



Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve Legally Protected

In 2001, The Chicopee Woods Area Park Commission approved a conservation easement for the 1500 acre Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve, with Elachee Nature Science Center to serve as the Land Trust holding the easement.

Although designated as a scenic area and used by the public as well as Elachee's visiting school groups and day camps, the land was not legally protected from development until the conservation easement was granted. Appointing Elachee as the trustee for the easement in perpetuity means that the Center and the Park Commission will share responsibility for maintaining the Preserve in its natural state.

A conservation easement is a legal document designed to preserve and protect the conservation values of a property and maintain the dominant woodland, scenic, and natural character of the area including land and water resources. It also protects the plants, animals and their habitats, prohibiting development that would interfere with the property's conservation value. Hiking and educational classes are permitted.

The Nature Preserve is part of the Chicopee Woods Area Park, one of the largest parks within city limits east of the Mississippi River. It is a biologically diverse area with rolling topography and a number of different forest types, streams and wetlands.

Elachee President and CEO Andrea O. Timpone said, "This action culminated years of visionary work by the Park Commission, Elachee, and other community leaders who believe that preservation is the best use of this unique resource. It is a tremendous legacy to leave for future generations to enjoy."