



Susan Dudley stands at the base of Buckland Mill, which has been rebuilt several times on the foundation of the original mill. She is concerned that the foundation might suffer permanent damage because of increased water levels and seepage.

PHOTOS BY MARGARET THOMAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

## Buckland Mill's Future Hinges on Clash With Manassas

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crease the lake's water supply by an additional 1 billion gallons. The city suffered a bad drought last year, and officials said the additional water capacity would, in part, prevent similar problems.

By increasing the amount of water in the lake, city officials also have increased the amount of water in Broad Run. Worried that snow melt and heavy rain could flood property along the banks of the creek, city officials set out to purchase small easements.

Three acres of easement—two in the stream bed of Broad Run and one acre on the creek bank—are on the couple's Buckland Mill property.

Although the city has offered Mannix and Dudley \$29,332.80 for the land, which officials say is more than the \$24,440 appraisal price, they have refused to sell, claiming the land is at least four times more valuable. More troubling, they say, is the water that already has seeped into the cellar of the mill. If the water remains, Mannix said, it is unlikely the mill ever will be restored, and the structure could be permanently damaged by insects and rot.

Friday was the deadline for the two parties to reach an agreement, according to city officials. They said they would go forward with condemnation procedures against the easement land if no settlement was reached.

The matter would have to go before the Manassas City Council, which could vote on a resolution to condemn the land, and then to a condemnation court, which would set a value for the property.

"We don't know how to ... meet his



A tree that was once on dry land is now partially submerged because of the rising water level of the creek by Buckland Mill.

demands in a reasonable fashion," said Manassas City Attorney Robert Bendall, who added that the city has been negotiating with Mannix since April 1997. "It's not in

the best interest of the city to turn over four times the value of the land to him to get an agreement."

Mannix, however, said he can't agree to a proposal that would undervalue and damage his property.

"My main goal is to stop the project," he said. "This is a desperate endgame because the city has already raised the lake. All we can really hope for now is to be compensated for the loss. We're going to still try to kill the project, but we know the chances are really slim. . . . I guess the next step is court. I don't know if they'll take us or we'll take them."

The three-story mill is mostly filled with the domestic overflow of any suburban garage. Canoes, children's toys, a workbench and garden tools all are stored there. From the outside, it appears to be a three-story home. But on closer inspection, a visitor can see that it once played an important role in the community.

Buckland was the scene of a famous cavalry clash in October 1863, when Confederate Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry defeated Gen. Hugh Judson Kilpatrick as part of the Bristoe Campaign. Stuart's men, who chased the Yankees from the site, jokingly called the battle the "Buckland Races."

A mill has been on the site since the 18th century, its fortunes rising and falling with that of Buckland, which once occupied land on both sides of Broad Run.

Now only a few structures remain on the south side of the creek and west of Route 29. Residents say the mill, which began life grinding grain and corn, changed with the times. What remains is something more modern than the picturesque buildings of Currier and Ives prints.

There is no water wheel. The mill's power came from a turbine in its cellar. In the mill's third story are dusty machines of the Industrial Age, when the mill produced grain, Dudley said.

No formal plans exist for a restoration of the mill. Bendall contends that shortening

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the distance between the mill and its water supply would, in fact, help anyone who wished to restore the structure.

"The mill isn't being damaged or destroyed," Bendall said. "It's a nonfunctional, land-locked structure. It's not anywhere near the stream bed. . . . If anything, we're adding value to the fact that the mill may be returned to its functional" state.

Mannix strongly disagreed, arguing that any change to the landscape destroys the historical nature of the land. "This area was a battlefield," Mannix said. "If we lose the authenticity of the site, the historic value is lost."

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## Modern Feud Befalls Historic Mill

*Buckland Property Owner, Manassas Clash Over Site's Future*

By LEEF SMITH  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Brian Mannix and his wife, Susan Dudley, knew they were faced with a rare opportunity as soon as they saw the "For Sale" sign.

The historic home and old grain mill nestled beside Broad Run Creek needed work, but they knew the Buckland property was special. They quickly bought the

land and soon began envisioning what they hoped would one day be a grand restoration of the 18th-century granary.

That was 13 years ago. The house has been renovated, and added onto, but the demands of raising two children and career advancements put their hope of restoring the mill on hold. Now, they say, that goal may never be realized.

A dispute with the City of Manassas over the ownership of land along the banks of the creek has cast doubt over the future of the historic structure.

The problem, strangely enough, centers on a large rubber bladder. In February the unusual device was installed at the top of the Lake Manassas dam to in-

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BY MARGARET THOMAS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Susan Dudley stands on a part of her land that Manassas wants for a flood plain. Buckland Mill, which dates to the 18th century, is in the background.