

# PECONIC LAND TRUST



For immediate release

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## **PECONIC LAND TRUST TO BE HONORED WITH U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY 2015 CHAMPION AWARD**

*Nominated for prestigious honor by Congressman Lee Zeldin.*

*Award recognizes the Trust's 32 years of commitment to  
Long Island's working farms, natural lands and heritage.*

**APRIL 3, 2015. SOUTHAMPTON, NEW YORK.** In a visit today with the staff and board of the Peconic Land Trust, Congressman Lee Zeldin (New York's first Congressional District) congratulated the Trust on its recognition by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as one of the recipients of the prestigious Environmental Champion Awards for Region 2 (New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands). Congressman Zeldin nominated the Trust for this special recognition.

"For over 30 years, the Peconic Land Trust has been dedicated and committed to bettering our community by protecting and preserving our farms, natural lands, and our history and heritage here on Long Island. I am honored to join with the Trust today to recognize and celebrate their well-deserved 2015 Environmental Champion Award," said Congressman Lee Zeldin.

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“Thank you to Congressman Zeldin and his staff for shining a light on the Trust’s important work – we are truly honored to be a recipient of this distinguished award. Since 1983, the Trust has been dedicated to protecting what we know and love on Long Island. Through patience, consistency and respect for landowners and the land, we’ve been able to work with our local legislators, partner organizations and communities to conserve land that supports local farmers, protects our drinking water, and preserves our historic community character,” said John v.H. Halsey, President, Peconic Land Trust.

The formal presentation of the award will be on Friday, April 24, 2015 in New York City. In announcing the nomination process in January 2015, EPA Regional Administrator Judith Enck said: "What better way to mark the annual celebration of Earth Day than by honoring those organizations, businesses and individuals whose work has protected the environment and improved public health. Environmental protection is something that no one person or group can do alone. We need to foster an environmental ethic in corporate board rooms, in city halls, and in neighborhoods across the country – and that’s the kind of work our Environmental Champion Award recipients do."

The EPA’s Environmental Champion Awards recognize achievement in six categories:

- Business and Industry
- Individual Citizen
- Non-Profit Organization, Environmental or Community Group
- Environmental Education
- Federal, State, Local or Tribal Government or Agency
- Media

The Peconic Land Trust is being recognized in the Non-Profit Organization, Environmental or Community Group category.

The Trust's nomination was endorsed by many in the community, including New York State Senator Kenneth LaValle, New York Assemblyman Fred Thiele, Southampton Town Supervisor Anna Throne-Holst and Town Councilwoman Christine Scalera, farmers Chris Browder, Alex Balsam and Karen Rivara, Stony Brook Foundation's Dexter Bailey, Perfect Earth Project's Edwina von Gal, and the Land Trust Alliance New York Program's Ethan Winter.

In his nominating letter, Senator LaValle wrote: "The Trust's work is innovative, ground-breaking and a model for other communities to replicate. A wide-variety of projects have focused on sustainable food production, resiliency/climate change, surface and groundwater protection, wetland restoration and the health of Peconic Bay. . . . It is a well-deserved honor for an outstanding organization that is making a significant impact on the environmental health of Long Island."

In his nominating letter, Assemblyman Fred Thiele wrote: "The Peconic Land Trust has been an integral partner, working hand-in-hand with municipalities, other not-for-profits, civic associations, and homeowners, on land preservation, habitat restoration, water quality projects and sustainable farming initiatives. There is no doubt that their efforts have helped to protect and restore environmentally sensitive and ecologically important land in the Peconic region."

In his nominating letter, Vito Minei, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, wrote: "During the past 30 years, I have witnessed first-hand the

phenomenal and tireless efforts of the leadership and staff of PLT to preserve the natural resources, local quality of life, character of the East End and enduring existence of our two legacy industries – agriculture and fishing. While remaining steadfast in their mission to conserve natural lands, working farms and regional heritage, the programs they undertake have evolved to meet current and persistent challenges.”

In his nominating letter, Stephen M. Jones, Co-Chair of the Peconic Land Trust’s Board of Directors, wrote: “An environmental champion is not some flash-in-the-pan person or organization that makes a headline and moves on, but a group that’s into land stewardship for the long haul. The government can protect farmland, but outside of health regulations, is not there with the stewards day in and day out, to insure that land is used responsibly to grow wholesome food. Quietly and effectively for the past 32 years, the Trust has gone about the challenge of not only protecting farmland, but caring for it as well. Unlike stewardship of passive open space, farm stewardship required creativity, innovation, education and plenty of partners and cooperation. The PLT continues to show that it is up to the task of protecting and enhancing the environment within a community-based network of public and private partners.”

### **About the Peconic Land Trust**

Founded in 1983, Peconic Land Trust conserves Long Island's working farms, natural lands, and heritage. Since its inception, the nonprofit Trust has worked conscientiously with landowners, communities, municipalities, partner organizations, and donors, to conserve over 11,000 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. *The Trust depends primarily upon private donations to support its conservation work. A common misperception, however, is that the Peconic Land Trust collects and distributes the monies raised through the Peconic Bay Region Community Preservation Fund (the CPF is also referred to as the 2% land transfer tax or the Peconic Land Tax). This is NOT the case. The CPF is a public program managed by each of the five East End Towns for the protection of farmland, open space, and community character.* 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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