



# Hatfield Watershed #2

## Forest Legacy Tract, Massachusetts

July 2002

A forested property in Hatfield, Massachusetts, is a primary watershed recharge area where spring-fed streams flow into the town's only reservoir. The town of Hatfield's 3,400 residents rely heavily on the reservoir, as it provides between 60 and 70 percent of the town's water. Forests help cleanse water as precipitation runoff flows through a forest and the natural landscape also provides ground water recharge. Those benefits are lost when a forest is developed.

***"With appropriate forest management, the town can receive income from the sale of timber over the long haul."***

Director of the Hatfield Department of Public Works  
James Reidy

The 133-acre Hatfield Watershed property was protected from development with a conservation easement on July 12, 2002. The easement was purchased from landowners William and Kathy Kogut for \$590,000. The USDA Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program contributed \$442,500 to the total purchase price. The town of Hatfield contributed \$100,000 and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management contributed

\$47,500. The Valley Land Fund, a local land trust, will purchase the fee title to the property to close out the transaction, and will later sell it to the town when more local funds are available.

The conservation restriction, which will be held by the Department of Environmental Management and the town, prohibits residential development, installation of communications towers, and placement of billboards on the property. It also prohibits dumping, mining, and excavations, and the use of motorized vehicles is limited to activities related to managing the forest and Christmas tree operations.

James Reidy, Director of the Hatfield Department of Public Works, and Paul Davis, chair of the Hatfield Conservation Commission, lauded the transaction as significant, noting that the quality of the water entering the headwaters of the reservoir depend upon that site being left undeveloped. "With appropriate forest management, the town can receive income from the sale of timber over the long haul," James Reidy said.

As with all Forest Legacy property protections the Koguts were willing sellers wanting to conserve the land, and wanted to do the right thing for the property. The Koguts wanted to protect the property through the Forest



Legacy Program, and in the last few weeks before the closing date, decided to sell not only the conservation restriction, but also the remaining interest in the land. Reidy credits the Valley Land Fund with its quick ability to move in and purchase the remaining interest and hold it for later purchase by the town.

The Forest Legacy Program protects important forests from conversion to nonforest uses. These forests provide essential 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 ensuring it remains forest forever through the use of conservation easements.

Access roads such as this one will be used for removal of timber according to an approved Forest Management plan on the Hatfield Watershed property.

Photo by Terry Blunt

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