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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Westport Land Conservation Trust Requests Proposals to Buy Farm on Blossom Road

WESTPORT, MA — December 15, 2017 - The Westport Land Conservation Trust (WLCT) is requesting proposals from interested buyers of the Sherman/Rulon Farm located north of 122 Blossom Road in Westport. WLCT is seeking a buyer who will continue and enhance the agricultural operation on the farm. All proposals are due by February 15, 2018.

The 32-acre Sherman/Rulon Farm is located in north Westport and contains 16 acres of open farm fields, the majority of which are classified as prime farmland and soils of statewide significance by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The property currently has no structures, but does possess a network of fields connected by a well-established laneway.

WLCT and the Town of Westport have partnered to protect this farm. This farmland is part of a statewide program that taxes qualifying land at its farmland value – Massachusetts General Law Chapter 61. This voluntary program allows property owners to enroll in exchange for granting the municipality a right of first refusal to purchase the land if it is proposed to be converted to other uses during a specific time period. This farmland became available through that process and WLCT accepted the Town's assignment of its Right of First Refusal on February 8, 2017.

WLCT purchased the Farm for \$400,000 in May 2017. Westport's Agricultural/Open Space Preservation Trust Fund Council committed \$150,000 towards the protection of the property. Now, WLCT and the Town are working to protect the farm with a permanent agricultural

preservation restriction (APR). Their goal is to sell the farm to a private buyer committed to agriculture.

The APR, covering the entire property, will protect resources such as prime farmland soils and wetlands, and it will require that the property be farmed while allowing for the construction of farm buildings with approval. It will also allow for the construction of a single family house in a designated area near Blossom Road.

All future owners must adhere to the APR. WLCT and the Town of Westport's Conservation Commission will hold the restriction on the entire farm. WLCT and the Town will be responsible for the annual monitoring and enforcement of the restriction. Bidders are asked to submit proposals with a price range between \$225,000 and \$285,000.

The complete Request for Proposals can be found at: <http://www.westportlandtrust.org/shermanfarm>. This website will list of all important dates, details about the restriction, deadlines, and updates throughout the proposal process.

About the Westport Land Conservation Trust

Since its founding in 1972, the Westport Land Conservation Trust has assisted landowners in protecting more than 4,500 acres in Westport, Massachusetts. WLCT is a private non-governmental organization dedicated to local land conservation on behalf of the Westport community. The organization accepts gifts of land and conservation restrictions on land, and assists farm owners in preserving farmland with agricultural preservation restrictions.

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