



COLEBROOK CONNECTICUT

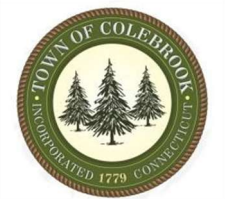


Photo Credit: Historic District Commission/Town of Colebrook, Colebrook Land Conservancy, newenglandeyes, Colebrook Associates, Camp Jewell

Community Resilience Building Summary of Findings

October 2025



Town of Colebrook, Connecticut

Community Resilience Building

Summary of Findings

Overview

The need for municipalities, regional planning organizations, academic institutions, corporations, states, and federal agencies to increase resilience to extreme weather events and a changing climate is strikingly evident amongst the communities across the state of Connecticut. Relatively recent events such as Super Storm Sandy, severe winter storms (2013 & 2015), COVID-19 pandemic, and Tropical Storm Isaias have reinforced this urgency and compelled leading communities like the Town of Colebrook to proactively collaborate on planning and mitigating risks. Ultimately, this type of leadership is to be commended because it will reduce the vulnerability and reinforce the strengths of people, infrastructure, and ecosystems and serve as a model for other communities in Connecticut, New England, and the nation.

Recently, the Town of Colebrook embarked on certification with Sustainable CT. As part of that certification, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Sustainable CT provided the Town with a community-driven process to assess current hazard and climate change impacts and to generate potential and prioritized solutions to improve resilience and sustainability. In October 2025, Colebrook's Core Team helped organize a Community Resilience Building process and workshop facilitated by TNC in partnership with Sustainable CT. The core directive of this effort was the engagement with and between community members to define strengths and vulnerabilities and the development of priority resilience actions for the Town of Colebrook.

The Colebrook Community Resilience Building Workshop's central objectives were to:

- Define top local, natural, and climate-related hazards of concern.
- Identify existing and future strengths and vulnerabilities.
- Identify and prioritize actions for the Town.
- Identify opportunities to collaboratively advance actions to increase resilience alongside residents and organizations from across the Town, and beyond.

The Town of Colebrook employed an “anywhere at any scale”, community-driven process called Community Resilience Building (CRB) (www.CommunityResilienceBuilding.org). The CRB’s tools, reports, other relevant planning documents, and local maps were integrated into the workshop process to provide both decision-support and visualization around shared issues and existing priorities across Colebrook. The Colebrook Plan of Conservation and Development (Draft – September 2025) and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Colebrook Annex (2022) were particularly instructive as references. Using the CRB process - rich with information, experience, and dialogue - the participants produced the findings presented in this summary report. This includes an overview of the top hazards, current concerns and challenges, existing strengths, and proposed actions to improve Colebrook’s resilience to hazards and climate change today, and in the future.

The summary of findings transcribed in this report, like any that concerns the evolving nature of risk assessment and associated action, are provided for comments, corrections and updates from workshop attendees and other stakeholders alike. The leadership displayed by the Town of Colebrook on community resilience building will benefit from the continuous participation of all those concerned.

Summary of Findings

Top Hazards and Vulnerable Areas for the Community

Prior to the CRB Workshop, the Colebrook Core Team identified the top hazards for the Town. The hazards of greatest concern included high wind and extreme precipitation events, ice storms, and intense and longer duration heat waves. Additional hazards highlighted by participants during the CRB Workshop included Nor’easters and blizzards during fall, winter, and spring months as well as extraordinary storm events such as hurricanes and tropical storms. These hazards have direct and increasing impacts on the infrastructure, environment, and residents of and visitors to Colebrook. These effects are seen within residential areas, natural areas (wetlands, rivers, forests, preserves), roads, bridges, businesses, farms, municipal facilities, churches, social support services and centers, and other critical infrastructure and community assets within Colebrook.

Current Concerns and Challenges Presented by Hazards

The Town of Colebrook has several concerns and faces multiple challenges related to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. In recent years, Colebrook has experienced a series of highly disruptive and damaging weather events including the Halloween blizzard (2011), Superstorm Sandy (October 2012), large snowfall events during the winter of 2015-2016 (84" cumulative), extreme wind events (October 2017), Tropical Storm Isaias (August 2020), extreme precipitation event (July 2023), and other less impactful but more frequent events. Impacts from these events have included rain-induced, inland flooding along waterways and low-lying areas, basement flooding in homes, and tree damage and associated power outages for multiple days. Major blizzards have dropped several feet of snow on the Town knocking out power and isolating residents living beyond blocked sections of roads. The magnitude and intensity of these events and others across Connecticut have increased awareness of natural hazards and climate change, while motivating communities such as Colebrook to proactively improve their resilience.

This recent series of extreme weather events highlights that the impacts from hazards are diverse. In Colebrook this included riverine flooding of critical infrastructure, roads, and low-lying areas; localized flooding from stormwater runoff during intense storms and heavy precipitation events; and property damage, basement flooding, and utility outages (lasting several days or more) from wind, snow, and ice. Longer periods of elevated heat, particularly in July and August, have raised concerns about vulnerable segments of the population, including elderly and/or disabled community members, particularly in older homes without air conditioning. The combination of these issues presents a challenge to preparedness and mitigation priorities and requires comprehensive, yet locally specific actions for the Town.

The workshop participants were generally in agreement that Colebrook is experiencing more intense and frequent storm events and heat waves. Additionally, there was a general concern about the increasing challenges of being prepared for the worst-case scenarios (e.g., major thunderstorms and hurricanes (Cat-3 or above)) particularly in the late summer and in the fall/winter months when more intense storms coincide with colder weather (i.e., snow/ice storms, Nor'easters, blizzards).

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges

As in any community, Colebrook is not uniformly vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change. Certain locations, assets, and populations have been and will be affected to a greater degree than others. Workshop participants identified the following items as their community's key areas of concern and challenges across several broad categories. Vulnerabilities and associated mitigation actions identified in the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Colebrook Annex (2022) are provided in Appendix A for cross reference.

Municipal Functions, Operations, & Growth:

- Colebrook's annual budget is almost exclusively derived from residential property taxes ("one-dimensional tax base").
- Challenges between balancing the cost of running the municipality and the amount of tax revenue generated due to the fact there is very little commercial property in Colebrook aside from a small corridor designated for business enterprises such as the Norbrook Brewery.
- Colebrook is highly dependent on volunteers for functions, resources, and services which can present a challenge if the volunteer pool shrinks due to the shifting interest amongst the younger generations.
- Declining number of students at Colebrook Consolidated School is a growing concern as it becomes more expensive per student with lower enrollment due to fixed costs such as maintaining the facilities and payroll for teachers and staff ("need more young families with school-aged children"). School infrastructure is aging and in need of upgrades and maintenance.
- Limited number of affordable residential properties for sale at any given time results in an impediment to attracting younger families with children looking for their first homes in a safe and supportive community such as Colebrook.
- Lack of senior housing in Colebrook, which would help elderly residents transition to more affordable and manageable living arrangements and at the same time increase the availability of homes for sale.
- Limited number of local, full-time jobs in Colebrook aside from those available through the school system and at businesses such as Norbrook Brewery. A few part-time and full-time positions are available within the Town (i.e., Town Hall, Public Works Department) and places like Camp Jewell.
- Limited cell and radio service across Colebrook with no cell service in the center of Town.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- No local law enforcement with reliance on state police located thirty minutes away in Canaan (Troop B).
- Concerns that alcohol-impaired drivers utilize more rural roadways through Colebrook to avoid major roads, which may result in a greater possibility of accidents.
- Limited amount of power generated locally through renewables, currently.
- Cold winters with extended periods of extremely low temperatures place some families and individuals at risk due to their inability to afford enough heating fuel.
- Concerns that some residents will not speak up for themselves if they are in need help.

Emergency Management & Preparedness:

- Concerns about the impact of heat waves on elderly and those in housing that do not have air conditioning systems.
- Limited to non-existent cell phone coverage across large portions of Colebrook. This presents a challenge when trying to report individual power outages to Eversource with the solution being to drive to adjoining municipalities to find adequate coverage to place a report (“communication doesn’t work if you don’t have coverage”).
- Non-active Citizen Emergency Response Team may reduce the Town’s ability to proactively improve emergency preparedness and management.
- Declining number of volunteers for the Fire Department.
- Increasing concerns amongst fire fighters and private property owners of the increased possibility of wildfires during more intense and longer duration droughts over the last decade. Extreme dry conditions and increased amounts of leaf litter coupled with windstorms caused a small brush fire on old North Road recently that could have escalated quickly without a quick response from local, multi-town (i.e., Colebrook, Norfolk, Winsted) and state fire fighters.
- Growing concerns related to risk of forest fires and limited access points for Fire Department and Emergency Services to effectively suppress fires in more remote areas of Colebrook.
- Ongoing issues with sump pumps failing due to over-use, age, or power outages resulting in residential basement flooding. Many homes in Colebrook do not have back-up power generators for critical equipment such as basement sump pumps.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Major weather events can close most, if not all, major roadways in and out of Colebrook simultaneously due to flooding and downed trees that block roads. This can increase the degree of isolation amongst residents, which is of particular concern amongst elderly residents living alone.
- Influx of children attending Camp Jewell during the summer months temporarily increases the presence of a vulnerable group in Colebrook if a crisis was to occur (i.e., extreme heat wave). Camp Jewell also has limited access and egress points.
- Most neighboring towns are also rural with limited additional capacity and resources, which can create challenges when asked to respond to issues outside of Colebrook per mutual aid agreements.
- In the event of a hazardous material release (e.g., tractor trailer crash on Route 8 with chemical spill), the closest state Hazmat Team to respond is located forty-five minutes away in Waterbury.
- Cases where residents during cold snaps have installed illegal heating appliances such as wood stoves and kerosene heaters that have not been inspected resulting in safety concerns from the Fire Department.

Roads, Bridges, Road Networks, & Dams:

- Increasing concerns that motorists are traveling at unsafe speeds on roads where people walk their dogs as well as through the center of town where reports of people not slowing down are common.
- High flood risk along Smith Hill Road (near the sheep farm/swamp) was raised as a particular concern for the Public Works Department.
- Dead end roads with homes are difficult for Eversource to restore power service when downed trees have both blocked the road and brought down powerlines.
- Flooding along Colebrook River Road (Route 8) during periods of extreme precipitation.

Stormwater, Septic, & Drinking Water Systems:

- Drinking water pumps for private wells are compromised during power outages unless hooked up to a back-up power generator.
- Recent reports of a municipal drinking water wells becoming contaminated by road salt accumulated during snow removal operations.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

Watersheds, Wetlands, Rivers, Open Space, Forests, Agricultural Lands, & Trees:

- Dead and dying trees located along transportation corridors that present potential challenges to public safety, road access, and power outages.
- Concerns about the impacts of more intense and extended droughts on forest species diversity and distribution over time in the forested landscapes of Colebrook and the northwest corner of Connecticut.
- Tick population continues to expand and is becoming a major public health problem with more complicated tick-borne illnesses beyond just Lyme Disease.
- Open space and undeveloped areas in Town continuously vulnerable to establishment of invasive species that can compromise native flora and fauna and the integrity of natural ecosystems.
- Roadsides and construction sites are also vulnerable to the establishment and spread of invasive plant species due to equipment use and the deposit of top soil/fill materials that are contaminated with seeds of invasive species.



Credit: Historic District Commission



Credit: Town of Colebrook



Credit: Town of Colebrook

Current Strengths and Assets

Just as certain locations, facilities, and populations in Colebrook stand out as particularly vulnerable to the effects of hazards and climate change, other features are notable assets for Colebrook's resilience building. Workshop participants identified the following items as their community's key strengths and expressed interest in centering them as the core of future resilience building actions.

- Clearly, the responsive and committed engagement exhibited by leadership, staff, and residents is a very appreciated strength within and across Colebrook. Ongoing collaboration between municipal staff, committee/commission/board volunteers, business community, faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, adjoining municipalities, Northwest Hills Council of Government, and various state-wide organizations (i.e., Sustainable CT, The Nature Conservancy), among others, on priorities identified herein will help advance comprehensive, cost-effective, community resilience building actions.
- Colebrook is viewed as a very proactive community in the northwest corner of Connecticut with a perennial focus on the future and acting accordingly to realize enhancements for the whole community ("lead from the front").
- Responsive municipal leadership and staff that maintains good communication and coordination with state agencies regarding issues such as the recent need to repair a washout area in a municipal road after a storm.
- During major emergencies, the First Selectman activates shelters and relays the announcement via municipal channels as well as through locally known social media outlets.
- Colebrook is an active member and participant in the Northwest Hills Council of Governments and is currently working with the Council of Governments to secure a part-time zoning enforcement officer to assist with zoning inspection needs in Colebrook.
- Individuals in the community look to help one another in times of need. Stories shared of residents helping on farms when owners impacted by health issues and people picking fruit and returning homemade jam to landowners because they care for each other ("strong and connected community").

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- High degree of knowledge, experience, and wisdom within the community of what it is like and takes to live in Town across many multi-generational families that call Colebrook home. This deep level of understanding also includes a keen sense of what the vulnerabilities of the community are given different hazard scenarios and challenges.
- Overall, the community is deeply passionate about the abundance and quality of the natural resources in Colebrook as well as in the large ecological significance of the northwest corner of Connecticut.
- Network of well-loved hiking trails, which are highly valued by residents because they help to improve the quality of life in Colebrook.
- Colebrook is substantially undeveloped with a great deal of protected open space and forested woodlands and intact wetland systems.
- Strong community desire to preserve and maintain the rural character of Colebrook through open space protection and working agricultural landscapes.
- Conscientious residents strive to ensure roadside litter is minimized.
- Crime in Colebrook is almost non-existent with only minor incidents being occasionally reported.
- Opportunities are made available to residents by elected officials and municipal staff to gain an understanding of the innerworkings of town government (“transparency is important”).
- Colebrook has a strong and committed culture of volunteerism where is common for individuals to serve in multi-capacities at the same time (“volunteers are the backbone of our Town; people are very generous with their time”).
- Large number of local groups and organizations thrive because of committed volunteerism amongst residents. Key organizations include the Historical Society, Colebrook Associates, Camp Jewell, Colebrook Land Conservancy, Colebrook Lions Club, and the Colebrook Congregational Church, among others (“tight-knit community”). These entities provide financial, emotional, and spiritual safety nets for residents that require assistance from time to time.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Colebrook Associates maintains a food pantry for those in the community that are experiencing food insecurity. Stations are set up for residents to donate food.
- Camp Jewell offers critical outdoor recreation and community-based opportunities for children and adults from across Connecticut within an idyllic, rural woodland and pond setting. Camp Jewell was utilized as a severe weather shelter in 2020.
- Large and engaged volunteer base within the Colebrook Land Conservancy, which has a long and productive history of land conservation and stewardship across Colebrook.
- Town center is a natural hub for the community given the clustering of the Community and Senior Center, Town Hall, and Post Office, among other buildings of importance.
- Community and Senior Center helps to create a network of engaged community members, which is at the core of Colebrook's ability to maintain and build community resilience.
- Two part-time directors in the Community and Senior Center are supported by a strong team of volunteers.
- Community and Senior Center has serviced the most vulnerable groups in Colebrook (i.e., senior citizens) amongst many other residents, with programming, support, and meals for over twenty-five years. Offerings include group breakfasts and nutritious lunches for residents. The Center also provides a place for nature programs, weddings, memorials, and children's programming opportunities.
- Van shuttle service via the Community and Senior Center is a critical asset for residents that are unable to or not willing to drive themselves to appointments and programming.
- Colebrook's school system was ranked 20th out of 900 schools across the state of Connecticut, recently.
- Regular communication between the Colebrook School Board to the community helps ensure residents are aware of activities and events at the school.
- Routine communication between the teachers and administrators with parents of students at the Colebrook Consolidated School is very much appreciated.
- Heating and cooling upgrades to the Colebrook Consolidated School are underway and will likely be completed December 2025.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Municipal staff are willing to go above and beyond to ensure that projects and initiatives that benefit Colebrook are completed (“focused on doing what is right for the Town”).
- Capable and committed Public Works Department that will work through the night during storms to plow snow and ensure drivability and safe roadways for residents. Department of Public Works has close and trusted connections with many residents in Colebrook.
- Portable generators are provided by the Public Works Department to residents who may need power to maintain medical oxygen supply.
- Maintenance by Public Works Department is conducted routinely at the five cemeteries in Town to honor past generations and ensure optimal access for visitors paying their respects. Public Works Department also handles burials at these cemeteries.
- Concerted focus on road infrastructure improvements over the last decade (via state of Connecticut Small Town Economic Assistance (STEAP) grants) have resulted in a municipal roadway network that is in solid condition and is largely able to effectively manage stormwater runoff during major precipitation events.
- State-maintained highways (i.e., Route 8) intersect Colebrook, which allows greater availability of support and resources during times of crisis.
- Fire Department is recognized as having swift and effective response times to issues in the community with many beneficial mutual aid agreements in place with neighboring fire departments in towns such as Norfolk, New Hartford, Barkhamsted, and Winsted, among others.
- Fire Stations have a history of opening during extended power outages to ensure residents in need can shower, charge their electronic devices, and gather important and timely information.
- Volunteer firefighters and emergency management services personnel are spread out across Colebrook which can help improve response times in the event of fire or health related calls including a recent incident involving a missing hiker.
- Two Fire Stations and the Community and Senior Center in Colebrook are equipped to serve as emergency shelters for residents, including the ability to prepare food and provide hot showers.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- A Citizens Emergency Response Team currently exists within Colebrook to help support emergency response activities, but it is not considered active, currently.
- Colebrook is mostly forested (approximately 50%) and is situated at a higher elevation than most of the state of Connecticut, which results in a generally cooler climate on average in the summer (“10 degrees cooler; no heat island effect”).
- The Metropolitan District (MDC) (Connecticut water utility services) owns between 5,000 – 6,000 acres of forested watershed along the eastern edge of Colebrook.
- The Sandy Brook Conservation Corridor is the focus of a Regional Conservation Partnership that advocates for the ecologically sound land management and the preservation across the 25,000 acres of the Sandy Brook watershed. The Corridor’s spatial footprint crosses two states and seven towns including the Colebrook with the underlining goal of linking the protection of ecological significance, cultural history, and outdoor recreation.
- Recent partnership initiative alongside four additional municipalities is meeting monthly to map the extent of invasive species and to discuss strategies and approaches to reducing the spread of species such as Japanese Knotweed, among many other plants and insect pests. Group is looking to reach out to private property owners with information and assistance to help curtail the spread of invasive species.
- Colebrook River Dam and Reservoir is maintained by an onsite team of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff for flood control purposes.
- Colebrook River Lake and Hydroelectric Station receive attention from the state and federal agencies during emergencies, which increases local opportunity for support and resources in Colebrook.
- Boat launch and recreational access facilities on the Colebrook River Lake Reservoir receive a great deal of use during the summer season.
- All of Colebrook’s homes are on private drinking water wells that provide high quality water for residents.
- Larger homes in Colebrook, that are typically second homes for wealthy part-time residents, provide a relatively higher proportion of the overall property taxes collected by the municipality.

Recommendations to Improve Resilience

A common theme among workshop participants was the need to continue community-based planning efforts focused on developing adaptive measures to reinforce Colebrook's strengths and reduce vulnerability to extreme weather, climate change and other common concerns raised. To that end, the workshop participants helped to identify several priority topics requiring more immediate and/or ongoing attention including:

- **Long-term vision and growth** (i.e., sustainable growth, volunteerism, conservation & recreation, housing, education/enrollment, diversifying tax base, demographics);
- **Infrastructure improvements** (i.e., roads, bridges and road crossings, stormwater management (culverts, green stormwater infrastructure), renewables (solar));
- **Quality of life improvements** (i.e., open space & accessibility, sustainability, health care, economic prosperity, affordable housing, senior housing, regionalization);
- **Emergency management** (i.e., communications, outreach, education, continuation of services, business recovery, evacuation, vulnerable populations).

In direct response, the Community Resilience Building workshop participants developed the following actions and identified, but not ranked, them as priority or as additional actions. Mitigation actions from the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Colebrook Annex (2022) are provided in Appendix A for cross reference with actions presented herein. Maps to support this CRB process, gathered from the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and The Nature Conservancy are provided in Appendix B.

Priority Actions

- Host a collective roundtable of the Town's boards and committees and all the supportive organizations in Colebrook to openly discuss the current and projected volunteer shortfalls. Then work to create collaborative opportunities and approaches to attract new volunteers to participate in municipal activities and critical support functions. Ensure that outreach to attract new volunteers includes welcoming new residents and those in the community that are of younger generations.

Priority Actions (cont'd)

- Conduct a “Community Volunteer Fair” for all residents to share available opportunities for volunteerism. This would let those that are considering volunteering know that their help would be most welcome and ultimately fulfilling, personally.
- Develop welcoming packets for new residents that highlight ways to get involved with the community, including volunteer opportunities.
- Revisit and/or develop promotional materials about Colebrook to increase awareness and hopefully attract younger people that are looking for a safe and supportive place to live and raise a family. Identify creative ways to share the materials and messaging about benefits of living in Colebrook (i.e., social media, low-cost advertising, outdoor recreation and rural life publications, articles by journalists (“top small towns in New England/America to live”), etc.).
- Maintain open lines of communication and strengthen trust between the Town and supportive organizations with vulnerable members of the community so people in need are willing to ask others for help.
- Foster community support through outreach and coordination by the Fire Department to develop a network of residents with back-up power generators that are willing to share their homes with neighbors in need of charging stations and hot showers. This would help provide and distribute support services across Colebrook in the event of a large-scale emergency.
- Work to localize the emergency action plan so that specific areas or neighborhoods in Town are aware of evacuation routes and procedures, who to call and when to call, and how to connect with community resources (i.e., chainsaws, trucks, homes with back-up generators (charging, showers, hot food, etc.)) to address acute needs (“hyper-local information and resources”).
- Consider the possibility of gathering residents by neighborhood or sections of Colebrook to discuss preparedness by walking through an actual emergency scenario.

Priority Actions (cont'd)

- Develop and distribute a paper copy (or perhaps consider a fridge magnet) of helpful phone number and information that will help increase the safety and wellbeing of all residents during major storm events.
- Reactive the Colebrook Citizens Emergency Response Team to help support emergency preparedness and response as directed by the designated emergency management personnel in Colebrook.
- Continuously revisit, realign, and update Colebrook's Affordable Housing Plan in response to community needs. Focus of the plan should be placed on welcoming and supporting the establishment of younger families in Town coupled with ensuring seniors can downsize locally and therefore free up housing stock for new residents. Explore existing opportunities within the planning and zoning regulations to accommodate both goals simultaneously.
- Continue to investigate and innovate to increase funding for municipal needs beyond the current dependence on residential-property tax base. This should include the relentless pursuit of state/federal grants (i.e., STEAP grants), community foundations, and private donations from local and regional benefactors.
- Establish an economic development commission in Colebrook to help identify alternatives to diversify and increase the sources of tax revenue beyond the current dependence on residential property taxes.
- Work directly with the Northwest Hills Council of Government to identify and get support in writing successful grant proposals to help increase the resilience and sustainability of Colebrook's community.
- Continue to build on previous and current efforts to encourage compliance with speed limits and the maintenance of safe roadways.

Additional Actions

- Explore the needs for resources to sustainability support the growth of the municipality's population over the next few decades.
- Engage with neighboring municipalities regarding priority actions generated during Community Resilience Building workshops in hopes of fostering more regional approaches and projects over time.
- Periodically convene the community members that participated in Colebrook's Community Resilience Building workshop (October 2025) to discuss progress, keep in touch on community challenges and opportunities, and reassess existing or develop new actions with the goal of improving the Town's resilience and sustainability going forward.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the number of households in Colebrook that currently have back-up power generators in well maintained and running order. Then cross reference with the locations that receive high levels of requests for support (i.e., basement flooding due to compromised sump pumps during power outages).
- Increase stocked food and blanket provisions within designated shelters (Community and Senior Center, two Firehouses) and enhance awareness amongst residents of shelter location(s) well in advance of major storms resulting in residents being displaced.
- Gather group of community members as well as Northwest Hills Council of Governments staff in hopes of finding grant opportunities to fund critical projects and activities to help increase Colebrook's resilience in the absence of additional revenue from the current tax base. Consider reaching out to neighboring towns (Norfolk, New Hartford, Barkhamsted, etc.) in coordination with the COG, in hopes of collaborating on regional grant proposals.
- Examine the potential for installing solar panels on the Community and Senior Center and Town Hall as a strategy to reduce the annual budget for operating municipal facilities.

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Consider establishing a discretely sited solar array in Colebrook center to help defray operation costs of municipal facilities (i.e., Community and Senior Center, Town Hall, Colebrook Consolidated School, etc.) and to provide an alternate source of power during time of crisis if coupled to batteries.
- Conduct outreach and awareness through the Community and Senior Center, Congregational Church, Colebrook Associates, and other organizations, to identify vulnerable community members coupled with setting up a contact process/network (“old fashion phone tree”) to ensure all residents are looked in on before, during, and after severe storms and major disasters, particularly if the events involve extended power outages (“neighbor helping neighbor”).
- Continue to work with Eversource to manage hazardous dead standing and dying trees including the recent increase in distressed Northern Ash trees. Strive to share responsibility for removal of hazardous trees between the utility, town, and private property owners.
- Continue municipal staff’s rapid response to road closures from downed trees. In addition, identify ways to share information more quickly amongst residents of roads that are blocked by downed trees during and after storms. This will help limit the number of motorists going down roads awaiting tree removal by municipal staff.
- Replace and increase the size of the drainage pipes at the bottom of Eno Hill Road and Route 8 to alleviate localized flooding during extreme precipitation events and to help reduce dangerous conditions for motorists on a critical roadway through Colebrook.
- Seek out funding sources to upgrade cell coverage via the installation of infrastructure to help improve the ability to communicate by cell phone in Colebrook (“health and safety of residents issue”).
- Continue to support via the Selectman’s Office improvements to the Fire Department’s radio system by integrating with the Litchfield County Dispatch system.

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Continue to conduct outreach to the community through various public forums to increase the volunteer base for the Fire Department (i.e., booth at Colebrook Fair, flyers at store, sign-up sheet at Historical Society, add in Winsted Citizen, etc.).
- Encourage training for Public Works Department and partners (i.e., Stream Smart Training Program) related to ensuring road crossings and culvert repairs and upgrades are done in the most environmentally friendly manner using nature-based or green stormwater management approaches, where appropriate.
- Catalogue (with permission) the various skills and expertise of current and new volunteers in the community to identify which volunteer opportunities might be most suitable for a given volunteer (“match skill with volunteer needs”).
- Continue to engage and discuss opportunities to advance the “Resilient and Connected Lands Network” efforts in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, Northwest Hills Council of Governments, and private and public landowners (i.e., MDC, etc.) (see land use map in Appendix B (Page 40)).
- Look to the local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff to continue to provide public outreach to help build awareness amongst residents and visitors of dam and reservoir upgrades and improvements happening at the Colebrook Reservoir.
- Increase monitoring and public awareness about diseases related to changes in climate (i.e., ticks, mosquitoes, etc.).



Credit: Town of Colebrook

CRB Workshop Participants: Department/Organization

Town of Colebrook – Office of the First Selectman

Town of Colebrook – Department of Public Works

Town of Colebrook – Fire Department

Town of Colebrook – Conservation Commission

Town of Colebrook – Board of Education

Town of Colebrook – Capital Improvement Program Committee

Town of Colebrook – Composting Advisory Committee

Town of Colebrook – Community and Senior Center

Colebrook Congregational Church

Colebrook Land Conservancy

Camp Jewell

Colebrook Lions Club

Colebrook Associates

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Colebrook Core CRB Project Team

Brad Bremer – First Selectman – Town of Colebrook

Joyce Hemingson – Conservation Commission – Town of Colebrook

Barney Adams – Resident (Public-at-Large) – Town of Colebrook

Bill Jasmin – Department of Public Works – Town of Colebrook

Online CRB Workshop Facilitation Team

The Nature Conservancy – Adam Whelchel, Ph.D. (Lead Facilitator)

The Nature Conservancy – Drew Goldsman (Small Group Facilitator)

The Nature Conservancy – Angela Tuoni (Small Group Facilitator)

Sustainable CT – Torin Radicioni (Scribe)

The Nature Conservancy – Nora Clark (Scribe, IT Manager)

Sustainable CT – Summer Mitchell (Scribe)

Sustainable CT – Katie Meder (Scribe)

Recommended Citation

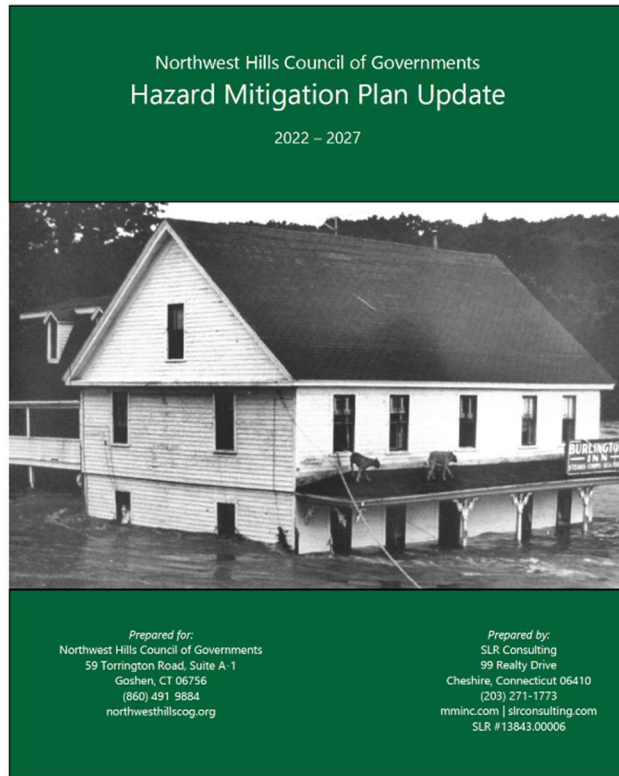
Town of Colebrook Online Community Resilience Building Workshop - Summary of Findings Report. (2025). Community Resilience Building Program. The Nature Conservancy and Sustainable CT. Colebrook, Connecticut.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A

Colebrook, Connecticut Mitigation Actions*



***Gathered from the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update -
Colebrook Annex (2022) .**

Action CBK-01	
Register as a Sustainable CT community and make progress with the hazard mitigation goals associated with registration.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$0 - \$25,000
Funding	OB, Sustainable CT
Timeframe	2022
Priority	High

Action CBK-02	
Remain engaged with FEMA and the State during the Farmington River Watershed flood map updates. Review draft maps and provide comments to FEMA.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$0 - \$25,000
Funding	OB
Timeframe	2022 – 2023
Priority	Low

Action CBK-03	
Refer to the Morris Low Impact Sustainable Development Design Manual, created to be a regional resource by the Northwest Conservation District and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments, to incorporate LID guidance and regulations into the local Zoning Regulations or Ordinances	
Lead	Planning, DPW, ConCom
Cost	\$0 - \$25,000
Funding	OB, NCD
Timeframe	2022 – 2023
Priority	Low

Action CBK-04	
Pursue regular natural hazard education in schools; work with the new school superintendent to coordinate this program.	
Lead	EMD; School
Cost	\$0 - \$25,000
Funding	OB, CT DEMHS
Timeframe	2022 – 2023
Priority	Low

Action CBK-05	
Fully incorporate the provisions of the DEEP model flood regulations into the local flood damage prevention regulations (or ordinance). Specifically, increase Substantial Damage and Substantial Improvement lookback periods to two or more years.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, FEMA Grant, CT DEEP
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	High

Action CBK-06	
Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct historic resource surveys, focusing on areas within natural hazard risk zones (flood zones, wildfire hazard zones, steep slopes) to support the preparation of resiliency plans across the state.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT SHPO
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Low

Action CBK-07	
Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct outreach to owners of historic properties to educate them on methods of retrofitting historic properties to be more hazard-resilient while maintaining historic character.	
Lead	Planning
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT SHPO
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Low

Action CBK-08	
Complete improvements to GIS capabilities and participate in regional efforts to improve GIS capacities.	
Lead	EMD; Fire; IT
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT DEMHS
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Low

Action CBK-09	
Make literature and information about natural hazards and preparedness available at Colebrook Town Hall and on the Colebrook Town website.	
Lead	EMD; First Selectman
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT DEMHS
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Low

Action CBK-10	
Use the CT Toxics Users and Climate Resilience Map to identify toxic users located in hazard zones within your community. Contact those users to inform them about the CT DEEP small business chemical management initiative.	
Lead	Planning; Chamber
Cost	\$25,000 - \$50,000
Funding	OB, CT DEEP
Timeframe	2022 – 2024
Priority	Low

Action CBK-11	
Take the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) Road-Stream Crossing Inventory analysis into consideration when upgrading and replacing infrastructure, including the restoration prioritization results.	
Lead	DPW
Cost	\$50,000 - \$100,000
Funding	OB, HVA
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Priority	High

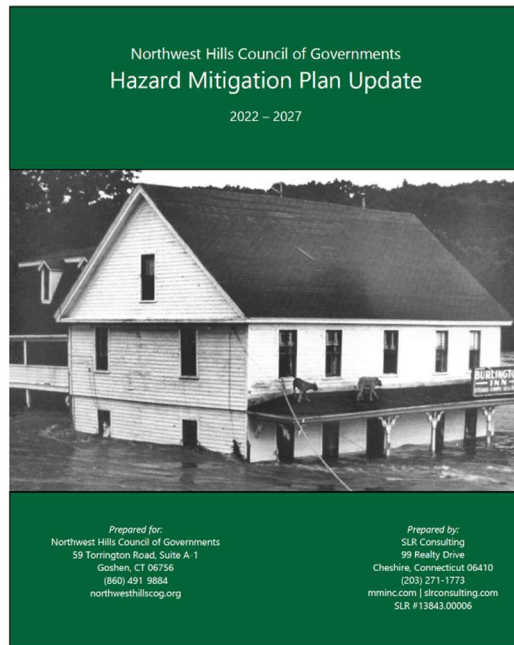
Action CBK-12	
Explore alternatives for improving radio signals in town.	
Lead	EMD
Cost	\$50,000 - \$100,000
Funding	OB, CIP, CT DEMHS
Timeframe	2024 – 2026
Priority	Low

MUNICIPAL ACITON STAPLEE TABLE

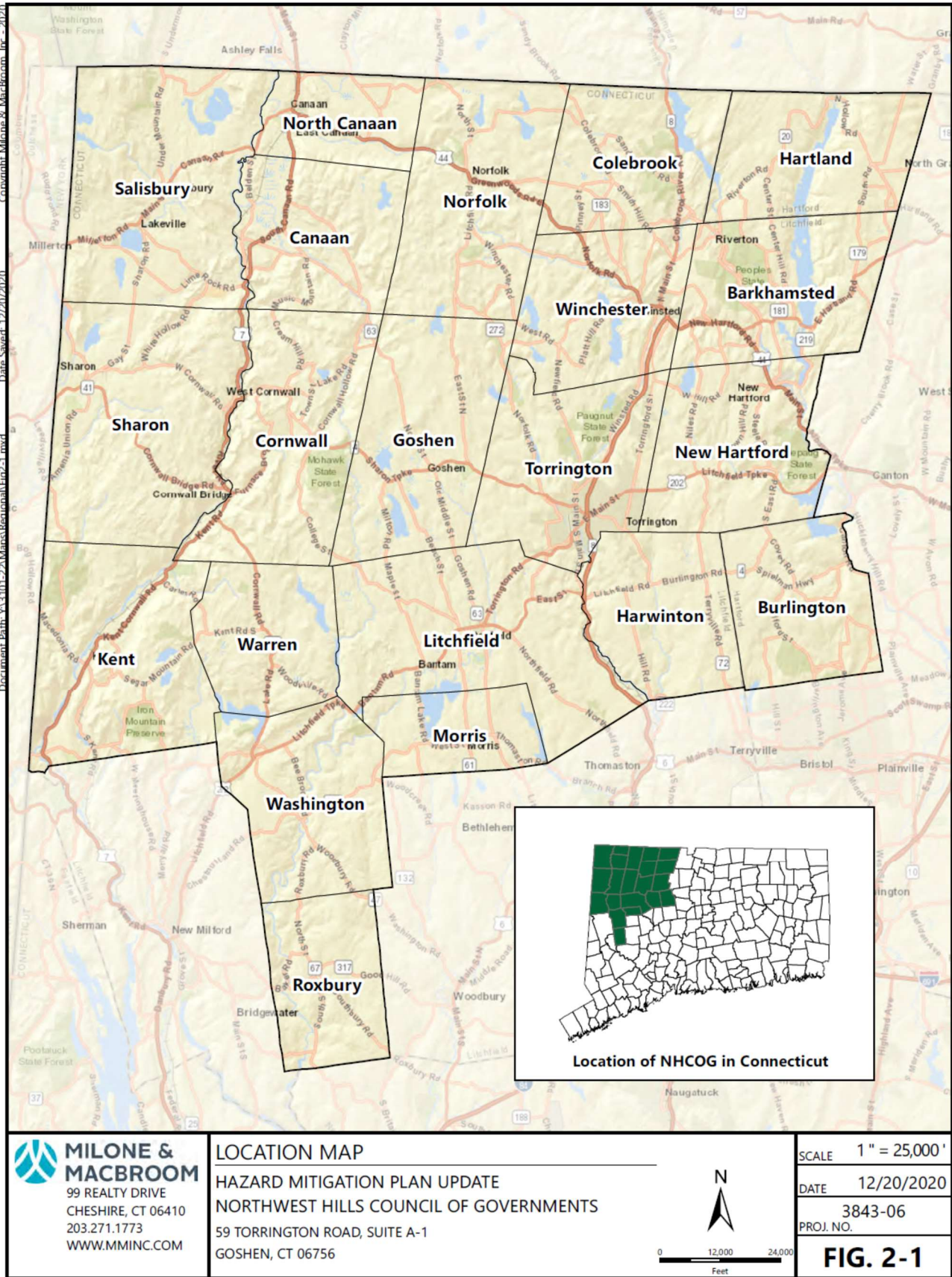
#	Action Description	Regional Theme	Lead Department	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe for Completion	Weighted STAPLEE Criteria														Total STAPLEE Score
							Benefits						Costs								
							Social	Technical (x2)	Administrative	Political	Legal	Economic (x2)	Environmental	Social	Technical (x2)	Administrative	Political	Legal	Economic (x2)	Environmental	
CBK-01	Register as a Sustainable CT community and make progress with the hazard mitigation goals associated with registration.	Sustainable CT	Planning	\$0 - \$25,000	OB, Sustainable CT	2022 - 2023	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
CBK-02	Remain engaged with FEMA and the State during the Farmington River Watershed flood map updates. Review draft maps and provide comments to FEMA.	Flood Map Updates	Planning	\$0 - \$25,000	OB	2022 - 2023	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	-1	-1	0	0	0	4
CBK-03	Refer to the Morris Low Impact Sustainable Development Design Manual, created to be a regional resource by the Northwest Conservation District and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments; to incorporate LID guidance and regulations into the local Zoning Regulations or Ordinances.	Low Impact Development	Planning, DPW, ConCom	\$0 - \$25,000	OB, NCD	2022 - 2023	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
CBK-04	Pursue regular natural hazard education in schools; work with the new school superintendent to coordinate this program.	School Education	EMD; School	\$0 - \$25,000	OB, CT DEMHS	2022 - 2023	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	4
CBK-05	Fully incorporate the provisions of the DEEP model flood regulations into the local flood damage prevention regulations (or ordinance). Specifically, increase Substantial Damage and Substantial Improvement lookback periods to two or more years.	Flood Regulations	Planning	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, FEMA Grant, CT DEEP	2022 - 2024	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	-1	-1	0	0	0	6
CBK-06	Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct historic resource surveys, focusing on areas within natural hazard risk zones (flood zones, wildfire hazard zones, steep slopes) to support the preparation of resiliency plans across the state.	Historic & Cultural Resources	Planning	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT SHPO	2022 - 2024	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	5
CBK-07	Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct outreach to owners of historic properties to educate them on methods of retrofitting historic properties to be more hazard-resilient while maintaining historic character.	Historic & Cultural Resources	Planning	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT SHPO	2022 - 2024	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	5
CBK-08	Complete improvements to GIS capabilities and participate in regional efforts to improve GIS capacities.	Other Emergency Response	EMD; Fire; IT	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT DEMHS	2022 - 2024	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
CBK-09	Make literature and information about natural hazards and preparedness available at Colebrook Town Hall and on the Colebrook Town website.	Public Education	EMD; First Selectman	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT DEMHS	2022 - 2024	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	4
CBK-10	Use the CT Toxics Users and Climate Resilience Map to identify toxic users located in hazard zones within your community. Contact those users to inform them about the CT DEEP small business chemical management initiative.	Small Business Chemicals	Planning; Chamber	\$25,000 - \$50,000	OB, CT DEEP	2022 - 2024	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	5
CBK-11	Take the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) Road-Stream Crossing Inventory analysis into consideration when upgrading and replacing infrastructure, including the restoration prioritization results.	HVA Road-Stream Crossing	DPW	\$50,000 - \$100,000	OB, HVA	2023 - 2025	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	5
CBK-12	Explore alternatives for improving radio signals in town.	Emergency Communication	EMD	\$50,000 - \$100,000	OB, CIP, CT DEMHS	2024 - 2026	0	0.5	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

Appendix B

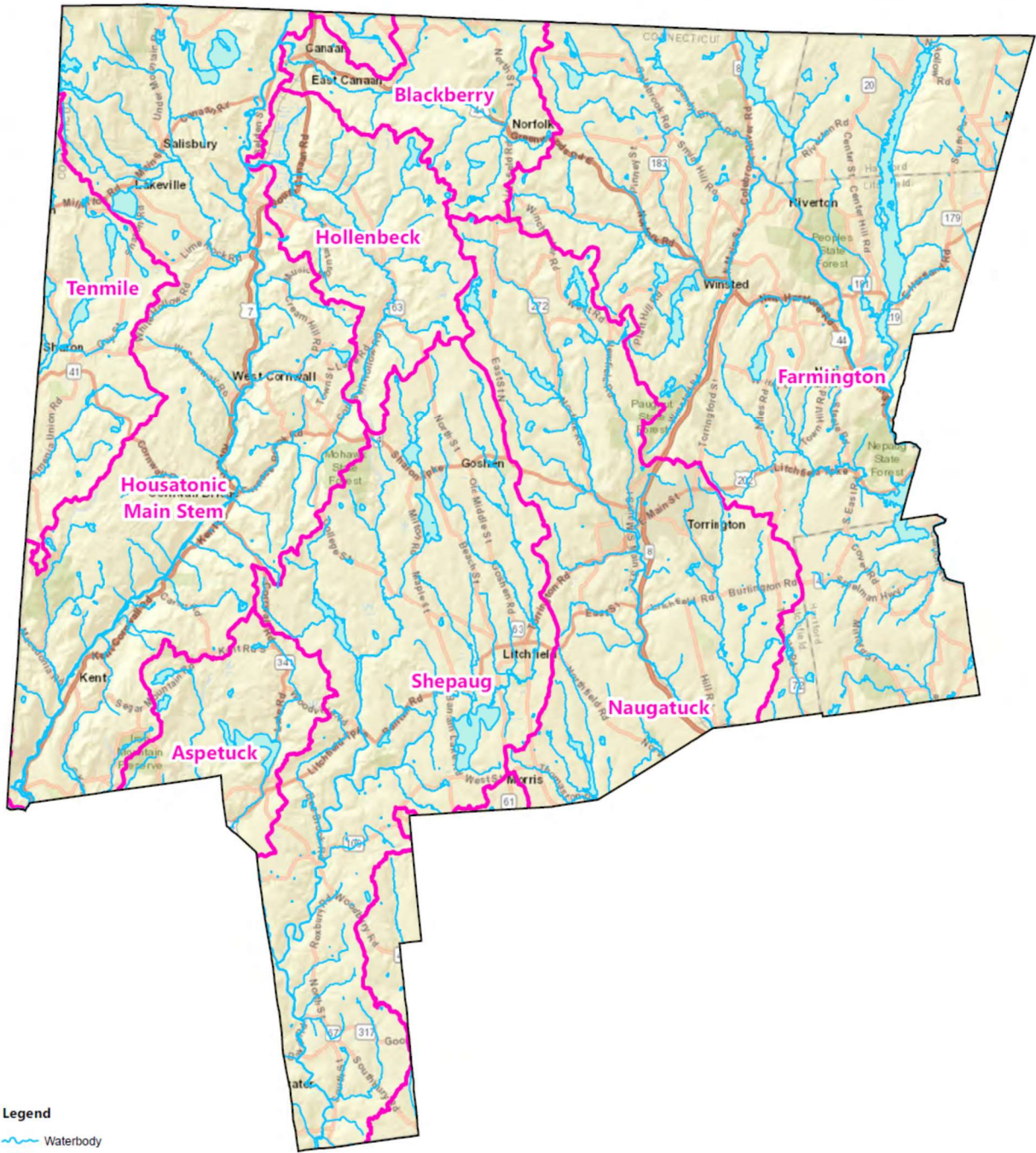
Colebrook, Connecticut Supportive Map Resources*



***Maps to support this CRB process, gathered from the Northwest Hills Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (2022) and The Nature Conservancy.**



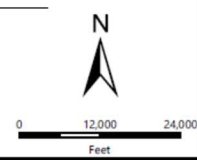
Document Path: \\A:\3843-06\Map\Regional\Fig2-4.mxd Date Saved: 12/20/2020 Copyright Milone & MacBroom, Inc. - 2020



- Legend**
- Waterbody
 - Regional Drainage Basins
 - Waterbody

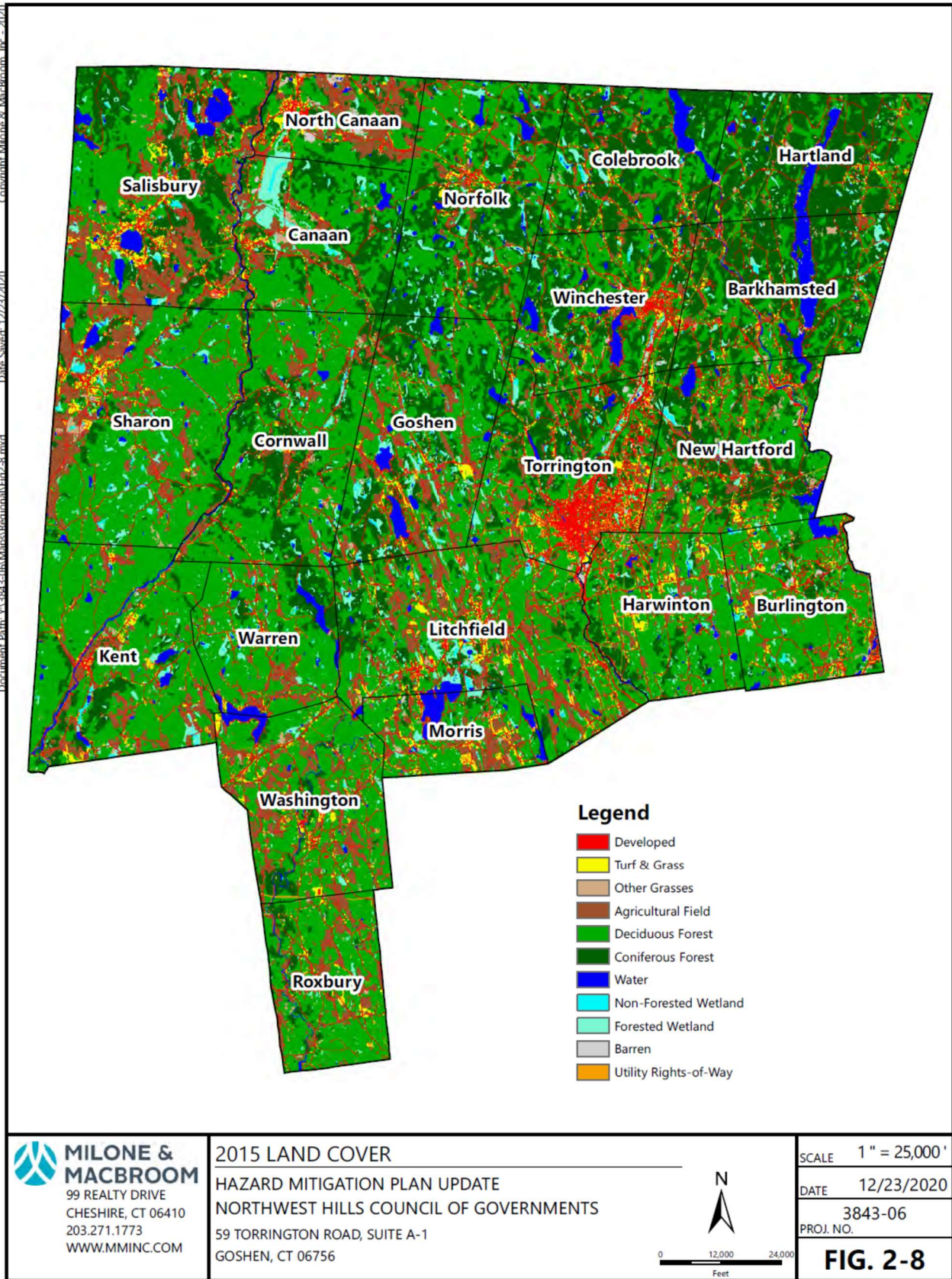
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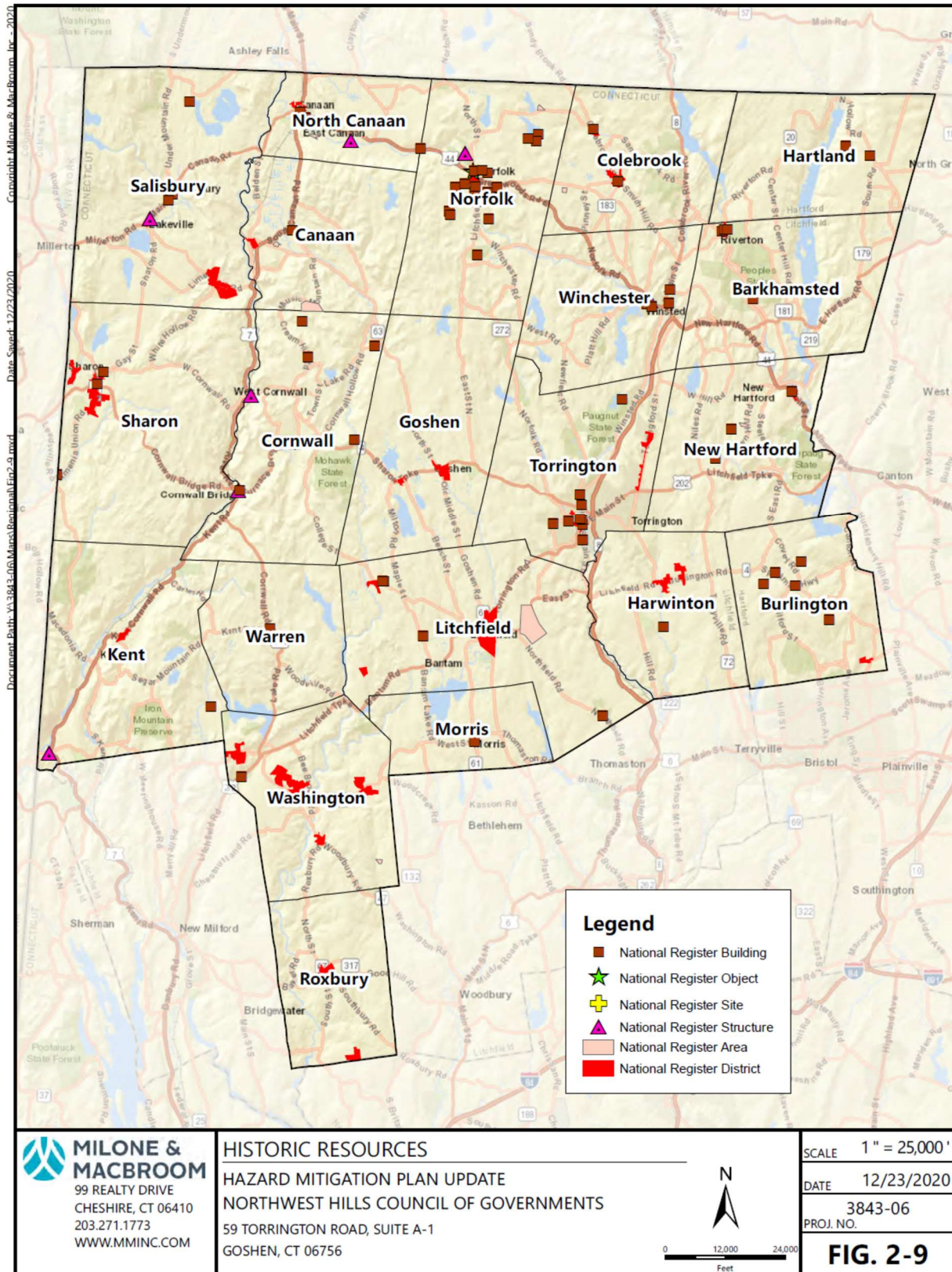
HYDROLOGY
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 NORTHWEST HILLS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
 59 TORRINGTON ROAD, SUITE A-1
 GOSHEN, CT 06756

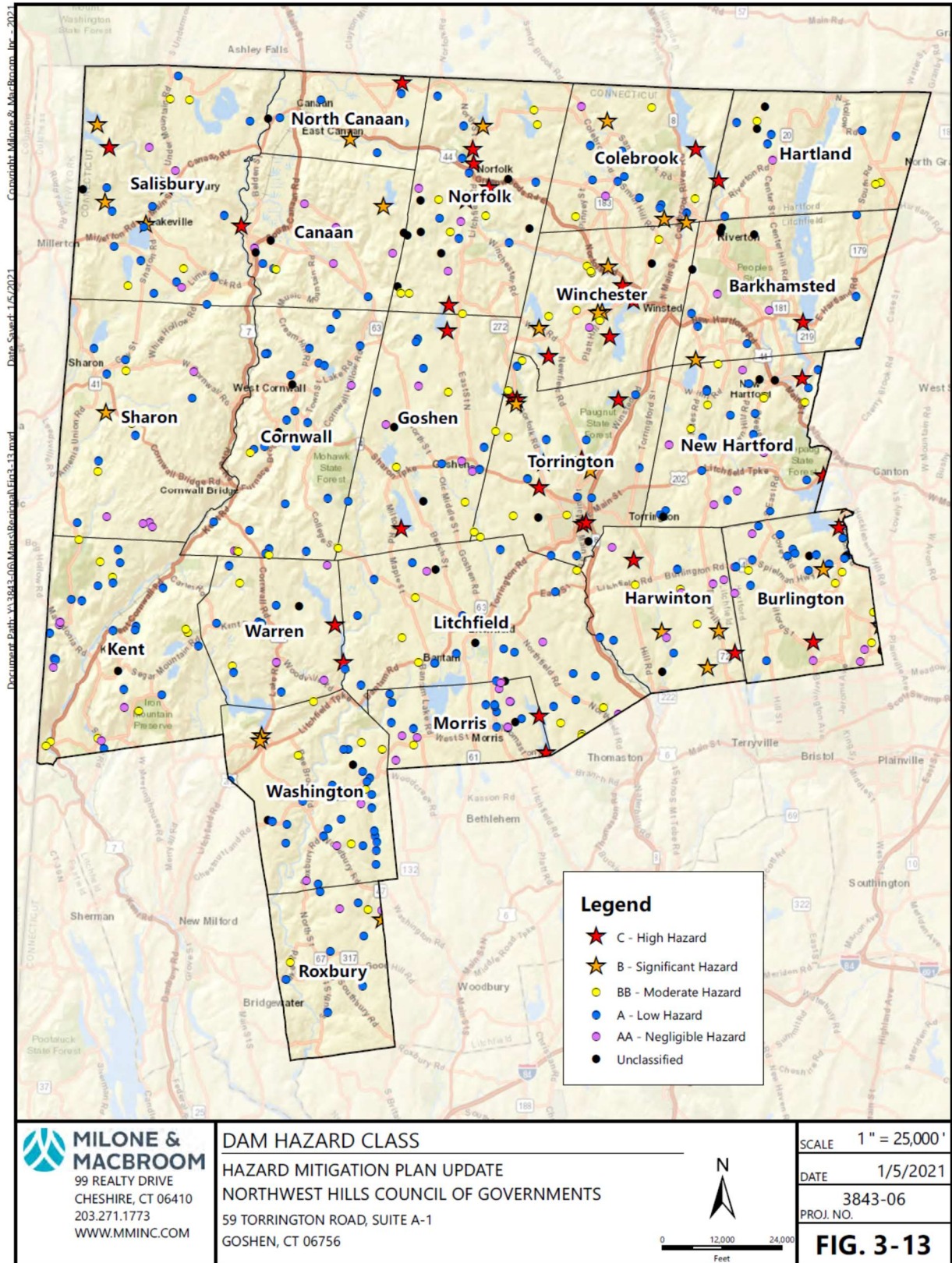


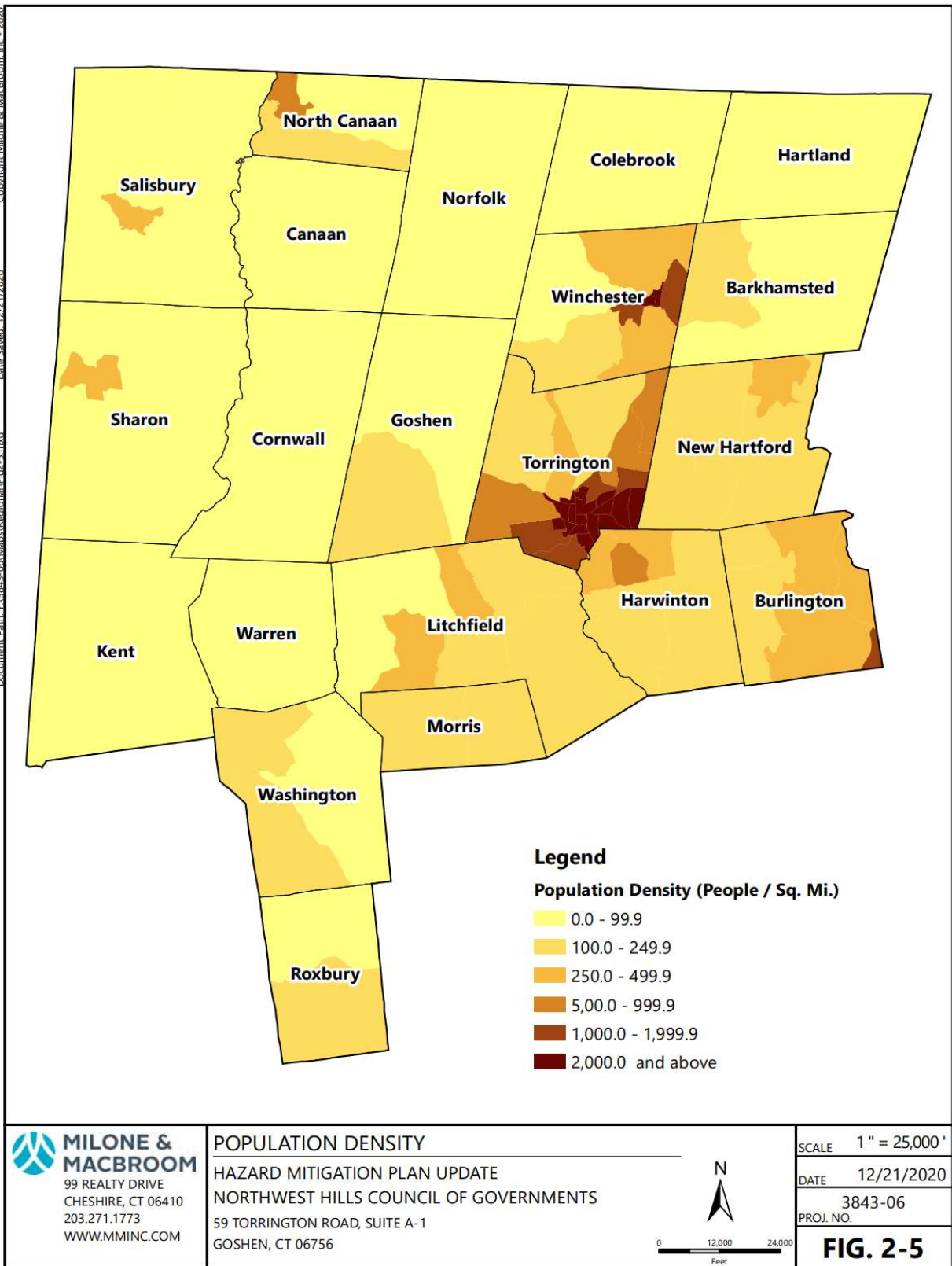
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PROJ. NO.	3843-06

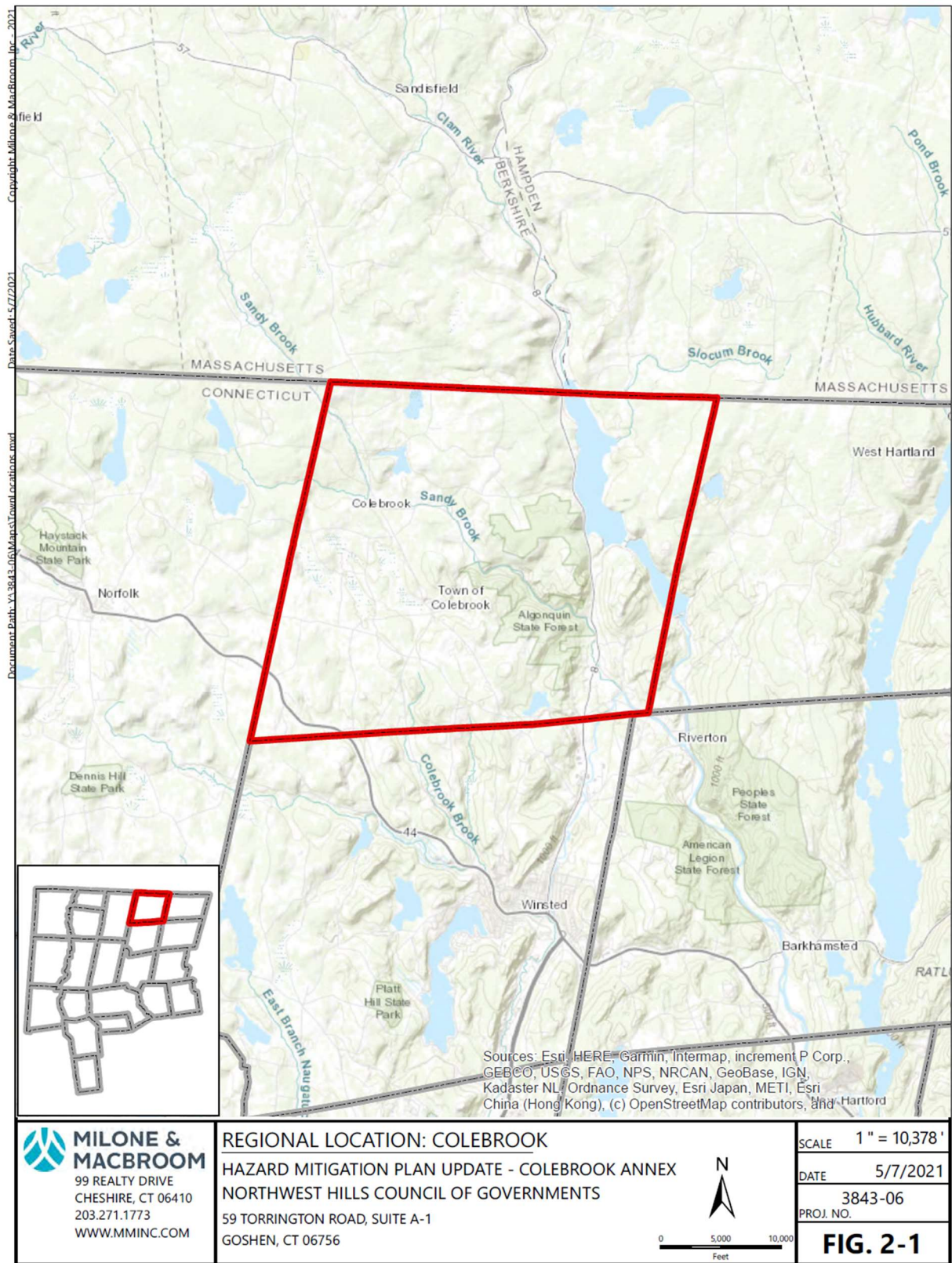
FIG. 2-4

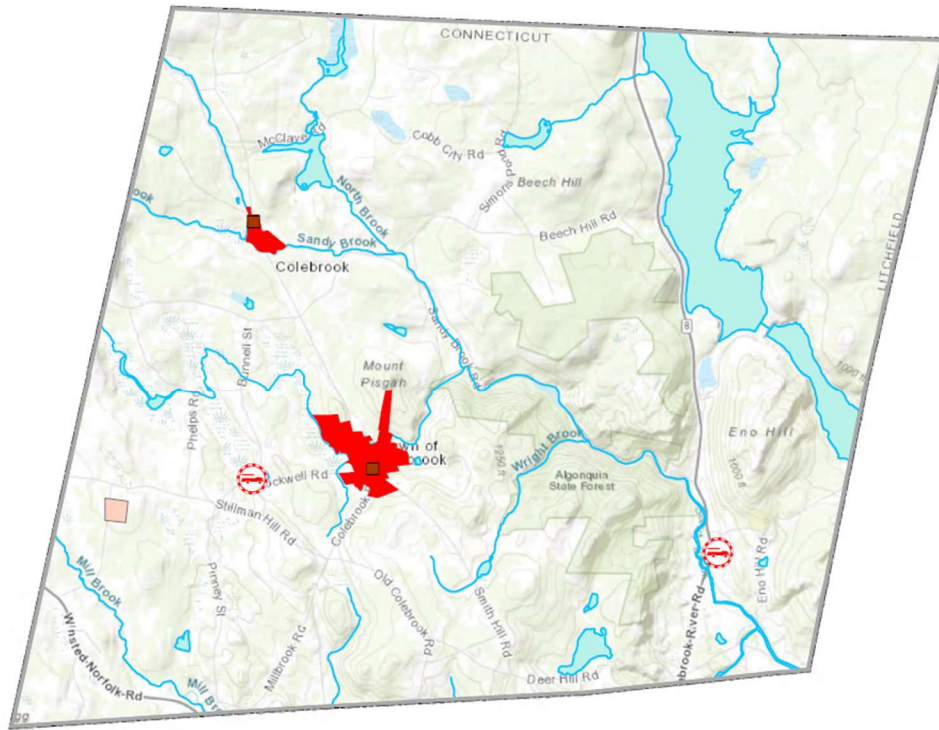










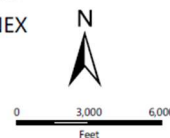


Critical Facilities & Cultural Resources

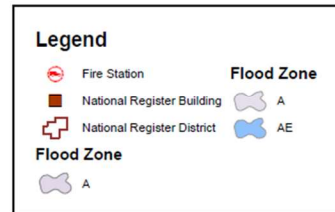
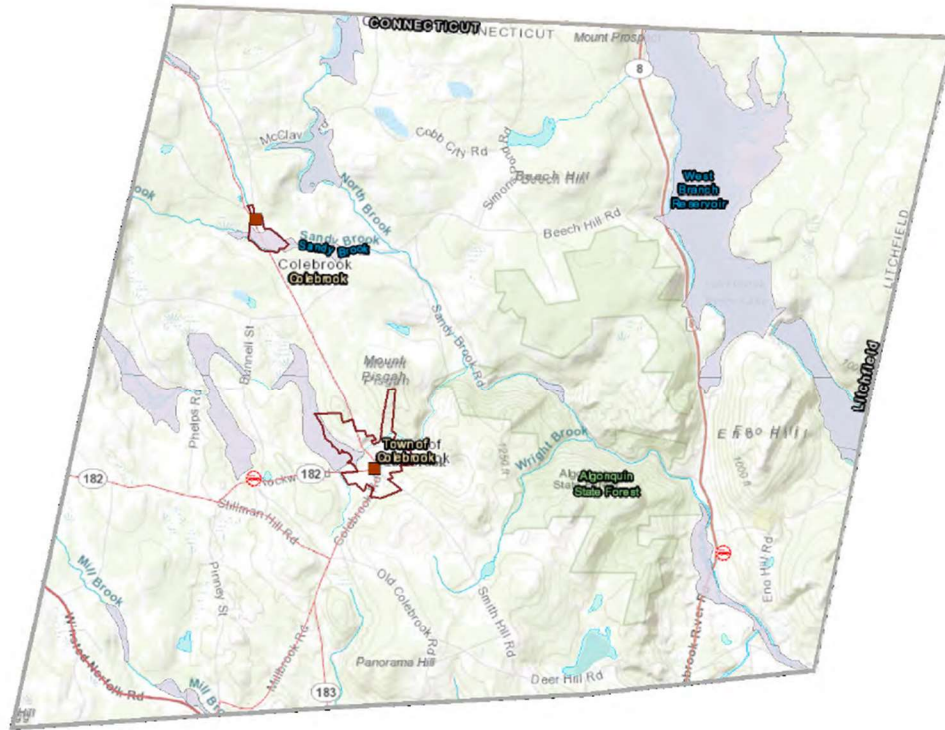
-  Fire Station
-  National Register Building
-  National Register
-  National Register District

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CRITICAL FACILITIES AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
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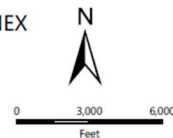


SCALE 1" = 6,487'
 DATE 5/7/2021
 PROJ. NO. 3843-06
FIG. 2-2



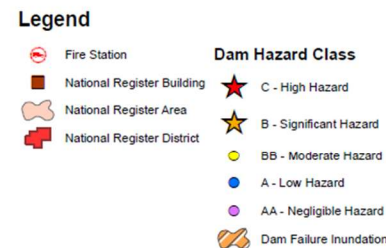
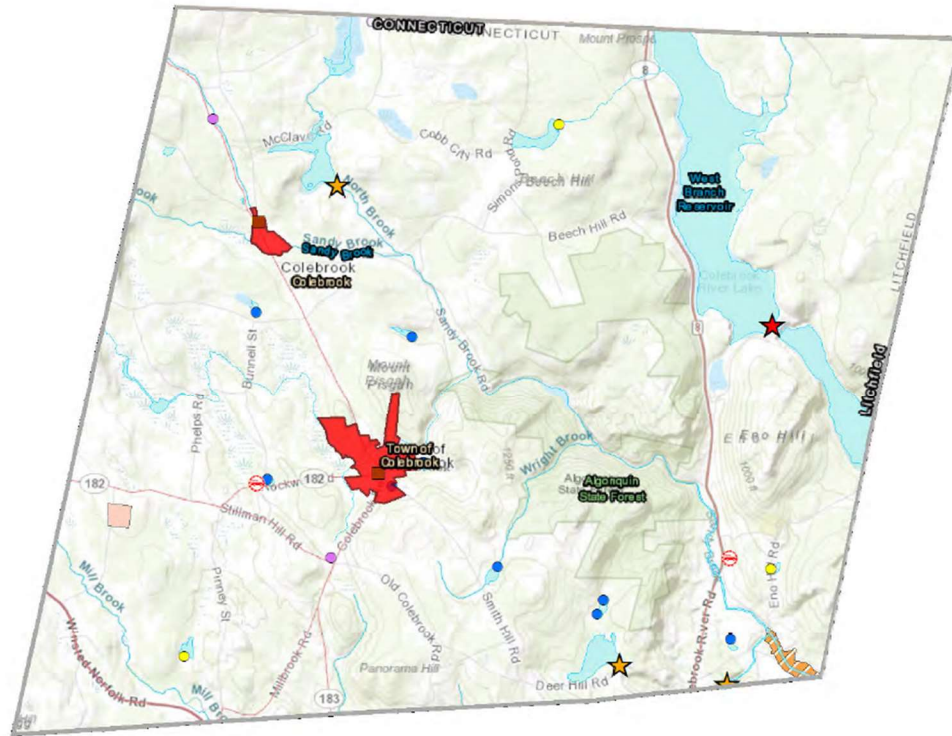
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FLOOD RISK AREAS
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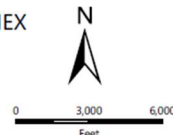
SCALE	1" = 6,487'
DATE	5/10/2021
PROJ. NO.	3843-06

FIG. 3-1

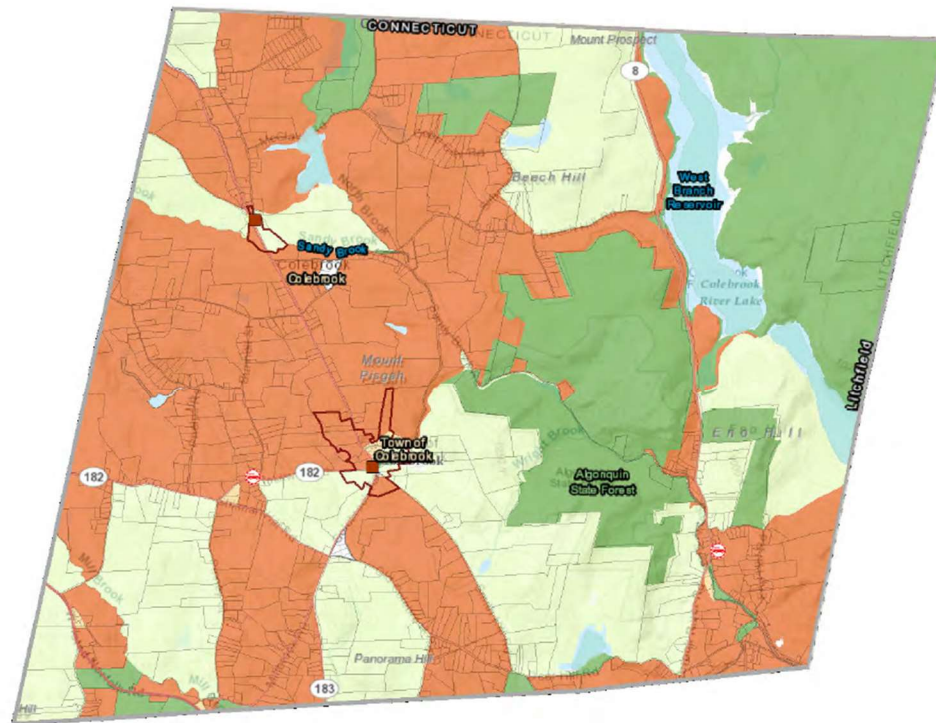


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SCALE 1" = 6,487'
 DATE 5/10/2021
 PROJ. NO. 3843-06
FIG. 8-1



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|  | Fire Station |  | No Vegetation |
|  | National Register Building |  | Interface |
|  | National Register District |  | Intermix |
| | |  | Low Density Development Vegetation |
| | |  | Uninhabited Vegetation |



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WILDFIRE RISK AREAS

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE - COLEBROOK ANNEX
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A horizontal scale bar with tick marks at 0, 3,000, and 6,000. The word "Feet" is centered below the bar.

SCALE 1" = 6,487'

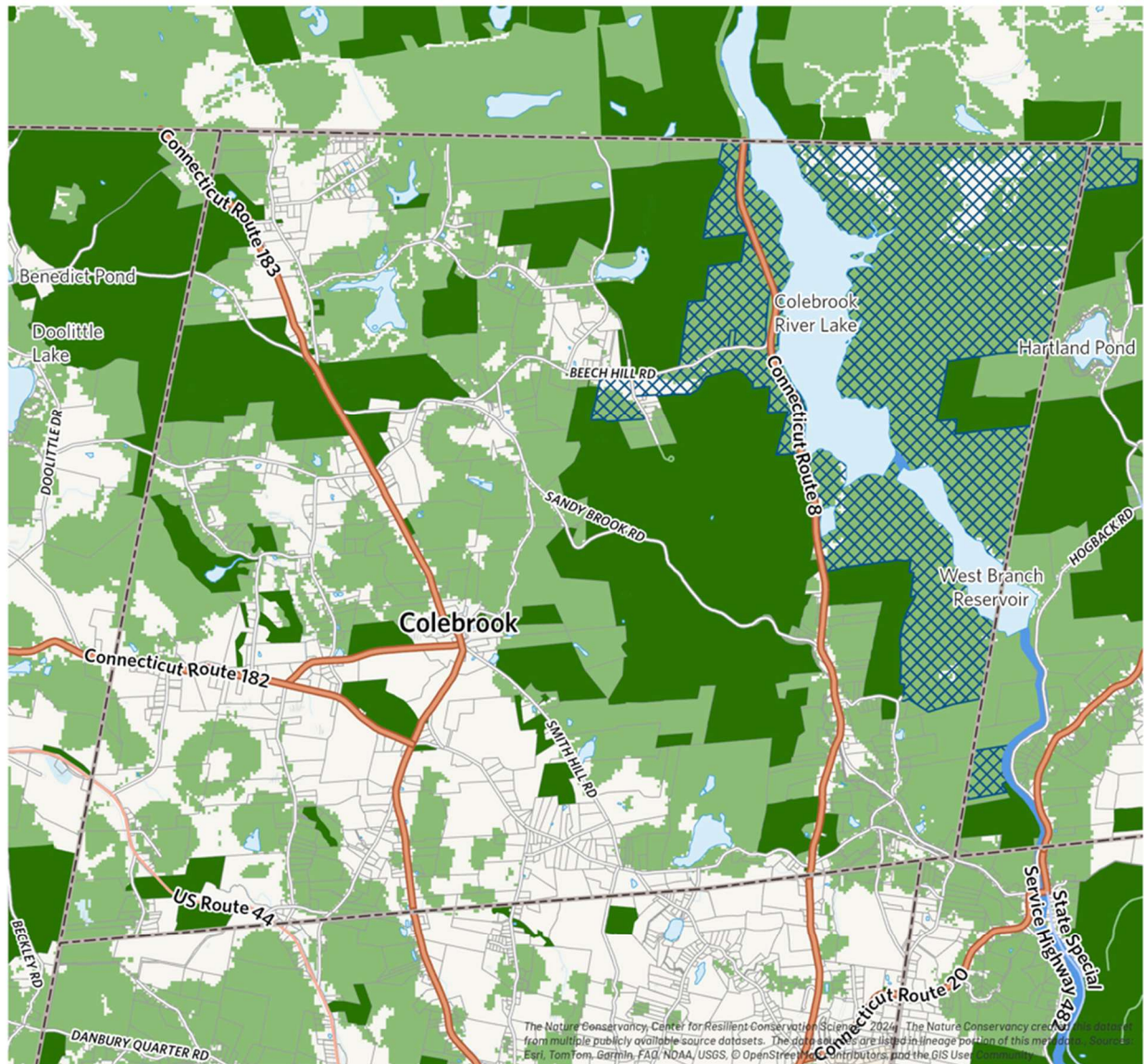
DATE 5/10/2021

3843-06

PROJ. NO.

FIG. 9-1

Resilient and Connected Lands in Colebrook, Connecticut

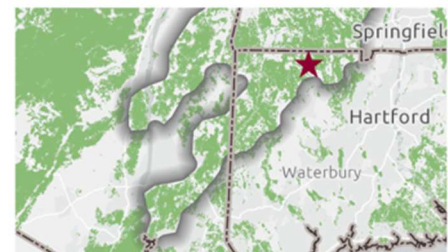


The Nature Conservancy, Center for Resilient Conservation Science, 2024. The Nature Conservancy created this map from multiple publicly available source datasets. The datasets are listed in the legend position of this map. Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAA, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community.



Legend

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Connecticut Route | Body of Water |
| Local Roads | Water Company Land |
| Parcel Boundaries | Secured Lands |
| Municipal Boundaries | Resilient and Connected Network |
| Farmington River | |
| Major Rivers | |



Date Exported: 10/14/2025 5:35 PM

Map by Christian Schluter | TNC's Connecticut Field Office

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