



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**All in the Family – Two Brothers Farm Together
& Protect Their Land Together**

(PHILADELPHIA, NY) – “When it’s time for me to leave this earth, I know I will be leaving my land better than how I found it,” stated fifth generation dairy farmer, William (Bill) Gleisner, “I value the tranquility and peacefulness of the land – and I want to keep it that way.”

Bill Gleisner and his brother, Charles (Chuck), moved to the North Country in the late 1970s from Ohio looking for good farmland and somewhere they could call home. At the time, farmers in Ohio were being pushed out of their land due to development; Bill and Chuck knew they wanted to continue farming, or as Bill put it, “Once you get the manure under your fingernails, it is always there.”

Since then, Bill and Chuck have been farming together in the Town of Philadelphia, NY. But now, they have done something more – they have protected their land, ensuring it will remain available for agricultural purposes, and compatible uses, forever. Fort Drum, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust and Ducks Unlimited partnered with the Gleisner brothers through the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program.

The purpose of the ACUB program is to limit use or development of property near the Fort Drum installation to agricultural and forestry uses. This minimizes encroachment while protecting conservation values and open space. Encroachment is defined here as urban development surrounding military installations that negatively affect the ability of the military to train realistically.

“The North Country is a special place, and it is partnerships like these that make Fort Drum so unique,” stated Michael H. McKinnon, Fort Drum Deputy Garrison Commander. “From the early days when the 10th Mountain Division was activated, the North Country community embraced the military as one of its own. Today, the ACUB program continues in that same tradition and is a great example of neighbors working together to protect family farms, while preserving Fort Drum's training capability well into the future.”

The ACUB program benefits the Army, as well as the land trust and the landowner. The Army maintains or enhances training capabilities, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust protects open space, and the landowner is paid not to develop their land, and in this case, the landowners will continue to farm.

After thirty years of working the land together, the Gleisner brothers are still at it. “We work together; we bail hay together – we do everything together, and that’s something special that not many families have,” explains Bill.

With six children and three grandchildren he is hoping to keep the land in his family, “Hopefully one day my kids will take over the farm and keep it going, but even if they don’t I can rest in peace knowing that it will not be developed. Someone will be able to farm it, and that’s the most important thing to me.”

Totaling 274 acres, Bill and Chuck Gleisner’s farms are the fifth and sixth properties to be protected by Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust through the ACUB program. With the addition of these properties, over 1,300 acres have been conserved with agricultural agreements through the ACUB conservation partnership program.

“The ACUB program strengthens our local farming community by providing financial resources to these farm families,” explained Linda Garrett, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Executive Director, “The Gleisner brothers are leaders in our community; they have a great connection to their land and share a passion for the long-term importance of farming. Through this program they will be able to either invest the funds they receive back into the farm or pass it on to the next generation – and most importantly the land will continue to be available for agriculture.”

When participating with the ACUB program, farm families work with Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust and Ducks Unlimited to create a conservation plan for the property. The plan addresses immediate and long-term goals, while ensuring flexibility for future operations. Farm families are then paid through the ACUB program for the appraised value of their non-farm development rights, as determined by a state-qualified appraiser familiar with this type of conservation project. The properties remain in private ownership and stay on the tax rolls. The farmers are not told how to farm or manage their land in the agreement, as Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust believes farmers are important stewards of the land.

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust and the Army have worked in partnership with Ducks Unlimited as part of the ACUB program when a farm or property contains bird habitat that the farmer and Ducks Unlimited are interested in conserving. This beautiful and productive land and its associated wetlands will now be able to provide important wildlife habitat.

To learn more about the ACUB program please visit the website at: http://www.sustainability.army.mil/tools/programtools_acub.cfm, or contact Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Executive Director, Linda Garrett at 315.779.8240 / email thtomorr@northnet.org or visit www.TugHillTomorrowLandTrust.org.

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust is a nonprofit regional community-based organization that works with local landowners to protect and foster responsible stewardship practices of working forests and farms. The organization also hosts educational and recreational programs free to the community to help connect children and families to the land within the Tug Hill region.

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