

Salt Box Farm



The 52-acre Salt Box Farm on Hildreth Street in Westford Center is an iconic resource, and scenic views of the farm's open meadow and hay fields are treasured by all who drive, walk or bike on Hildreth Street. Beyond the fields, the farm contains a variety of habitats including forested uplands, wetlands and a farm pond. The entrance to Westford's Prospect Hill Conservation Area is across Hildreth Street. The Hildreth Hills Conservation land is located to the south, and 65 acres of Town conservation land, which is traversed by the Burns Hill trail, are to the north. Salt Box Farm connects these conservation areas. If protected, a new public trail will be constructed on the farm, beginning at land owned by the Westford Conservation Trust on Hildreth Street, where a small parking area could be created.

Part of the fabric of the community for 250 years, Salt Box Farm is also valuable from a historic perspective; the saltbox style farmhouse was built circa 1660. It's one of only two remaining 17th century homes in Westford, and is included in the Massachusetts Historical Commission Inventory.

The Opportunity

The owner of Salt Box Farm has been approached by developers interested in purchasing some or all of her land. Given the topography, wetlands and amount of frontage, preliminary land plans indicate that Salt Box Farm could be divided into 16 house lots off Hildreth Street, including the existing farmhouse. Fortunately, the owner would prefer to see the property permanently protected if it is financially feasible. She has offered the Town of Westford, in partnership with the Sudbury Valley Trustees and the Westford Land Preservation Foundation (WLPF), an opportunity to purchase a Conservation Restriction on the land. The CR would permanently protect 45 acres of the property from development. The owner would retain the remaining six acres with no restrictions, allowing the six acres to someday be subdivided into three lots.

The CR will permit some continued farming and grazing as well as forestry and other conservation uses. The view of the property from Hildreth Street would be permanently preserved via a scenic buffer. And a public trail connecting Hildreth Street to the Burns Hill trail would be built along the perimeter of the property.

Fundraising

The Conservation Commission and the Community Preservation Committee have voted to support spending up to \$1.13 million in CPA funds to purchase the CR and permanently protect Salt Box Farm. At the Annual Town Meeting on Saturday March 24th, voters will be asked to approve that expenditure: please be there to vote YES! In addition, in order to defray the cost to the Town, the non-profit WLPF has committed to raising \$185,000 in private gifts and state grants.

Want to Help?

Please help conserve this beautiful property by making a tax-deductible gift to the Campaign to Conserve Salt Box Farm. Checks should be payable to the Westford Land Preservation Foundation and mailed to PO Box 235, Westford MA 01886. For more information email WLPF board member Ellen Harde at 39mainstreet@gmail.com.

