

ERNIE GOULD WOODLOT CONSERVATION PROJECT

GOULD LOT ACQUISITION

The proposed development of the Gould parcel into 44 housing units was not welcomed by the town of Petersham, or its neighbors. Provision of municipal services including police, fire protection and road maintenance to such a densely developed property, would strain the town's resources and forever change the character of this rural portion of the community.

The Harvard Forest engaged Keith Ross of LandVest to negotiate with the owners to purchase the property at its fair market value as determined by independent appraisal, and to coordinate a partnership with the East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT) and the Town of Petersham. Through this process a sale price of \$490,000 was established and a fundraising plan was implemented.

EQLT and the Harvard Forest collaborated to protect the Gould property and the integrity of the Petersham landscape. EQLT initially purchased the property and will convey a conservation restriction over it to the town of Petersham.

EQLT and a group of dedicated volunteers coordinated a fundraising effort from multiple sources. Thanks to very generous support from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services town self-help program, the townspeople of Petersham and surrounding towns, friends of Ernie Gould and the Cardinal Brook, Bafflin, Fields Pond and Cricket Foundations, the purchase of the Ernie Gould Woodlot and the sale of a conservation restriction over the property are nearly completed.

The Gould property, with its conservation restriction prohibiting development and division but allowing research, education, sustainable forestry and public access, will now be sold at its restricted value of \$60,000 to the Harvard Forest to become the cornerstone of the Gould Woodland Center.

HARVARD FOREST APPEAL

Raising funds for land protection is not the primary focus of the research and teaching work of Harvard Forest. Without prompt action, development on the Gould property would have adversely impacted the Harvard Forest's ability to conduct its research and teaching programs. Harvard Forest is seeking your help to raise the funds necessary to purchase this property to become a permanent part of the Harvard Forest. The total amount needed includes the expenses associated with the acquisition (*see budget*) in addition to the purchase price of the land.

HARVARD FOREST ERNIE GOULD WOODLOT ACQUISITION BUDGET

Purchase price	\$ 60,000
Appraisal	6,000
Hazardous waste exam	3,500
Legal, title, survey	15,500
Total	\$ 85,000

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT HARVARD FOREST'S ACQUISITION OF THE ERNIE GOULD WOODLOT

- Make a check out to the Harvard Forest and enclose it in the accompanying envelope
- Make a gift of appreciated securities and stocks to Harvard Forest
- Make a pledge of funds to the Harvard Forest over a three year period
- Share this brochure with others who you think might appreciate this conservation effort.



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PETERSHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

meticulously developed the first tax parcel property map of the town and was a leader in establishing sound land use by-laws and policies. He identified important natural areas and advocated for their protection.

Fortunately, we have the opportunity to honor Ernie's management philosophy and memory by altering the story above, protecting his woodlot and using it to educate students, forest landowners and conservationists. The woodlot's typical history, its location adjacent to the Harvard Forest and Fisher Museum of Forestry, and its connection to Ernie make it an ideal center for forest education. The East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT) has joined with Harvard Forest and the Town of Petersham to negotiate a purchase of this property from the current owners to create the Gould Woodland Center for Conservation (see EQLT Mission inside).

THE EMERGING THREAT

Central Massachusetts supports a remarkable 90% forest cover, and until recently has remained largely free of major development. However, over the past two decades development of regional and statewide conservation groups (e.g., East Quabbin Land Trust, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, The Trustees of Reservations, Massachusetts Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy), state agencies (DCR, DFW), and the federal government (U.S.F.S., Forest Legacy Program). In just the past six years the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has focused more than \$12 million dollars protecting land in this region due to its range of conservation values and spectacular natural and cultural qualities.

For its first 80 years the Harvard Forest could ignore the extensive exposure of its land to developable, abutting private property serviced

In 1984

Ernie Gould, long-time Harvard Forest, wrote a woodlot management guide for landowners (*Managing a Small Woodlot*—Arnoldia 45:1) based on his work on an 87-acre woodlot he owned in his hometown of Petersham, Massachusetts. Situated adjacent to the Harvard Forest and near the Colonial home where Ernie and his wife Anne entertained students, visitors and friends for three decades, Ernie's woodlot demonstrated the results of best management practices on a typical New England forest. After Ernie's death the land started down a troubling but familiar path after Anne sold it to a buyer expressing interest in forest management. Like many woodlots across New England, in short order the well-managed forest was aggressively harvested and soon afterwards a 44-unit condominium proposal was winding its way through the state permitting process. Despite good intentions and a caring landowner, the lack of permanent protection left this forest open for inappropriate development.

Ernie was universally liked and respected in Petersham. His quiet and thorough style was a hallmark of his tenure on town boards including the Chair of the Conservation Commission. He



THE HARVARD FOREST
For 100 years the Harvard Forest has been a national center for research and education in forest ecology and conservation. Across more than 3,000 acres of land, the Forest has developed one of the most comprehensive records of ecological change in North America. Annually more than 150 scientists, graduate students and undergraduates join the Forest staff and students for studies in Petersham. Harvard Forest land can be viewed as a unique laboratory and classroom, whose greatest values lie in the extraordinarily well-documented history, the ongoing series of ecological studies, and the natural setting that allows biological change to occur with minimal impact from direct human activity.



by unpaved woods roads. Now, to address this threat the Harvard Forest has embarked on a major effort to maintain the viability of its forest classroom and laboratory by minimizing development of surrounding lands and encouraging their long-term management for multiple uses and products. Consequently, Harvard Forest is promoting conservation through the establishment of conservation restrictions on hundreds of acres of adjoining private land, the receipt of small gifts of land, and modest land acquisition funded by the "Friends of the Harvard Forest". Recently, Harvard Forest and Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust collaborated on the protection of the abutting Wilson (100 acres) and Bryant (81 acres) properties.

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GOULD WOODLAND CENTER FOR CONSERVATION

Across New England forestland is largely owned by private individuals and organizations in relatively small parcels of tens to hundreds of acres. The success of conservation in this region, including land protection, sustainable management and habitat restoration as well as the broader goals of providing ecosystem services (fresh clean air and water, carbon sequestration), and economic support to communities, lies in communicating with and motivating busy landowners.

Over its 100-year history the Harvard Forest has worked with private landowners and evaluated the ecological consequences of forest management on private as well as Harvard lands. As it enters its second century, the Harvard Forest seeks to expand on this tradition by establishing the Gould Woodland Center for Conservation. Centered on the Ernie Gould woodlot, other Harvard Forest holdings and the Fisher Museum of Forestry, the Center will:

- coordinate management activities on Harvard Forest lands, with an emphasis on sustainably harvested woodlands and wildland reserves
- disseminate information from research and monitoring on these lands
- provide education on conservation and ecology
- serve as an interpretive trailhead to Harvard Forest lands and the landscape of Petersham,

Development of the Gould Center will coincide with the protection of Ernie's Woodlot and the creation of the Bob Marshall Trail, which will connect between trails on conservation lands in adjoining towns and across Petersham. Activities of the Center will be directed by Harvard Forest staff with input from an Advisory Committee composed of regional experts in forest conservation. Long-term management plans for woodlands and wildlands will be overseen by a private consulting forester, working closely with Harvard Forest staff.



WILDLANDS AND WOODLANDS VISION

In 2005 a group of Harvard Forest colleagues formulated a long-term conservation vision for the landscape. The resulting report, *Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the Forests of Massachusetts*, argues that the state's existing protected land base of one million acres should be increased to 2.5 million acres, an area equal to half of the land in the state. The conservation effort envisioned in

Wildlands and Woodlands (W&W) would ensure that the extraordinary environmental, social, and economic values of the landscape are sustained for generations to come. It would reverse the recent trend of deforestation and fragmentation and provide clean air and clean water from natural systems at a much more reasonable cost than serving these needs with human-engineered systems. The protected lands would be held by private, public and non-profit landowners, with 5% of the state's land area conserved as wildland reserves embedded within protected woodlands managed for diverse purposes, including sustainable forestry.

Since 2005 a diverse constituency has banded together to explore conservation finance mechanisms, and on-the-ground pilot projects aimed at achieving the larger Wildlands and Woodlands vision. This group has encouraged the formation of regional partnerships focused on land protection and forest stewardship, promoted new policy initiatives to fund broad-scale land protection and has worked with a large group of landowners in western Massachusetts to develop a regional forest protection effort.

Conservation of the Gould woodlot and development of the Gould Woodland Center for Conservation will similarly advance the Wildlands and Woodland goals. For additional information go to: www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org.

EQLT MISSION

The mission of the East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT) is to participate in creating local communities that are compatible with their natural environment, remain economically viable, and preserve the quality of life for generations to come. The work of the EQLT is focused on the communities of Barre, Hardwick, New Braintree, Oakham, Petersham and Ware. This east Quabbin area represents a diverse landscape of rivers, villages, rolling farmland, forested highlands, wetlands and working communities. Previously passed over by development, the local landscape and quality of life in this region is now threatened with permanent change. The EQLT was established in 1994, motivated by concern for the loss of farmland and wildlife habitat to unplanned sprawl. By working cooperatively with property owners, government agencies, conservation groups and other land trusts, the EQLT has permanently protected over 2,000 acres of land.

