



Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

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Randall Orchards conservation project announced as Land for Maine's Future Finalist for Funding

At its meeting on July 12th, the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) Board announced the Randall Orchards conservation project received the highest score in the Farmland Protection category and was selected as an LMF Finalist for funding. Once awarded, the LMF funding, along with the federal funding partner, USDA Farm & Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) and an additional donated easement by the landowner, will help permanently conserve 500 acres of forest and farmland including Randall Orchards in Standish. The LMF application was submitted by project manager, Presumpscot Regional Land Trust, with technical assistance from the Maine Farmland Trust. The FRPP funding application is still being reviewed.

“This is fantastic news for the area and is pivotal to helping the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust (PRLT) conserve this property with landowner Dick Randall. Becoming a Land for Maine's Future funding Finalist is a very competitive process, which just shows how valuable this project really is to Maine,” said *Richard Curtis, PRLT Board President*. “People in the area absolutely treasure Randall Orchards and working farmland is becoming increasingly rare in Southern Maine. In fact, Standish is one of the fastest growing towns in the state and the Randall property is one of the largest undeveloped blocks of land in the region. We appreciate that the LMF Board saw the value in protecting the property's heritage for future generations.”

Funding from both LMF and FRPP is necessary to purchase the development rights on approximately 300 acres of Mr. Randall's property, thereby making it feasible for him to donate a conservation easement on the remaining 200 acres of his land. While the LMF Board allocated a bit less than the requested funding amount, PRLT is seeking the additional funds from the matching federal funding partner, USDA Farm & Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) to cover the difference. Further fundraising is still needed for the upfront costs associated with the project.

“The community has gotten behind this project in a big way, but we continue to need their support,” says *Will Plumley, Vice President and Chair Randall Orchards Fundraising Committee*. “In order to cover the costs associated with this project, including the necessary environmental assessment, baseline data documentation, project management, surveying, etc. we've been underway with a fundraising campaign and still need to raise at least \$35,000. We have already received \$30,000 in private support and have a few private grant proposals still pending, but community support from individuals and businesses is going

to be necessary to close the gap.” To donate now to support the project costs of Randall Orchards Conservation effort, people can go to www.prlt.org or contact Plumley at w.plumley@roadrunner.com or (207) 595-2134.

“The LMF Scoring Committee and the Nominations Committee gave this project the highest scoring. It scored the highest because of the type of project it is and because it fit all the necessary criteria. It was the most outstanding project we had for farmland in part because of its longevity as a farm, that it has outstanding soils, is in an important location, and is currently an active farm. It is just a great project,” *said Don Marean, LMF Board Chair*. “It’s so great the work that PRLT is doing and has done—both in working with Dick Randall now to protect his farm, and to have protected the Stuart Farm many years ago. I grew up in Standish my whole life and always worried that something would happen to the Randall property. The most outstanding thing about this project is the man behind it, Dick Randall. He could have gotten a lot of money to develop it, and instead of thinking about how much money he could put in his pocket to develop it, he chose to do this. Dick stepped up to the plate and he did the right thing. People might not understand what a big thing this is, but it really is amazing. The project was selected to get LMF funding because it deserves funding. It is an outstanding project and I’m very happy for the people of Maine and the town of Standish that it was selected.”

Project Background

About a year ago, landowner Dick Randall first approached the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust for help to protect his working farmland from development. For 50 years, he has operated a working forest and an apple orchard on the property, which has become a landmark in Standish. In April 2011, the PRLT, with technical assistance from Maine Farmland Trust, submitted a request to the Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) funding program, and the USDA Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP). The combination of these funds are needed to purchase the development rights on Mr. Randall’s approximately 300 acres, thereby making it feasible for him to donate a conservation easement on the remaining 200 acres of his land. The project may take another year to be complete. When it is, Dick Randall will continue to own the protected farmland and the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust will become the easement holder and steward the terms of the agricultural conservation easement in consultation with the Maine Department of Agriculture, the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Maine Farmland Trust.

“Randall Orchards is an exceptional piece of working farmland in an area of intense development pressure,” *stated Stacy Gambrel, Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) lands staff member*. “If not conserved, this property would assuredly be developed. MFT is thrilled that the LMF Board is supporting the conservation of this productive and beautiful farmland.”

Further History

The farm was first purchased by Dick Randall's grandfather, Edgar in 1906- who moved into the existing farmhouse that was built in 1776 and started the Randall farm lineage. The Randall Orchards property has had a long farming production history including the sale of corn, peas, beans, apples, pumpkins, poultry, eggs, butter and milk over the years. In the 1930’s, there was a prominent milk and butter industry from this site. In 1948, Dick's father, Rufus, sold off his dairy herd and began to grow and sell apples through a broker and made and sold apple boxes—using the forest on the land to harvest wood. Dick, who inherited the farm in 1980, has been growing and selling apples ever since. In addition to his popular apples, Dick now grows and sells pumpkins, along with decorative squash and sunflowers at his roadside farmstand.

Many local people know of Randall Orchards from Dick’s farmstand, his pick-your-own apples, and his delicious cider—and many have grown accustomed to seeing Randall Orchards apples sold at Hannaford.

Others may be more familiar with the scenic vista of Dick's farmland as you drive along Route 25 in Standish, or perhaps know of Dick and his family's farm history and their essential role in the Standish community.

Dick's vision for his 500-acre property is that it stay as a working farm and woods and meadows in the years to come—protected in perpetuity. Dick's property represents one of the last commercial agricultural properties in Standish, has prime agricultural soils, and is one of the largest undeveloped blocks of land in the region.

"In 50 years I don't think there will be too many places with 500 acres of farm and forests for people to enjoy," said *Richard Randall, owner, Randall Orchards*. "I want to make sure I preserve this land for the future."

About Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

Originally founded as the Gorham Land Trust in 1986, the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust (PRLT) works to conserve natural lands and historical landscapes in the Presumpscot River Watershed and western shore of Sebago Lake. It holds properties and easements in Gorham, Windham, Standish, and Sebago. For more information, visit www.prlt.org.

About Maine Farmland Trust

The Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) mission is to protect and preserve Maine's farmland; keep agricultural lands working; and support the future of farming in Maine. Structured as a land trust, MFT is the state's leading force in preserving farmland, often working in partnership with local and regional land trusts-
www.maineFarmlandtrust.org.