



Two members of the Mulvihill family, who along with MaryAnn Mulvihill- Decker, helped plan this Friday's rededication of the Anna and Daniel Mulvihill Preserve, talk about the importance of the now public 85 acre property.

By Kathryn G. Menu

The rededication happening this weekend is taking place because additional acreage was added late last year to the Anna and Daniel Mulvihill Preserve?

CA: It was originally sold by Dolores [Zebrowski] as a 75-acre plot sans the house in 2001 to Southampton Town in a deal facilitated by the Peconic Land Trust. The deal took almost 10 years.

DM: She was really determined this property be wild and not developed and so she stuck at it and it became a preserve.

Was that something Dolores always wanted to do?

CA: Yes. And my uncle Bill felt the same way and he had property so he was also a big part of the preservation effort as well.

DM: Dolores eventually reached a point where she wanted the rest of the property, including the house, maintained in the same way and so that sale was effected but unfortunately not before her passing.

CA: She signed the contract just a week or 10 days before she died [in 2012]. The White-Collins-Mulvihill Spring Farm Residence at Spring Farm, located in the preserve, was declared a landmark in November.

CA: Sally Spanburgh [chair of Southampton Town's Landmarks & Historic Districts Board] did all of the research and put that together. Ultimately, the whole process took about 14 months to close.

What is special about this property?

CA: I think the most important thing about this property is where it is located in

the Ronkonkoma moraine. We have a lot of animals, including endangered species, on the property, as well as kettle ponds. Ecologically it is special, and we were aware of that growing up on the property as kids.

DM: I think what is special is how everyone in the family who ever lived there really enjoyed living there and wanted to see it preserved. It wasn't always the easiest place to live. It's isolated and it didn't always have modern conveniences, but I think everyone in the family got a lot out of being on that property.

There were huge beach plum bushes on the property and every fall in September we would harvest the beach plums and my grandmother was a master beach plum jelly maker and she taught my mother. We had beach plum jelly all winter.

Another thing I think is interesting is we all used to wander around the woods up there—not just the family that lived on the farm. My uncle, my dad, my grandfather, myself, Carol, Mary, the dogs, we loved to just wander around and go for hikes. Later on when we moved to Main Street, my father would turn to me and say, 'Why don't we go for a woods walk.' And we always went to the farm. We didn't go to Shelter Island. We didn't go to East Hampton. Everyone associated with the property enjoyed it for what it was. It wasn't just the place my grandparents lived—it was Mulvihill headquarters. How much time do you still spend at the preserve?

DM: I am fortunate enough to own a home less than a mile from there, so I still go there.

CA: I remember when Annabelle was born, Dan's oldest granddaughter, there was a picture of him looking down at her. I remember asking him, "What are you telling her?" And I will never forget, he said, "I am telling her, I am going to take her on a woods walk."

DM: My passion has been the outdoors, hiking, backpacking, mountain climbing—and it all started with being outdoors at the farm, and enjoying this property from when I was 2 years old. My son is the same way, and he spent many hours up there as a boy. On the one hand you could say we have given a lot, on the other hand I think we have all gotten a huge amount out of it. The rededication of the Anna and Daniel Mulvihill Preserve will be held Friday at 3 p.m. at the Brick Kiln Road, Sag Harbor, property with members of the Mulvihill family, the Southampton Town