

# PECONIC LAND TRUST



## **For immediate release**

Contact: Yvette DeBow-Salsedo  
631.283.3195

## **PECONIC LAND TRUST AND TOWN OF SOUTHAMPTON TO RECEIVE NYS DEC CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM GRANT FOR UPDATE OF TOWN'S FARMLAND STRATEGY**

**APRIL 30, 2015. SOUTHAMPTON, NY.** John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust, is pleased to announce that the Trust has been awarded a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Land Trust Alliance, through the Conservation Partnership Program (CPP) of the Environmental Protection Fund, in support of a collaboration project with the Town of Southampton on farmland protection strategies.

The grant awarded to the Peconic Land Trust/Town of Southampton is for:

**Category: Conservation Catalyst:** \$40,000.

Updating Southampton Town's Farm and Farmland Preservation Strategy. The Grant will enable Peconic Land Trust to collaborate with the Town of Southampton to review and update the Town's 1998 Farm and Farmland Preservation Strategy and develop new tools and strategies to conserve the farmland remaining in an area facing extreme development pressure and the highest land values in Suffolk County.

“Having worked with the Town of Southampton and the agricultural community in the mid-1990s to prepare the 1998 Preservation Strategy, we are uniquely positioned to review and update it in the face of new, unanticipated challenges that threaten our farms and farmland. We are the canary in the coal mine, and other parts of New York State will benefit by understanding our successes and failures as we reinvent our preservation tools,” said John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust.

“The Peconic Land Trust has been a remarkable partner to the Town in assisting with the development of strategies and programs to protect the farming industry on the East End. Like all good policy, these programs and approaches must be re-evaluated from time to time in response to changing conditions and needs, and this grant offers a timely opportunity to do so in a comprehensive way with the assistance of a highly capable and well-informed organization,” said Southampton Town Supervisor Anna Throne-Holst.

“I am pleased that the Town of Southampton has the opportunity to continue our beneficial relationship with the Peconic Land Trust, as we continue to explore critically important strategies to keep our local farms in food production. We hope and expect that others throughout New York State can learn from our experiences and planning as we face the realities of supporting farms and the business of farming in the face of significant pressure toward development because, after all, "farm" is a verb” said Southampton Town Councilwoman Bridget Fleming.

The awards were announced on Monday, April 20, 2015, at a press conference at Teatown Lake Reservation in Westchester County.

In a press release issued at the time of the press conference, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo said: “New York’s natural resources play a vital role in our economy, and today we are taking another step forward in protecting and preserving them for generations to come. With these grants, New York’s Environmental Protection Fund is securing critical funding for environmental and open space programs that will continue to protect our environment, generate jobs and revenue in local communities and ensure a cleaner and healthier New York.”

Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens said, “DEC’s partnerships with land trusts are crucial to achieving our conservation goals, without which there would be many land conservation projects that would not be possible. Governor Cuomo continues to demonstrate his commitment to the environment, diversity, providing opportunities for sportsmen and sportswomen, and improving recreational access opportunities near where people live in New York State. This year’s budget provided a \$15 million increase to the Environmental Protection Fund including increases to land acquisition, municipal parks and environmental justice grants.”

Rand Wentworth, President of the Land Trust Alliance said, “We commend Governor Cuomo, Commissioner Martens and the New York State Legislature for their tremendous support of this pioneering initiative and for taking steps to enhance the EPF in this year’s state budget. Time and time again we see how the EPF and the Conservation Partnership Program are cost-effective investments that pay vital dividends for public health, local communities and New York’s economy.”

Seth McKee, chair of the Land Trust Alliance’s New York Advisory Board and land conservation director for Scenic Hudson said, “The Conservation Partnership Program

has demonstrated impressive statewide success by supporting land trusts in our local communities. Together with state funding for land conservation and farmland protection, this program helps to protect and care for New York's natural heritage and working lands, and create trails, preserves and community gardens. It also benefits our economy, from tourism and outdoor recreation to farming and forestry. The program continues to be a model for the EPF because it unites the goals of New York's Open Space Conservation Plan, meets the needs and desires of local municipalities, and enables private landowners and land trusts to achieve their goals."

In addition, the Peconic Land Trust would like to thank our local legislators, Senator Ken LaValle and Assemblymen Fred Thiele, Jr., and Anthony Palumbo for their support of the EPF and the CPP programs.

As a result of the grants announced today, organizations throughout New York State, including the Peconic Land Trust, can also leverage nearly \$1.7 million in additional matching funds from community and private sources.

### **About the Conservation Partnership Program**

The Conservation Partnership Program is a public-private initiative funded through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and administered by the Land Trust Alliance, in coordination with Department of Environmental Conservation. Since 2002, the Conservation Partnership Program has awarded over 647 grants totaling \$11.3 million in EPF funds to 86 different land trusts across the state, from Long Island to Buffalo. To

date, the state's investment has leveraged \$13 million in additional funding from local communities and private donors

A total of \$1.8 million in grants will be awarded through the 2015 Conservation

Partnership Program to help local not-for-profits sustain critical programs: help local land trusts sustain and expand community and landowner outreach initiatives and develop an array of land conservation, stewardship and education programs. The grants will further regional economic development goals by strengthening partnerships with local and state governments and advancing locally supported efforts to protect working farms, enhance public access and recreation opportunities, and conserve private lands prioritized in New York State's Open Space Conservation Plan and state wildlife action plan.

Fifty-five organizations across New York will receive funds, including the Peconic Land Trust, North Shore Land Alliance, Three Village Community Trust, Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust, Green Guerillas, Westchester Land Trust, Teatown Lake Reservation, Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Mohonk Preserve, Dutchess Land Conservancy, Orange County Land Trust, Mohawk Preserve, Agricultural Stewardship Association, New York Agricultural Land Trust, American Farmland Trust, Thousand Islands Land Trust. The full list of grant recipients can be found at

[http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands\\_forests\\_pdf/lta2015regsum.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/lta2015regsum.pdf).

The Conservation Partnership Program, like other EPF programs, creates a powerful economic stimulus that spurs green community investments in every county in the state. In a report released earlier this year, the Trust for Public Land says that it is widely

understood that investments in conservation boost property values, support businesses, save energy and tax payer money, and safeguard natural ecosystems on which economic well being depends. With the grant awards announced today, land trusts will advance significant projects at a critical time for communities and businesses across the state.

**Conservation Catalyst Grants** provide critical funding for partnerships and community initiatives that connect people to nature, increase public involvement in community conservation, and help save special places prioritized in the New York State Open Space Plan. Land trust partnerships funded by the Conservation Partnership Program will involve local, state and federal agency partners, private landowners, municipalities, and other community service organizations. Land trust partnerships are a proven and highly cost-effective way for New York State to strengthen and build public support for its conservation programs.

### **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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