

Ware, Hardwick land to be conserved

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The East Quabbin Land Trust is on the verge of giving conservation governance of nearly 48 acres of undeveloped property to the towns of Hardwick and Ware.

Martha S. Klassanos, of Ware, who is vice president of the nonprofit land trust, said this week that the land eventually may be part of a project that will see 2,500 acres of conservation land connecting the two towns.

Klassanos, who also serves on the Ware Conservation Commission, said the land trust bought the 47.7 total acres for about \$75,000 from a private owner. In turn, the land trust, which may be reimbursed for its investment through grants, wants to donate the conservation restrictions to the two towns.

She said that under the arrangement, the land trust will continue as the property owner, but the commissions will oversee the land's conservation. Hardwick will have the lion's share of about 46.1 acres and Ware will have about 1.6 acres.

The property's approximate boundaries are Turkey Street, the Gilbertville Water District and the former music camp on Hardwick Pond, all in Hardwick, and Hardwick Pond Road in Ware.

Klassanos said the conservation restrictions say that the land may be used for passive and noncommercial recreation, including hiking, cross-country skiing, hunting and fishing. Forestry activities, such as selective pruning and cutting, are allowed.

However, she said there are prohibitions against the land being developed, or being used for dumping, mining, filling or building. She said there also are bans on the parking, or storage, of motor vehicles and such activities as the public's cutting of the trees.

Approval of the project must be given by the conservation commissions and boards of selectmen in each town. Klassanos said the Ware commission has given such approval, and Randall L. Noble, chairman of the Hardwick Conservation Commission, said last night his panel did the same on Wednesday night.

Sherry A. Patch, administrative assistant to the Hardwick selectmen, said this week that the board granted approval on Tuesday. The Ware selectmen, also on Tuesday, gave approval, pending a review of the paperwork by town counsel.

Klassanos said yesterday that she anticipates that the Ware board will give formal approval by signing off on the documents today.

She noted that the land trust eventually wants to conserve a total 2,500 acres, including the most recent purchase, that would extend from North Street in Ware almost to Hardwick Center.