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Before Buying Land

by Elliott Menashe

DEFINE YOUR GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS:

- Privacy
- View
- Cost of land and development/improvement
- Location in regard to schools, services, ferry, etc.
- Open land or woods
- Functions (house, garden, pasture, shop, orchard, woodlot, pond, etc.)

LOOK AT THE LAND AND NOTE FEATURES:

- Slope
- Soil consistency
- Signs of erosion
- Vegetation
- Wetlands or streams
- Condition of bluff
- Wind patterns
- Water table
- Surrounding land use (neighbors, potential clearcuts, potential developments, zoning, etc.)

CONSIDER COSTS:

- Water: Be sure there is adequate water for your needs. Determine total cost of obtaining water (hook-up to existing water systems, well installations)
- Utilities: Power and telephone
- Septic Systems: Require a soil log (perc test) to help you determine the probable cost of an on-site septic system.
- Surface Water Drainage
- Easements: Make sure you have necessary easements for access and that you are aware of any limiting easements which might exist.
- Clearing and Grading: Determine the costs of clearing for view, house-site, etc. and road construction and grading.

BEFORE BUILDING CONSIDER:

- Property Lines: Make sure you know where property lines are.
- Legal Building Site: Be certain that you have room to build given possible constraints such as wetland or stream buffers, bluff setbacks, or local covenants. Check zoning.
- Access Permit Requirements: Contact Island County Permit Center for requirements if your access is from a county road.
- House-site: Consider the position of the Sun in the winter and if the site will get enough light.

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