

November 21, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you to express my concern, and deep sadness, for the situation that Hybrid Farm has been put in. I recognize the difficult position that the Acton Conservation Commission must be in, concerning the maintenance and proper use of its land. I sincerely ask, however, that you reconsider the decision regarding Hybrid Farm. I have been associated with Hybrid Farm for over fifteen years. As a student in high school it was my home away from home every summer. The program established by Rita McConnon is one based on commitment, honesty, and love.

Rita has been committed to her program for as long as I have known her. She is there to show children how to love horses, and progress in their development as a rider, but there is also a commitment to helping these children develop self-confidence. A community exists within the walls of Hybrid Farm. I don't know too many teenagers that want to spend their summers in the throws of dirty stalls, yet she has kids lined up to be there.

Rita sincerely cares about her horses, and her riders. I have seen her on a number of occasions be in tears because of her concern for a sick horse, or the potential loss of a horse. Therefore, the idea of having to part from many of these horses is devastating to her. As a horse owner, I know the challenges of finding a safe home for your horse. Within the equestrian world there are many who place a weighty price on the care of another's horse. Rita is one that isn't seeking the money. I would confidently send my horse to Rita's, and my family has done so on a number of occasions.

Her farm is unique; it is special. I feel that it is an asset to the community of Acton, and the surrounding towns. Acton-Boxborough High School, for example, has a wonderful opportunity by utilizing Hybrid Farm in their Special Education programs. Research has shown that equine therapy can be more beneficial than a number of other techniques. The town Acton-Boxborough School District is extremely fortunate to have this resource available to its students.

Hybrid Farm is a wonderful organization built and run with love. Rita McConnon has devoted so much of her life to this program. Please understand that by reducing the number of horses on her farm, the many wonderful programs offered will be greatly impacted, if not cancelled. Rita is a respectful person, and I know she encourages all that work for her to respect the people, and land, that surround Hybrid Farm. Conservation land is a wonderful gift to all those that stroll through its paths. Please continue to allow those from Hybrid Farm to be amongst those that enjoy the peace and serenity that exists there.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this issue further. Please contact me should you have any follow up questions.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Quezada
21 Cortland Drive
Stow, MA 01775
(978) 897-1290

Dear Sir or Madam,

Hybid is extremely special and this is why: horses and kids are happy at Hybid and they are happy together at Hybid.

If you would like to have more reasons, here is what I think:

First of all, if you were to take the land away from them, where would all these horses go? You probably don't know. Think of all the horses that have been rescued, they were really happy to find a good home. These horses are special.

Second of all, the kids love Hybid so much, they would be so sad to not be able to come anymore. Your answer is probably: "Go to another riding barn." But no other barn is like Hybid because we don't come to Hybid just to ride. We come at Hybid to take care of the horses and ponies and learn how to keep them healthy and make them happy.

Third of all, the horses need the freedom in the fields. They need to live outdoors and the Conservation Land is the best place for them and they are the best for it. Don't take the land away from them. Outside is their house. What if someone took your house away!

Finally, think of all the people that work at Hybid. Think of all those people losing their jobs... They work hard and love their job and that's why they do it so well. Don't destroy that.

Thank you for reading me. Please let Hybid be.

Valentine Ganis (9 years old)

53 Upland rd, Cambridge, MA, 02140

To Whom It May Concern:

Hybid Farm has been an irreplaceable part of my life and a huge part of my childhood. When I learned to ride horses, at the ripe old age of 5 years old, Rita and her family took me in with open arms. They taught me to ride, and cared for my safety as though I was part of their family, and after the ten years I spent at Hybid, it certainly felt as though I was. I never knew when I first started taking lessons at Hybid that it would be such a huge part of my life. My foundation in riding, which I learned from Rita, has allowed me to ride at the Grand Prix level, and become an internationally ranked equestrian. However, their expertise in riding and horsemanship is not the only thing that makes Hybid Farm special. The respect for human and animal life at Hybid is one to be admired, no one is ever made fun of or excluded and there is no horse that is ever mistreated. The horses there are happy, and healthy and they live longer than any horses I have ever known, and that is because they are treated with such love and affection by so many people. The group of people who ride and work there are a tight-knit family who go out of their way to help each other out. They care for each other and for the horses more deeply than anyone can know. They welcome new riders wholeheartedly and show them the ropes. I grew up at there, and I know that if I ever needed anything, I could call Rita or anyone from Hybid, and they would come through for me. Hybid Farm not only instilled in me a true love for horses and riding but also gave me a solid foundation of good morals. Hybid played a huge part in raising me to be the person I am today, and has raised hundreds of girls and boys to be good, honest people. There is a lot of cruelty and crime going on in the world today but those two things simply do not exist at Hybid Farm. When parents drop their children off to ride, they know that their children will truly be having good, clean fun. With the amount of kids doing drugs, and drinking these days, parents know that when their kids are at Hybid, that they will come home safely. Hybid, to me, is a little slice of utopia. You will never see anyone from Hybid Farm cursing, speaking disrespectfully, or behaving like anything other than polite, respectful people. There is not, nor will there ever be any sort of drinking, smoking, or drugs at Hybid Farm. I think all the Hybid Farm parents, including my parents; appreciate knowing their kids will come home happy, healthy and safe, time and time again from Hybid. The community Rita and her family have created is truly amazing and to see it end would really be a tragedy. Hybid Farm is a community that gives back; they have supported the Girl Scouts of America, Relay for Life, and have made it possible for dozens of handicapped and disabled children to ride horses. They are helping future generations become extraordinarily good people. I am so appreciative of what Hybid Farm has done for me, and who they have helped me be. I am a happy, healthy person who has a job, got into every college I applied to, and who is completely drug and alcohol free, and I owe a lot of that to Rita and her family. I love Hybid Farm, and Rita and her family with all of my heart, and if they ever needed anything, I would gladly step up to the plate, because they are truly good people, who have given me such a huge gift already. I had a true childhood at Hybid, something that is rare these days. I was sheltered from the bad and had the privilege to be a kid there, for as long as I needed to be. Thank you Hybid, for everything you are and continue to be.

Regards,

Emily Macaulay

November 21, 2011

Dear Acton Conservation Committee,

My name is Caroline Kielar, and I have been horseback riding at Hybid Farm for ten years. Now I am almost seventeen years old, and I could not imagine my life without Hybid Farm. My time there has immensely helped me grow as a rider and as an individual. I have formed the strongest friendships of my life at Hybid Farm, with both the horses and the people who share my love of this magical farm. For me, Hybid has become part of who I am as well as a second home. I have learned responsibility, leadership, friendship, politeness and so much more throughout my years at Hybid Farm.

A common love of horses brings us all together at Hybid Farm. I came to Hybid Farm in second grade because I like horses, but wanted a supportive environment, unlike my previous barn. From the moment I stepped into the sweet-smelling barn, I felt a welcoming presence of a huge family of kids and horses. There is a bond that can be made with a horse that cannot be made with another human and cannot be put into words. It is a bond so indescribable because it has a certain strength beyond what our human words and experiences can achieve. Horses have always been there for me regardless of any troubles I am having in school or other parts of my life. It is as if the entire world melts away and you are left alone with the horse – two beings in a silently understood unison. In particular, my time spent with the horses at Hybid Farm has helped me cope with my Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, or OCD.

Hybid Farm is a truly unique place that brings people together from so many backgrounds. Everyone at Hybid Farm is kind and welcoming, which has helped shape who I am today. I have gained confidence and leadership through my experiences at Hybid and am now lucky enough to help teach what I know to younger kids who come to experience a little bit of Hybid's magic. The horses at Hybid are all amazing friends to me, and I have formed unbreakable bonds with a few very special horses here. My friends at Hybid expand beyond the horses though, and include all of the amazing people that I am privileged to spend my time with at Hybid Farm. These friends have been at my side through all the happy and difficult times in my life, and I know I could count on them for anything in the world. I have made several friendships that I know will last forever. I would be truly devastated and heartbroken to see Hybid Farm have to give away many of its horses and riders. I have had so many terrific experiences at Hybid Farm and really hope to make more in the future and I hope that other kids can experience this too. Hybid Farm has given me a place to feel relaxed and safe and I hope to spend many more years at this terrific place. The horses and people from Hybid are like family to me and I could not imagine my life any other way. **Please allow Hybid Farm to continue to use the land that it currently occupies and keep all of the dedicated and loving ponies!!!** Words cannot explain my deep love for Hybid Farm and my gratitude for all that I have learned there. I truly hope that you will listen and understand how privileged I have been to grow up at Hybid Farm and the vital role this farm has played in so many people's lives. **Please allow the horses, people and magic continue to flourish on the beautiful land that it occupies.** I know it would mean the world to me as well as all those who have also been touched by the love and compassion at Hybid Farm.

Sincerely,
Caroline Kielar, age 16
185 Hunters Ridge Road
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Conservation Commission of Acton,

Nov. 21, 2001

I was distressed to learn that action might be taken to prevent Hybrid Farm from operating in the same manner which has been so successful for the last decade or so.

I cannot say enough about the effectiveness of the programs and experience that Rita McConnea has provided for many children and adults.

My daughter, who is now 20 years old, began riding at Hybrid Farm when she was in 2nd grade. She continued riding there through the beginning of high school. In addition to taking lessons there, she eventually became skilled enough to be able to work as a camp counselor.

The lessons my daughter learned were unattainable in school. The reverence for large animals such as horses and the self-confidence and discipline that accompanies their care were experiences that surpassed the rudimentary exercises of math, english, history and language. During the socially challenging years of middle school my daughter was able to leave her troubles behind the minute she set foot on the grounds of Hybrid Farm. There were always welcoming arms and cheers of joy whenever a student walked through those barn doors. Rita McConnea has a masterful ability to make each and every person who enters her barn feel special. In addition to the challenges of learning how to work collaboratively with a horse, my daughter also learned to adopt and let go of these creatures. The experience of caring for and sometimes losing an animal to sickness or death provides another enduring lesson of caregiving and resilience. It has been a pleasure to witness those girls and boys

grow up and eventually appreciate how their unique experience at Hybrid Farm has folded into that which makes them the thriving young adults they are today.

Please, read these letters carefully, and take into account the legacy of community service that Tita McLennea has built and by extension instilled a lasting impression in our children who understand what it means to make a difference to others.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,

Debbie Diston (mother of Anna Stabler)
83 Bayberry Rd
Concord, MA 01742