



*Conserving the
Massachusetts Landscape
Since 1891*

CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT ESTABROOK WOODS IN CONCORD AND CARLISLE

Background Information

1. Estabrook Woods

"Estabrook Woods" is the name given to a 4 sq. mi. area of woodland, pasture and low-density residential settlement in the towns of Concord and Carlisle. The name dates back to the early 19th century and was mentioned in the Henry David Thoreau's Journal. Thoreau specifically called for preservation of four areas within Concord; Walden Woods and Estabrook Woods are the only two which can still be protected. Essentially, the Estabrook Woods are bounded on the north and south by the Towns of Carlisle and Concord, respectively, and on the east and west by Monument Street and Lowell Road. The area continued to be mostly woods and pasture land until the mid 1960's. Residential development in the last 25-30 years has reduced the amount of open land and future development threatens the ecological and scenic integrity of this remarkable resource.

Ownership of land within the Woods is as follows: Harvard University, 672 acres; Middlesex School, 300 acres; towns of Concord and Carlisle, 227 acres; private land protected by permanent conservation restrictions, 264 acres; Concord Land Conservation Trust, 16 acres. In addition, there are approximately 17 parcels of unprotected land in excess of 10 acres which are currently owned by private landowners in the two towns.

Estabrook Woods is considered to be a valuable resource to ecological researchers, historians, students, and citizens of both towns. They contain areas of sensitive ecosystems and unusual flora, archaeological and historic sites (including the Minutemen's line of march, an ancient limestone quarry, and old mill sites) and the Woods are unusual in their proximity to a major metropolitan area. Also, they are valued as a large, mostly unspoiled recreational area. Walkers, joggers, cross-country skiers and others enjoy the quiet beauty of the woods, the varied terrain, the streams and the ponds. Neighboring open space includes: Spencer Brook Valley, Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge, Minuteman Natural Park, The Old Manse, and Carlisle State Forest.

2. Harvard's Land Holdings

The largest parcel of land in "Estabrook Woods" is owned by Harvard University. This parcel was acquired by Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) in 1968, following an ambitious public campaign to be used as a research station for the study of wildlife and vegetation. The campaign was led by Lawrence Terry, the recently retired second headmaster of Middlesex School and Thomas Flint, Chairman of the Concord

Land Conservation Trust. The MCZ maintains the Concord Field Station headquarters in Bedford. Harvard students, both graduate and undergraduate, are involved in a variety of research projects. The research area is prized for its proximity to the University and because it is so close to a large metropolitan area. Fortunately for residents of the Concord area, Harvard has permitted its continued use for compatible recreation. So long as recreational use of the property remains modest and quiet, the University has permitted walking, jogging, skiing, etc. within its land area. In recent years, encroaching residential development has led local groups to wonder how long viable research can be conducted in these woods. With this in mind, the two land trusts approached Harvard in the hope that it would be willing to restrict the deed on its property with a permanent conservation restriction (CR).

Thus, Harvard has presented a very positive challenge to those who are committed to the protection of the Estabrook Woods.

3. The Land Trust Proposal and the Harvard Response

In February, 1994, the Concord Land Conservation Trust (CLCT) and the Carlisle Conservation Foundation (CCF) presented a formal proposal to the MCZ. In this proposal, the two trusts requested that Harvard place permanent conservation restrictions on the MCZ property in exchange for similar restrictions to be donated by surrounding landowners, including the Towns of Concord and Carlisle.

In a June 2, 1994 letter summarizing its response, Harvard acknowledged that it has a public charitable obligation to observe the terms of gifts of land and money by which the MCZ Woods were established. It emphasized that it has no intention of changing the use or ownership of the MCZ land holdings. Furthermore, the letter stated that if conservation restrictions can be obtained on an additional 400 acres of land within the Estabrook Woods, the MCZ Woods will always be viable for their intended purposes (research and education within a nature preserve).

Thus, the challenge to the Concord and Carlisle land trusts and communities is to seek 400 acres of land in the vicinity of the MCZ woods than can be permanently restricted against development. This is an ambitious challenge, but one that the local conservation trusts and The Trustees of Reservations, a statewide conservation organization, are eager to accept. If these 400 acres can be secured, a total of at least 1,072 acres of land will have been conserved for research and recreational use forever.

4. Middlesex School: Its response to Harvard's challenge.

The second largest land owner in the Estabrook Woods is Middlesex School with about 300 acres. The School's land includes approximately 100 acres of woodland, another 150 acres including Bateman's Pond and its affiliated wetlands, and approximately 50 acres used for campus facilities including dormitories, classroom, dining and athletic facilities

and athletic field space. Currently, the School uses its woods for recreational purposes, primarily a cross-country trail for both jogging and skiing).

Learning of Harvard's challenge for the preservation land surrounding the MCZ Woods, the Middlesex School Trustees have agreed to donate conservation restrictions on two parcels of land: a buffer strip of about 4 acres on that portion of the Middlesex land which abuts Harvard's land and a second parcel of land of approximately 40 acres located at the southern boundary of the School's property and containing one of several zones listed as ecologically sensitive in Concord's 1991 Open Space Plan. These conservation restrictions will be donated to The Trustees of Reservations to be held in escrow and recorded when protection of 340 acres has been secured.

5. Role of Conservation Organizations

On August 3, 1994 three conservation groups announced the beginning of a "Campaign to Protect Estabrook Woods." They are the Concord Land Conservation Trust (CLCT), the Carlisle Conservation Foundation (CCF), and The Trustees of Reservations (The Trustees), a statewide conservation organization founded in 1891. The shared goal is to secure permanent protection of at least 1,000 acres within the Estabrook Woods, including Harvard's 672 acres and to secure a protected corridor of greenspace from the Spencer Brook Valley to the Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge.

The two local organizations will take the initiative to seek landowners willing to participate by donating conservation restrictions on portions of their land within Estabrook Woods. Either local organization or The Trustees will be available to accept such restrictions. The three organizations will work together to ensure careful monitoring and effective enforcement of all these restrictions.

Action by local conservation organizations to protect land within Estabrook Woods dates back to 1971 when CLCT acquired 14 acres along Two Rod Road. Twenty years later, in 1991, CLCT submitted an ambitious proposal to the newly authorized Forest Legacy Program under the U.S. Forest Service for the purchase of conservation restrictions on certain parcels of land in Carlisle threatened by sale for development. In 1993, substantial funding was awarded. An agreement for the purchase of restrictions is now being negotiated with the owners.

In 1994, The Land Conservation Center of The Trustees of Reservations responded to a request from CLCT and CCF to assist the campaign in the following manner:

- o To assist in negotiations with Harvard University ;
- o To prepare to accept conservation restrictions which may be offered to The Trustees by the Towns of Carlisle and Concord as well as by private landowners.

- o To ensure that conservation restrictions within Estabrook Woods will be carefully monitored and effectively enforced in perpetuity.

For further information, contact:

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Jay Luby, Director, Carlisle Conservation Foundation, 508-369-2510.

Deidre Ling, Head of School, Middlesex School, 508-369-2550.

Prof. Richard Taylor, Director, Concord Field Station, Museum of Comparative Zoology,
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**HENRY DAVID THOREAU ON
ESTABROOK WOODS**

Journal, October 20, 1857:

What a wild and rich domain that Easterbrooks Country! Not a cultivated, hardly a cultivable field in it, and yet it delights all natural persons, and feeds more still. Such great rocky and moist tracts, which daunt the farmer, are reckoned as unimproved land, and therefore worth but little: but think of the miles of huckleberries, and of barberries, and of wild apples, so fair, both in flower and fruit, resorted to by men and beasts.

Journal, October 15, 1859

I think that each town should have a park or rather a primitive forest, of five hundred or a thousand acres, ~where a stick should never be cut for fuel ~nor for the navy, nor to make wagons, but stand and decay for instruction and recreation.... the Eastabrook Country, an uncultivated area of some four square miles in the north of the town, might have been our huckleberry field. If any owners of these tracts are about to leave the world without natural heirs who need or deserve to be specially remembers, they will do wisely to abandon the possession to all mankind, and not will them to some individual who perhaps has enough already.

Prepared by Wesley T. Ward, with assistance from
James Saltonstall, Middlesex School
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August 3, 1994



The Trustees of Reservations

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FOR RELEASE, AUGUST 3, 1994

CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT ESTABROOK WOODS IS ANNOUNCED

The Old Manse, Concord, August 3, 1994.

A long-awaited campaign to protect over 1,000 acres of open space within the historic Estabrook Woods was announced today at the Old Manse in Concord. The Concord Land Conservation Trust and Carlisle Conservation Foundation will ask landowners, including the Towns of Concord and Carlisle, to donate permanent conservation restrictions within the historic Estabrook Woods area. Either of the two local organizations or The Trustees of Reservations, a statewide conservation organization and the owner of The Old Manse, will accept these restrictions. The three organizations will cooperate to ensure that all such restrictions will be carefully monitored and their terms respected in perpetuity.

According to Marian Thornton, Chairman of the Concord Land Conservation Trust, the goal is to secure protection of at least 400 acres within the historic area of Estabrook Woods in addition to the 672 acres owned by Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology. In response to a February 1994 proposal by the Concord and Carlisle land trusts, Harvard in June issued a "Statement of Public Charitable Obligation" pledging that the MCZ property will be further secured for its intended purposes when the 400-acre goal is achieved.

Today, Middlesex School became the first owner of land surrounding the MCZ property to respond to Harvard's pledge. Head of School Deidre Ling announced that Middlesex will donate conservation restrictions in escrow on 60 acres of its property. Protecting the southern portion of Bateman's Pond, the adjacent ledges, and a visual buffer to the northeast along the MCZ border, the Middlesex restrictions will be recorded when 340 additional acres have been protected.



"The efforts of the land trusts and two towns to preserve Estabrook Woods have been given an enormous boost by the assurances from Harvard and the timely offer by Middlesex School," said Frederic Winthrop, Jr., Director of The Trustees of Reservations.

Harvard acquired the MCZ property twenty-eight years ago following an ambitious campaign led by Lawrence Terry (who had retired from Middlesex School after 26 years of service as its second Headmaster) and Thomas Flint, then Chairman of the Concord Land Conservation Trust.

The Concord Land Conservation Trust has 400 members and protects 754 acres of land, of which 179 acres are protected with conservation restrictions. The Carlisle Conservation Foundation, with 125 members, owns 87 acres and, jointly with the Town of Carlisle, protects an additional 226 acres with conservation restrictions. The Trustees of Reservations, founded in 1891, has 13,500 members statewide. It owns and manages 76 reservations totaling 19,500 acres and protects an additional 9,700 acres with conservation restrictions. All three are private, non-profit organizations, independent from municipal, state, or federal government, that rely upon members and contributors for their support.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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