September 23, 2024

Mr. James Ventres
Land Use Administrator
Town of East Haddam
East Haddam, CT 06423

Application to Inland Wetlands and Waterways Commission (1 of 2)
Tater Hill Road Parking Area

Dear Mr. Ventres,

Overview: East Haddam Land Trust, Inc. (EHLT) currently maintains a small gravel parking area for two or three cars on Tater Hill Road, at the southern entrance to EHLT's Miller Farm Preserve (Map31, Lot 90). The parking area is directly across the street from EHLT's new Walls Way Preserve (acquired by EHLT in 2024), which gives hiking access to the Town's Lena Reserve to the south. The parking area was approved by the IWWC some years ago. EHLT hereby applies to expand it.

Background: EHLT is currently preparing an open space grant application to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection under the Open Space and Watershed Lands Acquisition (OSWA) grant program, seeking funding to purchase a 14-acre parcel (Map 22, Lot 28) that lies adjacent to and to the east of Walls Way (Map 22, Lot 29). The acquisition will preserve a key piece of unspoiled land and will improve the experience of hikers transiting to Lena Reserve. As part of its OSWA application, EHLT will be required to demonstrate that the new property will be served by a parking area for 2-4 cars. Although, as noted above, the southern Miller Farm parking area already serves two or three cars, OSWA requires additional parking space for any new property acquired with state open space funds. (Note that Miller Farm was acquired with OSWA funds and that the existing parking area satisfies EHLT's OSWA requirements only with respect to Miller Farm.) Moreover, we expect additional parking may be required in any event, in light of the additional hiking opportunities presented by the new property acquisitions. Rather than install a new parking lot on the parcel to be acquired, EHLT believes it would be more cost-effective and less environmentally destructive simply to expand the existing Miller Farm lot.

Specifications: The existing gravel parking area measures some 28' wide x 36' deep. Although a wetlands area lies just north of it, the parking area does not physically encroach on that

wetlands area. As noted above, IWWC approved this parking area some years ago. The proposed expanded parking area would measure some 56' wide by 36' deep. It would simply extend the existing area by 28' to the east, maintaining the same depth of 36' from the road. The expanded area, like the existing area, would be simple packed gravel, and we do not believe the expansion would adversely affect the wetland area to the north.

We thank the IWWC for its consideration.

East Haddam Land Trust, Inc.
Cameron Beard, Stewardship Chair