

Trust seeks money to save rain

Group hopes to raise \$50,000 for undeveloped areas

By DEREK HASKEW
Cowan Correspondent

Keepers of the woodland might once have been druids, tree nymphs, or wizened hermits, and they might have used tricks or spells to protect their land.

But the Five Town Land Trust, modern-day keeper of woodlands, wetlands and open spaces, knows there are no spells to protect its property. It needs money. And right now, it's trying to raise \$50,000.

The trust is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving undeveloped land, including agricultural land, areas of scenic beauty and historical, archaeological or geological sites.

George Grant, secretary of the trust and an East Windsor resident, said Wednesday the group has launched the first phase of a fund-raising drive to meet its goal.

"We felt the need for a stewardship fund to take care of and protect land," Grant said. "Potential donors have asked about our finances, and we thought it would be a good idea to raise some money to ensure the land would be protected."

The trust, which has members in Somers, Stafford, East Windsor, Enfield and Killington, owns more than 50 acres and is completing a transaction that would place 150 acres of Stafford land under conservation easement. The trust prohibits development of its land, which is tax-exempt, and oversees the use of land it has under conservation easement. Properties under easement are subject to conservation restrictions, but remain under private ownership.

Grant said the fund's primary purpose would be insurance for possible legal action such as injunctions against conservation viola-

tions. He said the money might also be used to buy land, buy easements or pay for land surveys.

Donald Smith, president of the trust and a Somers resident, said the trust would like to buy several parcels abutting land already owned by the trust. He said the trust hopes to raise \$25,000 for stewardship and another \$25,000 for land purchases. Smith said the trust is most interested in protecting the Indian Rock site in Somers. The rock may be of archaeological significance because of carvings on the rock believed to have been made by Pequot Indians. Smith said negotiations with the owner are continuing.

The greatest potential for litigation involves easements, Grant said. When the land is sold or inherited, the new owners may not be sympathetic to conservation efforts and

Please see Trust

may try to develop or otherwise violate restrictions on the land. The trust is asking people for donations and plans to ask local businesses and social organizations to contribute as well, Grant said. He said the group is still discussing ways to generate interest in the fund-raiser, and said auctions and flea markets have been suggested. Donations of money, land and easements are tax-deductible. Anyone who is interested in making a donation or would like more information should call George Grant, 627-8062.

A weekend walk up Soapstone Mountain

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By Journal Inquirer Staff

SOMERS — In the Colonial days, the soft soapstone from Soapstone Mountain was used to make footwarmers, or bedwarmers. The stone was carved into a flat shape with a handle, warmed by the fire, and taken to church or to bed.

No longer is the soft stone from the mountain in Somers used commercially. But the mountain is there, and because it is, people walk on it and climb it. It is part of the Shenipsit State Forest.

If you would like to explore Soapstone Mountain, visit a beaver pond, and learn about insects and wild flowers, take time out to do so this coming Saturday. A walk will be sponsored by the Five Town Land Trust.

Open to the public and suitable for both adults and children, the leisurely walk (three miles in four hours) will be led by noted environmentalist Dr. Jerry Stage of Stafford.



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Walker's should meet at 11 a.m. at the Gulf Road entrance to the mountain, approximately two miles south of Route 190 on Gulf. There is a Shenipsit Forest sign. Or, from Route 140, take Burbank Road to Don Smith at 749-9550 or Jerry Stage at 875-0559.

The next walk will be on Saturday, Aug. 15, when the destination will be the Black Spruce Bogs in East Windsor.

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