

Nonprofit conserves 20 acres in Portsmouth

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Aquidneck Land Trust (ALT) announced the conservation of 20.97 acres of land north of Bramans Lane in Portsmouth. The property extends from East Main Road to the north end of Malee Terrace and is adjacent to conserved land in the Sakonnet Greenway open space corridor. It has forested and scrub-shrub habitat and prime farm soils. The multi-party deal included two separate parcels which were sold and merged into a new parcel, purchased by Derek Boudreau and Tiffanie Starr. ALT placed a permanent conservation easement on the 20.97 acres of land, which will remain private and be used for farming and wildlife habitat. A half-acre outzone on the property will allow for a future single-family home with the remaining land in conservation.

"This is an exciting success story," said Chuck Allott, ALT executive direc-

tor, in a statement. "There were many moving parts but we had very committed partners and a terrific shared goal. We are indebted to the Nelson family, who sold their land to ALT at a bargain sale price, and to the Brooks family, who sold the development rights on their property at a bargain sale price. We are also very grateful to the new owners, Derek Boudreau and Tiffanie Starr, who are committed supporters of land conservation and who specifically wanted to purchase a conserved property. All of these parties worked together to protect this land, which will remain as habitat, scenic open space, and farmland."

In 2021, ALT reached an agreement with the Nelson family, executors of the Estate of Helen Jones, the deeded owner, on 15.4 acres of the land, which was historically farmed but has remained mostly natural habitat for the last two decades.

"Helen and Skip Jones were very involved in the community and actually worked on the 1990 Portsmouth Com-

prehensive Plan that led to the formation of the Aquidneck Land Trust," said Allott. "We appreciate the family's commitment to conservation and their willingness to permanently protect this land."

After the Nelson agreement was in place, ALT contacted neighbors Bob and Judy Brooks, who agreed to conserve 5.57 acres of their primarily forested land, adjacent to the Jones property.

The land trust was simultaneously in discussions with Derek Boudreau and Tiffanie Starr, a couple interested in purchasing conserved land to live on and manage. Boudreau and Starr contributed funds for fee simple acquisition of the land, subject to ALT's easement. The two parcels owned by the Jones Estate and Brooks family were merged into a single lot, creating the 20.97-acre conserved property.

"We were searching for land that could be enjoyed, yet conserved," said Boudreau in a statement. "With each visit to the island there seemed to be

fewer and fewer fields, meadows, and green space. Given the island's rich traditions of rural land, agriculture, and natural habitat, we felt an increasing sense of urgency to act."

Co-owner Tiffanie Starr noted that conserved land "offsets the impact on water resources from other developments, preserves scenic landscapes and wildlife habitat, and contributes to the overall health of the local ecosystems. We hope that in a small way, we have contributed to maintaining the natural beauty of the island."

"The generosity of the original land-owners and the enthusiasm and commitment of the new owners have resulted in a large tract of land conserved at a bargain sale price," said Allott. "We are grateful to all parties involved and to our ALT supporters, who contributed to save this land. Together, these generous parties have ensured the permanent conservation of a very significant piece of land."