



# PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **TWELVE TOWN AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL MASTER PLAN**

*Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development has been awarded a grant for its proposal of the Twelve Town Air Line State Park Trail Master Plan.*

Connecticut - January 7, 2019: On January 7th, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) awarded funds to Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (CTRC&D) through their Recreational Trails program. The grant, in the amount of \$188,522.00, will be used to carry out CTCRC&D's proposal of the Twelve Town Air Line State Park Trail Master Plan.

The goal of the Master Plan is to re-establish the economic significance and value of the Air Line Trail, which was formerly the Air Line Railroad dating back to the 1870s. The railroad once connected New York City to Boston. During the summer months, the railroad brought a huge influx of city people to the country for vacation. Many local farm families boarded these visitors for extra income. The railway made possible the start of the resort business still flourishing on Williams Pond. Today, the Air Line State Park Trail is public property and is used for biking, walking, hiking, and horseback riding.

The Master Plan will be developed in collaboration with a task force made up of representatives from the Towns of Portland, East Hampton, Colchester, Hampton, Hebron, Columbia, Chaplin, Lebanon, Windham, Pomfret, and Thompson. CTCRC&D Executive Director noted, "This is a tremendous opportunity to bring together the 12 towns of the Air Line State Park Trail, along with CTDEEP and other stakeholders to promote the use, maintenance, and marketing of this amazing state asset. CTCRC&D is very excited to be facilitating this process and working with all involved." The project's scope encompasses over 50 miles of the Air Line Trail and properties adjacent near the trail, including town centers, state and town parks, and forests located within the twelve towns, four Council of Government regions, and the Last Green Valley region.

To re-establish economic significance and value, the Twelve Town Air Line State Park Trail Master Plan will:

- Inventory adjacent town land use, planning, and economic strategies
- Develop regional collaboration options based on best practices
- Way find to off trail towns, tourist amenities and connections to other trail systems
- Cultivate strategies for town economic development to educate and create new small recreational supportive businesses
- Create regional share service options and efficiencies for collaborative maintenance and improvements to trail, parking areas, and amenities
- Inventory natural resources to highlight and map critical areas for maintenance concerns, infrastructure installation, as well as, promoting eco-tourism and education
- Enhance marketing and branding to include town amenities, Air Line Trail events, and trail information
- Create a new website with links to CTDEEP and planning for cell phone based apps
- Coordinate regulatory and design objectives for adjacent land use to protect scenic integrity of the corridor
- Explore and develop framework for continuing the Twelve Town Air Line Trail Collaborative

The project will include four public workshops (northern section and southern section) to gain insights and creative solutions for trail improvements, user experience, and recommendations for future infrastructure.

The mission of CTCRC&D is to enhance agriculture, natural resources, and the economy by cultivating partnership-driven solutions for a diverse and resilient Connecticut.

For more information about CTCRC&D, please visit [ctrcd.org](http://ctrcd.org).

#### Contact:

Andrea Peres  
860.345.3977

[aperes@ctrcd.org](mailto:aperes@ctrcd.org)