

# PECONIC LAND TRUST

CELEBRATING 33 YEARS OF LAND CONSERVATION

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## MICHAEL LIGHT: AERIAL REFLECTIONS ON THE EAST END

**I**n the summer of 2016, Michael Light set out to rediscover the place of his youth. Having grown up on the East End in the 1970s, Mike has lived in the San Francisco Bay Area since graduating from Amherst College in 1986. Drawn back to the South Fork with the passing of his mother Deborah Ann Light last year — Mike’s aerial journey was a coming home of sorts, a reconnection with places he knew well from the ground . . . but a land revelation from above.

An acclaimed photographer exhibited and collected by museums worldwide (MoMA included), Mike’s aerial work has largely focused on the vast landscapes of America’s West. This summer he turned his attention around, flying his tiny two seat, 600lb, 100 horsepower plane — a Flight Design CTSW specially designed for exceptional aerial visibility — from California to New York and back again. With a base in Montauk, Mike took 32 flights across the East End and southern New England in June and August.

*Continued to page 8*



## President's Letter: John v.H. Halsey

### Join Us!

**T**hank you for your extraordinary partnership with the Trust! Together we have conserved 12,000 acres of working farms that produce local food, watersheds that safeguard our drinking water, shorelines that provide public access to beautiful beaches, wetlands that cleanse our bays and ponds, habitats that shelter birds and butterflies, and historic resources that connect us to our heritage.

**As we approach our 35th Anniversary in 2018, I feel a personal responsibility to lay the groundwork for the Trust's next 35 years.** What do we need to assure the permanence of what we have accomplished? How do we ensure that the Trust will meet its perpetual responsibilities for generations to come? Who will be the Trust's next generation of leaders? How do we maximize our impact going forward and enhance our capacity to do so?

About a year ago, our Staff and Board began a process to consider these questions, define a strategy, and calculate how much it will cost. We've come up with a bold vision for the future. Our work during the coming months will focus on:

**Permanence:** How do we fulfill our perpetual responsibilities? We need more financial resources in our Stewardship Fund to effectively monitor and enforce conservation restrictions and manage our properties in perpetuity. We need a permanent home that serves as a command center and gathering place for our staff and the community. If you have driven by our office recently, you can see that we have begun the renovation process.

**Impact:** How do we maximize our impact on conservation in the next 35 years? We need to provide more landowners with viable alternatives to development. We need to conserve threatened land more quickly than ever before. We need to assure that more protected farmland is accessible and affordable to farmers, especially those who provide local food. We need to broaden our educational programs at Bridge Gardens, the Ag Center, and Quail Hill Farm around water quality as well as our pollinators — bees, butterflies, and birds. We need to work with our public partners on new tools to preserve our communities.

**Capacity:** How do we enhance our capacity to realize our vision for the future? We need to increase our annual support to underwrite new technology, expand partnerships, and attract new expertise and experience to our staff. We need more capital in our Revolving Fund so that we can acquire more land when opportunities arise. With your help, we will move from an annual work agenda to a multi-year vision for conserving and stewarding what we know and love in our communities.

**Your annual support is the cornerstone of our work year after year.**

Our work is never done, always urgent, and could not succeed without you! The Trust's annual budget exceeds \$4 million per year for core mission support, including an incredible professional staff of 25 that is engaged in a myriad of ways to conserve what we know and love through planning, land protection, stewardship, education, public policy, and more. Please continue to do what you can to maximize our impact by encouraging others to make charitable gifts to the Trust! And if you have not made your annual gift yet, please do so now — you truly make our work possible!

Thank you! Without your support we could not protect the places that feed our bodies and our souls. Thank you for joining us on this journey!

### Protecting the Land in Support of Butterflies, Bees and Birds

*This summer, we've been asking the question: What Matters Most to You? Thank you to everyone who's answered so far, and if you'd like to lend your voice we would love to hear from you — visit us at [www.PeconicLandTrust.org](http://www.PeconicLandTrust.org) and join in!*

One enchanting surprise from the survey, our pollinator friends — bees, birds and butterflies — made it into the top five of what matters most. Conserved natural lands and farmland are perfect places to help these important workers thrive. At Quail Hill Farm, Scott Chaskey and crew encouraged the growth of over four acres of milkweed along Deep Lane; they also plant buckwheat (as a summer cover crop) repeatedly through the warmer season to provide more forage for Mary Woltz's bees and to add to the field's fertility in three different locations around Quail Hill.

At Bridge Gardens, Rick Bogusch has planted two species of native milkweeds that, along with the herb garden, are providing nectar for butterflies and other pollinators from spring through fall — sometimes you can hear the garden buzzing!

South Fork Stewardship Manager Matt Swain notes that milkweed



Photograph by Amagansett Studios

and goldenrod, loved by pollinators, are naturally occurring at a number of our Preserves, including Cove Hollow Farm Preserve in Wainscott, Blair Preserve in Sagaponack, Grassland Preserve in Montauk and our Ship Wreck Preserve in Napeague, which increased by .7 acres in 2015 with a donation from the D'Urso family.

The over 1,264 acres of preserve lands, which are actively managed by the Trust throughout the East End, make perfect habitat and migration routes for these important pollinators.

Want to learn more about what you can do at your home to help our winged friends? **Contact Matt Swain at 631.283.3195 or stop by Bridge Gardens or Quail Hill Farm.** We love to talk about plants and pollination!



# Peconic Legacy Circle

## For the Love of Community: Bequests 2014 Through October 2016

Since 2014, the Peconic Land Trust has been privileged to receive seven bequests in support of conservation from these remarkable individuals. We thank them for their generous spirit and will continue to work on their behalf to be steady stewards of the land we all cherish:

- **Barbara Asch**, book designer and art therapist, lived in Bridgehampton and was known for making art from found objects. Ms. Asch's work had been exhibited widely and she was the recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts grant.
- **Agnes Bogart**, a resident of NYC and Amagansett, was known for her cooking and love of fitness, taking up the practice of yoga in her 70s and riding her bike into her 90s.
- **Sue Fuller**, a sculptor, printmaker and teacher, renowned for three-dimensional works with thread, had her work showcased in numerous solo and group exhibitions and was represented in collections across the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- **Elinor Tibbets Van Ingen McDade** and **Colonel Robert McDade**, of Goat Alley Gallery in Sag Harbor, met in Vietnam in the 1950s and traveled during his active duty, before settling in Sag Harbor and becoming part of the community.
- **Margaret "Peggy" Corry Wilson** worked for the Red Cross during and after World War II and as an aide to Governor Nelson Rockefeller. Living in Bridgehampton for many years, Ms. Wilson was active in the League of Women Voters, the Bridgehampton Association and St. Ann's Episcopal Church.



Photograph by Jacqueline Osborn

- **Susan M. Seidman** was a respected writer, whose articles appeared in many newspapers and magazines, including *The East Hampton Star* and *The New York Times*. Sue's favorite topic was companion animals, followed by gardening, travel and social commentary. Her most recent book, *Cat Companions: A Memoir of Loving and Caring* was published in 2011.

Throughout our 33 years, the Trust has been fortunate to have the support of many who believed that conserving the working farms and natural lands of Long Island made a difference in their lives, and wanted to pass that love of the land to future generations. Many of these generous bequests have come to the Trust without any advance notice – although many of our friends have let us know their plans.

If you would like to share your legacy plans with us, and become a part of our **Peconic Legacy Circle**, we would be honored to talk with you and your advisors to learn what matters most to you.

*For more information, please contact Rebecca A. Chapman at 631.283.3195 or RChapman@PeconicLandTrust.org.*



Barbara Brush Wright (left) with Peconic Land Trust volunteer, Nancy Misucavech (right)

### Barbara Brush Wright

Serving on the Trust's Board of Directors from 2001 to 2011, including as our Treasurer from 2007 to 2011, Barbara was a steady and fair advisor to our staff. A woman of great creativity and many talents, Barbara taught elementary school in the New York City public schools before embarking on a second career in fundraising for the National Presbyterian Church and the Eastern Territory of the Salvation Army. When she retired and moved to Shelter Island full-time in 2000, Barbara followed her dreams by opening Shelter Island Pottery, a studio, classroom and shop on Manwaring Road. She shared her love of pottery for 12 years before moving to Chapel Hill, NC, to be closer to her daughter and granddaughters after the passing of her significant other, Dr. Alex Garcia. We miss Barbara's spirit and guidance.

**Cover Photo:** A stunning view above North Amagansett by Michael Light, where the Trust has protected an assemblage of approximately 650 acres including farmland, woodland, watershed, habitat, and trails in partnership with Deborah Ann Light, John de Cuevas, Maggie de Cuevas, Deborah Carmichael, the Potter family, Mary & Peter Stone, Andy Sabin, the Bistrrian family, Pat Struk, East Hampton Town, Suffolk County, Suffolk County Water Authority, and more.

# Assuring Local Food for Generations to Come

## 264 Acres and Counting: The Trust and Southampton Town Push Forward to Protect Farmland for Farming

It all began with the Pike Farmstand in Sagaponack. How could the Trust get protected farmland into the hands of Jennifer and Jim Pike at a price they could afford and assure that it would always be accessible and affordable to future farmers to grow local food? In 2011, for the first time, the Peconic Land Trust used enhanced restrictions on farmland including affirmative and affordable farming covenants as well as a food production requirement on the property. As a result, Jim and Jennifer Pike were able to purchase 7.6 acres of land at an affordable price from the Trust that they had farmed for 20 years. *This initial conservation effort would not have been possible without the support of the community, Suffolk County, and the Town of Southampton — over 300 people and organizations contributed directly to our acquisition of the farmland while the County and Town purchased development rights from the Trust at the closing. (For more on this story, visit our website: [www.PeconicLandTrust.org/Pike](http://www.PeconicLandTrust.org/Pike).)*



*As of October 2016, over 264 acres of farmland in the Town of Southampton have been protected by enhanced restrictions representing nearly five percent of all protected farmland in the Town.*

*These enhanced restrictions are now a new tool in our arsenal to assure that protected farmland is actually farmed, especially for food production in Southampton and, potentially, East Hampton. Over time, as protected farmland values continue to appreciate, we anticipate that more enhanced restrictions will be acquired from landowners on a voluntary basis, ensuring that future generations of farmers will have access to affordable farmland for growing food.*

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### Gifts and Purchase of Voluntary Restrictions

The Trust accepted donations of enhanced restrictions from Jeff White in 2011 and the Galban family in 2013 protecting an additional 54.3 acres with affirmative and affordable farming covenants. Notably, all three of these properties – Pike, White, and Galban – are in the Village of Sagaponack, a community with one of the highest land values in the United States.

These three projects paved the way for the Trust’s work with the **Town of Southampton in 2014, when the Town became the first municipality in New York State to purchase enhanced restrictions on farmland.** The Trust was in contract to purchase the property from the estate of Charlotte Danilevsky in Water Mill. The acquisition would not have been possible without the Town’s participation. The Danilevsky property consists of two parcels:

- The 19.2-acre Head of Pond farmland. This parcel has since been sold to farmer Hank Kraszewski, III.
- The 14.2 acre Uncle Leo’s Lane farmland. This parcel was acquired by Jim and Jennifer Pike in October 2016. To complete this acquisition, the Pike’s sold enhanced restrictions to the Town on 5.8 acres of farmland they also own in Sagaponack.

The acquisition of enhanced restrictions, whether through gift or purchase, dramatically reduces the value of protected farmland for inheritance tax purposes and resale — from as high as \$200,000 an acre to \$20,000 to \$25,000 an acre. This makes a huge difference for working farmers who are interested in producing food.



*Jim and Jennifer Pike with the Trust’s Melanie Cirillo, John v.H. Halsey and Kim Quarty*

Since the completion of the Danilevsky project, Southampton Town has purchased enhanced restrictions on an additional 169 acres of farmland, previously protected by the standard restrictions on development (including the recent Pike farmland parcel mentioned above), for a total of over 264 acres. These parcels include:



- The Rogers farmland in Water Mill: 62+ acres off Scuttlehole Road and 37+ acres off of New Ground Lane.
- Alice Topping LLC in Water Mill, 17 acres of farmland continuously farmed by the Halsey (Green Thumb Farm) family.
- CRW (Wesnofske) LLC farmland in Water Mill on Cooks Lane, 25 acres of farmland.
- Hayground Farm in Bridgehampton, 24+ acres of farmland owned by the Trust and leased to farmer Peter Dankowski.
- Serene Green, 1.1 acres of farmland off Noyac Road.



In a letter to the Town Board, Paul Rogers laid out the situation facing farmers: "In the face of ever escalating real estate values, it becomes increasingly difficult to ply the land as a farmer, intent on growing row crops, field crops or vegetables. When farmland from which the initial development

rights (restrictions) were sold can still be worth over \$100,000 per acre, it is clearly beyond the reach of anyone who desires to make a living producing food. The inflation of values on farmland is the biggest deterrent to food production in our area."

*Join us in applauding the Town of Southampton for recognizing and addressing the changing landscape that is facing our agricultural community and for working with the Trust and our local farming community to assure a future for agriculture that includes food production.*

## Development rights? Enhanced easement? What does this mean?

### Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

For nearly 40 years, local municipalities on the East End and Suffolk County have established PDR programs designed to protect farmland from development. In effect, when a farmer sells development rights, the land can no longer be used for residential or commercial development. While it is expected that the land will be used for agricultural purposes including nurseries, equestrian, and food production, there is no affirmative requirement to farm it. These programs are intentionally broad to address the needs of farmers throughout the state.

**To learn more visit our website: [www.peconiclandtrust.org/localfood](http://www.peconiclandtrust.org/localfood).**

## McCall Easement First on North Fork

With a nod to the past and an eye toward the future, families across the East End have protected lands that preserve our historic character while making possible opportunities for future farmers.



In the Spring of 2016, Russ McCall donated an enhanced easement to the Trust on 29 acres of farmland in Mattituck specified for growing food. Russ, a longtime supporter of the Trust, is an ardent champion of conservation on the East End. He played a leadership role in the protection of Downs Farm Preserve in Cutchogue, and enhanced the protection on his farmland for vines and cattle.

"As a landowner and a farmer, I feel an obligation to respect the land and to help ensure, when possible, that it is available for food production for future generations. By applying these additional restrictions to the farmland, our hope is it serves as a model for other landowners to use in their preservation efforts," said Russ. "This direction for farmland preservation, where land use can be voluntarily specified for future use, is a direction we hope to promote."



### Enhanced Restrictions

Over the past 15 years, the value of protected farmland on the South Fork has appreciated significantly to the point that it is increasingly unaffordable and inaccessible to farmers who grow food. In order to address this new reality, the Trust developed a set of restrictions that include food production requirements, affirmative and affordable covenants, as well as resale and appreciation limits. As a consequence of these enhanced restrictions, protected farmland is more likely to remain in production while its value is significantly reduced.



## Studies Focus on Strengthening Farmland Protection...

### Riverhead Relooks at TDRs for Farmland Preservation

On Earth Day, the Trust received a New York State grant to work with the Town of Riverhead. As you may know, the Trust worked closely with the Town in the early 2000s to protect a tremendous amount of farmland. The Town accomplished this by borrowing against the Community Preservation Fund's (CPF) future revenue; since then, however, the pace of farmland protection has slowed dramatically.

The Town, with our assistance, is looking at ways to retool its Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to increase the pace of farmland protection. TDR programs enable municipalities to transfer development from productive agricultural land (sending areas) to more appropriate business and residential zones (receiving areas). Private capital is often used to compensate farmland owners for their development rights enabling them to realize equity and preserve their land.

Why is this important? **Riverhead represents nearly 40% of the remaining farmland in Suffolk County.**

And the grant enables Trust staff —Kimberly Quarty,

Jessie Marcus and Matthew Swain— to inventory the remaining unprotected farmland parcels and identify those most critical to conserve; review the Town's TDR code and propose amendments to streamline and strengthen the process; and develop a more transparent application process for both developers and landowners. Once the revised program is in place, we will work with the Town to promote the opportunity. We look forward to sharing the progress over the next year.



*Protected farmland in Riverhead*

### Southampton Farmland Study Identifies Successes and Challenges

Nearly 20 years ago, the Trust worked with the Town of Southampton to prepare its Farm and Farmland Preservation Strategy. At that time, there were 8,500 acres of farmland and less than 2,500 acres protected. Today, there are 6,600 acres of farmland left of which 4,500 acres are protected. **While 67% of the Town's farmland is protected, there are 2,100 acres hanging in the balance!**

The 2016 update of the 1998 Farm and Farmland Preservation Strategy highlights the achievements and challenges plus recommendations for the future. The project is being overseen by the Trust's Melanie Cirillo.

Challenges, starting with escalating real estate values for even protected farmland and continued development pressure, along with increased regulations, estate tax issues, and limited farm labor are contributing to significant changes in agriculture: nursery and equestrian lands have increased while field crops are down by 25% and make up only 47% of the agricultural activity in the Town.

The expanded use of affirmative and affordable farming covenants, code revisions for Right to Farm and Ag Housing legislation, and the preservation of smaller farmland parcels are a few of the recommendations the Trust's staff is working on with the Town's Ag Advisory Committee and Planning Department.

*Both the Riverhead and Southampton studies are primarily funded by grants to the Peconic Land Trust through the Conservation Partnership Program, a grant program supported by funds from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and administered by the Land Trust Alliance and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.*



## ...and Shoring Up Our Coastlines and Soil

### Shelter Island: Saving Reel Point

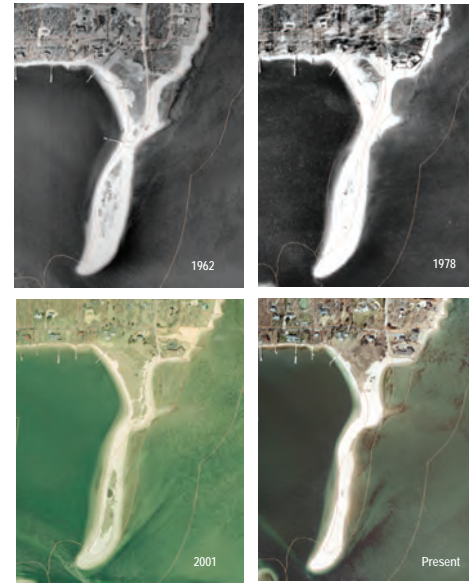
**R**eel Point Preserve, a fragile sand peninsula located on Shelter Island, has been battered by storms for years. Peconic Land Trust has been working with the Town of Shelter Island and the community to stabilize the shoreline, but severe erosion from strong winds and wave action continue to make restoration efforts futile.

The degradation of Reel Point has the potential to diminish the navigability of Coecles Harbor and negatively impact Shelter Island's economy and natural habitats. It is clear that more action needs to take place before it is too late.

To this end, **the Trust and the Town of Shelter Island are partnering to conduct a study of the erosion problems and develop a comprehensive shoreline management plan.** Lockwood, Kessler & Bartlett, Inc., a highly respected and successful Long Island engineering and consulting firm, has been hired to lead the study.

This is the first time the issues facing Reel Point will be scientifically studied using the resources of engineers and environmental consultants. All was made official on August 6, 2016, when the Town Board of Shelter Island passed a resolution to grant the Trust one-half of the \$42,500 it will cost to conduct this study.

*Please join us in this effort: the Peconic Land Trust is now reaching out to the wider community to help raise the remaining costs, \$21,250. Any funds raised over the needed amount will go into a dedicated fund for the future maintenance of Reel Point. For more information about the study please contact Matthew Swain, Stewardship Manager, at MSwain@PeconicLandTrust.org or Vice President Pam Greene at PGreene@PeconicLandTrust.org or call 631.283.3195.*



### Crop Trials at the Ag Center

**W**hen you look around at East End farms you can't help but notice that from June through September the fields are bursting with lush greens mixed with bright colors. 'Tis the season for the freshest produce around. It's easy to think that this is the most important part of the growing cycle but field health and sustainability scientists are working hard to educate farmers about one of the most essential factors in a successful growing season: the health of the soil. **Cover crops suppress weeds, build productive soils, help control pests and diseases, attract pollinators and help our water systems by keeping too much nitrogen from seeping into our bays and waters.**

Peconic Land Trust and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Suffolk County are partnering to conduct a cover crop trial at the Trust's Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm in Southold (Ag Center). Eight acres have been planted with a variety of cover crops and maintained by the Trust. The soils will be monitored by Ken Johnson, Agricultural Stewardship Technician, of CCE. Trust staff member, Dan Heston, worked with Ken to come up with the variety of cover crops to test. Currently growing at the Ag Center are **Sunn Hemp, Rye, Buckwheat and Sorghum**. Each type of cover crop has its own advantages. For example, Rye is very easy to incorporate back into the soil, Buckwheat attracts pollinators, and Sorghum is a champion weed suppressor. Dan is most curious about the Sunn Hemp which may offer a combination of a lot of excellent cover crop traits.

Cover crops are so important for the health of the land that it is part of the lease agreement. Farmers who lease Peconic Land Trust land are required to plant a cover crop by October 15. This helps reduce soil erosion due to winter storms. The study and partnership will be ongoing since changing soil health is a long-term investment.

*To learn more about how cover crops can improve your soil health, contact Dan Heston, at DHeston@PeconicLandTrust.org.*







*The view across Napeague Harbor toward Lazy Point in East Hampton.*

His photographs capture both how much has been developed on the dense northeastern seaboard but surprisingly also how much has been saved amidst the geological wonders of terminal moraines like Long Island and Cape Cod, with the pastoral beauty of the truly exceptional East End agricultural soils revealed. Here is a peek into Mike's view:

### **What was the inspiration for this summer's journey?**

**ML:** I've always been interested in the history of landscape representation as it evolved on the East Coast – the atmosphere is different in the east than the west, there is much more moisture in the air, and of course the summer topography infinitely greener – and I was curious to see if I could make art in the complicated place where I grew up, something I'd never done. It was great to come back at the age of 53 with an evolved skillset and my little bird to do what I do from the air – and attempt to comprehend more clearly some of the forces that comprise the place that formed me.

As an artist in general I tend to image two things: the land itself, and what humans do to that land. Ideally I want both to be equally strong actors in my pictures.

### **Were there surprises? Disappointments?**

**ML:** Long Island is very flat and the minute you get above it – even at 500 feet – it's genuinely astonishing what you can see all at once, especially if one has spent one's formative years so intensely in a place without ever making those connections. It is radically different than being on the surface, liberating and fascinating to see how it all knits together as a kind of quilt or textile (to channel my mother!). My preconceived notions as an aerial imager



and environmentalist are generally pretty cynical and tough, and I had a certain trepidation about seeing all the change on the East End – my mother and I arrived in 1967 – but the minute I got above things, I was stunned



at how hauntingly beautiful the area is, even now. I was not expecting that; I was expecting dismay. From above one really does see the splendor all this rich Bridgehampton loam gives: spectacularly productive land but also gorgeous hardwood forests perched above sandspits, a landscape that is far more diverse and gracious than the Cape's, which didn't get Long Island's beautiful silty glacial soils.

Another revelation was to actually see in context just how much of the area's agricultural land has been preserved. It's quite an impressive percentage, and it's due to planning by the various East End towns, Suffolk County, New York State and of course organizations like the Peconic Land Trust who have allowed and encouraged people to conserve. And from many, many individuals doing what they could, my

*The farm fields and woods along the Long Island Sound to the east of Oregon Road.*

mother included. From the air you really see the impact of this multi-pronged effort.

### What are your further plans?

**ML:** I have a wild fantasy of hangingar the aircraft on the East End for a year and coming to work in each of the four seasons: what does it look like in the snow? What does it look like in the grey, bare stripped-down days of February? Or on a crisp fall day where the air and the light have that certain kind of uncanny clarity? How does the ocean behave in winter? What is the quality of the light? It would be a pleasure to work with varied atmospheric conditions and explore the different ways light scatters. In high summer in the East what you get is this great, green agrarian breathing living majesty. I found myself helplessly, and very enjoyably, responding to the rather classic humid romanticism of it all. I'd love to plumb the area's harsh grey opposites as well.



*Historic family farms preserved in Orient looking toward Long Island Sound.*

*We appreciate Mike's sharing a bit of his experience with us, and look forward to sharing more of his work with you in 2017 and beyond – and hope his dream to have his plane anchored in Montauk for a year-long exploration of the East End's lands becomes a reality. For more on Mike and his art, visit him online at [www.MichaellLight.net](http://www.MichaellLight.net).*



## Leasing and Grant Program Supports Growth of Farms

**Y**ou can't have local food without local farmers. Supporting Long Island's working farms is a high priority to the Trust and is the driving force behind our Farms for the Future Initiative. In fact, since our founding in 1983, and with your help, the Peconic Land Trust has preserved more working farms on Long Island than any other private conservation organization. **Long Island's farms and farm families are central to our economy and our heritage.** Given intense development pressures, escalating real estate values, competition for farmland, and the lack of affordable farmland for both new and established farmers, our Farms for the Future Initiative has been an excellent program to help address some of these challenges.

As part of this initiative, we are focused on providing access to affordable farmland by purchasing, protecting, restoring and reselling protected farmland to farmers. In addition, the Trust's expanded Farmland Leasing Program provides local farmers access to affordable land – whether to expand their existing operation, or to provide them a place to start. Farmland owned by the Trust is available for leasing, primarily in Amagansett and Southold. Farmers currently leasing include Balsam Farms, Amber Waves Farm, and Bees' Needs in Amagansett (*see Mary's story below*); Sang Lee Farm, Invincible Summer Farms, and The Farm Beyond in Southold, and many more. The Trust is proud to partner with and support these hardworking farmers. We are currently leasing over 250 acres to 30+ farm operations across the East End.



Interested in learning more about leasing farmland?  
Contact Dan Heston, Senior Manager of Agricultural Programs,  
at 631.283.3195 or [DHeston@PeconicLandTrust.org](mailto:DHeston@PeconicLandTrust.org)

### A Farm of a Different Type: Bees

While much of our leasing is with farmers who are growing row crops, we've had a wonderful partnership with a farmer of a different type: Beekeeper Mary Woltz. Mary, owner of Bees' Needs, has been raising bees at Quail Hill Farm since 2004, providing the farm with very effective pollination services and her delicious honey for farm members. Mary remarked, "the Peconic Land Trust, through its extensive preservation of farmland and open space, is an important general contributor to maintaining bee habitat in our area."

Mary feels fortunate to have met Farm Director Scott Chaskey, and believes that his continuing advocacy on behalf of the bees – planting cover crops to feed both the bees and the soil – provides the support they need to flourish during challenging times. "What my Quail Hill bees lack in production, they compensate for in quality. Quail Hill honey was nationally recognized with a Good Food Award in 2014." Mary's apiary business has grown from her original six hives, to 11 hives situated in three farm locations, and she manages a total of 63 hives at 14 South Fork locations!





## It's Not Just About Land: But Supporting the Business of Farming

Because of our successful efforts to support local farmers, the Trust was selected in 2015 by Empire State Development (ESD) to oversee the administration of \$1 million in funds available to farmers through an Agricultural Capital Equipment Grant program. Grant recipients Michael and Isabel Osinski of Widow's Hole Oyster Company in Greenport are one of the many agricultural operations to receive financial assistance through this program to start, improve or expand the function of their businesses (*read the Osinskis' story below*).



A variety of local farms can benefit from the grant funds provided by ESD. For example, funds have been approved for the purchase of agricultural structures like deer fencing, farm equipment, infrastructure needed to convert a local farm to a dairy operation, upgrades for energy efficiency at a local winery, and more. With \$1 million available through ESD and just over \$300,000 provided to applicants to date, there is still funding available for agricultural operations that qualify. In addition, changes to the current grant include increasing the maximum award from \$25,000 to \$50,000, and allowing a grant recipient to request a second grant, as long as the request is for a new project and the total request is \$50,000 or less. Applicants also need only prove that the past three years tax returns have been filed.

*We encourage any farmer interested in the Ag Grant program to visit our website – [www.PeconicLandTrust.org/AgCap](http://www.PeconicLandTrust.org/AgCap) – or contact Thomas Hobson at 631.283.3195 or email to [AgGrant@PeconicLandTrust.org](mailto:AgGrant@PeconicLandTrust.org).*

### Oyster Farm Moves Into New Phase

It was 2002 when Mike and Isabel Osinski learned that their Greenport harborfront property included five acres of bay bottom, and with time on their hands since retirement, they decided to start an oyster farming business. Widow's Hole Oyster Company grows only Long Island native oysters, "*Crasostrea virginica*," using a traditional oyster cage system that rests very close to the bay bottom.

The bottom-resting system was adequate but impacted the speed of the oysters' maturity, their cleanliness upon harvesting, and the amount of algae available for the oysters to feed on (algae grows closer to the surface). Through research, Mike and Isabel learned about a newer technology of oyster baskets that float close to the surface, eliminating some of the challenges they were facing.

Interested in converting to floating baskets, the Osinskis applied for and were awarded funds from the Agricultural Capital



Equipment Grant Program (*see above*) toward the purchase of the new equipment. The Osinskis felt the funding assistance made a real difference to their upgrade. Mike remarked, "We needed the incentive of the 20% to make the commitment to changing to new gear, otherwise we may have stayed with the method we knew."

The new baskets' proximity to the surface has enhanced the amount of algae available for the oysters to feed on. The oysters also come out of the water cleaner, reducing the processing time required for

Mike and Isabel to get them market-ready. In addition, the wave action of the Greenport Harbor tides gently tumbles the growing oysters in the baskets, altering the cup-shaped shells and allowing for fatter, meatier oysters, the kind that knowledgeable foodies and restauranters demand. The new system is making a difference to the Osinskis' operation.

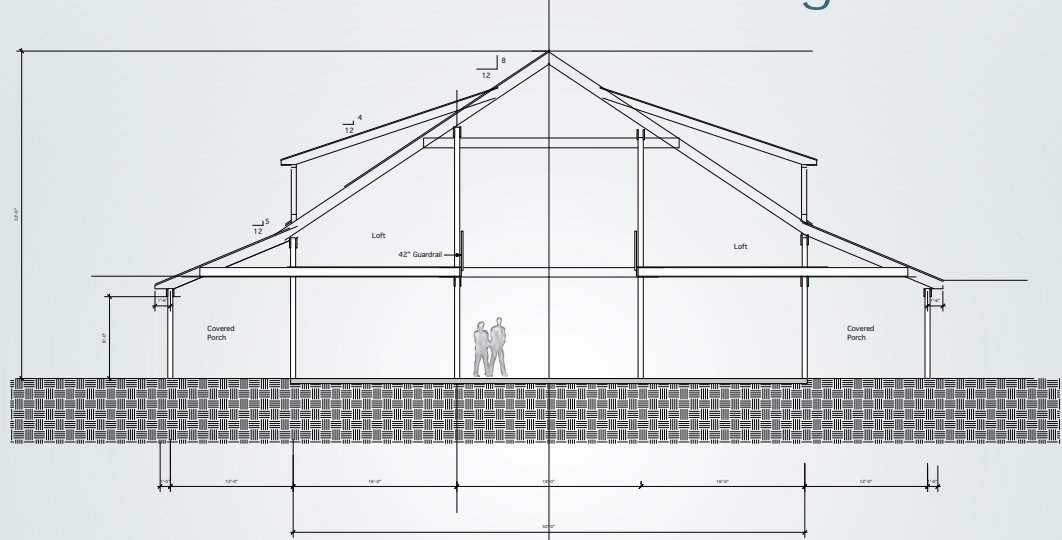




# Peconic 2016

at Martin Sidor Farms

## Our Future Barns in Amagansett



After years of vision and talk and planning we are actually about to build 2 barns . . . we anticipate wrapping up the permit process by the end of 2016.

One barn, to be located adjacent to the orchard within Quail Hill Farm, will serve our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm: a place for storage, tools, equipment repair, meeting and conversation, and curing garlic of course.

The second barn will be tucked away in the northwest corner of our Town Lane field and will serve the needs of those farmers who lease from us presently in Amagansett, and those who are part of the Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative now and in the future.

Wow, what a change! Our modest farmshop, hugged by a strong beech tree, has served us well for 27 seasons! Gratitude to those who have shared in the process and to those who have provided the significant capital necessary to make this happen: We thank you all!



## Digging in to Support the Community

Every year, we are fortunate to have the help of many individuals who dedicate hours of their free time to help us further our work. From serving on Board committees, to undertaking land management tasks to leading workshops and teaching school children, the Trust's volunteers share their expertise in many ways. We thank you all for your support and we'd like to introduce you to a few:

### Joe Lane at Bridge Gardens

At Bridge Gardens, Joe Lane comes weekly to harvest extra produce from the vegetable garden and deliver it to the Sag Harbor Food Pantry on our behalf. Joe started volunteering with us in 2012 after visiting Bridge Gardens and observing the large vegetable garden planted by Garden Manager Rick Bogusch. As someone who also volunteers many hours weekly at Good Shepherd Farm in Bridgehampton to plant and harvest food for local migrant farm workers, Joe clearly has an affinity for helping those in the East End's underserved communities.

Taking his familiarity with their needs, Joe has guided Rick in the planting of vegetables favored by his grateful recipients – including varieties of hot peppers, cilantro, and arugula. "I love nature and gardening and am always amazed at the beauty and variety of the plants growing in Rick's garden. It's really a unique place, and one I enjoy visiting every week. I know I can rely on Rick to provide some of the most delicious vegetables to the community members who visit the Sag Harbor Food Pantry," said Joe.

### Ken and Anne Marie Lyons at the Ag Center

At our Agricultural Center in Southold, Anne Marie and Ken Lyons are often found tending the garden



*Joe Lane with fellow volunteer Glorian Berk*

*"This community garden has become an important part of our life. It teaches us something every year, plus we've made so many new friends."*

plots, watering, weeding, and harvesting vegetables in the Trust's Learning Garden – part of our large Community Garden. They have volunteered with the Trust since 2009 after retiring, and live nearby. Upon their first visit to the Ag Center, they met the Trust's North Fork Stewardship Manager

Denise Markut, and were drawn in by her passion for farming. Anne Marie remarked, "When I came here as a city girl, I knew nothing about farming. Then I met Denise, who is a wonderful teacher!"

Now this dynamic duo spend countless hours from April to November helping around the farm, planting seeds in the spring, transplanting seedlings into the garden to grow, and focusing a lot of time and energy planting and caring for our learning garden. Anne Marie continued, "When we retired, we knew we needed to get out of our comfort zone if we were going to find something meaningful to do. This community garden has become an important part of our life. It teaches us something every year, plus we've made so many new friends. We both really enjoy the exchange of ideas, the social connections, the exercise, and most of all, the fresh produce we pick for dinner!"

*Thanks Joe, Anne Marie, Ken, and all our dedicated volunteers who help us in so many ways – we couldn't do it without you! Interested in learning more about volunteering with the Trust? Contact Kathy Kennedy, Outreach Manager, at 631.283.3195, or email her at [KKennedy@PeconicLandTrust.org](mailto:KKennedy@PeconicLandTrust.org).*





# Through Farms and Fields at Quail Hill Farm

Honoring Margaret de Cuevas and her father John de Cuevas





# Have You Noticed? We're Renovating!



Rendering by Architect John David Rose

After many years of multiple office spaces in the Village of Southampton, the Trust is moving forward to bring our staff under one roof. Our building at 296 Hampton Road is undergoing a renovation that we hope to complete by the fall of 2017. The building, purchased by the Trust in 1995, has housed part of main office staff with the remainder of our staff being temporarily housed in the Lower Level of 300 Hampton Road since 1998. The renovation at 296 will eliminate the jogs across the parking lot on sunny, snowy, rainy days and provide a permanent home for our staff for many years to come!

Looking for us? In addition to our temporary home next door at 300 Hampton Road in Southampton, you can find Trust staff at the North Fork Stewardship Center at 22600 Main Road in Cutchogue as well as at our stewardship centers at Bridge Gardens, 36 Mitchell Lane in Bridgehampton, and at Quail Hill Farm, Deep Lane in Amagansett.

Stop by anytime to see us – and we look forward to welcoming you to our home at 296 Hampton Road in 2017!



**Connections  
2016**



# PECONIC LAND TRUST



296 Hampton Road | PO Box 1776  
Southampton, New York 11969

(631) 283.3195

[www.PeconicLandTrust.org](http://www.PeconicLandTrust.org)

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*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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