



## “Tour de Pascommuck”

*Public Invited...No Cost Entertainment*

### Ken Larsen

*Property Inventory Needed*

**Chief Tecumseh knew the real value of land** and need for man's stewardship over that land when he proclaimed, *“We do not own the land, the land owns us..we are stewards...”*

As stewards of all the property held by the Pascommuck Conservation Trust, Inc., we have generally relied upon an *informal approach* towards inspecting our properties to not both the desirable and undesirable changes that occur from year to year, either natural or man-made changes.

Being stewards of over 150 acres in Easthampton, your Board of Directors agrees unanimously that there is a need to improve our current informal approach to one that is more formalized.

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## Wetlands

*Functions and Values*

### John Watling

Wetlands play an important role in the world and their protection is critical. These ecosystems provide a habitat for a majority of the wildlife on the Federal Endangered Species List.

Functions are the biological, chemical and physical processes occurring in and making up an ecosystem. Wetlands, regardless of our understanding of these functions, sustain our way of life. When the individuals responsible for decision making regarding these precious resources do not understand the basics of these functions and values, they make choices that prevent ecosystems from functioning to their full potential. The results can be potentially irreversible and extremely detrimental to the life and economy of the region.

Wetlands regulate the flow of water within watersheds; storing surface water and precipitation and slowly releasing it to associated surface water resources and the atmosphere. Wetlands help maintain the water table, providing recharge to ground water sources as well as other waters. Wetland plant species are unique in allowing air to move quickly from their leaves to roots allowing oxygen requiring processes such as decomposition, denitrification, and organic compound breakdown to occur (Steinberg and Coonrod 1994). Phosphorus entering wetlands is absorbed and used by the plants and soil microbes in these systems, providing a natural water purifying process. Suspended solids are filtered in wetlands as they come into contact with the vegetation living there. Typically wetland vegetation traps 80-90% of sediment from runoff (Gilliam 1994; Johnston 1991). Shorelines are stabilized by the root systems of the wetland plants.

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To accomplish the formalization process of annual property inventory/stewardship surveys we will utilize a *prepared written form* to be completed as we physically tour each of our properties. This form, along with photographs we will take of the parcels, will be compiled into a binder and updated accordingly.

There are several reasons that compel us to perform these inventories. Primarily, we are legally obligated as landowners to monitor our properties and take reasonable corrective action to mitigate hazards to the general public. Secondly, we are morally bound to ascertain that our defined land conservation goals are not being abused (AE vandalism, erosion from ATV traffic, unauthorized destruction or removal of vegetation). We will discuss these reasons further during our walking tours.

### **Tentative Schedule of Property Walks**

The Trust plans on conducting the walks on our various parcels every third and fourth Tuesday of the month. Our first walk was scheduled to be on the Dwyer and Tichy parcels but the heavy rains made postponement of this necessary.

The second property walk was scheduled for Tuesday, June 23. The four parcels in the southern Plains area of town were walked and assessed. Neighbors from the Plain, Strong, Park, and Brook Street areas were sent postcards of invitation as well as the new residents of the Kingsbury Drive and Laurel Lane neighborhood.

We will try to post our future property walks on Channel 5, Easthampton's web page and in the Gazette via a press release to the editor. Please consider joining us on these hikes. Walks will be at 7:00 P.M in the evening. Please prepare yourself for the bugs we may encounter. All walkers may assist in the Property Inventory if they desire.

## **Park Hill**

### *Part Two*

### **Gerrit Stover**

It's been almost six months since we last wrote about Park Hill. But it's been even longer—almost thirteen months—since Pascommuck Conservation Trust, Inc. and Valley Land Fund first talked to the owners of the farms and orchards in this very special part of Easthampton. Finally we have news—good news!—about this major project.

Steve and Joan Micka, whose apple trees and cultivated fields straddle the Easthampton/Northampton town line and cross Park Hill Road in Northampton, have decided to sell the development rights on their 55 acre third generation family farm to Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program. In fact, we hope to close on the APR in the beginning of July. Sale of the “APR” will help the Mickas continue and expand their operation so it can remain in the family for years to come. It will also keep some of Easthampton and Northampton's most beloved and beautiful farmland productive, open, and fruitful (literally) for the benefit of the community; and, of course, for the enjoyment of apple lovers of all ages!

The Mickas' decision marks a solid beginning for the preservation of Park Hill, even as negotiations continue with another landowner on the Hill. It also means the beginning of the real work, as fundraising for the Micka APR gets underway. To protect the farm in the face of very real development pressures and delays in state funding (you've heard of the Big Dig—now you know what to blame), Northampton, Pascommuck, and Valley Land Fund must pay the Mickas over the next two years. The down payment is coming from the City of Northampton which has already promised \$26,550. The land trusts will each contribute \$9,500 to make up the required local share.

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## NEWSLETTER NAME

For our faithful longtime Trust members we are sure you noticed the July 1998 newsletter has a name. We want your inputs regarding the name and suggestions for a permanent title. Drop us a line and we'll "Post" the results. On that note, guest articles are always most welcome for publication consideration.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### TERRACE VIEW PARCEL WALK

NOTRE DAME PARKING LOT  
7:00 P.M. JULY 21, 1998  
40 acre property assessment hike

### OLD PASCOMMUCK PARCEL WALK

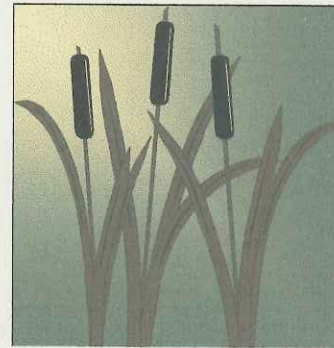
OLD PASCOMMUCK PARK ON EAST STREET  
7:00 P.M.  
Property assessment hike

### WORK PARTY

OLD PASCOMMUCK PARCEL/EAST STREET  
7:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 1998  
Clearing trails, repairing bridges and stairs.

### WORK PARTY

JOHN BATOR PARK/WILLISTON AVENUE  
7:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1998  
Cut brush, shoreline policing, weeding, etc.



The monetary value derived from the observation and photography of wetland-dependent birds by more than 50 million Americans is at least \$10 billion annually (USEPA 1994b). Easthampton has many wetlands. Locally one can visit the distant end of Nonotuck Park and see the wetlands in the Broad Brook region of the Nashawannuck Pond.

The values of wetlands are numerous. Immense varieties of species of microbes, plants, insects, amphibians, fish, birds, reptiles, and other wildlife depend in some way on wetlands. Some of the values watersheds provide us are:

- Water Quality
- Flood Control
- Erosion Control
- Community structure and wildlife support
- Recreation
- Aesthetics
- Commercial

Wetlands are among the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world. They can be compared to tropical rain forests and coral reefs in the array of species they support.

As stewards of this world, we must protect these ecosystems in danger of destruction through development and pollution. You can play a key role in this process. Let your local government know of your knowledge and concern for your local wetlands.

*Think globally; act locally.*

Write your mayor and City Council to voice your inputs regarding all issues important to you.  
Mayor Michael A. Tautznik and/or  
City Council  
Town Hall  
Easthampton, MA 001027





## HELPING BUILD MEMBERSHIP

### FRIENDS, FAMILY, NEIGHBORS

Quite often we discuss the world issues while chatting with our family and friends. Have you mentioned to them your commitment to your local world and membership in your land trust in town? They will certainly admire you for your concern for the natural beauty and resources we in the valley have been blessed with.

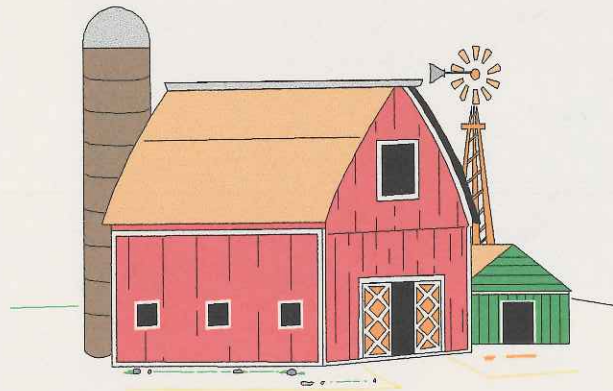
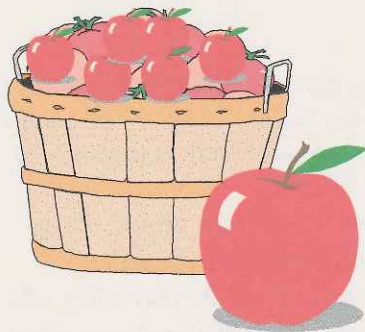
### CREATING A VISION

The Pascommuck Conservation Trust, Inc. needs ongoing new members to continue the expanding projects the members envision for Easthampton. Your help with recruiting friends and family to join the trust will help you create your vision of the Trust "Preserving the past...protecting the future". Please pass this newsletter to them and ask them to join the Trust today.

The bulk of the money will—probably no later than January 2001—be coming from the state. In the meantime, we must take out loans of \$205,450 this year, and \$200,000 next year to cover the purchase price.

Loans lead to interest payments, and by the end of 1998, we must raise \$14,400 to cover the first installments' interest. Each year thereafter until the APR program can buy the development rights from us we will need another \$28,400. So, as members of Pascommuck Conservation Trust, Inc., you will be hearing from your Board of Directors soon. We'll be calling to ask your generous financial assistance and your help in reaching your neighbors, friends, and fellow residents. Valley Land Fund will be joining Pascommuck in the fundraising, and we'll have other professional help in seeking funding from the people of Northampton and Easthampton, from foundations and large conservation organizations, and from the agricultural community.

While this all sounds like a lot of work, we feel confident this will be a great opportunity for the Trust's members to preserve this precious farmland.





# Men In Black.. Boys In White

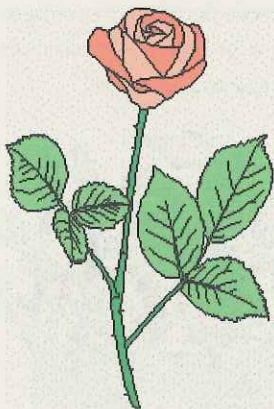
*Property updates with cynic jest*

## John Bator

Alas! The forces of evil have been quite active this spring, attacking the Trust from all fronts, determining to destroy our holdings while challenging our patience and integrity. Were it not for "Sir Bush A Lot and the Knights of the Square Table" (a.k.a. Bushman Bator and the noble Board of Directors, and various volunteers), all would be lost in the dark abyss of environmental assault.

It all started early this year, when a concerned abutter to our open space parcels in the southern area of town informed the Trust of topsoil being hauled away in truckloads from our property there. Thereafter began the process of map and deed studying, and the ultimate confrontation with the developer currently with farming rights to the property. Hopefully, this issue was resolved at a Planning Board meeting, where the developer agreed to make amends.

Then in late April some malicious fools kicked out three railing sections on the Joyce Brown memorial gazebo at the John Bator Park on Lake Street. Replacement parts are still pending (Hopefully nobody falls off the benches and lands in the vigorous rose bush growing around the base.).



And if that wasn't enough, a few days later a bunch of ding-dongs actually tipped over the gazebo! All the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty Gazebo back upright again! Until,...a mysterious (anonymous) crew of workers happened to pass by and got the job done. Talk about Good Samaritans!

What? You long for more horror stories yet? Okay. Our Old Pascommuck Conservation Area off East Street continues to be plagued by ATV's and dirt bikers creating patchworks of deep trenches rivaling the Grand Canyon. The trails are a mess because we have been too busy to handle a major work there this season. However, we will soon start posting our properties, which gives us some legal backup to protect what we have, and eventually the Cavalry may be summoned to clear trails and build new footbridges...well, maybe not the Calvary, per se, but hopefully the Boy Scouts.

Looking to things more positively now, our Earth Day Bake/Plant sale at Big E's was one of the most successful ever. A *GREAT BIG THANK YOU* to all of you that supported this fundraiser. The posies are popping at Lake Street, and during the Junior Fishing Derby at the Nashawannuck Pond, our park was utilized heavily. Folks liked our memorial bench dedicated in memory of Stanley Bogdanski. We completed the shoreline steps project with the planting of compact Cranberry Viburnams along the bank next to the steps.

Tune in next time for the continuing battle between the bad men in black and the guys in the white hats.



# En Vision Easthampton

## *A Community Coming Together*

### John Watling

Much credit can be given to the local press (the Gazette in particular) for the extensive coverage they provided on the recent visioning forums held in our community. I will waste no time in expressing what a strong sense of community spirit I felt and witnessed while attending these gatherings.

Tom Brown of the Easthampton Industrial and Development Commission called me in January, asking me to assist as a sub-committee member, working on a slide show being produced for the final forum on May 2. I accepted his invitation and spent the next few months working with five new friends I may never have met but for Tom's call to help. Some of the images in the show were Earl Mielke's. Earl is a long time Trust member that generously offered his extensive collection of historic images to this project. Earl has produced and presented numerous "History of Easthampton" slide shows to schools, clubs, and organizations in past years. I am extremely grateful to have met this fine, intelligent gentleman.

Those attending the various forums worked in break-out groups to discuss key elements that our town faces today and will face in the years ahead, those being:

- Schools and Youth
- Downtown Enhancement
- Parks and Recreation,
- Human Services
- Economic Development and Marketing
- Agriculture and Resource Protection

Space does not permit my recapping the citizen inputs on each of the above items. I would ask you keep your eyes and ears open for the word on where the final draft of the Visioning Report will be posted for your viewing.

At one forum I sat in on the Agriculture and Resource group, and another I chose the group to discuss the Schools and Youth. It was great to see an impressive showing of youth at the forums.

Some key action items recommended as a result of the visioning process regarding Agriculture and Resource Protection include:

- ❖ Educate residents about current threats to critical natural resources
- ❖ Improve condition of Nashawannuck Pond, Mt. Tom, and Oxbow.
- ❖ Commit money to purchase Park Hill Farm properties
- ❖ Establish a land bank fund to allow for open space acquisition
- ❖ Stress the importance of both farmland and wetlands protection

The inputs were many but most in attendance agreed these were extremely important action items the town must adopt. This process will be a continuing process. Successes will be achieved through *all* our efforts and support. I appeal to you to stay informed, do what you can, and pass on your appreciation of our local resources to the youngsters you know and meet.



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Please check appropriate membership and level of support:

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- Individual.....\$ 10.00
- Family.....\$ 18.00
- Contributor.....\$ 25.00
- Patron.....\$ 60.00
- Corporate.....\$ 100.00
- Sponsor.....\$ 150.00
- Life Member.....\$ 1,000.00
- I would like to be active in the Trust, helping with various activities.

(Cut along dotted line)

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