

## Land Bank

From Cape Cod Times

In 1959 a momentous event which is still shaping the future of Cape Cod occurred - the creation of the National Seashore. Setting aside 43,000 acres of precious beaches, trails and woodland is possibly the most positive event in the History of the Cape.

Here's a chance to do it again.

In the present tidal wave of residential home building which has tipped the scales on this fragile peninsula, few options exist involving large enough tracts of land to make a difference.

How about 15,000 acres in one pop.

The Mass Military Reservation is a 20,000 acre parcel. The state is being approached by Congressman Delahunt, supported by over 30 civic and business groups, to dedicate 15,000 acres of it to the Dept. of Environmental Management as a preserve. Delahunt wants to keep the Coast Guard, Air Guard and all other future development and training on the southern 5,000 acres. Nobody is pushing to close the entire base. According to State Representative Tom George, "To eliminate the base in one fell swoop would cause havoc in many lives and families."

The land is important as conservation land but has a second, perhaps more crucial, importance: it's the crown of the Sagamore Lens, the water supply for the towns of Bourne, Sandwich, Mashpee and Falmouth.

The decision to move this land into the public domain rests right now with the office of Governor Cillucci.

A great deal has already been written about the environmental benefits of protecting the Upper Cape's water supplies by converting the northern 15,000 acres of the Massachusetts Military Reservation into a watershed and wildlife refuge. Let's look at the economic benefits:

Without protecting our water, the economic costs could be devastating to Cape tourism and local residents. Nothing can kill a tourist season faster than mandatory water bans and tight restrictions affecting local restaurants, motel pools, and golf courses.

While these are all important economic benefits, the refuge will also be a boost to local homeowner on the Upper Cape.

Some Realtors claim that property values within a close radius of the base are down by 10-25 %. The adverse publicity about the base has driven down the sale price of homes in the area, according to Broker Jamie Regan, owner of Century 21, who has been active in the area for many years. In fact, Regan says that homes in the area of the base are selling a bit quicker than some because of the discount. Regan believes the military presence should be maintained.

For the neighborhoods around the base, we are talking several millions of dollars in added property value, added equity and more money for the local economy.

To look at how parks and refuges affect property values, you need go no further than our own back yard -- the Cape Cod National Seashore.

Homes bordering the park are well above average market values, and some local Realtors see the values of homes near a new Upper Cape refuge making a similar jump.

Sandwich Realtor Betsy Warren believes that if we can clean up the pollution and create a refuge, we can gradually build up, and perhaps even enhance, the property values in the area of the base.

OK. You get the point, now let's do the math, and figure out what this means to each homeowner.

For the average home valued at \$140,000 near the base, they have lost \$10,000 to \$27,000 in value. While creating a refuge will not boost the value overnight, it will happen in due course.

For the average homeowner -- that's at least \$10,000. It could go much higher. Not bad.

If you agree that it's a win-win situation for Cape Cod, tell Governor Cellucci by faxing him at 617-727-9723 or calling him at 617-727-9173