

In Pursuit of Six Lakes Park:

A Community's Fight for Environmental Justice in Hamden, Connecticut

A Report of the Six Lakes Park Coalition Steering Committee

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About the Six Lakes Park Coalition

The Six Lakes Park Coalition is a growing alliance of concerned neighbors and supporting organizations seeking to restore and conserve for public use the 102 acres of forest and wetlands in Southern Hamden commonly referred to as Olin Powder Farm and known to the community as Six Lakes. The Six Lakes Park Coalition seeks both to ensure thorough remediation of site contaminants and to align the property's eventual use with the needs and interests of the Newhall neighborhood and the wider Hamden community.

About the Environmental Justice Law and Advocacy Clinic

Students in the Environmental Justice Law and Advocacy Clinic represent community-based organizations, Tribal Nations, and nonprofit coalitions in their work to advance environmental justice and intersectional concerns such as Tribal sovereignty, environmental protection, public health, civil rights, and participatory environmental governance. Clinic projects involve a range of advocacy modalities and tools appropriate to the needs and objectives of the representation, including litigation, administrative advocacy and adjudication, legislation, policy development and reform, and media engagement. The clinic prioritizes legal services for under-resourced, overburdened, and historically marginalized communities, providing high quality legal services in close partnership with clients on important and neglected environmental concerns.

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Table of Acronyms

CAG	Community Advisory Group
CIP	Community Involvement Plan
CT DEP	Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (now DEEP)
CEEJAC	Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
DEEP	Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (referred to in documents as DEP or CT DEP prior to 2011)
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
HOLC	Home Owners' Loan Corporation
PCB	Polychlorinated Biphenyl

Executive Summary

Background

A 102.5-acre expanse of wetlands, forest, and glacial ponds sits at the southern edge of Hamden, Connecticut, fenced off from the public. For nearly a century, the Winchester Repeating Arms Company and the Olin Corporation used this property, known locally as Six Lakes, to test weapons and dump industrial waste. Today, toxic substances remain throughout the site, preventing safe public access and compromising the health and welfare of its neighbors.

In 1986, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (now the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, or DEEP) entered a legally binding agreement with Olin—a Consent Order—requiring Olin to investigate and clean up the contamination at Six Lakes. Forty years later, Olin has remediated only a small fraction of the site. The extent of the contamination and remediation needs remain unknown.

Hamden's Newhall neighborhood—a predominantly Black community built atop industrial fill next to the contaminated Six Lakes site—has borne outsized environmental burdens as a result of this contamination while being cut off from environmental benefits like safe outdoor greenspace.

Today, local leaders and residents are taking control of this story. Since 2020, the Six Lakes Park Coalition has partnered with the community to envision and realize a public-serving future for Six Lakes: a park that transforms a toxic legacy into a space for healing, beauty, community, and connection with nature for all who live near the property, as well as many who pass by each day on the adjacent Farmington Canal Heritage Trail.

Toward Community-Centered Cleanup

The Consent Order, last amended in 1987, requires that the Six Lakes site cleanup satisfy federal and state standards mandating timely and thorough investigation and community involvement.

The community holds a right to meaningful participation throughout the remediation process. This right extends beyond receiving notice and having an opportunity to comment at decision-making junctures. As the lead agency overseeing the remediation, DEEP is responsible for ensuring meaningful engagement of the interested public. It has a legal duty to:

- Conduct interviews with local officials, community residents, public interest groups, and other interested persons;
- Prepare and implement a formal Community Relations Plan, also known as a Community Involvement Plan, to ensure meaningful public involvement; and
- Provide at least one information repository near the site to keep the public up-to-date.

The Consent Order requires Olin to investigate and remediate the Six Lakes site following an established process.

- As of October 2025, Olin is in the middle of completing its duty to issue a Remedial Investigation Study in the Consent Order. This must be completed before DEEP and Olin begin negotiating how to plan and execute the Six Lakes remediation itself.
- Olin will then prepare a Remedial Action Plan.
- Connecticut's Remediation Standard Regulations require public notice and a minimum thirty-day comment period before any proposed Remedial Action Plan can proceed.
- At its discretion, DEEP may also hold one or more public meetings to present information, answer questions, and receive input if there is significant public interest—as there is in Six Lakes.
- Within 30 days of DEEP approval of the Remedial Action Plan, Olin and DEEP are to enter into negotiations for another consent order requiring Olin to implement the approved Remedial Action Plan.
- If more than three years lapse after the notice is published but before remediation substantially begins, or if substantial changes are made to the proposed approach, the regulations require reissuing of public notice and an additional comment period.

Federal and state requirements for public participation reflect a fundamental principle that communities affected by hazardous waste have a right to shape the response to environmental threats in their own backyards. Community-led remediation is not only a legal duty—it is a moral one. Today, Six Lakes is a monument to broken promises and environmental pollution. It must become a model of restorative justice and community-led repair. The time to reclaim Six Lakes for the Hamden community is now.

Introduction

At the southern edge of the Town of Hamden, Connecticut, “No Trespassing” signs warn residents away from an expanse of fenced-off wetlands, forest, and glacial ponds, known locally as Six Lakes. The site spans 102.5 acres, from the residential community of Newhall to the south, to the Lake Whitney drinking water reservoir and Hamden’s Whitneyville neighborhood to the north and east. For the better part of a century, Six Lakes was used by the Winchester Repeating Arms Company (“Winchester”), and later by Winchester’s successor, the Olin Corporation (“Olin”), as a munitions testing ground and a dumping site for hazardous industrial waste—including munitions waste, chemical solvents, batteries, and other debris.¹ The legacy of these activities persists in the soil and groundwater, where toxic substances such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), lead, and arsenic continue to pose risks to ecological and human health.²

Hamden residents and allied nonprofits have pressed for over a half century for Six Lakes to be converted into a park for public use. One of the last remaining undeveloped green spaces in urbanized Southern Hamden, Six Lakes is bordered by the Farmington Canal Trail and crisscrossed by existing pathways, making it an ideal space for public recreation. The conversion of Six Lakes into a public park would connect neighborhoods with each other and with the natural space in their own backyards, connect visitors with the site’s unique and diverse habitats, and connect communities as they come together in the restored park. None of this is possible, however, until a forty-year-old State Consent Order requiring site investigation and cleanup is fulfilled.

A Story of Environmental Injustice

The story of Six Lakes cannot be understood in isolation from the broader patterns of environmental racism that have shaped land use and environmental risk across the United States. Throughout the early and mid-twentieth century, Black families arrived in New Haven and Hamden during the Great Migration, drawn by the promise of employment at places like the Winchester Repeating Arms factory straddling New Haven’s Newhallville and Dixwell neighborhoods.³ Even as they built new lives and formed the economic backbone of communities, Black families faced segregation and other forms of discrimination in housing, lending, employment, and distribution of environmental burdens and benefits. One such instrument of State-sponsored segregation, redlining maps issued in the 1930s by the federally created Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), coded Newhall and Newhallville yellow for “Definitely Declining” and the Dixwell neighborhood red, denoting highest risk for lending because of the presence of Black residents and what HOLC described as “the appearance of a slum area.”⁴

Across the country, these and other instruments of residential segregation facilitated the concentration of heavy industry and highways in communities of color alongside the concentration of capital in whiter neighborhoods, which enjoyed cleaner air, safer housing, and more

abundant green spaces.⁵ Today, formerly redlined neighborhoods remain more exposed to pollution, extreme heat, and lack of green infrastructure than non-redlined areas.⁶

Six Lakes is a striking example of this broader injustice. Although it lies in an area of significant natural beauty and ecological value, its long history as a dumping ground reflects the targeting of Black and low-income communities for industrial byproducts. Even as federal and state laws have evolved to direct community participation in environmental cleanup, the people living closest to Six Lakes have been systematically excluded from decision-making about the fate of the land in their own backyards.

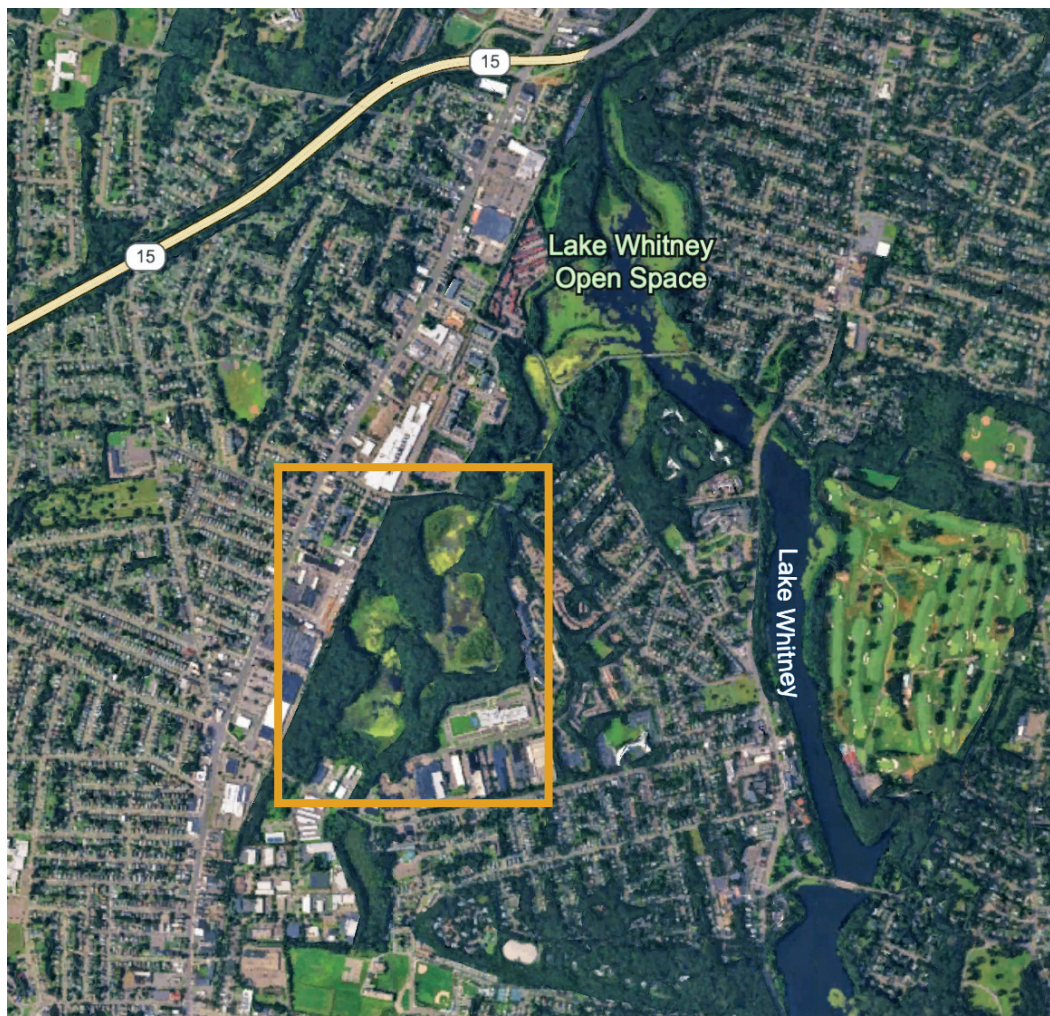


Figure 1: Google Earth view of Six Lakes showing green space and wetlands between Treadwell Street to the north and Putnam Avenue to the South.

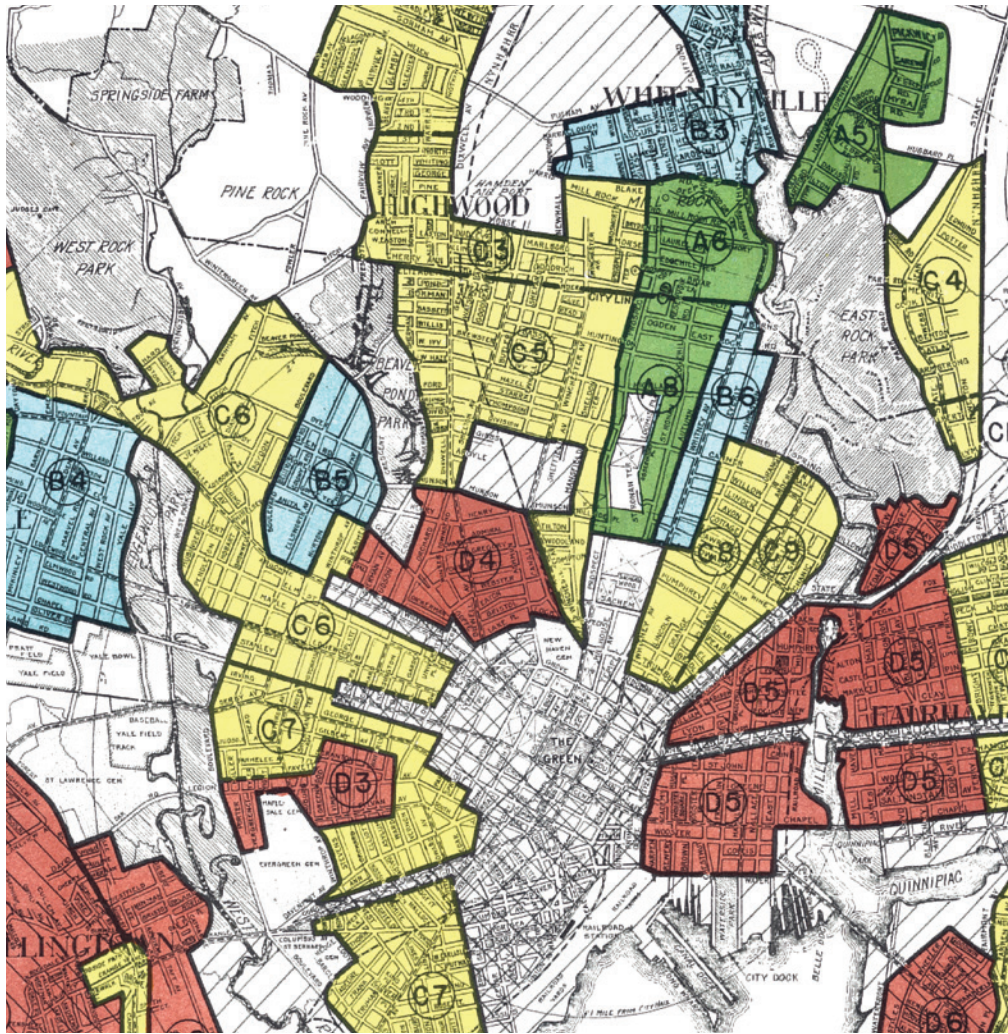


Figure 2: Portion of 1937 HOLC redlining map for New Haven demarcating Six Lakes as “Industrial space,” shading the Newhall and Newhallville neighborhoods yellow (Third Grade) to denote “Definitely Declining,” and shading in red (Fourth Grade) the Dixwell neighborhood south of the Winchester factory to denote “Hazardous.”

Unfulfilled Mandates Directing Six Lakes Cleanup and Community Engagement

For over half a century, residents and officials have fought to compel Olin to remediate Six Lakes so it could be repurposed into a public park. In 1986, Olin signed a Consent Order with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (now the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, or “DEEP”)⁷ compelling Olin to investigate the contamination at Six Lakes and comprehensively remediate the site.⁸ The Consent Order, which remains in effect, contemplated swift progress toward cleanup of Six Lakes, including implementation of a remedial investigation study 60 days after the Commissioner’s approval. Olin did complete a study in 1988⁹ and undertook interim remediation activities to remove surface debris and address soil contamination concentrated on a highly contaminated segment at the southern edge of the property.¹⁰ But DEEP never approved the remedial investigation study, and Olin never developed a remedial action plan to address comprehensive site cleanup. Instead, Olin suspended work on the site in the 1990s without DEEP objection. Meanwhile, DEEP itself deprioritized the Six Lakes cleanup to focus on decontaminating soil in the adjacent Newhall neighborhood,

which lies atop former wetlands filled in with industrial debris by the same corporations that polluted Six Lakes. The delay in remediation is not due to a lack of resources at the Olin Corporation. Olin is a leading U.S. ammunitions manufacturer and global manufacturer of chemical products valued at \$5.95 billion as of October 2025.¹¹

While fences continue to physically separate the community from Six Lakes, Olin and DEEP have left the community largely in the dark on decision-making, oversight, investigations, and remediation timelines for the site cleanup. State and federal law and policy direct otherwise. Regulations governing the site cleanup require DEEP to meaningfully engage the community to inform the lifecycle of the remediation process. For instance, DEEP must initiate community interviews and develop a community relations plan to inform site investigation and remediation decisions. It has failed to do so for decades. Meanwhile, Olin has declined meetings with residents and advocates. Apart from releasing two newsletters about the site decades ago, Olin has done little to inform the public of plans for and progress on the cleanup.

Centering Community in Realizing the Vision for the Future of Six Lakes

For residents of Newhall and surrounding neighborhoods, the contamination at and around Six Lakes is not merely an environmental issue—it is also a matter of racial justice, public health, and community trauma. The Newhall community continues to grapple with the impacts of hazardous waste under residents' feet and in their backyards, as well as crumbling foundations of homes built on top of unstable industrial fill.¹² Six Lakes is the closest undeveloped greenspace to Newhall, and has the potential to become an enclave of nature large enough to escape into, much like New Haven's beloved East Rock Park, located in a nearby whiter and wealthier neighborhood.¹³ But instead of bringing healthy recreation and connection to the community, it is a source of risk and alienation. Six Lakes illustrates what the U.S. Centers for Disease Control meant when it classified systemic racism as a serious public health threat.¹⁴ This harm is not limited to physical exposure to contaminants; it also includes the psychological wounds inflicted when communities are silenced, dismissed, or ignored by institutions responsible for protecting them.¹⁵

The pattern of neglect and delay only began to change when residents organized. In 2019, Justin Farmer, a longtime Newhall resident and then-Hamden Councilmember whose district encompassed Newhall and the Six Lakes site, began to bring together neighbors and nonprofit allies to demand that DEEP and Olin remediate Six Lakes and convert it into a public-serving green space. The work of the resulting Six Lakes Park Coalition builds on efforts by Hamden Land Conservation Trust, Save the Sound, Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut, and other groups that had labored for decades to push Olin and DEEP to safely redevelop Six Lakes into a public park. The Coalition's vision is clear: a community-led restoration process rooted in racial justice, ecological healing, and democratic participation. As the lead agency overseeing the remediation, DEEP has a legal duty to engage the public. Requirements for meaningful public participation set forth in federal and state regulations reflect a fundamental principle that communities affected by hazardous waste have a right to shape the response to environmental threats in their own backyards.

In this way, the fight for the future of Six Lakes is also a fight for dignity, self-determination, and equitable access to safe, healthy open spaces. As this report for the Six Lakes Park Coalition documents, the community's efforts to reclaim Six Lakes reflect a broader movement for environmental justice, demanding that the burdens of contamination—and the benefits of green space—be distributed fairly and that residents have a meaningful voice in the future of their communities. In summer 2024, the Coalition led a visioning process to learn more about the community's vision for the end use of the Six Lakes site. The resulting report—*A Community Vision for Six Lakes: Nature, Education, Neighborhood Connections*—lays out an ecological, educational, and recreational model for the site built from local voices.¹⁶ The community's goal is to open a Six Lakes park to the public by the end of 2029.¹⁷

The following sections explore how this unique landscape became contaminated with toxic waste; the regulatory failures that have prolonged its neglect and the alienation of residents from the cleanup process; the community's rights to meaningful involvement in shaping the future of the site and the cleanup process; and the community's vision for transforming Six Lakes from a symbol of industrial damage into a space of restoration, connection, and justice.

Site History

History of Industrial Contamination of Six Lakes

Six Lakes offers a bounty of natural resources and possibilities for recreational opportunities unique for its densely developed surroundings.¹⁸ Six Lakes is located east of Dixwell Avenue between the neighborhoods of Newhall and Whitneyville in the southern part of the Town of Hamden. The site is bordered on the west by the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, one of the most frequented hiking and biking paths in Connecticut. Six Lakes' name comes from the six glacial kettle ponds that punctuate the site.¹⁹ These ponds feed into Lake Whitney reservoir, which in turn supplies drinking water to residents across the greater New Haven area.²⁰ The shallow ponds and associated wetlands take up about half the site's surface area.²¹ Other notable features include a cattail marsh, red maple swamp, and a 130 year-old oak pine forest, all providing habitat for a diverse array of wildlife species.²² Well-worn gravel pathways traverse the site. Six Lakes is the last large undeveloped space remaining in urbanized Southern Hamden that could be transformed into a public park.

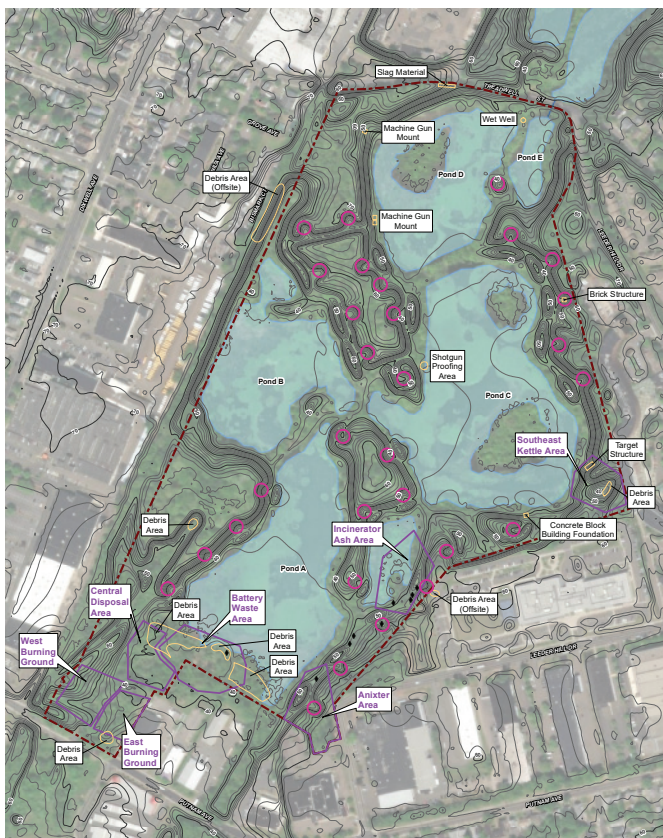


Figure 3: Map showing gunpowder bunkers, circled, at the Six Lakes site. Map prepared by WSP USA, Inc., a consultant that prepared the 2024 Investigation Work Plan on behalf of Olin.

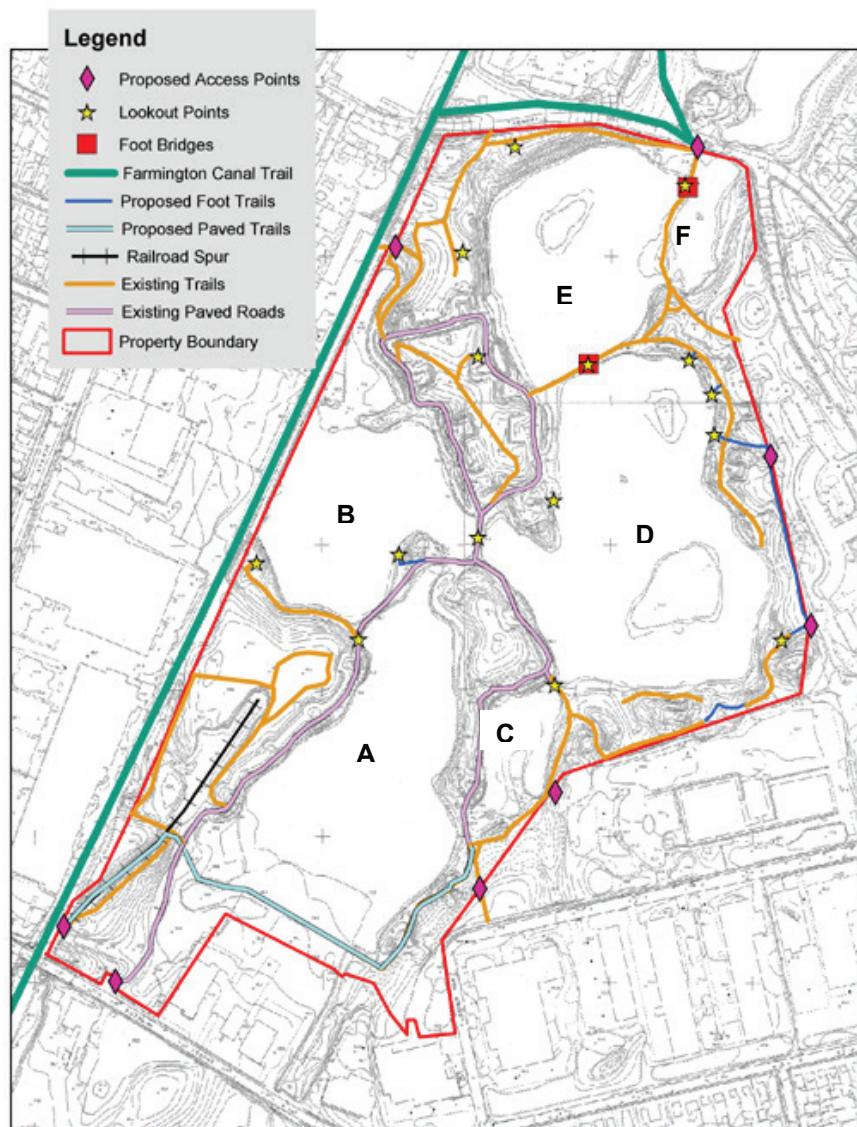


Figure 4: Map of Six Lakes created by student team at Yale University School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (now Yale School of the Environmental) for 2004 Vision and Management Plan for a future Six Lakes Park, showing current and proposed trails.

The degradation of Six Lakes and the adjoining Newhall neighborhood began more than a century ago. The Newhall area was once largely composed of swamps and wetlands. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, health officials raised concerns about mosquito-borne illness, leading to a decision to fill in the wetlands. Beginning in 1889 and continuing through 1915, the Winchester Repeating Arms company purchased the parcels that now comprise Six Lakes. Winchester used the area, known at the time as “Pine Swamp,” as a shooting range, a burn pit, an industrial landfill, and for gunpowder storage.²³ Dozens of bunkers around the site reflected its role in the munitions industry.

Around this same time, the Winchester Repeating Arms factory, straddling New Haven’s Newhallville and Dixwell neighborhoods, was becoming a growing epicenter for weapons manufacturing. By the early 20th century, “Winchester became the world’s biggest producer

of guns and bullets, with thousands of employees and a terrible reputation among labor advocates.”²⁴ Looking for a place to dispose of its waste, the Winchester company cast its sights on the Newhall area just over a mile to the north. As Winchester expanded its operations to meet munitions demands of World War I and World War II, the company utilized the Newhall neighborhood as a disposal site for coal ash and manufacturing waste. This filling continued into the 1950s, when residential development of Newhall expanded across the former wetlands.

In 1932, the Olin Corporation, a Missouri-based chemicals manufacturing company, purchased the Winchester Company.²⁵ Olin continued to use the Six Lakes property for gunpowder storage into the 1960s, giving rise to the site’s next moniker, the “Olin Powder Farm.”²⁶ After World War II, Olin also began using the property to dump battery waste, toxic chemicals, and construction debris—practices it continued for another two decades.²⁷ In particular, Olin made extensive use of Six Lakes for battery disposal until discontinuing battery production at the Winchester plant in 1957, and it disposed of chemical solvents at Six Lakes from the late 1950s.²⁸ Historical records and later environmental investigations have documented widespread burning of chemical wastes, open-air incineration, and burial of industrial debris across various parts of the site. The waste materials left behind include solvents, battery acid, metallic debris from munitions testing, and, in later years, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a class of toxic compounds now known to persist in the environment and pose significant health risks.²⁹

In 1964, Olin entered into an agreement with the New Haven Water Company regarding the Pine Swamp property.³⁰ Under the agreement, Olin granted to the New Haven Water Company a right of first refusal to purchase any part of Olin’s Pine Swamp property for \$100 per acre if Olin decided to sell Pine Swamp to any party other than a firearms or ammunition manufacturer. Olin also agreed not to pollute the water on Pine Swamp and to allow New Haven Water Company to enter Pine Swamp to inspect the property and preserve the purity of its water. Despite this agreement, Olin’s weapon testing and waste disposal continued on the property. The agreement remains binding on the parties’ successors.³¹

As residential development and toxic contamination continued side by side, the community began to organize. In February 1966, a community member lodged a complaint with the Town of Hamden that noxious odors and smoke were emanating from chemical burning on the site, affecting residents and businesses in the area.³² On an ensuing site visit, a Hamden Health Department sanitarian saw firsthand that Olin was regularly dumping “truckloads of chemical material and rubbish” on the Six Lakes site, then burning that waste and debris in pits. He ended his trip report with a plea: “It is my feeling that this matter has gone out of control and should be abated as soon as possible.”³³

Within a week, Health Department officials confronted Olin representatives about the company’s maintenance of a nuisance on the Six Lakes property in violation of town ordinances.³⁴ After the meeting, the Hamden Director of Health issued a nuisance abatement order to Olin on March 23, 1966, requiring the company to immediately stop transporting refuse into Hamden for burning, storing, or burying.³⁵ The order also required that Olin cart all refuse stored at the

Six Lakes site out of Hamden by April 6th of that year, then cover the area with “considerable dirt” to prevent runoff and excavation.³⁶

Initiation of Testing and Contemplation of a Future Park

After Olin ceased dumping and burning hazardous waste at the site, Hamden residents and community organizations began to explore the possibility of converting Six Lakes into a public park. Encouraged by Olin, the Town of Hamden explored purchasing the site, which then amounted to about 101 acres.³⁷ Hamden requested the assistance of the King’s Mark Resource Conservation and Development Area to produce an environmental assessment for the proposed land acquisition, which would convert the property into “a much needed open space and passive recreation parcel in southern Hamden.”³⁸ The resulting report by the King’s Mark Environmental Review Team, issued in 1979, along with subsequent testing by Olin, confirmed the presence of heavy metals, solvents, and other pollutants in soil and ground and surface water.³⁹ Vast stretches of the site still held discarded munitions fragments, rusted barrels, buried batteries, and patches of discolored soil where hazardous chemicals had leached into groundwater.⁴⁰ In light of these myriad challenges, the Town decided against purchasing the property.

In September 1981, DEEP notified Olin that it would be issuing a Pollution Abatement Order to the company requiring removal of buried batteries and associated soil from the Six Lakes property.⁴¹ By this point, it was clear that extensive site investigation and remediation would be required to make Six Lakes safe for public use and prevent risks to the area’s drinking water supply in Lake Whitney, just 100 yards from the Six Lakes property.

In light of concerning environmental assessments, including reports compiled by Olin documenting contaminants throughout the Six Lakes site,⁴² DEEP proceeded to mandate Olin’s removal of buried battery wastes and other contaminants.⁴³ Because the Six Lakes property is located immediately adjacent to waters that flow into Lake Whitney, the potential discharge of lead and other contaminants into public drinking water supplies was a particular concern.⁴⁴ In April 1983, DEEP issued a letter to Olin, informing the company of the agency’s intent to issue an abatement order with a compliance schedule to accomplish the removal of all buried battery wastes, as well as to remove, treat, and discharge contaminated groundwater and monitor ground and surface water. DEEP also advised Olin that it would consider entering into a consent agreement with the company in lieu of an abatement order, conditional on a consent agreement “committing Olin to these remedial actions.”⁴⁵

Olin agreed to submit detailed monitoring and remedial plans to “assure that the current situation at Pine Swamp will not create a threat to the environment or public welfare.”⁴⁶ Olin transmitted a Special Study Report to DEEP in 1983.⁴⁷ The “overall site strategy” that Olin proposed would consist of groundwater monitoring, repairing a broken storm sewer to control surface erosion, and clearing and filling the dry-cell battery waste area.⁴⁸ DEEP disapproved, insisting on a complete remedial program.⁴⁹

1986 Consent Order Governing Comprehensive Site Investigations and Remediation

On January 10, 1986, DEEP executed a Consent Order with the Olin Corporation, aiming to comprehensively address environmental damage at the site and prevent prolonged litigation over its cleanup.⁵⁰ The following year, the parties amended the order to correct typographical errors. The operative Consent Order, approved on April 22, 1987, remains a binding agreement between Olin and DEEP committing Olin to investigate and remediate the Six Lakes site to federal and state standards.

The Consent Order lays out a step-by-step plan to remediate the contamination, but decades later, it remains largely incomplete. The Consent Order required Olin to provide DEEP a proposed Remedial Investigation Study and implementation schedule within 90 calendar days of the effective date for DEEP approval, with the aim of documenting site conditions and forming the basis for site remediation. In December 1988, Olin submitted its initial Remedial Investigation Study to DEEP. The Remedial Investigation Study must adhere to regulations issued under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly referred to as the federal Superfund law.⁵¹ Once it has DEEP's approval on its Remedial Investigation Study—which Olin has never received—Olin must then develop a Remedial Action Plan, subject to comment by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DEEP approval, governing site cleanup. Following approval of the Remedial Action Plan, DEEP and Olin are to negotiate another consent order to ensure effective implementation of the selected remedies.

The Remedial Investigation Study Olin submitted to DEEP in 1988 was met with skepticism from several quarters. In comments to Olin on an interim final version of the study, the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority documented its concerns that the study improperly minimized the danger the site poses to human health and welfare.⁵² Among other things, the Regional Water Authority pointed out that Olin had not submitted its most contaminated soil samples for laboratory analysis. And it criticized Olin for assuming that there would be limited exposure to site contaminants and neglecting to consider the possibility of transforming Six Lakes into a public park—a use that would bring people into direct contact with contaminated soils and sediments.⁵³ The Regional Water Authority also pointed to the concerning presence of PCBs and pesticides in water and soil samples.

On December 5, 1988, a third-party consultant, Clean Sites, Inc., provided Olin with a letter, as contemplated by the Consent Order, documenting its conclusion that the study was consistent with applicable federal standards. Clean Sites's letter notified Olin and DEEP that federal regulations governing “community health and safety and community relations” applied to the study and that DEEP was responsible for conducting community relations activities to inform site investigation and cleanup.⁵⁴ There is no indication that such activities were conducted.

Olin's Remedial Investigation Study went on to languish in regulatory limbo. Eventually, in 1996—eight years after the Study's completion—DEEP staff conducted a long-delayed review of the Study. A draft letter to Olin prepared by DEEP staff concluded that the Study was “not

currently approvable” because it lacked critical details, including a proposed schedule for remedial actions required by the Consent Order.⁵⁵ The same draft letter acknowledged that DEEP’s own delays in reviewing the Study necessitated updates to the investigation. It also highlighted that Olin’s conclusions regarding the absence of off-site contaminant migration were contradicted by data showing down-gradient soil and groundwater contamination exceeding Connecticut Remediation Standard Regulations thresholds. For reasons that remain unclear in public records, there is no indication that DEEP sent the letter. As a result, the agency neither formally approved nor rejected Olin’s 1988 Remedial Investigation Study—a regulatory vacuum that contributed to stalled progress on the site cleanup.

With its review of the Study pending, DEEP allowed Olin to begin interim remediation work in 1989 in “areas with clearly defined waste extent, character, and an apparently preferred remedial alternative.”⁵⁶ The interim work included sitewide cleanup of surface debris; soil and source remediation in a portion of the site known as the “Anixter Area,” formerly owned and used for dumping by the electronics company Anixter International, and waste removal in former burning grounds.⁵⁷ Although Olin completed much of the interim remediation work,⁵⁸ the company’s cleanup plan was complicated when new sampling revealed significant levels of PCBs in the southern portion of the site.⁵⁹

PCBs are a group of synthetic organic chemicals classified by the EPA as probable human carcinogens.⁶⁰ PCBs are slow to break down, and they circulate readily between the air, water, and soil.⁶¹ PCBs bioaccumulate in the food chain as they are taken up in the bodies of smaller organisms and fish and then by larger animals, including people. PCBs were common manufacturing compounds until the EPA banned them in 1979 because of concerns about their toxicity and persistence in the environment.⁶²

In October 1991, DEEP directed Olin to remediate all soils at Six Lakes with detected PCBs and conduct post-remediation sampling of groundwater and surface water.⁶³ Two years later, in October 1993, DEEP changed course, agreeing to allow Olin to install a soil vapor extraction system in the Anixter Area to remove volatile organic compounds and defer PCB cleanup to a later Remedial Action Plan.⁶⁴

In early 1994, the EPA informed Olin that it would be conducting new site inspections of Six Lakes to determine whether to put the site on the National Priorities List of toxic properties.⁶⁵ Doing so would make the site an official federal Superfund site, subject to EPA oversight. Olin resisted the designation, insisting that the State retain oversight of the cleanup. Later that year, Olin asserted by letter to the EPA that “[a]s long as the EPA is considering the site for possible federal action, Olin cannot reasonably proceed with final site remediation plans. Olin has temporarily put these plans on hold[.]”⁶⁶ Olin also began a short-lived public outreach initiative by publishing two “Pine Swamp News” newsletters for the community in 1994 and 1995, which described the remediation process and advertised Olin-sponsored walks around Six Lakes.⁶⁷ For instance, in a 1994 newsletter, Olin promoted its working relationship with the Hamden Land Conservation Trust and concurred that “the site’s future use, at least in part,” would be “as a park or conservation area.”⁶⁸

Ultimately, in 2005, the EPA issued a letter to DEEP documenting that it had decided, at DEEP's request, to assign Six Lakes a rating of "low priority for further reassessment" while reserving the right to add the site to the National Priorities List if new information becomes available or if site conditions change.⁶⁹

Deprioritizing Six Lakes Site Cleanup

By the mid-1990s, Six Lakes had reached a critical crossroads. Olin's remediation efforts had stalled, and regulatory momentum from the Consent Order had largely dissipated. Despite substantial evidence of contamination and community concerns, DEEP began shifting its attention elsewhere.

One of the primary drivers of this shift was the environmental crisis unfolding in the adjacent Newhall neighborhood. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, investigations revealed widespread contamination from industrial fill beneath residential properties, schools, and community spaces in Newhall, dumped by Winchester and Olin.⁷⁰ In 2001, DEEP issued an order to Olin as well as the Town of Hamden, the Regional Water Authority, and the Connecticut Board of Education to investigate and remediate the pollution.⁷¹ After the respondents appealed, DEEP entered into a Consent Order in April 2003 with Olin, the Town of Hamden, and the Regional Water Authority, assigning responsibility for remediation of the adjacent Hamden Middle School and other contaminated Newhall neighborhood sites.⁷²

When DEEP initiated enforcement of the Newhall neighborhood contamination, it redirected resources away from the Six Lakes site cleanup. Internal agency documents are stark in recording DEEP's decision to halt the Six Lakes cleanup. In a February 2000 memorandum, DEEP recorded that the Six Lakes site was "not designated a priority" by the agency.⁷³ The memorandum acknowledged that despite some interim remediation efforts, "no significant removal actions have taken place at the site and a number of significant source areas and human/environmental exposure threats remain not addressed."⁷⁴ DEEP later elaborated on its decision to deprioritize the Six Lakes cleanup in a 2014 letter to Olin, stating that "[a]fter the discovery in 2000 of widespread waste fill material at the separate site in Hamden's Newhall neighborhood directly affecting hundreds of residential properties, the Department notified Hamden's elected officials that it was holding the remaining environmental actions at Pine Swamp in abeyance until the cleanup work in Newhall was resolved. This decision enabled both the Department and Olin to focus resources on planning for and implementing the substantial soil cleanup actions at the non-public properties within the neighborhood site."⁷⁵

Although Six Lakes was not a priority for the agency, it was for the community, which understood through experience the interrelationship between the Newhall neighborhood and the adjacent Six Lakes site. In February 2001, the Hamden Natural Resources and Open Space Commission wrote to DEEP urging it to make remediation of Six Lakes a "high priority."⁷⁶ The letter underscored the ongoing risk posed by hazardous substances migrating toward groundwater and the Lake Whitney reservoir, which supplies drinking water to tens of thousands of residents in the region. DEEP responded that it could not advance the Six Lakes cleanup until it had addressed "immediate needs" in the Newhall neighborhood.⁷⁷ Shortly thereafter, State

representative Brendan Sharkey wrote to DEEP criticizing its refusal to remediate the Six Lakes and Newhall neighborhood sites in tandem. DEEP responded that there “would not be any environmental benefit to conducting the investigations together,” despite recognizing that the sites shared a responsible corporate polluter and despite their close physical proximity.⁷⁸

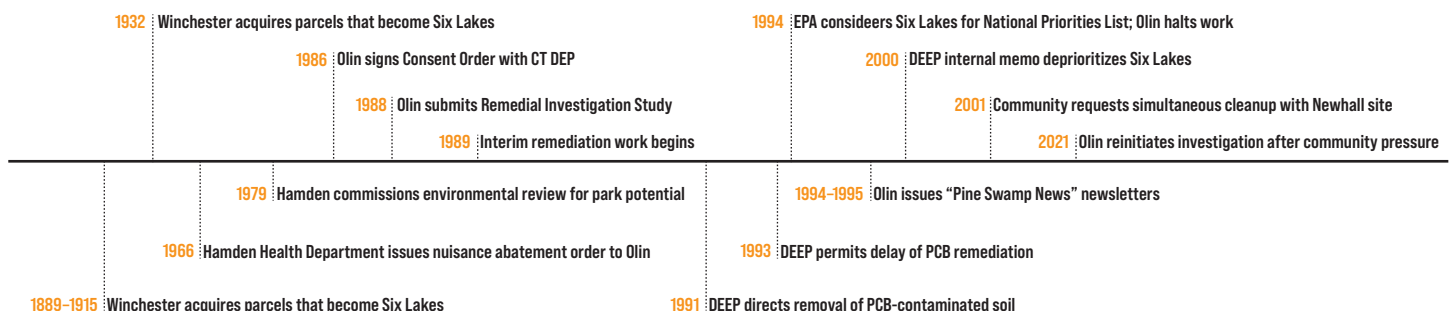
State Senator Martin Looney, familiar with the environmental injustices facing Southern Hamden, also repeatedly contacted DEEP to express concerns about the glacial pace of Six Lakes remediation.⁷⁹ In one response, then DEEP Commissioner Arthur Rocque acknowledged the need to refocus on Six Lakes but maintained that the Newhall neighborhood remained a higher priority. Commissioner Rocque promised to develop “an up-to-date schedule of activities for the Pine Swamp area,” but no such schedule materialized for years.⁸⁰ In response to another letter from Senator Looney three years later urging DEEP to pressure Olin to complete the cleanup efforts,⁸¹ Commissioner Rocque promised to “ask [his] staff to at least initiate discussions with Olin Corporation regarding a new assessment of the environmental conditions at the Powder Farm site as soon as the investigation of the Newhall Neighborhood project is fully underway.”⁸²

With action on Six Lakes by DEEP stalled, the community pressed ahead. In 2004, graduate students from the Yale School of the Environment, commissioned by the Hamden Land Conservation Trust, published a Vision and Management Plan for the Six Lakes site.⁸³ The plan envisioned transforming the contaminated, fenced-off site into a vibrant public park that would provide ecological restoration, community recreation, and environmental education opportunities.

Community Advocacy Revives Six Lakes Cleanup

Despite decades of delay and institutional neglect, local leaders and residents refused to accept that the fate of Six Lakes was to remain inaccessible and contaminated. Instead, they organized, built alliances, and envisioned a radically different future for this landscape. Out of this determination, the Six Lakes Park Coalition emerged—a testament to the power of grassroots advocacy and the deep connection between land, health, and community dignity.⁸⁴

Six Lakes Site: Environmental History & Community Struggle Timeline



While community concern over Six Lakes had existed for decades, it began to crystallize into a formal movement in the late 2010s. Residents, environmental advocates, and local organizations came together, recognizing that without coordinated action, Six Lakes would remain locked behind fences. Their efforts build upon decades of groundwork laid by the Hamden Land Conservation Trust,⁸⁵ which had long advocated for repurposing the Six Lakes property for public benefit and thoroughly documented site conditions supporting transformation of Six Lakes into a public park. In 2020, these efforts coalesced into the Six Lakes Park Coalition.

History of the Six Lakes Park Coalition

In August 2019, as a Hamden Councilmember representing Newhall, Justin Farmer approached Curt Johnson, then president of Save the Sound, about the Six Lakes site as a concerned city councilor. In the months after this initial meeting, strategic planning commenced. On the morning of September 27, 2019, Justin Farmer toured the area around the Six Lakes property with Curt Johnson and a handful of community members. An initial Six Lakes Park Coalition steering committee meeting kicked off formal Coalition convenings on March 19, 2020, followed by the Coalition's first public meeting and community presentation on October 13, 2020. In the years since, the Coalition, through dedication to community and environmental health and consistent engagement with DEEP, has brought new energy, broader participation, and a sharper environmental justice lens to the fight.

The Coalition, together with the Town of Hamden, persisted in pressing for a community-serving end use of Six Lakes. In January 2021, the Six Lakes Park Coalition Steering Committee sent a letter to Larry Bingaman, then President and CEO of the Regional Water Authority, urging it to transfer its right of first refusal for purchase of 102 acres of the Six Lakes site to the Hamden Land Conservation Trust to facilitate the site's conversion into a public park.⁸⁶ The group expressed its shared concern that, although the Regional Water Authority had previously offered to transfer the Authority's 1964 agreement with Olin providing the right-of-first-refusal and although the Trust voted to accept the transfer, the Regional Water Authority had not yet moved forward with the transfer. The Steering Committee viewed this transfer as a critical step towards long-term open space preservation, noting the creation of a Six Lakes Park presents a unique opportunity to protect the environment, support public recreation, and generate tax revenue.

The same year, following pressure from the Six Lakes Park Coalition, Hamden Mayor Curt Balzano Leng sent letters to DEEP and Olin on behalf of the Town of Hamden and the Coalition, urging DEEP to commit to a collaborative cleanup process.⁸⁷ Mayor Leng emphasized that the residents of Southern Hamden, particularly those in the predominantly Black Newhall neighborhood, had endured decades of environmental harm from Olin's industrial legacy. He argued that the remediation of Six Lakes could not be isolated from broader questions of racial and environmental justice. He accordingly called for a cleanup process that would prioritize community involvement and pave the way for transforming Six Lakes into a public park.⁸⁸ Olin declined the Mayor's request for a collaborative meeting, insisting that it needed to "sufficiently

advance ongoing environmental matters” with DEEP before considering end uses for the site.⁸⁹ The following year, in November 2022, the Hamden Legislative Council unanimously approved a resolution calling for the re-envisioning of Six Lakes as a public-serving park and demanded that the cleanup proceed without further delay.⁹⁰ Meanwhile, DEEP resumed regulatory oversight—if incrementally.

At DEEP’s insistence, Olin submitted to DEEP in 2022 a historical summary and conceptual site model outlining contamination zones, remaining pollutants, and proposed next steps.⁹¹ Later that year, Olin provided DEEP with an Investigation Work Plan for new soil and groundwater testing. By spring 2024, DEEP confirmed that Olin had conducted updated investigations to supplement data from the 1980s and 1990s. Olin compiled these findings into a Site Investigation Report submitted in May 2024, which DEEP approved later that year.⁹² Responding to the Coalition’s persistent demands for community engagement, DEEP attended community update meetings in 2023 and 2024, co-hosted by the Town and the Coalition, to report on cleanup progress. Delays in a second round of site investigation work in 2025 once again slowed the process and DEEP’s communications with the public.

Despite progress, critical gaps in community engagement in the cleanup process remain. To date, neither Olin nor DEEP has conducted legally required community interviews, prepared a formal community relations plan, nor established a clear structure to engage residents and organizations in developing site priorities.⁹³ In refusing to meet with the Coalition and community representatives about the cleanup process, Olin continues to sideline community engagement and ignore the social and cultural stakes of the cleanup. As a consequence, the testing and planning process continues to unfold largely behind closed doors, perpetuating dynamics of exclusion that have defined the Six Lakes story for over a century.

For the Six Lakes Park Coalition and the Southern Hamden community, the fight is not simply about removing contaminants from the soil and water. It is about healing—physically, psychologically, and culturally. The cleanup of Six Lakes represents an opportunity to redress environmental injustice, reclaim public space, and honor the resilience of the communities that have long borne the site’s toxic legacy. The next section of this report explores the legal frameworks that must guide this transformation and the obligations DEEP and Olin have yet to fulfill.

Regulatory Framework Governing Six Lakes Cleanup

The cleanup of Six Lakes is governed by a web of federal and state laws designed to ensure swift and effective remediation of hazardous waste and to guarantee community participation in the cleanup process. The operative 1987 Consent Order for Six Lakes requires that Olin conduct site investigation in accordance with regulations adopted under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (“CERCLA”), 42 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq., familiarly known as the Superfund law. Six Lakes site remediation is also subject to Connecticut state law, including Connecticut’s Remediation Standard Regulations, subtitle 22a-133k of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. These legal frameworks require DEEP, in its role as the oversight agency, and Olin as the responsible party, to not only investigate and remove contamination but also to engage affected communities transparently and meaningfully in decisions about their health, land, and future. The following section provides an overview of key provisions of the 1987 Consent Order and pertinent statutes and regulations governing Six Lakes cleanup.

Six Lakes Consent Order

DEEP’s 1987 Consent Order with Olin allocates specific responsibilities to Olin to investigate and remediate the Six Lakes site, as well as responsibilities to DEEP to oversee the cleanup process in a timely manner.

The Consent Order records the parties’ understanding that “any remedial action taken by Olin [will] be consistent” with the National Contingency Plan and other applicable regulations promulgated under the CERCLA, the federal statute that governs cleanup of highly contaminated sites.⁹⁴ Among its directives, the Consent Order requires Olin to conduct a Remedial Investigation Study of the site consistent with the National Contingency Plan and other regulations issued under CERCLA.⁹⁵ The Remedial Investigation Study is to focus particular attention on areas of concern at the southern end of the site, including the battery disposal area and other locations at the southwest and southeast of the property, though the Consent Order does not limit investigation and cleanup to these areas.⁹⁶ The Consent Order requires Olin to submit the Remedial Investigation Study to the DEEP Commissioner for review and approval on a specified compliance schedule, along with written quarterly progress reports.

Using the information from the Remedial Investigation Study, Olin must submit a Remedial Action Plan to DEEP, focusing on the areas of concern identified for the Remedial Investigation Study. The Remedial Action Plan must be approved in writing by the DEEP Commissioner, upon consideration of technological feasibility, comments by the EPA, and other relevant

factors. Within 30 days of DEEP approval, Olin and DEEP are to enter into negotiations for another consent order requiring Olin to implement the approved Remedial Action Plan.⁹⁷

Other provisions of the Consent Order require Olin to prepare a report disclosing past storage, disposal, and product testing practices at the Six Lakes site; to complete interim cleanup of specified battery waste areas; and to conduct groundwater testing for listed chemicals known to have been disposed of on the site.

While these duties are clear, implementation has fallen far short. Olin's Remedial Investigation Study, submitted to DEEP in 1988, was neither formally approved nor rejected by the agency. Because comprehensive site investigation remains pending, 37 years later, a formal Remedial Action Plan is yet to be developed and implemented.

Federal Superfund Statute

At the federal level, CERCLA, commonly known as the Superfund law, serves as the cornerstone of hazardous waste cleanup law. Congress enacted CERCLA in 1980 in response to industrial contamination crises such as toxic waste dumping at Love Canal in Niagara Falls, New York, which poisoned and displaced generations of low-income residents and galvanized public attention to the widespread problems of unmanaged industrial pollution. CERCLA provides the federal government with broad authority to respond directly to actual or threatened releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment. CERCLA also imposed a tax on the chemical and petroleum industries; funds collected through the tax went into a trust fund (the Superfund) for cleaning up abandoned or uncontrolled hazardous waste sites. The EPA implements the law in cooperation with States. EPA's rules implementing CERCLA and spelling out specific requirements for site investigations and cleanup are contained in a broader set of regulations known as the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Contingency Plan ("National Contingency Plan"), 40 C.F.R. part 300.⁹⁸

CERCLA authorizes the federal government—and, in some cases, state governments—to compel responsible parties to investigate and remediate hazardous waste sites that threaten public health or the environment. If the EPA identifies a contaminated site as a high priority for cleanup, it will place it on the National Priorities List, a federal register of Superfund sites subject to long-term remediation.⁹⁹ EPA can lead the cleanup directly for sites on the National Priorities List, or it may transfer funds and management responsibility to States or federally recognized Tribal Nations to lead. EPA may take legal action to compel potentially responsible parties to conduct the cleanup or pay the federal government back for cleanup costs.

The National Contingency Plan ensures that the public is meaningfully engaged in the cleanup for Superfund sites. Before undertaking any fieldwork for remedial investigation, the agency leading the cleanup must conduct interviews with local officials, community residents, public interest groups, and other interested persons to solicit their concerns and information needs and preferences for involvement in the cleanup process.¹⁰⁰ Following these interviews, the agency must prepare a formal Community Relations Plan to ensure meaningful public involvement in a wide range of site-related decisions, including site analysis and selection of appropriate cleanup

remedies.¹⁰¹ It must also provide at least one information repository near the site where the interested public can access up-to-date information about the site cleanup.¹⁰² The lead agency is responsible for planning and implementing the Community Relations Plan; responsible parties can participate in aspects of community relations activities but only at the discretion and with oversight of the lead agency.¹⁰³

The regulations go on to assure broad public participation throughout the remediation process through mandatory public comment periods and public meetings.¹⁰⁴ For instance, the National Contingency Plan requires that the public be given notice and opportunity to comment—both in writing and orally at a public meeting—on a proposed plan laying out remediation alternatives before the remediation plan is finalized.¹⁰⁵

CERCLA's public participation requirements are not merely procedural checklists; they reflect the fundamental principle that communities affected by hazardous waste have a right to shape the response to environmental threats in their own backyards. The National Contingency Plan's detailed public participation requirements set a floor rather than a ceiling on necessary community engagement. The federal government also supports establishment of community advisory groups for Superfund sites where there is a high degree of community interest to assure that the community has a direct and consistent role in advising on the cleanup.¹⁰⁶

In July 2005, a Remedial Site Assessment was undertaken by U.S. EPA Region 1 for the site then known as Pine Swamp, which confirmed that further assessment was needed under CERCLA, while noting that the State was leading cleanup activities.¹⁰⁷ The assessment decision acknowledged that the Potentially Responsible Party, Olin, was “working with [DEEP] on the investigation and remediation of a nearby neighborhood, and the site investigation of the site will resume, per letter from [DEEP] and Consent Order.”¹⁰⁸ Still today, neither Pine Swamp¹⁰⁹ nor Newhall¹¹⁰ is listed on the National Priorities List, and cleanup remains under State oversight. However, the door remains open to the possibility of National Priority listing in the future.

Connecticut Remediation Laws

The Consent Order also dictates that remedial action for the Six Lakes site be consistent with requirements of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, now DEEP. Remediations of polluted soil, surface water, and groundwater in Connecticut are governed by Connecticut General Statute section 22a-133k and its implementing regulations. The statute requires the DEEP Commissioner to promulgate regulations setting forth standards for the remediation of hazardous waste sites, which must “fully protect public health, public welfare, and the environment.”¹¹¹ These Remediation Standard Regulations, codified at subtitle 22a-133k of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, establish standards for remediation of polluted soil and groundwater in the state. As in the case of Six Lakes, remediations in Connecticut can also be governed by consent order, provided that the consent order is consistent with applicable law.¹¹² A finalized consent order cannot be modified except by agreement by both DEEP and the responsible party.¹¹³

The Remediation Standard Regulations set forth a variety of guarantees for public participation in site cleanup. Among them, the regulations require public notice and a minimum thirty-day comment period before any proposed remedial action plan can proceed.¹¹⁴ If there is significant public interest in a particular site demonstrated in the public comments—as there is with Six Lakes—DEEP, at its discretion, may hold one or more public meetings to present information, answer questions, and receive community input.¹¹⁵ In addition, if more than three years lapse after the notice is issued but before remediation substantially begins, or if substantial changes are made to the proposed approach, the regulations require reissuing of public notice and an additional opportunity for public comment.¹¹⁶

Realizing Legal Mandates for Meaningful Public Participation in the Six Lakes Site Remediation

For much of the past forty years, DEEP and Olin have treated community engagement and public participation in the Six Lakes site cleanup as less than an afterthought. DEEP's records reflect that the community has never been provided notice nor opportunity to weigh in on decisions in the cleanup process. The agency has not initiated public meetings to disclose progress on the site testing nor elicited community concerns and priorities. Olin, for its part, has refused meetings with local officials and community stakeholders and shut down inquiries into the site's intended end use. And no formal plan exists to assure effective community engagement in the cleanup process. Olin's engagement with community stakeholders has been at best sporadic and mercenary, never translating into a meaningful dialogue or results on the ground.

The omission of meaningful community engagement has begun to change in recent years, as dedicated DEEP staff have attended and presented at community meetings organized by the Six Lakes Park Coalition in partnership with the Town of Hamden. This renewed community engagement reflects DEEP's recognition that "[w]hen it comes to decisions affecting their well-being and environment, members of the public have the right to be informed of, and included early and often in, clear, transparent, and reliable decision-making process."¹⁷

This public participation right extends to the Six Lakes site remediation. As described above, federal and state laws governing the Six Lakes remediation process direct community engagement from the inception of site investigation through the completion of remediation, and they give the public a right to receive formal notice and provide written and oral comment on decision-making points in the remediation. These laws establish a baseline for the quality of community engagement that DEEP must assure throughout the cleanup process. DEEP's own policies and guidance for public participation fill in the gaps to assure meaningful community engagement in all stages of decision-making, implementation, and oversight processes.

The following discussion outlines measures to build on the efforts to bolster public participation in recent years. Implementation of these measures is necessary to bring the Six Lakes cleanup into compliance with public participation requirements in federal and state remediation laws as well as DEEP's environmental justice and public participation policies.

Public Participation Principles

The State of Connecticut, and DEEP in particular, have made a commitment to meaningful public participation in environmental programs and activities a core policy for decades. DEEP has long recognized that Connecticut's manufacturing and industrial base is primarily located in lower-income communities of color in the state's urban areas, which bear a disproportionate share of pollution burdens from Connecticut's industrial legacy.¹¹⁸ Since December 17, 1993, it has been DEEP policy that "no segment of the population should, because of its racial or economic makeup, bear a disproportionate share of the risks and consequences of environmental pollution or be denied equal access to environmental benefits."¹¹⁹ DEEP has accordingly committed itself to incorporating environmental equity into the agency's program development and implementation, policymaking, and regulatory activities.

Toward these ends, it is DEEP policy to "enhance communication with, and improve environmental education opportunities for, minority and lower income communities" and to "encourage community participation in the Department's ongoing operations and program development."¹²⁰ More broadly, in 1971, the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act declared it state policy to "improve and coordinate the environmental plans, functions, powers, and programs of the state, in cooperation with the federal government, regions, local governments, other public and private organizations and concerned individuals" in furtherance of its "responsibilities as trustee of the environment to the present and future generations."¹²¹

Connecticut's recognition of the role of climate change in deepening racial and income disparities in environmental burdens and benefits has moved it to double down on its commitment to meaningful community engagement in environmental programs and activities. On September 3, 2019, Governor Ned Lamont issued Executive Order No. 3, expanding the scope and responsibilities of the Governor's Council on Climate Change, established by Executive Order No. 50 in 2015, and directing the Council to analyze climate change mitigation and adaptation through an equity lens.¹²² Among its deliverables, the Council's Equity and Environmental Justice Committee prepared a comprehensive report in 2020 providing recommendations and best practices for public participation and public engagement in DEEP programs and services,¹²³ which continue to guide DEEP's activities.¹²⁴

Connecticut expanded on these commitments to public engagement with Governor Lamont's issuance of Executive Order 21-3 in December 2021, which established within DEEP the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council ("CEEJAC"). CEEJAC's purpose is to advise the DEEP Commissioner on current and historic environmental justice, pollution reduction, energy equity, climate change mitigation and resilience, health disparities, and racial inequity. Toward these ends, the Executive Order tasked CEEJAC with "developing a model plan for community engagement and stakeholder outreach centered around meaningful participation" and taking other measures to strengthen partnerships with local community stakeholders regarding environmental justice issues.¹²⁵

DEEP's Environmental Justice Public Participation Guidance document, created as part of the 2020 Equity and Environmental Justice Committee Report, provides a set of guiding principles for engaging environmentally overburdened communities, such as Newhall, and other communities adjacent to Six Lakes, in DEEP programs and activities. The Guidance recognizes that "[t]hose whose health and environment may be affected by a decision have a right to be meaningfully involved in the decision-making process, and to play an equal role in producing ideas and plans." It further recognizes that key to meaningful public participation are "strong bidirectional relationships built on trust and mutual respect," as well as demonstrating through action that community input is being taken into meaningful account and appropriately acted upon. According to the Guidance, "[b]eing accountable to the public requires not only eliciting, but also listening to, considering, and implementing stakeholder input, and sharing information frequently and openly."¹²⁶

To put these principles into action, the Guidance instructs DEEP to "[e]ngage the public in all stages of the decision-making, implementation, and oversight processes," from the planning stage through evaluation of complete projects.¹²⁷ To ensure effective outreach, DEEP should develop, with input from community stakeholders, a "community engagement plan," which identifies key communities to engage, how to partner with those communities, and how to track success in partnering with those communities."¹²⁸ The Guidance recognizes the importance of "meet[ing] people where they are" to make the decision-making process "accessible for as many people as possible, including those who face the most obstacles."¹²⁹ Achieving these goals requires, among other measures: communication in accessible and culturally sensitive language; providing access to unabridged documents in languages appropriate to the community through public repositories; eliciting and acting on community suggestions for appropriate times, locations, and formats of public meetings to maximize opportunities for public participation; effectively advertising meeting details well in advance to allow community members to make plans; and providing resources such as child care and remote access for in-person meetings to facilitate community attendance.

The Guidance also stresses the importance of measures to build trust and equal partnership with affected communities. Such measures include co-creating agendas for public meetings with community stakeholders, setting clear and consistent project timelines, and clearly and timely communicating project information and expectations to the community. The Guidance encourages DEEP to engage "an independent steering committee of affected community members from the beginning of the process to lead with planning, training, education, and outreach" and to act as liaisons between DEEP and the community.¹³⁰

DEEP should put these principles into practice to meaningfully engage residents of Newhall and other affected Hamden neighborhoods along with invested community stakeholders in the Six Lakes cleanup. Doing so will demonstrate appropriate respect for the role that the Six Lakes site plays in the health and wellbeing of area residents as well as their right to be involved in public decisions and oversight processes which affect their community's future. It will also help ensure that all community members, including those who may be hardest to reach, are able to obtain accessible information about the site and its progress and provide their input into remediation

timelines and direction. Although the community was not consulted in the first four decades of activities under the 1987 Consent Order, site investigation remains ongoing, and a remediation plan is yet to be developed. The community has a right to be meaningfully involved from this investigation phase of site remediation onward, as further outlined below.

Public Participation in Remedial Investigation Phase

Under the Consent Order, Olin must complete a Remedial Investigation Study consistent with CERCLA and its implementing regulations in the National Contingency Plan. Although Olin prepared a Remedial Investigation Study in 1988 and third-party Clean Sites, Inc. certified its consistency with CERCLA and the National Contingency Plan, DEEP never approved the Remedial Investigation Study as required by the Consent Order. A draft letter written by DEEP staff dated June 7, 1996 reflects staff's judgment that deficiencies in the 1988 Remedial Investigation Study, including the absence of a proposed schedule to accomplish remedial actions, prevented it from being approved by the agency.¹³¹ As a consequence, remedial investigation had to be restarted, and DEEP must assure that CERCLA's minimum public participation mandates for remedial investigation are satisfied.

Pursuant to CERCLA and the National Contingency Plan, DEEP must undertake specific community relations activities, to the extent practicable, "*prior to commencing field work for the remedial investigation.*"¹³² This timing ensures that site investigation takes into account community priorities, values, and knowledge, and it ensures that the public will have opportunities for meaningful involvement throughout the full course of site cleanup. DEEP, as the lead agency overseeing the cleanup, is responsible for planning and implementing the community relations program. Olin, as a party responsible for the pollution, "may participate in aspects of the community relations program at the discretion of and with oversight by [DEEP]."¹³³ Although Clean Sites, Inc.'s letter certifying Olin's 1988 Remedial Investigation Study apprised DEEP of its responsibility to undertake community relations activities for the Six Lakes site, there is no indication in DEEP's records that these activities were performed. As DEEP and Olin reinitiate site investigations, they must prioritize undertaking these mandatory community relations requirements.

A Guide to the Public's Right to Participation

DEEP has a legal duty to engage the public and prepare a Community Involvement Plan.

DEEP must conduct interviews with stakeholders about how they would like to be involved in the process.

DEEP must then prepare a formal Community Involvement Plan, outlining how it will engage with the community during the remediation.

As of October 2025, Olin is in the middle of completing its duty to issue a Remedial Investigation Study as specified in the consent order. This must be completed before DEEP and Olin begin negotiating how to plan and execute the Six Lakes remediation itself.

After the Remedial Investigation Study is finalized, Olin will prepare a Remedial Action Plan for public comment. The public has a right to engage at several points as the plan is finalized:

A 30-day public comment period will open. If there is significant engagement, there would be a possibility of extending it.

DEEP will then analyze the comments and Olin's responses. It will then decide whether to:

Once DEEP approves Olin's remediation plan, the public still has a voice.

Olin must engage the public throughout the remediation as outlined in the Community Involvement Plan.

If more than three years lapse after notice is published but before remediation substantially begins—or if there are substantial changes to the proposed approach—the regulations require the reissuing of public notice and additional opportunities for the public to comment.

(a) Direct Olin to send the summary and its responses—either as prepared by Olin or as revised by DEEP—to everyone who commented;

(b) Determine that the comments show that there is substantial interest in the remediation and direct Olin to hold a public hearing about the proposed remediation; or

(c) Notify Olin that the proposed remediation plan is premature, inadequate, or deficient—and inform Olin what it must do to get approval.

Community relations activities required by the National Contingency Plan during this site investigation phase include the following. First, DEEP must “conduct[] interviews with local officials, community residents, public interest groups, or other interested or affected parties, as appropriate, to solicit their concerns and information needs, and to learn how citizens would like to be involved” in the site cleanup process.¹³⁴ Next, DEEP must prepare “a formal community relations plan,” also referred to as Community Involvement Plan (“CIP”),¹³⁵ based on the information gathered in the interviews and other relevant sources, specifying the community

relations activities that DEEP expects to undertake during the remedial phase of the site clean-up.¹³⁶ The purpose of the CIP is threefold: first to “[e]nsure the public appropriate opportunities for involvement in a wide variety of site-related decisions, including site analysis and characterization, alternatives analysis, and selection of remedy;” second to “[d]etermine, based on community interviews, appropriate activities to ensure such public involvement;” and third to “[p]rovide appropriate opportunities for the community to learn about the site.”¹³⁷ DEEP must also establish at least one information repository at or near Six Lakes with a copy of information made available to the public about the site cleanup.¹³⁸

Following the completion of site investigation, Olin must prepare a Remedial Action Plan outlining the specific remediation activities it proposes to conduct on the site. Both Connecticut’s Remediation Standards Regulations and CERCLA require formal public notice and opportunity for written public comment on a Remedial Action Plan before remediation activities may commence.¹³⁹ Connecticut regulations require that the public notice be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the municipality in which the remediation will occur and that a copy be mailed to all immediately adjacent property owners or posted on the site.¹⁴⁰ The public notice must include information about the owner of the parcel subject to remediation, the parcel address, the nature of the pollution that will be remediated, a description of the proposed remediation, and instructions for submitting comments.¹⁴¹ After the public notice has been issued, a public comment period will be open for thirty days.¹⁴²

Additional public participation opportunities may be necessary if community members or other interested parties raise concerns during the thirty-day public comment period. If comments are received, Olin, as the entity responsible for the remediation, must submit to DEEP a written summary of all comments and a proposed response to each comment.¹⁴³ Based on the comments and Olin’s proposed responses, DEEP may either: (1) direct Olin to send the written summary and response document, either as prepared by Olin or as revised by DEEP, to each person who submitted comments, (2) determine that there is substantial interest in the proposed remediation and direct Olin to hold a public meeting regarding the proposed remediation, or (3) determine that the proposed remediation is premature, inadequate, or deficient and inform Olin of additional measures that it must take to come into compliance.¹⁴⁴

If DEEP determines that a public meeting is appropriate, public notice of the meeting must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Six Lakes area for at least thirty days before the meeting.¹⁴⁵ Any interested person must have a reasonable opportunity to submit data, views, or arguments orally or in writing at the public meeting.¹⁴⁶ After the public meeting, Olin must provide DEEP with a written summary of and response to any comments received during the meeting.¹⁴⁷ Depending on the nature of the comments, DEEP may decide that the proposed remediation must be revised to adequately address concerns.¹⁴⁸

Public participation does not stop after the remedial action plan is approved. If there is any substantial change to remedial actions from those described to the public, DEEP must reinstitute public notice and a new thirty-day public comment period.¹⁴⁹ It must also reinstitute public notice and comment if more than three years elapses between public notice and the start of remediation.¹⁵⁰ In addition, for the Six Lakes parcel, DEEP must ensure that the community involvement

activities specified in the CIP prepared during the site investigation phase are undertaken throughout the remediation process.

Toward Community-Led Remediation

Ecological restoration is far from the only challenge facing Six Lakes. The site's contamination has inflicted profound psychological harm on the surrounding community. For decades, residents of Newhall and Southern Hamden have lived beside a fenced-off landscape, knowing that the soil and water beneath and near their homes hold toxins left behind by industries that once employed their families but ultimately treated their neighborhoods as expendable. The damage experienced by neighborhoods surrounding Six Lakes includes the cumulative weight of being ignored by institutions designed to protect and promote public welfare and of watching bureaucratic promises go unfulfilled.

Healing Six Lakes will require repairing trust and affirming the right of residents to shape the future of their environment. The work of the Six Lakes Park Coalition exemplifies what community-led repair can look like in practice. The Coalition track record speaks to its commitment to, and the community's interest in, the future of this site: successfully gathering over 2000 petition signatures from community members to push for a public park, collecting over 500 community survey responses on what residents envision for a future public park, and organizing community meetings to develop a community vision report for transforming Six Lakes into a public park. The Coalition strives to center the voices, values, and aspirations of the people most impacted by the site's toxic legacy. Its vision is not simply about removing contamination from soil and groundwater; it is about reclaiming public space, restoring ecological health, and affirming the dignity and agency of communities who have been denied environmental equity for generations.

To repair strained community relationships and rebuild trust, DEEP and Olin should engage with the Six Lakes Park Coalition as a vehicle for community partnership. The Federal EPA recognizes that community advisory groups like the Coalition are particularly important when a contaminated site is located in an Environmental Justice Community or when there is otherwise a deficit in trust that necessitates particular care in community engagement.¹⁵¹ A community advisory group can help bridge this gulf by providing a consistent channel of communication between the affected community, the lead agency, and the party responsible for the remediation and ensure that community relations and public participation activities are designed to, as DEEP's Public Participation Guidance calls for, "meet people where they are."¹⁵²

By engaging with the community and stakeholders through the Coalition, DEEP and Olin will help ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated and that the community is no longer left in the dark about work on the site and timelines and goals for its cleanup. This engagement will help build sustained partnership in the future Six Lakes Park with the community, which will be the ultimate beneficiary, user, and steward of the site once clean-up is completed.

CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS FOR CENTERING COMMUNITY IN SIX LAKES

The history of Six Lakes makes plain that environmental cleanup is fundamentally about justice. For decades, under-resourced residents of Southern Hamden have carried the dual burdens of environmental contamination and institutional neglect. Addressing the toxic legacy of Six Lakes and the harm inflicted on the Newhall neighborhood and surrounding communities requires that DEEP and Olin uphold both the letter and the spirit of the law and fulfill commitments to environmental justice and repair.

First and foremost, DEEP must immediately undertake the community involvement activities required under both federal law, and state law and policy. This means conducting comprehensive community interviews to understand the concerns, priorities, and needs of residents who have been historically excluded from decisions about the land that surrounds their homes and schools.¹⁵³ These interviews must be the starting point for a Community Involvement Plan that DEEP co-develops with the community. The plan should detail how information will be shared, how decisions will be explained, and how residents will participate in shaping remediation strategies and future land use.¹⁵⁴

Equally critical is engaging with the Six Lakes Park Coalition as a community advisory group in the site cleanup. Community advisory groups have proven to be powerful tools for ensuring that communities directly affected by hazardous waste sites have a consistent, organized, and respected voice in the cleanup process.¹⁵⁵ The Coalition has spent years educating residents, developing vision plans for the site's transformation, and advocating for transparent and equitable remediation. DEEP and Olin should recognize the Coalition's leadership, provide funding and technical assistance to expand community outreach, and treat the group as a co-equal partner in development of the Community Involvement Plan and in future decisions regarding Six Lakes.

Trauma-informed practices should also be embedded throughout the remediation process. The community's experience is not just one of physical exposure to pollutants; it is a history of institutional betrayal, silence, and broken promises. Effective community engagement should recognize this legacy and avoid retraumatizing residents. Meetings should be held in accessible, trusted spaces; materials should be translated and written in plain language; and logistical barriers such as childcare, transportation, and stipends for participation should be addressed. Most importantly, officials must be willing to listen without defensiveness and to act on what they hear.

Transparency and timely information are equally critical. DEEP must create and maintain physical and online information repositories where all relevant reports, data, and updates about the Six Lakes cleanup are easily accessible to the public. Communications should not merely announce decisions but also explain the reasoning behind them and invite feedback. For decades, secrecy and technical jargon have alienated the community members most affected by this contamination. That must end.

Finally, DEEP and Olin must commit to a clear, enforceable timeline for the remediation of Six Lakes and for realizing the site's future use. The Six Lakes Park Coalition released in December 2024 the report *A Community Vision for Six Lakes: Nature, Education, Neighborhood Connections*, which summarizes the results of the Coalition's community visioning process. As described in the report, participants in the community visioning process detailed three clear desires for Six Lakes:

1. A desire for a park where the community could walk, hike, picnic, bird watch, and simply enjoy the outdoors in a relatively undisturbed natural environment.
2. A desire for a park where, in addition to passive recreation, the community could engage in educational and enrichment activities, such as school field trips, afterschool and adult programs; creation of a nature center or discovery museum; and research by university students.
3. A desire for a park that could provide physical connection to neighborhoods and serve as a multi-generational space for children and families.

A Community Vision for Six Lakes also documents the community's desire that Olin clean up the site swiftly and thoroughly on a clear and enforceable timeline. This timeline includes initiation of cleanup in line with the community's desired end use by the close of 2026, completion of cleanup and beginning of park construction by the end of 2028, and opening of the park to the public by the end of 2029. The community should not have to wait until another decade dawns to enjoy a safe outdoor space for recreation and connection in their own backyard.

Many issues beyond the scope of this white paper will need to be studied and addressed for this vision to be realized. These issues include identification of standards to which the site should be remediated, the relationship of the standards to the site's anticipated end uses, and the process by which the governing level of cleanup is determined, as well as questions of post-remediation ownership and the community's role in these processes. These are all topics currently being studied by the Coalition's Land Acquisition and Management work group and may be the subject of future community reports.

The community's vision for Six Lakes has been steadfast: to convert this long-abused land into a public park that provides ecological restoration, environmental education, and recreational opportunities for all residents. Realizing this vision is an act of reclaiming space, repairing harm, and affirming that Black, brown, and low-income communities deserve the same access to safe, healthy environments as any community.

The story of Six Lakes is a stark reminder that environmental harm does not happen in a vacuum. It is the product of historical forces—industrial expansion, racial segregation, redlining, and decades of policy choices that have treated certain communities and landscapes as expendable. For residents of Newhall and Southern Hamden, the toxic legacy of Winchester Repeating Arms and Olin Corporation has been compounded by institutional silence and a half century of regulatory neglect.

Yet Six Lakes is also a story of resilience. Despite fences, contamination, and bureaucratic inertia, the people of Hamden and their allies have not given up on the dream that this landscape could be transformed. The Six Lakes Park Coalition has offered a vision of what justice looks like: a public park that heals both land and community, restores ecological function, and affirms that Black and brown neighborhoods deserve safe, beautiful, and healthy environments just as much as any other community.

The law, too, is clear. Under CERCLA, Connecticut's Remediation Standard Regulations, and the governing Consent Order, the community has the right to participate meaningfully in decisions about investigation, cleanup, and the future use of contaminated sites.¹⁵⁶ This is not simply procedural formality—it is an essential protection for communities historically burdened by environmental racism. Six Lakes must not remain a monument to broken promises and environmental degradation. It must become a model of restorative justice and community-led repair. The time to reclaim Six Lakes for the Hamden community is now.

Notes

1. As discussed below, Olin and DEEP first signed a Consent Order regarding the site remediation of Six Lakes on January 10, 1986. This Consent Order was amended on April 22, 1987 to fix typographical errors, add page numbering, and substitute the correct name of a chemical compound. Allyn Myles Carnam, Corporate Regulatory Counsel, Olin, Letter to DEEP re: Amended Pine Swamp Consent Order, June 8, 1987. In this White Paper, the “Consent Order” will refer to the amended 1987 Consent Order.
2. *Id.*
3. ISABEL WILKERSON, *THE WARMTH OF OTHER SUNS: THE EPIC STORY OF AMERICA’S GREAT MIGRATION* (2010); NICHOLAS DAWIDOFF, *THE OTHER SIDE OF PROSPECT: A STORY OF VIOLENCE, INJUSTICE, AND THE AMERICAN CITY* (2022).
4. *Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America*, HOLC Residential Security Map, New Haven, Conn., Area Description D4, Univ. of Richmond, https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/CT/NewHaven/area_descriptions/D4#loc=15/41.3223/-72.9246&advview=full.
5. See, e.g., Eric Patrick McLoughney, *The Breath of the Bronx: Limited Greenspace and Poor Respiratory Health* (May 10, 2019) (Thesis, Fordham University), https://research.library.fordham.edu/environ_2015/84/; Laura Arenschield, *Income, Race Are Associated with Disparities in Access to Greenspace*, PHYS.ORG (June 23, 2020), <https://phys.org/news/2020-06-income-disparities-access-green-spaces.html>.
6. Jalonnie L. White-Newsome et al., *Historical Redlining and Urban Health Today in U.S. Cities*, 131 ENV’T HEALTH PERSPS. 127003 (2023), <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/full/10.1289/EHP11164>.
7. Prior to 2011, DEEP was named the Connecticut Department of Environment Protection (“CT DEP”). This White Paper uses the term “DEEP” to refer to the agency both before and after this name change.
8. Olin and DEEP first signed a Consent Order regarding the site remediation of Six Lakes on January 10, 1986. See 1986 Consent Order [Appendix]. This Consent Order was amended on April 22, 1987 to fix typographical errors, add page numbering, and substitute the correct name of a chemical compound. Allyn Myles Carnam, Corporate Regulatory Counsel, Olin, Letter to DEEP re: Amended Pine Swamp Consent Order, June 8, 1987 [Appendix]. In this White Paper, the “Consent Order” will refer to the amended 1987 Consent Order.
9. *Pine Swamp Property Remedial Investigation Study Hamden, Connecticut for The Olin Corporation Stamford, Connecticut*, MALCOLM PIRNIE (December 1988).
10. *Pine Swamp Property*, Presentation, OLIN ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION GROUP 40 (December 20, 2022).
11. *Olin Corporation (OLN)*, YAHOO FINANCE (Oct. 4, 2023), <https://finance.yahoo.com/quote/OLN/key-statistics/>.
12. Lisa Reisman, *Newhall To Hamden: Focus On “Foundations First,”* NEW HAVEN INDEPENDENT, Dec. 9, 2024, https://www.newhavenindependent.org/article/newhall_residents_to_hamden_crumbling_foundations_fixed_before_community_center.
13. Kelly Davila & Mark Abraham, *New Haven Neighborhood Changes 2010 to 2020*, DATAHAVEN, <https://www.ctdatahaven.org/reports/2020-census-data-demographic-change-connecticut-town-and-city-neighborhoods/new-haven-neighborhood-changes-2010-2020#:~:text=Between%202010%20and%202020%2C%20the,Haven%2C%20and%20the%20Hill;East%20Rock,NICHE,https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/n/newhallville-new-haven-ct/>.
14. *Connecticut Environmental Justice Screening Tool Final Report* at 89, CONNECTICUT INSTITUTE FOR RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION (August 2023), https://connecticut-environmental-justice-circa.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3393/2023/08/FinalReport_ver2.o.pdf.
15. See generally ROB NIXON, *SLOW VIOLENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENTALISM OF THE POOR* (2011) (using the concept of slow violence to analyze the effect of climate and environmental crises on the marginalized).
16. *A Community Vision for Six Lakes: Nature, Education, and Neighborhood Connections*, SIX LAKES PARK COALITION (Fall 2024).

17. *Id.*
18. Leigh Baker, Robin Barr, Sarah Bendit & Tasha Eichenseher, *Six Lakes Park: A Vision and Management Plan for the Olin Powder Farm, Hamden, Connecticut* 3 (Yale Univ. Sch. of Forestry & Env'tal Stud. 2004) at 2-3 [hereinafter "2004 Yale Vision and Management Plan"].
19. *Id.* at 3. Technically, there are six interconnected ponds which may lead to different counts of the total number of water bodies. See *Biophysical Characteristics of the Olin Powder Farm Property* in *Olin Powder Farm Management Plan*, YALE SCHOOL OF FORESTRY & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, (May 1, 2004), <http://sixlakespark.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Yale-Forestry-Biophysical-Information48-74.pdf> ("The significance of the Olin Powder Farm site is enhanced by the fact that the six interconnected ponds on site will be reincorporated into the public drinking water supply system in 2004, serving as pretreatment basins for water flowing towards Lake Whitney and the new Lake Whitney water treatment facility.").
20. Connecticut DEEP, Presentation re: Pine Swamp Historical Summary, Site Model, and Future (May 5, 2023) at 4.
21. *Id.* at 4.
22. 2004 Yale Vision and Management Plan at 2-3.
23. 2004 Yale Vision and Management Plan at 162
24. Nicholas Dawidoff, *The Other Side of Prospect: A Story of Violence, Injustice, and the American City* 41 (2022).
25. *Id.*
26. Environmental Research & Technology, Inc., *Environmental Investigation of Pine Swamp Hamden, CT, Prepared for Olin Corporation* at 2-9 (Jan. 1981).
27. Leonard Parente, *Hamden Health Department, Nuisance Abatement Order to Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation* (March 23, 1966).
28. 2004 Yale Vision and Management Plan at 23
29. 1987 Consent Order at 2-3; Malcolm Pirnie, Pine Swamp Site Program Report for Olin Corporation (August 1983) at 10-12.
30. *Agreement Between Olin Mathieson Chem. Corp. & New Haven Water Co.* (May 7, 1964), recorded in Volume 484 at Page 384, Hamden Land Records (Conn.).
31. The South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (Regional Water Authority) assumed the agreement when it acquired the former New Haven Water Company in 1980, and the Hamden Land Conservation Trust reports obtaining the right of first refusal from the Regional Water Authority in 2021 to facilitate redevelopment of Six Lakes into a public park.
32. Vincent Prota, Sanitarian, Hamden Health Department, Memorandum re: Dumping and Burning at Olin Mathieson Co., 475 Putnam Avenue, Hamden (March 17, 1966).
33. *Id.*
34. Parente, Hamden Health Department, Nuisance Abatement Order at 1-2 (1966), <https://perma.cc/M2LH-GJS3>.
35. *Id.* at 2.
36. *Id.* at 2.
37. *King's Mark Environmental Review Team, Environmental Review Team Report on Olin Powder Farm, Hamden, Connecticut* at 1-2, (August 1979) [hereinafter "1979 Environmental Report"] <http://sixlakespark.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Environmental-Review-Team-Report-Olin-Powder-Farm-1979.pdf>.
38. *Id.* at 2 (recognizing that "there is little park land in this built up section of town. Most of the town's park areas are located at the northern extremes of the town.")
39. *Id.* at 8 ("All of the ponds and wetlands on the site are fed by groundwater; hence, the quality of surface water nad ground water on the property are closely related" and both could be adversely impacted by buried wastes and other contamination "considering the past and present industrial uses in the area."); Environmental Research & Technology, Inc., *Environmental Investigation of Pine Swamp Hamden, CT, Prepared for Olin Corporation* (Jan. 1981).

40. Vincent Prota, Sanitarian, Hamden Health Department, Memorandum re: Dumping and Burning at Olin Mathieson Co., 475 Putnam Avenue, Hamden (March 17, 1966); Judi Doherty, *Pine Swamp Dump Area Is Traced To Olin Corp.*, NEW HAVEN REGISTER (Nov. 6, 1979).
41. Brian Curtis, Senior Sanitary Engineer, DEEP Water Compliance Unit, Letter to Olin re: Work Plan Approval with Additions (November 17, 1981); see Frances J. Ludwig, Environmental Analyst, New Haven Water Company, Letter to DEEP Requesting Investigation of Drums (December 9, 1981) (New Haven Water Company urging DEEP to begin research immediately into the contents and impacts on local water supplies of recently discovered 55-gallon drums buried at the Six Lakes site).
42. See, e.g., 1979 Environmental Report; Environmental Research & Technology, Description of Field Program (April 5, 1980); H. Hodge, DEEP, Pine Swamp Hazardous Materials Management Unit Inspection Report (November 28, 1980); Environmental Research and Technology, Environmental Investigation of Pine Swamp Hamden, CT (January 1981); 2004 Yale Vision and Management Plan.
43. Robert E. Moore, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, DEEP, Letter to Olin re Intent to Issue Abatement Order (April 11, 1983). Note: DEEP is statutorily charged with the responsibility for the protection of the environment under Connecticut General Statutes §§ 22a-6, 22a-424, and 22a-432. See 1987 Consent Order at 1 [Appendix].
44. Letter from DEEP to Olin re Intent to Issue Abatement Order (April 11, 1983).
45. *Id.*
46. In a letter to DEEP, Olin noted that the company, at that time, “continues to believe that exhumation of the waste at Pine Swamp is neither the proper environmental response to the situation nor is it required by State law, regulation or policy.” Letter from Allyn Myles Carnam, Counsel – Regulatory Affairs, Olin Corporation to DEEP, re Retaining Additional Site Investigation (August 19, 1983).
47. See Malcolm Pirnie, Pine Swamp Site Program Report for Olin Corporation (August 1983); Fuss & O’Neill, Hydrogeology Study Anixter Communications (March 1983). Anixter refers to Anixter International Inc., a national communications products and electronics manufacturer, which dumped industrial pollutants in a northeast quadrant of the Six Lakes site from 1978 to 1980. Monitoring wells installed by Olin in 1980 and 1981 showed particularly high levels of chlorinated hydrocarbons, which DEEP suspected originated from a portion of the Anixter site. Field investigations revealed multiple barrels emanating these same hydrocarbons buried in a pit on the northeast corner of the Anixter property. DEEP then issued a pollution abatement order to Anixter to investigate the extent of groundwater and soil contamination, and to take necessary remedial actions to minimize and eliminate it. *Id.* at 9-10.
48. Malcolm Pirnie, Pine Swamp Site Program Report for Olin Corporation at 10-12 (August 1983).
49. Letter from Robert E. Moore, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, DEEP, Letter to Olin re Issuing Cleanup Order (May 11, 1984).
50. Olin and DEEP first signed a Consent Order regarding the site remediation of Six Lakes on January 10, 1986. See 1986 Consent Order [Appendix]. This Consent Order was amended on April 22, 1987 to fix typographical errors, add page numbering, and substitute the correct name of a chemical compound. Letter from Allyn Myles Carnam, Corporate Regulatory Counsel, Olin, to DEEP re: Amended Pine Swamp Consent Order (June 8, 1987).
51. CONN. AGENCIES REGS. § 22a-133k-1(d); 42 U.S.C. § 9617(a) (requiring publication of notice and brief analysis of a proposed plan for remedial action under CERCLA and a reasonable opportunity for submission of written adoral comments and for a public meeting at or near the facility regarding the proposed plan before remediation action may commence).
52. Darrell B. Smith, Deputy Director of Engineering, Water Quality & Research, South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, Letter to Olin Corporation Attaching Review of Malcolm Pirnie Pine Swamp Report (October 31, 1988)
53. *Id.* at 3; Letter from G.T. Wisely, Project Manager, Olin Corporation, to DEEP PCB Unit re Discovery of PCB Contaminated Soils at Anixter Area (Sept. 25, 1990).
54. *Id.*
55. Draft letter from O’Connor, DEEP, to Olin Corporation re Review of 1988 RIS (June 7, 1996) [Appendix].
56. Malcolm Pirnie, Olin Pine Swamp Interim Corrective Measures Report (June 1991) at 5 [Appendix] [hereinafter “1991 Interim Corrective Measures Report”].
57. See Letter from G.T. Wisely, Chief of Environmental Compliance, Olin Corporation, to DEEP re Interim Corrective Measures (September 20, 1989) [Appendix] (outlining proposed interim corrective measures).

58. 1991 Interim Corrective Measures Report at 5-7 (executive summary describing remediation work conducted by Olin between 1989 and 1991, including excavation and removal of demolition debris in the southeast kettle area and exposed lead contaminated ballistic trap sand in the southern portion of the site, and the pilot testing of a soil vacuum extraction system in the Anixter area). *See also* Pine Swamp Site Activity Update Presentation for Meeting between Olin and DEEP (Sept. 23, 1992).
59. *See* Letter from G.T. Wisely, Project Manager, Olin Corporation, to DEEP re Olin Pine Swamp, Hamden, Connecticut, Anixter Area PCB Contaminated Soils (September 25, 1990).
60. *Learn About Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)*, U.S. ENVTL. PROT. AGENCY, <https://www.epa.gov/pcbs/learn-about-polychlorinated-biphenyls> (last updated March 28, 2025).
61. *Public Health Statement: Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)*, AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND DISEASE REGISTRY (November 2000), <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/ToxProfiles/tp17-c1-b.pdf>.
62. *Id.*
63. Letter from. Lori Saliby, PCB Mgmt Division, DEEP, to Olin re PCB Soil Remediation (Oct. 10, 1990) [Appendix].
64. Letter from Steve Magee, Project Engineer, Envirogen, to Olin, re Work Performed for Soil Vapor Extraction System (April 13, 1994).
65. Letter from Neil O. Neunaber, Site Team Manager, Olin, to EPA, Requesting No EPA Involvement (April 14, 1994).
66. *Id.* at 4.
67. *See* Olin Pine Swamp Newsletter (Summer 1994); Olin Pine Swamp Newsletter (Spring 1995).
68. Olin Pine Swamp Newsletter (Summer 1994).
69. Letter from Thomas RisCassi, Supervising Environmental Analyst, Remediation Section, Bureau of Waste Management, DEEP, to U.S. EPA, re State Lead (June 13, 2005) (a letter from DEEP requesting that EPA identify Six Lakes as an “Active State Lead” site with low priority for further federal Superfund evaluation). *See also* EPA, Superfund Site Information: Pine Swamp (Olin Corporation), <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/CurSites/csinfo.cfm?id=0100224> (listing the site as “Not on the NPL” and designating it as a “State-Lead Cleanup”).
70. *See* DEEP, Newhall Street Neighborhood Remediation Project Remedy Selection Plan (October 2007), https://www.hamdenedc.com/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/ARPA/CT_Dep_2007_Newhall_Neighborhood_Remediation_Project.pdf.
71. *See* DEEP, Newhall Street Neighborhood Remediation Project Remedy Selection Plan (October 2007), https://www.hamdenedc.com/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/ARPA/CT_Dep_2007_Newhall_Neighborhood_Remediation_Project.pdf.
72. Letter from RisCassi, DEEP, to U.S. EPA re State Lead, at 2 (June 13, 2005).
73. Letter from Jane K. Stahl, Deputy Commissioner, DEEP, to Representative J. Brendan Sharkey (Sept. 19, 2001) at 2.
74. *Id.*
75. Letter from Patrick F. Bowe, Director, Remediation Division, Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse, DEEP, to David M. Share, Director, Environmental Remediation, Olin Corporation re Restarting Environmental Investigation and Remediation (Jan. 27, 2014) [hereinafter “2014 Pine Swamp Restart Letter”].
76. Letter from William Farrell, Chairman, Hamden Natural Resources and Open Space Commission, to Arthur Roque, Commissioner, DEEP (Feb. 13, 2001).
77. Letter from Jane K. Stahl, Deputy Commissioner, DEEP, to William Farrell, Chairman, Hamden Natural Resources and Open Space Commission (March 15, 2001).
78. Letter from Jane K. Stahl, Deputy Commissioner, DEEP, to Representative J. Brendan Sharkey (Sept. 19, 2001) at 2.
79. Letter from Arthur J. Rocque Jr., Commissioner, DEEP, to Senator Martin Looney (July 25, 2001).
80. Letter from Arthur J. Rocque Jr., Commissioner, DEEP, to Senator Martin Looney (July 25, 2001).
81. Letter from State Senator Martin M. Looney, to DEEP Commissioner Arthur Rocque re Remediation of the Olin Powder Farm Site (Feb. 2, 2004).

82. Letter from Arthur J. Rocque Jr., Commissioner, DEEP, to Senator Martin Looney (May 4, 2004).
83. Letter from Curtis P. Johnson, VP, Hamden Land Conservation Trust, to DEEP Enclosing 2004 Yale Vision and Management Plan (August 2, 2004).
84. For a full list of member organizations to the Six Lakes Park Coalition, please consult the Coalition website at <http://sixlakespark.org/about-slp/>.
85. *Our Lands*, Hamden Land Conservation Trust, (last visited Aug. 4, 2025), <https://www.hlct.org/our-lands.html>.
86. See Letter from Justin Farmer, Councilor Hamden, Gail Cameron, President HLCT, Curt Johnson, President, Save the Sound & Brad Macdowall, Councilor, Hamden to Larry L. Bingaman, President and Chief Executive Officer, South Central Regional Water Authority (Jan. 28, 2021), <https://perma.cc/MR8D-SF8T>.
87. See Letter from Town of Hamden, to DEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes (Sept. 27, 2021); Town of Hamden, Letter to Carrie Hunt, Olin Corporation (Sept. 27, 2021); Town of Hamden, Letter to David Share, Olin Corporation (Sept. 27, 2021).
88. *Id.*
89. Letter from Elizabeth T. Bowen, Principal, Environmental Remediation, Olin Corporation, to Town of Hamden (Oct. 13, 2021).
90. Town of Hamden Legislative Council, Resolution Concerning Restorative Justice for Southern Hamden and Urging the Conversion of the Former 'Olin Power Farm' to a Public Space Consistent with the Community's Vision (Nov. 28, 2022) [hereinafter "2022 Hamden Public Space Resolution"].
91. WSP Environment & Infrastructure, Olin Pine Swamp Investigation Work Plan (Oct. 28, 2022) [hereinafter "2022 Olin IWP"]. Olin also presented to DEEP a conceptual site plan for contaminated areas of Six Lakes that were not covered by the 1987 Consent Order. Olin Corporation, Presentation to DEEP re Non-Consent Order Area of Pine Swamp Property Conceptual Site Model (Dec. 20, 2022).
92. WSP Environment & Infrastructure, Olin Pine Swamp Investigation Work Plan (Oct. 11, 2024); WSP Environment & Infrastructure, Olin Pine Swamp Investigation Work Plan Revised (Dec. 2, 2024) [hereinafter "2024 IWP"].
93. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(i).
94. 1987 Consent Order at 1-2.
95. 1987 Consent Order at 2-3. Olin also agreed to submit a Scope of Work for the remedial investigation survey within 90 days from the entry date of Consent Order. Once they received DEEP's approval, Olin was supposed to implement the RIS within 60 days. *Id.* at 3.
96. 1987 Consent Order at 2-3.
97. 1987 Consent Order at 3-4.
98. The National Contingency Plan is a set of regulations intended to "provide the organizational structure and procedures for and responding to discharges of oil and releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants." 40 C.F.R. § 300.1. The National Contingency Plan was first developed in 1968 in response to a massive oil spill off the coast of England. It has since been broadened to provide a framework for responding to hazardous substance releases into water and undertaking response actions under CERCLA. 40 C.F.R. § 300.3. For more information on the National Contingency Plan, see *National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) Overview*, U.S. ENV'T PROT. AGENCY, <https://www.epa.gov/emergency-response/national-oil-and-hazardous-substances-pollution-contingency-plan-ncp-overview>.
99. Gerardo Millan-Ramos, U.S. EPA Region 1, Remedial Site Assessment Decision, Pine Swamp (June 13, 2005).
100. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(i).
101. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(ii).
102. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(iii).
103. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(3).
104. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(f)(3).

105. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(f)(3).
106. See U.S. EPA, Superfund Community Advisory Group Toolkit for the Community (Dec. 2021), <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/HQ/100003202.pdf>.
107. Letter from Gerardo Millan-Ramos, U.S. EPA to Tom Riscassi, CDEP (July 29, 2005).
108. *Id.*
109. *CERCLA Site Information: Pine Swamp (Olin Corporation)*, U.S. ENV'T PROT. AGENCY, <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/CurSites/csinfo.cfm?id=0100224>.
110. *Id.*
111. CONN. GEN. STAT. § 22a-133k(a)
112. See CONN. GEN. STAT. § 22a-6dd; Regs., Conn. State Agencies § 22a-3a-6(l) (encouraging disposition of contested DEEP enforcement actions by consent order, provided that the order is consistent with policies and procedures of relevant provisions of law).
113. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22a-6dd.
114. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22a-133k-1(d)(4)
115. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22a-133k-1(d)(D)(iii).
116. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22a-133k-1(d)(2).
117. *Environmental Justice Public Participation Guidance*, DEEP, https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/deep/climatechange/gc3/gc3-2020-agendas-and-minutes/public-participation-documents/gc3_public_participation_guidance.pdf?rev=27ae6257f5a0425da2bc8280615830e5&hash=D5DF2892EB22F9D3F9AB6896E3AF1037 [hereinafter “DEEP Public Participation Guidance”] (excerpted from 2020 EEJ Report).
118. DEEP, *Environmental Equity Policy* (Dec. 17, 1993), <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Environmental-Justice/Environmental-Equity-Policy>.
119. *Id.*
120. *Id.*
121. CONN. GEN. STAT. § 22a-1.
122. DEEP, Equity and Environmental Justice Working Group Report (Nov. 2020), [hereinafter “EEJ Report”] https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/deep/climatechange/gc3/gc3-working-group-reports/gc3_equity_ej_final_report_111320.pdf?rev=3ed3e8ad24904c3980f3e507e31ee30a&hash=6CB45D55345CB11F9F63908A9EDC726D.
123. *Id.* at 15.
124. DEEP Public Participation Guidance.
125. Executive Order 21-3, *Connecticut State Climate Action*, <https://portal.ct.gov/connecticutclimateaction/executive-order/executive-order-no-21-3>.
126. DEEP Public Participation Guidance at 1.
127. *Id.* at 2.
128. *Id.* at 3.
129. *Id.* at 2.
130. *Id.* at 6.
131. Draft letter from O'Connor, DEEP to Olin Corporation re Review of 1988 RIS (June 7, 1996) [Appendix].
132. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2) (emphasis added).
133. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(3).

134. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(i).
135. For guidance on development of community involvement plans, see EPA's 2020 guide to *Community Involvement Plans* (2020), available at <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/HQ/100002210.pdf>, and other resources in EPA's CIP Toolkit at <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/community-involvement-tools-and-resources#files>.
136. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(ii).
137. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(ii) (A-C).
138. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(iii). For sites listed on the National Priorities List (so-called "Superfund sites"), CERCLA also authorized the federal government to provide technical assistance grants to affected communities to assist them in understanding and evaluating the nature of the hazard, remedial investigation and feasibility study, remedial design, and other components of the remediation process. 42 U.S.C. § 9617(e). The lead agency must inform the community of the availability of technical assistance grants prior to commencing fieldwork for the remedial investigation. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(iv).
139. CONN. AGENCIES REGS. § 22a-133k-1(d); 42 U.S.C. § 9617(a) (requiring publication of notice and brief analysis of a proposed plan for remedial action under CERCLA and a reasonable opportunity for submission of written adoral comments and for a public meeting at or near the facility regarding the proposed plan before remediation action may commence).
140. Regs., Conn. State Agencies § 22a-133k-1(d)(1)(A).
141. *Id.* § 22a-133k-1(d)(1)(B).
142. *Id.* § 22a-133k-1(d)(2)(A).
143. *Id.* § 22a-133k-1(d)(2)(C).
144. *Id.* § 22a-133k-1(d)(2)(D).
145. *Id.* § 22a-133k-1(d)(2)(D)(iii).
146. *Id.*
147. *Id.* § 22a-133k-1(d)(2)(E).
148. *Id.*
149. *Id.* § 22a-133k-1(d)(3)(A).
150. *Id.* § 22a-133k-1(d)(3)(B).
151. U.S. EPA, *Guidance for Supporting Community Advisory Groups at Superfund Sites* (Aug. 2020), <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/HQ/100002540.pdf>.
152. DEEP Public Participation Guidance at 2.
153. 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c)(2)(ii).
154. *Id.*; Conn. Agencies Regs. § 22a-133k-1(d).
155. EPA, *Superfund Community Involvement Handbook* (2016).
156. 42 U.S.C. § 9617; 40 C.F.R. § 300.430(c); Conn. Agencies Regs. § 22a-133k-1(d).

