



PECONIC LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1

APRIL/MAY 1993



Photo By Roger Smith

North Haven Parcel Protected

Throughout the 1980's, as the East End experienced high appreciation in real estate values, the pressure on municipalities to reassess properties intensified. In the Town of Southampton, the path toward reassessment began when a court ruling invalidated the Town's policy of reassessing properties upon sale. This policy had resulted in many instances wherein owners of recently purchased property were taxed at a far higher rate than longtime residents with comparable property. The Town sought to rectify this inequity by reassessing every parcel of land within the Town, the goal being that every property owner would pay taxes based upon the present value (highest and best use)

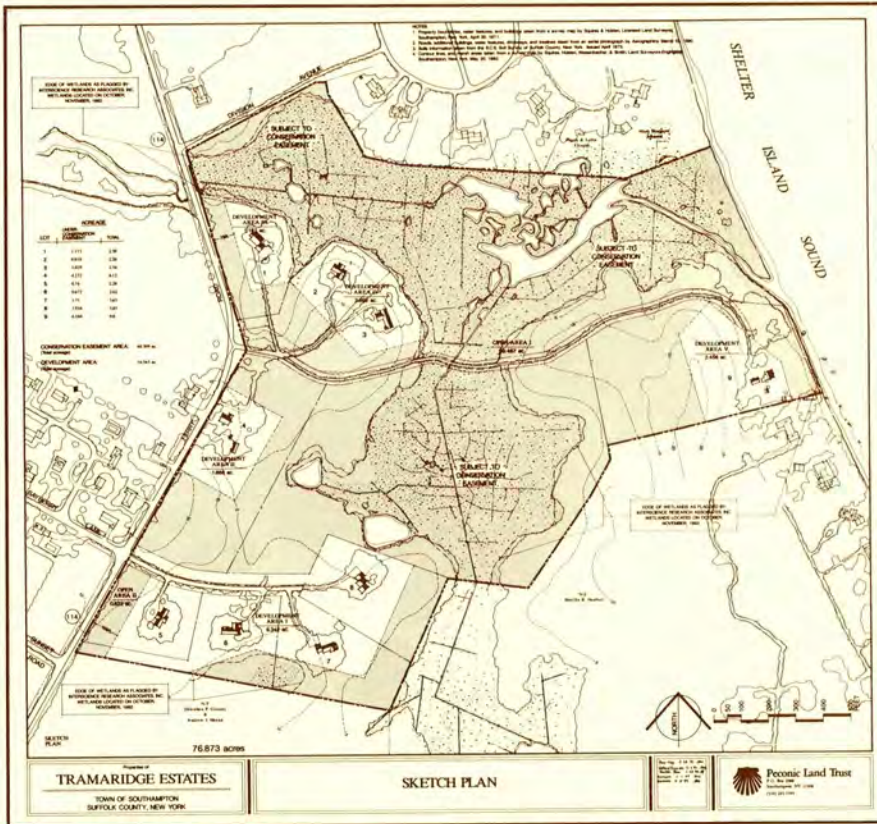
of their property, as required by New York State law.

Unfortunately, the reassessment adversely affected many owners of vacant land by dramatically increasing their property tax burden. Historically, the Town had gone to great lengths to minimize the impact of property taxes on the conversion of raw land to other uses by keeping such taxes as low as possible. However, compliance with New York State law required a change in this policy. In order to assist the owners of vacant land, both the Town of Southampton and the Peconic Land Trust have used conservation easements as a mechanism to reduce property taxes and preserve open space.

A good case in point is 77 acres of woodlands, meadows, and tidal wetlands in the Village of North Haven owned by the Loveridge family since 1951. For years, the family had been carefully charting a course to protect the property in its entirety by conveying interests in the property from one generation to the next. As a consequence of the reassessment, however, the best laid plans appeared to be for naught. The family was confronted with a 13-fold increase in property taxes on at least 32 acres of the property, an amount that would have necessitated the sale of the property.

"It's as ridiculous as paying income

Continued on next page



taxes on potential income,” says Julie Zaykowski, one of three Loveridge daughters. “Vacant land cannot support high taxes. Our woodlands provide no income. A property tax that is based on potential development only encourages development.”

The only structures on the entire property are a summer cottage (originally built at the turn of the century as a hunting lodge), a shed and the old farmhouse where Julie, her husband Joe and their 9 year-old daughter live. The house was built in the 1750’s by Constant Havens, a descendant of the family that first farmed what was then called Hog Neck (see “Historic Lore”). Four generations of the Loveridge Family have grown to appreciate the abundance of wildlife on the land and marshlands. In their view, the property is a treasure and should be protected.

“This land has been properly cared for in its natural state for hundreds of years,” Julie says. “The new assessments were particularly painful for us because it was not a result of anything we had done. We didn’t add buildings or a swimming pool or tennis court. We had no plans to develop the property, yet with an enormous property tax increase based only on the potential for development, it seemed there was nothing we could do to prevent it.”

In March of 1992, Julie Zaykowski called the Peconic Land Trust to discuss the

family’s dilemma. “The Peconic Land Trust became our only hope that something decent would come out of this whole nightmare. The Trust’s advice and support has been invaluable.”

The first step was to take advantage of Southampton Town’s Term Easement Program. The Town established this program in the 1980’s as a means to reduce property taxes on land protected for five years or more. The longer the commitment in time, the greater the tax reduction. Such easements are reviewed by the Town’s Conservation Board and accepted by the Town Board based upon the Conservation Board’s recommendation and a public hearing.

In the case of the Loveridge family, time was of the essence as the term easement had to be in place by July 1, 1992 in order to reduce the 1992-93 property taxes. The family decided to put a five- year term easement on about 60 acres of their land. The easement was drafted such that it could be extinguished, without penalty, if the family conveyed a perpetual conservation easement on a comparable portion of their property to the Town or the Peconic Land Trust before the end of the five-year period. The term easement was granted to the Town several days before the deadline. As a consequence, the projected 1992-93 property taxes would increase 6-fold rather than 13-fold. In spite of

this reduction, the family still faced the prospect of selling portions of their land in order to pay future property taxes, although the day of reckoning had been temporarily put off.

With the term easement in place, the next step in the process was to begin the planning work necessary for the preparation of a perpetual conservation easement. As with most of the Trust’s planning projects, our work began with a thorough analysis of the land in order to identify the best set of options for the family and the property. An Environmental Conditions map was prepared that consolidated data about the property including soils, wetlands, and topography. With this information in hand, the Trust identified those areas of the property that should be preserved in perpetuity as well as those areas that may be suitable for limited development in the future. Based on the family’s goals and objectives, the Trust then prepared a Concept Plan that identified a conservation easement area which would perpetually restrict the development of approximately 60 acres of land, protecting the most ecologically sensitive areas as well as scenic vistas. The map also identified 7 future homesites, in addition to the 2 existing residences that the family would retain for future equity. Consequently, the perpetual easement would permanently reduce the yield on the property from a total of 18 units to 9 units.

After seven months of work with the Trust and with the encouragement of Town Supervisor Fred Thiele, Town Assessor Ed Deyermond, and the North Haven Village Planning Board, the Loveridge family made a donation of a perpetual conservation easement to the Peconic Land Trust on February 23, 1993 (please see map). As a consequence, the 1993-94 property taxes will be further reduced to about three times what they were prior to reassessment.

“If we had not proceeded with the Trust, it’s likely our only alternative would have been to sell the entire parcel, including our home,” Julie states. “To lose the land and our home would have been a great tragedy.”

The Peconic Land Trust is presently looking into the assessment practices of other states to determine the extent to which “current use” assessment is used as an alternative to the “highest and best use” assessment method. Current use assessment could protect landowners like the Loveridge family from being put in a position of having to develop land to pay property taxes.

Annual Meeting

Steven T. Kenny, the new Chairman of the Southampton Town Planning Board, addressed 80 people at the Peconic Land Trust's Annual Dinner on Monday, October 26th, 1992 at Indian Cove Restaurant in Hampton Bays.

Mr. Kenny's talk focused on what may be a key issue on Long Island in the 1990's: The effort to balance economic development with continued preservation of the region's unique natural resources. "... a viable economy is necessary to secure environmental protection," said Mr. Kenny. "It is the basic premise which must shape our approach to the future of Eastern Long Island."

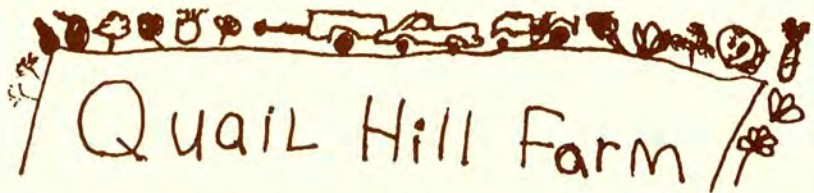
He praised supporters of the Peconic Land Trust for understanding and respecting the traditional role of land and open spaces in adding to economic productivity. "This organization knows the interdependence of our three part economy: agriculture, fishing, and tourism, and appreciates the importance of planning for and providing the setting and infrastructure to maintain and enhance our traditional industries."

Mr. Kenny also pointed out that the 1990's will be a crucial time for balancing several priorities and that a strategic plan is necessary. "We can't really waste much time," he stressed. "It took us 300 years to get to our present land use pattern. It will take us less than 30 years to finish and permanently fix development's footprint in our area."

During the course of the evening, the Trust's President, John v.H. Halsey, announced the organization's officers for 1993: Lee Foster, Chairman; Lucy Bradley, Vice President; Joseph L. Townsend, Jr., Treasurer; Elizabeth A. Smith, Assistant Treasurer; and Roger Smith, Secretary. Herbert L. Golden of Laurel joins Deborah Ann Light, E. Blair McCaslin, Paul Stoutenburgh, Edwin F. Tuccio, and Thomas Williams on the Trust's Board of Directors.

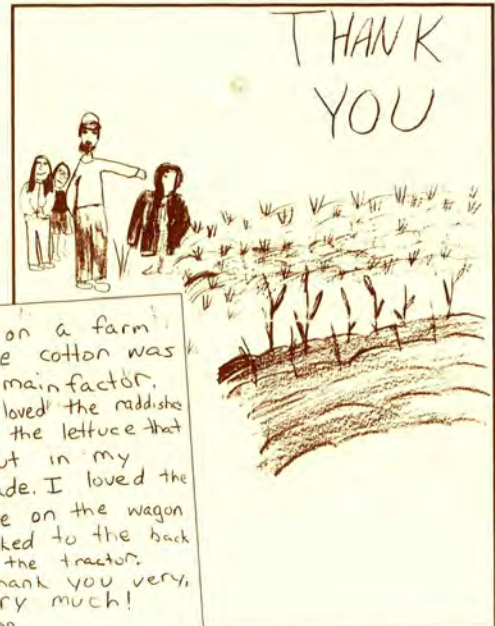
"I am convinced the Trust is an organization which does what it says it does," stated Ms. Foster about her commitment to another year as Chairman. "'Trust' defines not only the entity that strives to protect resources but it identifies what is required to do so."

"This is definitely a working Board, not figureheads at all," said Mr. Halsey. "The Board sets policy, it meets monthly, and its members serve on a number of committees in addition to supporting other activities. We're lucky to have people who want to be involved."



Can we learn about organic farming and also take part in planting and harvesting our own vegetables? This question apparently went through the mind of Sue Ruland and her fourth grade class at the Laurel Hill School in Setauket. After finding out about Quail Hill Farm, a cooperative community farm in Amagansett managed by the Peconic Land Trust, Ms. Ruland encouraged her students to participate in the farm's agricultural activities. The class eagerly echoed the teacher's interest, and organized a "read-a-thon" to raise the \$240 needed to purchase a half-share in the farm. The event was so successful that this class of fourteen students raised \$590, more than enough for a full share in the cooperative farm.

The class visited the farm last spring to learn about their share in the Trust's community supported agricultural project. According to Scott Chaskey, the Trust's Stewardship Coordinator, the youngsters spent several hours at the farm, planting sunflowers, visiting the apple orchard, and harvesting greens and "Easter egg" radishes. Dur-



To Scott,
Thank you for taking the time to show us the farm. My Uncle (who lives in Texas) is a rancher and a farmer, and my mom (my Uncle's sister) and brother and sister used to

live on a farm where cotton was the main factor. I loved the radishes and the lettuce that I put in my salade. I loved the ride on the wagon hooked to the back of the tractor. Thank you very, very much!
Dyan

ing the summer, when the forty varieties of vegetables and fruits matured, students returned with their parents to harvest more of their share.

"What a wonderful gesture by this class of fourteen students," Mr. Chaskey said. "They were so enthusiastic when we toured the farm in order to learn more about organic and community farming. The Autumn Beauty sunflowers which they planted so thickly smiled with their radiant energy throughout late August."

It is a primary purpose of the Farm to welcome and educate children concerning farms, environmental issues, and organic gardening. During the summer, Quail Hill Farm offers a children's gardening class; children from age 4 learn to plant, cultivate and appreciate home grown food. One hundred and forty families joined the cooperative farm in 1992. Now is the time to enquire about shares in Quail Hill Farm for the 1993 season. Please call Scott Chaskey at (516) 267-8492 or the Trust's main office at (516) 283-3195 for information.

Historic Lore: North Haven



Photos Provided By The Zaykowski Family

What is now known as North Haven was settled in the latter part of the seventeenth century, shortly after the first English settlers found their way to the East End of Long Island. The peninsula of land was originally call Hog Neck and was purchased from Indians living on Shelter Island. A deed dated October 3, 1665 records:

"The Shelter Island Indians have this day confirmed the purchase of Hog Neck to Southampton men, forever reserving liberty of hunting and fishing and fowling upon same, and have received six Indian coats upon the confirmation thereof. The full satisfaction of all their claims to Southampton men."

Among the first families to settle on Hog Neck were the Havens, Sayres, Eldridges, Russels, Paynes, and Gardiners. These first settlers were farm families; they used the open land to pasture livestock and raise crops of wheat, fruit, and vegetables.

For the most part, Hog Neck was maintained as a farming community. Yet throughout the years other industries, such as cooperage, boatbuilding, fishing, salt hay harvesting, and grist mills also sustained the community.

One unique industry it can claim as its own is the production of salt. Salt works were operated in the area as early

as the Revolutionary War. One of the early innovators in the industry, Joseph Crowell, came to Hog Neck during the middle of the next century from Cape Cod. He purchased the Havens Farm and set up a salt works facility on what is now known as the Loveridge property (see cover story). Mr. Crowell was one of the first people in the country to use wind power to produce salt. He used windmills to pump water into large vats. Solar evaporation of the water left the salt which was then harvested and sold throughout the Northeast. During the next century, the increase of mining activity and factories to manufacture salt led to the end of nature's way.

As more people settled in the area, schoolhouses were built to serve the community. An early schoolhouse was built circa 1796 and was located on Sunset Beach Road. It was eventually destroyed by wind and tides. Another schoolhouse, built circa 1847, is located on the corner of Payne Avenue and Ferry Road. It no longer serves as a school but occasionally as a meeting place.

Because it would "sound better to modern ears," the name of the peninsula was changed to North Haven on July 25, 1842 "by unanimous voice and consent of the male inhabitants of Hog Neck,

opposite Sag Harbor." It was incorporated as a village in 1932.

For many visitors to the area, the first sign of North Haven is the bridge that connects it to Sag Harbor. Until the first one was constructed in 1834, travelers had to go around the beaches and through Noyac to reach the neighboring village. Due to winds, gales, and passage of time, several bridges have been built. (In 1900, the bridge fell into the water!) The one we see today was put up in 1936 and was renovated in 1974.

In some ways, North Haven is much changed from the time it was purchased from the Indians. Wetlands are now where ponds and lakes were, small harbors have filled in and meadows mark where farms used to be worked. Yet several portions of the peninsula, such as the Loveridge property, are clear reminders of the land of centuries ago and remain as a prime wildlife habitat that is a haven for hundreds of species of bird and animal life.



President's Column: 10th Anniversary

Ten years ago, I was living in San Francisco, making the final preparations for marriage to my lovely wife, Janis. Having left Southampton in 1970 for the Hanover plain, I had spent the intervening 13 years living, working, and studying in such varied places as New Hampshire, Sweden, and California. The older I got, the stronger the pull to return to Eastern Long Island. The more I saw of the world, the more I appreciated this special place. In late June, 1983, Janis and I left California in a pickup truck bound for Long Island.

During those many years away from Long Island, I would return to visit family and friends. Each time I returned, something had changed. A farm had been developed, a vista had been lost, or a dune had been built upon. It seemed as though the destiny of the East End was beyond everyone's control. It was clear that those who loved and worked the land were being displaced. Escalating land values, inheritance taxes, and stagnant crop prices were among the pressures that forced the conversion of farmland and open space to other uses.

In an effort to turn the tide, the Peconic Land Trust was incorporated on August 1, 1983. The initial Board of Directors consisted of four people... Richard W. King, Terry Stubelek, Roy L. Wines, Jr., and myself. The Trust was born of a desire to shape the destiny of Eastern Long Island, to provide farmers and other landowners with an alternative to the outright development of their land. The groundwork had been laid for the organization during the preceding 18 months. There was encouragement and assistance from many people including my family, Cliff and Lee Foster,

Edward P. Sharretts, Jr., Richard E. Warren, Jane and Emerson Thors, Audrey and Charlie Raebeck, Ronald S. Lauder, and Joe Raynor to name a few. We started with a hope and a dream and little else but hard work.

With each passing year, we have been able to apply limited resources and creativity towards the preservation of farmland and open space throughout Long Island. Yet, there is far more to do.

As I reflect on the accomplishments of this organization over the past 10 years, I am proud of the fact that we have created a stable institution that will continue the hard work of conserving the very essence of Long Island. I know that the Trust is here to stay, long beyond the hopes and dreams of its founders.



Challenge Grant

Raising funds for nonprofit programs is not an easy task. Given the sluggish economy of recent years, the situation has become even more difficult.

So it is especially satisfying that once again the Peconic Land Trust was able to meet its Challenge Grant in 1992. By October 31, 1992 the Trust had raised \$200,000 from many loyal supporters to match the \$100,000 pledged by the Lauder family, Joseph F. Cullman 3rd, John de Cuevas, Margaret de Cuevas, and two anonymous donors.

Meeting the Challenge Grant is just another indication of the widespread and devoted support for land conservation on Long Island. "Just now, the very circumstances that make it so difficult for people to give have opened up tremendous opportunities for land conservation on Long Island," commented Joe Townsend, the organization's Treasurer. "We're grateful to the many people who reached into their pockets to help the Trust take advantage of this opportunity."

Funds raised through the Challenge Grant underwrite the Trust's work including conservation planning, the acquisition of land and conservation easements, and the stewardship of protected lands. The results are evident. To date, the activities of the Trust have brought about the protection of over 1,200 acres of farmland and open space on Long Island.

Needless to say, there will be a 1993 Challenge Grant to propel our work ever forward. If you are interested in being a sponsor of the 1993 Challenge Grant or otherwise contributing, please call the Trust office. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Conservation Accomplishments: 1992 Revisited

The Peconic Land Trust is actively involved with over 50 different conservation projects encompassing several thousand acres of land. Each conservation project has a life of its own and evolves at its own pace. Given patience and diligence, a number of projects are completed each year. To date, the Peconic Land Trust has protected over 1,200 acres of farmland and open space throughout Eastern Long Island. During calendar year 1992, the Trust completed the following conservation projects involving the acquisition of land and easements, land management/restoration work, and preacquisition on behalf of government:

Stony Hill Woods Easement - Early in the year, an anonymous donor made a gift of a conservation easement to the Trust on approximately 96 acres of woodland in North Amagansett. The land is perpetually protected from development with the exception that the owner is entitled to one single-family residence on the site. The land under easement is particularly important as a deep water recharge area as designated by the Town of East Hampton and Suffolk County.

Bridgehampton Club Easement - The Trust received a gift of a conservation easement on approximately 68 acres of land owned by Bridgehampton Associates, Inc. The property, located in the hamlet of Bridgehampton, consists of a golf course and beach facility which dates back to the early 1900's. The easement held by the Trust will restrict the future development of the property while permitting compatible and historical uses of the property. Should the property cease to be used for recreational purposes, the easement provides for its future use as wildlife habitat and parkland.

Potter Easement - The Trust received another gift of a conservation easement from the Potter family on a property located in the deep water recharge area of East Hampton. The easement extinguishes 6 development rights and perpetually protects 20 acres of prime agricultural soils as defined by the Soil Conservation Service of the USDA.



Tyson Easement - The Trust received a gift of conservation easement on 8 acres of prime agricultural land in the Agricultural Overlay District of the Town of East Hampton. The easement extinguishes 7 development rights and is adjacent to a larger area of farmland, open space, and dune-lands.

Talmage Preserve - The David Talmage family of East Hampton made a gift of 4 lots to the Peconic Land Trust which contain significant tidal and freshwater wetlands. The property is located on Accabonac Harbor and protects wetlands and wildlife habitat.

Granttham/Reeve Preserve - Dr. Caryl Granttham of Riverhead named the Peconic Land Trust to be the recipient of 20 acres of beautiful soundfront property as a testamentary gift. The property is heavily wooded and will remain in its natural state in perpetuity.

Irving Cohn Preserve - The Trust received a gift of a wooded lot near Big Fresh Pond and adjacent to Elliston Park in the Town of Southampton.

Schumacher Preserve - The Trust received a gift of 4 separate lots in the Town of Southampton which include freshwater wetlands.

Quail Hill Farm - Our cooperative farm in Amagansett completed its third growing season in 1992 serving 140 families with over 40 varieties of organic vegetables and fruits. We are now cultivating 7 acres and have improved the soil health considerably due to composting, cover crops, and crop rotation. Quail Hill continues to serve as a model farm, integrating educational programs, sound organic soil management, and community stewardship.

Cooperation with Local Government In addition to the acquisition of land and conservation easements, the Peconic Land

Trust often assists government in the protection of farmland and open space. Last year the Trust negotiated, on behalf of Suffolk County, the purchase of 106 acres of woodland in the Town of East Hampton. The property, previously owned by Birchwood Holding Company, Inc., was acquired under the County's Safe Drinking Water Program. In this instance the Trust contracted to acquire the parcel and then reconveyed the land to Suffolk County at cost. The trust also negotiated, on behalf of the Town of East Hampton, the purchase of development rights on a 13.7 acre farm previously owned by Aquila Properties. This property is adjacent to several hundred acres of protected farmland.

Land Management - Once property is protected, its long-term management must be assured. The Trust manages and monitors each of its preserves and easements. In addition, the Trust provides a variety of other stewardship services to landowners including the preparation of long-term management plans, soil conservation measures, and wetlands restoration. During 1992 the Trust assumed the active management of an additional 87 acres of land owned by others. The management of these properties included soil preparation, seeding of beneficial covercrops, establishment of pasture, and field mowing.



Everbreeze Farms Protected

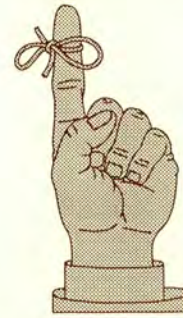
On March 11th, Suffolk County purchased the development rights on thirty-three and a half acres of farmland from Abram and Ellyn Halsey. The farmland is located between Rose Hill Road and David's Lane, south of Montauk Highway in the hamlet of Water Mill. The land has been farmed by the Halsey family for many generations. In recent years, the property has been planted in potatoes, corn, and rye.



The Peconic Land Trust assisted the Halsey family through the negotiation process with the County farmland program. The Trust also worked with the Town of Southampton on the family's behalf to design and seek approval for several lots for future development adjacent to the preserved farmland.

Randall T. Parsons, a consultant to the Peconic Land Trust, coordinated the effort. "This acquisition represents a significant piece of the conservation puzzle in the hamlet of Water Mill," said Parsons. "We hope to do much more with the cooperation of landowners in the area. This is a good example of a cooperative preservation effort involving a private landowner, the Peconic Land Trust, the Town of Southampton, and Suffolk County where everyone's goals and objectives were met."

The County has budgeted \$2,000,000 to purchase additional farmland development rights in 1993.



SAVE THESE DATES:

**June 13th
and
August 13th**

Annual Peconinic - Our annual "Peconinic" has been scheduled for **Sunday, June 13th** at Bayside Farms in the Town of Southold. As you know, it is our way of saying thank you to all of our supporters. Last year's Peconinic was a great success and we expect this year's to be even better. Invitations will be in the mail soon.

Clambake Benefit - Also, the Trust has made plans to celebrate our tenth anniversary by having a fundraiser in the form of an "old fashioned clam-bake" to be held on **Friday, August 13th**. Please mark these dates down in your calendar. For additional information, please call the Trust office at 283-3195.

SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE PECONIC LAND TRUST!!

The Trust provides farmers and other landowners with unique alternatives to development. Our gifts to you of farmland and open space are dependent upon your gifts to us. Please make a contribution today. Thank you very much!!

\$5000 ___ \$2500 ___ \$1000 ___ \$500 ___ \$250 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$25 ___ Other ___

Name _____

Address _____

Town/Zip _____ Phone _____

A copy of the last financial report filed with the Department of State may be obtained by writing to: 1) New York State, Department of State, Office of Charities Registration, Albany, N.Y. 12231, or 2) Peconic Land Trust, P.O. Box 2088, Southampton, N.Y. 11969.



PECONIC LAND TRUST

P.O. Box 2088

Southampton, N.Y. 11969



POSTAL PATRON

♻️ Printed on Recycled Paper

Littoral Drift

Plugs of beach grass
on the bald cap of the dune.
A fence of red slats
lashed with wire.

A seawall of boulders
quarried in a distant valley
and dropped from a crane
like ungainly meteorites.

A wave overturns, spits up air, chases its own spume.

From the highwater ridge, brittle as a clay pot,
shards of sand scatter on a wind stream.

Sand on the rebound
eddies and sifts through the fence slats
and slips like unreliable mortar between the boulders.

Some grains reach the stretch marks etched into the sleek sand,
skin like that on a mother's breast or belly, veins
flowing back to the waters.

Fran Castan



Mission Statement

The Peconic Land Trust is a non-profit, tax-exempt conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of farmland and open space on Long Island. To this end, the Trust acquires and manages land as well as easements for conservation purposes. In addition, the Trust assists farmers and other landowners in the identification and implementation of alternatives to outright development.

Peconic Land Trust, Inc.

30 Jagger Lane, P. O. Box 2088
Southampton, New York 11969
(516) 283-3195

Board of Directors

Lee Foster, *Chairman*
John v.H. Halsey, *President*
Lucy Bradley, *Vice President*
Joseph L. Townsend, Jr., *Treasurer*
Elizabeth A. Smith, *Asst. Treasurer*
Roger A. Smith, *Secretary*
Herbert L. Golden
Deborah Ann Light
E. Blair McCaslin
Paul Stoutenburgh
Edwin F. Tuccio
Thomas B. Williams

Staff

John v.H. Halsey, *President*
Timothy J. Caufield, *Assistant Director*
Laura L. Fischer,
Administrative Coordinator
Scott Chaskey, *Stewardship Coordinator*
Maria Socko,
Administrative Assistant
Melanie A. Tebbens, *Planning Assistant*
John Boulware, *Stewardship Assistant*
Timothy Laird, *Stewardship Assistant*

Part-Time Staff

John Cantwell
Louise Loewenguth
Anthony B. Sasso

Consultants

Andrew L. Johnson
Randall T. Parsons

Newsletter

Tom Clavin, *Writer*
Lithographic Communications Inc.
Printing