

From: [Deb Matthews](#)
To: [Conservation Commission](#)
Cc: rita@hybidfarm.com
Subject: Hybrid Farm / Conservation Land access
Date: Thursday, November 17, 2011 10:36:06 PM

To the members of the Acton Conservation Commission

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to you to beg that you continue the longstanding lease that Hybrid Farm has had with the Town of Acton, allowing their access to graze ponies and trail-ride over Acton's conservation land.

My 10-year old daughter has attended camp there the past few summers, and it has been a wonderful, caring, responsible environment. My daughter has learned to care for ponies, and has gained self-confidence in her own skills as a rider. She hopes to one day be a camp counselor there herself, and was devastated when she heard that Hybrid might have to let go of half of its ponies, and curtail or end some of its programs. Hybrid Farm itself is picture perfect, and I think it is something special to have a working farm still in Acton, as it was many decades ago. There's a lot to be said for holding on to history.

I've also been impressed by the outreach that Rita has done with special needs kids. There have been several special needs kids at Hybrid camps with my daughter. Not only can horse-riding be very therapeutic for those children, I think it is great that my daughter and other campers can make friends with other kids who may have a wide range of abilities. Horses are a wonderful bridge between kids of different backgrounds and abilities.

I recently reread a letter you received in 1983 from one Mary Smith, in which she supported Hybrid's access to grazing lands. I was struck by how many of her points are 100% relevant today, almost 30 years later. To pull out some of the phrases that resonated:

"The McConnon's home is one of the historic landmarks in Acton. The open fields in their present condition help to preserve the authenticity of an eighteenth century farmhouse. There are few of these remaining and anything we can do as a community that will not have any adverse effects on our citizenry should be encouraged. In our opinion the present conditions that surround the area do that. Natural maintenance of the fields via grazing animals is environmentally sound, financially advantageous, and contributes aesthetically to the community."

and

"having the open fields allows for a different type of recreation and wildlife than the more heavily wooded land."

Acton has had much development over the past 30 years... if anything, Mary Smith's comments from 30 years ago are even more urgent and meaningful today. To echo Mary Smith, I too encourage and urge the Conservation Committee to continue the

present usage of the land. I think a horse farm is a perfect use of conservation land, and Hybrid Farm in particular is an important part of the fabric of life in Acton. To lose Hybrid's programs would be a major blow.

Sincerely,

Deb Matthews
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Resident since 1998