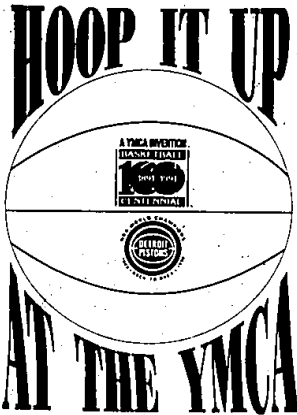




SHARON LAMBLER/staff photographer

Thinking spring

Winter's on the way, but Highmeadow Elementary third graders (from left) Sarah Stewart, Robbie Armstrong and Alissa Brasch, are thinking spring. The youngsters were among the students who helped members of the Farmington Hills Garden Club plant more than 200 red tulip bulbs recently. The project ties in with this month's drug awareness campaign and Highmeadow's themes for the past two years — "Think Globally, Act Locally" and "You Can Make A World of Difference."



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Officials protest wetlands bills

By Ralph R. Echtenaw
staff writer

A delegation of West Bloomfield residents and officials visited Lansing last week to complain about two Senate bills that would wipe out local wetlands ordinances in one case and require the state to buy all the wetlands anyone wants to sell.

"I think we should have public outrage over this," township Supervisor Sandra Draur said. "It's ludicrous what they're trying to do. It will destroy a decade of hard work."

She spoke of Senate Bills 15 and 522, whose chief sponsors are Sen. Gilbert DiNello, D-East Detroit, and Sen. Paul Wartner, R-Portage, respectively.

DiNello's bill, in its present form, would require the Department of Natural Resources to buy all the

wetlands anyone wants to sell to the state.

But DiNello said Senate Bill 15 will probably be altered significantly before it gets out of committee to reflect the fact that the state doesn't have enough money to buy all the wetlands anyone wants to sell. He mentioned that wetlands owners might be given tax breaks instead of cash in exchange for their property.

DINELLO'S ARGUMENT is that wetlands benefit everybody, thus everyone should share the cost of owning them. "If everybody benefits from wetlands, then everybody should pay," he said.

Wartner's proposal, Senate Bill 522, would wipe out local wetlands ordinances and subject Michigan wetlands to state law alone. West Bloomfield's wetlands ordinances,

among the strictest in Michigan, would exist no more.

While West Bloomfield ordinances require a buffer zone between construction and wetlands, state law does not. According to Steve Sadevasser, a DNR land and water management specialist, developers may build right up to the edge of a wetland under state law and not require a DNR permit. The permits are needed only if a developer wants to dredge, fill or drain a wetland.

Draur said the Senate natural resources and environmental affairs committee members seem determined to pass both bills, despite a standing-room-only crowd at last week's public hearing where opposition was "overwhelming."

FURTHERMORE, DRAUR thought more time should have been granted to those who wanted to speak to the committee. They got an hour. "Being an elected official," she said, "I wasn't allowed to speak," she said.

Draur also pointed out that just 24 of Michigan's 1,776 cities, villages and townships have wetlands ordinances. "The senators seem to be concerned with less than 1 percent," she said. "Nobody is clamoring for this except builders and developers."

While the DNR opposes Senate bills 15 and 522, Sadevasser said he doesn't "think these bills would put a real burden on the DNR."

Sweetest Day

Saturday, October 19

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