CONTACT:
Branford Land Trust
(203) 483-5263
info@branfordlandtrust.org

PRESS RELEASE
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Branford Land Trust and Local Environmental Groups Join Forces to Protect Jarvis Creek Salt Marsh

The Branford Land Trust (BLT) — in partnership with the Guilford Land Conservation Trust, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and the Seedlings Foundation — is purchasing a 20-acre section of the Medlyn Farm south of Route 146, across from the farm stand and along the Jarvis Creek salt marsh.

To do so, the BLT's Jarvis Creek Farm fundraising campaign has already raised more than half of the $1.75 million dollar goal, thanks to a $500,000 EPA Long Island Sound Improvement Grant and $650,000 from two generous Branford families. Raising the remaining $600,000 is an unprecedented effort for the BLT, and it is undertaking a community-wide fundraising effort to do so.

This is an all-hands-on-deck effort, supported by Audubon Connecticut, Connecticut Audubon Society, Connecticut DEEP, Friends of Historic Route 146, Guilford Land Conservation Trust, Menunkatuck Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut, Save the Sound, and the Seedlings Foundation.

"The Branford community has stepped up to protect important properties like this before," says BLT president Pete Raymond. "Over the years, our residents have come together to help preserve treasured places like Beacon Hill, the Hoadley Creek Preserve, Red Hill Woods, and the Supply Ponds & Pisgah Brook Preserves. Now, we're asking for your support again."

Part of the area originally inhabited by the Totoket and Menunkatuck, Indigenous communities of Quinnipiac, the first parcel of what we now know as Medlyn Farm was acquired by John Rogers in 1758. The Medlyn family has farmed there since 1911, and the farm has been an important source for fresh produce, dairy products, eggs, and firewood throughout the years.

The purchase of the property, which was put up for sale in 2020, will protect the farmland from imminent development. "We're grateful that the Medlyn family and the Land Trust were able to work together on this sale," says Raymond. "The family has the option to farm the land for several more years, and the Land Trust will work to conserve these unique ecosystems."

CT DEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes says "DEEP is pleased to partner with BLT in its acquisition of this property to protect the Jarvis Creek salt marsh by providing $500,000 made possible through an EPA Long Island Sound Improvement Grant. Connecticut's salt marshes

provide critical ecosystem services such as protecting estuarine water quality, providing places for outdoor education, research and outdoor recreation, critical fish and wildlife breeding and foraging habitat, and flood and erosion control."

Salt marshes such as those along Jarvis Creek are critical to coastal resilience. They can be sustained if they are able to keep pace with sea level rise. Preserving non-rocky upland areas allows salt marsh ecosystems to migrate to higher ground. Such upland marsh migration can help sustain a healthy amount of marsh and provide those critical ecosystem services.

The Jarvis Creek estuary is important to many vulnerable species, including the salt marsh sparrow and smooth cordgrass. Those who walk the nearby network of public hiking trails have reported seeing river otters, American bitterns, glossy ibis, peregrine falcons, bald eagles, American kestrels, ospreys, clapper rails, marsh hawks, black bellied plovers, and more.

The property is also part of the popular Branford Trail's Stony Creek section, which allows people to walk from the center of Stony Creek to the Hoadley Creek Preserve and on to the Stony Creek Quarry and Van Wie Preserves, Red Hill Woods and the Westwood Trails in Guilford, almost entirely on protected open space.

These types of open space preserves are part of what makes Branford such a special place to live, and popular for visitors as well. The Branford Land Trust maintains and stewards these natural places that provide places for recreation and education, that offer critical fish and wildlife habitat, and that enhance the environmental integrity of our shoreline for future generations.

Contributions, large and small, are important for the preservation and stewardship of this property. All contributions are tax-deductible as provided by law and can be made online at www.branfordlandtrust.org, or by sending checks noted "Jarvis Creek Farm" to the Branford Land Trust, P.O. Box 254, Branford, CT 06405.

(Donations that exceed the fundraising goal will be added to the BLT Stewardship Fund, ensuring responsible management of BLT properties in perpetuity.)

The Branford Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, accredited by the Land Trust Alliance, established in 1967 to protect Branford's open space and natural resources. Run by volunteers and supported by member families and businesses, the Land Trust manages 30+ miles of hiking trails, and protects over 1,000 acres in more than 130 parcels with conservation easements on another 400 acres in Branford. For more information about the Jarvis Creek Farm campaign, visit www.branfordlandtrust.org.

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IMAGES:
Aerial photos by Mark Orensteen
Map from South Central Regional Council of Governments