

PECONIC LAND TRUST



For immediate release

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PECONIC LAND TRUST AND TOWN OF RIVERHEAD END 2006 ON HIGH NOTE WITH NINE CONSERVATION PROJECTS TOTALING 209 ACRES

Since 1983, the Trust has protected over 8,500 acres of working farms and natural lands in conjunction with landowners, communities, and local government; the Town of Riverhead, with the assistance of the Trust, has conserved 1,446 acres since November 1997

March 16, 2007. Southampton, NY. The Peconic Land Trust and the Town of Riverhead completed a successful year of farmland and open space protection – with 209 acres conserved in 2006. The protection of this land was enabled through multiple financial programs, including the Community Preservation Fund (CPF), grants from New York State agriculture markets, and bonds against future projected CPF funds.

“Like most towns on Long Island, Riverhead has felt the development pressures that have forced many of our farmers to sell off their lands. The creation of the Farmland and Open Space Preservation programs has allowed us to help our landowners retain family farms as well as to acquire what little, precious open space there is left. This in turn, we believe, makes Riverhead an attractive place for families and businesses to settle,” said Phil Cardinale, Supervisor, Town of Riverhead.

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In March 2006, Peconic Land Trust coordinated a landowner outreach seminar on behalf of the Town of Riverhead to educate farmers and other landowners about the conservation programs and tax incentives available to them for the conservation of working farms and natural lands. The seminar, which attracted many participants, was seen as an impetus for a number of projects that were completed in 2006; more than 20 additional farm families have submitted applications to sell development rights.

“Through a combination of education and funding, the Town of Riverhead has been able to provide protection of its agricultural heritage and to preserve some of its existing natural lands for future generations. We are extremely pleased to work with the town to help it achieve its preservation goals and look forward to future successes,” said John v.H. Halsey, President of Peconic Land Trust.

On behalf of the Town of Riverhead, the Trust completed seven (7) purchases of development rights (PDRs) on active farmland throughout the town, equaling 189 acres; and three (3) open space acquisitions, equaling 20 acres. To date the Town, with the assistance of the Peconic Land Trust, has conserved more than 1,446.7 acres of farmland and natural lands under the Riverhead Town Farmland Preservation and Open Space Programs. The Peconic Land Trust has worked with the Town of Riverhead to implement these programs since November 1997.

Riverhead Town Purchases of Development Rights:

Harbes Farm Riverhead East, LLC – Riverhead Town PDR (Jamesport)

On behalf of the Town, the Trust worked with Edward and Monica Harbes to protect 27.5 acres of their working farm on Sound Avenue. (April 2006)

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Donahue – Riverhead Town PDR (Calverton)

On behalf of the Town, the Trust worked with Daniel J. Donahue, Jr., to protect 18 acres of his working farm on Edwards and Riley Avenues in Calverton. (May 2006)

Hulse – Riverhead Town PDR (Calverton)

On behalf of the Town, the Trust worked with Herbert Hulse to protect this 26.14-acre working farm between Manor and Middle County Roads in Calverton. (June 2006)

Kujawski – Riverhead Town PDR (Jamesport)

On behalf of the Town, the Trust worked with brothers John and Ray Kujawski to protect 28 acres of this working farm on Herrick's Lane in Jamesport. (August 2006)

Alberto/Tri-State Horticultural Services – Riverhead Town PDR

On behalf of the Town, the Trust worked with Joseph Alberto to protect 20 acres of Tri-State Horticultural Services working tree farm on the Main Road and CR 105 in Riverhead. (October 2006)

Edwards/Delea – Riverhead Town PDR (Calverton)

On behalf of the Town, the Trust worked with Shirley Edwards to protect this 60-acre sod farm located on Edwards Avenue. In October, the Town advanced funds in order to secure the purchase of development rights; New York State Agricultural markets is also contributing grant funds to assist with the conservation. The current leasee, Michael Delea, is under contract to purchase the property from Edwards. (October 2006)

Sharkey/Molfetta – Riverhead Town PDR

On behalf of the Town, the Trust worked with James Sharkey and Monique Molfetta to protect 8.6 acres of their working horse farm, located off Middle Road. (Suffolk County purchased the development rights on an additional adjacent 8.6 acres of the farm in February 2007.) (December 2006)

Riverhead Town Purchases of Open Space:**Adams-Larsen – Town of Riverhead Acquisition**

On behalf of the Town, the Trust negotiated the purchase of 5.9 acres of meadowland north of Sound Avenue in Riverhead. This parcel is one of the larger out-parcels of the 139-acre 4H property. (June 2006)

Goldman – Town of Riverhead Acquisition

On behalf of the Town, the Trust negotiated the purchase for open space preservation of a 4.9-acre property that combines natural lands (1.3 acres) and freshwater wetland (3.6 acres). This property is part of the Sawmill Creek watershed and is located on East Main Street, near Town Hall. (June 2006)

Carter – Town of Riverhead Acquisition

On behalf of the Town, the Trust negotiated the purchase of 9.3 acres, with deeded Long Island Sound access, located north of Sound Avenue in Riverhead. The parcel is also an out-parcel of the 139-acre 4H parcel in Riverhead. (December 2006)

About the Community Preservation Fund and the 2% Real Estate Transfer Fee

In 1998, the five East End towns (East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, Southampton, and Southold) obtained from NY State's legislature the right to bring forward a new real estate transfer tax of 2% on each real estate transaction occurring in these towns. An extensive coalition of farmers, business leaders, environmentalists, realtors, builders, baymen, and civic and community leaders across the region pushed for the creation of this Community Preservation Fund. In 1998, the voters approved a referendum creating the Community Preservation Fund, which is a conservation program to preserve open space and farmland in the five East End townships through

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2020. This fund is financed by a 2% tax on real estate sales. (In 2006, voters in all five townships approved a referendum to extend the collection of the transfer fee from 2020 to 2030). This is a one-time tax that the buyer of real estate is required to pay when purchasing a new or used home or vacant property.

Please note: Many believe that the funds raised by the 2% real estate transfer tax go to Peconic Land Trust for its conservation programs. This is incorrect! The Peconic Land Trust raises its operating budget through charitable gifts and payment for professional services. The 2% real estate transfer fee paid by buyers is collected by Suffolk County and is redistributed directly to the Town in which the property purchased is located.

About 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 farmers, donors, municipalities, and other landowners to preserve over 8,500 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 and Amagansett and its Main Office is in Southampton. For more information about the Peconic Land Trust visit www.peconiclandtrust.org or call 631.283.3195.

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Attachment: Photos of each of the properties; high-resolution images (300 dpi) available on request. Aerial maps of the properties are available on request.