

York Water District buys 3-acre parcel

Land helps protect watershed

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YORK — The York Water District has bought a three-acre property off Mountain Road that fits neatly as a puzzle piece into an area of protected land.

The district closed on the property at 5 Eber Drive on Sept. 20, according to District Superintendent Don Neumann.

The district paid \$155,000 for the property, but ratepayers are not picking up the tab, Neumann said. The cost is covered by district profits earned from payments made by telecommunications carriers who lease space on the district's cell tower atop Mount Agamenticus, according to Neumann.

"The purpose of purchasing the land is to protect the watershed," he said.

The property at Eber Drive abuts another three-acre parcel recently bought by the York Water District at 210 Mountain Road, Neumann said. A small stream runs across the back of the Mountain Road property, directly into Chases Pond, the source of York's drinking water.

The stream has no official name, according to Gary Stevens, the district's resource protection manager. But because a moose was spotted in the stream, it has been given the informal name of Moose Brook.

The Eber Drive property "is such close proximity to Moose Brook, it's very important to us that we bought it," Stevens said. "We have three main streams that feed Chases Pond. This one is the closest one to the intake. It's the only one that comes from a developed area."

Moose Brook at Eber Drive and Mountain Road is essentially "a 12-inch culvert going across the road," Stevens said. "At Chases Pond, it's a decent- sized stream or brook."

The parcels on Mountain Road and Eber Drive join the more than 1,800 acres owned by the Water District in the Mount Agamenticus watershed area.

The district is continuing an environmental site assessment of the Eber Drive property to ensure water quality. This could include installing monitoring wells, taking groundwater samples and conducting ground-penetrating radar, Neumann said. The work may qualify for funding from the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, he said.

Buildings on the property will be demolished by an excavator, said Neumann. This will give firefighters a training opportunity in skills of rescue, hose deployment, and safety, according to a released statement from York Beach Fire Capt. David Osgood.

"In the end, we'll put it back to its natural state because this whole parcel is in the watershed," Neumann said.

An estimated 35 homes are within the watershed, said Neumann. The district currently has no plans to buy other properties, he said.

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