



PECONIC LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

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Photo: Peter Muller

East Hampton's Open Space Program

Recent successes in the preservation of agricultural land within the Town of East Hampton have demonstrated how the Peconic Land Trust can work with, and for, a municipality to save open space. In particular, the farmland surrounding Long Lane (please see map on page 5) is the largest agricultural area in the Town, and parts of it have been continuously farmed since the 1600's. Unlike many other sections of the town, it has re-

mained relatively undeveloped for three centuries. Preserving the Long Lane area was one of the main motives behind the Town's \$5 million open-space program which was approved by voters in 1989.

To move ahead with preservation projects in the Long Lane area and elsewhere, the Town designated the Peconic Land Trust to negotiate with individual landowners on its behalf. To date, development rights on nearly 57 acres, including a 21 acre parcel in Amagansett, have been sold to the Town

of East Hampton.

"We were already actively involved with some of the owners of parcels the Town was concerned about, so it made sense for us to continue our efforts," said Randall Parsons, a Trust consultant who served as the Trust's negotiator. "Aside from the acreage itself that will remain as farmland, we have helped the Town protect a highly visible agricultural setting thereby demonstrating that there are sound alternatives to outright development." *continued on page 3*



Promised Land Farm

One of the signs of spring is renewed activity at Promised Land Farm. This "biodynamic" operation can be found at the Quail Hill Preserve in Amagansett, which was donated to the Peconic Land Trust last year.

According to Scott Chaskey and Robert Willett, who supervise the farm for the Trust, the 1990 season was a productive one, with 75 shares purchased by about 250 people. This year Promised Land Farm is upping the number of shares to 80. Each share costs \$520 and half-shares are available.

This year, as last year, the farm will yield a wide variety of produce: potatoes, carrots, radishes, an array of green vegetables, apples, and even such exotic edibles as tatsoi and mizuma. Plantings and seedings have already begun and the first harvest is expected to occur in late May.

"We had a good year last year even though we were working with neglected land," Chaskey says. "Our intention this year is to enhance the fertility of the soil, which in turn will increase the sweetness and abundance of the vegetables."

There are several guiding principles for Promised Land Farm:

participation in the growing process that yields satisfaction and pride (not to mention delicious food) as well as the demonstration of biodynamic farm practices that rely on naturally occurring pesticides and organic fertilizers. In short, Promised Land Farm represents an opportunity to broaden our understanding of agriculture and to test a different approach to production.

"People harvest their own produce and while some effort is involved, it's fun to be part of this type of farm and to know what you're putting on your table is good for you," Chaskey says. "It's especially great for children to work beside their parents and learn how crops grow."

This year Promised Land Farm will again operate a garden school one day a week for youngsters (grown-ups can sneak in) so they can receive some basic education on agriculture.

It is not too late to purchase a share for the 1991 growing season, but because of the popularity of Promised Land Farm and with Spring progressing, it's a good idea not to wait. Those interested in the farm can call 283-3195 for further information or to reserve a share.

The President's Column

Welcome to our first newsletter of 1991. The focus of this issue is East Hampton Town and the role that the Peconic Land Trust is playing in the implementation of the Town's Open Space Program. As public monies for land acquisition become more and more scarce, it is most important that these limited funds are used as efficiently as possible. Thus, the blend of public monies with the conservation tools that the Trust employs in its work are a perfect match. It is our intent to stretch the public dollar to the greatest extent possible.

Meanwhile, we continue to provide Trust services to landowners throughout East Hampton Town. From our facility at the Quail Hill Preserve in Amagansett, we are providing land stewardship services for a number of families. These services include the maintenance and restoration of land for agricultural and conservation purposes. Our work with the Olin Family Trust in East Hampton Village is but one example of the management of fallow land. And as Promised Land Farm has demonstrated, we can provide guidance and support to projects that involve the public at large.

In addition, our planning work helps families determine the future use, ownership, and management of their land. From estate tax planning to the appropriate use of their land, the Trust works with landowners to identify and implement conservation strategies that meet their long-term needs.

Finally, it is most gratifying to see East Hampton residents step forward to support our work. To name a few, we thank Joseph F. Cullman, 3rd, Chairman Emeritus of Phillip Morris, for agreeing to chair the President's Council of the Trust, Anthony C.M. Kiser, III and the William and Mary Greve Foundation for awarding the Trust with a \$50,000 matching grant, and David Osborn, a past Board member, for assisting the Trust with its land management work. Thank you one and all. We look forward to a fruitful year in East Hampton Town and elsewhere. Until next time...

John v.H. Halsey, President

Open Space Program

continued from page 1

The nearly 40 acres on Long Lane are comprised of three parcels, 8.8 acres that had received preliminary subdivision approval, 15.6 acres owned by the Osborn Produce Company, and 13.7 acres co-owned by companies based in New York City and Switzerland. The purchase of development rights means that the owners retain their lands but future use is restricted to agriculture. Thus, residential development is no longer an option.

Why didn't the Town do it's own negotiating? "Very simply, Town officials have limited time and staff. Rather than hiring additional staff, the Town can retain the Trust to implement their program. We have developed expertise in the tax implications of conservation programs and how best to structure the sale. We also can assist in the design of the parcel, if some of it is to be retained by the owner. Based on our positive experience in East Hampton, we would like to try to assist other municipalities in a similar fashion," Parsons said.

Lisa Liquori, the Director of the East Hampton Planning Department, agrees. "The Peconic Land Trust has been a blessing," she stated. "Until it came into existence, we didn't realize how much we needed it. It can handle land preservation projects that we've limped along trying to handle ourselves."

Liquori pointed out that the Trust can offer expertise that the Town is either unable or unauthorized to provide, such as giving landowners advice on tax advantages and estate planning. In addition, the Trust can involve land planners and other consultants as needed. The staff of the Town's Planning Department is routinely inundated with subdivision applications and other demands on its resources.

Charitable Giving Ideas *By: T. P. Luss, CLU, ChFC*

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." I believe in this and have allowed the saying to govern my life. Every nonprofit organization needs two kinds of gifts: those that cover current operating expenses and those that are pledged for future needs. In this article, I will describe a way for Peconic Land Trust supporters to build a future endowment for the organization.

A one-time contribution can be made to the Trust for the purchase of life insurance, which can significantly increase the value of one's contribution. Depending on a donor's age and health, such a contribution can be worth as much as 10 times the amount donated. In other words, an individual can provide the Trust with a substantial gift at a fraction of the cost. A variation on this theme is for a donor to pledge a tax-deductible contribution of \$1,000 per year for 10 years. A life insurance policy could then be purchased by the Trust with the \$1,000 provided by the donor annually. Ultimately, the Trust would receive a much larger sum than the actual contribution. For example, a person age 60 and in reasonable health could provide the Trust with \$30,000 in the future for a total of \$10,000 in contributions spread out over 10 years.

Individuals who want to leave funds to the Peconic Land Trust in their wills may find that the use of life insurance allows them to accomplish their desire in a much more cost effective way. For more information, please contact the Trust office.

Tom Luss, CLU, ChFC, has worked closely with the Peconic Land Trust for a number of years. We want to thank him for his time and expertise in this area. Tom has offered to write brief articles for our newsletter outlining ideas and issues that may be of interest to our readers.

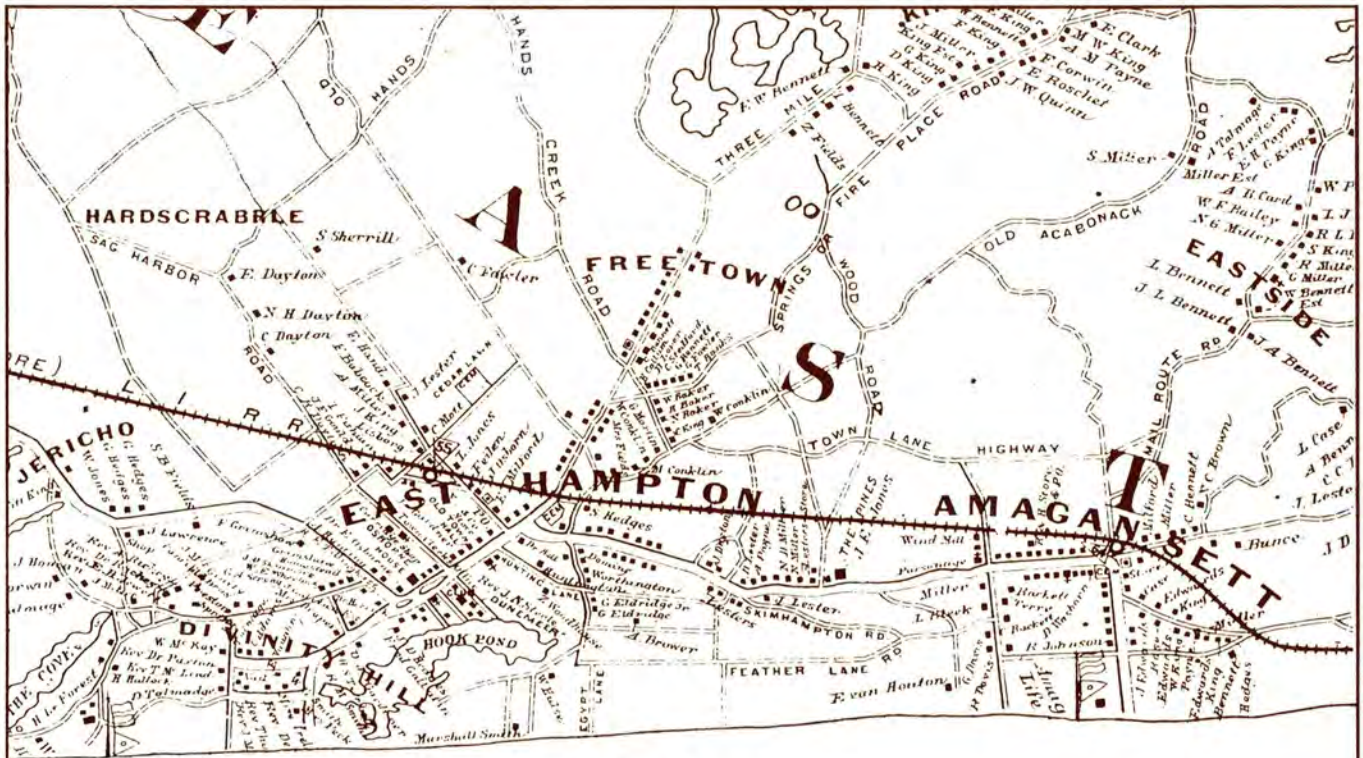


"What's especially important is the Trust's ability to reach out to farmers, and that's a tremendous benefit as farmland becomes precious," Liquori said. "It's gotten to the point that whenever a farmer approaches us with an interest in subdividing his land, I give him the Trust's phone number and urge him to explore other ways his needs can be met."

Negotiating on behalf of the Town of East Hampton did not mean that the Trust had the luxury of playing with someone else's money. "We never finalized anything without the Town's consent," Parsons said. "We checked with the

Town as we went along. The goal was a fair price and a plan for the land that both the landowner and the Town could live with."

One of the landowners involved, David Osborn, believes the Trust's intervention was the turning point in producing a successful outcome. "I had a situation like this years ago and things didn't go smoothly at all and nobody was happy," he said. "This time it was an everybody wins situation. The negotiations were handled well and they worked out to everyone's satisfaction. Everyone involved benefited. When you're haggling over land, that rarely happens."



Historic Lore

The farm fields off Long Lane and Stephen Hand's Path in East Hampton comprise not only the largest agricultural area in the Town but one of the oldest, if not the oldest. Soon after East Hampton was settled in 1648, the fields, containing prime agricultural soils known as Bridgehampton loam, began to be cultivated.

Today the main crops are corn and potatoes, but even though the latter has long been associated with the East End, they were not grown in the early days. Initially, the Long Lane fields were primarily used for cattle grazing and growing wheat. This changed in the 19th century when the Western Plains opened up and farmers turned to other crops. What is remarkable about the Long Lane area is how little it has changed over the course of three centuries. Dave Talmage, who grew up on a farm there, recalls that when his father moved up from Springs in 1921, the area was all

open land. "The only houses were ours and one belonging to a man named Sherrill, who was a Civil War veteran," Talmage said. "Hardscrabble Farm belonged to the Daytons, and there was another place belonged to a Judge Seabury who was connected to Tamanny Hall, and before Seabury it belonged to McAlpin. Across from my parents' house was Hand property. Bill and George Hand, brothers, had a big barn on the end of Newtown Lane, around from where the High School is now."

Talmage's father originally raised vegetables, then gave potatoes a try. As time went on, potatoes became the staple crop.

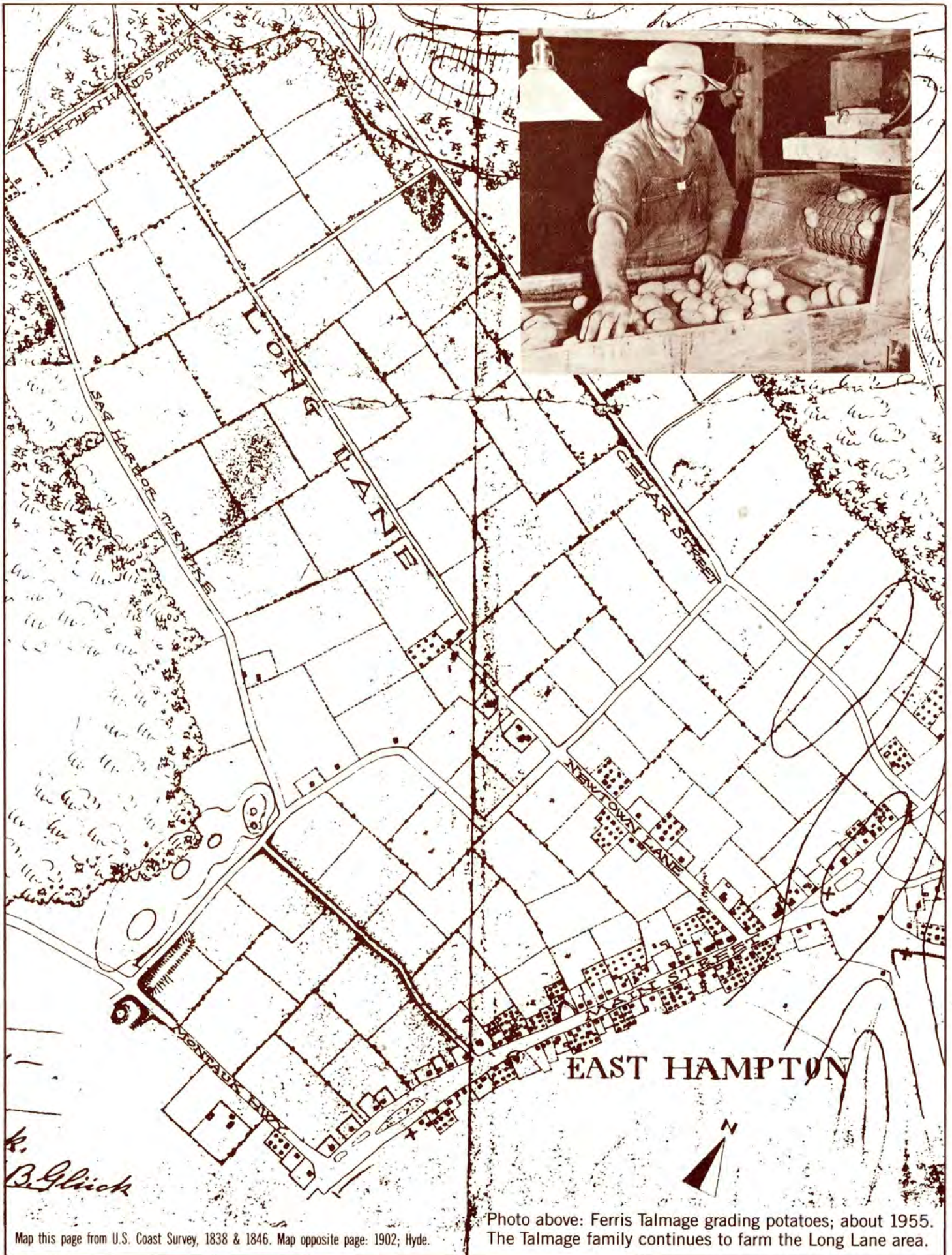
"We could compete with other areas in potatoes and the soil was right for it," Talmage said. "We could use combines and the latest equipment and not worry about the rocks. My father sold potatoes from a stand on the corner for over 20 years."

The family had another enterprise too for a few years—a sawmill. Around

the beginning of World War II the Talmages operated it off Long Lane, using as raw material the large amount of trees felled by the 1938 hurricane. "Practically all the big white pine came down during that storm and it took a long time to use it up. We built a barn from that wood and sold the rest."

In the 1950's, potatoes had taken a firm hold, though Talmage points out that there were even more being grown along Further Lane adjacent to the ocean. Now, of course, much of that area has been developed and the remaining farmland acreage is significantly less than Long Lane. Fortunately, through the efforts of the Town, county, and the Peconic Land Trust, over half of the Long Lane acreage is now preserved.

"The history of Long Lane is as long as the history of the town," Talmage said. As preservation work proceeds, it looks like Long Lane will have a future.



R. B. Glick

Map this page from U.S. Coast Survey, 1838 & 1846. Map opposite page: 1902; Hyde.

Photo above: Ferris Talmage grading potatoes; about 1955. The Talmage family continues to farm the Long Lane area.



Looking towards Long Lane. © Rameshwar Das, 1991. All Rights Reserved.

The Estate Tax Burden

It's rarely good news, but we're not telling you anything you don't already know: April is tax time. When Shakespeare wrote, "Beware the Ides of March," he was a month off or perhaps didn't have to pay taxes, because April 15th rates right up there with Halloween when it comes to giving good citizens the chills. But not all taxes hit families in April. Estate taxes, one of the most significant causes of the loss of Long Island's farmland, can come at anytime of the year. For farm families, such taxes can spell disaster.

Let's offer a general purpose example of a Long Island farm family. Unless there is proper estate planning, when the older generation of a farm family dies, the land is appraised at its "highest and best use," the most profitable use of the land, rather than its agricultural value. On Long Island, that usually means residential use resulting in a very high value for estate tax purposes. Take a 50-acre farm. Depending on its location, it may be

appraised as high as \$100,000 per acre instead of \$10,000 per acre as agricultural land, a total value of \$5 million. With federal estate taxes as high as 55 percent and New York State estate taxes as high as 21 percent, the heirs may have to sell off all or a large part of the farm to pay such taxes.

There are a number of ways to reduce the estate tax burden. One example is the owner of one of the properties on Long Lane (covered separately in this issue). By selling the development rights to the town, the parcel will be appraised as agricultural land when it is passed on to the next generation. This will represent a major savings for the farm's heirs, who otherwise would have been presented with a hefty estate tax bill.

Unfortunately, public funds for the purchase of development rights are becoming more and more scarce. Thus, the role of the Peconic Land Trust in estate planning has become all the more important. Through the creative use of conservation easements and limited develop-

ment, the Trust is working with a number of landowners to reduce the value of their land for estate tax purposes, while providing for their future financial needs by identifying appropriate sites for future development. For example, one landowner is restricting 30 acres of a 45-acre parcel with a conservation easement. In essence, the development rights will be removed from the 30 acres. In this particular case, the value of the land for estate tax purposes will be reduced from \$5 million to about \$2 million. The balance of 15 acres, however, has a potential for a total of 4 dwellings surrounded by preserved land, thus providing the family with future equity.

Call the Peconic Land Trust at 283-3195 for information on how to reduce the estate tax burden and preserve land for future generations. There is also an excellent booklet available at the Trust office entitled Preserving Family Lands by Stephen J. Small which outlines the estate tax problem in greater detail.

1991 Peconinic

Yes, it is that time again (well, almost). On Sunday, June 9, the Peconic Land Trust will hold its sixth annual "Peconinic," which, as in the last few years, promises to be a sun-drenched afternoon of good food, good music, and an enjoyable gathering for a good cause.

Unlike many events that take place during warm-weather East End weekends, the Peconinic is not a fund-raiser. "We invite all our contributors and supporters as a 'thank you' for what they've done for us during the past year," said John Halsey, President of the Trust. "It's an opportunity for us to show them how much we appreciate their help. We wouldn't exist without them."

Last year the Peconinic was attended by approximately 300 people, and it was held at the home of Mrs. Charles G. Halsey (a distant relative of the president) in Water Mill. This year's event is certain to be special - for the first time it will take place on land owned by the Trust.

Quail Hill in Amagansett will be the setting, an historic site donated to the Trust last year by Deborah Ann Light; it is also where the Promised Land Farm can be found, the organic farming cooperative (please see separate story). "While we're very grateful to the people who have donated their homes and

Countryside Magazine

What, is the Peconic Land Trust going national? Not exactly, but in the coming months, readers across the country will be introduced to the Long Island based organization, thanks to an article in the May issue of Countryside magazine.

The author is Sara Evans, an editor at Parents magazine who lives on the North Fork. She contacted John Halsey, President of the Trust, last spring to write about the Trust's activities and, via that approach, give some visibility to the land trust movement and how it can benefit the preservation needs of any community.

Countryside magazine, a publication of the Hearst Corporation, is dedicated to the American Landscape and is committed to supporting the land trusts which help protect it. All advertising revenues, nearly \$250,000, from the premier issue were donated to land trusts through Countryside's grant program, including the Peconic Land Trust. As part of its continuing plan for supporting land trusts, Countryside is now offering to share revenue - on a 50- 50% basis - from subscriptions ordered by Peconic Land Trust supporters. Order now and you will receive 6 issues for \$5.99 - nearly 50% off the \$9.97 cover price. \$3.00 of each subscription will fund the work of the Peconic Land Trust.

The offer expires June 30, 1991. To order Countryside, simply call: (800) 444-8783 ext QMPL.

time in the past to host the Peconinic, it's particularly satisfying to do this year's on our own land," Halsey said. "As a sign that our preservation efforts are bearing fruit, having the event at Quail Hill will, I think, be especially gratifying for our supporters."

There is one other good reason for the Peconinic: It is a traditional kick-off for the Trust's annual Challenge Grant campaign. Last year, with generous support, the Trust was able to exceed the \$100,000 figure, which was matched by five private contribu-

tors. For the most part, the Challenge Grant funds enable the Trust to continue to operate.

"I look at the Trust's efforts at a time of regional belt tightening and realize that we leverage our funds in unique ways," Halsey said. "We are an uncommon institution. We connect appreciated assets with an interest in preservation. The net result is a savings, both in land and money, to the landowner and the community at large. Our operating cost is the ingredient necessary for all of this to take place."

SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE PECONIC LAND TRUST!!

The Trust identifies and implements 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. 11968.



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Peconic Land Trust, Inc.

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 outright development.

Mission Statement



Scott Chaskey

At the open door I cradle my daughter
 facing bay backwater. March light
 filters silver on beak, wing, feather
 of white and black buffleheads,
 iridescent mallard
 the snow swans,
 and on kingfisher's crown,
 Sun is an hourglass shape
 on the instrument of water - reflected
 starlight crossed by kingfisher's rattle,
 ducks' slide - and completely Spring - like
 diamond spin in the wise liquid of my daughter's eye.

Primavera