

**For Immediate Release  
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**The Trust for Public Land and the Town of Ipswich Announce  
Conservation Opportunity for Maplecroft Farm in Ipswich**

**IPSWICH, MASS., August 3, 2009:** The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Ipswich town officials announced today that TPL has reached an agreement with the Raymond family to conserve nearly 250 acres of land known as Maplecroft Farm, bordered by Argilla Road, Heartbreak Road, Essex Road (Route 133), and Northgate Road in Ipswich.

The property consists of rolling pastures and croplands and is an important example of the rural landscape that is vanishing from the North Shore. The agreement gives TPL, a national nonprofit conservation organization, until February 2010 to raise \$5.1 million from a variety of sources to purchase conservation restrictions that will permanently protect the land from development. If the conservation effort is successful, access will be provided to a public trail across the property, and agricultural restrictions will protect its significant farmland. The restrictions will allow the continued use of a portion of the property for soccer fields.

Ted Raymond, a lifelong Ipswich resident whose family has owned Maplecroft Farm for nearly 70 years said, "Our family appreciates the opportunity to see our farm preserved for future generations to enjoy, and we look forward to working with TPL to make this a reality. This is certainly the most desirable outcome of the various possibilities we could consider."

Ingrid Miles, member of the Ipswich Board of Selectmen, said, "The Town has been working on this project with The Trust for Public Land and our other partners since last summer, and we are thrilled that TPL has reached this agreement with the Raymond family. The property that we hope to conserve has many public benefits, not the least of which is preserving the scenic gateway to Town along Route 133 and the view we all cherish along Argilla Road to Crane Beach. Protecting this property has been a high priority for the Town for many years."

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Ipswich voters will consider this opportunity at Town Meeting in October, where they will decide whether to allocate funds from the Town's existing open space bond program to the permanent conservation of the property. The Town's contribution will be augmented by a package of funding sources that collectively will make the project possible, including contributions from two state agencies (the Department of Agricultural Resources and the Department of Conservation and Recreation), and an estimated \$500,000 in private donations.

The Essex County Greenbelt Association will be responsible for the private fundraising campaign. Ed Becker, Greenbelt's Executive Director, said, "The Maplecroft Farm property has been one of Greenbelt's highest conservation priorities for many years, so we are very pleased to have an opportunity to work with the landowner, the Town of Ipswich, The Trust for Public Land, and our other partners to protect it. Few properties embody Greenbelt's mission of protecting scenic land, high value wildlife habitat, and agricultural resources as well as the Raymond property."

Local farmer V. Mario Marini has leased and farmed portions of Maplecroft Farm for the past 30 years. He commented, "This land has become more precious to me as the demand for fresh local produce has increased. The loss of this land, which represents about a third of my farmland under cultivation, would have a serious effect on the food supply at my farm stand. I strongly urge everyone to support this land preservation project for the future of the Town."

The wetlands on the Maplecroft Farm property, including the headwaters of Labor in Vain Creek (also known locally as Gould's Creek), are of great environmental significance and are included in the Great Marsh Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Renowned North Shore birder and Ipswich Open Space Committee member Jim Berry stated, "This open area is truly significant habitat for many birds and other species. Most recently, the rare Ross's Goose was seen on the property for only the fourth time in Massachusetts."

In addition to preserving the property from development, the opportunity announced today would provide public trail access to hikers, riders, and other users. Alex Van Alen, the Executive Director of the Essex County Trail Association, which will likely hold the trail easement, said, "This trail across a beautiful property would be a critical link in Ipswich's vast trail network."

Whitney Hatch, Southern New England Director for TPL and a resident of Ipswich, added, "The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is excited to have reached an agreement to create this conservation opportunity in Ipswich with the Raymond family. We understand how important the preservation of the Town's rural character is to the quality of life in Ipswich, and we hope to seize upon this once-in-a-generation opportunity to make a lasting impact on the Town's future."

Ipswich Open Space Committee member and photographer Dorothy Kerper Monnelly reflected, "Can you image the loss of that spectacular scenic vista across open fields, as you travel to Crane Beach? This project also protects the productive use of the land, and can be accomplished with significant funding from several granting sources. This is a rare opportunity to preserve a sense of place that has become part of life in Ipswich."

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and natural areas. Since its founding in 1972, TPL has helped to protect more than 2.8 million acres nationwide, including nearly 13,000 acres in Massachusetts. TPL depends on the support and generosity of individuals, foundations, and businesses to achieve its land for people mission. For more information, visit [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org).

The Essex County Greenbelt Association is a member-supported, nonprofit land trust dedicated to conserving land of ecological, agricultural and scenic significance in Essex County. Founded in 1961, Essex County Greenbelt has protected more than 13,000 acres of land across the region. For more information or to join as a member go to [www.ecga.org](http://www.ecga.org).

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