

For immediate release  
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## Land Trust doubles preserved lands in '07

The St. Simons Land Trust in 2007 doubled the amount of land preserved forever – from 72 to 144 acres. The value of the land that is permanently protected also doubled.

“We’re thrilled with the stepped-up pace of land preservation,” said Board Chairman Ben Slade. “We plan to tap into expanded funding resources in the year ahead to keep up the momentum.”

Five individual properties make up the 74 acres saved:

- Fort Frederica North Marsh Tract consisting of 20 acres of upland and marsh on West Point Drive, adjacent to the national monument. The property was acquired at a bargain price with the assistance of Glynn County, which obtained a \$750,000 grant from the state of Georgia to assist the Land Trust with the acquisition. The Land Trust borrowed the remaining funds through the state’s Land Conservation Partnership and is working to obtain federal funding so the National Park Service can ultimately purchase the property to add to Fort Frederica’s land holdings.
- Wildlife Drive at Frederica Road consisting of two acres and 500 feet of frontage along Frederica Road. This property is being acquired at a bargain price from the developer of the new Wildlife Preserve residential subdivision. The acquisition helps save the Frederica Road canopy, as called for in the Land Trust’s *Greenprint*. As a bonus, the land adjoins the popular John Gilbert Nature Trail.
- 5.8 acres on the Frederica River north of Fort Frederica. This property includes remains of five tabby slave cabins and a stand of live oak trees that are more than 100 years old. The owner gave the Land Trust a conservation easement, limiting development and protecting the historic and scenic character of the property.
- 45-acre marsh and hammock on Postell Creek. This property just behind Oglethorpe Park was given to the Land Trust as a conservation easement, protecting the upland portion of the property from development.
- One-half acre on Serenity Lane in the Harrington community. The owner contributed the land to the Land Trust, protecting it from development in perpetuity.

Land Trust Chairman Ben Slade noted that the Land Trust invested just \$3.6 million to preserve \$7.7 million worth of land. The additional \$4.1 million of land value came from landowner contributions (bargain sales, donations) of \$1.85 million, grants from the state of Georgia and foundations, as well as from the donated conservation easements worth \$2.25 million in property value.

“In the coming year, we will continue to seek outside dollars – both private and public – in order to increase significantly our sources of funds for land conservation on the island,” said Land

Trust President Russ Marane. “If the development pace of the past 7-8 years continues, we probably have 10 years to protect the amount of land we need to save in order to protect the scenic and natural character of this island, as well as to offer more open space accessible to the general public.”

Marane said the Land Trust this year will begin a conversation with island residents about the need for a pro-active land conservation program to protect 500 additional acres of land over the next five years. “Only 4 percent of the land on St. Simons is protected or designated open space, and half of that is devoted to the Fort Frederica National Monument,” said President Russ Marane. “Less than 1 percent of the land on the island is devoted to public parks.”

Marane said that an aggressive and better-funded conservation program could be directed to creating a better balance of open space and developed properties. He anticipates the use of both public and private funds to expand the amount of protected open space and to provide more public access to active and passive parks located throughout the island.

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The St. Simons Land Trust’s mission is to preserve the island’s natural and scenic character and to enhance the quality of life of the island community for present and future generations. The Land Trust currently protects 144 acres of property on St. Simons Island.

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