

## Williamsburg Massachusetts Land for Sale

Description: 18 acres of partly wooded land bounded by a good trout stream (Bradford Brook) on the west and sloping in “steps” to the stream from Ashfield Rd., opposite its intersection with Conway Rd. Portions of the land are infested with multiflora roses and difficult to negotiate. (Their removal would yield a lot of biomass.) The northerly portion of the land includes a number of mature and bearing black walnut trees, numerous planted blueberry bushes, and miscellaneous fruit trees, including a few ancient heirloom apple trees. Blueberries, some Chinese chestnut, and miscellaneous other fruit trees are scattered in other more or less open areas. Much of the formerly open land was planted to Christmas trees, which are now overgrown and mostly should be chipped for mulch (especially the Scotch Pine). Some Shipmast black locust have been planted here and there. The land consists of gently sloping areas that would be practical to return to fields followed by steep slopes to a wetland formerly the bed of Bradford Brook. On the other side of this wet strip is the lower meadow, formed when the brook itself, and then, proceeding westerly, the brook itself. The land has not been sprayed with anything for at least 25 years. It is frequented by a large variety of wildlife including deer and black bear.

Taxes: According to the latest estimated tax bill (July, 2006), the total annual taxes for the land, without “improvements”, are less than US\$280. The land has qualified for many years in a conservation portion of a recreational land use law that allows a reduced taxation. The special tax status may transfer with the land title. If it does not (because, for example the buyer wants to cut off the timber), it is subject to rollback taxes, basically payment of the waived taxes under the recreation status for the previous 10 years. Alternately, Massachusetts’ constitution allows for conservation easements to be permanently affixed to the title of land. Courts cannot overturn such easements. (Our copy of the law is not recent, and there may have been amendments that we do not know about. If this is of concern to prospective buyers, they should obtain the current version of Chapter 61B.) A number of land uses are consistent with 61B status, as I understand the matter.

Advantages: The soil on portions of the upper clearings is exceedingly rich. For the lover of gardening, birds, trees and wildlife this is an excellent site. Ashfield Rd. is maintained to county standards—rather high in Massachusetts. By car it is about 5 minutes to town and another 10 or 15 minutes to the city (County Seat) of Northampton. One can bicycle to town easily in 15 minutes. With 5 colleges in the area, this rural to semi-rural region of Massachusetts offers more cultural opportunity and intellectual resources than anyone could possibly use. Housing in the area is very tight. There is a bus route between Williamsburg and Northampton. Cooley Dickinson hospital, on the near side of Northampton, is a tertiary care facility, with excellent clinics located in the hills nearer to Williamsburg. The land is 20-30 minutes from the intersections of Interstates 90 and 95. Driving time to Bradley International Airport is about the same as taxi travel from Manhattan to Kennedy Airport when I had the misfortune to live in New York City. New York City and Boston are near enough to visit for business or whatever and drive back in the same day, but distant enough not to be directly troublesome.

At least two sites on the land are suitable for solar building. The special tax status can be transferred to the buyer if s/he agrees to continue to retain the conservation use of most of the land. A dwelling is permitted without voiding the tax status, but of course the house lot (1.5 acres) and the dwelling will be taxed at the regular rate.

Disadvantages: Winter. It didn’t seem so bad when I lived there, but I didn’t know any better.

Closing and Related Cost. Closing costs, rollback taxes if any, surveying costs (the land was never surveyed to our knowledge), and any other costs of sale will be borne by the buyer.

Subdivision: The land may be subdivided in 2 acre or larger lots with at least 200 feet of frontage. We will only subdivide in patterns that we regard as rational land use, selling lots in sequence, south to north. We prefer to sell the parcel without subdivision. A minimum of 5 acres is required to retain the recreational land tax status. I don't know if this includes the house lot but I'm assuming this would require an additional 1.5 acres.

Present Owners: Dan & Cynthia Hemenway, now living in Florida.

Extras: Dan Hemenway will walk the site with the purchaser of the entire 18 acres for a one-day consult, also indicating features of the land. This is to be scheduled for mutual convenience sometime after the closing. Dan has taught permaculture worldwide for more than 25 years.

Williamsburg Information: [www.burgey.org](http://www.burgey.org)

Price information: [BarkingFrogsPC@aol.com](mailto:BarkingFrogsPC@aol.com)

Price: We want \$160,000 for the entire parcel or \$11,000 per acre for subdivided land. Buyer pays all closing costs including surveying, if the buyer wants it or if subdivided. We prefer not to subdivide and, again, retain the right to sell parcels in the sequence and shape that we regard as best. The land will work best if kept whole.

Dan Hemenway