

PECONIC LAND TRUST

CELEBRATING 28 YEARS OF LAND CONSERVATION

VOL. 22, No 1



FALL 2011

Farms for the Future: Trust Initiative Invests in People

Conserving Long Island's working farms is not only about land, but also people. So how do we assure that farmland, once protected, is accessible to those who want to farm it? This is the question the Peconic Land Trust has been working to address through our Farms for the Future initiative. Unfortunately, there are no easy answers or silver bullets.

This issue of accessibility has become of particular concern on the South Fork as the value of farmland—even protected farmland—has climbed far above that which is affordable to most farmers, whether new or established. It has become particularly acute for first generation growers who are looking to farm on a relatively small scale—anywhere from 1 acre to 10 acres.

With the support of our donors, the Trust has begun to identify solutions that help new farm operations get off the ground and established growers to expand their businesses with an eye toward long-term economic

health and stability. These solutions include farmland leases, incubator programs, and sales of land with overlay easements and covenants that limit activities and real estate values (*see sidebar, page 7, for more on overlay easements and covenants*).

"Our Farms for the Future initiative allows us to assure that farmland, once conserved, remains in production and available to farmers. If our communities are going to have viable, productive farms, we must take steps now that go beyond farmland protection. We must assure that both farmers and the business of farming can continue," said John v.H. Halsey, President of the Trust.

The Farms for the Future initiative has received seed support from grants made by the Goldman Family Foundation and Avalon Park & Preserve, Inc. These grants have provided funding for the apprenticeship program at Quail Hill Farm as well as infrastructure improvements at the Deborah Ann Light Preserve in

Article continued on page 6



Photo credit: Ellen Watson

President's Column

It Takes Many Hands



Conserving Long Island's working farms, natural lands, and heritage is a daunting challenge, one that has evolved since 1983 when the Peconic Land Trust was founded. And over the past 28 years, the Trust has evolved as well. Today, thanks to you, we are recognized nationally as a regional organization in the forefront of land conservation.

In our early years, the Trust focused on land protection through conservation planning with landowners, the acquisition of land and conservation easements, and the stewardship of land including monitoring conservation easements. While our work today still includes these core functions, we are engaged in so much more.

We have learned that conservation is not only about land, but also people. The high real estate values of protected land have presented unanticipated problems of access and affordability for our farmers. Thus, if we are to conserve working farms, it is not enough to simply protect the resource – we must also support farming. Our Farms for the Future initiative is designed to address this imperative.

Through our education programs, we provide landowners with practical conservation options. We recently partnered with the Long Island Farm Bureau, Hill, Ullman & Erwin LLP, Cornell Cooperative Extension, FarmNet, and Farm Credit East to enlighten landowners about current

Federal Gift & Estate tax benefits that sunset on December 31st, 2012. Our Connections program enhances a conservation ethic as we connect people of all ages and backgrounds to the land and the bounty it holds.

Together with the Land Trust Alliance, the American Farmland Trust, and others, we pursue legislation at all levels of government that promotes conservation. Whether confronting the ongoing federal estate tax issues facing landowners on Long Island, or supporting New York State's Environmental Protection Fund, or assisting Suffolk County or Towns with conservation acquisitions, we are fully engaged with the public sector.

From oceanfront in Southampton to a shellfish hatchery in Southold, from beech forests and our Quail Hill Farm in Amagansett to farmland and Sound frontage in Riverhead, from a historic property on Shelter Island to an apple orchard in Northport, with your help we will continue to protect lands that have defined Long Island's history and rural heritage.

We could not do this work without the many supporters and partners who believe in our mission. Conserving what we know and love for our communities now and in the future is truly the work of the Peconic Land Trust. None of this could happen without you—thank you for making it possible! Indeed, it takes many hands!

Trust Welcomes New Members to the Board of Directors

Every October, the Peconic Land Trust holds its Annual Meeting when new members of the Board of Directors are elected and outgoing members are thanked for the time and service they have devoted to the organization.

It is with tremendous gratitude that the Board and staff offer their heartfelt thanks to outgoing Board members Barbara Brush Wright, Stephen Weir, Julie DeBold and Douglas W. Campbell IV. They have benefited the organization with their experience, talents, and perspectives for many years. Their presence on the Board will be missed, but we look forward to their continued involvement through Trust committees and events in the future.

We are pleased to welcome to the Board Jane Iselin, Joseph Townsend and Richard Hogan. Two of our new members—



Jane and Joe – are veterans having served on the Trust's Board of Directors from 1995 to 2007 and 1987 to 1994 respectively. Rich, who is joining the Board for the first time, has been an active member of our Projects Committee. We look forward to their participation throughout the organization!

The Trust is also pleased to announce that John S. Norbeck will take the reins as Chair of the Board for 2011/2012. Nancy

Gilbert, who was co-chair with John last year, will be assuming Treasurer duties for this coming year. Hilary Leff, who joined the Board in 2010, will be new Vice Chair, Hatsy Drescher will continue as Secretary, and Brian McCaffrey will take on the position of Assistant Secretary.

The Trust is fortunate to have an incredibly engaged and enthusiastic Board of Directors. Thank you for all your energies and guidance in support of the Trust's mission. ■

Gift and Estate Tax Changes Offer Opportunities to Landowners until December 31, 2012

High real estate values on Long Island mean that owners of farmland and natural lands are often faced with the prospect of onerous estate taxes. There has been a concerted effort on the East End by farming and conservation organizations—including the Peconic Land Trust—to enact tax reform in order to prevent farms from being broken up or sold due to, or in anticipation of, the federal estate tax. Congress recently enacted estate and gift tax legislation that provides opportunities for farmers and other landowners to pass land to the next generation with a reduced tax exposure. **But these tax changes are only in effect until December 31, 2012, and now is the time for landowners to carefully consider their options.**

Federal Gift Tax Changes: Beginning January 1, 2011, individuals can give up to \$5 million (or \$10 million per couple) free of gift tax. Gifts over \$5 million will be subject to a 35% tax rate, and the \$5 million exemption is reduced by gifts made in prior years.

Federal Estate Tax Changes: The estate tax was reinstated with a \$5 million exemption, 35% rate, and stepped-up basis for all assets included in the estate for estate tax purposes.

For decedents dying in 2010 and before the date of enactment, the estate can elect to pay no estate tax in favor of the carryover basis rules, with an allocation of \$1.3 million of basis step-up and an additional \$3 million for assets passing to a spouse.

These changes in tax law have the potential to significantly benefit landowners, and it is not too early to start planning. All landowners are urged to immediately consult their legal and tax advisers to see how these significant, but temporary, changes could be applied to their specific situation. ■



Photo credit: Christine Kraft

The 2011 Annual Fund... Let's Conserve More Together



Photo credit: Jeff Heatley

acres critical to our lives and livelihoods. However, our work is far from done.

With your ongoing investment in the Trust, we will continue to work from a pragmatic, problem-solving perspective to ensure a future that includes working farms, fresh local produce, safe drinking water, cleaner and more productive bays, new recreational opportunities, buildings and landscapes indicative of our history, and more—all of which sustain our local economy.

Please help us realize our full potential by contributing generously to our 2011 Annual Fund. Your gifts are critical to assuring that we have the human and financial capital to conserve what we know and love on Long Island, including a professional staff with the experience, talents, and creativity necessary for success. **Our goal is to raise \$1.6 million by December 31, 2011.**

With your generous contributions toward our Annual Fund, the Trust has worked with landowners, local government, partner organizations, and communities to protect **over 10,000**



Photo credit: Barrett Hawes

If you have already made a gift to the 2011 Annual Fund, thank you for your confidence in our work! If you are willing and able, please consider asking a friend or neighbor to **match your Annual Fund gift**. The broader the base of our support, the more we can accomplish!

Thanks again for your support! Please do not hesitate to contact Rebecca Chapman, our Vice President of Philanthropy, if you have any questions about our work and the Annual Fund. ■

Annual Fund Sponsors

Every gift, regardless of size, is critically important to our Annual Fund. All of us at the Trust truly appreciate every dollar that we receive and recognize that people give to the best of their ability. Among our Annual Fund donors, there is a group who contribute \$1,000 or more. We recognize these donors as "Sponsors" and we are pleased to report that this category of supporters has been growing over time. In 2010, we had 166 Annual Fund Sponsors. We hope to exceed that number in 2011! Thank you all for your support!

Conservation Accomplishments

2011 Conservation Projects Offer Diversity Across the Region

Farmlands, viewsheds, historic properties, woodlands, and wetlands hallmark a successful year of conservation partnerships with landowners, local government, and the Peconic Land Trust this past year. The Trust works on a large range of conservation projects. If you have ideas of conservation opportunities in your community, please contact Peri Grandone, Director of Conservation Programs at 631.283.3195 or PGrandone@PeconicLandTrust.org.

In February, **Charlton and Nancy Halsey** donated a **conservation easement on a 1.1-acre building lot in Water Mill** to the Trust, creating a permanent viewshed toward protected farmland on Cobb Road in honor of William H. Pierson who operated a dairy on the property in the early 1900s. This represents the third farmland preservation project completed by the Halsey family in cooperation with the Trust, all of which permanently protected working farmland in the Water Mill and Bridgehampton area, home of some of the richest agricultural soils in New York State.



acre farm parcel on Hedges Lane. The land had been donated to the SFLF, a supporting organization of the Trust, in the 1970s with all its rights intact. A newly created one-acre lot is the site for the farmhouse. The remaining **9.79 acres of farmland have been protected** with conservation restrictions in perpetuity. The home was sold subject to a façade easement, thereby permanently protecting its character.



The White family of Sagaponack, a multi-generational farming family, has been working with the Trust for a number of years to plan the future of their farm. As such, the Trust was very pleased to accept the donation of an **overlay easement in August on a 3-acre parcel of conserved farmland on Bridge Lane**. The original easement on this lot, purchased by the Town of Southampton in 2006 with the help of the Trust, allowed for the construction of agricultural buildings. This new overlay easement eliminates this right, thereby further protecting the rich agricultural soils, and enhancing the conservation efforts of the family to date.



In May, the **Corrao family** conserved **seven acres of natural lands on Granny Road in Medford** when the Town of Brookhaven purchased the land with the assistance of the Trust. The conservation of this woodland parcel adds important acreage to the existing Overton Preserve. As a future trail head and parking site, the parcel will improve the public's access to the Town's growing trail system.



In August, the Trust assisted the Town of Southold in the **conservation of nearly 29 acres of working farmland on Horton Lane**, owned by the Estates of **Joseph M. and Julia D. Conway** along with **Joseph A. Conway**. The Conway family lands will

remain actively cultivated as the Town is re-selling the conserved agricultural lands to a local farmer, subject to an easement that eliminates the right to develop on all but a 2-acre area where the existing home, barn and accessory structures stand.

In September, the Trust sold the **Percy Hedges farmhouse in Sagaponack**, a four-square-style home built in 1930 and slated for demolition in 2009. It had been most recently occupied by the Barsczeski family. The Trust partnered with the South Fork Land Foundation in the creation of a one-acre building lot carved from a 10.79-



Concerned over the impact of development on the fragile ecology of the **Bridgehampton Moraine and nearby Great Swamp**, **Dolores Zebrowski** conserved a **6.7-acre woodland building lot** in late September. The Trust

closed on the property through a bargain sale transaction with Dolores and immediately sold the property to Suffolk County. This acquisition brings the total acreage of land conserved by the family to nearly 125 acres in the Bridgehampton Moraine, lands that sit directly over the sole source aquifer that provides clean drinking water to eastern Long Island. The Trust is very pleased to have been a part of this project, and looks forward to continuing our strong working relationship with this conservation-minded family.



Also in September, **Dede Gotthelf** successfully conserved nearly **14 acres of woodland situated on the Peconic River in the Riverside** section of Southampton Town, land that is included in the New

York State Wild and Scenic Waterways priority area. Working in partnership with the Trust, Ms. Gotthelf generously donated five building lots and sold one lot in a bargain sale conveyance to the Trust. Similar to the Zebrowski project, the Trust subsequently sold the property to Suffolk County. Ms. Gotthelf retained ownership of 2 additional lots and will be exploring future development plans that will benefit the Riverside community.

Three conservation easements were donated to the Trust this fall over properties on Chauncey Close, Cove Hollow

Farm Road and Ruxton Road, **adjacent to Georgica Cove** in the Village of East Hampton. The easements permanently protect **7.46 acres of natural habitat in brackish tidal**



marsh and successional maritime forest, old field and shrubland ecological communities, prohibiting vegetative screening and landscape activities except for the management or enhancement of natural habitat or the prevention of public hazards. The easements will contribute significantly to the scenic vista of these cove-front remnants of the former Cove Hollow Farm, as well as to protection of the health of Georgica Cove and Georgica Pond and of important habitat for numerous mammals, birds, turtles and other wetland species. ■

The Many Forms of Planned Giving

A planned gift to the Peconic Land Trust is a great way to conserve Long Island’s working farms, natural lands, and heritage for generations to come. In addition to leaving a legacy, a planned gift can also benefit you and your heirs financially. For example, a planned gift by bequest may provide tax-saving opportunities by lowering the value of a taxable estate thereby reducing estate taxes to be paid by heirs.

Planned gifts can take many forms and can be as simple as including the Peconic Land Trust in your will or naming the Trust as a beneficiary of an insurance policy, retirement plan, or certificate of deposit. Regardless of the kind of planned gift you choose, you will direct your dollars to conservation rather than taxes, simplify your estate plans, and perhaps even increase your income. We will work closely with you and your advisors to discuss the planned giving options that best meet your needs and fulfill your philanthropic wishes.

We hope you will consider leaving a legacy to the Trust and your other favorite charities. For more information, please contact Rebecca Chapman, our Vice President of Philanthropy.

Planned Gift Profile: Susan Gullia

In 2009 Susan Gullia transferred her home in Amagansett to a Revocable Trust that names the Peconic Land Trust as beneficiary. Susan’s interest in our work began by reading our newsletters and similar



materials. She then became a contributor, she has noted, “in a small way.” Susan has since become a consistent donor to our Annual Fund, an active participant in Trust events, and a member of our Philanthropy Committee. She is also an ambassador for the Trust. As the coordinator of tours to Long Island for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, she has made the National Trust aware of our conservation work, and included us in activities and presentations. We are honored by the trust and confidence that Susan has placed in us through her support and participation, and, of course, her planned gift.

Why the Peconic Land Trust ... reflections by Susan Gullia

“When I moved from Bluff Road in Amagansett to my present location on Hawk’s Nest Lane, ten years or so ago, I wanted to create something there that would be lasting in the way of an arboretum and to that end brought in various large specimens and mapped out the land to support this idea, and then it struck me, that Peconic Land Trust was now a big presence in and around Amagansett, and I wondered if they might be interested in accepting my house and land to use for their purposes, whatever they might be – so we went to work, and I am thrilled to say, that when I feel that I must leave the property I now know that it has a future with a steward that will care for it and use it well, and that makes me very happy.”

“It seems to me almost impossible to think of Long Island without thinking about Peconic Land Trust and the work that John Halsey and his wonderful team have done over what seems forever, but in fact, is a very short time, to protect the land and farming community from being destroyed on this very fragile island that is home to so many of us.” ■

Farms for the Future *Continued from front cover*

Amagansett and the Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm in Southold, making more land productive through deer fencing and irrigation. The end result has been the Trust's ability to put more of our available farmland into the hands of new small-scale farm operations as well as established growers.

"By continuing and expanding the Farms for the Future initiative through overlay easements, leases, an incubator for startup agricultural operations, apprenticeships, and other related programs, we are trying to ensure that Long Island's agricultural industry remains viable and sustainable for generations to come," said the Trust's Project Manager Stephen Searl.

Mentoring, Networking & Community

A distinctive offering of the initiative has been to connect new farmers with mentors. The Trust has a long history of nurturing new farmers through its apprentice program at Quail Hill Farm. The apprentice program, now in its 21st year, has trained more than 100 individuals in sustainable agricultural practices; and currently we know that at least 30 past apprentices are still active in farming, community gardens, or food security throughout the US and Canada.

Thanks to additional funds through grants, our mentoring activities are expanding beyond our Quail Hill Farm and the guidance provided by Scott Chaskey, its Director. North Fork Stewardship Managers Dan Heston and Denise Markut, and Project Manager Stephen Searl are all providing guidance to farmers who are leasing land from the Trust as well as to others in the community with regard to networking, services, farmland availability, and troubleshooting.

Many of the farmers we work with have pointed to our staff, as well as others including the Fosters in Sagaponack, the Daytons in East Hampton, and the Lees in Southold, as providing invaluable advice and insights

that only experience can bring, particularly with regard to weather, soil, disease, and pests.

"When our CSA experiment began 22 years ago, we were fortunate to receive good counsel and mentoring from the Halseys of the Green Thumb, the Osborns, and the Foster family. Our farm fields and our community are more fertile because of their generosity," said Scott Chaskey. "With support from our entire community, we are now able to build upon this generosity and to assist young people who have a passion for this work. In this way, we are part of the solution to keeping Long Island's rich agricultural history vital and thriving."

But it's not just the mentoring relationships that have been meaningful to the farmers leasing land from the Trust; it's the connections with their peers—the other farmers working on Trust land, the growing community of small-scale farmers working throughout the East End, and the public who has grown to appreciate their crops and support their businesses. At the Ag Center, an informal weekly pot luck involving farmers from throughout the East End has grown organically. The community as a whole has provided many, including those without deep ties to the area, with a support network bound together by a shared commitment to farming.

Another benefit of the initiative mentioned by farmers is the vision shared with the Trust of making farmland available for agricultural production. This common purpose provides a foundation for partnership—something that is not always achievable through leasing with private landowners.

The Farms for the Future initiative is a work in progress, adaptable based on lessons learned by Trust staff and guidance from similar programs elsewhere as well as the changing needs of the farming community. It would not be possible without the generous support of our donors through our Annual Fund as well as specific grants and gifts for this purpose.

The following are profiles of some of the first generation farmers the Trust is working with today.



Objectives of Farms for the Future

- Keeping conserved agricultural land actively farmed
- Creating opportunities for farms to start and expand their commercial agricultural operations
- Promoting the diversity of farming and farmers on Long Island
- Supporting and developing food production farming
- Ensuring that these properties stay available and affordable for farmers

Balsam Farms: Hyper Local

By the time he was 12, Alex Balsam had already caught the farming bug. Spending summers on the East End, Alex became an unofficial apprentice at Quail Hill Farm and was farming his own 1-acre plot during his summers in Amagansett. Today, Alex and his business partner Ian Calder-Piedmonte, are farming just down the road from Quail Hill, on 10 acres at the Deborah Ann Light Preserve on Town Lane. Balsam Farm has been on this site since 2004, and today the pair farm here as well as in East Hampton and Sagaponack on a total of 50 acres.

Their farm stand on Town Lane has become a popular destination for the community in and around

Affordable Farming Covenant and Resale Restrictions



In recent years, sales of protected farmland to non-farmers on the South Fork have been as high as \$200,000/acre, raising the average value of protected farmland to about \$100,000/acre –

well beyond the reach of the vast majority of farmers. In addition, non-farmer sales at inflated values have dramatically increased the value of protected farmland for federal and New York State estate tax purposes, truly onerous for “land rich, cash poor” farmers.

In 2011, the Peconic Land Trust initiated a new tool—the Affordable Farming Covenant and Resale Restriction—that can be applied to protected farmland as an overlay easement and enables the value of the protected farmland to be lowered to its “agricultural value” due to the following:

- Subsequent sales of the further restricted farmland are limited to a predetermined value consistent with comparable sales exclusively to farmers plus appreciation tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the value of any agricultural improvements added to the property;
- The Trust is the purchaser of last resort if the owner is unable to find a farmer to purchase the restricted farmland;
- It is required that the Trust approve all future sales to ensure that the restricted farmland is purchased by a qualified farmer.

The Trust recently applied this tool in the re-sale of the Hopping farmland in Sagaponack to Jim and Jennifer Pike in early 2011; the tool was subsequently used by Jeff White who voluntarily donated an overlay easement with similar restrictions on a 20-acre farmland property also in Sagaponack that was previously conserved through the

Amagansett, and the pair have expanded their retail business to include farmers markets (in 2011 they participated in six markets from Southampton to Montauk) and a CSA box distribution business. In addition to their retail customers, Alex and Ian are also focusing on growing a wholesale business supplying local restaurants—they have 20 regular customers and an additional 10 to 15 they supply periodically through the season.



Article continued on page 8

sale of development rights to the Town of Southampton in 1986. In the case of the White and Pike properties, the overlay easement further reduces the value of the land through the following:

- equestrian use of the property is prohibited;
- if the farmland is fallow for two years, it must be kept available for agricultural use and managed subject to a Natural Resource Conservation Plan;
- if the farmland is fallow for three years, the Trust has the right to lease it to another farmer to ensure that it remains in agricultural production.

In the case of the Pike property, the overlay easement further restricts the property such that at least 60% of the farmland must be in food production.

“The resale of the Hopping property and the White donation have provided the Trust with the opportunity to adapt techniques used in other states to ensure that protected farmland remains in agricultural production and affordable to farmers in the future. Resale restrictions and overlay easements may also be invaluable to farmland owners who seek to reduce the value of their land for estate tax purposes. If we don’t think outside the box, we may not only lose the farmland, but the farmers themselves,” said John v.H. Halsey, President of the Trust.

It is important to note that the use of the Affordable Farmland Covenant and Resale Restrictions is not appropriate in all circumstances. Indeed, they represent another technique in the toolbox and their appropriateness in any given situation should be carefully considered in the context of the goals, needs, and circumstances of landowners. Under the right circumstances, however, they may be critical to keeping farmland affordable and productive for generations to come.

To learn more about the Pike and White parcels, visit our website at www.PeconicLandTrust.org.

Farms for the Future Continued from page 7

For Alex and Ian—who met at Cornell University—future growth is tied to being able to support their local customers with a broader diversity of product. “What we are growing is for the local market; we aren’t going into New York City, Nassau or even Western Suffolk. We see the need and opportunity to grow here and it’s nice to know that there is market growth available to us,” says Ian.



For more information visit www.balsamfarms.com.

Invincible Summer Farms: Seed Saver



Photo credit: Randee Daddona

Stephanie Gaylor is a one-woman powerhouse advocating for what some consider a lost art in farming, seed saving. Stephanie’s Invincible Summer Farm – the name comes from an Albert Camus quote: “*In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.*” – is dedicated to growing heirloom vegetables, primarily tomatoes and peppers, from seeds she saves herself from previous seasons

or trades/buys from a network of seed savers from around the world. Stephanie doesn’t rely on any of the published directories but a growing network through reference that has been expanding through technology – phone, email, and Skype – and that is honed in the winter months between growing seasons.

For Stephanie, the benefits for growing on Long Island include the proximity to the ocean and the NYC markets – but that comes with a high cost of land. For her, a huge help would be the growth of distribution networks that could help bring the products to the city markets as well as expanded education on the benefits of locally grown foods to increase the demand.

“Farming is absolutely critical to who we are as people. Today, most people are so far removed from the food system that it has become an abstraction. Education is the key to retention as well as better infiltration of local produce into the food system. As farmers, we need to lead in the education process,” Stephanie said.

For more information visit www.invinciblesummerfarms.com.

Amber Waves Farm: Farming with an Education Purpose



Katie Baldwin and Amanda Merrow, who met as apprentices at our Quail Hill Farm in 2008, seem like lifelong friends. It’s their comfortable style with one another—and their shared philosophy—that has made their partnership at Amber Waves Farm a glowing success in just three seasons. Amber Waves Farm is situated on the farm fields behind the Amagansett Farmers Market, farmland that is managed by the Trust for its owner Margaret de Cuevas, who acquired the farm and the market in 2008. What made their proposal stand out was their focus on being an educational farm, and that they would include education in all three pillars of their business plan: to their shareholders in their community supported agriculture program, to the community through their organic wheat project that has reintroduced wheat production on the East End, and to the local schools with educational programming, the passion and interest for which was born of their experience as Quail Hill apprentices.

“We consider ourselves and our farm a product of the land trust. The apprentice program was our first real farm experience, and we spent the summer thinking of what type of farm operation we could run,” said Katie.



“The idea of Amber Waves was grown from all the field trips that came to visit Quail Hill and our getting to know the local teachers and kids. We saw that food education—whether through schools, a CSA or our wheat project (*how it’s grown to how bread is made*)—could fit together well; and those three pillars have become the foundation for the farm,” added Amanda.

For more information visit www.amberwavesfarm.org.

For more information on the Peconic Trust’s Farms for the Future initiative, please contact Project Manager Stephen Searl at 631.283.3195 or SSearl@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Browder's Birds: 2nd Career with a Focus on Making a Difference



Chris Browder wanted a change. Having spent 20 years in finance, Chris was looking for a new challenge—maybe one even that would allow him to combine his background

in finance with conservation. A summer apprenticeship at Garden of Eve in Riverhead, “where I was probably the oldest apprentice of all time,” included work with livestock, which led him to farming pasture-raised chickens for meat. Following the example of Joel Salatin, who raises livestock on his Polyface Farm in VA using holistic methods, Chris and his wife Holly started Browder's Birds at the Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm, where they rent space in the Center's barn, as well as 4.75 acres of pasture and another 1/8th acre for processing. Now in its second full year, they have found a market here on the East End for their birds and pastured eggs, which are sold through their own CSA as well as at farmers markets in Greenport and Westhampton Beach.

Going forward, their plan is to create a full-service product line around their chickens—from the meat, to rubs that are being created by Holly for grilling and roasting, to additional laying hens for more eggs and a market garden of vegetables to complement the birds. The meat chickens, the pasture and the processing have all been designated certified organic, and practically all of their waste is recycled within the process. Challenges remain including securing the birds from predators and the labor demands of pasturing and processing.



All of which makes for a pretty expensive cost of production—and a bird that costs between \$6 and \$7 a pound at market. “I think we are used to cheap food in this country, but cheap food isn't necessarily healthy food. Our products are more expensive, but many people are willing to pay for the exceptional quality, taste and texture of our birds. We're also local, so our customers know us and we build personal relationships with many of them.”

For more information visit www.browdersbirds.com.

Sunset Beach Farm: Childhood Mentor Takes on New Role



Jon Wagner and his partner (*on the farm and in life*) Karin Bellemare are starting a new life together here on the East End, where Jon grew up. After graduating

from Green Mountain College in 2009, while most of their friends were focused on getting “good” jobs in the city, Jon and Karin had one focus: make money during the Hamptons' high season to get their dream off the ground, Sunset Beach Farm. That singular purpose, to make a life on a farm, continues to drive them. “Our lifestyle is pretty one-dimensional,” said Karin, without a note of irony or regret, but rather pride in what they've been able to accomplish.

Jon and Karin met in college, and while farming floated in and out of their future plans, it wasn't always their focus. For Karin, a summer internship at an organic farm



in Connecticut between freshman and sophomore years nearly convinced her that farming couldn't be a career—and she changed her major to environmental business to give herself a broader education. But raising chickens, ducks and seedlings (*in their campus housing no less*) as well as the energy the college's town emanated toward local food and sustainability, motivated them back to farm life.

To get them ready, Jon reached out to a childhood mentor, Scott Chaskey (*who coached Jon in soccer when he was 10 and 11*). “I told him I wanted to learn about farming, and he invited us over,” says Jon. By the spring of 2010 they were ready to start, first with a one-acre plot in North Haven on Jon's family's property, and later adding two acres in Amagansett adjacent to Quail Hill Farm. Their farm operation (*which is based on biodynamic growing practices and incorporates companion planting based on Rudolph Steiner's farming methods*) supports both a CSA and farmers markets in Amagansett and Westhampton Beach, and includes 30 egg layers (chickens), as well as tomatoes, greens, dry beans, potatoes and a large variety of vegetables, including Karin's favorite: carrots.

For more information visit www.sunsetbeachfarm.net. ■

School Connections Flourish Through Gardening



A critical component of the Peconic Land Trust's mission is to connect people to the land around us through education. The Trust staff from Quail Hill Farm and our Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm provide engaging and lifelong learning programs to

communities on Long Island. Here are a few of the innovative programs currently underway:

The Roots Program

Quail Hill Farm and SUNY Stony Brook are partnering on The Roots Program, a two-year old initiative that takes good nutrition out of the classroom and brings it to people in need within Suffolk County through community gardening. Acting as a consultant to the program's founder—Dr. Josephine Connelly, Assistant Clinical Professor of Family Medicine—Quail Hill Farm Director Scott Chaskey has provided transplants to the 11 gardens now in production, including a rooftop garden at Stony Brook Hospital and at raised bed gardens at the Tuckahoe School and on the Shinnecock Reservation. Iman Marghoob, the Gardens Coordinator, works with coordinators at each of the gardens to assist the participating families.

Not only has Scott visited the gardens to offer his advice, but the coordinators and dietitian interns have also visited Quail Hill Farm to better understand the growing process. Following a recent visit to Quail Hill Farm, Dr. Connelly wrote Scott: "To watch and listen to you go about the daily/seasonal activities with such purpose and liveliness and excitement is thought provoking and really inspires me to want to do more in this area—connecting people with land and growing food for their health, for their emotional well-being, and sense of connectedness to each other and for taking care of the land itself. Our partnership is really making a difference in the lives of people and I really look forward to our continued work together!"

At the Ag Center at Charnews Farm, a number of education based programs have also incorporated the farm into their programming. These imaginative initiatives are managed by North Fork Stewardship Manager Denise Markut.

Avalon Environmental

Students from the Avalon Environmental Stewardship Program, supported by the Paul Simons Foundation, have visited and worked at the Ag Center since 2008, helping to establish the community garden and learning garden plots as well as other activities centered on reinvigorating the farm. The goal of the program is to offer youth an opportunity to experience the outdoors in new

ways. According to Kathy Griffiths, Director for Avalon Park & Preserve, "We are deeply appreciative of our continuing partnership with the Peconic Land Trust. By opening the doors of the Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm, the Trust has become a true ally in our quest to bring kids back to nature." To date, more than 35 students have participated in Avalon programs at the Center.

Elementary School Programs

In 2010, Denise Markut and Outreach Manager Kathy Kennedy met with the Principal and teachers at Southold Elementary to discuss the creation of an educational field trip program designed around the farm and local food production for 4th and 5th graders. The on-site program, developed by local retired school teacher Peg Dickerson, and taught by two certified teachers hired by the Trust, teaches history and science with a hands-on component and prepares students for New York State testing.

In the spring, the 4th grade classes take a tour of the Center and learn about the history of agriculture on Long Island and why our conservation efforts are so important to the farming community, the agricultural economy, and life on Long Island.

The second section of the program focuses on the Center's Learning Garden, modeled after the Native American "Three Sisters" tradition that inter-plants corn, beans, and squash. Students learn about seed germination, photosynthesis and how these three crops support one another. Next, they plant potatoes in preparation for their return visit to the Center as 5th graders. In the fall, the 5th graders learn more about the potato crop and its history and relevance to Long Island agriculture. They harvest the potatoes they planted and learn how to make potato chips. After each lesson, students have their lunch on the farm and play old fashioned farm games.

The program has received strong support from the Southold Elementary school teachers and Principal; and recently, in the fall of 2011, the 5th graders visited the farm for their potato harvesting.

Another innovative program taking place at the Ag Center is "Read a Recipe," designed and supported by Mary Jo Weinig and the Weinig Foundation. This program, with 3rd and 5th graders from Greenport and Orient, is a partnership with the Floyd Memorial Library, and is designed to combine literacy with nutrition. The Trust hopes to grow all of the educational programs at the Agricultural Center and work with other local schools in the future. ■



Partnerships Bring Culture, Food and Family Fun

Throughout the year, the Peconic Land Trust offers a variety of programs and activities that seek to engage the community with the people and places that make the East End of Long Island a wonderful place to live and visit. Here is a sampling from our 2011 Summer Season:

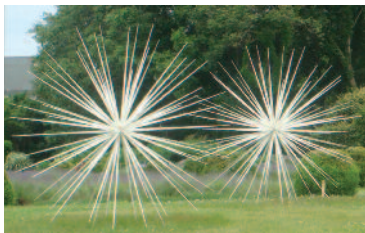


The Friday's at Six Music Series at Bridge Gardens, now in its third season, brought out the young and the young at heart to listen to local talent, share culinary treats, and enjoy the summer days in this garden oasis.

Local musicians including the Bridgehampton School Marimba Band, Charles Certain Duo, Alfredo Merat, the Southampton String Ensemble, Jim Turner, and Joe Hampton and the Kingpins made this a memorable season.

Uncommon Ground II

a curated sculpture exhibition, graced the grounds of Bridge Gardens for the second year. Under the direction of curator Cheryl Sokolow, the works of 11 nationally and internationally recognized artists magically blended with the garden's vibrant plantings. The 2011 roster of sculptors included: John Van Alstine, Kevin Barrett, Lila Katzen, Alexander Krivosheiw, Herbert Mehler, Norman Mooney, Caroline Ramsersdorfer, Peter Rosenthal, Michael Enn Sirvet, Isobel Folb Sokolow, and Zoetrope.



Thank you to 2011 Bridge Gardens corporate sponsors: Maran Corporate Risk Associates, BNY/Mellon Wealth Management, Macy's, Hildreth's Department Store, Marders, Channing Daughters Winery, B. Smith's, and C. Whitmore Gardens.



For the second year, the Trust's Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm in Southold hosted two special events: a Barn Dance and Family Day. The Barn Dance, featuring caller Chart Guthrie, brought energetic community members to the farm to dance to traditional American music as the sun set over the Center's farm fields.

Family Day, a partnership with the Southold Mothers Club and 4EC, gave families the opportunity to spend the day on the farm. Attendees learned about where our

food comes from with Slow Food East End, interacted with farm animals courtesy of Tabbethia Haubold of Long Island Livestock Company, watched a birds of prey demo with the Quogue Wildlife Refuge, enjoyed pony rides, storytelling and family music, and took part in a variety of arts and crafts, games and seed planting activities.



This August, Tuesday evenings in Amagansett was a time to meet the local farmers who are working land owned or managed by the Trust in the community for "Souper Tuesdays." Eli Zabar and Devon Fredericks of the Amagansett Farmers Market hosted and created soups from vegetables grown at the farms: Quail Hill Farm, Balsam Farm, Sunset Beach Farm and Amber Waves Farm. The farmers joined us, along with the folks behind the new Amagansett Food Institute and Michael Cinque of Amagansett Wines and Spirits, who organized tastings of wine from local vineyards, including Palmer and Wölffer.

The artists of Plein Air Peconic once again brought their talents to bear on the protected land on the East End with two beautiful shows at Ashawagh Hall in Springs this year as well as a mini-show at our annual Through Farms and Fields benefit. Their work continues to shine a wonderful spotlight on our communities' conserved landscapes. The artists of Plein Air Peconic are: Kathryn Szoka, Ellen Watson, Gordon Matheson, Casey Chalem Anderson, Michele Margit, Joanne Rosko, Aubrey Grainger, Gail Kern, Susan D'Alessio, Tom Steele, and Eileen Dawn Skretch. ■



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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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