

PECONIC LAND TRUST



For immediate release

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PECONIC LAND TRUST BEGINS 25TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR CELEBRATING SUCCESS OF 2007 FUNDRAISING SEASON

Trust surpasses its annual Challenge goal – \$1.4 million – and prepares for a celebratory year of special events, education programs, and conservation projects.

January 14, 2007. Southampton, New York. John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust, announced the conclusion of another successful fundraising season and the start of the organization's 25th Anniversary. Founded in 1983, the Trust has worked with landowners, communities, municipalities, and donors to conserve nearly 9,000 acres of working farms and natural lands on Long Island. The Trust's funding comes primarily from private donations by individuals, corporations and organizations, and in 2007 the Trust surpassed its annual Challenge goal of \$1.4 million with donations from over 1,500 supporters.

"In the past 24 years, the staff and Board of the Trust have worked tirelessly to help conserve a way of life here on the East End of Long Island. I am enormously proud of what we have been able to achieve and look forward to celebrating our accomplishments and opportunities alike during this 25th anniversary year," said Halsey. "There is far more to be accomplished. I see 2008 as a new chapter for the organization, one where we implement new ways to serve our communities

as we continue to conserve the working farms, woodlands, bays, dunes, marshes, pastures, meadows and waterfronts that make Long Island a truly wonderful place to live and visit.”

2007 Conservation Achievements

In 2007, the Trust worked with the community to conserve over 260 acres of land on the East End – a variety of land types from farmland to nature preserves. Most significant of these conservation efforts were Cackle Hill on Shelter Island, New Suffolk Waterfront in Southold, and Cox Lane Farm in Southold. These projects involved different components of the conservation story on the East End:

Cackle Hill: In September, the Trust acquired this 26+ acre historic homestead property. Simultaneous to the closing, 17.1 acres of woodland were sold to the Town of Shelter Island and Suffolk County. In December, the Trust sold the remaining property, including the homestead, to a buyer who agreed to a conservation easement on the property that insured that it would never be further subdivided, that the historic façade of the 100 year old house would not be changed, and that the view of the property from West Neck Bay would be preserved.

New Suffolk Waterfront: In December, the Trust acquired this 5.5 acre historic property – formerly the home of the first submarine base in the U.S., where the U.S.S. Holland was commissioned by the Navy – located in the Town of Southold. The Trust is working with the Town, the New Suffolk Waterfront Committee, a local civic organization, and the community to vision a future for this important community resource.

Additionally, the Trust is working with both the public and private sector to facilitate end-buyers and to maximize public and conservation benefit.

Cox Lane Farm: In May the Trust purchased 27.53-acres of agricultural lands located on Cox Lane in Cutchogue from Joe Macari, Sr. at a simultaneous closing where the Town of Southold and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service acquired the development rights on just over 25 acres. Currently, the Trust is leasing the farmland to a local organic farmer, Fred Lee, and is studying options at this site for an access to affordable farmland program.

Public Policy Update

In addition to its land conservation achievements, the Trust was also involved in many public policy initiatives and discussions, including two successful referenda (the Southold Town \$4 million bond initiative and the Suffolk County 1/4 penny sales tax extension); lobbying efforts on behalf of the Farm Bill and Federal and State Conservation Tax credits; and continued discussions with Congressman Tim Bishop on revisions to Estate Tax legislation to help families retain land for future generations.

Looking Forward

As the Trust enters its 25th year, affordability issues will continue to be front and center – particularly as they relate to farmland on the East End. In addition, the Trust will continue to pursue conservation projects, large and small. High

profile projects such as the Amagansett Farmers Market and the Pike Farm on Sagg Main in Sagaponack remain priorities for the Trust and we continue to work toward realizing their protection. But for every project, there are many other conservation opportunities – large and small – currently in process or waiting to be pursued. The Trust’s staff is now working on over 80 projects in various stages, and each month new projects are brought to the organization’s attention.

Events & Activities

The Peconic Land Trust’s *Connections* will kick off in March, offering a full slate of educational, recreational, and family friendly programs that “connect people to the land.” The first program will be an Orchid Talk with Mark Davis, in conjunction with the Long Island Farm Bureau, at Bianchi-Davis Greenhouses in Riverhead on March 15; followed by a birdhouse building workshop at Quail Hill Farm on March 29. Additional information on all *Connections* events can be found on our website, www.PeconicLandTrust.org. The *Connections* calendar (print version) is published four times during the year (March/April, May/June, July/August, and September/October/November).

There will also be a number of special events, including *Through Farms and Fields*, our Country Luncheon in early August, the *Tomato Taste-off at Quail Hill Farm* over Labor Day Weekend, and *Plein Air Peconic III*, a collaboration of

artists with the Trust, in October. Additional details on the Trust's special 25th Anniversary events will be announced in early February.

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 farmers and other landowners, donors, and municipalities to conserve almost 9,000 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 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.

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