

# Independent Land Trust Gaining Ground

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By Michael Marotta  
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When Cynde Robbins moved to Scituate from rural New Hampshire 16 years ago, she was apprehensive about leaving behind the rich pastures of the Granite State. "I had this vision of everything being black-top and cement and I really didn't want to come," Robbins said. "But I found this lovely part of Scituate that's farm country, just like where I grew up."

The Clapp Road resident is so fond of her property and the aesthetic value of Scituate that she and her husband, Wayne, have formed the Maxwell Conservation Trust, a non-profit organization designed to sustain open space and quality of life in town.

When the Robbins' discovered that there was no active trust in town for preserving open space, they sought legal advice, and having gone through the proper state and federal government channels have had their trust granted charitable non-profit status.

Robbins, who named the trust after her golden retriever, Maxwell, said the main objective of the trust is to help protect the town's natural land resources against irresponsible development, as well as preserve open space for recreation, wildlife, public water supply and forestry protection.

"There's so much to be done down here," Robbins said. "We are really so far behind, when you think about what Marshfield has done with preserving the North River, we haven't really done a whole lot except for our marsh-lands."

While just in its "infancy stage", as Robbins calls it, the Maxwell Trust has already generated enough to purchase a house and an 8.5-acre parcel of land on Clapp Road. They plan on re-selling the house with an acre of land and preserving the seven acres of backland as open space.

Next up is a project in collaboration with the "Save the River View" group working to preserve a parcel of land along Third Cliff.

All the money used to buy land comes from donations, and since the Maxwell Trust is just getting off the ground, most of the donations have come unsolicited from word-of-mouth.

Robbins said she is currently in the process of putting together an executive committee and has future plans to develop a membership-based organization, Robbins says that the Trust will remain completely independent from town government.

"Whether it be justified or not, people don't trust our town government," she said. "So in order to give them a choice you have to have an independent trust, and almost every town has one."

Robbins said that the town's conservation commission is aware of the group's existence and called the planning boards reaction to the group "favorable."

"They need all the help they can get," she continued. "And we plan to get more involved as we get more people to help us."

While they originally had not plans to concentrate on the trust full-time, the Robbins' (Wayne owns Robbins Garage in Cohasset) have been swamped with myriad requests and ideas on prospective parcels of land.

"We need to make sure our quality of life is preserved," Robbins added. "We need to purify the air, the water, everything. So we're set up to hold conservation easements, trusts and restrictions so people's land can be whatever they want it to be, however they want to handle it."