A Celebration of Our Donors

This is a very special year for me and the Peconic Land Trust... it is our 25th Anniversary! Since 1983, with your help, we have protected about 9,000 acres of working farms and natural lands that define Long Island, especially its East End. This achievement represents our work with many public and private partners, including villages, towns, Suffolk County, New York State, landowners, communities, and donors.

As I reflect on the past 25 years, I cannot help but think of my return to Southampton in 1983 with my newlywed wife to found the Peconic Land Trust. The older I got, the stronger the pull to return to this part of the world. And no wonder... the East End of Long Island has so much to offer: the ocean, bays, and the Sound; productive farms and fresh produce; clean water and bounty from the sea; a rich history that began with native people, followed by Europeans, and today people from all over the world. With so much to offer, however, we also have so much to lose. My calling to return home was to stem the tide of loss and you have played a significant role in this endeavor.

Conserving what we know and love for our communities now and in the future is truly the mission of the Peconic Land Trust. We do this because of our connection to the land and people of the East End. We do this so that working farms and natural lands will continue to define Long Island in the future. We do this so that there is something to pass on to the next generation. To this end, with your help, the Trust will continue its work from a pragmatic, problem-solving perspective for many generations to come.

As we celebrate and reflect upon the past 25 years, let us recommit ourselves to future generations by continuing to conserve the land and the ways of life that are the essence of Eastern Long Island. On behalf of all of us at the Peconic Land Trust, thank you for your continued support. We hope that you will be a partner with us for many years to come—we need you now more than ever.

Donor Profile:

Marillyn Wilson and Wilson’s Grove

In February 2008, Marillyn Wilson made an extraordinary gift to the Peconic Land Trust with the donation of Wilson’s Grove, approximately 45 acres of woodland including her architecturally distinctive home. The donation is the latest in a long-running relationship between the Trust and Ms. Wilson, which began with her friendship with John Halsey in the early years of the Trust, followed closely by her encouragement and generous support of the Trust’s conservation efforts. In June 2002, she donated a conservation easement on her property to the Trust. (For more on the conservation easement donation and other reflections on Wilson’s Grove, see the Peconic Land Trust newsletter, Fall 2002, archived on the Trust’s website).

“We will be forever grateful to Marillyn, not simply for her gift of this incredible property but also for her friendship and long-standing support of the Trust’s mission,” said John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust. “Marillyn’s property, Wilson’s Grove, is clearly one of the most unique properties on the East End. And her love of that property and her willingness to share it with the public speaks volumes about her humanity.”

In discussing the donation of the property to the Trust, Ms. Wilson reflected on her 40 years of owning the property and its wonderful white pine forest. She recounted a story about a solitary birthday hike and a wonderful surprise: “walking through the woods, I spotted a purple object up ahead and thought to myself rubbish. When I came upon it and picked it up—it was a purple mylar balloon exclaiming Happy Birthday—and what a laugh I had to myself sitting in the woods.”
When Mary Mothersill was searching for a beach house in the Hamptons in the early seventies, she enlisted the help of her friend Tina Fredericks, a real estate agent. They looked at many traditional houses, contemporary houses, Palladian mini-manors, and shacks. But Mary didn’t like any of them. It was only when Tina showed her a property on Pauls Lane in Bridgehampton that she was intrigued. Three acres with two very small structures designed by Andrew Geller seemed exactly right. Andrew Geller is an architect who worked with Raymond Loewy and whose houses have been described as “wonderfully eccentric” and “icons of carefree leisure.” Mary bought the place—which was unheated and totally unlandscaped—and began a thirty-five-year project of renovation and landscaping. She ate and entertained in what she called the “big” house and slept in the “little” house. In the beginning, the view from her deck was of the Babinskifarm with its cows and calves. She used to buy her vegetables at the Babinski farmstand and hoped that the Babinskis would continue to farm the land forever. Years later, she watched as the McMansions went up where the cows used to graze. With the help of landscape designer Jim Owen, she transformed the property into extraordinary, magical gardens. Thousands of iris bloomed. There were peonies, 40 kinds of yew, spruces and, of course, daffodils and tulips. An arc of iris graced one of the sitting areas. She and Jim devised a water-course that made its way down a hill that ended in a little pool that she filled with carp. She built a tennis court and, later, added a pool. She swam in the pool every day in summer. Mary was a strong swimmer and enjoyed swimming in the ocean and walking on the beach.

She entertained her colleagues and friends and was always generous and hospitable—cooking and grilling wonderful meals from recipes she collected and pouring excellent wine. About 10 years ago, she built another “little” house which she called “The studio,” where she set up her computer and worked on her books and papers. The property is quite different now from the one she bought, but the essence of it remained the same. Mary treasured the peace and beauty of her little houses and the trees, shrubs and flowers that she planted, labeled and nurtured. She wanted very much for this small part of the East End to be maintained and saved from McMansionization. To that end, she talked with the Peconic Land Trust about the disposition of her property. Mary Mothersill died on January 22, 2008, and she left her land and houses to the Peconic Land Trust.

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The 2007 Peconic Land Trust Honor Roll

As the Peconic Land Trust celebrates its 25th Anniversary, we thank our many contributors and volunteers who have made this milestone anniversary possible. It is through your support and actions that we will look to the next 25 years with confidence as we continue to work with landowners to strengthen land conservation throughout our region.

So many of our life-enriching human experiences come from the land; and because of the land, we share in and connect with the rich agricultural and natural history of the region. It provides us the bounty of good food from our farms, beautiful places to explore, and places for coming together with family and friends. Through our work and with your continued support these experiences will be passed to our children for generations to come.

John Norbeck
Vice Chair of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Philanthropy Committee Peconic Land Trust

In assembling the list of our contributors, the Peconic Land Trust has endeavored to be as accurate as possible. If we have made an inadvertent omission or error, please accept our sincerest apologies. Please feel free to contact Rebecca A. Chapman, Vice President of Philanthropy, if you have any questions or concerns.

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The following bequests have been made to the Peconic Land Trust
Corwin Douglas Morris Trust
Gregory Dwyer Irrevocable Trust
DTD Estate of William R. Ginsberg
Estate of Alan Kayes
Estate of Marjorie Lawson

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Mary Mothersill was 83 when she died. She was a philosopher, teacher and writer of extraordinary gifts. Born in Canada, she graduated from the University of Toronto, received an M.A. in philosophy from Radcliffe College and a Ph.d from Harvard. Over the course of her professional life, she taught at Vassar, Columbia and at the universities of Connecticut, Chicago, Michigan, New York. She was Chair of the philosophy department at Barnard College for many years until she retired in 1993. She was highly regarded among her peers, and the author of several books including: BEAUTY RESTORED published by Oxford University Press in 1984. At the time of her death she was working on a book about bad taste, a subject about which she had strong convictions. During a remarkable career, Mary received many honors. She was an Alfred North Whitehead lecturer at Harvard, a visiting fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford. She served on the board of the Journal of Philosophy and was a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and President of the eastern division of the American Philosophical Society where she delivered a presidential address on Old Age. She was also on the board of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee and the Choral Society of the Hamptons.

These facts are but the bare bones of a life that was so much more. Mary Mothersill had a strong sense of morality and an abiding regard for the truth. She had a gift for friendship. She gave her best to her work, to her friends and to the world as she found it. Whether working to stop a war, preserve civil liberties, to keep good music in a community, to help a student find a job, protect the land—whatever the task she was willing to take it on.
Southold  
Thanks to an anonymous donor with a desire to preserve the North Fork’s rural character, we accepted a gift of six parcels of wooded and agricultural land totaling 17 acres, along Route 48 in Southold. The Town of Southold holds a conservation easement on these beautiful parcels.

Farr Farmland and Woodlands  
Thirty-seven acres of farmland and woodlands in Riverhead were protected by Mr. and Mrs. Rex Farr, who sold development rights to Suffolk County, and plan to continue organic farming on the site. The Trust worked closely with the Farr’s and the County to help make this conservation a reality.

Cackle Hill  
This important 26-acre property on Shelter Island was protected thanks to the seller, a conservation buyer, the Town of Shelter Island, Suffolk County and the Trust. We purchased the property, then subdivided it into a 17-acre wooded parcel that we sold to the Town of Riverhead and Suffolk County, and a nine-acre parcel with a 100-year-old home that was purchased by a conservation buyer, subject to a conservation easement that prevents further subdivision and maintains the integrity of the property in perpetuity. Years ago, Cackle Hill was the site of a successful egg farm.

Zilnicki Farmland  
In November, nearly 71 acres of farmland owned by Helen Zilnicki were protected through the sale of development rights to the Town of Riverhead and Suffolk County. We assisted in the conservation of this project, which is part of an assemblage of additional lands owned and farmed by the Zilnicki family, and identified as high priority lands for protection by the Town of Riverhead.

Schmitt/Zilnicki Farmland  
We assisted landowners Phillip A. Schmitt, Deborah Schmitt, Stanley Zilnicki and Kathy Zilnicki in the sale of development rights on 10 acres of farmland to the Town of Riverhead and Suffolk County. These agricultural lands are located on Roanoke Avenue in Riverhead, and were also identified by the Town as high priority for protection of farmland.

Koop Wetlands  
In early December, Gerald Koop donated a conservation easement to the Trust on a 2.58-acre parcel located in the hamlet of East Quogue. This wetland property, nestled among a heavily populated area of the community, helps to support the fragile tidal wetland ecosystem of Tiana Bay.

Horowitz Preserve  
In December, Charles and Justine Horowitz gifted two flag lots to us totaling 1.33 acres. These two parcels, located in the Tuckahoe area of Southampton, contain woodlands and wetlands, and are adjacent to other preserved lands owned by the Trust and Southampton Town.

New Suffolk Waterfront  
This important community resource was acquired by the Trust in mid-December from the Love Lane Acquisition Corporation in an effort to secure the 5.5-acre waterfront parcel from over development. The Trust plans to work closely with the Town of Southold, the New Suffolk Waterfront Committee, a community coalition, and the New Suffolk Waterfront Fund, Inc., to develop a conservation plan for future ownership and uses at the site.

Zohn Farmland  
Over the past 20 years, we have been working closely with Ngaere Macray Zohn to realize her conservation goals for her land in Sagaponack. Ms. Zohn’s gift to us of a conservation easement on a 1.8-acre parcel on Sagaponack Road furthers this effort. This prime agricultural parcel adjoins other lands she has conserved, and is currently supporting the farming operations of the Pike family.

Seymour Wetlands and Woodlands  
Samuel and Karen Seymour of Shelter Island donated to us a conservation easement on nearly 14 acres of woodlands and wetlands. This land, located on Stearns Point Road adjacent to Cackle Hill, is part of an assemblage of tidal wetlands and woodlands opposite West Neck Bay.

Westmoreland Preserve  
Located on Shelter Island, this 6-acre wetland preserve was donated to us by Westmoreland Farm, Inc. The property includes a beautiful scenic viewshed enjoyed by Shelter Island residents and visitors.
## Mission Statement
The Peconic Land Trust conserves Long Island’s working farms, natural lands, and heritage for our communities now and in the future.

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