

Conservationists fight to save Hills, City wetlands

By MARY GNIEWIEK

Supporters of a bill designed to protect wetland areas in Michigan predict disastrous consequences if the state doesn't begin to restrict commercial development in such areas.

Senate Bill 3, the wetlands bill, is currently before the State House of Representatives. A vote is expected in early December.

The bill, introduced by State Sen. Kerry Kammer, D-Pontiac, passed the Senate last spring.

It has drawn applause from environmentalists and wrath from home builders and realtors.

If it becomes law, owners of wetland areas of at least five acres will have to receive a special permit from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to dredge, drain or fill the land.

Wetland areas less than five acres that are considered critical by the DNR also will be subject to permit if the property owner intends to alter use of the land.

An amendment added by the House

Conservation, Environment and Recreation Committee requires the bill to take immediate effect in counties like Oakland, with a population of at least 100,000 residents.

Counties with populations less than 100,000 would be protected by the bill on a slower timetable — after DNR evaluation of the wetlands statewide.

"THE BILL is designed to protect the health and safety of the population and its natural resources," explained Bob O'Leary, an aide to State Senator

Doug Ross, D-Oak Park.

Ross was an early supporter of the bill.

"Wetlands provide several services to our water system," O'Leary said. "They filter water, absorb a tremendous amount to prevent flooding and provide a natural habitat for wildlife like ducks and geese."

Regulation is necessary because wetlands are prime development areas, according to O'Leary.

"They can be purchased cheaper than residential land, then drained, filled and built up."

Wetlands do not have to be contiguous to a lake or stream. Officials in Farmington and Farmington Hills could not estimate the amount of land affected locally.

"There's not much in Farmington, but there's lots of wetlands scattered around Farmington Hills," said Hayward Pearce, a biology professor at

Oakland Community College, Orchard Ridge campus.

"Shallow water is the key to wetlands. They're anywhere where wild fowl can nest. It's a place where small fish can reach maturity and plant growth is in abundance."

"Wetlands are one of the most important things necessary to preserve

wildlife. If they are filled in, it destroys runoff, pollutes the streams and gets rid of a habitat for all kinds of animals."

"IT ALSO starts the possibility of floods downstream. We've got banks of concrete, no water is absorbed so it flows over."

obituaries

LILIAN DORA KORTTILA

Lilian Dora Korttila, 61, of Livonia died Nov. 19 in Sinai Hospital, Detroit. Mrs. Korttila was a secretary for Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co.

Survivors include her husband, Rudolph; father, Levin Johnson; brother, Lennart; son, Gerald; and sister, Olga Svenson of Sweden.

Services were Nov. 21 in Heeneysundquist Funeral Home, Farmington. The Rev. Lowell L. Anderson of Bethlehem Lutheran Church officiated. Burial was in Glen Eden Memorial Park Cemetery, Livonia.

EDITH M. HUTH

Edith M. Huth, 90, of Arkansas died Nov. 20 in Rogers Memorial Hospital, Arkansas.

A former Farmington Hills resident, Mrs. Huth moved to Arkansas earlier this year to be near her son. She was a member of St. James Lutheran Church. Survivors include her son, Gerald; four grandchildren; and eight great grandchildren.

Services were Nov. 24 at Heeneysundquist Funeral Home, Farmington. The Rev. Darwin Wilson of St. James Lutheran Church, Detroit, officiated. Burial was in Grand Lawn Cemetery, Detroit.

EDWARD H. PRIESTAF

Edward H. Priestaf, 84, of Farmington died Nov. 21 in Oakhill Nursing Home, Farmington.

Mr. Priestaf was a retired self-employed building contractor.

Survivors include his wife, Marie; daughter, Mrs. Carol Brownson; sons, Robert C. and Thomas E.; sister, Mrs. Ann Trout; brother, Clarence; nine grandchildren; and three great grandchildren.

Services were Nov. 26 at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington. The Rev. Donald Lunick of Holy Cross Lutheran Church officiated. Burial was in Romeo Cemetery.

THOMAS JOSEPH PIDGEON

Thomas Joseph Pidgeon, 24, of Farmington died Nov. 22 in St. Mary's Hospital, Livonia.

Mr. Pidgeon was sales manager for Hughes and Hatcher. Mr. Pidgeon was a member of St. Gerald's Roman Catholic Church, Farmington.

Survivors include his parents, Theodore and Claire; sisters, Mrs. Claire M. Scholl and Mrs. Margaret L. Gonnell; brother, James M.; and grandmother, Mrs. Laura G. Leary.

Services were Nov. 24 at Heeneysundquist Funeral Home and St. Gerald's Roman Catholic Church. The Rev.

Maurice Decker conducted the service. Burial was in Glen Eden Memorial Park Cemetery, Livonia.

FRANCES JAMES ELLIOTT

Frances James Elliott, 57, of Novi died Nov. 22 in Sinai Hospital, Detroit. Mr. Elliott was a coordinator for Eaton Corp.

Survivors include his wife, Mary C.; daughters, Pamela Sue Jones and Tracy Rae; son, Stephen; mother, Beatrice; sister, Elsie Steeb; and four grandchildren.

Services were Nov. 26 in Thayer-Rock Funeral Home. The Rev. Richard Henderson conducted the ceremony. Burial was in White Chapel Cemetery.


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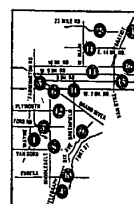
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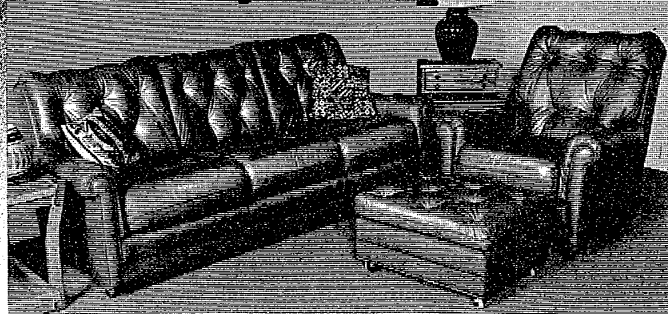


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