

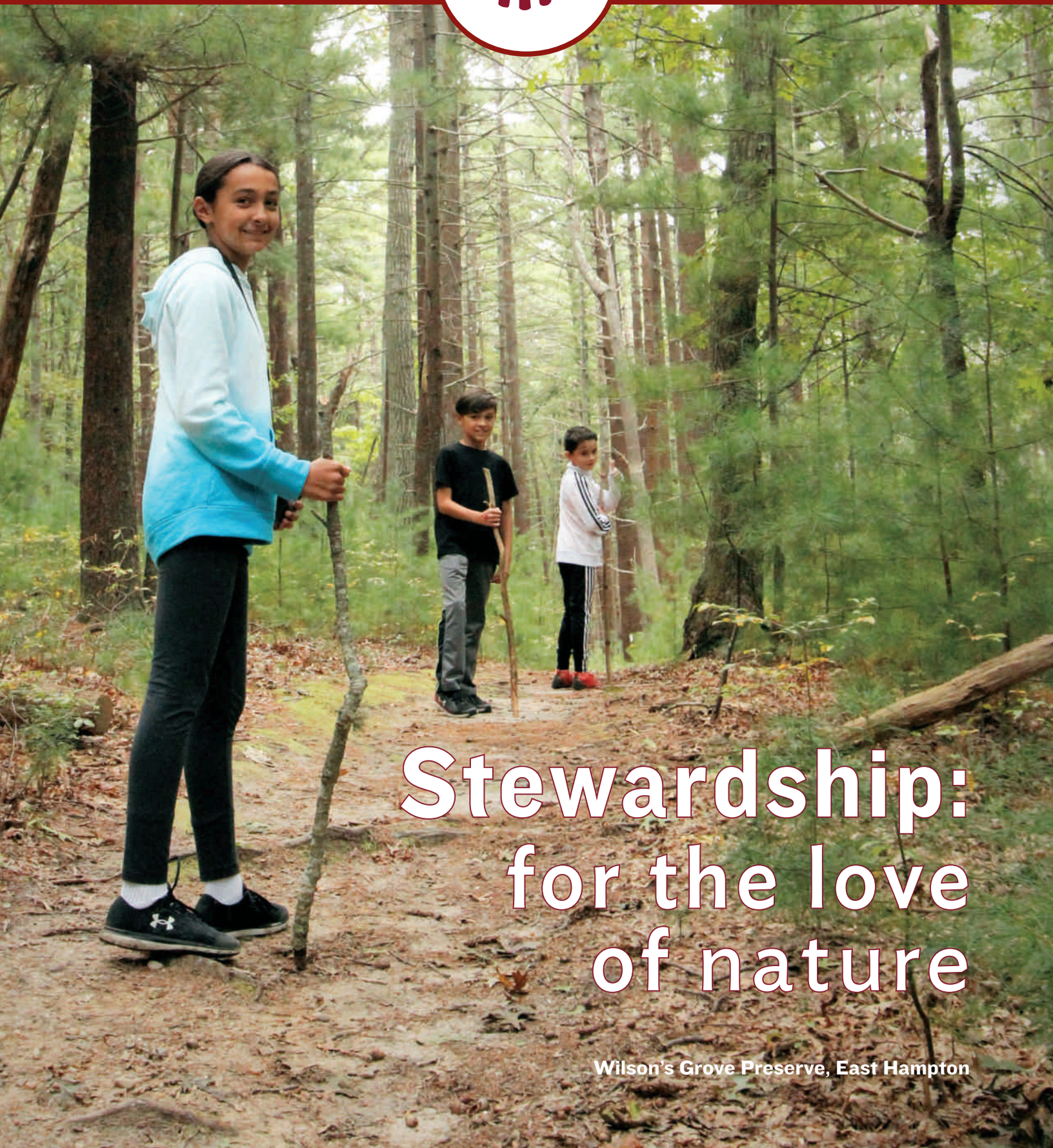
PECONIC LAND TRUST

CELEBRATING 36 YEARS OF LAND CONSERVATION

Vol. 30, No. 1



Fall 2019



Stewardship: for the love of nature

Wilson's Grove Preserve, East Hampton

A Message from our President

It is hard to believe that the Holidays are once again upon us! The summer flew by, but a memorable event was Through Farms & Fields on August 4th when we honored Senator Kenneth P. LaValle and Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr., for their commitment to conservation and community. It was an incredible evening hosted by the Wesnofske family at their farm.

As in years past, your generosity has made our work possible, and for that, we are all eternally thankful! Because of you, we have conserved over 13,000 acres of working farms, vibrant woodlands, critical watersheds, sensitive wetlands and shorelines, historic resources, and so much more that not only define this place, but also protect the land and water that sustain us. But this is just the beginning of the story – we have a perpetual stewardship responsibility not only at the Trust, but as a community of the whole.

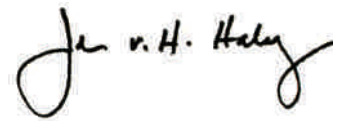
This responsibility is to steward the land and water around us. These resources are finite and precious, and under continued threat even if protected from development. The recent easement violation that we are confronting in Amagansett is a case in point. We will forever defend the conservation purposes for which land has been protected – this is a critical aspect of stewardship.

There is a long tradition of stewardship on Long Island that began with the Shinnecocks and other native

people who revered and maintained this land for thousands of years before our forebears landed on these shores. Today, we too bear this responsibility at a time when the challenges have never been greater due to relentless development, traffic, population, pollution, and climate change, to name but a few.

Together we must be vigilant to ensure that what we have protected stays protected given the trust that has been placed in us as an institution and a community. Stewardship has always been a component of the Trust's work, but an increasing amount of the resources that you provide us will be devoted to this purpose in the coming decades.

Thanks again for making it all possible! I wish you and yours the very best during this Holiday Season!



Senator Kenneth P. LaValle with John v.H. Halsey and Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr., at 2019 Through Farms and Fields

Peconic Land Trust Achieves Accreditation

At this year's national land trust conference in October, the Peconic Land Trust and the South Fork Land Foundation joined the growing list of organizations that have received accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA).

Accreditation provides third-party verification that a land trust meets high standards for land conservation, stewardship and nonprofit management based on specific indicator elements from Land Trust Standards and Practices, first published by the LTA in 1989.

We are excited to share this news with you!

To learn more about accreditation, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org.



Our Friend Joe



This past August, we lost a great friend of the Trust and of the East End. Joe Townsend passed away after battling ALS. He is deeply missed by everyone whose lives he touched.

Joe's contributions to the North Fork were many. He was a conservationist, businessman, athlete, historian, traveler, and family man. He worked closely with the Trust on many conservation projects and was an effective advocate of our work for over 30 years, serving two terms on our Board of Directors.

One of the last Trust projects Joe worked on was the preservation of Edwards Farm in Orient Point. In 2018, with Joe and his friends in attendance, a plaque was dedicated in his honor at the farm.

Currently, the plaque is located at the trailhead off the main road. But by spring of 2020, we'll move it to

a newly created natural access and viewing area on the south side of Edwards Farm. This viewing area, which has beautiful vistas across Little Bay, will be open to visitors.



"Joe was passionate about many things, including saving land," said Timothy Caufield, a senior advisor to the Trust. "His love for the East End was an inspiration. His care and diligent guidance will be dearly missed by all of us."

For information on the viewing area and Edwards Farm, please contact Amanda Abraham at AAbraham@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Farms for the Future

Building the Soil for a Healthier Planet: Cover Crops

Keeping the soil productive takes a team. Thanks to your support, we have partnered with the soil scientists at Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Suffolk County for the past three years on cover crop trials at the Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm in Southold.

Each year we plant any resting acreage at our Ag Center with different cover crops based on the recommendations from CCE. These trials allow us to see what cover crops grow well in our area. The outcomes help us provide good advice to the local farming community.

Cover cropping is an important practice that can provide many benefits, including improving soil health, preventing soil erosion, managing nitrogen production, and suppressing weeds. For winter cover, most importantly, it uses up the excess nitrogen from summer crops, which helps to keep nitrogen from going into the ground water.

This year's trials consisted of 14 different varieties and mixes with a range of planting dates starting in April for Spring and Summer cover and going into October for Fall and Winter cover. Of the Spring/Summer varieties we tried this year, the two that grew the best

were the sunn hemp and the mix of sorghum sudangrass and sunn hemp.

For the Fall/Winter trials, we have planted regular rye, a rye/vetch mix, triticale, yellow mustard, oil seed radish, medium red clover, and a mix of oats, peas and hairy vetch. During last year's Fall/Winter trials, the crop that did the best was rye, the traditional choice for Long Island cover crops, as it is fast growing and can be planted into October.



Have questions about our cover crop trials? Connect with Land Steward Brendan Minogue at BMinogue@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Congratulations to all!

Ag Center farmland lessees **Sang Lee Farms** and **Deep Roots Farm** have received the **Slow Food East End's Snail of Approval** seal! The seal, previously limited to restaurants, was expanded to farms in 2018. The first three recipients are **The Green Thumb Organic Farm** and **Sang Lee Farms** in 2018 and **Deep Roots Farm** in 2019. To learn more visit www.SlowFoodEastEnd.org





The Challenge of Stewardship

With your help, and thousands of others, the Peconic Land Trust has

conserved over 13,000 acres of productive farms, vibrant woodlands, critical watersheds, sensitive wetlands and shorelines, and historic resources. We have accomplished this in concert with landowners, communities, partner organizations, government at all levels, and you.

This land, in turn, impacts the quality of soil and water that life itself depends on. How land is used and managed over time, whether by the Trust, our public partners, or landowners, is what we mean by stewardship.

Indeed, preventing land from being developed marks the beginning of our perpetual stewardship responsibilities. Ultimately, our greatest challenge is to ensure that conserved land remains protected for the purposes it was protected in the first place.

In addition to managing land in our care, including its restoration and accessibility to the public, we must also monitor and enforce restrictions on privately-owned land upon which we hold conservation easements, and we must do this forever. This is the challenge of stewardship.

As such, land trusts across the country are restoring wetlands, forests, and fields, providing people with access to trails, garden plots, and nature itself, protecting land from encroachments by others, and enforcing the restrictions of conservation easements. But we are not alone.

Public Programs and Private Conservation

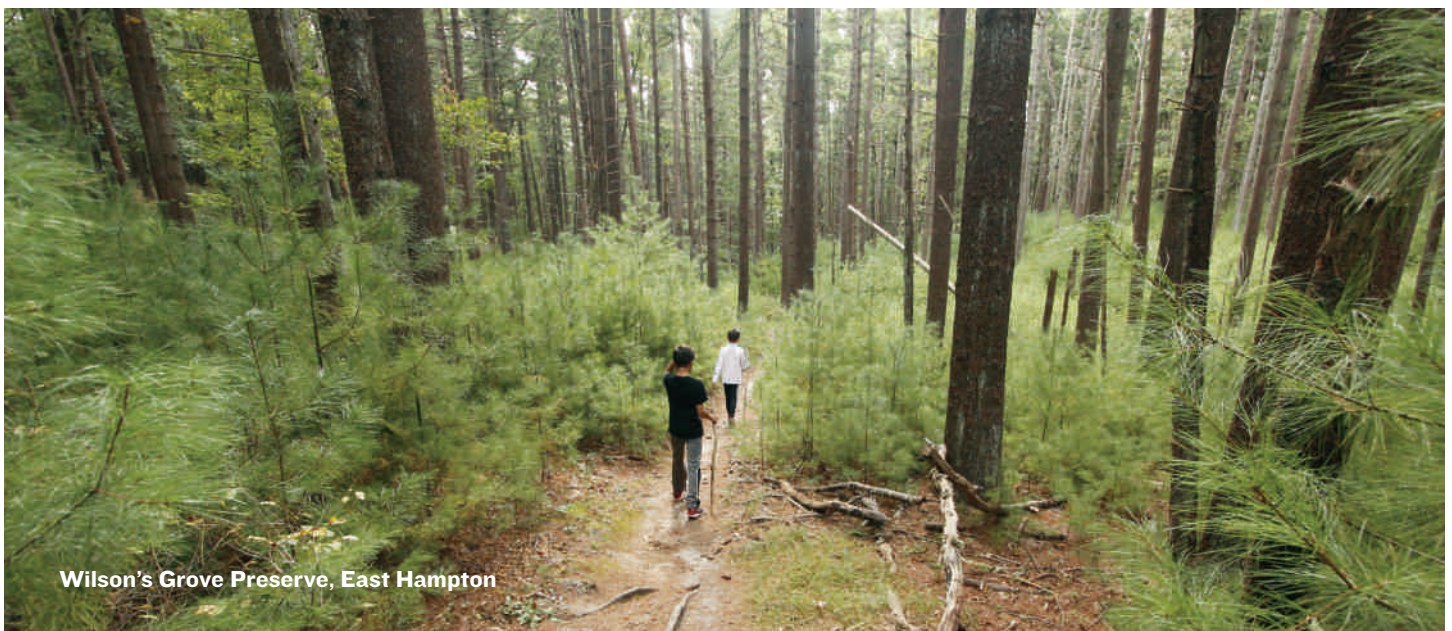
Beginning in the 1970s, New York and Long Island have led the way in groundbreaking public conservation programs, including: the *Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Program* (1974), *Town-based purchase of development rights and open space programs* funded through local referenda (1980s & 1990s), the *Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program* (1988), the *Pine Barrens Preservation Act* of 1993, the New York State *Environmental Protection Fund* (1993), and the five East End Town's *Community Preservation Fund* (1998).

These programs have provided much of the capital in Suffolk County to protect tens of thousands of acres.

Working in concert with the Peconic Land Trust (1983) and other private conservation organizations, our public partners have been able to leverage extraordinary amounts of public funds with private dollars.

The Trust has literally brought millions of dollars to such efforts raised from communities and local residents like you. Using our revolving fund, we have pre-acquired threatened land on behalf of our public partners because we can act more quickly.

In addition, we have often been the first point of contact with landowners in the acquisition process because we are trusted and take into account their needs, goals,



Wilson's Grove Preserve, East Hampton

and circumstances as they consider the future use, ownership, and management of their land.

The synergy of public programs and private conservation efforts continues to conserve all that we know and love. But with our success, we also share the challenge of stewardship.

A New Era

This time is like no other. Everything we have on Long Island is finite and under continued threat even if protected from development.

Stewardship, the use and management of land over time, is the prevailing and perpetual challenge that the Trust and our public partners face. Once land is protected from development, we all have a responsibility to ensure that it remains protected and is managed appropriately given its conservation values. This includes preventing encroachments by others as well as the monitoring and enforcement of thousands of conservation easements held by Suffolk County, its Towns and Villages, the Trust and other private conservation organizations.

Our collective conservation accomplishments over more than 45 years represent an extraordinary public and private investment that requires trust, vigilance, and action in order to meet the challenge of stewardship.

We cannot do this alone – you, too, play an important role in the stewardship of all that has been protected. In addition to supporting our work, you are our eyes and ears. As a community, we must watch over the land that has been protected so that everyone can assure that it remains protected forevermore. We must also care for the land and water in ways that will sustain the resources critical to the health and wellbeing of people and all living things, for the love of nature, and life itself.

Interested in continuing the conversation or assisting with conservation monitoring? Contact our Director of Stewardship Matthew Swain at MSwain@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Your Gift Matters

Your gift to the Annual Fund helps protect our working farms, natural lands, and agricultural heritage. Without your support, our work would not be possible.

Thank you.



Giving is easy!

Simply return the enclosed gift envelope, or visit us online. Consider a monthly gift and join our Peconic Partners giving program.

www.PeconicLandTrust.org/give
Call us at 631.283.3195 or email us at:
Info@PeconicLandTrust.org

Lands under Stewardship: Peconic Land Trust

Many of the lands we have protected end up in public ownership or private hands subject to conservation easements held by our public partners or the Trust.

The Trust has the perpetual responsibility for conservation easements and preserves that have been donated to, or acquired by, the Trust since 1983 from Nassau County to the East End:

129 Conservation Easements = 3,007 acres
91 Preserves = 1,363 acres

How We Care for Land and Water & How You Can Make a Difference

- Developing comprehensive management plans for preserves
- Mowing fields
- Planting cover crops
- Removing invasive vegetation
- Restoring landscapes
- Creating and maintaining trails
- Teaching sustainable land management techniques
- Leasing land to farmers growing food



- Be our eyes and ears in the community
- Adopt sustainable, low-impact lawn and garden practices
- Sign up for an energy audit for your home and/or business
- Buy local and support our farmers and tradespeople
- Stay informed and lend your voice: participate in your local government
- Be water conscious
- Reduce, reuse, recycle, and upcycle

Staff Spotlight

Denise Markut

Senior Manager of Stewardship

Kathy Kennedy

Senior Manager of Outreach

“

Many years ago, on the North Fork, I was a young aspiring farmer with a great passion for the

land, my community, and the Community Supported Agriculture philosophy of sharing the harvest.



My grandparents were farmers in Vermont and it was always my dream to be a farmer too. I received my BS in Agriculture from UConn, and worked for 10 years growing food and livestock. In 1995, I decided to create the first CSA on the North Fork. I grew 200 crops for 45 families and loved the work and the close-knit community that was forming.

But I was struggling. I was a single mom raising three small boys. Running the farm alone made it difficult to meet the financial responsibilities at hand each Winter. At that time, there were no programs like the Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative to help new farmers succeed. Eventually I had to let go of my "farm dream."

I came to work at the Peconic Land Trust and now I'm the Senior Manager of Stewardship. I've worked with the Trust for 20 years and have had the most amazing adventure.

We've created the Farms for the Future Initiative so new farmers don't have to go it alone like I did. It provides affordable farmland leases, mentoring, infrastructure, safety training, and equipment.

I've blazed miles of trails on natural lands and worked with countless school groups. I've been able to use my passion and expertise to teach others how to grow their own food and connect with the land in a very humble but beautiful and fulfilling way – gardening.

Thank you for coming on this journey with me by supporting the Trust. You make all our work possible!

”

“

Growing up in Hampton Bays, I spent much of my free time immersed in nature. I never

knew how lucky I was. I rode my bike to the beach to swim, snorkel, dig clams, fish for snappers, and collect shells. I explored the woods looking for Indian pipes, scented wintergreen leaves, and Lady Slipper orchids. I became fascinated with birds – spying on the lives of cardinals, chickadees, robins, and blue jays with my binoculars.



These experiences had a huge impact on me. And they're a major reason why I have worked at the Trust for 21 years, helping to conserve what we all know and love.

As the Trust's Outreach Manager for the last 15 years, it brings me joy to re-create these types of experiences for you and your family through our Connections programs. There's nothing better than seeing the look of joy on a child's face when they pet a goat for the first time, pull a seine net out of the water teaming with marine life, or explore a woodland trail and find a feather from a red-tailed hawk.

Taking time to slow down and connect with nature is so important in our busy lives. Thanks to you, we're able to offer more than 50 Connections activities a year for people of all ages!

I invite you to join me to experience your own peaceful breathing space. I hope it brings you joy.


”


Thank you Denise and Kathy for all of your hard work and dedication!

Have any questions for Denise or Kathy? Feel free to reach out to Denise at DMarkut@PeconicLandTrust.org, and to Kathy at KKennedy@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Local Growers Invest in Commitment to Quality: NYS Grown and Certified

We have some great news to share. Funding through the New York State Grown and Certified program – which provides support for agricultural and aquaculture producers who enroll in the statewide program – has started to flow on Long Island. Since the Trust announced that \$500,000 was available for food safety-related projects through a block-grant program open to Long Island growers:

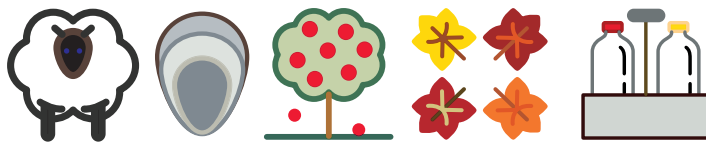
 **9** applications have been approved

4 have received reimbursements 

Applicants can request up to \$50,000. The reimbursement is for 90 percent of their project cost.

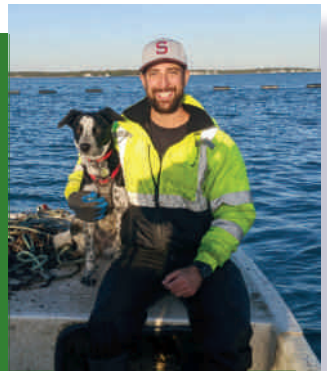
New York State Grown & Certified is a statewide, multi-faceted food certification program designed to:

- strengthen consumer confidence in NY products,
- address food product labeling, and
- assist NY farmers so they can take advantage of the growing market demand for foods locally grown and produced to a higher standard.



Commercial oyster cultivation enhances water quality and promotes sustainable blue-green economic opportunity on the Peconic Bay – one of eastern Long Island’s greatest natural resources. With the support of NYS grants we’re able to make critical investments in aqua-farming equipment that strengthen consumer confidence in locally grown seafood.

— Joseph Finora,
Hampton Oyster Company



The program is available to growers of produce, dairy, shellfish, eggs, beef, poultry, pork, goat, sheep, maple products, and beverage ingredients, as well as wild harvested seafood for producers and processors, and food and beverage processors (non-dairy, non-alcoholic). The Trust administers the cost-share grant on behalf of NYS Dept. of Ag and Markets on LI.

Interested in learning more? Contact Josh Halsey, Program Coordinator at JoshHalsey@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Water Quality

Because of You:

Sagg Pond can have a healthier future

In 2019, local residents contributed \$224,000 to make Sagg Pond healthier.

Through the outreach efforts of the Peconic Land Trust and the Stony Brook Foundation, over a dozen donors contributed to the Foundation to support a research study by Dr. Christopher Gobler of Stony Brook University.

The 4-year study will provide guidance to the Southampton Town Trustees who are responsible for managing Sagg Pond and its cut to the ocean. The cut allows periodic flushing of the pond, which dilutes contaminants and improves water conditions for crabs, fish, wetland vegetation, wildlife, and people.

Dr. Gobler’s study will provide scientific data as the basis for a water quality improvement project plan for Sagg Pond.

The funds raised by the community are being matched by \$182,000 from Southampton Town. The Town is tapping its Community Preservation Fund, which in 2016 was extended to include water quality projects.

Thank you for helping us make a difference.

To learn more about the Sagg Pond study as well as other efforts to improve the quality of our local ponds and bays, contact Amanda Abraham at AAbraham@PeconicLandTrust.org.



THROUGH FARMS & FIELDS

A COUNTRY SUPPER IN CELEBRATION OF OUR LOCAL BOUNTY
SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2019



Scenes from the 2019 celebration
at the Wesnofske's *Ocean View Farm* in Bridgehampton
honoring the conservation commitment of
Senator Kenneth P. LaValle and Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele, Jr.



Historic Case House: Helping Farmers Succeed

Thanks so much to everyone in the community who has shown their support of the Case House.



Your contributions have enabled us to move the Case House to Cleo's Corner (Horton's Lane and Route 48) in Southold. We've also completed a new septic system and foundation.

But the move was only the beginning. Now we need to restore the house!

The historic Lt. Moses Luther Case House was donated to the Trust last year. We were so excited to be able to preserve this piece of our heritage. Since the original part of the house was built in 1747, there is much work to be done to make this into a family home. It will need new electric and plumbing, and we'll update or add bathrooms and a kitchen. Once completed, we hope to find a farmer who can lease the home and surrounding 5-acre farm field.

The farmer would then have an affordable home overlooking fields they farm, streamlining their work and expenses. And as part of the Trust's *Farms for the Future Initiative* at Charnews Farm, they would also have direct access to mentoring and equipment.

This initiative is a groundbreaking effort designed to give new farmers a helping hand. In addition to mentoring and equipment, it provides affordable farmland leases, infrastructure, and safety training.

We need your help to complete this restoration. Please support this effort by making a gift today.

Interested in learning more or making a donation? Visit us online at www.PeconicLandTrust.org/CaseHouse or contact Alison Delaney at ADelaney@PeconicLandTrust.org.



Historic Preservation Easements

Besides preserving our working farms and natural lands, an important part of the Trust's mission is to work with donors to preserve our heritage for future generations.

Along with the current Case House project, we have protected a number of historic properties on Long Island, including:



Wines - Gilbert Homestead

2001: Wines-Gilbert Homestead in Jamesport (circa 1800s)

2006: The Danby House, Wading River (circa 1700s)



The Danby House

2009: The Timothy Halsey House, Water Mill (built 1790)

2012: The Ward and Reybine Houses in East Marion (circa 1900)

2012: Hedges Farm House in Sagaponack (built 1939)

2015: The Sleight House in Stony Brook (built 1880)

2019: The Light House in Sag Harbor (circa 1885 -1900)



The Sleight House

To learn more about our historic preservation efforts, please contact Melanie Cirillo at MCirillo@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Garden Happenings

Now in its 11th year, Bridge Gardens continues to flourish, thanks in large part to your support and the support of our many wonderful members.

Without question, the Gardens would not be as lush, inviting, and showcasing seasonal changes without the careful love and attention provided by **Garden**

Manager Rick Bogusch. Rick has been managing the garden since its donation to the Trust in 2008.

Supporting Rick this year was **Rashawn Gant** who did a superb job helping ensure the beauty of the garden continues to amaze you all year long.

With its expanded focus on native, pollinator, and wildlife-friendly plants, and low-impact, sustainable practices, Bridge Gardens offers a place to learn as well as relax. We welcomed numerous groups for



tours and self-guided visits this year, including **Southampton Chamber of Commerce**, cyclists with **Vermont Bicycle Tours**, **Massapequa High School's** Adult Ed program, **Southold Garden Club**, **Long Island Herb Society**, and the **Nathan Hale Garden Club**.

Local summer camps visited for nature-based experiences, including campers from the **Children's Museum of the East End** and **SHINE Hamptons**. SHINE Hamptons campers enjoyed decorating a full-sized birdhouse, created and installed at the Gardens by volunteer **Fred Foelsch**.

With programming ranging from our annual spring lecture series, vegetable gardening workshops, organic rose and lawn care classes with **Paul Wagner**, to Friday music nights and wine tasting-and-tours with local wine makers, we hope you've enjoyed your year with us!

Now is a great time to renew or purchase your annual membership, or give one as a gift. Call or visit us online today at www.PeconicLandTrust.org/BridgeGardens.

The Community Gardener Experience:

Barbara and Peter Himler

“Our first season at Bridge Gardens was bountiful. We kicked off our year with an early spring lecture by Rick Bogusch. Rick expertly advised the gathering on where to purchase seeds, which veggies to grow and when, and which organic fertilizer works best. We ordered most of our vegetable seeds online, which ambitiously included sugar snap peas, Shiseido peppers, haricots verts, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, Brussels sprouts, carrots, kale, basil, spinach, arugula, and romaine lettuce. The lettuces, peas and beans were first in the ground in April. Others followed shortly.

Twenty years ago, while on a family trip to northern Italy, we purchased some local arugula seeds. We recently rediscovered them and they too made it into the rich Bridgehampton loam, producing surprisingly delicate peppery leaves all summer long. We also caught a *NY Times* story about Wild Boar Farms, a Napa Valley farm that

bred unusual tomato varieties. This prompted another online seed order with names like “Cosmos,” “Blue Beauty,” Yellow Furry Boar,” and “Barry’s Crazy Cherry” some of which still linger on our vines in October.



We could not have been more pleased by our 10' x 20' plot's prodigious output, thanks in part to Rick and his team's watchful eye. We still savor those sweet and crispy snap peas, the fried, ricotta-stuffed zucchini flowers, the soy sauce-coated and grilled Shiseido peppers, and the Italian arugula and kale salad! We have every intention of taking it to the next level in 2020.

”
Thank you Barbara and Peter for being part of the Bridge Gardens community. Have questions about the Community Gardens? Contact Kathy Kennedy at KKennedy@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Guests Flocked to our 2nd Annual Birdhouse Auction



Hundreds of people visited Bridge Gardens over the summer months to view and bid on 34 beautiful, creative and funky birdhouses. This year's exhibition featured the work of 27 talented designers, builders, painters and sculptors and offered something for everyone. With opening and closing receptions, bidding was strong and provided welcome financial support for the work of the Trust and Bridge Gardens! Planning is already underway for next summer's 3rd annual exhibition.

If you are an artist interested in joining the fun, please contact Kathy Kennedy at KKennedy@PeconicLandTrust.org for more details.



Bridge Gardens

36 Mitchell Lane | Bridgehampton NY
www.PeconicLandTrust.org/BridgeGardens

In Celebration of Scott & Layton

After nearly three decades of tending the land at Quail Hill Farm, inspiring generations of farmers and families in the love of land and locally grown food, Scott Chaskey will be retiring from the Peconic Land Trust at the close of the year. We'll miss Scott's wisdom and generous nature at the farm everyday. It's hard to put into words how much Scott means to all of us, so we will leave it with a simple **THANK YOU SCOTT!**



Here is a secret revealed. Seven years ago, when I served on the Board of Sylvester Manor, Shelter Island, I was part of the team that interviewed an eager, young candidate for the Farm Manager position, one Layton Guenther, fresh from the Sustainable Agriculture course at Santa Cruz.

I sensed a kindred spirit, a lover of the music of the soil. I

was patient and proper in my role; when another candidate was chosen for that Manor job I invited Layton to apply for a similar position at Quail Hill Farm. A number of us at the Trust saw the process through, weighed the questions and answers, and we invited Layton to join us in the fields in 2013.

We have worked together in the fields for 6 years and counting, and I know that most of you are familiar with the transition, but still, isn't it kind and just to WELCOME! Layton to the role of Director of Quail Hill Farm.

Please take a moment to read Scott's "One More Letter" below. We know you will be as inspired as we are.

Welcome Layton

And please join us in Welcoming Layton Guenther as the new Director of Quail Hill Farm. Over the past few years, Scott has been working with Layton for a successful transfer of leadership at the farm.



The following is an excerpt of Scott's letter to the community this summer:

One More Letter, by Scott Chaskey



the East End Farmer

“Thirty years ago upon our return to the U.S., after living for ten years in England, my father-in-law invited me to a Saturday meeting in Amagansett of an agrarian experiment handsomely named Community Supported Agriculture.

Bill King and Connie Fox, my artist-in-laws, were part of the original 10 families that formed the first CSA in New York state, **Full Circle Farm**, in Bridgehampton. Full Circle became **Second Circle**, and when **Deborah Light** donated 20 acres of land to the Trust, Second Circle became **Promised Land Farm**, with seventy or so families participating.

John Halsey, always innovative, recognized the value of a community farm on conserved land, and for fifteen years or more we were the only land trust in this country to embrace the marriage of the two. From the little house on Jagger Lane four of us (the Peconic Land Trust team at the time) discussed preservation, field fertility, seeds and crops, machinery, and fostering community. Renamed again (discovered by Deborah on a vintage map), the roots of **Quail Hill Farm** began to spread.

Over the years, inspired by my work in the fields, I have written scores of letters to our farm members.

Here is an excerpt from 18 May, 1996:



And when the fields are fresh and greeeeeeen... is the phrase I've used to answer the blackbirds and catbirds this spring. I am recalling the voice of a master of the meadows, my great friend Edgar Wallis, who mentored me on the cliffs of the Penwith peninsula overlooking Mousehole, Cornwall. He would pass our cottage on Love Lane each day on his way to the "mountains" to plant or cultivate or pick violets, the winter flower.

We worked together in the steep meadows above the sea, turning the dark soil by hand, as he taught me the use of the long handled Cornish cliff shovel and the songs of the male voice choir ("...heard in London and on the BBC..."). Raised in a family of fisherman, he was proud to claim his independence: "I took to the land!" Returning at dusk from meadow work he would often plunge hands into the fuchsia hedge, and through parted branches impart a few final sweet notes to us in the garden below. Then the hedge would close and in the damp air a shadow figure, often holding two baskets of violets, would shout: "I'm off!"

Now at the close of 2019 I offer this, from a book in progress, a chapter entitled "Inexhaustible Ways of Seeing:"

In his meditative essay, "The Tree," the English novelist John Fowles observes that "Achieving a relationship with nature is both a science and an art, and beyond mere knowledge or mere feeling alone..."

I have been lucky to begin and end each day in a room embraced by an elegant beech tree (2nd floor, Quail Hill Farm office), and I suppose my daily work—the practice of agriculture—can be a very good way to approach such a relationship, primarily because one is exposed to what Nature is made of: sun, soil, water, wind, roots, stems, flowers, seed. But so often the sense of purpose, intrinsic to agriculture—something I have praised for many years, now having found it—can also obscure what may be purposeless in Nature, at least in the sense that we use that word.

The natural world, the whole substantial pageant (to borrow from Shakespeare) if it exists for a purpose,

that purpose is not solely ours to order or to legislate, and to achieve an enduring relationship requires an openness to both the seen and the unseen.

Many times daily I rub shoulders with the beech tree that hugs our farm shop as I pass going outward to our nearby fields, or going inward to my desk. For centuries beech bark was used by scribes for writing tablets. Sheets of bark tied together became some of our first books: the Anglo-Saxon 'bec' and German 'boche,' root words for the beech tree, are intertwined in meaning with the word 'book.' Beech is a synonym for literature.



The Swiss psychologist Carl Jung wrote that life itself is like a plant that "lives on its rhizome." What is above ground may last only a single season, but beneath the soil surface, "underneath the eternal flux," the rhizome endures.

It is time for me as a writer and seedsman to "tune in" to the rhizome. For years I have given attention to growing food on conserved land to nourish a community, and you in turn have nourished me with words, yes, and with your faith and support for conservation and for regenerative agriculture (the new term): building fertile soil.

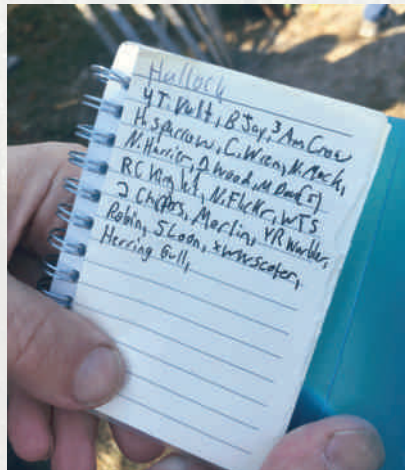
At the close of this year, in the damp December air on this other peninsula, holding (in spirit) a basket of violets, I will celebrate what together we have learned. With gratitude and a smile I acknowledge: I took to the land! And in harmony with the cycles of the seasons, and a reverence for soil, seed, rain, and sea (and the work before us), I leave you with a shout:

"I'm off!" Thank you.

*These are just a portion of Scott's letters. We invite you to read them in full at:
www.PeconicLandTrust.org/QuailHillFarm*

Connections





Thank you to everyone who joined us for Connections 2019!

Photos, page 14, left to right: experiencing Bridge Gardens, learning about poultry from the friendly folks at Browder's Birds, birding at Dam Pond, starting seeds at Quail Hill Farm, beach seining in Hampton Bays, looking for ladybugs at Quail Hill Farm. kayaking Sagg Pond, a woolly friend at Hallockville Museum Farm, transplanting leek seeds at Quail Hill Farm, leaf printing at Bridge Gardens' Autumn Open House, low-maintenance lawn at Bridge Gardens, enjoying the farm tour at Sang Lee Farms. Photos page 15, left to right: hiking at Cranberry Bog, look who we found at Sebonac Inlet, bouquet arranging at Quail Hill Farm, garden tour at Bridge Gardens, clearing the seine net at New Suffolk Waterfront, fall tree pruning at Summerhill Landscapes, cucumbers at Sang Lee Farms, birding list from the bluff hike at Hallockville, a quiet moment at Cranberry Bog, paddle break at Northwest Harbor.

Over the past year, we are Grateful to our . . .

Supporters at all levels for joining us in looking towards a future that values the working farms, natural lands, and the heritage we all share.

PECONIC LEGACY CIRCLE

Peconic Legacy Circle members have let us know their intention to remember the Trust in their estate planning. Legacy gifts are among the most meaningful ways to ensure that Long Island's beautiful beaches, clean water, working farms, majestic woodland and pristine wetlands will be protected for generations to come.

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Through Farms & Fields

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2019

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PECONIC LAND TRUST

Quail Hill Farm
Community Supported Agriculture

AT THE COMMON TABLE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2019

Quail Hill Farm, Amagansett

Sponsor:

The Hilaria and Alec Baldwin Foundation

Chefs & Winemakers:

Jason Weiner | Almond Restaurant
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and thanks to ...

Julie, Dan, Chloe, Vance and Mae Resnick, Meegan Chaskey, Peter Cobb, Kevin Coffey, Debbie Geppert of Bostwick's Catering, Nancy Goell, Ronnie Grill, Madelaine Haberman, Greg Kessler of The Hoppy Acre, Susan Malfa, Kathleen Masters, Jack Mazzola of Jack's Stir Brew, Heather Meehan, Katie Mellow, Montauk Brewing, Deborah Nevins, Jon Rose, Maxwell Ryan, Michael Sprung, Rand Stoll, Summerhill Landscapes, and Carissa Waechter.



PECONIC LAND TRUST

Bridge Gardens

A special thanks to our 2019 Partner, Patron, Benefactor level Bridge Garden's members:

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Help Us Spread the Word

While 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 goes directly to the Town in which the property purchased is located.

Thank you for your help!

If you are interested in learning more or supporting the Trust, please contact:

Director of Development, Amanda Abraham, at 631.283.3195 or AAbraham@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Remembering John de Cuevas

“He was authentic and true, an inspiration,” John v.H. Halsey wrote to *The East Hampton Star* in remembrance of our friend, John de Cuevas, who passed away on November 29, 2018. Our thoughts go out to John’s many friends and family, especially his wife Sue and daughter Maggie.

“John loved the East End, its land, and those who worked the soil. He silently and selflessly pursued his passion in a myriad of ways including the preservation of treasured woodland in North Amagansett as well as the support of local producers and local food,” added John.

His passion and commitment to protecting our agricultural and natural resources for future generations was evident in his many years as an active member of Quail Hill, founding of the East End Food Institute and support of new farms, including Amber Waves Farm.

In remembrance of John and his extraordinary gifts to the community, Quail Hill Farm’s poet farmer

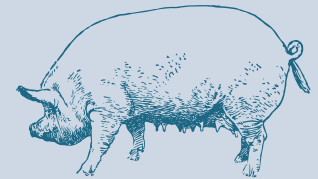
Scott Chaskey sat down and wrote a “*A Letter to John.*” We all miss John’s spirit and passion for farming, food, and life.

The following is a short excerpt from Scott’s letter.



A letter to John

I’m thinking of you today, missing you, as I walk through our Amagansett fields, the fields we know equally well, if from a slightly different perspective. So it seems best to write, to greet you with words, something else we know equally well, from a shared perspective, and my thoughts are enlivened by the landscape you were moved to settle in, to celebrate, and to preserve...



To read Scott’s letter in full, please visit www.PeconicLandTrust.org/johndeCuevas



AT THE COMMON TABLE SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2019



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF COMMUNITY FARMING AT QUAIL HILL FARM

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Mission Statement

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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