



Conservation Commission

Town of

Groveland

Groveland, Massachusetts
Town Hall
183 Main Street
Groveland, MA 01834

Meadow Pond Reservation Addition

Proposal

Groveland Community Preservation Committee
December 28, 2006

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Town of Groveland
183 Main Street
Groveland, MA 01834

Dear Committee Members:

Enclosed are ten copies of an application requesting Community Preservation funding for an open space purchase addition to Meadow Pond Reservation.

The application includes a request for \$75,000.00. The property located at 28A Uptack Road will be a great addition to the present reservation and further protect the habitat area know as "Turtleland."

We hope that you will give the application careful consideration. We would be happy to provide you with further information you may need or to meet with you to discuss the proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Dempsey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Michael Dempsey
Chairman

Applicant Information:

Name of Applicant: Groveland Conservation Commission
Contact Name: Michael Dempsey
Mailing Address: 183 Main Street
City: Groveland
State: MA
Zip Code: 01834
Daytime Phone: 978-265-5756
Email Address: btr@shore.net

Location of Project

Name of Project: *Meadow Pond Reservation Addition*
Address of Project: Stephenson Way / Uptack Road, Groveland, MA

CPA Category: (Include all that apply):

- Open space
- Historic preservation
- Recreation
- Community housing

Project Cost:

CPA Funding Requested: \$75,000.00
Total Cost of Proposed Project: \$ 75,000.00

Description:

The proposed project would add approximately eight acres of open space to the present Meadow Pond Reservation. The property directly abuts the current reservation. Purchasing the property will protect the current reservation from potential development on the eight acres. The purchase also adds another significant piece of land to the Blanding's Turtle habitat area.

Goals

The current Meadow Pond Reservation consists of approximately 68 acres of open space surrounding Meadow Pond in Groveland. The reservation was originally established with a donation of ten acres in the 1960's. In 2002 the Commission was able to apply for a Self-Help grant and add 58 acres to the reservation. Meadow Pond reservation protects the habitat of the Blanding's Turtle. This turtle is protected by the State of Massachusetts as a threatened species. The purchase of eight additional acres that abut the reservation will expand protection of this important habitat. This 8-acre property also includes extraordinarily sensitive wildlife including the Wood Turtle, Blanding's Turtle, and Spotted Turtle as well as rich plant habitats. It falls within the State-specified rare and endangered species zone.

Background & Overview

The people of Groveland will directly benefit by the preservation of this eight acre parcel of open space. In the last ten years the Conservation Commission, the Board of Selectmen, the Open Space and Trails Committee and the citizens of Groveland have taken an active role in protecting open space in our town. In 1996 the town completed an acquisition of 47 acres of open space that was threatened with development at what is now known as Veasey Memorial Park. This first purchase of property by the town added a significant high profile parcel to the town's open space inventory including a large parcel of state owned land at Crane Pond Reservation and the Town Forrest. As Groveland was affected by the population growth of the 1990's and significant development due to the rising real estate values, citizens both old and new alike began to appreciate greenways, open space and a certain rural character in northern Massachusetts. In 2002, once again the citizens supported an initiative of the Commission to purchase 58 acres of open space and stop an unpopular development. The purchase became a "no-brainer" choice when a significant population of the threatened Blanding's turtle species was confirmed on the property. This same rare species habitat protection value of the purchase along with open space protection and additional passive recreational area still exists today and is the driving force behind the proposed purchase of the eight acre parcel.

Community Need

When purchased nearly five years ago by the town using Self Help funds as a part of an Open Space initiative Meadow Pond Reservation was hailed as a significant new area open to citizens for passive recreation. The Reservation has many well-worn trails throughout the property. It serves as an area for hiking, fishing, snow-shoeing and walking. Its beauty also lies in its proximity to many of the residents of Groveland. Within a walk or short drive, town residents can explore nature, appreciate open space and enjoy the great outdoors all within our town boundaries. Expansion of the current 68-acre reservation will insure that there will be no encroachment of the property with new housing on its borders.

In Massachusetts, there exists tremendous variety of plants and animals, natural communities, and ecosystems. Many of these species and natural communities are uncommon and under protected. As residents of Groveland we believe it's our responsibility to protect and preserve biodiversity. This property, on Uptack Road and part of the Meadow Pond/Parker River Greenway holds vernal pools and is a rich habitat for many endangered species. In acquiring this land, the Town of Groveland will greatly benefit from the biodiversity this open, undeveloped space will provide to its residents. We will secure a large portion of the perimeter around Meadow Pond and the reservation, which is now part of the property owned by the Town, under the management of the Conservation Commission.

Focusing on passive recreational uses such as trail walking, bird watching and nature observance in general, this area will continue to thrive as a source of rich and diverse habitat in which residents will be enabled to take part in an on-going effort of education in the area of preservation of our natural resources. School field trips during non-sensitive times of the year will be encouraged in order to bring about awareness on the importance of open space preservation. Our management plans for this area will include excluding off-road vehicles and other activities that will disturb existing habitats.

Community Support

We have received letters of support from organizations including the Groveland Open Space and Trails Committee and the Friends of Meadow Pond citizens group. The Conservation Commission has also worked with the Open Space and Trails Committee to have the eight acre parcel included in its list of priority properties to acquire and protect in the 2007 Groveland Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Project Management:

The project will be managed by Michael Dempsey. Mr. Dempsey is the chairman of the Commission. His multiple years as a manager and conservationist make him more than qualified for overseeing this project. In 2002 he led the team that facilitated the purchase of 58 acres of open space .

Budget

The total budget for the purchase is \$75,000.00. This budget was derived from an estimate received from a combination of appraisals on the 8-acre parcel, a recent appraisal of another nearby open space parcel and advice from Trust for Public Land.

The 8-acre parcel that will be purchased is part of a residential lot owned by Susan Hancox. Her entire residential lot consists of two parcels totaling 12 acres. The 12 acres are divided into two lots including the 8-acre parcel of open space. The additional four acre lot contains a single family residence. The scenario that will be followed for acquiring this parcel includes working with an organization such as Trust for Public Land or Essex County Greenbelt. This third-party organization will purchase the entire 12 acre residential lot, sell the 8 acre parcel to the Town of Groveland and resell the residence and adjoining 4 acre parcel. The Town of Groveland will pay only the appraised value of the 8-acre parcel.

Other Funding

The Friends of Meadow Pond and local residents have assisted us in the past to raise funds from open space and conservation-minded foundations. We anticipate the pursuit of any additional funds required will come from a similar campaign.

The Groveland Conservation Commission has already committed the funds necessary to conduct appraisals of the property from its Open Space and Land Fund.

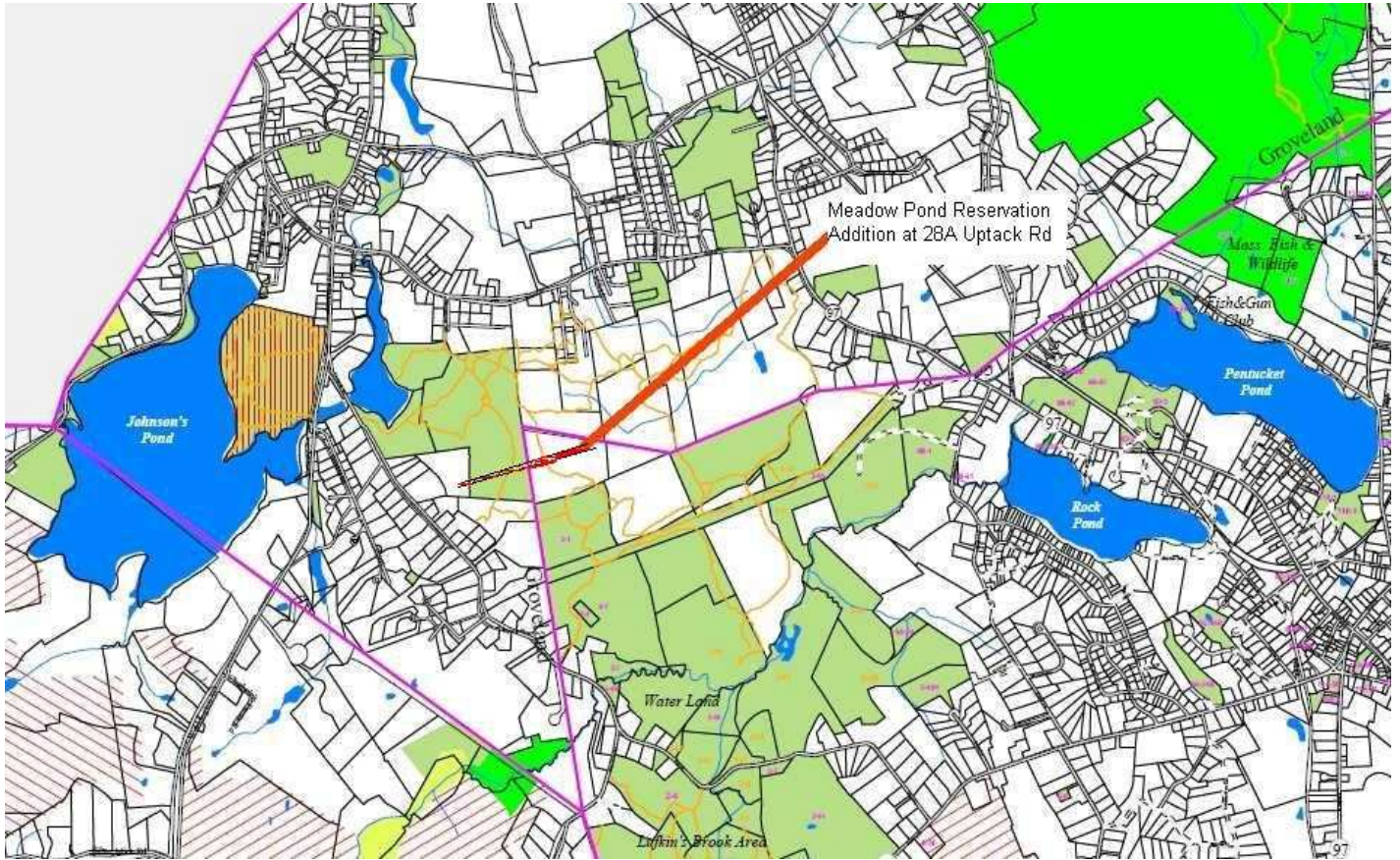
Timeline

If the proposed project is approved by the CPC and the Town, project implementation would begin as soon as funding is available. The project would start in May with completion within 12-18 months. The project will involve working with a third-party organization to purchase the 12 acre residential property and resell the two lots including the 8-acre parcel to the Town.

Appraisals

The first appraisal of the eight acre parcel was completed in June 2006. The second appraisal of the entire 12 acre residential lot is being completed. An additional appraisal of a nearby parcel of open space is also available. All of these documents can be made available to the CPC during the month of January 2007.

Map of Parcel



Compliance

There are no compliance issues related to the purchase of this property. It meets all current environmental and zoning requirements.

Environmental Hazards

There are no environmental hazards on the property.

Maintenance

All maintenance will be handled by the Groveland Conservation Commission Open Space Fund and volunteers to the Groveland Open Space and Trails Committee.