

PECONIC LAND TRUST

CELEBRATING 37 YEARS OF LAND CONSERVATION

Vol. 31, No. 1



Fall 2020

Climate & Conservation

Together, we can make a difference

Georgica Pond | Wainscott

A Message from our President



This past year will be remembered for generations to come. Given the pandemic, social strife, and political polarization, 2020 has been filled with division, uncertainty, sorrow, and stress. But there is reason

for hope beyond the promise of vaccines. If we can respect our differences, rebuild trust, and find common ground, we can do anything. As has been said many times by many people, **“Together we stand, divided we fall.”**

If you are like me, our current reality has awakened in you a deeper appreciation of our local community – its people, facing shared challenges, some more desperate than others; frontline workers who care for and protect us; farms that provide us with fresh, local produce; places that define our community and nourish our souls – all part of the social and natural environment in which we live. Here, we have more control over what’s happening around us. Here, we can protect the land and water upon which we depend. Here, we can find common ground.

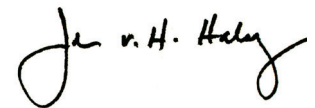
Through the many challenges we have faced this year, you and the community have asked the Trust to do more to protect, steward, and share the resources that sustain us, and bind us together. Consequently, we

have never been busier, especially as more people are seeking refuge here on the East End, and the needs of those already here have come into sharper focus, especially around food security.

So, while we are physically separated by distance and masks, we are bound together more than ever to protect our surroundings, and to connect with each other through the land you help to conserve. Because of you, the Trust has many new opportunities to:

- Protect more of the land and water upon which our lives and livelihoods depend;
- Support new and established farmers who feed us, including people in need;
- Ensure that conserved land is accessible to all members of our community;
- Lift our spirits through virtual gatherings that provide a space for us to meet and greet.

This newsletter reflects the breadth of the work that you make possible. Thank you so much for your partnership and continued support. Together we will continue to do amazing things even during these trying times! Please call or email me if you have any questions. I’d love to hear from you. Stay safe and be well.



JHalsey@PeconicLandTrust.org

Connecting (virtually) through Programming

Thank you for staying connected with us this year! Through programs on Zoom and video, and essays and stories about nature and agriculture, we hope we brought a little of the wonders of Long Island’s working farms and natural lands into your homes. And inspiration to your own landscapes.

We hope next year to be able to meet more in person, but also plan to continue to provide interactive programs over Zoom and video.

This year, we had how-to videos on everything from birdhouse building to fermenting veggies and eco-mindfulness. We had essays on our local feathered friends, and Zoom conversations with local growers and artists.

We send a very special thank you to all the contributors: the moderators, panelists, writers, farmers, chefs and explorers. You made these programs engaging, informative, and dynamic.

If you missed any of our programs, you can find them on our website blog. We are in the planning stages for 2021 – with plans to host Zoom programs monthly, starting with a discussion on the “Changing Tides in Marine Farming” on January 21.



photo courtesy of Richard Wines

We welcome your ideas for future programs.

Have a suggestion for 2021? Please reach out to Kathy Kennedy, Senior Manager of Outreach, at KKennedy@PeconicLandTrust.org. We look forward to seeing you in person in the future.

On Georgica Pond...

The stress on our local ponds due to surface runoff and other pollutants continues, but we have some good news to report related to Georgica Pond in Wainscott. Thanks to a generous donation by Katharine (Kathy) Rayner, the Trust has acquired and will begin remediation and restoration of a 1.4-acre property on the corner of Montauk Highway and Wainscott Stone Road.

“I am privileged to be able to give back to a place that has provided me with so much joy and beauty. Having lived on Georgica Pond for forty years I have witnessed its deterioration, and this project to protect the Pond comes from the heart,” said Katharine Rayner. “As a gardener, I look forward to learning a new vocabulary of native plants and working with Peconic Land Trust to restore a natural habitat on the shore of Georgica Pond.”

This property has been the site of notable restaurants for over 50 years. Its restoration will aid in improving the health of the pond and surrounding natural habitat by removing the building, septic system and leaching fields that have contributed to the degradation of the pond’s water quality. There will also be an opportunity to work with the Town of East Hampton and the Friends of Georgica Pond Foundation to address the flow of contaminated surface water into the pond.

“Sometimes it takes years to make a conservation purchase happen. In this case, it was literally weeks,” said John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land



Trust. “Upon learning from Kathy that the owner was actively considering offers on the property, Kim Quarty, our Senior Project Manager, worked with broker Lori MacGarva to make it happen. Guided by Kathy’s commitment and vision, we are now preparing for the demolition of the structures on the property to set the stage for its restoration, all to improve the health of Georgica Pond!”

Thank you Kathy for making this all possible!

To learn more about this critical water quality and habitat protection initiative, contact Kim Quarty, Senior Project Manager, at KQuarty@PeconicLandTrust.org, or Matt Swain, Director of Stewardship, at MSwain@PeconicLandTrust.org.

A Special Thank You to our Connections Presenters, Panelists & Contributors:

Casey Chalem Anderson, Drienne Benner, Rick Bogusch, Chris Browder, Ted Bucci, Scott Chaskey, Moses Cucura, Susan D’Alessio, Jessica Damiano, Laura Donnelly, Patty Gentry, Nancy Gilbert, Daniel Gilrein, Layton Guenther, Jennifer Halsey-Dupree, Pete Haskell, Ira Haspel, Annette Hinkle, Carol Isles, Brian Kennedy, Greg Kessler, Will Lee, Christian Mir, Jessica Morgan, Brendan O’Dwyer, Melissa Parrott, Will Peckham, Jennifer Pike, Karen Rivara, Charity Robey, Charity Joy Robinson, Justin Ruaysamran, Brian Smith, Kathryn Szoka, Paul Wagner, Richard Wines, John Witzenbocker, Tamson Yeh, and Bill Zalakar



Balsam Fields Deborah Ann Light Preserve, Casey Chalem Anderson



Climate and Conservation:

Now and for Future Generations

The challenges of this year are still with us. As we adapt to changes brought on by the pandemic, we continue to hear how various stages of economic lockdown have given Mother Earth moments of recovery. But these moments, due to severely reduced travel and closures in factories, are fleeting.

Nonetheless, perhaps this is a moment when we can focus on actions that we can all take on a permanent basis to reverse the damage caused by climate change.

To reverse course, we must work toward a future where we:

- emit fewer greenhouse gases
- sequester carbon and build soil
- anticipate sea-level rise
- increase our use and investment in renewable energy sources
- improve our biodiversity by nurturing native plants and species – including pollinators
- bolster our local food resources
- protect our resilient wetlands and shorelines to absorb storm surges
- reduce nutrients and runoff in surface waters that cause harmful algal blooms
- expand and protect watersheds that recharge our drinking water.

Here on the East End, conservation and sustainable land management practices can help achieve these goals.

With your support, the Trust is strategically conserving land a) with prime agricultural soils, b) within groundwater protection areas, and c) along our vulnerable shorelines.

And, we are also providing workshops on land management practices to help growers and residents implement:

- soil health practices that build soil, sequester carbon and reduce excess nitrogen, via composting, utilizing cover crops, buffer plantings, and stormwater management.
- sustainable landscaping practices that encourage native plants, provide habitat for wildlife necessary for pollination and biodiversity, and reduce or eliminate the need for fertilizers and pesticides.

Undeveloped, natural landscapes, including woodlands, farmlands, meadows and other natural habitats, absorb carbon dioxide emissions. Wetlands and shorelines absorb storm surges and protect coastal communities. Growing food in our communities reduces transportation costs and pollution related to importing food. Using regenerative agriculture practices improves soil health and reduces the need for fertilizers and pesticides. So, if we work together to conserve more land, grow more food locally, care for our soil, and protect our shorelines we really can mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

Together, we can make a difference.

The following are a few of the recent projects and programs that your support makes possible. Thank you!

Water Quality

On Long Island, the combination of continuing sea-level rise and increasing demand for drinking water are colliding, intensifying salt-water intrusion into our sole source aquifer. By conserving land near drinking water wellheads and in sensitive areas of the aquifer, we reduce development in these areas and provide more land for water recharge.

Since 2017, we have received a grant match commitment of \$9 million from New York State for the acquisition of land or the purchase of development rights in the towns of Brookhaven, East Hampton, Shelter Island and Southold for surface water quality, groundwater recharge areas, and drinking water protection. To date, we have closed on three properties under this program, most recently in Shelter Island.

In February 2020, the Trust acquired (*and simultaneously re-conveyed to the Town of Shelter Island*) six acres on Shelter Island to protect groundwater by enabling the naturally recurring replenishment of the aquifer. The woodland was a conservation priority because of its location near a public drinking water wellhead and its relatively high recharge potential for the island's aquifer.

The land will be maintained for passive recreation, such as hiking and birdwatching. A foot trail, trail markers, and a trailhead kiosk are being considered.

We expect to close on another property in the Town of Brookhaven by year end.

Living and Adaptable Shorelines

Properly managed wetlands and shorelines can provide storm surge protection. These lands act like sponges, absorbing salt water and reducing surface runoff and the potential for harmful algal blooms. In projects across Suffolk County, the Trust is working with scientists and communities to reduce erosion and implement solutions that restore formerly developed properties.

Most recently, the Trust worked with donor Katharine Rayner to acquire a former restaurant property in Wainscott (*see page 3*). Now we are in the process of removing the existing structures and implementing a restoration plan that will include new plantings of native grasses and wetland vegetation. The Trust is also working with the Town of East Hampton and the Friends of Georgica Pond Foundation in ongoing efforts to reduce the stormwater run-off into the pond from both Route 27/Montauk Highway and Wainscott Stone Road. Nitrogen and phosphorus from runoff are major contributors to the harmful algal blooms that have stressed many of our local ponds and bays, including Georgica Pond.

Located where Talmage Creek flows into Georgica Pond, the property sits within the 4,000-acre Georgica Pond Watershed.* The protection of this land will revert a developed property back to nature (today, approximately 59 percent of the land within the watershed is developed*). The area is home to a wide-range of birds, reptiles, finfish and shellfish, and native plants and trees — including osprey, snapping turtles and blue crabs.

**source: Friends of Georgica Pond Foundation*



North Menantic Preserve, Shelter Island

Soil Health and Local Food

The Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative, with its focus on food production farming, is providing resources to acquire, lease, resell, and restore farmland across Suffolk County.

A key component of the program is keeping the agricultural lands healthy and viable for a diverse range of food-related crops -- including the requirement that lands under lease must be in cover crop when not actively in food production. Seasonal cover crops (Summer and Winter) protect the soil from erosion, manage nitrogen cycling, and provide important nutrients that build up the soil for future plantings.

In 2020, the Trust leased over 200 acres of farmland to both new and established farmers across the East End – a total of 28 different farm operations. These included vegetables, quail, hogs, snails, flowers, herbs, and bees! Additionally, the Trust continues to work with the Sisters of St. Joseph in Brentwood helping to manage its farmland leases with six growers.

Working with the soil health specialists at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, we have



participated in a number of cover crop trials at our Agricultural Center in Southold to see which are most effective here on Long Island. Trials have shown that sunn hemp and a mix of sorghum sudangrass, and sunn hemp in summer, and rye in winter were the best performers.

All of this and more we are able to do everyday with your support!

Interested in continuing the conversation? Contact Melanie Cirillo, Director of Conservation Programs, at MCirillo@PeconicLandTrust.org, Matt Swain, Director of Stewardship, at MSwain@PeconicLandTrust.org, or Dan Heston, Director of Agricultural Programs, at DHeston@PeconicLandTrust.org.

New Preserve Dawns on Great Hog Neck

We are pleased to announce that over 50 acres of woodland will now be available for passive recreation with the recent purchase of 29.8 acres by the Trust from the Reese family. The new preserve, named after the family's father, **Harold A. Reese Preserve**, is located adjacent to the Trust's Wolf Preserve (23 acres) on the Great Hog Neck peninsula. The land will be available for hiking and exploring in the future as part of the expansion and improvement of the existing trail system at the Wolf Preserve, thanks to your support.

By conserving the land's ecology, the new preserve will contribute significantly to the area's resiliency to the effects of climate change, provide important wildlife habitat, and contribute to groundwater protection in this part of the Peconic Bay Estuary. Acquisition of the Reese property was made possible by the Reese family's choice of a bargain sale, and also by accessing a line-of-credit provided by an anonymous donor to the Trust. The acquisition was completed on November 25.

"Having been in real estate development on the North Fork for over 50 years, our family saw this property as an important opportunity to preserve land in an ecologically sensitive part of the North Fork and to recognize our father's important contribution to the community. We are pleased to have been able to work

with the Trust to see this land be open, available and contributing to the natural resources of the North Fork," said Harold Reese, Jr.

The property has been owned by the Reese family since the mid-1960s and is predominantly woodland, with a 1-acre area of fresh water wetlands and is on the Peconic Estuary Program's Critical Land Protection list.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity to protect and conserve a significant amount of land in the Great Hog Neck area. We thank the Reese family for recognizing the importance of conserving this environmentally sensitive area of the Peconic Bay Estuary and for working with our team, led by Project Manager Holly Sanford," said Trust President John v.H. Halsey.

To learn more, contact Holly Sanford, Project Manager, at HSanford@PeconicLandTrust.org, or Matt Swain, Director of Stewardship, at MSwain@PeconicLandTrust.org.



Restoring the Health of Sagg Pond



The Trust has always looked for innovative ways to safeguard Long Island's fragile water supply. We have done this by identifying critical recharge areas, protecting watersheds, and remediating when needed. But we also care about our surface waters, the bays, ponds, and lakes that surround us.

As part of this effort, the Trust has worked for decades to improve water quality in coastal ponds on the South Fork, including Lake Agawam, Wickapogue Pond, Georgica Cove, and Mill Pond. We have worked with neighbors and local experts to raise funds in support of water quality research and long-term initiatives.

Most recently, in 2019, the Trust partnered with SUNY Stony Brook's Dr. Chris Gobler, Endowed Chair of Coastal Ecology and Conservation, to fund a comprehensive, multi-year study aimed at understanding the causes of blue-green algal blooms

in Sagg Pond, Sagaponack. The pond has been closed for shellfishing by the NYSDEC, and public warnings have been issued regarding recreational use.

Thus far, Dr. Gobler and his team have been able to use microbial source tracking to identify major contaminants in the waterbody. This included fecal contamination from dogs and small mammals, which was most likely transported to the pond via surface runoff. Gobler's team installed a monitoring buoy in the pond to receive ongoing, real-time data on the temperature, salinity, and dissolved oxygen levels of the pond. This summer, readings from the buoy hit bloom levels.

Additionally, the team installed oyster cages in the pond to assess the feasibility of using these filter feeders as a water quality remediation approach to help remove excess nitrogen from the water. With the support of the community, and in partnership with Southampton Town and the Town Trustees, the Trust will support additional research to inform the preparation of a Sagg Pond Management/Revitalization Plan.

Once the plan is complete, the Trust will help coordinate remediation efforts, raise both public and private funds to support the effort, and promote best practices among watershed residents to restore the health of Sagg Pond.

To learn more about this critical project, contact Matt Swain, Director of Stewardship, at MSwain@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Extend your impact and become a

Peconic Partner

Your monthly gift to the Annual Fund helps protect our working farms, natural lands, and heritage.

Without your support,
our work would not be possible.

Thank you.

Giving is easy! Simply return the enclosed gift envelope, or visit us online.

www.PeconicLandTrust.org/give

Call us at 631.283.3195 or email us at:

Info@PeconicLandTrust.org

New Cattle Farm Grows in Southold

Keeping agricultural lands in production and available to farmers looking to start or expand operations is a primary component of our Farms for the Future Initiative. We are so pleased to recently sell 19.2 acres of protected farmland and associated buildings and structures in Southold to John Murnane of Olde Road Farm LLC in September.

The farmstead will be added to Olde Road Farm's existing 18 acres. Mr. Murnane is in the early stages of establishing a beef cattle farm operation in Southold.

Mr. Murnane grew up on a farm in Ireland and has had a home in Southold for the past 18 years. He currently has 15 Wagyu cattle with plans to expand the farm to include sheep and chickens and other crops. He initially plans to make repairs to the barns and to plant the fields in grazing crops for his cattle. "I've wanted to get back into farming as I had



growing up in Ireland. I've been running a construction business and raising five kids with my wife for the past 30 years, and for the last five years have been asking myself, where did the last 25 years go. Having a farm and the beautiful Peconic Bay is the best of both worlds for me and my family. I decided it was time to do what I loved as a kid growing up and maybe slow down a little," said Mr. Murnane.

"We are excited to see this farmstead have a new life as part of John's expanding cattle operation. Keeping farmland in active agriculture, and supporting many different types of farm operations, is important as we all work toward keeping agriculture viable in, and integral to, our communities," said Dan Heston, Director of Agricultural Programs at the Trust.

To learn more about supporting local farmers and the Farms for the Future Initiative, contact Dan Heston, Director of Agricultural Programs, at DHeston@PeconicLandTrust.org, or Jessie Marcus, Stewardship Manager, at JMarcus@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Gajeski Family: Building on a Tradition of Conservation

In June, the Gajeski family built upon the conservation legacy of Benny and Eleanor Gatz with the protection of farmland in Riverhead.

Felix and William Gajeski of Jamesport sold their development rights on 7.5 acres of farmland through the Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Program. The land has been actively farmed for over 100 years and is part of a 410-acre block of productive, but unprotected, farmland. The Gajeski brothers are the first landowners to preserve farmland in this part of Jamesport, between the Main Road and the railroad, and Herricks and Laurel Lanes.

Also in June, Brian and Deborah Gajeski sold development rights to the County on two building lots in the Northville area of Riverhead on Sound Avenue. The lots, totaling 3.1 acres, are adjacent to previously protected farmland and are part of a nearly 1,000-acre contiguous block of protected farmland.

The Gajeskis' are descendants of Benny and Eleanor Gatz, who sold development rights on over 50 acres of farmland in 2002 and 2003. Mr. Gatz is the father of Felix Gajeski's wife Gwen Gatz Gajeski and the grandfather of Brian Gajeski. The family operates the

wholesale vegetable business, Gajeski Produce, and a retail farmstand, Northville Farms, on Sound Avenue in Riverhead.

"We are honored to once again be able to help the Gatz/Gajeski family with the protection of farmland in the Town of Riverhead under the Suffolk County Farmland Protection Program. As the first initiative of this type in the country, the County's program continues to work with our farming community to ensure that agriculture remains strong and viable on Long Island. We thank the Gajeskis for their commitment to farming!" said Trust President John v.H. Halsey.

To learn more contact Julie Wesnofske, Project Manager, at JWesnofske@PeconicLandTrust.org.



Gwen Gatz Gajeski, Abigail Gajeski, and Deborah Gajeski.

Conservation in Setauket on Little Bay and Conscience Bay

Thanks to you and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, natural resources in the community of Setauket are being protected. In late September, the Trust and the Stell family protected 3.3 acres along Little Bay and Conscience Bay.



This is the latest acquisition along Dyke Road. In 2014, the Trust acquired a 1.12-acre parcel. This property was the first upland area added to an existing 52-acre Conscience Bay-Little Bay State Tidal Wetland. The Trust sold the property to New York State in 2015.

And, in December 2019, the Trust acquired a .72-acre parcel from the Tyree family, which includes a single family residence. Plans for the site are still pending.

The goals of conservation efforts in the area are to protect against sea-level rise and coastal erosion, aid in safeguarding the water quality of the local bays, and preservation of the area's rich history as part of the American Revolution. *The area is where the Culper Spy Ring originated and operated.*

"Every piece of property we can protect in these coastal communities can help combat the impacts of climate change while also preserving the rural characteristics of Long Island," said John v.H. Halsey, President, Peconic Land Trust.

Wetlands along Brushy Neck Creek in Westhampton Protected

Congratulations and sincere thanks to the DiPirro/Dederick family and the Town of Southampton for the most recent conservation of 1.7 acres along Brushy Neck Creek in Westhampton. With a rich wildlife habitat and scenic views, the undeveloped property sits at the eastern end of Moriches Bay Estuary and was identified by the Town as a conservation priority.



The Town acquired the property from the DiPirro/Dederick family in September and it will now be a nature preserve. The family reached out to the Trust in early 2019, working with Senior Project Manager Kim Quarty, to begin a conversation with the Town.

As recent storms have proven, providing buffers — especially in areas along our fragile salt marshes like this one — aids in coastal resilience by reducing the destructive impacts of storm surge hastened by the impacts of climate change. This is beneficial not only to the people living near the water, but also provides for a healthy environment for our local wildlife.

Over 100 species of fish, birds and plants can be found in the area, including diamondback terrapin and loggerhead sea turtles and seals. A wide variety of migratory, breeding, and wintering birds, including peregrine falcons, terns, osprey and owls, also find refuge and food here.

As part of the Atlantic flyway, the area provides places to rest and nest for the many species of birds who make their way north and south as well as for those who call Long Island their home all year round.

The newly protected land is located across Brushy Neck Creek from our Jagger Preserve and near our Tanners Neck Preserve. Southampton Town has also protected land in the area for parkland and open space, providing for many acres of land to help balance the estuary's health.

"As someone who grew up here, it is important to me — and my family — to support conservation efforts on Eastern Long Island. Without our beautiful and ecologically healthy waters, wetlands, beaches, and wildlife, we lose the very essence of what defines this community and why many of us choose to live here," said Carolann DiPirro.

To learn more about these conservation stories, or if you know of a property within your community that could be an opportunity for conservation, contact Melanie Cirillo, Director of Conservation Planning, at MCirillo@PeconicLandTrust.org or Kim Quarty, Senior Project Manager, at KQuarty@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Savoring the Gardens' Bounty

One highlight of the late summer season at Bridge Gardens were workshops on fermented food, featuring community gardener Justin Ruaysamran. Justin, who has a popular Instagram page @Justinmakesmyown, partnered with Rick Bogusch to share the easy steps to creating delicious and healthy fermented foods. First up was sauerkraut using cabbage from Bridge Gardens, then recipe-enhancing fermented pepper paste using the late-September pepper harvest, then miso to pair with Bridge Gardens vegetables in various dishes. We concluded the series by making kimchi using carrots, radishes and cabbage.



Justin shared his story:

What inspired you to get started fermenting food?

Food fermentation combines a number of interests and values I hold. The first is preservation in that fermentation can extend the life of food, resulting in less food waste, a reduction in environmental impact, cost savings to my grocery spending, and a show of respect to the hard work put into cultivating and getting the food to my kitchen. Another reason is historical, as humans have employed fermentation techniques for thousands of years across all cultures, and I want to make sure these practices do not get lost to modern, often industrial, food manufacturing processes. Another reason is accessibility, as we have discussed in our blog series. Most fermentation techniques require little equipment, maybe a jar, and the simplest of ingredients: salt and time. Finally, is taste, because fermentation techniques can produce flavor profiles not found in employing any other technique.

How long have you been making fermented food?

I tried to recreate pickles when I was a kid. The curiosity never left.



What is your favorite fermented food to make?

Hands down, I love my Thai fermented pork ribs, which is rarely available in restaurants. My basement always has a supply of kraut, kimchi, miso, pepper paste, mead and kombucha. Also, my sourdough starter has been going for over three years.

What inspired you to join the BG community garden, and how would you describe this experience?

In gardening, we often find ourselves alone. It is probably a large reason why many of us are drawn to the activity, to be alone with nature. While I do garden in my backyard, I also wanted to participate in Bridge Gardens because of the community. I love watching, and learning, how others turn a small plot of land into a productive harvest. Rick has provided valuable and practical guidance. And I have enjoyed giving back to the community through my fermentation demonstrations.

Bridge Gardens

36 Mitchell Lane, Bridgehampton.

Open daily from 10am – 4pm,
with free admission.

If you are interested in learning more about what makes Bridge Gardens grow, contact Rick Bogusch, Garden Director, at RBogusch@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Garden Tips: Protecting Your Plants from Storms

With more and more chances for storms here in the northeast, here are a few tips from **Dan Heston** to consider when you are planting and harvesting next year:

Pick your fruits and veggies as quickly and timely as possible. The old farmer's adage says: No matter how good a crop looks in the fields it's really non-existent until it is harvested and safely in your cooler. So, if there is a hurricane in the forecast, harvest everything you can.

Prune carefully before storm season. Pruning surrounding trees by carefully thinning them out so the Long Island winds can safely sail through them will save you on clean up time, protect your

garden plants from falling limbs, and beautify the surrounding landscape.

Plant between hedgerows. Laying out a tender planting with hedgerow protection is a must on Long Island. Hurricanes and tropical storm winds generally come in from the southeast, move to the southwest, and then pass with winds moving to the northwest. Keep this in mind as you lay out your garden. Large plantings like deciduous trees with base shrubs or bushy evergreens make excellent wind breaks. But shrubby plants like berry bushes or low growing fruit trees can also be used to protect more fragile crops. Just lay your garden out with plantings between the rows of shrubs.

Remembering Jim Kilpatric

In 2008, Bridge Gardens founders Jim Kilpatric and Harry Neyens made a decision that has since impacted more people than can be estimated. They donated their beloved Bridge Gardens Trust to the Peconic Land Trust, to ensure that this public garden could be enjoyed and appreciated by the community in perpetuity.

We are deeply saddened to know that Jim Kilpatric recently passed away but want to share the impact their generous gift has made to the community.

Because of Jim and Harry, the Peconic Land Trust has a place to demonstrate sustainable living practices that showcase a sensitivity to the environment. Since receiving their gift over 12 years ago, the Trust has worked to create a place where people come together to explore, learn, and relax. Offering everything from organic landscape practices and how-to workshops on vegetable gardening, native plants and organic rose care, to children’s activities, live music in the garden and art classes, Bridge Gardens has become a community gathering place.

We couldn’t have done this without Jim and Harry’s commitment to the Bridgehampton community



Jim leading a tour of Bridge Gardens in 2008

and beyond. Jim, and his partner Harry, have created a lasting legacy, one that will be enjoyed and experienced by countless visitors and for that we are sincerely thankful.



The Gardens bloomed this year, thanks in part to the hard work and dedication of **Bridge Gardens’ Assistant Shawn Gant**. Shawn worked closely with Rick throughout the season to manicure the hedges, maintain the planting beds, and tend to the vegetable gardens.

Thank you Shawn!

And a big thank you to all the volunteers who helped at the Gardens this summer, including Carol Ahlers, Susan Barbieri, Lacy Doyle, Susan Edwards, Elio Floro, Bernard Hayduk, Regina Humanitski, Ed Krois, Joe Lane, Linda Massis, Tom Oleszczuk, Heidi Rain, Bobbi Rosko, Cathy Tepper, Mark Turner, Jackie Watson, and Matt Ziskin.

Offering Respite and Resources to Many

Did you have a chance to visit Bridge Gardens this year? If you did, you would have noticed that you were in good company. The Gardens saw more visitors this year than ever before. Time in nature provided many people a break from the stresses of the year and many took time to explore regularly, enjoying the colorful changes that happen throughout the garden’s many beds.

While our usual in-person workshops were put on hold, we adjusted to virtual programs using both Zoom and video. We hope you enjoyed them! Don’t worry if you missed any, all the virtual programming is available to view on our website blog. Many feature Garden Director Rick Bogusch sharing his extensive horticulture knowledge on everything from seeding carrots, lettuce and beets, to creating healthy soil through compost, to walks through the 4-quadrant herb garden. Rick was also joined by Paul Wagner of Greener Pastures Organics on several lawncare workshops. And a new series took shape, “My Bridge Gardens,” featuring several people sharing their love of Bridge Gardens.

Growing for the Community

Farmers and gardeners made this year at the Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm a success.

As a season of uncertainty and concern unfolded, the team had to take a new approach to make the fields ready for the farmers and gardeners.



With COVID-19 appearing early on the North Fork, Dan Heston along with Jessie Marcus and Brendan Minogue worked together, getting the farm fields and community gardens ready and prepped.

This season, the farm hosted five farmers in the incubator fields, plus three in the outlying fields across Horton's Lane and on the north side of Route 48. The

onsite community garden hosted 52 community garden members. The fields were productive and an important part of the community's local food resources. However, the long, dry mid-summer season along with the tropical storm *Isaias* in August had some negative impacts – as did pests and disease.

As a result, the Farms for the Future team is working with Annmarie Calabro from Suffolk County Soil and Water District to develop a pest management plan for the Ag Center property. We hope to have it available

before the start of the 2021 growing season. The management plan will be a resource for our farmers and gardeners at the Ag Center as well as more broadly throughout the community.

To learn more about the farm leasing program at the Ag Center, contact Dan Heston, Director of Agricultural Programs, at DHeston@PeconicLandTrust.org or Jessie Marcus, Stewardship Manager, at JMarcus@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Case House Renovations Continue



This summer also saw work renew on the renovation of the Case House. The house moved to Cleo's Corner back in the winter of 2019. The initial work included a new foundation and septic system and grading the property. A fundraising campaign to support the renovations began and over 200 donors responded!

In the late winter and early spring of 2020, with the Coronavirus lockdown upon us, work on the Case House paused. But by the summer, we were up and running again on the next phase with builder Sid Beebe.

With donations from the community and some funding from the sale of the 19 acres of farmland to Olde Road Farm (see page 8), work began replacing the roof, siding, windows, plumbing, and electricity.



These renovations are expected to be completed before the winter sets in. Then work will turn to the interior with the installation of a new kitchen and bathrooms.

We still need your help!

Your donations are needed to keep this project going! \$250,000 in additional funds will enable us to have the Case House ready to lease to a local farmer in 2021.

If you are interested in learning more or would like to make a contribution to this effort, please contact Alison Delaney, Development Officer, at ADelaney@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Community Gardeners Give Back

A big thank you to the Ag Center Community Gardeners! They showed their community spirit by tending garden plots for CAST (Community Action Southold Town) and donating produce from their own garden plots to this vital food pantry. Beans, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, herbs, squash, and more were harvested and shared with the pantry this year.

The effort was led by Jean-Marie Sanchez, who coordinated the harvests and delivery to CAST. Many of the community gardeners contributed to this program, including Jeannette Coane, Dean Sambach, Claire Spiezio, Molly MacDermot, Bonnie Stock, Vinny MonteForte, Jeannie Calderale, John Castiglione and Brett Anderson.

"It's been the highlight of the past few months to grow vegetables and share them with people," said Jean-Marie. "On a recent delivery I arrived during pick up hours. A bunch of rainbow chard was sticking out of the

top of the bag. I had barely handed over the bag when a client asked if she could have some chard. Her eyes absolutely lit up at seeing the colorful vegetables just picked a 1/2 hour earlier. It made my week."



Thank you Jean-Marie and all of the participating community gardeners. Your generosity of time and spirit has truly been inspiring!

To learn more about becoming a community gardener at the Ag Center at Charnews Farm, contact Brendan Minogue, Land Steward, at BMinogue@PeconicLandTrust.org.



Dan Heston, Director of Agricultural Programs

Since joining the Trust in 2007, Dan Heston has provided extraordinary guidance to our Farms for the Future Initiative . . . take a moment to meet Dan and learn more about his relationship to the land and farming.

I've come to appreciate the farm fields of Long Island more than ever over the last few months. As I've watched others shutter businesses and shelter in place, I've been grateful to have the farm work. It never ends. And, in its own way, it helps me keep this crazy world in perspective.

Regardless of viruses, politics, racial injustices, and computers – the seasons roll on. The plants need pruning, the machinery needs servicing, the irrigation and wells need to be maintained, the fields must be prepped on time and the seeds planted. It is both exhausting and grounding. Some days it's the ultimate blessing and some days a curse.

I grew up hunting the local farm fields and fishing the nearby ponds and streams of the Maryland countryside each day after school. On the weekends in the summer months I spent the early morning hours bagging corn for a local farmer. I hated it. The 5 a.m. start time, the dewy wet corn fields that swallowed me alive, the sustained concentration required for the job were hard to muster at the age of 6. But, I could count to 50, and

that, along with showing up on time was the extent of the job requirement.

The fact that my best friend, now wife, was my work partner made the position sustainable. We'd ride out together to the corn fields on the back of a hay wagon too sleepy to talk. The only sound the low murmur of the men quietly talking among themselves. The sun would slowly rise, and the hushed tones would inevitably evolve into happy chatter. By 9 am, quitting time, I was soaking wet, hungry, and happy. I was free to spend the rest of the day as I pleased.

Since those first early mornings I have raised goats, rabbits, pheasant, quail, geese, ducks and chickens. My college years were spent focusing on environmental studies. Along the way, I also became an ASE licensed mechanic and certified arborist. Today, in addition to helping my wife manage our own farm — Salt Air Farm — I oversee the Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative.

Agriculture helps to connect each of us to our surrounding environment. Textbooks and computers can only take us so far. Awakened a child, or reawakened an adult, to the sounds, smells, and sights of the natural world helps to ensure the gift will be safely passed down to another generation.

I've logged in a lot of time working in farm fields since those first early morning hours. And, I've spent a lot of time learning the business end of farming. I'm still learning. Every day is different. Every day is new. But, some lessons stick with you. One truth I've gleaned over the years is that the preservation of our farmland is key to a healthy, happy tomorrow.

An Extraordinary Year | A Note from Layton Guenther

2020 was a year of extraordinary growth and transition at Quail Hill Farm. In my first full year as director, I approached the season with renewed commitment to our mission: to grow good food, cultivate community, and train new farmers in the practices of regenerative agriculture.

I was heartened to see the optimism and steadfastness that the members brought to this year, which launched with challenges that could have derailed our operations. And yet, in the face of great uncertainty, the farm community of members and growers rose up with mettle and mirth to envision a season of abundance, possibility, and promise.

As a small farm, our margins are tight in every way; each employee hired, every seed purchased, and every CSA membership determines how our farm fares overall from year to year. When the economic shutdown came to call on our East End towns, Quail Hill, like many farms, experienced a spike in demand from individual consumers seeking alternatives to picked-over grocery store offerings, while also seeing the consequences bear down on our restaurant partners as they shifted their business models. In response to the accelerating pandemic, we instituted a hiring freeze while offering pay-what-you-can farm shares in the early spring. Usually, one speaks of March as coming “in like a lion, out like a lamb,” but this year the reverse was true.

So many of our best-laid plans for 2020 were scuttled: an Americorps invasive species removal project, educational elements of our hallmark apprenticeship program, restaurant-supported agriculture programs with local chefs. On top of this, our beloved farm community events like the breakfast, potluck and At the Common Table were all canceled. Nevertheless, members and farmers found new and meaningful ways to engage with Quail Hill.



New community partnerships were also forged in the economic shutdown that saw local food pantries balloon with new clients facing food



insecurity. In late March, at the urging of two Quail Hill Farm members who wished to investigate how we could make our produce available to families in need, we reached out to the staff at the Bridgehampton Child Care and Recreational Center (*The Center*) and learned that their food pantry was allocating more food than ever before: over 700 people, weekly, with no consistent supply of fresh vegetables-- an increase from 70 people per month pre-COVID.

Farm to Food Pantry

With seed funding from two Quail Hill Farm members, and the leadership of Ms. Bonnie Cannon, The Center’s Executive Director, we designed a pilot Farm to Food Pantry program to allocate excess produce from our farm to our community partners at no cost, thanks to private donations and a grant from **All for the East End (AFTEE)** at the **Long Island Community Foundation**. As farmers, the Farm to Food Pantry program has elevated a sense of purpose in our work: apprentices have consistently expressed their passion for the pilot program, which has seen over ten tons of produce harvested and distributed to East End families through The Center’s networks.

In a year that has brought untold challenges to most, the Quail Hill Farm community of farmers, eaters and CSA members have responded with empathy, clarity and courage. Our beloved farm members donated over one thousand hours of their time to assist in the roll-out of COVID safety protocols at the farm as well as helping out in the fields, lifting the spirits (and lightening the workload!) of old and new farmhands alike.

Although 2021 will likely not see a tidy resolution to all of the chaotic renderings of this pandemic, we will face the coming season with the blueprint of how to grow for a resilient future. With both feet firmly planted on our Amagansett silt loam, we’re already eagerly preparing for another season of abundance, community and connection.

To learn more about Quail Hill Farm, contact Layton Guenther, Farm Director, at LGuenther@PeconicLandTrust.org.

A Note from *The Center*

“Quail Hill Farm and the Peconic Land Trust have been a God-Send for our food pantry recipients. We are so grateful for the partnership. Thank you for supplying us, and for helping us to learn so much about different varieties of produce. Layton’s *Instagram Live* talks with Mr. Doug, teacher, chef, and culinary expert at The Center, have been very beneficial for our program. Teaching nutrition and healthy eating have always been part of our curriculum. Our cooking classes have been inspired by learning about all the new types of greens and vegetables. We look forward to collaborations in the future. Thank you so much Peconic Land Trust, Quail Hill Farm, and AFTEE!”

**Bonnie Michelle Cannon, Executive Director,
Bridgehampton Child Care & Recreational Center**



The Center’s Ms. Gloria Cannon & the Trust’s Alison Delaney with Quail Hill Farm produce at The Center.

Giving Our Thanks to:

Emma Quaytman and the 40 Quail Hill Farm volunteers she led this past season for donating their time and toil to make this season truly meaningful.

Kevin Coffey, Laura Fenton and William, Rachel Sabnani, Emily Sabnani, Thalia Nierenberg, Cathy Tepper, Nikki LaBranche, Ed Krois, Joan Hayden, Stephanie Joyce, Gaia Filicori, Micaela Durand, Susan Malfa, Jon Rose, Beth Kastner, Alex Kamper, Jack Saltzman, Jane Weissman, Cheyenne and Johnny Morris, Gina Abatemarco, Patrice Dalton, Melanie Woods, Annabel Barnett, Ross Watts, Alex Rittscher, Jimmy Cash, Sophi Kholegashvili, Donna Lewis, Lindsay Morris, Hannah Solis-Cohen, Mary Ann Petrozzo, Pamela Choy, Michael Smaldone, Madelaine Haberman, Matt Sprung, Hillary Suchman, Justin and Sammy Girshon.

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Supporters at all levels for joining us in looking towards a future that values the working farms, natural lands, and the heritage we all share.

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Through Farms & Fields

A Virtual Celebration of our Local Bounty

Thank you to all who joined us and raised a glass to celebrate farmland conservation and the bounty it provides. We send also heartfelt thanks to our committee for your enthusiasm and dedication, **Carol Mulvihill Ahlers (Chair), Michael Daly, Hatsy Dresher, Nancy Goell, Patty Orben, Judy Saner** and to our video editor **Geoffrey Wells**, you made the stories come to life. Missed our program? You can watch online at www.PeconicLandTrust.org/TFF2020

And to our sponsors, we appreciate your support this year . . . and hope to be able to celebrate with all in person in 2021:

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While many believe that the funds raised by the 2% real estate transfer tax go to Peconic Land Trust for its conservation programs, this is incorrect!

The Peconic Land Trust raises the vast majority of its funds through private donations.

The 2% real estate transfer tax paid by buyers goes directly to the Town in which the property purchased is located.

Thank you for your help!

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