

Marion Road Conservation Area: A tiny piece of peace

By Mary Leach

Nestled next to the Pine Haven Cemetery off of busy Bedford Street is a tiny piece of peace for those seeking a walk in the woods.

The Marion Road Conservation Area was established in 2002 as a cooperative conservation project between the town of Burlington and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The 15-acre site features varied topography with wetland and woodlands and a diverse array of plant species, including the shagbark hickory, *Carya ovata*, which is not common in Burlington, but these trees appear throughout the property. The property has several trails, some hills and a certified vernal pool.

That this wooded oasis exists is a confluence of luck and circumstance, said John Keeley, Burlington conservation agent.

"Back around 2001 there was a proposed subdivision in there and apparently a lot of the neighbors got pretty upset because, as you can tell by walking there, it's pretty wet. They were concerned about what the development would do to water in their neighborhood," said Keeley. "The commissioners spoke to the developer and he indicated a willingness to sell it to the town."

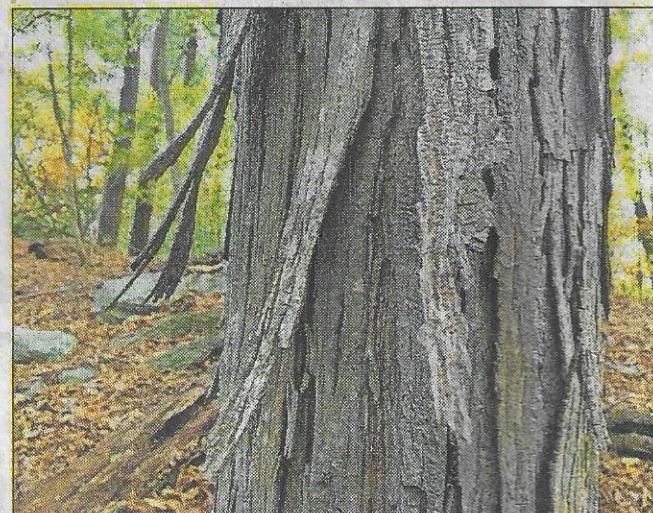
Around the same time, the state was looking to buy open space to mitigate the loss of open space during the Route 3 widening.

"The subdivision was never built, and we got state money from the Route 3 mitigation to buy it. There is a state conservation restriction on the land as well," said Keeley.

There are several access points to the Marion Road Conservation area, but Keeley recommends that visitors park on the trailhead next to the Pine Haven Cemetery on Lexington Road. Visitors will see a sign at the trailhead and will walk on a 40-foot wide strip of land next to the cemetery, along a stone wall, to an open area that runs along the edge of a back yard. Then you will follow the trail



Fall adds a spot of color to the trails at Marion Road Conservation Area. [COURTESY PHOTO/MARY LEACH]



Shagbark hickory trees are seen throughout the area. [COURTESY PHOTO/MARY LEACH]



Several wooded trails are at the Marion Road Conservation area. [COURTESY PHOTO/MARY LEACH]

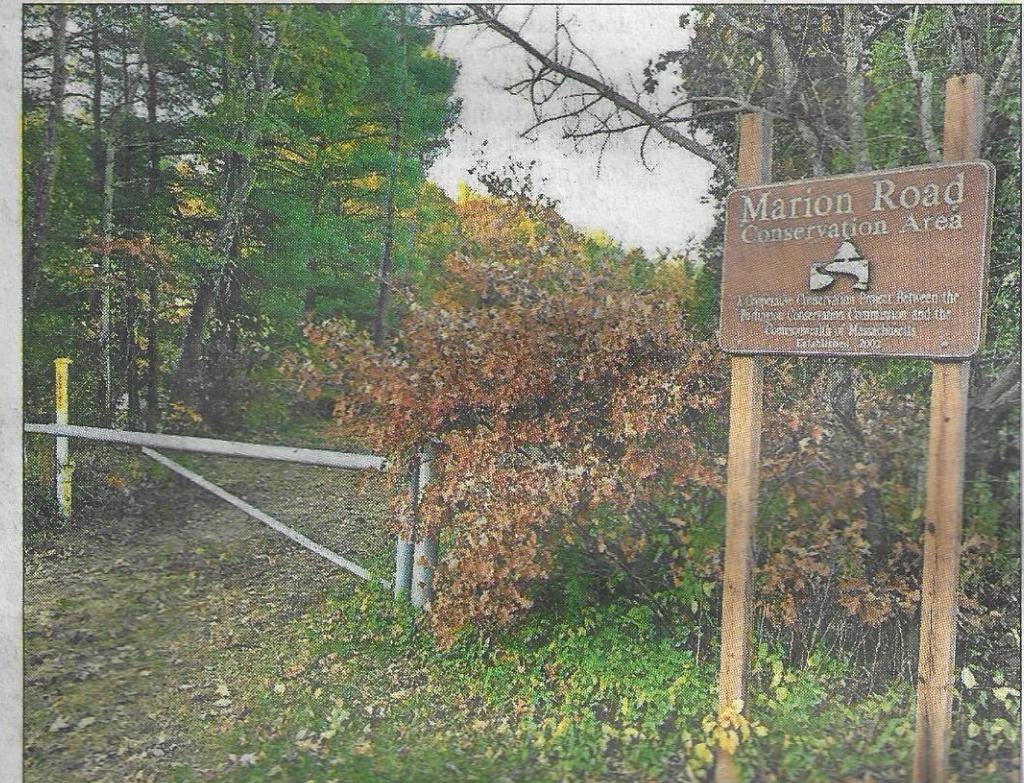
along a stone wall with a neighborhood on the other side to the wooded area, where there are

several trails to explore.

"It's a down and back kind of experience, not like a big



Shagbark hickory, not common in Burlington, is seen frequently at the Marion Road Conservation Area. [COURTESY PHOTO/MARY LEACH]



The Marion Road Conservation Area trailhead begins with a short walk along gas lines. [COURTESY PHOTO/MARY LEACH]

loop," said Keeley. "There's hills."

interesting typography for a

small piece of land with some

www.burlington.org/community_development/conservation_areas.php