

PECONIC LAND TRUST



PECONIC LAND TRUST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are land trusts?

Land trusts are not-for-profit, charitable organizations that protect land by working with landowners, communities, and municipalities using a variety of methods including gifts and purchases of land and conservation easements (legal agreements between landowners and land trusts or government agencies that permanently limits the uses of land in order to protect its conservation values).

Land trusts have been active in the United States since the 19th century. Today there are over 1,600 land trusts operating across the country; collectively, they have protected more than 37 million acres from Maine to California.

The Peconic Land Trust is a proud member of the Land Trust Alliance (www.lta.org), a national organization that promotes private land conservation to benefit communities and natural systems. As such, the Alliance serves as the national convener, strategist, and representative of the many land trusts across America.

Who benefits from land conservation?

By protecting our working farms and natural lands, everyone benefits. Conservation allows the farmland owner to continue farming, and landowners to protect the important resources of their lands. The business community benefits because land conservation has a positive impact on local property values, encourages primary and second homeownership in the community; helps build and promote tourism and creates meaningful recreational activities – all while preserving the distinct character of each community.

What kind of land does PLT conserve?

The Trust's focus is on conserving working farms, natural lands, wildlife habitats, viewsheds, wetlands, woodlands, and watersheds that help provide our supplies of local produce and food products, fresh drinking water, and recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors (e.g., hiking trails). Property adjacent to these areas may also be of prime importance as buffer areas that help to maintain the conservation value of adjacent lands.

How is PLT Funded?

Approximately 60% of the Trust's budget comes from charitable donations while the remaining 40% is fee income from planning and stewardship services provided to clients.

A common misperception, however, is that the Peconic Land Trust is the recipient of the monies raised through the Community Preservation Tax (also referred to as the 2% land transfer 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. While PLT often works with local municipalities to facilitate land conservation purchase transactions, the only funds PLT receives is in conjunction with actual services provided (e.g., stewardship programs).

Does PLT work with local municipalities?

The Trust works with villages, towns and Suffolk County to assist in developing and implementing protection programs for working farms and natural lands.

Who are the people involved with PLT?

The Trust staff is comprised of professionals with skills and expertise in protecting working farms and natural lands. Representing communities throughout Eastern Long Island, members of the Board of Directors have backgrounds in planning, finance, business, farming, real estate and management. In addition, Trust volunteers with a vast array of experience and skill work on committees and assist in planning and conducting events.

Is perpetual protection of land guaranteed?

Yes. Through the Trust's Stewardship Program, conservation easements held by us are monitored annually. This program is supported, in part, through contributions from each donor. This fund assures that there will be income to meet our stewardship responsibilities in perpetuity. If for some reason the Trust did cease operation, which is highly unlikely, we have provided for the transfers of the lands and easements that we hold to an appropriate non-profit conservation organization.

What about public access on conserved land?

For protected land that is owned by a private landowner, access to that land by the public is determined by the landowner. On some of these privately held lands, the Trust is able to arrange for educational visits such as nature hikes. Additionally, the Trust does own a number of public trail systems on Long Island.