Town of Winchester – City of Winsted

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Office of the Town Manager

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Town of Winchester Awarded $150,000 for Watershed Forest Management

November 2, 2026, WINCHESTER, CT – The Town of Winchester has been awarded $150,000 from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) through its Resilient Forestry Practices Grant Program to launch the Winchester Watershed Forest Renewal Project, restarting active management of the Town's watershed forest after nearly 20 years.

The Town owns approximately 1,100 acres of forest surrounding Crystal Lake and Rugg Brook Reservoir. These protected watershed lands are essential to the Town's drinking water supply, providing a natural buffer that helps prevent erosion and preserve water quality.

The project will begin with selective thinning to give healthy native trees more room to grow and targeted invasive plant control. The work will follow DEEP's recommendations to preserve and strengthen the existing woodland, making it more resilient to storms, pests, and disease while protecting wildlife habitat and the drinking water supply.

The project builds on a forestry Practice Plan prepared by DEEP Forestry Services, which evaluated the Town's watershed property and identified areas where active management would provide the greatest benefit. The $150,000 award will allow the Town to put these state-recommended practices into action, supporting both DEEP's forest resilience goals and Winchester's strengthen its protection of our drinking water supply.

"This is what happens when we identify a need, build a plan, and secure the resources to act on it," said Town Manager Paul Harrington. "After nearly two decades, we're bringing active management back to our watershed forest. With DEEP's expertise and $150,000 in state funding, we're making a long-term investment in Winchester's drinking water supply and the natural resources our community depends on."

For questions or additional information, please contact the Office of the Town Manager at 860-738-6962.

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