



PECONIC LAND TRUST



For immediate release

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**PECONIC LAND TRUST AND TOWN OF SOUTHOLD
ANNOUNCE THE ACQUISITION AND PERPETUAL PROTECTION
OF 20.9 ACRES OF FARMLAND,
WOODLAND AND WETLANDS IN ORIENT**

The Trust, the Town of Southold, and members of the Orient community worked with the Edwards Family to protect this important part of the hamlet's community character and agricultural heritage.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2015. SOUTHAMPTON, NEW YORK. John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust, and Southold Town Supervisor Scott Russell are pleased to announce the acquisition and protection of 20.9-acres of farmland, woodlands and wetlands in Orient, New York. This conservation effort was made possible with the cooperation of members of the Edwards Family of East Hampton, NY, the Town of Southold's Farmland Preservation Program, and financial support from a growing number of generous members of the Orient community.

On August 18, 2015, siblings Elbert and Harriet Edwards sold the farmland, woodlands and wetlands to the Peconic Land Trust for its appraised value of \$1.09 million, with the

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Town of Southold simultaneously purchasing the development rights for \$700,000. The Town easement perpetually protects the property for agricultural production and passive open space uses.

The Trust is working with members of the Orient community to raise \$450,000 in order to cover the remainder of the purchase price along with transaction and land restoration costs. The Edwards have agreed to a three-year installment sale, providing time and flexibility to the Trust and the local community to complete this fundraising effort. To date, the Trust has received commitments of approximately \$75,000 from the community towards this effort.

“The protection of this historically significant property would not have been possible without the patience and persistence of the Edwards Family, steadfast commitment to land preservation from the Town of Southold, and financial support from many generous members of the local community,” said Peconic Land Trust Vice President Timothy Caufield. “We look forward to working with the community to protect the rural and agricultural heritage that has always been so much a part of Orient’s special sense of place.”

Elbert and Harriet Edwards had recently inherited the land from their mother, Marion Latham Edwards. The quaint bayside farm had been owned and farmed by successive generations of the Latham and Terry families in Orient since the early 19th Century.

“My sister Harriet and I were pleased to work with the Peconic Land Trust to conserve

our land. The farmland, woodlands and wetlands have been in our family – Edwards, Terrys and Lathams – for six generations. By preserving the land, we are also preserving our family’s agricultural history. This is an outcome we had always hoped for,” said Elbert Edwards.

By purchasing the development rights on this property, the Town of Southold is continuing its long commitment to the protection of community resources.

“This property represents the heart of what the Community Preservation Fund (CPF) is intended for – to preserve the agricultural and natural resources of our town,” said Southold Town Supervisor Scott Russell. “The Town will continue to work with families, communities and organizations like the Peconic Land Trust to invest in our agricultural land through the CPF for the benefit of the people of our Town and future generations.”

The property is located on the south side of Main Road in Orient, immediately west of Latham Sand and Gravel, and is adjacent to the east of the Trust’s Orville Terry Preserve, which was donated to the Trust by Joyce Terry in 1989. The Peconic Land Trust is leasing the cultivated farmland to Daniel Latham of Latham Farms; The Oysterponds Rod and Gun Club use of the woodlands and wetlands for hunting will continue as part of the Peconic Land Trust’s Wildlife Management Program. With cultivated prime farmland soils, wooded natural habitat and wetlands, scenic vistas, and access to Little Bay, the property can provide the Trust with the opportunity to work with the Orient community on stewardship projects and educational programs.

“I am delighted to be helping the Trust raise money for a project that is preserving one

of the last remaining unprotected farm properties along Main Road in Orient,” said Orient resident John Henry. “Not only can this preservation help to assure the continued agricultural use of the land, which represents an important part of Orient’s cherished rural character, but potentially limited portions of the property could provide passive open space uses for the benefit of the entire community. Those of us who live on the North Fork are accustomed to seeing bumper stickers exhorting us to ‘Save What’s Left’ in our beloved area. This is a splendid opportunity to do precisely that.”

A Legacy of Land Conservation and Agriculture in Orient

Thanks to efforts by New York State, Suffolk County, Southold Town and private conservation organizations such as the Trust, over 1,500 acres of farmland, woodlands, wetlands, and coastline have been permanently protected in Orient. Six hundred of those protected acres lie between Narrow River Road and the Cross Sound Ferry terminal. This impressive assemblage of contiguously protected land contributes to the community character of Orient, making it one of Long Island’s most treasured places.

Orient has a rich and vibrant agricultural history, where families such as the Browns, Kings, Lathams, Terrys, among many others, have farmed for generations. The Trust, through its Farms for the Future Initiative, will continue to work with the Orient community to ensure that agriculture remains a part of the fabric of the hamlet for generations to come.

About Farms for the Future Initiative

The Peconic Land Trust’s Farms for the Future Initiative includes farmland leases,

incubator programs, and sales of protected farmland to farmers, some with additional restrictions that limit non-agricultural activities or support food production farming, designed to assure farmland access and affordability for farmers in the future.

Although the Farms for the Future Initiative is constantly evolving, the Trust started with three primary objectives:

- 1) Explore and refine a new set of conservation tools and techniques that address the issues of farmland accessibility, affordability, and sustainability
- 2) Buy, protect, rebuild and resell farms to farmers
- 3) Develop and expand our Farmland Leasing Program

To learn more about the Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative, please contact Luke McKay, Project Manager, at 631.283.3195 or LMcKay@PeconicLandTrust.org.

About the Peconic Land Trust

Established in 1983 to conserve Long Island's working farms, natural lands, and heritage, the Peconic Land Trust, a nonprofit, tax-exempt conservation organization, 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, shorelines, and historic resources 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 or call 631.283.3195.*

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