

**Aton Forest, Inc.
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Aton Forest Preservation Project Gets U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Grant

Aton Forest, Inc. has been awarded a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Small Grant of \$75,000 under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. The grant will help Aton Forest preserve over 1,100 acres of forested land in Norfolk and Colebrook, Connecticut. The Aton Forest Preservation Project is one of only 31 nationwide that were awarded grants under the program this year, and it received the only such grant awarded in Connecticut.

Aton Forest is a large ecological research station and preserve in northern Connecticut at the Massachusetts border. Its wetlands include a large beaver pond, swamps, pristine streams and many vernal pools. Through its research programs, Aton Forest has documented the presence of waterfowl and wetland-dependent breeding migratory birds. The NAWCA grant process focuses on the acreage of affected wetlands and their importance to waterfowl and neotropical migrants.

Aton Forest, Inc. is working on increasing and preserving its landholdings. The Aton Forest Preservation Project includes the granting of an easement on over 1,000 acres to be held by the Norfolk Land Trust. In addition, Aton Forest, Inc. has acquired one parcel and is working on acquiring another to be added to the forest's preserved acreage.

"We are delighted to receive this grant," said Michael Aurelia, President of Aton Forest, Inc. "It may be called a 'small' grant, but it will be a big help in preserving Aton Forest. We are grateful for matching grants and help from our partners, including Norfolk's Coalition for Sound Growth and the Doolittle Lake Company."

"The Aton Forest Preservation Project involves cooperation of many organizations, and will conserve wetlands and associated upland habitat for the benefit of migratory birds and other wildlife," said Mitch Hartley, North Atlantic Coordinator for the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. "This project typifies the kind of work we want to support."

Aton Forest, Inc. was organized in 1990 to preserve and increase the lands acquired by the eminent plant ecologist Frank Egler, and to continue the long-term, low-key research Dr. Egler pioneered. Anyone wishing to support Aton Forest, Inc. can send tax-deductible donations to: Aton Forest, Inc., P.O. Box 509, Norfolk, CT 06058.