



Newsday Photo by MAX HOFFER

Wauwepex, the Nassau Boy Scout camp in Wading River, where countless scouts have in the past pitched tents and learned about camping out, has been recommended by the Suffolk County Planning Commission for purchase as a county park.

Buy Scout Park, Suffolk Is Urged

By T. J. Collins

Hauppauge—The Suffolk County Planning Commission voted unanimously yesterday to recommend that the county purchase the 420-acre Boy Scout camp in Wading River for use as a park. The Nassau County Boy Scouts Council had voted 35-1 Tuesday night to offer the property, Camp Wauwepex, for sale to Suffolk.

No price tag was put on the camp by the scout council, but knowledgeable persons believe the land could be worth as much as \$4,000,000. The scouts would use the proceeds of the sale to wipe out a debt of more than \$1,000,000 that has been costing the Nassau scouts \$100,000 a year in interest. The council has said the debt is endangering its continued existence.

In its resolution, the scout council also directed its land committee to search in Nassau and Suffolk for land suitable for short-term camping. The scouts will keep 132 undeveloped acres adjacent to Camp Wauwepex.

The possible sale of the camp has been a controversial subject in Nassau scouting circles since it was first contemplated 10 years ago. The idea of selling it was shelved as recently as 1973. At that time, many scoutmasters objected to the idea on the ground that

the scouts would be left without a suitable campground on Long Island. The Nassau council has a 5,900-acre camp in the Catskill Mountains near Livingston Manor.

At Tuesday's meeting, several scoutmasters talked against the idea, but none of them could be located last night for comment.

"Selling land is an emotional issue," Francis Looney, president of the Nassau council said. "But I think when the land-use committee comes up with suitable short-term facilities, it will allay any concern of those who feel they are losing something. You have to be realistic and practical. We do not have money to operate properly and pay off a staggering debt."

Looney said the \$4,000,000 price tag was "speculative" and that the sale price probably would be reached through negotiations.

Lee Koppelman, director of the Suffolk County Planning Commission, said the price would be based on a fair market value if the county legislature follows the commission's recommendation to acquire the property. He explained that if the legislature decides to go ahead, independent appraisers will be hired to determine the value of the land, and that an offer will then be made based on the appraisals.