

# ***“Preserving PEI’s Agricultural Land”***

## **A PEI ADAPT Council Conference**

**November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**Purpose:** This conference was organized by the PEI Adaptation Development Agricultural Production Technology (ADAPT) Council to look at “*Preserving PEI’s Agricultural Land: Investment Options, Trusts and Ownership Structures*”. About 80 people attended.

**Agenda:** The conference Agenda included the following presentations:

- Boyde Beck PEI History Lesson on Land Tenure
- Phil Ferraro Report on The Land Trust 2008 Conference
- Tim Carroll Attracting Investment Income for Island Farmers
- Chris Payne (Nova Scotia) Investing in Local Economic Development
- Melissa Watkins (Ontario) How Land Trusts and Agricultural Easements Can Protect Farmland

**Observations:** The conference was looking at ways of promoting local investment initiatives to support farmers, as well as ways to protect and preserve farmlands for public benefit, with many farmers at an age where they’ll be getting out of agriculture in the not too distant future.

The PEI ADAPT Council includes representation from all Island agricultural organizations, and Phil Ferraro (their Executive Director) is willing to speak at our special meeting with the agricultural sector, and to help with invitations.

Also in attendance (although not on the Agenda) at the Conference were two representatives of the Lucy Maud Montgomery Trust. One is John Stephenson, a renowned Island landscape photographer who we might want to invite as a guest speaker for the agricultural sector meeting. The other is Carol Horne who has recently completed a UPEI Island Studies masters thesis on “*Measuring Landscape Preferences*” and has published a summary report (based on her thesis) titled “*The Island Landscape – A Non-renewable Resource.*” Following are a few points that Carol makes:

- *Land use decisions may be based on agricultural productivity, potential for development or ecological importance, but pure aesthetics are rarely taken into consideration.*
- *While most Island residents may take for granted the scenic beauty that surrounds them, they are the first to boast about the Island landscape to visitors.*
- *The Island’s scenic landscape is a key element of the province’s overall image and has contributed greatly to the brand that is Prince Edward Island.*
- *In the 2005 Tourism Prince Edward Island Conversion Research report, 23% of visitors cite “scenery” as the primary motivator for visiting PEI.*
- *PEI’s other primary industry, agriculture, is the source of much of the very pleasing patchwork quality of the landscape.*

- *Unlike a National Park or a designated protected area, a working landscape, no matter how scenic, will be subject to change. That change, unfortunately, may detract from the overall scenic value.*
- *Perhaps the community can agree on which areas of the Prince Edward Island landscape have greater relative aesthetic or cultural value, or even to what degree could a scene support development without detracting from its overall appeal.*