

**MFT PURCHASED EASEMENT
(hypothetical) PROJECT OVERVIEW
FOR**

Greenacre Farm

Landowner: Retiring Farmers (to be purchased by Incoming Farmers)
Windsor, Kennebec County

Staff Project Manager: Perkins

March 14, 2017

Summary Recommendation:

Staff requests that the Lands Committee recommend to the Board the purchase of a conservation easement on Greenacre Farm in Windsor, Kennebec County.

Property Location:

268 Greenacre Rd.
Windsor, ME 04363
Delorme Map # 13
(Please also see attached
maps)



Background¹:

Greenacre Farm was most recently a 125-cow organic dairy, owned and operated by Retiring Farmers from 1973-2014. They operated a conventional dairy, then transitioned to an organic operation in 2006 and shipped milk first to Stonyfield and then to Organic Valley. Retiring farmers sold their cows in 2014, and then, in the spring of 2015, leased the farm to Incoming Farmers. Incoming Farmers have leased and operated the farm as a 40-cow organic dairy since that time, and are now under contract for its purchase.

Incoming Farmers plan to continue the dairy operation and increase their herd up to ~100 cows within 2-3 years. They are working with Farm Credit to get financing to purchase the farm; however, an MFT purchased easement payment is an integral part of the financing plan.

¹ (Relates to farm viability)

Property description:

Greenacre Farm has a total of 248 acres, primarily is located on Greenacre Road in Windsor, approximately 12 miles from Augusta. The property consists of 95 acres of open land (about 39% of the property), and 135 acres of farmland soils (about 55% of the property). The farmland soils include:

Prime Farmland Soils			
PdB	Paxton-Charlton fine sandy loams, 3 to 8 percent slopes	39	16%
WrB	Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	5	2%
Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance			
HrB	Hollis fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	30	12%
SkB	Scio very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	45	18%
Farmland Soils of Local Importance			
HrC	Hollis fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	11	4%
PdC2	Paxton-Charlton fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes	4	2%
PeC	Paxton-Charlton very stony fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes	1	1%
<i>Total Farmland Soils</i>		135	55%

The Hollis series consists of well drained and somewhat excessively drained soils formed in a thin mantle of till derived mainly from parent materials that are very low in iron sulfides such as gneiss, schist, and granite. They are shallow to bedrock. They are nearly level through very steep upland soils on bedrock-controlled hills and ridges. Small areas with few rock outcrops are cleared of stones and used for cultivated crops, but most cleared areas are in hay or pasture. Common trees are northern red, white, black, and chestnut oak, hickory, eastern white pine, eastern hemlock, and gray and black birch.

Scio very fine sandy loam is a nearly level or gently sloping, moderately well drained soil in slight depressions on plains and on tops of low terraces. This soil is well suited to cultivated crops and pasture. In some years the seasonal high water table delays planting or harvesting. Drainage is needed for maximum crop yields and efficient use of machinery. Most forage grasses are suited to the undrained soil.

The Paxton soils series consists of well drained loamy soils formed in sandy loam material underlain by dense till. The soils are very deep to bedrock and moderately deep to a dense layer. Where stones have been cleared and slopes are gentle, Paxton soils are well suited to cultivate crops, hay, and improved pasture. The main agricultural uses for Paxton soils are apples, corn, and silage. Paxton soils have a high water holding capacity and are well suited for intensive agricultural and woodland production. Trees commonly growing on Paxton soils include red, white, and black oak, hickory, sugar maple, red maple, gray and black birch, white pine, and hemlock.

Incoming Farmers' purchase of Greenacre Farm includes a house, barns, milk house infrastructure and some of the farming equipment they have been leasing from Retiring Farmer.

MFT Purchased Easement Program Criteria:

MFT PURCHASED EASEMENT PROJECT OVERVIEW	
Farm/Project Name	Greenacre Farm
Landowners	Retiring Farmers
Location (town & county)	Windsor, Kennebec County
Total Acreage	248 acres
Acreage in Fields	95 acres
Acreage in Farmland Soils	136 acres

Staff found that Greenacre Farm meets MFT's Requirements for Purchased Easements as follows:

<p>1. The land to be protected must fall into one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) it is a commercial farm; b) it contains farmland that is currently used by a commercial farm; c) it is intended to become a commercial farm or to have its farmland used by a commercial farm under a clear plan, where selling an easement under this program is part of that plan. 	<p>The land to be protected was recently used by a commercial farm and will be used as a commercial farm under the new ownership.</p>
<p>2. Adequate stewardship funding is available, either from the landowner, or from other project partners (including MFT).</p>	<p>MFT will invest 15% of the total formula generated by our PEP formula in stewardship funding for this project, as is our practice under the Purchased Easement Program for Type 2 projects, and will request the MFT Board to allocate what additional stewardship funding is necessary, as identified by our Stewardship Fund Formula.</p>
<p>3. MFT staff reasonably believes that MFT's due diligence requirements (including environmental assessment and title investigation, including the discharge or subordination of any mortgage or other liens on the property) will be satisfactorily addressed before closing.</p>	<p>After discussions with the landowners, MFT staff have reason to believe that our due diligence requirements will be satisfactorily addressed before closing. MFT is working with Farm Credit on mortgage consent.</p>

Additional Considerations for Farmland Protection Projects:

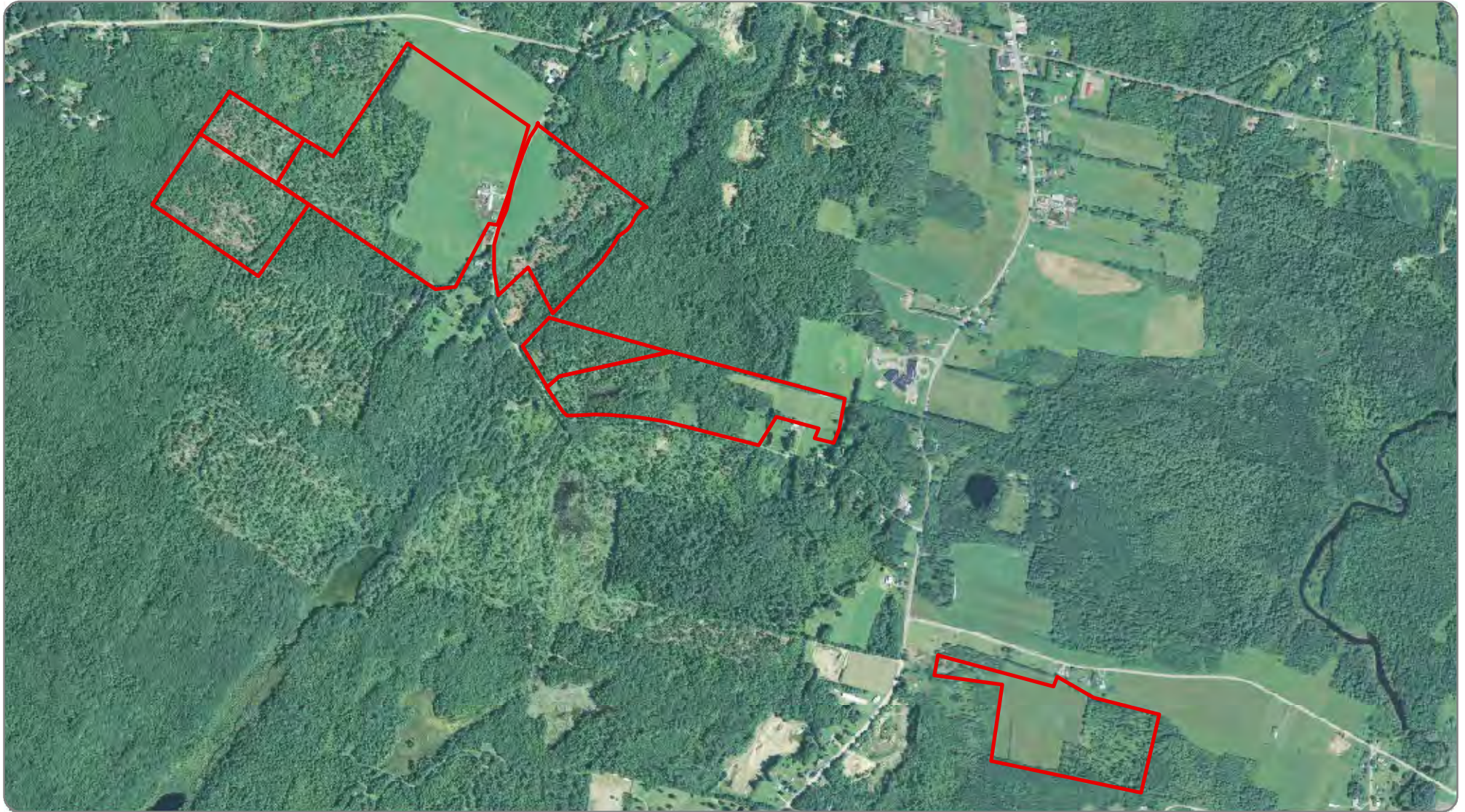
Staff has found that the following additional factors also bring merit to this project:

- **The quantity of prime and/or significant agricultural soils present on the property, or, lacking such soils resources, the property has characteristics which otherwise support its agricultural viability (i.e.- forest, pasture, sugarbush, blueberry ground, etc.):** This farm has good agricultural soils, comprising approximately 55% of the total property, with demonstrated capacity to support a small dairy sustainably. The soils are also suitable for other agricultural uses as discussed in the soils descriptions, above. The mixed forest, which has for the past 50 years been maintained and harvested in accordance with a Forestry Management Plan, adds to the farm's diversity as a source of commercial specialty lumber and firewood.
- **The property is close to other active and productive farms and agricultural infrastructure:** Windsor is an area of active and productive farmland where there is sufficient critical mass of farms and farm infrastructure to support agriculture.

Greenacre Farm (~248 Acres)

Windsor, Kennebec County, Maine

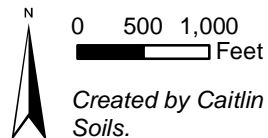
Aerial Map



 Property Boundary



Note: Information on this map is provided for purposes of discussion and visualization only; mapped boundaries and acreages are approximate.

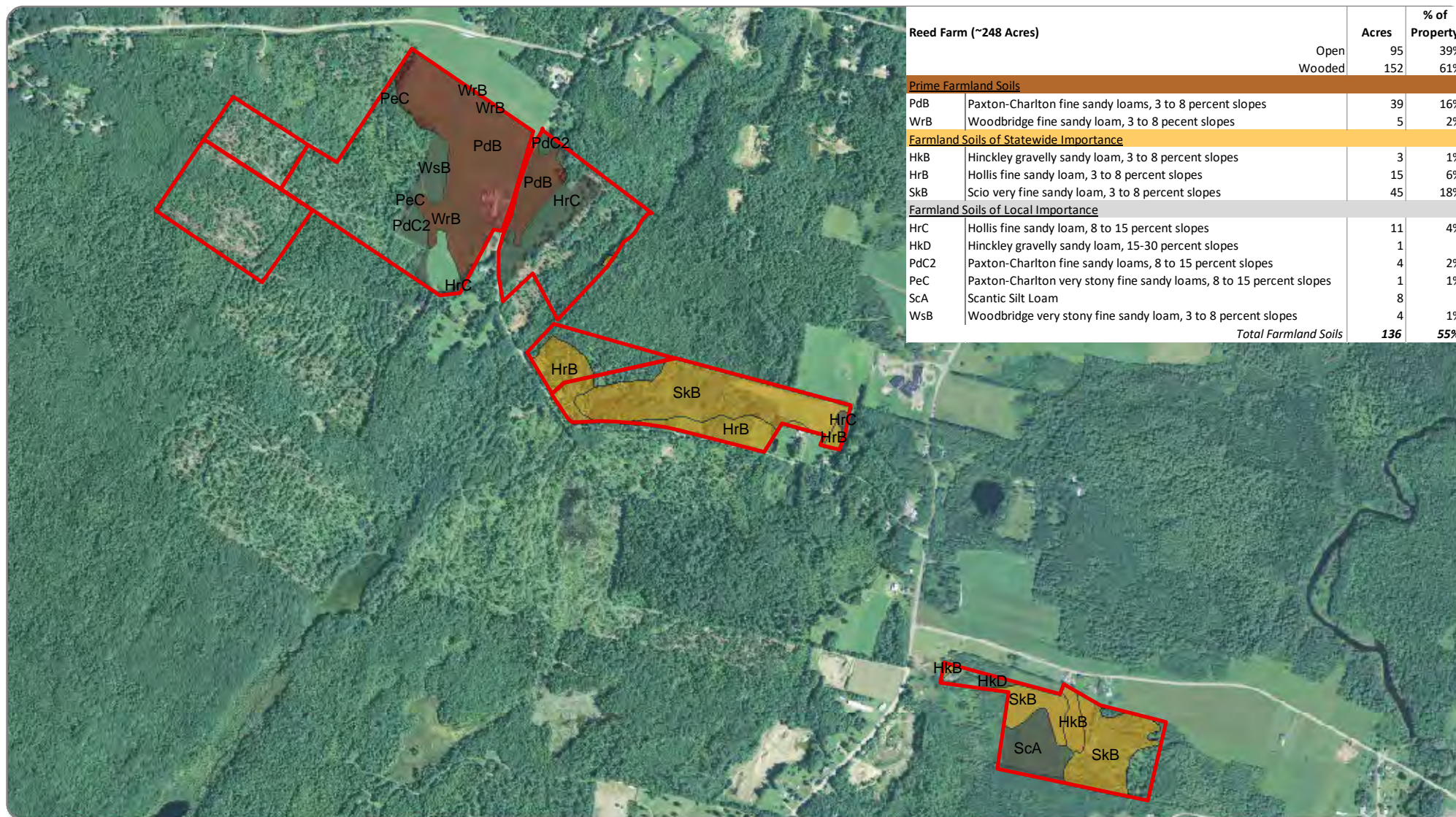


Created by Caitlin Hopkins, MFT, 02/16/17. Base data source: Maine Office of GIS, NAIP 2013, NRCS Soils.

Greenacre Farm (~248 Acres)

Windsor, Kennebec County, Maine

Soils Map

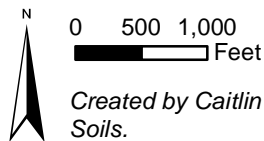


Reed Farm (~248 Acres)		Acres	% of Property
	Open	95	39%
	Wooded	152	61%
Prime Farmland Soils			
PdB	Paxton-Charlton fine sandy loams, 3 to 8 percent slopes	39	16%
WrB	Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	5	2%
Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance			
HkB	Hinckley gravelly sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	3	1%
HrB	Hollis fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	15	6%
SkB	Scio very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	45	18%
Farmland Soils of Local Importance			
HrC	Hollis fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	11	4%
HKD	Hinckley gravelly sandy loam, 15-30 percent slopes	1	
PdC2	Paxton-Charlton fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes	4	2%
PeC	Paxton-Charlton very stony fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes	1	1%
ScA	Scantic Silt Loam	8	
Wsb	Woodbridge very stony fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	4	1%
Total Farmland Soils		136	55%

- Property Boundary
- Prime farmland soils
- Farmland Soils of Local Importance
- Farmland soils of statewide importance



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