

Easthampton a

Trust would protect land for town

By ROBERT O'MALLEY

EASTHAMPTON — Town residents are setting up a non-profit organization to acquire land that would be protected for conservation, wildlife and historical preservation.

William C. Carroll, chairman of the recycling committee and the historical commission, said today that the organization, to be known as an "environmental trust," is a non-profit tax-exempt organization somewhat similar to the Kestrel Trust in Amherst, essentially formed for the same purpose.

Carroll said the acquisition of such types of property would be one way to increase the amount of "passive" recreational space in Easthampton.

While residents for some time have been considering forming such a trust, the impetus to form the organization arose when a two-parcel, five-acre tract of land bounded by East Street, River Street and the Manhan River became available for purchase, Carroll said.

Carroll said the land, which is of interest to both the conservation commission and the historical commission, lies "at the west end of the original Easthampton settlement of Pascommuck, in the late 1600s, and adjoins the Daughters of the American Revolution historical marker, the Pascommuck boulder."

The Connecticut River Watershed Council, which has also expressed interest in seeing the land preserved as passive recreation land or open space, "has offered to take an option on the property to hold it until it can be purchased for the town," Carroll said.

While Carroll noted that the "Easthampton environmental trust is not yet a reality" and thus not in a "position to accept donations to help purchase this tract," he said that the Connecticut River Watershed Council would accept money for the purchase of the property now "so that the donors can claim the charitable donation deduction for the 1981 tax year."

Carroll, who hopes that the trust will be formally organized by some time in January, said that the Connecticut River Watershed Council could accept donations on the land until that time.

The land, which is zoned industrial, is owned by a Sunderland couple and is currently up for sale, with a second party reportedly also interested in the tract, Carroll said.

Carroll said the trust is essentially meant to increase the town's passive recreation land, which is land used for hiking, relaxing, and nature study, in contrast to active recreation land, which is used, for example, for picnicking, playgrounds and organized athletics.

"Acquisition of land will be either through gift to the trust or through purchase by the trust with donated funds," said Carroll, who added that Northampton and Southampton "have acquired considerable land for this purpose during the past decade."

"One of the reasons," he said, "for forming a trust of this type is that donors of either land or money will receive tax advantages for their gifts."

While Carroll has estimated that there is little more than 50 acres of "accessible" passive recreation land in town now, notably the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, which is privately owned, he said that standards used by the Lower Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission suggest that the town should own "a minimum of 200 acres of passive recreation land based on its present population."

Moreover, Carroll explained that the Metcalf and Eddy town master plan compiled 10 years ago, "recommends nearly 2,000 acres of passive recreation land, either owned by the town or controlled by easements. A realistic figure, he noted, probably lies "somewhere between the two figures."

In light of budget limitations imposed by Proposition 2½, the effect of inflation on the price of land and the continuing development of open land, Carroll suggested that the formation of an environmental trust seemed to be the most appropriate alternative.

Land trust plots future course

By ROBERT O'MALLEY

EASTHAMPTON -- Residents organizing a conservation trust here this week elected a temporary board of directors and began plotting a course for the future.

The trust, to be officially known as the Pascommuck Conservation Trust Inc., is being formed to acquire or manage land for conservation and wildlife protection, as well as land of historic or archeological interest.

The group currently is accepting donations to purchase a roughly five-acre tract of land between East Street and the Manhan River that was recently purchased for the trust by the Connecticut River Watershed Council.

The land was purchased to assure that it could be preserved for the trust and to allow residents to make donations and still receive tax breaks this year.

Since the council is a non-profit organization and the still unincorporated trust does not yet have that status, residents contributing money to the council can receive a tax break.

The money received by the watershed council, which is still accepting donations for the land, would be used by the trust to pay for the purchase.

Terry A. Blunt, executive director

of the council, said yesterday that the council would hold the land for a reasonable amount of time and was "confident that the land trust" would eventually receive enough money to purchase the parcel. The council to date has received roughly \$200 in donations.

"We would hold it until it became obvious there was going to be no action on the part of the land trust," he said.

Members of the trust, named for the five-acre tract that was once part of the original Easthampton settlement of Pascommuck in the 1600s, also hope to educate the public to the importance of conserving land, plants and wildlife and of curbing air and water pollution.

The purposes and aims of the trust, whose membership is open to the public, will be carried out by a board of directors elected at the group's annual meeting.

Paul Kuzeja, Charles Conner,


Thomas Conner, Michael Tautznik, David Kennedy, Frank Galat and William Carroll were elected as members of a temporary board of directors this week.

Carroll, chairman of the historical commission, said the articles of incorporation and bylaws are being drawn up free of charge by attorney John Moriarty. The bylaws and application for non-profit, tax-exempt status will be reviewed at a meeting next month.

Sewing club meets

WESTHAMPTON — The Battey Button 4-H Sewing Club met at the home of Evelyn Blakesley Tuesday to sew skirts for spring.

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January 30, 1982

Easthampton trust aims at conserving open land

By ROBERT O'MALLEY

EASTHAMPTON — The land runs downhill and along the Manhan River and then up again to darker pine woods near the peak of the hill. The low land is flood plain, flat and open, but the hills are tree covered, rising and falling toward railroad tracks and East Street.

The land is hidden beyond road and railroad so you can't see much of it unless you walk it. In walking, you plow through knee-deep snow, see ice flows slipping down the river and animal tracks under the trees.

A quiet place

You'd probably forget there was a road nearby and imagine yourself anywhere far away. William Carroll says that's the way it should be and the reason he and others want to buy it. It's meant to be a place where people can take a quiet break from work.

The 4.8-acre parcel of land, bounded by East Street, the Manhan River and River Street, may

be purchased soon by a group of residents currently forming a land trust to preserve open space here.

"I think there's a great deal of emotional healthiness in having a bit of green around," says Carroll, who is a prime mover in the formation of the trust. "Go to Boston and New York, and then look at the people in a rural area."

While he senses a difference between city and rural people, it's not something easily articulated. Maybe it lies in the contrast between an unbroken stretch of green rural land and the concrete and brick city landscape. "Personally, I feel uptight if I don't see green around me," Carroll says.

Site of first settlement

When incorporated, the trust will be known as the Pascommuck Conservation Trust, and will take its name from the original Easthampton settlement of Pascommuck, founded in the 1600s and located on part of the land off East Street that the trust hopes to

purchase.

A boulder on the land still marks the site of an 1704 Indian battle in which 19 people from the settlement were killed. Carroll, also chairman of the historical commission, says the site may have archeological value beside its obvious environmental worth.

The Connecticut River Watershed Council has purchased the East Street land for the trust and intends to hold it until the fledgling organization is incorporated and collects enough money to purchase it on its own.

In the meantime, the tax-exempt watershed council is accepting donations for the trust so that residents who contribute can receive tax credits for their gifts this year. While the council has collected only about \$200 of the \$2,000 needed to pay for the land, Carroll is hopeful that the remainder will come.

Conservation issues key

Carroll hopes the trust will eventually acquire — with the



WILLIAM CARROLL and others in the local conservation trust foresee a possible nature trail through the property, which would remain otherwise undeveloped. (Photos by Robert O'Malley)

help of donations — or manage other open land in Easthampton. The group also intends to promote concern for such environmental issues as clean air and water.

"In the long run," he says, standing atop a hill overlooking the Manhan River, "it's a lot more healthy for the town to preserve a good bit of this open space because it's something that can't be replaced — once you've lost it, you'll never get this back again. Who can buy back the Plains area and reforest that?"

If the trust can receive enough money to purchase the East Street land, part of which is separated from the main tract by Boston & Maine railroad tracks, he would like to see it left as it is today — a flat stretch by the river covered by ferns in the summer and a hilly rise covered by white birch, black birch, spruce and cedar trees, among others.

Nature trail seen

The trust might have a nature trail for walkers and the river would be accessible to canoeists and fishermen. The focus, though, is to preserve the land and the wildlife that inhabits it — birds, squirrels, chipmunks, perhaps raccoon or fox.

Down below, the slow drift of branch, ice and water is interrupted by a lone tire floating toward the Connecticut River Oxbow. "It's not as bad as it used to be,"

says Carroll, eying the solitary tire, "but it could stand a good cleaning."

In walking the land last week, Carroll followed a route taken by a group of residents who walked the land last month, just to see it and learn more about it. About 15 to 20 people are involved in the trust now and bylaws have been drawn up.

The trail starts at the historical marker on a grassy area along East Street, moves down hill over the B&M tracks to the river, and then up again through wood and over a roller-coaster of hills back to the start.

"My overriding interest is in woods and nature and the outdoors," says Carroll, who is a sexton at the Easthampton and Florence Congregational churches. "But if I was employed in that field I might lose something."

Carroll has nearly enough credits to receive a master's degree in geology from the University of Massachusetts, but he has chosen to bypass a university degree as well as work in his chosen field — mainly because as a geologist he would be working at a job in which open land would be under development.

"The flexibility of the job gives me a lot of time to do the kind of things that are important," he says, adding that he has done a

variety of jobs in the past including factory employment, work as an attendant at a state hospital and as a laboratory technician. "I can't see getting locked into something," he says. "You miss too much. You get locked into the rat race."

Development secondary

Explaining that the East Street land is zoned for industrial use and was once under consideration as a site for an asphalt plant, Carroll says he has a "very conservative way of looking at things" in that he thinks leaving the land untouched is more important than developing the site for some other purpose.

"Appreciate what you've got," he says, "before looking at development. Easthampton has its own special historical heritage, its own special environment. I think there should be an appreciation for it."

The land trust is an extension of his own philosophy in that it should serve as a tool to conserve open land in Easthampton, which, "because of its small size could be totally developed," could become just a "bedroom town" covered by houses and without any open land.

Forming the trust, he says, is an idea that has been tossed around for a while. "There's been a lot of interest in it for sometime. I suppose someone had to stick their neck out and do something about it."



THE 4.8-ACRE tract of land, bisected by Boston and Maine Railroad tracks, includes part of Easthampton's earliest settlement, called Pascommuck.

The people's trust...

Easthampton conservation group working to preserve the town's natural heritage

By CAROL MAZZOCCA

EASTHAMPTON — The Pascommuck Conservation Trust Inc. — formed in March 1982 to study the town's open space and recreational needs — has grown from a small, close-knit group, to having more than 100 members.

And the non-profit organization has set its sights on working to preserve Easthampton's natural and historical resources.

an interest in preserving Easthampton's history and natural resources.

In working toward that goal, the Trust founders set their eyes on a wooded 4.8-acre parcel of land off East Street. Through the dues collected during a membership drive, which began earlier this year, and a \$1,000 grant provided through another non-profit group called the Frank Stanley Beveridge Foundation, the Trust expects to be able to buy the land by the end of this month.

privately owned land.

The Connecticut River Watershed Council currently owns the land. The Council bought the land two years ago from Warner Corp. and then agreed to sell the land to the Trust when it raised the money.

The conservation trust had indicated it hopes to develop a self-guided nature trail through this parcel of land.

The group also plans to work for preservation of land over the town's drinking water supply, also known as the aquifer. "We're helping to preserve valuable pieces of land such as the land over the aquifer, and sections of land near rivers and streams," Kennedy said.

Trust members hope to purchase lands like these, or to encourage the town to purchase them, in order to keep the lands the way they are today for the "betterment of the community," Kennedy added.

Currently members such as Michael Tautznik, formerly a Conservation Commission member, are encouraging Easthampton officials to purchase "one of the most vital natural resources in the downtown."

The Nashawannuck Pond, Tautznik said, may die if the advanced weed growth is not taken care of. But in order to pay for weed control, funding through grants would be needed.

However, this could only be achieved if Easthampton were the owner of the pond. J.P. Stevens currently owns the pond.

Tautznik said he hoped boat rides along the Nashawannuck Pond during the Fall Festival helped educate the people about the value of the pond.

More than 320 people took the trip, which explored the natural history of the pond. Along the way, participants were able to see firsthand the problems of eutrophication, or weed growth, existing in the pond.

The pond was once a recreational mecca for Easthampton's residents. Weakly enforced water pollution control and the lack of strict wetlands protection policy, however, have encouraged sidestepping of pond cleanup over the years.

While the boat rides were offered free of charge, donations collected during the two-day event totaled \$120.

The Trust is planning further fund-raising efforts including a bake sale on Oct. 8 at Big E's Foodland and a tag sale Oct. 23.

'We're helping to preserve valuable pieces of land such as the land over the aquifer, and sections of land near rivers and streams.'

— David Kennedy

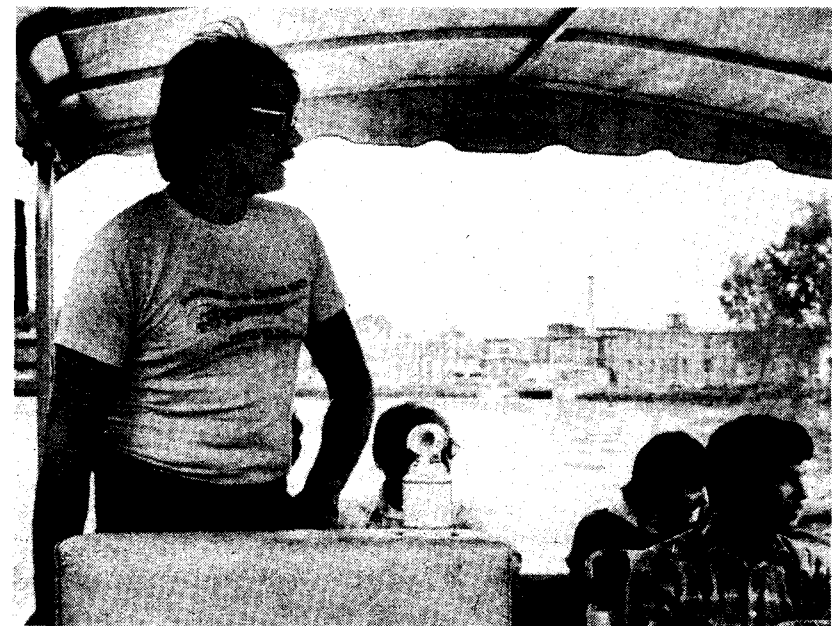
An information booth at the Fall Festival trade show and a popular boat ride on Nashawannuck Pond last weekend helped increase the Trust's membership by 20 persons.

Its members possess a wide range of professional and educational backgrounds including bankers, painters and clergymen, all with one goal at heart: an interest in promoting Easthampton.

That interest, more specifically, said Pascommuck Conservation Trust President David Kennedy, is

The idea of purchasing the land — now zoned for industrial use — is to prevent any development of the land where the original white settlers had lived in 1699. Today, it serves as a wildlife habitat. The Pascommuck Boulder, with a memorial tablet marking the Indian massacre of 1704 in which 19 of 38 settlers were killed, is also located there.

The land is bounded south by East Street, east by River Street, north by the Manhan River and west by



MICHAEL TAUTZNIK, treasurer of the Pascommuck Conservation Trust Inc., served as captain and tour guide on the boat tours of Nashawannuck Pond last weekend. (Photos by Stephen Mease)

Protecting the aquifer

Educational forum turns into debate

By MARTY McDONOUGH
EASTHAMPTON — What began as an educational forum on the town's pure and abundant underground water supply ended as an emotional political debate among the 100 people who attended last night's gathering at the Congregational Church here.

The debate concerned a referendum vote set for Monday at which voters will be asked either to reconfirm or to overturn a special Town Meeting decision Feb. 20 to ease building restrictions in an "aquifer protection district" in the south of town. (See related story.)

"Water, Our Abundant but Fragile Resource," the title of the forum which was sponsored by the Pascommuck Conservation Trust, a non-profit conservation group, was hosted by John Sackrey, a hydrogeologist with Curran Associates Inc., a Northampton engineering firm. The audience, which surprised the organizers by its size — appeared to be made up of people from all parts of town, including the "Plains" area. That is the area zoned as an "aquifer protection district," where — due to zoning restrictions — many homeowners have found they have had to go through a lengthy procedure to obtain special permits in order to build additions to their homes.

Sackrey detailed the geological evolution of the large "Barnes" aquifer which runs south to north along the base of Mt. Tom on the east side of town. And he gave a brief history of how the town, beginning in 1908 with the drilling of wells in the Hendrick Street area, has succeeded in tapping into this aquifer for its drinking water. Sackrey described the aquifer as "second to none" in terms of purity.

Residents here should do what they can to protect this aquifer, he warned. "You don't want to become another Whately," Sackrey said.

On Monday, voters will decide whether they want to approve the zoning change approved by Town Meeting. Some speakers last night said they believe the wording of the approved zoning change, and thus the wording of the referendum ballot, is "ambiguous" and could leave the town wide open to a suit, which might cripple the effectiveness of protective measures in the existing zoning bylaw.

"I was at the Town Meeting, and I didn't vote," said a woman. "I didn't know what to do. First there was the motion, then the amendment. I was so darned confused. I'm

not the smartest Town Meeting member, but I'm not the dumbest either."

Others last night said the wording of the ballot question dealing with the zoning change was clear, and served to provide relief to property owners in the district without posing an increased threat to the quality or quantity of the underground water supply.

Alexandra Dawson, an environmental lawyer from Hadley who specializes in community resource protection, was a panel member at the forum, and said the wording in the law was "ambiguous," and that it might not hold up in court if challenged. That would mean that building in the aquifer recharge protection district might not be limited at all, she said.

She described the Town Meeting-approved zoning change as "a lawsuit waiting to happen."

Mrs. Dawson and Sackrey suggested, and most people in the audience seemed to agree, that the zoning change already voted should be overturned Monday, and a new motion be drawn up in words "as clear and pure as your water." Such a motion should be aimed at easing building restrictions in the special district somewhat — in order to provide relief to homeowners — while continuing to protect the underground water supply from depletion and/or contamination due to over-development.

Robert Canon, a real estate agent in town, said he doesn't think the wording of the zoning change is unclear at all. And while he admits that some people in town may think he supports the change only because it might mean brisker sales of homes in the special district, he said his concern is genuine.

Canon said that the new requirement that the zoning enforcement officer inspect construction in the district may actually do more than the permit system did to insure that water run-off in the district is prevented.

"I'm not a lawyer," said Canon. "But to me, that law says exactly what the planning board wanted to get across."

One reason why the Planning Board originally proposed the zoning change was that the zoning board was unable to keep up with the number of applications for special permits from homeowners in the special district. As a result, beginning last summer, many special permits were granted by default.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOWN PARCEL NATURE TRAIL
June 16, 1987

The success of an educational Nature Trail with the Town Parcel depends on a larger educational campaign occurring outside the property itself. This process must begin with efforts to increase community awareness and involvement, and generate added financial support from local businesses and larger funding sources, before the Nature Trail is built. Also, trash on the property must be removed so that the land will return to its natural, growing condition. Recommended actions are:

Community Awareness

- Give the Town Parcel a new, more meaningful name.
- Proudly announce the Trust's ownership and intentions concerning this land.
 - = post a bold, impressive sign at the property entrance
 - = actively pursue media attention
- Notify entire community of major trash cleanup to be held in the Fall.
(see below: Trash)

Community Involvement

- Begin campaign to generate cooperation from neighborhoods adjacent to the Town Parcel. Work with the Pleasant St. Neighborhood Association, to
 - = explain the changes that are coming
 - = reassure current users that they will continue to be welcome on the land, but will be expected to respect new guidelines for use.
 - = stop any ongoing trash dumping
 - = stop the vandalism to trees and vegetation on the property
 - = involve the neighborhood kids and adults in making the Town Parcel a more pleasant place to be
- Solicit the guidance and expertise of Arcadia Directors.
 - = develop specific Nature Trail activities and interpretation
 - = arrange canoe trips from Arcadia to the Town Parcel, on the Manhan River
 - seek cooperation from local government, in the form of parking privileges at the site of Town-owned land north of the Town Parcel
- Seek an easement between the two large properties which abut the north side of the Manhan River.
- Solicit greater financial and physical commitment from Trust members.
- Expand membership.

Financial Support -- Hazardous waste testing is expensive but necessary, and will require special fundraising efforts.

- Seek grant money from the Cox Foundation, for environmental rehabilitation. --
- Consult funding directors of local educational institutions for suggestions about additional grant sources.
- Solicit local business support and involvement, in this effort that has community significance and will make Easthampton a nicer place to live.
- Sponsor educational nature walks to White Brook, to raise money and increase local awareness of the Trust's goals.
- Increase membership dues, as indication of serious commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS, page two

Trash

-Conduct a massive and widely publicized trash cleanup campaign, in the Fall, preferably in conjunction with a major local event or holiday.

= start at the fringes and move in toward the most densely concentrated trash, so that the remaining work and the most difficult rehabilitation will be localized and made manageable for the following efforts.

= pick up the largest items ... appliances, cars, bikes, tires, cans, bottles

= scrunch down and compress what's left after surface cleanup

= ask community residents to bring autumn leaves, from lawn raking, to the site

= search for local excavation projects, construction sites, that would donate dirt and fill

= spread all available organic matter across trash site

= let winter come

= let spring come

= plant limited rye grass., only in areas needing stabilization

= continue campaign of spreading leaves and dirt where needed

= let time go by

= next spring, plant small tree seedlings from elsewhere on the property randomly across filled areas.

= keep people from walking in the rehabilitation area, with light fencing or small stakes

= post signs stating purpose and goal of cleanup effort.

Nature Trail

-Accurately mark off and reveal property boundaries.

-Erect small identification signs throughout the property, so that visitors know this land is being cared for by the Trust.

-Erect large signs at the property entrance, stating intentions and guidelines for use of the land.

-Hire a Naturalist or an ecologist or an Arcadia director, to develop specific interpretation on the Nature Trail.

-Use existing dirt bike trails whenever possible, and let other trails revert to nature, by prohibiting activity on them.

-Remove cut trees and the products of vandalism.

-Remove evidence of scattered bonfires.

-Mow poison ivy on intended trails, twice a year or as necessary.

-Maintain the existing clearing in the center of the property, as a natural resting place and special habitat for species needing sunlight and edges. - -

-Clean the river of fallen trees, so that canoeing is possible.

-Schedule times when dirt bike activity will be allowed, with the stipulation that riders must respect the land, stay on the intended trails, and be courteous to visitors.



KAREN ADAMSKI/Gazette Staff

About half an acre on the corner of West Lake Street and Williston Avenue is expected to be donated to the Pascommuck Conservation Trust this month. The trust would use it for eight to 10 parking spaces for Nashawan-

nuck Pond and possibly as a future recreation area. The parcel has views of both Nashawannuck Pond and Rubber Thread Pond, shown here.

Land donation near to add pond parking

Conservation trust hopes lot will divert cars from Brookside Cemetery road

By KAREN ADAMSKI
Gazette Staff

EASTHAMPTON — Plans are in the works to convert an overgrown parcel of land into a parking lot for visitors to the Nashawannuck Pond.

The approximate half-acre on the corner of West Lake Street and Williston Avenue, which is owned by B-G Mechanical Contractors, is expected to be donated to the Pascommuck Conservation Trust this month.

The trust will transform the parcel into a gravel-topped parking lot in the hope of reducing the number of vehicles using the Brookside Cemetery road to get to the pond.

The Nashawannuck Pond Steering Committee asked the trust to look into obtaining the property for pond parking as part of an attempt to preserve the Nashawannuck Pond.

After deciding to block access routes to points along the pond's shoreline to reduce erosion, concerns were raised by cemetery officials that the vehicles would move onto the cemetery roads and damage property there.

The lot would afford pond users parking spaces off cemetery property.

The parcel being donated, which is overgrown with small trees, weeds and bushes, would be cleared, although some of the plant growth would remain, offering some shade and scenery to users.

Hidden within the parcel's overgrowth is Rubber Thread Pond, which flows through a pipe under Williston Avenue into the Nashawannuck Pond. This pond, which still will be owned by B-G and is not used for recreation, is not visible from either Williston Avenue or

Lake Street and can be accessed only by narrow trails leading to the banks.

By clearing some of the vegetation from the area, the trust can create about eight to 10 parking spaces and a possible future recreation area for visitors, all with views of both the Nashawannuck Pond and Rubber Thread Pond.

Daniel Bishop, executive vice president of B-G Mechanical Contractors, said his business also would like to clear about 10 to 15 feet, extending from their building's present parking lot off Payson Avenue, and set up a picnic area for employees in the summer.

No definite plans for that have been made.

Because the Pascommuck Trust is a non-profit organization, according to Michael Tautznik, a trust member, the

donation of the land will be tax deductible for B-G.

A value for the land still has to be determined, but Bishop said his business will meet with their attorney this week to determine the value.

Kenneth Larson, president of the trust, said maintenance of the lot will be handled by the trust's maintenance subcommittee.

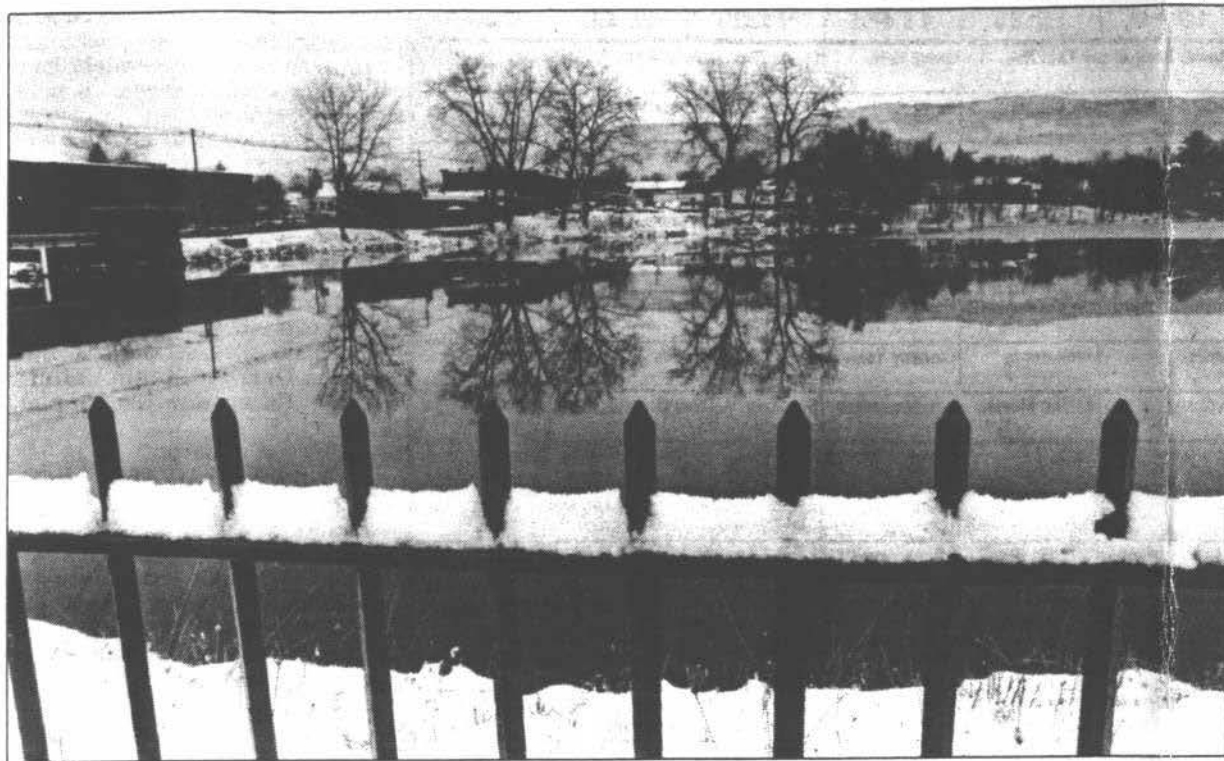
Bishop said B-G has been in Holyoke for 15 years and has been very active in the community. The firm, which in May purchased the former Tighe & Bond Inc. building at 50 Payson Ave., plans to move its headquarters to the site this fall.

"We just wanted Easthampton to know we wanted to be good neighbors," Bishop said. "Our big thing is we want to be good neighbors and get off on the right foot."

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Nashawannuck Pond in Easthampton

Gazette File Photo

Land donation is first step to preserve Nashawannuck

By JIM HILLAS
 Gazette Staff

EASTHAMPTON — The donation of a half-acre parcel to the Pascommuck Conservation Trust marks the first step in plans to preserve Nashawannuck Pond.

Part of the land, which is a gift from B-G Mechanical Contractors, 50 Payson Ave., will be converted into a public parking area for fishermen and other visitors to the pond, according to Trust President Kenneth Larsen.

Larsen said that although the gift of land, appraised at \$5,000, is a tax-deduction for B-G Mechanical, the company donated the unused property "to be a good neighbor."

Last year, the Nashawannuck Pond Steering Committee, an ad-

visory group dedicated to preserving the pond, decided to block vehicles from driving to the shoreline. The ban was designed to reduce erosion, which committee members believe encourages excessive weed growth that is choking the pond.

Since the pond abuts the Brookside Cemetery, cemetery officials expressed concern that vehicles banned from direct access to the pond might park on cemetery property and cause turf damage there.

Steering committee officials last year asked trust members to investigate the possibility of acquiring the half-acre lot for a parking area. Putting a parking lot on the donated land at the corner of Williston Avenue and Lake Street would solve both problems, Lar-

sen said, because of its proximity to the pond. He said he hopes the lot will be ready sometime this spring.

Other plans in the works for the pond include a dam project that steering committee members say would prevent nutrient-laden silt from the White and Broad brooks from flowing into the pond and fostering weed growth. The dam project is estimated to cost between \$50,000 and \$70,000, according to Town Administrator Reid S. Charles.

Arcadia expands

By BILL THOMAS
Transcript-Telegram staff

EASTHAMPTON — A sweet-smelling chunk of farmland stands a good chance of becoming a life-sustaining memorial if its sale to a nature sanctuary goes through as planned.

The Massachusetts Audubon Society is hoping to buy 16 acres of floodplain from Joseph S. Koziol of East Street. The hayfields along the Connecticut River oxbow abut the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary on its northeast corner.

On a recent visit to the tract, butterflies skimmed its green fields in the autumn sun. Meadow and river creatures

See ARCADIA, next page

● Arcadia

Continued from preceding page

could be heard — croaking, chirping and buzzing — rather than seen. A short distance down Potash Road, mountains clad in a kaleidoscope of colors towered above the river.

Timothy J. Storrow, land officer for the Audubon, said the conservation organization was seeking the land for "a little more than \$20,000." Members of the Koziol family said Joseph Koziol was in Florida, and could not be reached.

Sanctuary staff are excited about the deal, which is being held up on a mortgage technicality. Storrow said he expects the meadows to change hands "within the next couple of days."

William L. Burgart, vice president of Pascommuck Conservation Trust Inc., donated \$5,000 to help Audubon buy the property. Burgart wants to see the fields kept in their present state as a memorial to both his mother, Anne G. Burgart, who died four years ago, and wife Patricia (Bond) Burgart, who

died in May.

"I think it would be a nice way to remember them — generations of people will enjoy this space" said Burgart.

"The setting is divine," said sanctuary Director Mary E. Shanley, "because on one side of the woods (along the meadow) is a marsh. It provides a habitat for many different kinds of birds and mammals."

Shanley is also pleased that the property will be preserved as farmland in a time when that resource is being gobbled up by local developers. Under the terms of the proposed sale, Koziol has the right to cut hay from the fields over the next two years.

"The society has always had an interest in protecting farmland contiguous to its sanctuaries," Storrow said. "The possibility of development is not a real threat because the land does get flooded from time to time, but it's always good to preserve farmland," he said.

HOME & GARDEN TIPS... **(continued)**

- a water and molasses mix put out at night in large platters on the floor will attract and kill roaches.
- Mix one tablespoon of liquid seaweed per gallon of water and spray on leaves of houseplants, trees, shrubs and lawns. It enhances growth and color.
- To boost the effects of any liquid fertilizer, add one tablespoon of liquid seaweed per gallon of mix.
- Plant tonic: One pint of stinging nettle herb (available in health food stores) mixed in 1/2 gallon of very hot water (just below boiling). Add a pint of this strained tea to every gallon of water to which a tablespoon of liquid seaweed and soluble plant food have been mixed. Use to spray foliage and to water roots.
- Wood ashes are good for the lawn as well as compost pile.
- Cut flowers from the garden will last longer if harvested in the early morning and while in the half open stage.
- Dried, crushed banana peels make an excellent natural fertilizer for flowers and shrubs.
- Use the newer, granulated forms of limestone. They are more expensive, but are easier to spread, and break down faster than the ground limestone.
- Soak used teabags overnight in water and use the liquid to feed houseplants, flowers, and small shrubs.
- Whiteflies can often be repelled by planting a clove of garlic in the soil where the affected plant is growing.
- If using bone meal to fertilize, mix thoroughly into the soil or it becomes useless.
- Add lime to prevent slime mold when planting cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower or brussel sprouts.
- Foliage on tulips and daffodils should never be cut until at least half of the leaf surface has browned- otherwise the flowering for the following year is affected.
- **RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY THE R & E COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**
John Bator, Michael Blegner, William Burgart,
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Easthampton area

Local group encourages bats to come home to roost

By ANDREW AYRES
Special to the Gazette

EASTHAMPTON — A little public relations work is under way in this town for the common brown bat, whose sullied reputation might soon be restored by its value as a bug killer.

The local Pascommuck Conservation Trust received a grant from a pesticides control group last December to build 30 backyard "bat-houses." Since then, it has received inquiries from as far away as Maryland on how to get one of the small wooden structures designed to encourage the nocturnal creatures to set up housekeeping and, in turn, start

dropping insects like ... well, like flies.

"That's before word even got out" about the brown bat's notable success rate as a pest population controller, said Ken Larsen, a member of the conservation trust's Research and Education Committee.

The current demand for the houses may mean people are changing their longstanding prejudices about the animals, and opting for a natural approach to insect control.

"I wanted this to be low key," Larsen said. "But we're getting inundated with orders."

The committee received its grant from the Washington-based

National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides to build the houses at a cost of about \$7 each.

"We already have orders for 20 of the 30 we're planning to build," Larsen said.

The limited supply of bat houses is intended for backyards in the Easthampton area, according to Larsen, though entrepreneurs may create their own design and market them anywhere.

Bats have numerous advantages over other pest-control methods — they eat a lot of bugs (even ones that sting), and unlike pesticides, they don't harm the environment. They are also an improvement over electric insect zappers be-

cause they don't use electricity and they don't require cleaning.

"I took down my bug popper," Larsen said, adding that he removed the noisy flying-insect destroyer from its post near his backyard pool last summer after installing his bat-house.

Regarding the bat's widely held image as a dirty, disease-ridden parasite, Larsen said brown bats are cleaner than many domestic animals, and are less likely to carry rabies than are skunks. Their small size makes them non-intrusive, and unlike birds, they are a quiet predator.

And then there's the brown bat's voracious appetite for truly nasty creatures like mosquitoes.

Larsen, who described himself as a beacon for biting insects, said that because of the bats living in his yard, "You could count on one hand the number of mosquito bites I got last summer. Those bugs are usually all over me."

Fellow Pascommuck member Ken Bator said it was Larsen's idea to start the bat-house project by asking for funding.

Pascommuck members exhibited a few of the houses in Easthampton last year, but not everyone liked them.

"Some people," sighed Bator, bemoaning the popular misconceptions about bats. "What can

you do about them?"

Bator said he has had a bat-house since last summer, but hasn't been able to judge its occupancy rate because of the flying mammals' nighttime feeding and frolicking habits.

Bator and Larsen said they have all the materials they need to build the 30 houses, and this week they and a group of Pascommuck volunteers were to nail them together.

The houses are available for \$10 each, Larsen said.

Anyone wanting to order a bat house should contact the Pascommuck Conservation Trust, Inc., P.O. Box 806, Easthampton 01027.

A History of the Pascommuck Conservation Trust, Part I (1981-1983):

In 1971 a town "Master Plan" was compiled for Easthampton. In it came the recommendation that 2,000 acres of passive recreation land be set aside for recreation and conservation.

By 1981 still only a small group of people were interested in forming an environmental protection organization here. Finally, late that year, the impetus was provided for forming just such a "trust" when a two-parcel, five-acre tract of land bounded by East Street, River Street and the Manhan River became available for purchase. The land lay at the west end of the original 1600s Easthampton settlement of Pascommuck, and adjoined the Daughters of the American Revolution historical marker, the Pascommuck boulder.

William C. Carroll, then chairman of the recycling committee and the historical commission, said a non-profit tax-exempt environmental trust was being formed, an organization that would acquire land to be protected for "conservation, wildlife, and historical preservation."

The Connecticut River Watershed Council took an option on the property in order to hold it for the evolving land trust. Any money raised would be held in a special escrow account by the Council until the Trust could purchase the parcel.

On January 11, 1982, an organizational meeting of the original eight members of the Trust was held in the town hall. The goals of the trust were announced: "to acquire - through gift or purchase - land for conservation and wildlife protection, and property of historic or archeological interest." The Trust would also consider the long-term leasing of land for conservation purposes, aquifer protection, farmland protection, and Manhan River greenbelt protection. The Trust would aim also to educate the public as to the importance of conserving land, plants and wildlife, and of curbing air and water pollution.

With the aid of local attorney John Moriarty, land trust organizers began setting up a non-profit corporation. By their second meeting, the group -- the Pascommuck Conservation Trust -- had drawn up bylaws, established member-

ship fees, and had begun planning "a serious fundraising drive."

The Trust's founding board of directors and officers were: David Kennedy, president; Frank Galat, vice president; Michael Tautznik, treasurer; Charles Connor, clerk; and directors William Carroll, William Burgart, Thomas Connor, Paul Kuzeja, and John Moriarty.

In December, 1982 the Trust won tax-exempt status.

In 1983 the Trust called on the Frank Stanley Beveridge Foundation in Westfield for assistance in purchasing the Connecticut River Watershed Council parcel. The Trust would be granted half the funding needed, with the stipulation that the land trust organization come up with matching funds.

That fall the Trust, by then some 100 members strong, would become linked in people's minds with the Nashawannuck Pond, at that time owned by the J.P. Stevens Company. At the 1983 Fall Festival, the Trust sponsored a popular boat ride on the Pond. Trust member Michael Tautznik, formerly a Conservation Commission member, encouraged Easthampton officials to purchase the pond, "one of the most vital natural resources" in the town. "The Nashawannuck Pond may die," he warned, "if the advanced weed growth is not taken care of."

In order to pay for weed control, funding through grants would be needed. That could only be achieved if Easthampton were the owner of the pond. In time, the pond, once a recreational mecca for Easthampton's residents, would become town property, and an effort to clean up the pond, through grants and public fundraisers, would go into full swing.

From the Fall Festival pond tours would emerge the "Save the Pond" effort.

From its first attainment, the purchase of a 5-acre riverbank parcel, the Trust would be on its way to establishing a Manhan River "greenbelt".

From these and other accomplishments of the Pascommuck Conservation Trust, awareness of the need to protect the earth's natural resources would grow in Easthampton, Massachusetts.

Stay tuned. There'll be more on the history of the Trust in future newsletters...