

PECONIC LAND TRUST



For immediate release

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JOHN V.H. HALSEY HONORED

AT 2014 NYS LAND CONSERVATION SUMMIT

FOR HIS LEADERSHIP, COMMITMENT AND INNOVATION

Over 250 land conservation professionals gathered for a 2-day summit to discuss and exchange ideas, with special keynotes from NYS DEC Commissioner Joe Martens and noted environmental legal scholar Michael Gerrard.

APRIL 22, 2014. SOUTHAMPTON, NEW YORK. John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust, was honored by his peers at the New York State Land Conservation Summit at The Historic Thayer Hotel in West Point, NY. The gathering of over 250 land conservation professionals and volunteers was convened on April 10th & 11th to discuss the challenges facing land protection as well as innovative tools and techniques that land trusts across the state are using to conserve our woodlands, working farms, bays, meadows, wetlands, waterways and historic places.

The Summit's Steering Committee and the leadership of the Land Trust Alliance's New York Program elected to honor John at the newly reinitiated regional summit, the first such gathering since 2009. John, who was chair of the Land Trust Alliance's New York Advisory Board from 1995 to 2009, volunteered the Peconic Land Trust's resources to reintroduce the New York conference. The Peconic Land Trust, working with a steering

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committee of over a dozen land trusts across the state, applied for and received a grant from the **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** for the organization and execution of the Summit through the **Conservation Partnership Program** (CPP), a grants program of the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) administered by the Land Trust Alliance's New York Program. The Land Trust Alliance, based in Washington D.C., has worked with the national conservation community for more than 30 years to quickly, effectively, and permanently save our most valued natural resources across America.

In his introductory remarks honoring John v.H. Halsey, Seth McKee, Land Conservation Director of Scenic Hudson and the chair of the LTA NY Advisory Board said: "In addition to committing his incredible organization's resources to this conference, John has personally been key to the development of the Land Trust Alliance's program here in New York and all that we have accomplished together – he really helped get the program rolling in the '90s. He is an innovator who has pioneered everything from the purchase of development rights on farmland on the East End of Long Island to the use of transfer fees to support community preservation funding and Peconic has been one of the anchor supporters behind the Land Trust's Alliance's one of a kind public policy programs here in New York state for many years."

Former chair of the LTA NY Advisory Board, Becky Thornton, President of Dutchess Land Conservancy, said: "I was extremely lucky to serve as John's Vice Chair for 9 of those years. I can tell you that John is a true leader who leads by example in everything he does. During his time as chairman, we got the NYS Conservation Partnership Program approved; we also got the conservation easement tax credit legislation approved. The Peconic Land Trust is an organization under John's leadership that uses

all the available tools and is an amazing model – if I want to know anything about how to do something I call John – they’ve been there, done it, and give you the do’s and don’ts.”

The two-day Summit included fields trips organized by Hudson Valley conservation organizations to incredible locations, including **Black Rock Forest** (organized by Black Rock Forest Consortium), **Bear Mountain State Park** (organized by New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, Tahawus Trails and the Jolly Rovers Trail Crew), **Storm King Art Center**, and **West Point Foundry Preserve** (organized by Scenic Hudson), **Fortress West Point** (organized by Hudson Highlands Land Trust).

The conference was kicked off with a welcome address by **Lieutenant Colonel Mark Smith**, tenured faculty member in the West Point Academy’s Department of Geography and Environmental Engineering and a presentation by **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens**.

At the Summit, more than 50 individuals presented at workshops and panels ranging from advances in stewardship monitoring and trails management to new strategies to assure that protected farmland is accessible and affordable for farmers. Other topics included conservation easement issues regarding climate change adaptation, modifications and terminations, urban land conservation, land conservation financing, understanding the State budget and funding opportunities, fundraising and marketing.

The luncheon speaker was **Michael B. Gerrard**, the Andrew Sabin Professor of Professional Practice, and Director of the Center for Climate Change Law, at Columbia Law School.

Steering Committee: Dawn Haight & Yvette DeBow, Peconic Land Trust; Teri Ptacek, Agricultural Stewardship Association; Laura Ten Eyck, American Farmland Trust; Tony Colyer-Pendas, Columbia Land Conservancy; Andy Chmar, Hudson Highlands Land Trust; Ethan Winter, Land Trust Alliance; Jennifer Garofalini, Mohonk Preserve; Jessica Ottney Mahar, The Nature Conservancy; Tally Blumberg, Open Space Institute; Jim Delaune, Orange County Land Trust; Michael Knutson, Scenic Hudson; Jake Tibbles, Thousand Islands Land Trust; Marc Matsil, Trust for Public Land.

Conservation Partnership Program: Funded through the Environmental Protection Fund, under the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and administered by the Land Trust Alliance, CPP grants assist land trusts in advancing an array of goals, including land trust accreditation, capacity building and strategic planning, regional collaboration, increased public access and protection of areas prioritized in New York State's Open Space Conservation Plan and state wildlife action plan. Grants for the 2014 program will be announced on April 24, 2014, at Indian Ladder Farms in Altamont, NY. Fifty groups from around the state will receive 62 grants totaling \$1.4 million from the EPF. For more information, visit the Land Trust Alliance website: <http://www.landtrustalliance.org/about/regional-programs/ne/nyscpp>.

About the Peconic Land Trust

August 1, 2013 was the 30th Anniversary of the founding of the Peconic Land Trust, which was established in 1983 to conserve 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 approximately 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. *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 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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