

# PECONIC LAND TRUST



For immediate release

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## **PECONIC LAND TRUST SELLS COX LANE FARMSTEAD TO FAMILY WITH PLANS FOR A SHEEP FARM**

*The property, 27.5 acres with farmhouse and barns, was acquired by the Trust in 2007, with 25.7 acres protected through a sale of development rights to the Town of Southold.*

*Sale to Tom Geppel and Carol Festa completes the plan by the Trust to transfer the farm parcel to private ownership.*

**DECEMBER 9, 2011. SOUTHAMPTON, NEW YORK.** John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust, announced the sale of a Cox Lane farmstead, 27.5 acres located in Cutchogue. Using its revolving fund established by the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation, the Trust acquired the property in 2007 to protect it from development. The Trust simultaneously sold the development rights on the farmland to the Town of Southold with the intention of holding the property until it could be sold to a buyer committed to agricultural production. The sale to Tom Geppel and Carol Festa in late November completes the intended conservation cycle envisioned in the Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative. Moreover, this sale enables the Trust to replenish its revolving fund such that more threatened parcels can be acquired and recycled for agricultural use. The Trust has two more parcels in Southold Town that it hopes to sell for agricultural production. Tom and Carol plan to establish a sheep farm on the property and are currently raising a flock on leased land in the area.

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“We are excited about the opportunity to deepen our roots on the North Fork with the purchase of this farm. Our decision to get involved in farming stems from our desire to help preserve the farming culture of the area while increasing awareness of the importance of eating locally grown products. We plan to build a multi faceted family-based farm that will supply the local market with high quality products. We also believe the farm business will provide our children with many learning experiences and the satisfaction of a productive existence. We are looking forward to our future endeavor on this great piece of property,” explained Carol Festa.

### **About the Property**

Acquired by the Trust in 2007, the Cox Land property is 27.53 acres located on the corner of Cox Lane and County Road 48 in Cutchogue. At the time of acquisition, the Trust simultaneously sold the development rights on 25.69 acres of prime agricultural soils to the Town of Southold. The remaining 1.83 acres comprises a development area that includes a circa 1930s farmhouse, a two-car garage, two side-by-side barns, and two additional outbuildings. Since it was acquired by the Trust, the house, barns, and farmland have been leased.

### **Farms for the Future Initiative**

The issue of access to affordable farmland by both established and start-up farmers has become of particular concern within the past decade as the value of farmland – even protected farmland – has climbed beyond that which is affordable to most farmers, whether new or established.

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.

“Through our Farms for the Future initiative, we hope to ensure 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 that go beyond farmland protection. We must assure that both farmers and the business of farming can continue,” explained Trust President Halsey.

#### **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, communities, municipalities, partner organizations, and donors 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, Bridgehampton (Bridge Gardens), Southold (Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm and Shellfisher Preserve) and Amagansett (Quail Hill Farm) 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 CPF, 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 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](http://www.peconiclandtrust.org) or call 631.283.3195.

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