CCPP
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# CCPP Overview

- Public-private partnership between CLCC and CT DEEP
  - Funded by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)
  - Technical assistance provided by Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy and Connecticut Farmland Trust
- Five-year federal easement program
  - Enables land trusts that have or intend to submit an open space (OSWA) grant to DEEP to apply through CLCC for federal match funds
- Projects considered
  - Forest and watershed lands
  - Agricultural lands (consistent with OSWA program criteria for farmland preservation)

# Who can apply to CCPP?

- CT land trusts that have or intend to apply to OSWA
- CT land trusts that have received an OSWA award notification but have not yet closed on the project

# Easement Options Under CCPP

- Entity Held Easements
- U.S. Held Easements

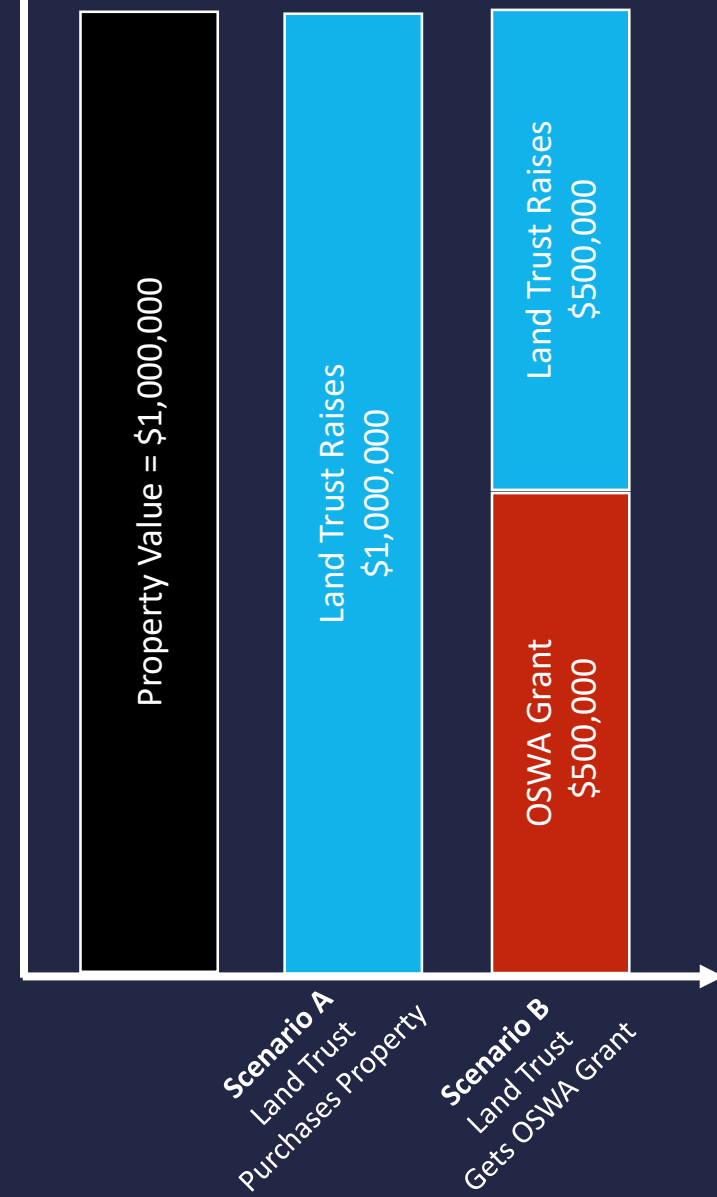
# Entity-Held Easements

- Easement acquired and held by an eligible entity (land trust)
- Funding scenario for Entity-Held easements
  - Land Trust A seeks to purchase title through OSWA and partners with Land Trust B (eligible entity) to hold the federal easement
    - Partnership is necessary because land trust A cannot hold both title and federal easement
- Land Trust B works with Land Trust A to apply through CLCC for NRCS funding for federal easement
- Closing: landowner receives combination of OSWA and NRCS funds
- Partnering land trusts are responsible for long-term stewardship and monitoring

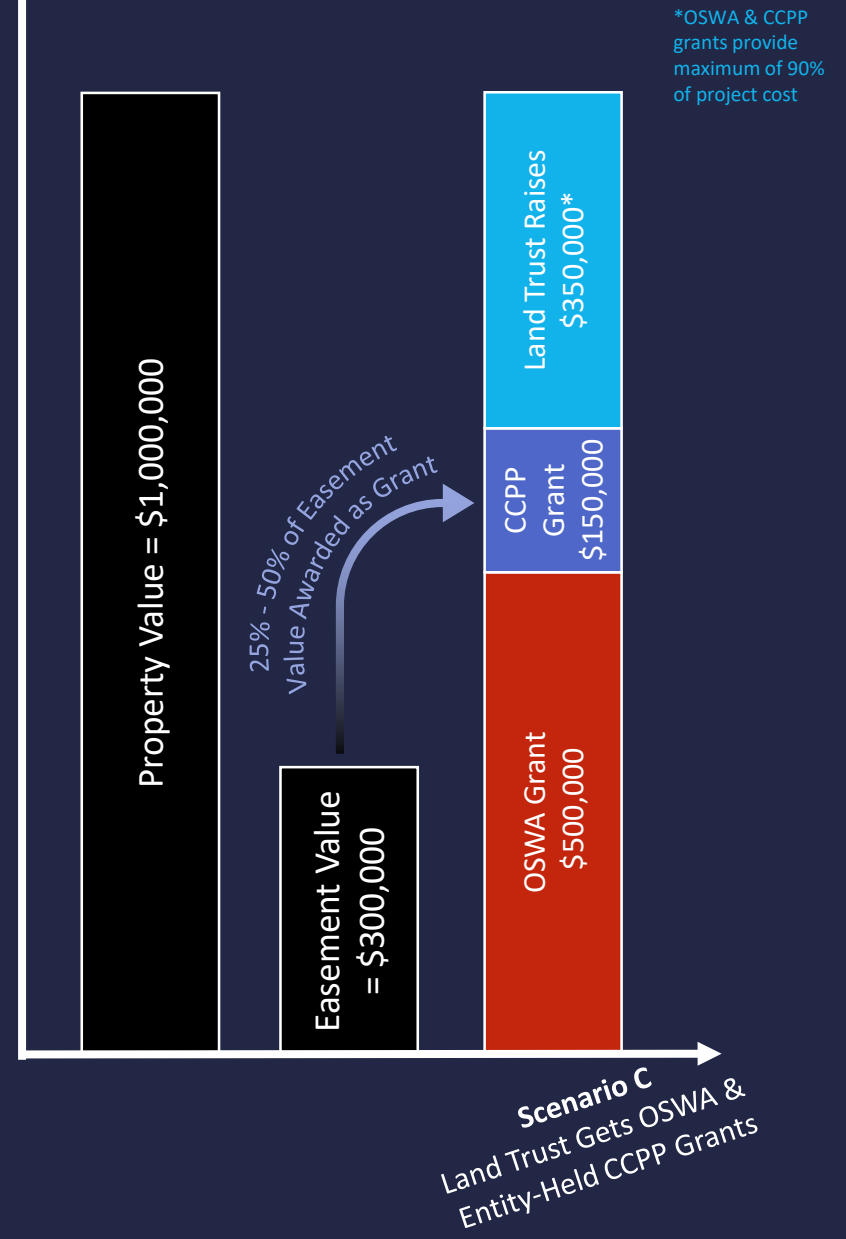
# Entity Held Easements

- Level of funding
  - NRCS will contribute between 25% - 50% of the easement value to the transaction
  - Subject to CT general statute limit of 90% of a property's fair market value (FMV) when combining state (OSWA) and federal funds
- NRCS will pay for these due diligence activities
  - Appraisal tech reviews
  - Environmental searches
- Land Trust A pays for all other due diligence and acquisition activities
  - CLCC's Transaction Assistance Grant (TAG) Program
    - Can provide a reimbursement grant for certain transaction expenses

## Without CCPP



## CCPP, Entity-Held Easement





# CCPP-NRCS Process – Entity Held Easements

- CLCC will...
  - Hold a signup (project intake forms are being accepted)
  - Review projects for eligibility
  - Complete NRCS applications and eligibility documentation
  - Rank, bundle, and submit applications to NRCS
- After CLCC's submission, NRCS will...
  - Review projects' eligibility (e.g., title review, on-site inspection)
  - Rank and tentatively select projects for funding
  - \*Prior to entering into an agreement with NRCS, land trust must obtain an appraisal\*
    - \*Draft easement deed must be prepared and submitted to NRCS for review before appraisal\*



# CCPP-NRCS Process – Entity Held Easements

- Prior to closing, land trusts are responsible for...
  - Appraisal
  - Survey
  - Management Plan (RCPP Easement Plan)
  - Baseline Documentation Report (BDR)
  - Title and Closing Work
- NRCS is responsible for...
  - Reviewing due diligence activities
  - Environmental records search
- Land trusts steward and monitor after closing

# What does Entity (land trust B) need to do?

- Decide if they are willing to hold a conservation easement for land trust A
- Read NRCS's Entity Program Agreement
- Work with land trust A to decide
  - Easement's level of restriction
  - Whether U.S. will hold right of enforcement
- Fill out EHE project intake form
  - Need to obtain DUNS number
  - Register in the System for Award Management



# Things to Work Through

- Entity-Held Easements
  - For CLCC...
    - Recording/layering of the OSWA and federal easements
    - Technical correction to OSWA statute
  - For land trusts (land trust A)...
    - Finding your land trust partner to hold the federal easement

# Questions

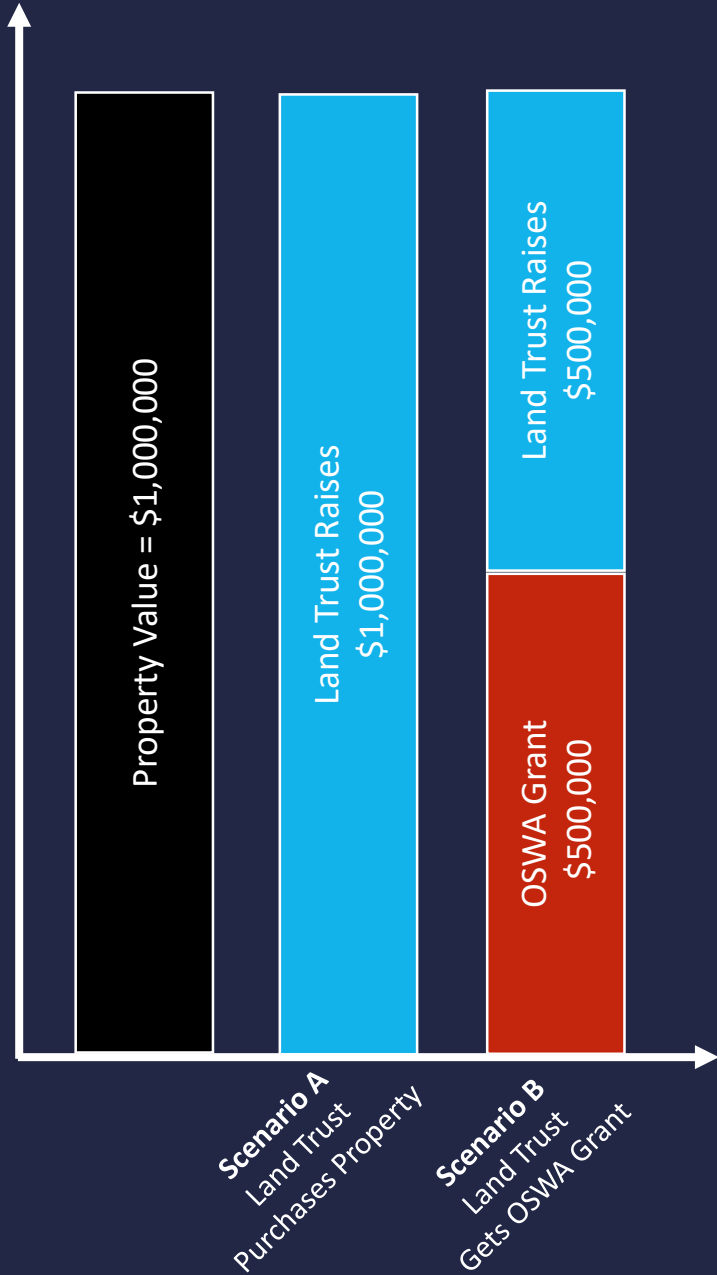
# U.S. Held Easements

- Easement is acquired and held by NRCS on behalf of the U.S.
- Funding scenario for U.S.-Held Easements
  - Land Trust A seeks to purchase title through OSWA and partners with NRCS to hold the federal easement
- Landowner with assistance from land trust applies through CLCC for NRCS funding for the federal easement
- Closing: landowner receives combination of OSWA and NRCS funds
- Land trust owns title subject to OSWA and U.S. easements
- NRCS is responsible for long-term stewardship and monitoring

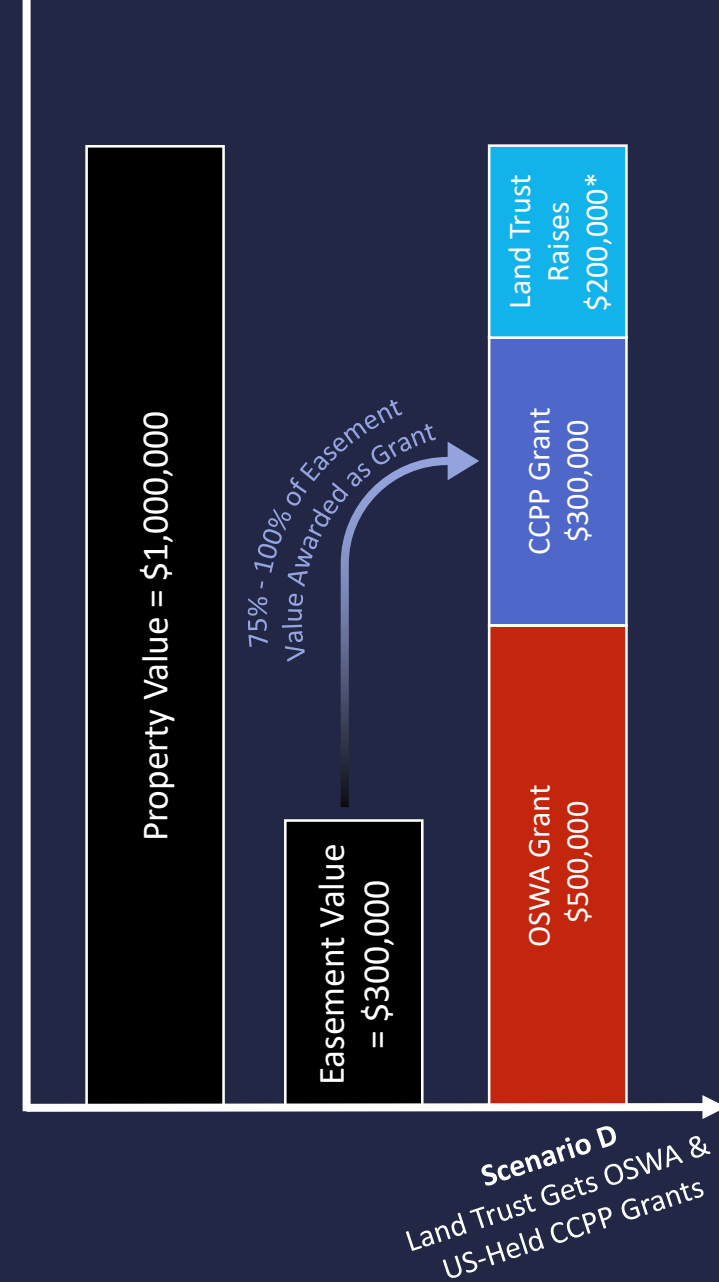
# U.S. Held Easements

- Level of funding
  - Depends on easement's level of restriction
    - Moderately Restrictive (up to 75% of easement value paid to landowner)
    - Highly Restrictive (up to 100% of easement value paid to landowner)
  - Subject to CT general statute limit of 90% of a property's fair market value (FMV) when combining state (OSWA) and federal funds
- NRCS will pay for the cost of due diligence and acquisition related activities for U.S.-Held easements
  - Includes surveys, appraisals, title searches, closing services, and other realty-related services

## Without CCPP



## CCPP, US-Held Easement



\*OSWA & CCPP grants provide maximum of 90% of project cost

# CCPP-NRCS Process – U.S. Held Easements

- CLCC will...
  - Hold a signup (project intake forms are being accepted)
  - Review projects for eligibility
  - Complete NRCS applications and eligibility documentation
  - Rank, bundle, and submit applications to NRCS
- After CLCC's submission, NRCS will...
  - Review projects' eligibility (e.g., title search, on-site inspection)
  - Complete initial planning activities (e.g., cost estimates, easement plan, BDR info. gathering)
  - Rank and tentatively select projects for funding
  - Landowner will review and accept tentative selection



# CCPP-NRCS Process – U.S. Held Easements

- After CLCC's submission, NRCS will...
  - Pay for an appraisal to establish easement's fair market value
  - Make an offer to and enter into an agreement with the landowner
  - Obtain and complete all planning (e.g., boundary survey, BDR, etc.,) and closing activities
  - Steward and monitor after closing

# Things to Work Through

- U.S.-Held Easements
  - Recording/layering of the OSWA and federal easements
  - Technical correction to OSWA statute

# Timeline

- Will vary from project to project
- For those that have received an OSWA award but not yet closed
  - The federal process could take approx. 6-12 months
- For those that are applying for an OSWA grant
  - The federal process should be approx. the same as it is for OSWA

# Questions

# CLCC's Transaction Assistance Grant Program

- Reimbursement grant program to support land trusts' transaction-related project expenses
- Rolling application
- Funding levels
  - Early-stage transaction costs
    - Up to \$5,000
    - Appraisals, title searches, and environmental assessments\*
  - Closing stage transactions cost
    - Up to \$20,000
    - Title searches, title certificate/insurance, surveys, environmental assessments, and recording fees

*\*Early-stage grants for environmental assessments must be justified (i.e., a reasonable suspicion that the site is contaminated). Otherwise, land trusts are encouraged to apply for funding for environmental assessments when they are at the closing stage.*

# Resources/Contact Information

- CT Conservation Partnership Program
- Transaction Assistance Grant (TAG) Program
- CCPP Administrator – Yaw Owusu Darko
  - [yodarko@ctconservation.org](mailto:yodarko@ctconservation.org)