

PECONIC LAND TRUST



CONSERVING LONG ISLAND'S WORKING FARMS, NATURAL LANDS, AND HERITAGE FOR OUR COMMUNITIES NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

ISSUE NO. 5

The Latest News from the Peconic Land Trust

SPRING 2018

Public Policy

Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Program Saved for Now

The landmark program—which has successfully protected more than 10,000 acres of farmland from residential development in the last 40 years—has been secured for now.

After 18 months in limbo, the Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Program is back in business. This innovative program—the first of its kind in the nation to protect working farms—had been in jeopardy since September 2016. That month, a decision by New York State Supreme Court Justice Thomas Whelan declared that—going forward—farmers could not have agricultural structures or improvements on their protected land necessary to farm. This was a shock to many farmers who had retained the right to make these improvements.



Fortunately, on March 14, the New York State Appellate Division rejected the State Supreme Court decision. That means that once again, farmers are permitted to build these structures and make improvements on their protected land. But we are not completely out of the woods yet because this decision may be appealed to the Court of Appeals. We remain vigilant and ready to act if necessary.

In the 1970s, agriculture on Long Island was under tremendous pressure. Land values and development had rapidly increased—as they continue to do today. Farms that had been handed down generation after generation were disappearing and being sold to pay



federal estate taxes. Farmers needed a way to protect their land, work, and way of life.

That was why, in 1974, Suffolk County initiated the country's first farmland preservation program. It allowed the County to purchase development rights and thus to preserve invaluable agricultural soils,

ensuring the future of farming so important to our local economy. Through the program, farmers continued to own their land but relinquished the right to develop it into residential subdivisions—the ultimate win-win solution. A tremendous success, it has been replicated throughout New York State and the country.

Had the lower court decision been upheld, farmland owners would have lost the right to have barns, fences, and other improvements necessary to farm on protected farmland. Without the ability to make improvements to grow and protect their crops, many farmers could have suffered severe financial losses. Others could have sued the County on a breach of contract, which could invalidate their initial sale of development rights, thereby exposing once-protected farmland to development. The case threatened the future of 35,000 acres of farmland on Long Island alone.

Thankfully, that did not happen. Clearer heads prevailed for now.

It is through your support that the Trust is able to advocate for conservation in our community—*including agriculture*. Keeping landmark programs such as the Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Program working for our future is a critical component of our work. *Thank you for making it possible!*

For more information on our public policy work, please contact Yvette DeBow-Salsedo at YDebow@PeconicLandTrust.org.

THIS NEWSLETTER CONTAINS EXCERPTS FROM OUR E-NEWSLETTER SERIES. TO STAY UP TO DATE VISIT OUR BLOG AND PLACES TO VISIT PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE: PECONICLANDTRUST.ORG

GROWING FARMERS

Growing Farmers, by filmmakers Michael Halsband and Hilary Leff, in partnership with the **Peconic Land Trust**, is a documentary film exploring the issue of affordable farmland and the Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative. The film tells the stories of several farmers who are leasing land either owned or managed by the Peconic Land Trust in the face of one of the greatest impediments facing farmers on Eastern Long Island.

Interested in hosting a screening of *Growing Farmers* with a school or community group? Contact Kathy Kennedy, Outreach Manager at 631.283.3195 or KKennedy@PeconicLandTrust.org. You can also watch *Growing Farmers* at home: www.PeconicLandTrust.org/GrowingFarmers

Connections 2018



Shortly after welcoming the new year, our Connections programs were underway (clockwise from top): dissected owl pellet, Carl Gabrielsen showing guests hydroponically grown lettuce, pansy seedlings begin their season, searching for birds of prey with John Turner, Nancy Gilbert and Mary Welker at the Riverhead Farmer's Market, *Growing Farmers* screening and panel discussion at Southampton Arts Center.

Getting to Know

Rand Stoll Finds a Sense of Community at Quail Hill Farm and Bridge Gardens

Rand Stoll has been a supporter of Quail Hill Farm and Bridge Gardens for many years. He feels a deep sense of connection to the land as a member of these communities.

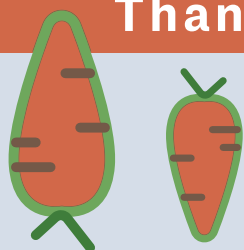


“When I first bought my home in Amagansett, I was thrilled to find Quail Hill Farm and its community supported agriculture program right around the corner,” Rand says. “I became a shareholder, harvesting my own fruits and vegetables throughout the summer. My children, Emilie and Ben, grew up running barefoot in the soil, and I felt a deep, spiritual connection to my fellow shareholders and Director Scott Chaskey.

“Eventually, I wanted to try my hand at growing my own produce. I was among the first community gardeners and members at Bridge Gardens, growing an overabundance of kale that initial summer. My sense of place deepened as I would enter the gardens, cup of coffee in hand, to work the soil, chat with other growers, and get tips from Garden Manager Rick Bogusch. Now an expert gardener, I participate in the community potlucks and donate surplus food to the local food pantry.

“My love for the East End is deeply rooted in these communities. I am a conservationist at heart – I understand the importance of protecting and enjoying our beautiful home.” — Rand Stoll

Thank You Rand!



And thank you to all of our donors for your generous support.

Trust Honors Joseph Townsend at Edwards Farm Preserve



The Peconic Land Trust unveiled a plaque honoring East Marion resident Joseph Townsend Jr., this past December.

The plaque is installed at the Edwards Farm in Orient, which has been preserved by the Trust with the extraordinary assistance of the

community, Town of Southold, and Mr. Townsend, who was recently diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.

The trail head where the plaque is located will eventually lead to a new nature observation platform honoring Joe. It will overlook Hallocks Bay, Orient State Beach Park and beyond.

Participating in the recent unveiling ceremony with Mr. Townsend were Peconic Land Trust President John v.H. Halsey and Senior Advisor Tim Caufield.

Joe’s contributions to the North Fork are many and include his public service as the Mayor of Greenport, Councilman of Southold Town, member of the Southold Town Planning Board, board member of the Peconic Land Trust and the Oysterponds Historical Society, and President of the Long Island Indian Museum.

Joe was also instrumental in the preservation of Dam Pond/Ruth Oliva Preserve in East Marion and the Trust’s Widow’s Hole Preserve, in Greenport, in addition to his unwavering support of the preservation of the Edwards Farm.

Join us in thanking Joe for all he has done through his volunteer and conservation efforts!

To learn more about upcoming plans at the Edwards Farm please contact Amanda Abraham, Director of Development, at AAbraham@PeconicLandTrust.org or Holly Sanford, Project Manager, HSanford@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Preserve Spotlight

Accabonac Preserve, East Hampton

Nestled on the northern flank of the Ronkonkoma moraine, the Trust's 92.9-acre Accabonac Preserve, established in 1998, was made possible by the Potter family and a generous donor, who wishes to remain anonymous.



The land was owned by the Potter family, who were very interested in a conservation outcome and offered to sell the land to the Trust at a bargain sale. The gift by the anonymous donor helped make the conservation of this beautiful and ecologically significant land possible.

Our sincere thanks to the Potter Family and our anonymous donor for their trust in us to steward this land.

The wooded property of the Accabonac Preserve – which had the development potential for 37 homes – is located in the Town of East Hampton's Water Recharge Overlay District, *sitting above the deepest part of the aquifer, our sole source of drinking water.*

A 7.2-acre portion of the property is subject to restrictions held by the Town of East Hampton in support of water quality.

The protection of this land also adds significant forest to the Springs hamlet and provides hikers with wonderful trails that connect to the **Paumanok Path.**



The Accabonac Preserve is part of 600 acres of preserved woodland in the North Amagansett/Springs area that provides critical habitat for a wide variety of sensitive species including Great Horned owls, innumerable migrating birds, and Eastern box turtles.



When hiking the trails at Accabonac Preserve you will see evergreen shrubs, called sheep laurel, low bush blueberry, and bayberry. The sandy soils of the area have been colonized by a variety of sun-loving plants commonly found in the Pine Barrens and in the back

dunes community of our bay and ocean beaches: scrub oak, beach heather, bearberry and reindeer lichen.

Through land conservation, we are all working together to improve the quality of our precious water resources and wildlife habitats.

Have questions about the Accabonac Preserve, its trails and ecology? Contact Senior Stewardship Manager Matt Swain at MSwain@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Interested in exploring?

Trail heads can be found on both Accabonac Road and Springs-Fireplace Road. **Long Island Trail Lovers Coalition**, www.hikeli.com, and the **East Hampton Trails Preservation Society**, www.ehttps.org, are great resources for hiking in the area, including walks through neighboring Peconic Land Trust Preserves: **Stony Hill Preserve** and **High Point Preserve.**

Conservation News

Betsy and Jonathan Blattmachr Donate Conservation Easement to Protect the Natural Habitat Near Big Fresh Pond

Earlier this year, Betsy and Jonathan Blattmachr of Southampton donated a conservation easement on their land in North Sea.

“The land has been in our family for over 100 years. Being able to contribute to the preservation of the local ecology and habitat surrounding Big Fresh Pond for the benefit of future generations is important to our family. The land will forever be undisturbed and we are pleased to have been able to work with the Peconic Land Trust to see this wish fulfilled,” said Betsy and Jonathan Blattmachr.

The easement covers approximately 1.8 acres of undisturbed woodlands, which will preserve the natural habitat for the benefit of the public. It is important to note that this property could have been

The Blattmachrs’ donation is a welcome addition to the Tuckahoe Woods area.

developed with a house in an area that has long faced development pressure.

Located on Coopers Lane and Big Fresh Pond Road in North Sea, within the Town of Southampton, the Blattmachr property is near Town-owned open space and adds to the area’s scenic viewshed and woodlands.



In close proximity to Big Fresh Pond, the protection of this land also contributes to the preservation of the pond’s integrity. This gift is a welcomed addition to an assemblage of protected land known as Tuckahoe Woods.

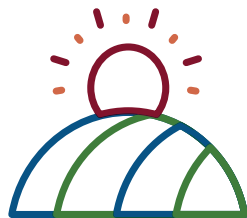
“We thank Betsy and Jonathan for preserving their historic family land and for making a difference,” said John v.H. Halsey, President, Peconic Land Trust. “Their protection of these sensitive woodlands around Big Fresh Pond can serve as inspiration to landowners on Long Island.”

Interested in learning more? Contact Kim Quarty, Senior Project Manager at KQuarty@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Because of YOUR support in 2017, together we...

MONITORED

4,340 acres to ensure their protection

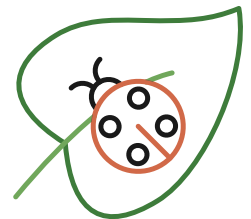


DONATED

over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce to local food pantries

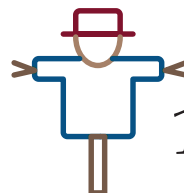
ENGAGED

more than 2,000 guests at activities that bring conservation home



SECURED

\$2.3 million in grant funding for the benefit of Long Island’s water quality



MENTORED

15 new farmers

Sisters of St. Joseph: Moving Forward in Conservation

Green solutions provide for clean energy and land conservation in Brentwood



In February, the dedication of the Sisters of St. Joseph to conserve their land and the environment was noted by reporters at *Newsday*. In a series of articles from February 7th through the 27th, the Sister's

installation of solar panels, and their intention to protect 27 acres of agricultural land and an additional 35 acres of woodland in Brentwood was featured.



Through these plans, the 212-acre campus will be provided with 63% of the electricity it needs. The campus will continue to lease fertile

agricultural lands to local farmers, as well as support their own Community Supported Agriculture farm, and protect an undisturbed woodland area that will provide a great opportunity to study and understand our natural habitat.

We offer our heartfelt congratulations to the Sisters of St. Joseph, and are so proud to have worked with them over the past three years to see their vision for conservation be achieved.



The guiding principles for the Sister's conservation is their Land Ethic, developed in 2015:

As Sisters of St. Joseph, our charism calls us to love of God and neighbor without distinction. We believe that all is one and that our call is to an active inclusive love that seeks this union with God and the sacred community of life that includes all of creation – air, soil, water, plants, and animals. We see ourselves in union with this community that we hold as the neighbor through whom God continues to be revealed.



"As we began to realize how precious and sparse this type of land is in western Suffolk, we realized we had a responsibility to meet the need to preserve it," said Sister Helen Kearny, in *Newsday*. "We

wanted to make the decision moving forward that all of our decisions would be sustainable."

Peconic Land Trust's Kim Quarty and Dan Heston have worked with the Sisters of St. Joseph on site planning and the rejuvenation of their agricultural lands — which are now leased to local farmers providing fresh, local produce to the community.



To learn more, contact: Dan Heston, Senior Manager, Agricultural Programs, at DHeston@PeconicLandTrust.org or Kim Quarty, Senior Project Manager, at KQuarty@PeconicLandTrust.org

Visit
Bridge Gardens
Explore • Discover • Experience

Open Year -Round, Daily: 10am - 4 pm
Complimentary Admission

Support the Garden
with a Membership
PeconicLandTrust.org/BridgeGardens

36 Mitchell Lane
Bridgehampton

The 2018 growing season is upon us...

be a part of
Quail Hill Farm

Shares are Available Now!
Are you ready to start enjoying fresh, organically grown produce from the farm? Sign up today to get your share!

Deep Lane, Amagansett

For more information, please visit
www.PeconicLandTrust.org/QHFshares

Peconic Legacy Circle A Gift for Future Generations

What the Trust does is so important and strikes a deep chord with me — how much it helps our beautiful place. Everybody, do what you can. Don't take the beauty for granted.

Carol Steinberg, Esq.
Peconic Legacy Circle Member

You can leave a legacy by remembering the Peconic Land Trust with a gift from your estate.

Your gift will ensure that Long Island's beautiful beaches, clean water, working farms, majestic woodland, and pristine wetlands will be protected for generations to come.

Legacy gifts can take many forms and may be useful for estate planning purposes. To learn more, contact **Amanda Abraham, Director of Development,** AAbraham@PeconicLandTrust.org.



PECONIC LAND TRUST

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OUR LATEST CONSERVATION NEWS

Celebrating 35 years of Conservation

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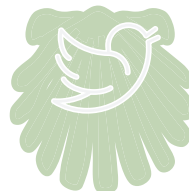
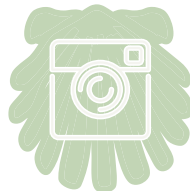
**Peconic Land Trust conserves Long Island's working farms,
natural lands, and heritage for our communities
now and in the future.**

**Enclosed are highlights from our eNewsletters from November 2017 through April 2018.
Join our email list to receive updates from the Trust each month.**

**Please help us further reduce our carbon footprint. If you change your address, or would like to
receive all (or some) of your communications from the Peconic Land Trust by email, let us know!**

**Contact Janet Schutt, Donor Services Manager
631.283.3195 ext. 24 or JSchutt@PeconicLandTrust.org.**

Follow us...



A copy of the last financial report filed with the New York State Attorney General may be obtained in writing to:
New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271
or Peconic Land Trust, PO Box 1776, Southampton, NY 11969