

PECONIC LAND TRUST

CELEBRATING 38 YEARS OF LAND CONSERVATION

Vol. 32, No. 1



Fall 2021



Acknowledging the Past...

Embracing the Future

A Message From Our President

A year full of transition and reflection, 2021 will soon be in our past. For many of us, we are ready for the new year! I know that I had hoped COVID-19 would be behind us. But alas, it is still here, but thanks to vaccinations, testing, and perseverance, its presence is less daunting as we seek a new normal. Throughout the year, you have made it possible for the Trust to conserve and steward the land and water upon which we depend as we transition to better, healthier times. *All of us at the Trust cannot thank you enough!*

Among the transitions that my family and I experienced this year was the passing of my mother, Emily van Heusen Halsey, at the age of 98. What an incredible life she had with a tremendous love for birds, gardening, food, friends, and family. As the one person who has known me the longest, she taught me how to love, forgive, persevere, and celebrate life in all of its forms. She lived her life to its fullest and encouraged her children to do likewise – she remains an inspiration to all who knew her.

Another transition of note this year was the passing of one of our longest and beloved donors. In terms of longevity, Marillyn B. Wilson, a devoted conservationist, supported the Trust since its inception. Living in her home on what is now our Wilson's Grove Preserve in East Hampton, Marillyn supported conservation locally, nationally, and internationally. A dedicated annual fund donor, she entrusted us with her land when she was among the first to move to Peconic Landing on the North Fork. She also generously included us in her will for which we are most grateful. Her passion for conservation continues to guide us. *(To read a reflection on Marillyn Wilson, please see our Spring 2021 newsletter.)*

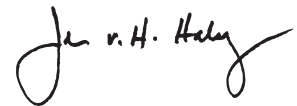
Two long-time staff members, Julie Zaykowski and Pam Greene, represent a different type of transition, from full-time leaders of the Trust to retiring veterans of the

Trust. Julie has fully transitioned, but Pam will remain part-time through the end of January 2022 as she completes her transition to her new life in her home state of Indiana.

Both Julie and Pam dedicated over 25 years to the Trust and rose to key leadership positions given their commitment to our mission, incredible work ethics, and their ability to work with all sorts of people. We truly appreciate their dedication to our cause and the community at large.

Last, but not least, is the transition of the summit of Sugar Loaf Hill back to its natural state. As a ceremonial burial site over 3,000 years old, this is the most sacred land to the Shinnecock people, and the highest point within Shinnecock Hills. The Trust has worked with the Shinnecock Graves Protection Warrior Society and Southampton Town to acquire and protect this ancestral site. The ultimate transition will be to return this sacred land to the Shinnecock people once the existing house is demolished and the property is restored.

As we reflect upon all that we have accomplished together in 2021, let's recognize the continuing challenges ahead of us to protect and restore the land and water that sustain us. Let's honor all who embrace conservation including the Shinnecock people and our other Indigenous partners – there is much we can learn from their traditions and practices. Thanks again to all of you who make our work possible! Please stay safe and be well.



JHalsey@PeconicLandTrust.org



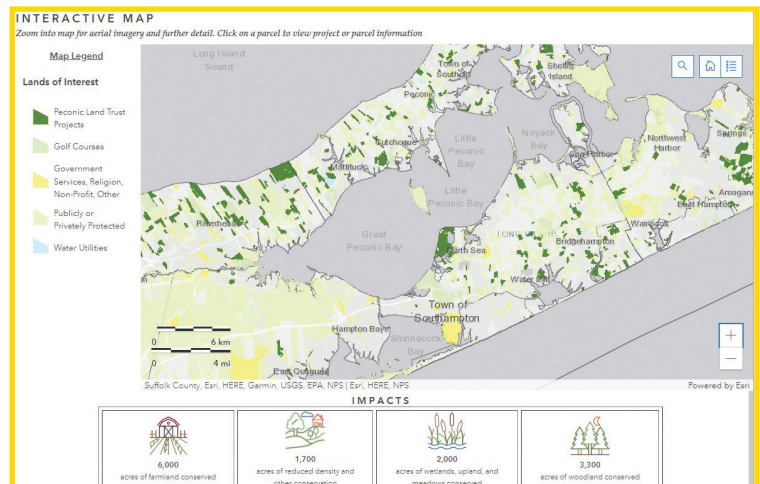
Zoom In | New Interactive Map is Live

Want to learn more about conservation in your neighborhood, village, hamlet, town, or county? Visit our website and explore our newly updated interactive map!

In addition to the story behind over 580 conservation projects you have helped make possible with your support of the Trust, you will also be able to learn about conservation and census data based on location. Our Stewardship team is working continuously to keep this map up to date.

Visit Today!

[PeconicLandTrust.org/Map](https://www.PeconicLandTrust.org/Map)



Have questions? Contact Matt Swain, Director of Stewardship and Geographic Information Systems at MSwain@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Conserving Sacred Land | The Summit of Sugar Loaf Hill

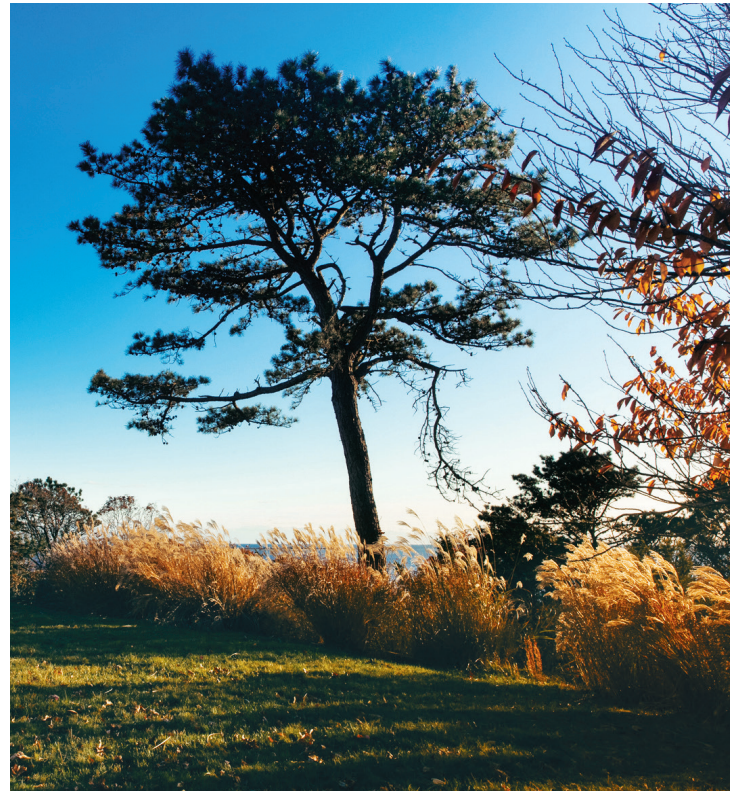
As you walk along the shores, hike the woodlands, kayak the bays and ponds, and swim in the ocean, take in the unique beauty of Paumanake (Long Island) – remember that this place IS HOME to many communities of Indigenous people for over 10,000 years. As we conserve Long Island, let us reflect on their history and story, which continues to this day.

In August we shared the news that Sugar Loaf Hill Summit had been conserved – sacred land of the Shinnecock people. The land, despite protests back in the 1980s, was developed as a residential site in 1990. The Summit had previously been disturbed in the 1930s and 1950s when it was excavated during archaeological studies. It was then documented as a site where ceremonial burials occurred over 3000 years ago.

“Sugar Loaf Hill has been one of our most sacred sites as Shinnecock people for millennia,” said Shane Weeks, co-Chair of the Shinnecock Graves Protection Warrior Society (Society). “Our people have always known that our ancestors are buried there. Despite the desecration that has occurred, its importance and original purpose maintains.”

When the Summit was on the market recently, the Society and the Peconic Land Trust decided to work together with the Town of Southampton to acquire and protect the property from any future development. To this end, the Trust purchased the property with private support from Roger Waters. In a simultaneous transaction, the Town purchased a conservation easement from the Trust precluding any future development of the property for commercial or residential purposes. Currently, the Trust and the Society are working together on the restoration of the land, including the removal of the residential building.

Once the restoration of the land is complete, the Trust will petition the Town to approve the transfer of the Summit to the Shinnecock people, hopefully before the end of 2022. If successful, this will be the first time that land within Shinnecock Hills will be returned to and repatriated by the Shinnecock people.



The Trust is honored to work in partnership with the Shinnecock people.

Our work with the Society continues, with the hope of announcing future conservation in the coming months and years based on the model of the Summit. To support future acquisitions and restorations, the Trust has established the Shinnecock Land Acquisition and Stewardship Fund (Fund). Capital raised through this Fund will support efforts to acquire, restore and steward more sacred Shinnecock land in conjunction with the Society.

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Land Acknowledgement

The Peconic Land Trust acknowledges that the region – Paumanake (Long Island) / Sewanhacky (Long Island) – where we work and live is the ancestral territory of many communities of Indigenous people. We honor their stewardship of the land for over 10,000 years. We accept our responsibility to protect their cultural and traditional connections to the land.

The Summit of Sugar Loaf Hill (continued)



Landscape images of Sugar Loaf Hill on Cover and pages 3 and 4 by Jeremy Dennis

In order to succeed in this role, the Trust is serving as a bridge between the Shinnecock people, the Town, and private landowners. This bridge starts with communication that will hopefully be the basis

of a growing trust between all of the parties. In the meantime, the Society is in the process of incorporating its own Indigenous-led 501(c)(3) land trust. Founded by members of the Society, the new land trust, the Niamuck Land Foundation (Foundation), will acquire, restore, and manage burial grounds and other sites sacred to the Shinnecock people and their

neighboring Indigenous communities. The Trust will work collaboratively with the Society and the Foundation on future conservation opportunities. To learn more, visit NiamuckLandTrust.org.

“The Indigenous-led Niamuck Land Foundation is necessary to facilitate land acquisitions, raise funds, steward lands and hold properties that are sacred to the Indigenous communities on Long Island,” said Weeks.

In addition to working with the Society and the Foundation, the Trust will support Indigenous rights and protection of land and water through the lens of the Indigenous people to the greatest extent possible. We want to understand their stories and lessons about the places we have, and are, conserving.

For more information, or to make a donation in support of the Shinnecock Land Acquisition and Stewardship Fund, visit PeconicLandTrust.org/SLASF or contact John v.H. Halsey at JHalsey@PeconicLandTrust.org or Amanda Abraham at AAbraham@PeconicLandTrust.org. For a list of Fund supporters, visit page 19.

In the Southampton Town Code, amended in 1990, two areas important to the Shinnecock people are designated critical environmental areas: the Sugar Loaf Hill Shinnecock Indian Burial Grounds and Archaeological Resource Area and the Shinnecock Indian Contact Period Village Fort. These designations place additional restrictions on land to protect cultural, historic, archaeological or educationally important resources and restrict clearing, regrading, filling, excavating and building until an archaeological examination of the site has been conducted and submitted to the Planning Board for review.



Partner Profile | Shinnecock Graves Protection Warrior Society

Founded in 2016 to protect and preserve known and unknown burial sites on Long Island, the Shinnecock Graves Protection Warrior Society (Society) has worked tirelessly to bring the issue to the forefront. The Society – co-chaired by Rebecca Genia and Shane Weeks – is a cultural entity recognized by the Shinnecock Nation to lead this work on behalf of the community.

“The Society was founded in order to raise awareness and stand up for the injustices continued on our people. Due to the absence of respect for our people historically, our sacred sites and burial grounds have been desecrated time and time again with no regard for the Indigenous people as a living community,” said Weeks. “The Society stands up for those sacred sites and the rights of our people. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the Southampton Town Graves Protection Act (STGPA) are extremely important in this work because without them, there are no penalties for private or public land owners who dig up remains. They also establish protocol for their return to our people and ultimately back to the earth.”

The Trust staff, led by President John v.H. Halsey, has worked with the Society and the Shinnecock Nation to assist in the conservation of sites, including the Hawthorne Road* site in 2018 and most recently the Sugar Loaf Hill Summit – both in the Shinnecock Hills section of Southampton Town.

An important part of the Society’s work is to coordinate and facilitate the repatriation of human remains and funerary objects returned to Shinnecock from museums and institutions that acquired those remains throughout the years.

This work has been made possible in part due to the Nation’s Federal recognition, achieved in 2010 through the diligence of members of the Nation after over 30 years of petition. Through Federal Recognition, the Nation gained status under the NAGPRA – federal legislation that passed in 1990. Under the Act, museums, universities, and other institutions are required to turn over remains and funerary objects to federally recognized tribes that make a formal request.

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***Hawthorne Road:** In August 2018, human remains were found during excavation for a new residence on Hawthorne Road in Shinnecock Hills. The human remains were determined to be part of an ancient burial site. The Town of Southampton protected the land from future development by acquiring it through the Town’s Community Preservation Fund in 2019 – a result achieved because of the Society’s advocacy. The Trust facilitated the sale by negotiating a management agreement with the seller.



*Members of the Shinnecock Graves Protection Warrior Society
photo courtesy of Dana Shaw*

In recent years, human remains returned to the Nation have been reburied in areas across the East End that are near where they were found. The Trust has supported the Society in this initiative by providing land for this purpose.

“The relationship between the Society and the Trust has been very instrumental in returning our indigenous ancestors that have been dug up from their graves back to the earth. Because access to many sites and sacred places has been cut off to our people, the Trust has been able to provide areas of their lands that will never be developed for us to reinter our ancestors as close as possible to where they came,” said Weeks.

Also important to the work of the Society is the passage in 2020 of Southampton Town’s Graves Protection Act (STGPA). The Act created a town archaeologist post and requires that a person who discovers an unmarked grave to immediately cease construction and notify Southampton Town police. The Act also provides a process for the possible conservation of the land through the Town’s Community Preservation Fund. The hope is that this will become a model for other municipalities in the state.

The Shinnecock Nation and Shinnecock Graves Protection Warrior Society were instrumental in getting action on the part of the Southampton Town Board to make this Act a reality.

Resources:

To start your journey to learn more about Indigenous communities here on Long Island and across the world, visit:

- On This Site, curated by Jeremy Dennis, for information on Indigenous communities on Long Island: jeremynative.com/onthissite/
- Native Land, a mobile app and online resource about Indigenous communities across the globe: native-land.ca/ or download from the app store on your mobile device.

Study Update | Sagg Pond Watershed

As many know, Sagg Pond (like many of our ponds and bays) has suffered from the effects of excessive nutrient loading from various sources. Beginning in 2019, the Peconic Land Trust has been working with partners – *Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Suffolk County's Agricultural Stewardship Program* and *Marine Program* and the *New York State Center for Clean Water Technology at Stony Brook University* – to study the issue and to look at solutions to improve the overall conditions.

Over the summer, you may have spotted boats from CCE Marine out on the pond. If so, then you are not alone. CCE's Marine program staff led by Molly Graffam, PhD, and Ron Paulsen, PG, were conducting site characterization studies along the Trust's Smith Corner Preserve and other properties to quantify nitrogen in groundwater that discharges into the pond along the shoreline.

Partial funding for this project (50 percent) has been provided by donations from residents within the Sagg Pond watershed – thank you! And, we are happy to report that the Southampton Town Board recently approved an award of \$107,433 through its Community Preservation Fund's Water Quality Improvement Program. The Trust will use this award to fund the additional 50 percent of the current research. *Thanks to the community and the Town, we have fully funded CCE's current research.*

Once CCE makes recommendations in early 2022, based on its research, the Trust will launch a remediation effort to revitalize the pond. Molly



CCE groundwater team collecting surface water samples

and Ron will pinpoint the locations of nitrogen-rich groundwater seepage into the pond and identify potential remediation methods, including the use of permeable reactive barriers (PRBs) in specific locations to naturally break down nitrogen and other nutrients before they reach the pond.

In addition to the use of PRBs, another important tool for limiting nitrogen from entering the pond is to upgrade antiquated septic systems. The Trust will be working with Stony Brook University's Center for Clean Water Technology to assist residents within the watershed with the replacement of inefficient septic systems.

To learn more, visit PeconicLandTrust.org/SaggPond. Have questions, or would like to make a gift in support of the pond's restoration? Contact Amanda Abraham, Director of Development at AAbraham@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Georgica Pond's New Look



Driving along Montauk Highway in Wainscott you may have noticed changes occurring at the Trust's Georgica Pond Preserve. Since acquiring the property in August 2020, we've removed existing structures, added native grasses and plants, and installed a new walking path and parking area. Stay tuned: new kiosk signs will be coming soon with information on the conservation, restoration, and animal and plant species.

VISIT TODAY!



The restoration and new walking path at the Georgica Pond Preserve was made possible by a generous donation from Katharine Rayner – with our sincere thanks!

Restoring Forge River

This year a floodplain restoration of the Forge River Preserve was completed. This 4.6-acre peninsula, located in Mastic Beach, was acquired by the Trust in 2014 and contains sensitive wetlands, wildlife habitat, and is part of the migration routes for birds. The property and structures had been badly damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Restoration began in 2018, when the house and other structures on the property were removed. Additional steps included removal of invasive species from upland and shoreline areas. Beach grass and other native plants, including bayberry and bluestem, have been installed.

The main goal is to help protect adjacent areas from storm surges. The preserve is also a refuge for a variety of bird species, including osprey: a nesting pole was installed on the preserve earlier this year.



New osprey nesting pole with predator guard

To learn more about this project, contact Matt Swain, Director of Stewardship and Geographic Information Systems at MSwain@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Waterwash Narrow River | A Rain Garden Walk



Ecological Artist / Activist Lillian Ball leads one of the tour groups

Rain gardens can be a viable solution to minimize the impact of stormwater run-off into sensitive wetlands and other environmentally fragile areas.

Creating a rain garden on your property can feel like a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be a large area to be impactful. To learn more, nearly 50 people joined us for two garden tours in September, led by Lillian Ball. Lillian is an ecological artist/activist working on water issues and has a multidisciplinary background in anthropology, ethnographic film, and sculpture. Her expertise both in understanding the "big picture" as well as landscape design, paired with expansive knowledge of plants offered attendees hope that they too could create something meaningful, environmentally impactful, and beautiful in their home landscape.

The location of the tour in Orient is the only residential project in the *Waterwash* series conceptualized and designed by Lillian. Created in collaboration with the property owners, their architect, and nature, the project at the 15-acre site involved the removal of invasive plants and adding perennials and grasses native to the Northeastern U.S. Several rain gardens installed throughout the site hold storm water as it soaks the plantings, reducing runoff and erosion, and provide the perfect environment for these plants to thrive.



Plants observed during the tour included many varieties of grasses, such as Little Blue Stem, Atlantic Grass, Switchgrass, and Purple Love Grass. Woven throughout the meadow were Eastern Red Cedar, Bayberry, Goldenrod, Milkweed and Arrowwood Viburnum. Closer to the home we observed numerous varieties of Asters as well as Ninebark, along with Ironweed, Baptisia australis (false indigo), Joe Pye weed, and Liatris (blazing star).

For additional information about this project and to learn more about Waterwash projects, please visit Lillian's website: lillianball.squarespace.com.

Moving Forward | Deep Hole Creek Conservation



As many of you know the Trust has been working with the Koehler family since July to find a conservation alternative to the development of their 15-acre parcel along Deep Hole Creek in Mattituck.

In September, we were so happy to share with you that the Trust was in contract to purchase the property. We are very grateful to the Koehler family for choosing to work with the Trust, Southold Town, and you, the community, to achieve a conservation outcome. Over the last few months, the community has continued to support this effort and we are closer now than ever to our goal. And it all began with you, the community. By impressing upon the Trust and Town how important this land was to local residents, the community mobilized a conservation effort now close to completion.

When we started this project, we had hoped to partner not only with the Town, but with a conservation buyer. And when one didn't immediately show up, rather than lose this preservation opportunity, the Trust stepped forward to permanently protect the property, but not to own it indefinitely. In fact, a key component

to financing this acquisition is the sale of the property to a conservation buyer, especially one who will keep the farmland in production. If you or anyone you know is interested in owning this property once protected, please let us know.

If all goes well, the Trust anticipates closing by year end. At that time, the Town will purchase the development rights on the parcel, protecting the land in perpetuity. We will restore our funds by selling the protected parcel, so that we can protect another conservation gem on the North Fork.

Over 100 community members have contributed to this conservation effort, which will cover a portion of the development rights, closing costs and carrying costs of the Trust until a conservation buyer can be found for the property. Additional funds are still needed to cover the acquisition costs.

Please consider joining our efforts!

Visit page 18 for a list of project donors.

Interested in learning more? Contact Alison Delaney, Development Officer at ADelaney@PeconicLandTrust.org or Holly Sanford, Project Manager at HSanford@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Equipment Co-Op Thrives and Expands

Thanks to the generosity of two anonymous donors, the Trust's farm equipment co-op is expanding!

New farmers often face the issue of a limited amount of capital and what to prioritize – land, seed, personnel, or equipment? For our incubator farmers at the Trust's Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm, some of those choices became simpler with the establishment of The Lyle Wells Farm Equipment Co-Op in 2019. Named in memory of Lyle Wells, a Riverhead farmer who passed away in 2018, this optional program provides our incubator farmers on the North Fork with access to shared equipment for a \$250 annual fee.

The variety of professional farming tools include a BCS two-wheel tractor, backpack sprayer, and two seeders. This equipment is designed to work well on the one-acre plots that our new farmers start on, but is also big enough to be effective on up to 3 acres. The equipment co-op gives farmers who join access to equipment that is right for the initial size of their business, while they can save for larger equipment as they grow in scale. Rachel Stephens of Sweet Woodland Farm has been a keen participant of the equipment co-op. Her favorite piece of equipment is the BCS two-wheel tractor. This machine can perform many of the same functions as a traditional tractor thanks to its various attachments. Rachel has used the BCS to create rows in the fields, till the land, and more. This year, Rachel

Priscilla's Farm | From Wedding Bells to Bell Peppers



Have you been to the Trust's Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm in Southold? If you visited over the summer, you were greeted with rows of colorful flowers behind the big white barn. Those flowers and surrounding crops belong to Priscilla's Farm.

Priscilla and Leslie Howard joined the Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative in 2018. The program provides assistance and access to affordable farmland. "Our farm wouldn't exist without this program. We wouldn't have land to farm and the sense of security that we have here. The Trust wants us to succeed," said Leslie.

And Priscilla and Leslie have succeeded. Starting with a one-acre lease and monetary gifts from their wedding

registry, they now farm 3.5 acres and grow everything from marigolds to radishes to tomatoes. They run a weekly CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) membership and sell produce at two Long Island farmer's markets.

Emphasizing certified organic practices is a point of pride for the couple. The farm is USDA certified organic through the Northeast Organic Farming Association. Priscilla notes that their crops grow well in the local soil without any need for fertilizers. Their carrots fared especially well this year. At night the farm fields come alive with beneficial insects. To mitigate crop damage, they plant in different areas of the farm field. This way if one section of potatoes declines the others are not affected. This ensures they always have inventory to sell at market.

Within their farm fields, you'll notice a collection of small greenhouses. They were hand built and designed to be portable. They provide warmth and shelter to delicate developing seedlings that are transplanted directly into the fields once they are deemed ready. By also changing the location of the small greenhouses, any pests who found a cozy home are left behind for the new year.

You can find Priscilla, Leslie, and all their organic and delicious produce in season at the Sayville Farmers Market on Saturdays and the Port Jefferson Farmers Market on Sundays.

Interested in learning more about the Farms for the Future Initiative? Contact Dan Heston, Director of Agricultural Programs at DHeston@PeconicLandTrust.org.



Crop rows at Sweet Woodland Farm

was able to cut a half-acre of rye in two hours with the sickle bar mower attachment. Last year it took 1 ½ months and two co-workers to do the same job! By having the rye harvested in a timely manner she was able to save money on straw for the fields.

With funding received from two anonymous donors, the Trust will purchase new equipment on the North Fork and start a co-op program on the South Fork for our incubator farmers at the Deborah Ann Light Preserve in Amagansett. The South Fork will be receiving starter equipment including their own BCS two-wheel tractor while the North Fork will receive, amongst other equipment, a rotary spreader and drop spreader.

Have questions or interested in helping us grow the co-op? Contact Jessie McSwane-Marcus at JMarcus@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Donor Spotlight | David and Carolyn Holstein



We first heard about the Peconic Land Trust about a dozen years ago. We had recently become part-time residents of the East End (now full-time!) and were always interested in local events. We attended one of the Trust's small gatherings at Wölffer Estate Vineyards one beautiful summer evening. Kathy Kennedy, Senior Manager of Outreach, greeted us, filled us in on the workings of the Trust and we then had a unique tour and wine tasting with Roman Roth, Wölffer's own winemaker. Not only was the evening filled with wine and stories about the winery, but about why the land and its use was so important to the region.

After our first event with the Trust, we began attending other offerings and learning more about the history of securing farmland on the East End, as well as the current challenges to that work. John Halsey's outline of how the Trust came into being, and the individual stories from local growers and others involved in the land were inspiring. Most importantly, we were extremely impressed by the Trust's creativity and vision. They were approaching the challenges of their expanding mission with new ideas, new partners and delivering tangible results. The enthusiasm, intelligence, welcoming and breadth of efforts led us to enthusiastically supporting the Trust.

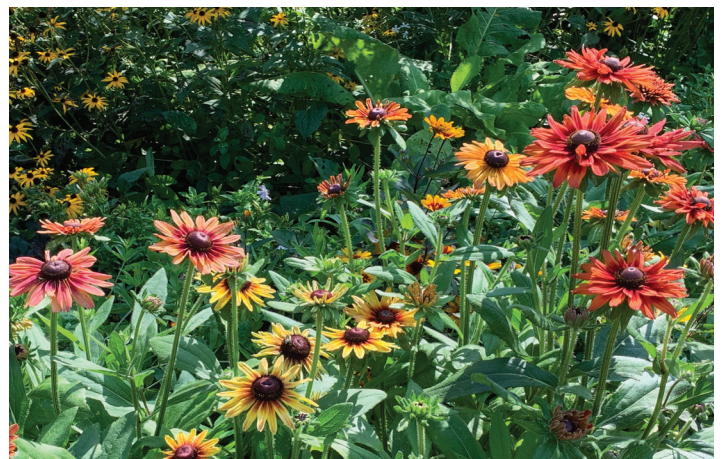
My employer, The Capital Group, has a real desire for its associates to give something back to their communities. In pushing me to broaden my interests and activities, I am more connected to colleagues and, perhaps, a more engaged employee. The Trust was an organization that we believed in and wanted to be committed to. The Corporate Match provided an incentive to increase our contributions and magnify their impact. It helped us make the jump from being an

interested donor to being a "partner" and having a real connection with the Trust's work.

The added financial capacity to donate through the Corporate Match is a blessing. It also brings with it some additional responsibilities. You want to make sure the charities being supported align with your goals and they are ones that you can feel a connection to for the long-term as we do with the Trust. In addition to donating through the Corporate Match program, we have also become members of Bridge Gardens. We so appreciate the peace and serenity of the garden itself. The space provides a respite from the more crowded atmosphere outside its walls. We especially enjoy the work of Rick Bogusch, Garden Director. From his tours of the property, offering expert advice on gardening on the East End to a summer music evening, where he generously prepares items from their garden, his gentle manner pervades the space.

At the height of the pandemic, nature was probably the only thing that kept us going. We made it an adventure to go for a hike/walk nearly every day. It felt like the only safe way to be out and about. We figured out the Southampton trail system/map and kept a log of the trails we discovered. And there is always the beach. We are so lucky to be in an area that has so much accessibility to nature that has been preserved for us to enjoy. Conservation is all about preserving what we have today. Plus, looking ahead and trying to expand our reach so the quality of life for future generations will be even better.

Thank you, David and Carolyn, for sharing your story with us. And thank you to all our donors who make our work possible.



Interested in learning more about the Corporate Match program? Contact Olivia Waterhouse, Development Assistant at OWaterhouse@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Extend your impact and become a

Peconic Partner

Your monthly gift to the Annual Fund helps protect our working farms, natural lands, and heritage. Without your support, our work would not be possible.

Thank you.

Giving is easy!
Simply return the enclosed gift envelope or visit us online.

PeconicLandTrust.org/Give
Call us at 631.283.3195 or email us at:
Info@PeconicLandTrust.org

Meet the Staff | Janet Schutt

I've been working at the Peconic Land Trust for 23 years. You could say that I'm passionate about our mission. And here's why:

I grew up about an hour west of the East End in North Babylon. At the end of my block there was a lake and woods. That was our playground. We would tramp through the woods pretending we were Nancy Drew looking for clues to some made-up mystery. Or build tree forts and lean-tos with my older cousins and friends. Play hide and seek.

Then one day it disappeared. Bulldozers came through clearing a wide swath through the woods and cutting the lake in half to build Route 231. The ecosystem was destroyed. Fish, ducks, and swans floated with oil slicks on my half of the lake. Box turtles, salamanders, and bird nests were crushed beneath the wheels of dump trucks and heavy machinery.

I remember feeling helpless. Like there was nothing I could do to prevent this. At the time, there wasn't.

But you're not helpless. By giving to the Trust, you're part of a community of like-minded people who want to conserve our woodlands, wetlands, and farmland. Coupled with the expertise and dedication of Peconic Land Trust staff – we can accomplish great things!



My whole family has gotten involved with the Trust over the years. Peconic has always been a family affair. My husband volunteered as the clam-shucker extraordinaire for many

years. And my son was a food runner, garbage hauler, and golf cart driver as he grew from 5 years old when I started to his mid-20s today. Being able to raise my son with an appreciation for the land, nature, and local farmers has been wonderful.

I'm so proud to be part of this amazing community that has already protected over 13,000 acres of rich farmland, majestic woodlands, and stunning wetlands. I hope that you too, take pride in the role you have played in protecting our beautiful East End. We couldn't do it without you.

I'd love to know . . .

What makes you passionate about conservation?

Please share your story with me anytime!

Would you like to share your own conservation story? E-mail Janet Schutt, Senior Manager of Donor Services, at JSchutt@PeconicLandTrust.org.

A Source of Joy and Learning for Many

Did you have a chance to visit Bridge Gardens this year? If you did, you were in good company. Many realized the garden has become a sought-after source of relaxation, nature-based playtime, art and learning. Whether drawn to the wide-open spaces where children can explore freely, the shaded picnic tables that offered a place to relax and listen to the birds over lunch, or the exuberant garden beds that offered inspiration for gardeners of all skills, Bridge Gardens was a source of joy and learning for many.

Late spring saw the arrival of TravelStorys. This audio tour of the garden, narrated by Garden Director Rick Bogusch and Senior Manager of Outreach Kathy Kennedy, offers you the chance to learn about the plants and history of Bridge Gardens. Listen to the tour while at the garden, or you can visit our website from anywhere and take the virtual tour.

PeconicLandTrust.org/TravelStorys

The easing pandemic allowed us to gradually transition to in-person programming. We hope you took advantage and joined us. Some of our workshops featured the rose, herb, and vegetable gardens. Our garden-to-table cooking demonstrations, in partnership with community gardener Justin Ruaysamran, were very popular with



Justin and Rick presenting the Herb Your Enthusiasm Workshop, July 23, 2021

attendees who learned and then tasted samples made from produce and herbs from Bridge Gardens.

People with an interest in the arts enjoyed a series of watercolor workshops with artist Barbara Thomas, as well as exploring the exhibition of large-scale landscape sculptures as part of the Uncommon



Ground IV exhibition. Curated by Cheryl Sokolow of C. Fine Art, the show features twenty sculptures throughout the garden, each enhancing your experience of the landscape. You can view the show through September 2022.



And, in November, new kiosks came to Bridge Gardens!

The general information signs, along with signs for the Community Gardens and the Demonstration Vegetable beds, are part of a new series of signage in English and Spanish. Make sure to take a look the next time you visit.



Garden Assistant Shawn Gant and Rick debuting the new kiosk.

The gardens look their best with the help of steady volunteers who assist Rick and Shawn with a myriad of tasks from harvesting fresh produce for the Sag Harbor Food Pantry, deadheading flowers, weeding garden beds, and assisting with programming.

Thank you to all!

Have questions about gardening, plants, lawns and landscapes? Email us at LawnExpert@PeconicLandTrust.org.

Climate Change and the Native Plant Connection

When considering the future of our climate, there are numerous actions you can take to help reduce or reverse climate change. These include using alternative energy sources like solar power, creating a living shoreline to help absorb storm surge, and reducing waste through composting and recycling. But did you know that growing more native plants in your landscape also offers significant benefits?

Native plants are adapted to the climate and soil conditions where they naturally grow and require much less water, fertilizer, and pest controls. They sequester or absorb carbon in their root systems which also absorb water, reducing flooding and erosion. Just as importantly, they support biodiversity by providing nectar, pollen and seeds for wildlife as well as an environment for these animals to live and breed.

Showcasing sustainable, low impact gardening practices is a primary focus of the educational workshops at Bridge Gardens, and that includes growing native plants. Garden Director Rick Bogusch has incorporated many new native plants into the beds at Bridge Gardens since the Trust received the donation of this 5-acre public space in 2008. These plants offer four-season beauty for your landscape and there are many from



Coreopsis

which to choose.

In his monthly Bridge Gardens e-newsletter, Rick has shared some of his favorites. They include Spring-blooming bloodroot, which thrives in shade or partial shade, sun-loving *Coreopsis* ‘Gold Standard’, and *Rudbeckia*

‘Autumn Sun’ – both offering beautiful yellow blossoms and seed heads for birds in autumn. Trees and shrubs are also important components to the landscape and Rick suggests *Clethra alnifolia* or summersweet, a shrub with rich green foliage and spikes of white fragrant flowers that draw pollinators.

For more information visit our blog, and plan to join us for upcoming workshops at Bridge Gardens in 2022.



Connections

Thank you for staying connected with us this year! As we look ahead to 2022, we hope to see you more often, and once again connect to nature and each other.

Project Update | Wading River Initiative



For 100 years, the Condzella family has farmed on North Country Road in Wading River. With their assistance, the Peconic Land Trust is working to permanently protect 38.6 acres of farmland, including 15 acres currently owned by the family and an additional 23.6 acres that they are currently leasing.

To do this, the Trust has applied for three grants from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. One of the grants has been approved, and two are pending. But the grants will only cover a percentage of the total project cost. The Trust is working with the community to raise \$700,000 required by Ag and Markets as a match to the grants by March 31, 2022.

Protecting this farmland will provide a path for the Condzellias to potentially acquire the leased acreage and reunite it with the farmland they currently own.

By permanently protecting this farmland, our community will forever benefit from:

- Availability of fresh, locally grown produce, including strawberries, asparagus, and honey.
- Scenic viewshed and source water protection.
- Continuation of the area’s bucolic farming heritage.

We need your help to protect this bountiful land for agriculture.

Please consider joining us!

Visit page 19 for a list of project donors.

Interested in learning more and supporting this project? Please contact Julie Wesnofske, Project Manager at JWesnofske@PeconicLandTrust.org, or Amanda Abraham, Director of Development at AAbraham@PeconicLandTrust.org.



A Bountiful Season

Note from Layton

Our 32nd season of community farming in Amagansett will soon conclude, the long arms of autumn wrap around rows of sweetening broccoli, cauliflower, cabbages, carrots, parsnips & more.

Meanwhile, late season flowers (cosmos, celosia, zinnias and marigolds, among others) linger, indefatigable, to adorn sills and tabletops across Amagansett. Elsewhere on the farm, roughly three quarters of our beloved silt loam is bedded down with “cover crops,” seeded to conserve precious topsoil for the next six months or so until the cycle of farming begins again.

The cyclical nature of vegetable farming, of a life lived close to the land, can be a great comfort given the vicissitudes of daily life, particularly in these persistently uncertain times. This season marked our second living and farming in the midst of a pandemic, and true to form the Quail Hill Farm community created space to gather, harvest, and celebrate the little victories of 2021.

If last season was the opening of a door, this year we walked through, together. Early season CSA sign-ups were strong (and yes, sold out for the second year running), and a new sliding-scale CSA fee structure meant that we were able to provide free and reduced-price shares for more than 50 families in our community.

At our first annual Memorial Day Plant Sale, scores of members filled their arms with flower, herb and vegetable starts – optimism in its purest form. And throughout the CSA season, a crew of greeters staffed the Greeter Station, welcoming members to the rows on Birch Hill.



As I write this, the forest floor around the Farm Shop is littered with tiny caloric treasures – hickory and beech nuts abound in what ecologists are calling a “mast year.” An abundance of tree nuts will, in turn, catalyze population booms all the way up the food chain. Mast years are also a strategy for resilience: when all of the trees in a forest coordinate to over-produce its seed, they all enjoy shorter odds at propagating future generations of their kind.

The Quail Hill Farm community is concluding its own mast year of sorts, in which we welcomed more CSA members and fed more families through food access programs than ever before, including the farm to food pantry partnership with the Bridgehampton Child Care and Recreation Center. Hopefully, in time, the efforts we championed during these pandemic years will create a groundswell of transformation that will foster a food system on the East End rooted in equity, resilience and justice.

To learn more about Quail Hill Farm, contact Layton Guenther, Farm Director, at LGuenther@PeconicLandTrust.org.



PECONIC LAND TRUST

Quail Hill Farm
Community Supported Agriculture

In its second year, the Farm to Food Pantry program provided **28,000 pounds** of fresh vegetables to the food pantry at the Bridgehampton Child Care and Recreation Center. *Thanks to all who have made this possible!*

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Supporters at all levels for joining us in looking towards a future that values the working farms, natural lands, and the heritage we all share.

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Peconic Legacy Circle members have let us know their intention to remember the Trust in their estate planning. Legacy gifts are among the most meaningful ways to ensure that Long Island's beautiful beaches, clean water, working farms, majestic woodland and pristine wetlands will be protected for generations to come.

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Through Farms & Fields

A CELEBRATION OF OUR LOCAL BOUNTY

We are continually grateful for your ongoing support of conservation and the work of the Peconic Land Trust. We have missed connecting with you in person and look forward to next year when we hope to be able to celebrate, together.

Thank you to our committee for your vision and dedication,

Carol Mulvihill Ahlers (Chair), Michael Daly, Hatsy Dresher, Nancy Goell, Patty Orben, Judy Saner

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296 Hampton Road
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631.283.3195

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The Peconic Land Trust conserves Long Island's working farms, natural lands, and heritage for our communities now and in the future.

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While many believe that the funds raised by the 2% real estate transfer tax go to Peconic Land Trust for its conservation programs, this is incorrect!

The Peconic Land Trust raises the vast majority of its funds through private donations.

The 2% real estate transfer tax paid by buyers goes directly to the Town in which the property purchased is located.

Thank you for your help!

Counsel

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William T. Hutton, Esq.
Susan Tutts, Esq.
Ellen Fred, Esq.
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