

PECONIC LAND TRUST



For immediate release

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PECONIC LAND TRUST ACQUIRES CONSERVATION EASEMENT OF 1.1 ACRE PARCEL, PART OF HISTORIC FARMLAND ON COBB ROAD IN WATER MILL

Property owners Charlton and Nancy Halsey have secured the conservation of an important viewshed in honor of William H. Pierson who operated a dairy on Cobb Road

MAY 5, 2011. SOUTHAMPTON, NEW YORK. John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust, announced the donation of a conservation easement on a 1.1-acre parcel of open space that fronts on Cobb Road and adjacent to Pierson Court in Water Mill. The parcel is part of 19 acres owned by Charlton and Nancy Halsey that was previously owned by William H. Pierson in the first half of the 20th century and operated under the name Suffolk Dairy. The Halsey's decided to place an easement on this property in honor of Mr. Pierson as well as to ensure that a portion of the original farming operation would be preserved forever. The easement protects the properties scenic values by preventing any structures or screening in perpetuity.

"Now anyone traveling down Cobb Road can always have the scenic view that has been there for over 100 years," said Mr. Charlton Halsey, who added that Mr. Pierson's home was directly across the road from the protected landscape.

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“This is a wonderful tribute to Mr. Pierson that protects a glimpse of Water Mill’s agricultural heritage. Dairy farming has all but disappeared from Long Island with the exception of a few small herds for cheese production. This gift of a scenic easement by Charlton and Nancy Halsey is a great credit to them and personally gratifying to me as I worked on their farm while I was in high school,” said John v.H. Halsey.

About the Property

Mr. and Mrs. Halsey have owned the property – 19 acres – since 1948 when they purchased it from William H. Pierson, who was a contemporary of Mr. Halsey’s grandfather. Back in the early part of the 1900s, the Suffolk Dairy was run by Mr. Pierson and his partner Mr. Wallis. At that time, dairy farming was fairly common on the East End, and the Suffolk Dairy in particular was one of the larger operations, with approximately 60 milking cows. The dairy operated on several pieces of farmland in the Wickapogue area, as well as a pig farm on Lower Seven Ponds Road. The valuable cream from the dairy was shipped to New York City by train in special containers surrounded by ice (as this was prior to refrigeration). The surplus milk was believed to be used to feed the pigs down on Lower Seven Ponds. According to Charlton Halsey, the original buildings on the property included a dairy barn and water tower, which were built in 1910. The barn was innovative for its time, with a system of ventilation through tall towers on each wing of the barn that allowed air to flow from the inside area to the outside. Also, an extra feature was cork brick flooring in the stalls for the cows – unusual at the time. The barn was segmented to accommodate not only the milking cows, but young stock (calves), feed (corn silage), hay, and the working horses.

About Charlton and Nancy Halsey

Charlton and Nancy (Conklin) Halsey both grew up in the Southampton area and come

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from multi-generational farming families from the East End. Married in 1947, Mr. and Mrs. Halsey raised two children on the farmstead on Cobb Road, son Lee Halsey, who still lives in the area, and daughter Melanie. Charlton Halsey began farming in 1942 with his father, Reginald, on their original 13 acres. At the height, he farmed 150 acres – 100 of which the family owned. For most of the time, potatoes were the main crop on the farm, with the addition of rye and wheat, which was primarily grown for cover crops; as well raised pick your own strawberries for several years. Today, the Halseys own a total of 40 acres of farmland in Southampton. In addition to the new conservation easement, Charlton and Nancy Halsey have sold development rights on three parcels to the Town of Southampton – two 1-acre building lots on Cobb Road (December 2005), which provide a viewshed into the adjacent farmland, and an 11.5 acre property (October 2003) on Montauk Highway in Bridgehampton adjacent to Little Long Pond, which is currently in nursery stock.

About the Peconic Land Trust

The Peconic Land Trust was established in 1983 to conserve Long Island's working farms and natural lands. Since its inception, the nonprofit Trust has worked conscientiously with landowners, communities, municipalities, partner organizations, and donors, to conserve approximately 10,000 acres of land on Long Island. The Trust's professional staff carries out the necessary research and planning to identify and implement alternatives to outright development. While working to conserve the productive farms, watersheds, woodlands, and beachfront of Long Island, the Trust is also protecting the unique rural heritage and natural resources of the region. The Trust has Stewardship Centers in Cutchogue, Bridgehampton (Bridge Gardens), Southold (Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm and Shellfisher Preserve) and Amagansett (Quail Hill Farm) and its Main Office is in Southampton. *A common misperception,*

however, is that the Peconic Land Trust is the recipient of the monies raised through the Peconic Bay Region Community Preservation Fund (also referred to as the 2% land transfer tax or the Peconic Land Tax). This is NOT the case. The CPF tax is collected by Suffolk County and then redistributed to the five East End towns, the distribution of which is based on the location of the property from which the tax is acquired. For more information about the Peconic Land Trust visit www.peconiclandtrust.org or call 631.283.3195.

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