



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FIRST LAND PARCEL DONATED TO NATIVE LAND CONSERVANCY:
Native-led land conservation trust preserves forest parcel in Barnstable

On June 29, Norman W. Hayes of Sandwich donated a 1.4-acre parcel of pine-oak forest to the Native Land Conservancy, Inc. (NLC). It is the first gift of land to the newest land trust operating in Eastern Massachusetts. Founded in 2012, NLC is the first Native American-led non-profit land trust operating east of the Mississippi River.

“We are honored and humbled by Mr. Hayes’ generosity in land and spirit,” said Ramona Peters, founder of the Conservancy. “Land has special meaning to native people. Our ancestors go back on this land 12,000 years. We started this land trust to rescue precious parcels before they can be developed. It is very appropriate that the first parcel entrusted to us is located in the middle of Barnstable, the middle of Cape Cod. We are grateful that Mr. Hayes shares our conservation vision.”

The land parcel is comprised of almost one and half acres of rolling, mature forest on the flank of Shoot Flying Hill on the edge of Centerville. Towering white pines dominate, some 120 years

old, according to Mr. Hayes, a professional forester and environmental consultant who was born and raised in Barnstable. He noted that American holly, and American beech, as well as the expected pitch pines and black and white oaks, inhabit the property. In the spring, lady slippers and starflowers bloom. The land also preserves part of the Zone of Contribution to public supply wells of the Barnstable Fire District.

In the deed to NLC, Mr. Hayes asked that a saying of his father's be translated into the native Wopanaak language. Stephen P. Hayes, a founder of the Barnstable Land Trust, Inc. thirty years ago, often told his son Norman, "Take care of the land and the land will take care of you." In Wopanaak, it is "*Wachônumk ahkee kah ahkee peesh kuwachônuqunaw.*"

The Barnstable Land Trust (BLT) will hold a conservation restriction on the land, as required by the State Conservation Land Tax Credit program, which has reserved a \$75,000 tax refund for Mr. Hayes for his gift. Long-time BLT Executive Director Jaci Barton said, "We are thrilled to be working in partnership with the NLC to protect land that is vitally important to their heritage."

The Native Land Conservancy, Inc. was formed in 2012 and received its tax exemption in 2013. It is supported by open membership (anyone can join), though led by a board of natives, including Wampanoags and Nipmucs. NLC has offered native-led walks of its own and in partnership with other land trusts, providing unique cultural insights into aspects of the landscape and its spiritual significance. Though headquartered on the Cape, NLC can accept land and interests in land anywhere in Eastern Massachusetts. NLC is a member of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition and The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc.

"We thank Mark Robinson of The Compact for introducing us to Mr. Hayes," said Errol Hicks, NLC President. "The Compact has been very useful to us in getting established and scouting land opportunities."

After a public announcement of the land gift on September 3rd, Mr. Hayes and the NLC members toured the property and tacked up the first boundary markers with NLC's logo and the words "*Ay8ôk wâchônumuk*" meaning "protected place."