



Boudreau Forest Legacy Tract, Massachusetts

April 1997

An eleventh hour purchase caused a proposed Massachusetts housing development to remain a haven for wildlife. Developer Paul Boudreau, a south Hadley lawyer, sold an easement on his 56-acre parcel to the Forest Legacy Program on April 25, 1997, for \$335,000. Boudreau had given the USDA Forest Service until April 27 to buy the development rights on the property, where he had already secured the necessary permits to build Fox Haven, a luxury subdivision. "Boudreau had what amounted to a fully permitted subdivision plan ready to go," said Terry Blunt, of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (MA DEM).

Forest Legacy administrators and MA DEM officials were alerted to the proposed subdivision by concerned local residents who valued the forested area and were anxious to see it protected. Although skeptical, Boudreau agreed to hold off implementing his development plan while appraisal and title work were completed. After realizing that Forest Legacy could provide him not only funds but a way to save on his income taxes, Boudreau signed a purchase and sale agreement. Having no potential to develop the land or his subdivision, he decided to donate his remaining ownership to the town for watershed protection.

The area was targeted by area conservation groups, in part because of its intrinsic natural beauty and its importance in protecting a primary water supply, but also because of the precedent its sale would set in initiating development along the mountain range in that area.

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Peter Johnson, South Hadley
Conservation Commission

Boudreau plans to donate the property itself to Fire District 2. "In anticipation of obtaining the property, District 2 has already begun developing a management plan for the land as required by the Forest Legacy Program," Water Superintendent William Selkirk said.

Peter Johnson, a member of the South Hadley conservation commission who had been watching the sale closely, said, "Boudreau's case was an example of how Forest Legacy is a uniquely appealing program, even to those who stand to profit from development."

The property will be managed by the South Hadley Water and Fire District, and monitored under the

auspices of the MA Department of Environmental Management annually.

The Forest Legacy Program protects important forest from conversion to nonforest uses. Important forests provide important wildlife habitat, protect water quality, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, afford outstanding scenic views, are home to historic sites, and/or provide the opportunity to continue traditional forest uses. A Federal-State partnership allows landowners to keep their land private while at the same time ensuring it remains forest forever through the use of conservation easements.



Red-eyed vireos, tangers and wood thrushes benefit deep forests where cowbirds – a freeloader in other bird's nests – tend not to penetrate. Photo by Terry Blunt

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