

# Open Space Bond Strategies

## Procedural:

- Check with Town Finance Director – how much can the town afford without adverse affecting bond rating,
- Who does the town use to prepare bond documents, get quote for bond document preparation.
- Get Town Council approval, contact your State Rep/Senator to have bond authorization bill presented and approved by General Assembly.
- Have Town Council contact Sec of State to have bond question placed on ballot.
- Follow up and make sure each step is done.

## Campaigning:

- Collect facts and figures: Open Space protects the environment, adds to quality of life, supports local farming, protects community cultural history, and avoids property tax increases (ie Cost of Community Services).
- Contact local community newspapers for editorial support.
- Write letters to editor, op-ed pieces to Pro-Jo and local papers.
- Contact local elected officials and candidates for letters of support. Find out which candidates/officials support the bond, and who is against. Use this in your fliers.
- Prepare fliers for personal distribution at town transfer station, supermarkets, farmstands, banks, pharmacy, restaurants, etc... Go door-to-door in subdivisions. Post fliers at shops and stores.
- Promote the bond at Grange, Rotary, historical society, business association meetings, after service church coffees, etc.
- Post signs at protected land indicated it was protected with open space bonds.
- Place ads in local newspapers every week for a month prior to election.

## Glocester Voters-Please Read

I'm all in favor of keeping Glocester rural and preserving open space, but not in a reckless manner at the expense of hardworking taxpayers who are struggling to get by. In these days of tough and uncertain economic times, the Glocester Land Trust is asking you to allow them to borrow \$500,000 to buy MORE land and take it off the tax base forever, raising your taxes two ways. I guess they don't read the paper or watch the news. First, we would add that loan and interest to our debt service for another ten years. There is, by the way, another three years remaining to pay on the last loan for the Land Trust. Maybe we should pay that off first before borrowing more \$\$\$. Second, by taking more land off the tax base, it effectively raises your taxes by reducing the base used to assess the town's taxes, thus requiring higher taxes on less total property base to collect the same amount of tax revenue town-wide. All this while we spend thousands of dollars attempting to create a new field in the woods, while letting the fields at the Phillips Farm grow up to brush. I guess there isn't enough time for the hardworking volunteers to mow all that brush and maintain those fields, because they spend too much time mowing private property on Putnam Pike across from the Steere Hill access road. Got some brush that needs mowing? Maybe you can get on the list! We cannot survive any more debt!

Please Vote **NO** at this time for the Local Land Trust Referendum on the ballot.

*This is not signed by the Tooth Fairy, it is signed by me.....*

**George "Buster" Steere**

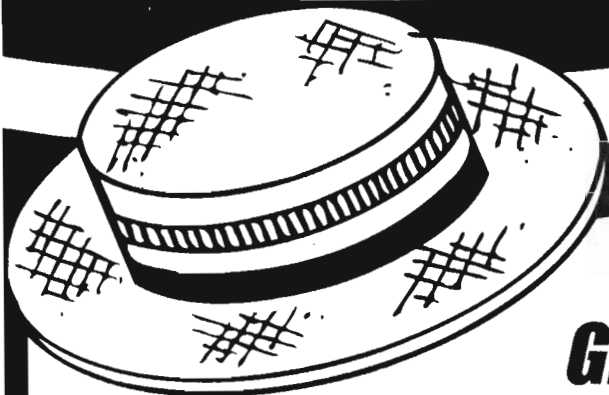
## GLOCESTER VOTERS BE INFORMED

The Glocester Land Trust started the **Open Space Bond** project in Spring 2008 -- before these uncertain economic times -- as proposals such as this require long-term planning to accomplish. The cost to you, the taxpayer, is 6.5 cents/\$1,000 evaluation; thus, **the impact on a \$300,000 evaluation would be less than \$5 per quarter**. This is not to be taken lightly, but as shown in over sixty economic impact studies, the cost to provide services to new residential development is always greater than the tax revenue generated by that development. *That additional cost will be passed to you in the form of higher property taxes.* In other words, **every taxpayer in Glocester will pay higher property taxes to subsidize new residential development.**

The "thousands of dollars" to create "a new field in the woods" was a **Federal grant** that your hardworking volunteers acquired to **bring money to our town!** With these grant monies, we were able to **pay a Glocester business and his employees** to create a new wildlife habitat. The Land Trust does mow a friendly neighbor's field in exchange for allowing Land Trust equipment to be kept on her property when we hardworking volunteers are maintaining the wildlife habitat fields at Phillips Farm. *This mowing is done before and after the nesting birds have used the fields to raise their young.* However, if someone with that type of construction equipment would like to volunteer to mow the fields, it would be most welcome.

If anyone has further questions, please come to an open public meeting. The Glocester Land Trust meets the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM, and we welcome you to attend, participate and volunteer.

Thank you,  
Bruce Payton, Chair, Glocester Land Trust



# **GLOCESTER VOTERS**

## **Please Vote NO On Local Referendum #3**

### **Open Space**

Last Wednesday after my ad came out in the Bargain Buyer in which I stated my opinion on the local Open Space Referendum #3 that would authorize the Gloucester Land Trust to borrow \$500,000 (which immediately becomes a \$650,000. debt with interest over 10 yrs.) to purchase more land to take off the tax role forever, I received a call from Bruce Payton (of the Gloucester Land Trust). Seems he wasn't happy about my "attack" as he put it, and he told me that I was going to pay for it by being slammed in the Bargain Buyer this week. Well Bruce, hope it makes you happy, so give it your best shot! I was just stating my opinion and a few facts, it wasn't an attack..however, if the shoe fits by all means, wear it! You were correct about one thing Bruce, I have never attended a Land Trust meeting. I have however, spoken to you many times over the last 3 (at least) years about the unsightly mess you've created (my opinion again) at the Phillip's Farm on Putnam Pike. I've also brought to your attention many times that a tractor and mower owned by the Town should not be mowing a few acres of private property just because the nice lady that owns it allows you to park the tractor there. Bash me all you want Bruce, it isn't right and my opinion stands. I told you that people are having it tough right now, struggling to pay their taxes and mortgages, some are losing their homes and now is not the time for Gloucester to incur more debt. (My opinion again) Your answer...exactly right, that's why now is the time for us to buy land because we can get a good deal on it when someone needs to sell and needs the money. It will only cost taxpayers pennies per thousand on their taxes. Maybe so, but if you can't.scrape up the money to pay your taxes as it is even another \$30, \$50, or \$100. is unbearable. Also, that free money you spoke of, I think you also called it a Grant, "not taxpayer money", that you used to clear your Steere Hill project on which you said the Land Trust made \$5,000. Does that come from the same place as the other "not taxpayer \$, grant" or whatever that the Land Trust is paid NOT to mow and maintain the fields on a regular basis? The Land Trust owns more land now than they can sensibly maintain and now is not the time to burden already overburdened taxpayers further. I say pay off the three more years remaining on the Land Trust deal first, and maybe bring back the nice green pasture on Putnam Pike at the Phillips Farm (good luck) before you incur more debt to buy more land. (That darned opinion of mine again)

I really hope Bruce, that by growing all those acres of weed and brush you are able to attract the wildlife that you spoke about, pheasants, quail, etc. I have those and more, deer, fox, turkey you name it. All I can suggest to you is that wildlife, like patrons of fine restaurants, go where they like the menu best.

**Struggling To Pay My Taxes**  
**George "Buster" Steere, Chepachet**

# Glocester Voters

Do you like your recent tax increases of 8-9% annually? Well, if so, vote for the local referendum #3 Open Space. It will HELP to push your next tax increase EVEN HIGHER.

If you are angry about your skyrocketing tax bill, like I am, then don't just talk about it, take a stand, send a message now!

**NO NEW DEBT - NO NEW TAXES!**

Vote NO on local Open Space Referendum #3.

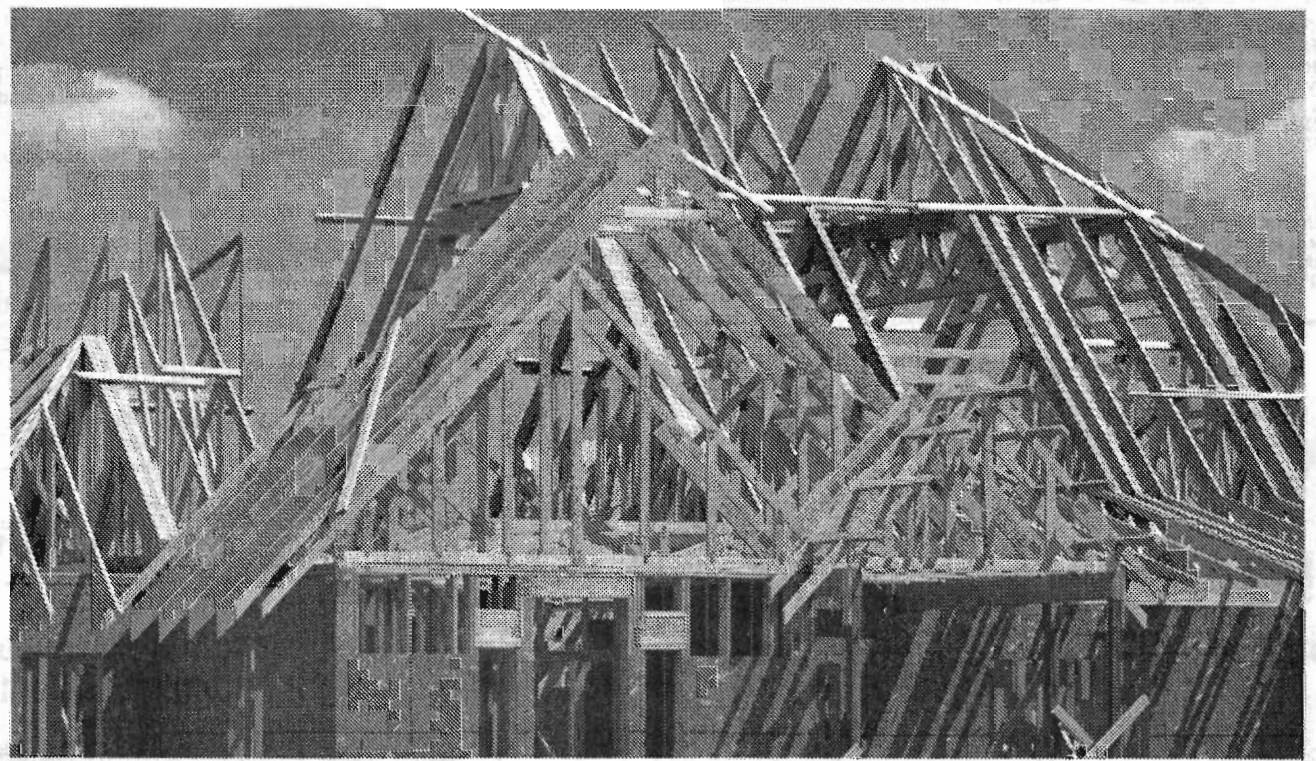
Paid for by George "Buster" Steere

# A Picture Says a Thousand Words...

## THIS?



## OR, THIS?



### VOTE YES ON THE OPEN SPACE BOND NOVEMBER 4<sup>th</sup>

paid for by the Gloucester Land Trust

SAY YOU SAW IT IN THE BARGAIN BUYER-OCTOBER 29, 2008

# **GLOCESTER RESIDENTS**

## **Vote for Open Space**

### **November 4th**



**The Open Space Bond will:**

- [1] Add additional greenspace to our town.**
- [2] Increase areas for recreational use in our town.**
- [3] Help maintain Gloucester's good bond rating.**
- [4] Help slow down property tax increases.**

**Note: The Gloucester Land Trust is a voluntary group of trustees, appointed by the Town Council. We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm, in the Town Hall.  
The public is welcome to attend.**

# Vote YES for Open Space and Lower Taxes

As volunteer members of the Gloucester Land Trust and Gloucester Conservation Commission, we are asking for your support of a \$500,000 Gloucester Open Space

Bond that will be on the November 2008 ballot. Since the Land Trust was established in 1987 the citizens of Gloucester have overwhelmingly approved three bond issues to acquire and protect farms, forests, and open space. The first bond from 1987 was retired (i.e. paid off) many years ago, the second bond from 1990 was retired two years ago, and the year 2000 bond will be retired in four years. This proposed bond issue will replace the 1990 bond that was retired two years ago.

There are two basic reasons to approve this bond issue. The first is financial because in the long run it will save you money year after year. The second is environmental/quality of life because open space protects the rural character of Gloucester which is why so many of us choose to live here.

*1. Is there additional money coming from other sources?*

**YES.** The Land Trust uses the bond funds as the required matching portion for the grants we receive from the State of RI, environmental organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, and private charities such as the Champlain Foundations. The Land Trust has been very effective in stretching the buying power of Open Space Bond money. For every one dollars worth of land acquired, less than 23¢ of the cost has come from Gloucester Open Space Bond funds. But without the 23¢ of local money, we can't get the grant money. And if Gloucester doesn't receive the grant money, it will go to another town.

*2. Will the public be allowed on the land that is acquired?*

**YES.** There will be walking, cross country skiing, and horseback riding trails, along with fishing and hunting where it is appropriate. The grants we receive to acquire land come with legal deed restrictions that require us to maintain the property as open space for passive (non-competitive) recreation.

*3. Does it make financial sense to taxpayers to keep the land open rather than developed for new houses?*

**YES.** Numerous studies have shown that new housing developments cost the town more than the additional income generated by property taxes. That extra cost gets passed to you in the form of higher property taxes. If you wish to see the figures, please read the Cost of Community Services report available on the publications page at [www.SNEFCI.org](http://www.SNEFCI.org). Of course if you think your property taxes are not rising fast and high enough, and you want to keep them high forever, the logical thing to do is to vote NO. So the choice is simple: vote YES and pay a little for a few years to protect open space and save money forever, or vote NO and save a few dollars for a few years and then pay ever higher property taxes forever. It's like that old oil change commercial, you can pay a little now or a lot later.

4. *Are there non-financial benefits to acquiring open space?*

**YES.** The scenic vistas we all enjoy will be protected, and open space helps maintain clean air and water. Open space also preserves wildlife habitats and biodiversity. More protected open space means fewer subdivisions which contribute to suburban sprawl, road congestion, traffic, noise, and lessened quality of life. By supporting open space bonds you also help protect local agricultural land and farm fresh products. Is global warming a concern to you? If so, open space protects the mature trees that store carbon dioxide and thus helps reduce global warming. Open space also provides a place for you and your children to explore and enjoy forever.

5. *Is the \$500,000 an affordable amount for a town the size of Glocester?*

**YES.** The last Glocester Open Space Bond in the year 2000 was also \$500,000. Compared to other towns in Rhode Island, we are seeking a very modest sized bond. West Greenwich, with a population 39% smaller than Glocester, overwhelmingly approved an \$8,000,000 open space bond issue in 2006. Portsmouth, with a population 61% larger than Glocester, passed a \$2,000,000 open space bond issue in 2007. Placement of the Glocester Open Space bond issue on the ballot was unanimously approved by the Town Council.

As shown in the table below, the cost of Open Space is under 1% of your property tax, and decreased sharply two years ago when the 1990 bond was paid off. Approving the proposed bond would restore funding and still keep the cost well under 1% of your property tax.

	Budget Year Ending June 30th							
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 est
Open Space Bond Principal & Interest	119,540	111,790	107,900	109,875	61,525	59,850	58,050	121,150
Town Budget to be raised by Taxes	13,983,454	14,073,013	14,942,352	16,008,507	16,576,300	18,134,592	19,692,581	20,627,979
Open Space Bonds as a % of Property Tax	0.85%	0.79%	0.72%	0.69%	0.37%	0.33%	0.29%	0.59%

6. *Do you need the money now?*

**YES.** The Land Trust is in discussions with several large landowners whom wish and prefer to protect their land as open space, and are offering their land to us at a very reasonable price. If we cannot come up with the funds, they will be forced to sell to developers. But we cannot get grants and protect these lands until an open space bond issue is approved. Our window of opportunity will soon close so your support in November is urgently needed.

Paid for by Debra and Roy Najecki, West Glocester



# A Picture IS Worth a Thousand Words

## Please Vote NO to Local Open Space Referendum #3

### Land Trust Stewardship



*This is what 20 years of Land Trust Mismanagement has done to a green hayfield*

- 1.) NO TAXES received by Town on Land Trust Property.
- 2.) Hundreds of thousands of your tax dollars, local and federal, spent to buy and preserve green space allowing very limited use by local taxpayers.
- 3.) The "Land Trust" has taken tens of thousands of dollars in "free money grants" (still tax \$) with stipulations attached requiring them to let fields grow up to brush while claiming to be preserving green space.

**\*Lose-Lose-Lose Situation for Taxpayers.**

### Landowner Stewardship



*Over 200 years of Family Landowner Management*

- 1.) Taxes paid to Gloucester
- 2.) No Tax Dollars spent to preserve green space
- 3.) Have accepted NO free money grants (tax \$) with strings attached to mismanage green space

**\*Win-Win-Win Situation for Taxpayers.**

When was the last time your banker loaned you \$500,000 with no idea what you were going to do with the money? Maybe they can provide a few acres for our kids to go sledding this winter. Doubtful!

**Vote NO more money, NO more debt, NO more taxes!**

Let's pay off what we owe, then we'll talk about it.

**Vote NO on Local Referendum #3 Open Space.**

George "Buster" Steere