

For immediate release

Contact: Yvette DeBow-Salsedo

631.283.3195 / 646.284.8028

**“GROWING FARMERS”
NEW DOCUMENTARY CHRONICLING
THE PECONIC LAND TRUST’S WORK WITH FARMERS ON LONG ISLAND
GETS FESTIVAL PREMIER AT THE
HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 7**

A “Conversations with...” panel moderated by food writer Laura Donnelly, with Director and co-Producer Michael Halsband, co-Producer Hilary Leff, local chef Bryan Futerma, and the Trust’s Director of Quail Hill Farm Scott Chaskey, will be held on Monday, October 8 at Rowdy Hall in East Hampton.

September 28, 2012. Southampton, New York. John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust, is proud to announce that *“Growing Farmers,”* a new documentary film that looks at the issue of affordable farmland and the Trust’s Farms for the Future Initiative has been selected by the Hamptons International Film Festival for screening during its 20th Anniversary season. The film is co-produced by Hilary Leff (*who is also the Trust’s Vice Chair of the Board*) and Director Michael Halsband, in conjunction with the Peconic Land Trust. The film tells the stories of several farmers who are leasing land either owned or managed by the Peconic Land Trust in the face of one of the greatest impediments facing farmers on Eastern Long Island.

“We are so proud of the film Michael and Hilary produced regarding our work with farmers here on the East End,” said Trust President Halsey. “Access to affordable farmland is certainly a real challenge to farmers – both those new to agriculture as well

as those who are looking to expand their existing operations. The Trust is committed to identifying solutions to this issue, along with others, which threatens working farms on Long Island and beyond. The stories told in the film highlight the challenges and opportunities that all farmers face.”

Not only does *Growing Farmers* includes conversations with farmers who are leasing conserved land from the Trust, both on the North and South Forks, but also looks at the larger community of chefs, students, and educators involved in the food movement on Long Island.

“Working with the Peconic Land Trust to make the movie has made me realize more than ever how important it is for everyone to know how vital and important it is to each and everyone of us to support farming wherever we are,” said Director Michael Halsband. “It directly impacts our health and well being, and our support of farmers who really care about the quality of the food they grow is and has become more important than ever. I hope this documentary we made will help to spark a greater awareness and interest in where our food is coming from and an appreciation for the people who put the love into growing it for us.”

“Getting to know some of the young farmers and hearing their stories was inspiring. The work that the Land Trust is doing in helping to keep farming on the East End is so important on so many levels; it helps the economy, it creates jobs for people interested in farming, it provides fresh, local food for the community,” said co-Producer Hilary Leff.

Growing Farmers will be shown on Sunday, October 7 at 11 :00 am in East Hampton (*the film will be shown before the long-form documentary **Herman's House***). Tickets for the film

are available from the HIFF box office at hamptonsfilmfest.org. A trailer of the film can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MRgOj4Wxz0>.

On Monday, October 8, there will be a moderated panel discussion led by food writer and chef Laura Donnelly at Rowdy Hall in East Hampton, as part of the festival's *Rowdy Talks* program. Joining Donnelly will be Director and co-Producer Michael Halsband, co-Producer Hilary Leff, local chef Bryan Futerma, and the Trust's Director of Quail Hill Farm, Scott Chaskey. The panel will take place at 10:00 am and is open to the public (*space is limited*). Michael Halsband and Hilary Leff will also be talking about the film at two local schools, the Bridgehampton School and Pierson in Sag Harbor on Thursday, October 4 and Friday, October 5.

Peconic Land Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative: With the support of its donors, the Trust has begun to identify ways to help new farm operations get off the ground and established growers to expand their businesses with an eye toward their long-term economic health and viability. This initiative includes farmland leases, incubator programs, and sales of land with overlay easements that further limit non-agricultural activities and real estate values.

Objectives of the Farms for the Future Initiative:

- Keep conserved agricultural land actively farmed
- Create opportunities for farms to start-up and/or expand their commercial agricultural operations
- Promote the diversity of farming and farmers on Long Island
- Encourage food production farming
- Ensure that farmland is available and affordable for farmers

About the Peconic Land Trust: The Peconic Land Trust was established in 1983 to conserve Long Island's working farms and natural lands. Since its inception, the nonprofit Trust has worked conscientiously with landowners, donors, local government, partner organizations, and communities to conserve over 10,000 acres of land on Long Island. The Trust's professional staff carries out the necessary research and planning to identify and implement alternatives to outright development. While working to conserve the productive farms, watersheds, woodlands, and beachfront of Long Island, the Trust is also protecting the unique rural heritage and natural resources of the region. The Trust has Stewardship Centers in Cutchogue, Southold, Bridgehampton and Amagansett and its Main Office is in Southampton. *A common misperception, however, is that the Peconic Land Trust is the recipient of the monies raised through the Peconic Bay Region Community Preservation Fund (also referred to as the 2% land transfer tax or the Peconic Land Tax). This is NOT the case. The CPF tax is collected by Suffolk County and then redistributed to the five East End towns, the distribution of which is based on the location of the property from which the tax is acquired.* For more information about the Peconic Land Trust visit www.peconiclandtrust.org or call 631.283.3195.

#####