



PECONIC LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

15th Anniversary Issue

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Photo: Peter Muller

The Promise of the Community Preservation Fund

Residents of the five East End towns have a unique opportunity to significantly shape the futures of their communities and enhance conservation efforts this Fall. Each town will have a referendum on the November 3rd ballot providing residents with the chance to approve a 2% transfer fee from the buyers of improved and unimproved property. The funds collected within each town will be placed in a

Community Preservation Fund and used by each town to acquire land possessing agricultural, hydrological, environmental, ecological, and open space significance. Other communities, including Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Block Island, have adopted similar transfer fees with broad-based support from residents, landowners, as well as real estate and building interests. By protecting important landscapes, open space, and

rural character, the Community Preservation Funds will preserve the East End's heritage and quality of life, thereby assuring a strong real estate market in the future.

For the Peconic Land Trust, passage of the Community Preservation Fund is of critical importance. In recent years, the Trust has been blending public acquisition and private conservation techniques with great success.

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Important Elements of the Community Preservation Fund

1. All acquisitions made with these funds will be voluntary on the part of the landowner.
2. The transfer fee will not be levied on real estate sales less than \$250,000 on improved property and \$100,000 on unimproved property in the Towns of East Hampton, Southampton, and Shelter Island. In Riverhead and Southold, the fee will not be levied on sales less than \$150,000 and \$75,000 respectively. Transfers of land for agricultural purposes will be exempt.
3. There is a "sunset provision," stipulating that the collection of transfer fees will expire in the year 2010.
4. Each town will have an advisory committee to recommend lands to be preserved and assure the implementation of the plan.
5. The buyer will pay the transfer fee.
6. Money raised in a town stays in the town where the transfer fee is collected.
7. The legislation applies exclusively to the East End and not for other areas of Long Island or the State.
8. The funds will be used in conjunction with private conservation techniques such as conservation easements, clustering, limited development, and zoning.
9. The legislation authorizes the establishment of a bank to facilitate the transfer of development rights (TDR).

If you have questions regarding this important ballot item, please call Peconic Land Trust at (516) 283-3195. [The Peconic Land Trust urges you to vote YES on November 3 to establish the Community Preservation Fund in your town.](#) The protection of the East End's heritage depends on it.

Also on the ballot on November 3 is the Suffolk County Community Greenways Fund, which, if passed by voters, will authorize the County to spend \$62 million to "protect rapidly vanishing open space and to preserve rapidly dwindling farmland critical to the well being and quality of life of the residents of this County." If these funds are approved, the Trust will work with the County to implement its program.



In June, Governor Pataki signed legislation permitting the five East End Towns to place a referendum on the November 3 ballot. If approved by voters, each town will be able to collect a 2% transfer fee on real estate sales to fund local land conservation programs (see related article). The Governor was flanked by two sponsors of the bill, Assemblyman Fred Thiele and Senator Kenneth LaValle, as others (l. to r.) Group for the South Fork VP Kevin McDonald, Trust President John v.H. Halsey, The Nature Conservancy Director of Conservation Programs/Government Relations Stuart Lowrie, Town of East Hampton Supervisor Cathy Lester, and Town of Southold Supervisor Jean Cochran looked on.



Early in September, Suffolk County Executive Robert Gaffney visited the Trust's new planning department with Tim Caufield and John v.H. Halsey.

The Promise of the Community Preservation Fund (continued from cover)

We have been able to protect parcels of tremendous significance to East End communities that would otherwise have been beyond our reach. In so doing, we have leveraged finite public funds so that these monies can contribute to the protection of many parcels rather than a few. Given the explosive development pressure that we are currently experiencing on Eastern Long Island, time is of the essence. If we are to protect our heritage, working farms, and open space, we need all of the resources that our communities can muster. There is no question that the fate of the East End will be determined in the next 5 to 10 years.

Thankfully, support for the Community Preservation Fund is extensive. A broad coalition representing bankers, farmers, Realtors, builders, civic associations and environmental organizations have lobbied hard for the enabling legislation. More than 100 prominent and respected residents of the East End successfully encouraged Governor George Pataki to sign the bill in June. The 140-member East Hampton Business Alliance has endorsed the concept and members of the Long Island Farm Bureau passed a resolution in support.

Soil Seed Bank Study

by Chris Pickerell

In the Trust's Spring Newsletter, we discussed the Cassidy Preserve wetland restoration project involving the replacement of *Phragmites australis* with *Spartina alterniflora* in a tidal marsh. In the future, we plan to undertake additional projects of that scope and nature.

In an effort to increase our knowledge of wetlands impacted by the invasion of *Phragmites* we have teamed up with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County Marine Program to undertake an applied research project. In an experiment designed and implemented by Cornell at two Trust-owned wetlands, we are studying the composition of the soil seed bank. The vestigial seed bank (those seeds that are present in the soil as a result of previous plant growth) and/or current seed rain is an important source of new plant material after an area has been cleared. If we are able to eradicate *Phragmites* in one of these wetlands, this seed bank would help to quickly colonize the exposed soils. If we determine that the seed banks contain favorable species, we plan to obtain permits for removal of *Phragmites*. This work would be the first of its kind in the region.

Although the experiment is only half completed, some very interesting results have already come to light. As in published reports describing other seed bank studies, our soils are showing a species composition entirely different than that of the dominant plants presently in the wetland (in this case, *Phragmites*). In fact, *Phragmites* seedlings represent a very small percentage of species germinating from our soil samples. At this time, we are not sure whether the species that are emerging represent species growing in the wetlands before the *Phragmites* took over, or if the seeds originated from plants outside of these wetlands. In either case, early results indicate that it may be possible to restore these two wetland sites through the removal of *Phragmites* and minimal planting. We plan on publishing the results in the scientific literature and we will pass along any interesting information when we have it.



Kudos to Lori Feilen and Susan Moisa who opened the nonprofit "Friends of the Farmers Thrift Shop" at 129 Adams Street in Greenport this past summer. New donations arrive daily—many well-known manufacturers make contributions on a regular basis—and customers will find a wide variety of furniture, antiques, china, pottery, garden tools, quilts, linens, books, toys and much more. Call them at (516) 477-3520 for store hours or if you would like to make a donation. Proceeds are donated to Peconic Land Trust and Little Flower Children's Services Inc.

Benefit Clambakes



The Trust's Benefit Clambakes this summer took place on the ocean at the Bridgehampton Club and at Quantuck Beach Club in Westhampton Beach. Enjoying the evening in Bridgehampton, in the top photo, were (l. to r.) Judy Saner, Anne Tregellas and Weezie Quimby. Also at Bridgehampton, were (l. to r.) Ted Quimby, Lynn St. John, Don Louchheim, Norm Nelson and Sally Nelson.

And the rains came . . .

The Trust had an opportunity to live up to its "rain or shine" promise at this year's Peconinic. The previous record of 12 consecutive years of sun had to be broken at some point, and the 13th Peconinic on June 13th was as good a time as any! Close to 250 hardy supporters braved the elements to attend and, by most accounts, a good time was had by all! We would like to thank Honest Bread Company for its donation of bread and rolls, George Braun Oyster Co. for delicious oysters and the following for their donations of items for the raffle: Kathy and Jeff White of Liberty Farm; Quail Hill Farm; Lenz Winery; and the Halsey family of The Milk Pail. Thank you also to all our volunteers, to everyone who sent a donation to help defray our expenses and to the numerous vendors we depend upon for all the details to come together.

The Trust Works with Towns and Villages

Since its first municipal agreement with the Town of Southampton in 1997, the Trust has contracted with other East End Towns and incorporated Villages, as well as Suffolk County, to assist them in the planning and acquisition of open space and farmland. The Trust's municipal contracts harness our experience and ability to blend public acquisition with private conservation tools. Our goal is to help the County, Towns, and Villages leverage limited conservation funds to the greatest extent possible. This is especially important given the rapidly increasing real estate values on Eastern Long Island and the fact that there are simply not enough public funds to protect the remaining farmland and open space, even with the Community Preservation Fund described earlier in this newsletter.

The Trust has developed a work plan that emphasizes our philosophy of "listening to the landowner." Through a process we call "Conservation Opportunities Planning," we are focusing the limited acquisition funds on the most critical portions of the land to be protected, while educating the landowner as to private conservation tools (e.g. limited development, conservation easements, family limited partnerships, etc.) to meet his/her goals. By demonstrating how conservation tools can be used in conjunction with public acquisition programs, we can satisfy the goals of both the landowner and the municipality while stretching limited public funds. To date, we have employed Conservation Opportunities Planning on 4 projects in the Towns of Southampton and Riverhead.



Conservation Opportunities Planning

Before land can be protected, landowners need information that will enable them to make intelligent decisions with regard to the future use, ownership, and management of their land. To this end, many landowners have retained the Peconic Land Trust to assist in the preparation and implementation of conservation plans based on their overall goals, needs, and circumstances as well as an understanding of the land itself. Given our growing role with municipalities, the Trust has proposed that villages, towns, and the county proactively assist and inform landowners of the many options available to them by engaging in a process that we call Conservation Opportunities Planning.

The goals of the Conservation Opportunities Planning process are: a) to educate landowners about public and private conservation tools and techniques that may be useful given their special needs and circumstances, b) to provide landowners with basic information about their land in order to facilitate their planning of its future use, ownership, and management, and c) to define areas within their property that may be eligible for public acquisition or private conservation as well as areas suitable for future development.

With a thorough understanding of the goals and needs of the landowner, the analysis begins with the preparation of a **Base Map** that consolidates existing data from a variety of sources including an existing survey, if available, and a scaled aerial photograph from which buildings, roads, veg-

Other municipal agreements include the Villages of East Hampton, Sag Harbor, and Southampton, the Towns of Riverhead, East Hampton, Shelter Island, and Southold, and last but not least, Suffolk County. The agreements call for a variety of tasks and services to be provided by the Peconic Land Trust. For example, in the case of East Hampton Village, the Trust is assisting in the implementation of the Village's Open Space Plan including the acquisition of land and easements. In the case of the Town of Shelter Island, the Trust prepared the Community Preservation Project Plan.

The number of municipal agreements has put a great deal of stress on the current staff of the Trust. In effect, the number of Trust projects has tripled in the last 12 months, in large part due to the municipal agreements, while our staff has remained the same. In an effort to expand our capacity, the Trust has recently hired Huson "Hoot" Sherman, former Supervisor of the Town of Shelter Island, as our Director of Public Programs. Hoot has extensive experience in both the public and private sectors; he is a proven manager of people and tasks. His responsibilities will focus initially on the North Fork and Shelter Island. He and his future staff will share space with our Planning Department in the Trust's new annex, rented space necessary to accommodate our growing staff.

etation, and other features can be digitized. Next, an **Environmental Conditions Map** is prepared that shows soils, topography, wetlands, and other natural features that are significant. All of the data is reviewed with the landowner so that areas for protection and limited development can be identified and defined on a **Conservation Opportunities Plan**. The areas defined for protection may be considered for the purchase of development rights or the donation of a conservation easement. Other portions of the property may be used for future building lots and/or protection through other conservation techniques. Once the landowner has approved the Conservation Opportunities Plan, it will be reviewed by the Town. Any inconsistencies between the goals of the landowner and the Town will be discussed and mediated at that time. Assuming consensus is reached between the Town and the landowner, a final **Conservation Opportunities Report** will be prepared based on the Conservation Opportunities Plan. The report should include a range of values, provided by a qualified appraiser, for the development rights on the property. The cost of the plans and report generated through this process will be borne by the municipality and provided to the landowner. This information will assist the landowner from an estate planning perspective and guide both the landowner and Town.

The Conservation Opportunities Planning Process represents a cooperative, cost-effective approach to leverage limited public funds with limited development and private conservation techniques.

Mobile Stewardship Unit Planned

While the days when a country doctor visited a sick patient are a distant memory for most of us, house calls are making a come back with dog groomers, personal fitness trainers and others who accommodate the busy schedules of their clients. Land stewardship has always been a "house call"—caring for land is ongoing and on-site is the only way to do it. The Trust has been actively involved in providing stewardship services for its own easements and preserves for many years. The interest in these services among landowners and the local municipalities has increased to the point where the Trust is planning to create a mobile unit so that stewardship staff can provide services on both the North and South Forks. Specialized

equipment is needed for the crew to operate. Please call 283-3195 if you are willing to donate any of these items or would like to have a copy of the list of tools we will need. Your generosity will help us get the program off and rolling!

1. A 3/4 ton, winch-equipped, 4 x 4 pickup truck
2. A 4 x 4 ATV
3. 20' utility trailer to haul an ATV
4. 45 HP 4 x 4 tractor with front-end loader
5. Power equipment such as weed-eaters and chainsaws
6. Hand tools



From Quail Hill Preserve . . .

They appear out of nowhere, though immediately the air absorbs the musical element of their flight. Above the noise of the diesel tractor, the feeding flight of swallows; they arrive to catch the flush of insects that rise out of the grasses. Their liquid flight suggests that we are at sea, though I feel the solid wheels revolve beneath me. This rich soil supports the weight of man and tractor, also the weight of timothy and clover and ragweed, and also the weightlessness of swallows. Row after row I follow the dance of birds who followed me to the field; part of the circle which involves the soil; we are in time, together.

We are mowing often now, when crops are "over the hill" or harvested, in preparation for the autumn cover cropping. We have prepared several field areas to be seeded with a late summer mixture. You will see a carpet of green as the oats and buckwheat jump up, followed by the deep green legumes known as bell beans, sown to provide a supply of nitrogen for the crops to follow. Buckwheat will grow to a few feet tall within the oat mixture, blossom white, and then, along with the oats, will die back during winter. In spring we will plow the residue, a necessary source of organic matter, back into our Amagansett loam. Corn stalks, bean beetles, fat radish roots, red root pigweed, purslane . . . all turned back into the layer of humus, food for earthworms and microbes, organic matter for sprouting buckwheat and oats. In the autumn squash patch, cucurbits ripen. The first fruits, pasta spaghetti squash, have been harvested. Soon, sweeter varieties of buttercup, sugarloaf, delicata, sweet dumpling, and pumpkins turning a fine color in the far field. Also to come in the early fall: leeks, kale, Chinese cabbage, potatoes both red and white, peppers of color, silver queen corn . . . we are rich indeed.

Scott Chaskey, Preserve Manager

Ed note: if you would like more information on Quail Hill Farm membership, please call (516) 283-3195. Winter shares are \$210; from Thanksgiving to the end of February, members enjoy organic carrots, beets, rutabaga, celeriac, potatoes, assorted winter squashes, onions, garlic, cabbage, and eggs.

From Shellfisher Preserve . . .

The time has come for us to welcome our new neighbors at Shellfisher Preserve. If you recall, the Preserve is part of a conservation/limited development plan that includes the development of four lots on 8 acres adjacent to the 14-acre Preserve. With great anticipation, we finally met everyone at a recent meeting of the Plock Shellfisher Preserve Home Owners Association. We seem to have gained not only a very nice group of people who share our appreciation for the unique

environment that is Shellfisher Preserve, but also some new friends. From our initial conversations, two of the four lots will be developed immediately, while the other two may remain in their current state for a year or more. The group has decided to make improvements and modifications to the common areas over time, as needed. This approach will allow for everyone to get to know their new home before making changes. Some immediate agenda items call for improvements to the driveway and boat access area. As I have mentioned in a previous Trust newsletter, we hope there will be interest in creating a common garden within an existing open area near the four lots. At least one owner may allow us to salvage some native plant material from his lot before construction begins. In addition, with the help of one of our new neighbors, we will be purchasing a skid steer loader for use at the Preserve and other Trust projects on the North Fork. My family and I, and the Trust staff, are pleased to welcome everyone as we begin a new chapter in the Shellfisher story.

Chris Pickerell, Preserve Manager



In July, Trust staff and Board members participated in a day-long site visit to Shellfisher Preserve and Fort Corchaug. Naturalist and former Trust Board member Paul Stoutenburgh, Shellfisher Preserve Manager Chris Pickerell, Preserve Manager Margot Booth and Dick Ryan of the Southold Town Preservation Committee provided an orientation on the history and native flora and fauna at each site.



Bayman Rob Parrino (at left) explains his mariculture operation at Shellfisher Preserve in Southold to visitors Edith Muma, Maureen Hinkle and John v.H. Halsey.

Volunteer Efforts at Downs Farm Preserve

The Trust has been retained by the Town of Southold to manage Fort Corchaug, the only-known Native American fort site on the North Fork, located on the Downs Farm Preserve. The 101-acre site is home to natural communities such as an oak-hickory forest, a maritime oak barrens, and a coastal salt marsh. The Town is considering uses for the property, some of which include the creation of an interpretive center to provide historical background, a land management center, and opportunities for hiking trails and other passive recreational activities such as birdwatching, photography, and natural history tours. These projects will take time, talent, and manpower, all assets that can be provided by members of the community who are able to volunteer their time.

Without contributions of time and skill provided by volunteers, most conservation organizations could not keep pace with the requirements of active land stewardship. The Peconic Land Trust's new stewardship Volunteer Program was initiated this past spring with two work days at the Downs Farm Preserve in Cutchogue. Volunteers, staff, and board members quickly learned that the effort is a two-way street—everyone brings special skills and experience to the work and gains new skills from the others.

Participants included Volunteers from local communities, Southold Town employees and committee members, and Trust board and staff. Some of the projects that were completed this spring through volunteer efforts include: cleanup of a large dump pile and removal of artifacts for the Interpretive Center; demolition of several outbuildings that were beyond repair; salvage of local Sage, Sanford, and Robin's Island bricks that will be incorporated into the Interpretive Center; bucking and stacking of dead and downed wood and brush that was causing an unsightly and fire hazardous condition; cleanup of a building that will be used as a management center by the Trust; and clearing on a section of the handicapped loop of the hiking trail system.

Many thanks to all who generously gave their time. Other work days are being planned and new volunteers are always welcome. Please call the Trust office at (516) 283-3195 if you are interested.



With the guidance of Margot Booth, Preserve Manager, Ft. Corchaug received some much-needed attention. On several work days this past summer, area residents turned out to clear the site of debris, prune overgrown brush, mow, and perform a number of stewardship tasks. Shown in top photo is Melissa Spiro from the Town of Southold Planning Department. In the bottom photo, are Jack McGreevy, Trust VP Timothy Caufield, and Dick Ryan, Chair of the Southold Town Land Preservation Committee at what will be the future home of the Ft. Corchaug management center.

24 Donors Agree to Sponsor 1998 Challenge Grant

We must match their \$300,000 by October 31.

While it has taken more than 300 years to reach our present level of development on Eastern Long Island, the next 15 years will determine the fate of our remaining, precious acreage. *Our communities and our way of life will be defined by our actions now.* As time grows short, support for the Trust's annual Challenge becomes more urgent. We are depending on peo-

ple like you—believers in the importance of open space, wetlands and farmland, and those who work these resources—to take responsibility for the future. Our Challenge Sponsors have agreed to match your donation so that we can raise a total of \$600,000. Please join them in helping us to reach our goal. Send your tax-deductible gift by October 31.



A Tribute to Hugh Halsey II, M.D.

by John v.H. Halsey

As I grew up and matured, I watched my Dad devote himself to his family, work, and community. He worked very hard, but somehow was able to enjoy life at the same time, especially in a sailboat. He set goals for himself and worked assiduously to meet them. He started his medical practice from scratch and passed it on to his partners upon his retirement, all the while serving his community and the people in it in many ways. After 78 years, Dad recently passed away, but was able to say, "I can't believe that my life could be more satisfying. I think that I have accomplished everything in life with what talents I have and without regrets." With Dad's full confidence and unbridled support, I returned to Southampton 15 years ago to start the Peconic Land Trust from scratch. And so, during this, our Fifteenth Anniversary, it is only fitting that I pay tribute to my Dad, whose life inspired me to follow in his footsteps as best I can, recognizing that he is indeed a tough act to follow.

The Bottom Line: Bequests

If you would like to extend your support of the Trust's work protecting farmland and open space on Long Island, you may include a provision in your will to bequeath cash, securities, or property to the Trust. The following language may be used:

"To the Peconic Land Trust, Incorporated, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, incorporated under the laws of the State of New York in 1983, having as its principal address 296 Hampton Road, Southampton, New York 11968, (Gifts of Real Estate) "I hereby give

and devise my real property at address here to Peconic Land Trust, Incorporated, of Southampton, New York."(Other Gifts by Will) "I give and bequeath (e.g. \$ ____; my shares of name here common stock) to Peconic Land Trust, Inc. of Southampton, New York."

If you or your attorney would like to discuss a potential bequest, please call Marsha Kenny, Director of Development, at (516) 283-3195. All inquiries will be kept confidential.

Wish List

We'd like to thank the following for their generosity: Raymond Burello of Quality Performance LTD for his watchful maintenance of the Andrew E. Sabin Preserve at Tanger Outlet Centers in Riverhead; North Fork Sanitation and Beaver Tree Company for donating equipment for work days at Downs Farm Preserve; Pellegrini Vineyards for providing their facilities to volunteers on work days; Peter Muller for a beautiful framed

photo; and to volunteers Alice Cole, Carol DeVito, Louise Loewenguth, Pamela Rossbach and Judy Saner for their time, ideas and good humor. Don't forget, gifts of goods and services, or items on our "Wish List" will help the Trust stretch its conservation dollars. Please call our office, (516) 283-3195, if you can provide any of the following: Bobcat or similar equipment, tractor (75-80 H.P.), dump truck, irrigation pipe.

Celebrate the Trust's 15th Anniversary with fine wine from Lenz Winery

In celebration of the Peconic Land Trust's 15th Anniversary, Lenz Winery has made available a unique Chardonnay with a specially designed commemorative label. Firm, rich and lush describe the first impression of this full-bodied complex wine. Full barrel fermentation and aging in new Vosges oak are evident in the toasty, vanillin aromas. The Peconic Land Trust Reserve Chardonnay's buttery texture combines this bouquet with subtle floral layers of apple, pear, and nutmeg flavors. This time consuming and very expensive Burgundian technique of wine making has produced an intense wine with unique French/Long Island character.

The price per case is \$200 (plus \$9.90 NYS tax), \$80 of which is a tax-deductible contribution that will support the Trust's land conservation work. For phone orders charged to MasterCard or Visa, please call the Trust's office at (516) 283-3195. Your order will be shipped UPS to any address within the continental United States.

Lenz Winery is located in Peconic on Long Island's North Fork. Founded in 1978, the Winery has 70 acres of some of the most mature vineyards in the region. The North Fork is a distinct geographic region as well as a designated BATF appellation for United States wines.



In June, Bob Pellegrini of Pellegrini Vineyards in Cutchogue purchased 41 acres in Peconic from the Peconic Land Trust. The site includes a residence and several farm buildings on 4 acres and 37 acres of protected farmland on which the Town of Southold purchased the development rights in late 1997. Photographed at the Trust office following the closing were: (l. to r., seated) Judge Fred Tedeschi; Bob Pellegrini, and PLT Chairman Roger Smith; (l. to r., standing) Melanie Cirillo, PLT Director of Conservation Programs; Peri Youmans, PLT Project Assistant; real estate broker Syma Joffe Gerard; Mary Kolakowski, Fidelity National Title Company; Stephen Rendall, PLT Director of Finance; and Susan Tuths, Esq.



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Mission Statement

The Peconic Land Trust is a nonprofit, 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 full-yield development.

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Offshore

I go to sea, before dawn, wondering
 what else wanders these waters in the dark.

I had dreamed of people
 walking down the headland forest,
 the groundfog shimmering over the paths
 and lifting as the sky lightened.

At the shore they gathered
 to hear the dawn begin singing
 in the inward rushing of the sea.
 Now I know the meaning of dreaming
 is changing in our time,
 like the names of God.

How I like to be at sea at dawn!
 Headlands behind me rearing into light,
 sift and saw of swell,
 girl-laugh and gull-cry...

Alone in this stillness
 knowing we change
 and affirming
 far out to sea we change
 and change forever.

by Allen Planz, from *Dune Heath*,
 Canio's Editions

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