



MATUNUCK HILLS HIKE WAS MILES OF FUN

On July 20th, Clarkson Collins and Claudia Swain led a hike for 13 SKLT members and friends into the Matunuck Hills. The group hiked from the access road on Commodore Perry Highway down the driveway to the path where it was wide enough to walk two abreast, past the white oak "Christmas tree" full of galls, like hanging ornaments.

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Clark pointed out the vegetation that has come into the area, based on the terminal moraine outwash, as well as geologic points of interest. After passing through a lovely stand of mature birch, we came upon Patch Pond, the first kettle pond on the journey.

We had to cross the old stone wall fence made from considerable sized rocks. Of note along this trail, struggling from their stumps, were American Chestnut saplings, about 4" diameter at breast height (DBH).

Despite the warmth of the day, all were willing to press on up the trail and so the hike continued to Hot House Pond. The huckleberries were thick, and the breeze was cool, so the crowd was willing to stop and listen about volunteer opportunities available at SKLT. We arrived safely back to our starting point to cooler temperatures and low hanging skies.

Sign up for our next hike – a trail walk at Browning Woods on Saturday, October 25th at 1 pm (see story front page). Email Jane.Baumann@sklt.org or call 789-0962 to register.

Open Space Makes All the Difference



SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST
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WAKEFIELD, RI 02879

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Site Lines

FALL 2008

SOUTH KINGSTOWN
LAND TRUST

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FALL MONITORING RALLY

Mark your calendars for Sunday, November 2, 2008 - the date we have scheduled for all our volunteers to hit the fields and forests and report back to us on all the lands of the South Kingstown Land Trust! SKLT now owns or has easements on 129 parcels of land in South Kingstown. As part of our stewardship duties, each of these properties must be inspected and monitored yearly. We cannot do it without the help of you, our valued volunteers.

Monitoring Day begins at 11am at the SKLT Barn on Matunuck Beach Road, where Management Director Clark Collins will give a quick overview of what we hope to accomplish that day. Each volunteer will choose a property

or two, and small volunteer teams will spend the day, or part of the day, exploring those properties for any issues or irregularities. There will be a short form to be completed by the monitor for each of the properties. If you have a digital camera, please bring it along, as we hope to add current pictures of each property to our files. Volunteers will work in teams of two - so bring a friend, spouse, or other good natured enthusiast to share the excitement.

At 4pm everyone is invited to return to the Barn to turn in the forms, share the experience, and join the staff for a light supper to say thank you. This is the first annual monitoring rally, and we expect with your help, it will be fun and rewarding. If you would like to volunteer, please let us know. Give us a call at 789-0962; or send us an e-mail at Jane.Baumann@sklt.org. The more the merrier - so come on out. No prior experience is required and all are welcome.



Matunuck Hills Hikers,
July 20, 2008
See story on Page 8

Credit: Claudia Swain

TRAIL WALK AT BROWNING WOODS

Clarkson Collins will lead a walk at the Browning Woods trail on Saturday, October 25th at 1pm. Participants should meet at the trailhead parking lot opposite 794 Shannock Road. The Browning Woods trail is 2.5 miles long, through more than 250 acres of protected land, which includes the original Browning Family homestead, owned by the family from the mid 1600s until its sale to SKLT in 1999. The property is entirely wooded, including areas of mixed hardwoods, white pine and pitch pine, and forested wetlands. Paths are gently sloping and are in good condition. Download a map of the trail at www.sklt.org.



SKLT CLOSES ON THE FERRICK PROPERTY

Nearly 10 years of work with the Ferrick family has paid off in the preservation of 22 acres in Green Hill. With funding from The Nature Conservancy and dedicated neighbors, SKLT was able to close on this project in June. The land contains wetlands, streams and forest at the northeast corner of Green Hill Beach Road and Matunuck Schoolhouse Road. The property boundary on Green Hill Beach Road features a wonderful stone wall.

Factory Brook passes through the land, most of which is forested wetland and a rare species habitat area. Thick briars in understory of the forested swamp makes penetration difficult, but ensures a protected wetlands habitat for many species. The property borders more protected conservation land, the 64 acre South Shore Management Area owned by RI DEM, and is part of a distinctive landscape, D095, Trustom Pond/Matunuck, as listed by RIDEM in its Landscape Inventory. This acquisition adds to a wide swath of protected open space south of Route 1 in South Kingstown, which increases its wildlife habitat value and provides forested natural views along these well-traveled roads. The Land Trust is very grateful to the Ferricks for working with us to permanently protect this beautiful wetland habitat.



Ferrick property along Green Hill Beach Road.

Credit: Joanne Riccitelli

HIGHLANDERS AT ELYSIUM: SKLT'S HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

In 1999, Zenas Bliss donated 14.5 acres of his family's beloved "Elysium" holdings in Matunuck to the South Kingstown Land Trust to be preserved as natural land in perpetuity. Since then SKLT has been restoring the farm and old field habitat that existed when the family acquired the property in the late 1800s. SKLT was awarded a USDA Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program grant in 2007 to support removal of the tangle of brush and invasive plants, notably bittersweet and privet, which have taken over since the 1960s. In winter 2007 SKLT enlisted the help of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Trustom Pond Refuge staff to mechanically clear over six acres of trees and brush, and followed up in

the summer with a program of mowing and spraying the resurgent invasives. Next door to Elysium, Tom Browning and his father Ralph were developing a herd of Scottish Highlander beef cattle, and clearing a few acres of brush. It was obvious that the cattle had a special knack for brush control and pasture redevelopment. Sensing a win-win situation, SKLT is refocusing its strategy to include hooved brush-cutters instead of the mechanical kind. SKLT is using USDA funds to assist Tom in installing an electric fence and reconstructing stone walls. A series of paddocks will allow the cattle to use the fields in the spring, late summer and fall, and allow ground nesting birds and wildlife to use the area as habitat in June and July. We expect this to be an especially green, sustainable and economically beneficial answer to this land's management for years to come.

THANKS FOR A SUCCESSFUL GREAT OUTDOORS PARTY

SKLT held its Great Outdoors Celebration and Auction on August 10th at the Barn on Matunuck Beach Road. Hosted by Charlie and Lindsay Coolidge, 158 supporters came out to bid on local artists' work including beautiful paintings by Mimi Sammis, Dottie Sage, and Gregor Kammerer, handcrafted furniture by Stephen DeMetrick, a whimsical garden tool bench by Charlie Coolidge, a hand-painted vintage picnic basket by Mary Brown, and a handsome charcoal drawing by Troy West. Also sold were an aerial photograph to be taken by Nate and Don Bousquet, an oyster



Garden bench created by Charlie Coolidge.

and champagne party donated by Perry Rasso, a kayaking adventure provided by Peter Swain—complete with an autographed copy of Prentice Stout's *Quiet Waters*, and much more.

The gregarious, legendary and caustic wit of auctioneer Louis Raymond encouraged significant bidding and a good time. The final item of the evening was a call for support for the Jackson Farm in Green Hill, with its 17 acres of sweet corn, mixed vegetables, and a high percentage of prime farmland soils. Fifty guests donated a total of \$4800 for this important project. Overall, the party raised over \$40,000 to continue the work of the Land Trust. Thanks to all who participated!

JOIN US IN PRESERVING OPEN SPACE IN SOUTH KINGSTOWN

Your support for open space preservation continues to strengthen our organization and invigorate our work. Join or renew your membership, make a general donation, or become an EverGreen member! SKLT is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization so your donation is tax-deductible. As always, your generosity is greatly appreciated.

MEMBERSHIP:

- I would like to: Join Renew
- Individual..... \$25
 - Family..... \$40
 - Protector..... \$50-99
 - Steward..... \$100-\$149
 - Guardian..... \$150-\$499
 - Conservator..... \$500-\$999
 - Benefactor..... \$1000+

GENERAL DONATION:

I'm already a member, but I would like to make a general donation. Please accept my check in the amount of \$_____.

EVERGREEN:

I have already planned a gift to SKLT and qualify to be an EverGreen member through:

- Estate Plans Trust Other

- I am a landowner interested in preserving my property.
- Please contact me about making a Legacy gift.
- My employer will match my gift. I've enclosed a matching gift form.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Please make checks payable to:
South Kingstown Land Trust
 313 Main Street, Suite C, Wakefield, RI 02879



MILESTONES

As we move into the fall of our 25th year, SKLT looks back on an invigorating year – we've led hikes, started our own newsletter, launched EverGreen, our legacy society, attracted new members, and celebrated our 25th birthday!

While all of this was going on, we closed on the Ferrick property in Green Hill, and the Dubs property on Potter Pond. The Ferrick property had been a work in progress for many years, and we are pleased to see it finally come to fruition. The easement on the Dubs property exemplified a unique coming together of many neighbors to ensure that the surrounding fields on the pond remain in their natural state. These acquisitions bring our number of properties to 129 and our preserved land to 2378 acres.

EverGreen, SKLT's legacy society has also gotten off to a great start. SKLT now has 17 members many of whom are sporting their new legacy pins to show their commitment to preserving and stewarding SKLT properties. It is not too late to become a charter member in this first year; please call Claudia Swain at the office if you would like additional information.

All of this has led to a renewed interest by the community in our efforts and our mission. We hope you can join us on November 2nd when we invite members and friends to set out onto the lands and bring us a report on each and every parcel. This is an important monitoring event which we hope to make an annual one. If you want to learn more about what it takes to preserve our land, this is an ideal opportunity.

In September, Joanne, Jane and Claudia attended the Land Trust Alliance Rally, the national training conference for land conservationists, held in Pittsburgh. Jane and Claudia are first-timers at Rally and the Land Trust Alliance supported their trip with a partial scholarship.

Thanks to the Alliance, land trusts like SKLT have a strong voice in Washington and helped convince Congress to extend tax incentives for easement donations, helping landowners who wish to preserve their land.

Thank you for your ongoing support of SKLT!

Michael A. Sherry, President

SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST

The mission of the South Kingstown Land Trust is to conserve and protect the natural resources and open spaces of our town for the enduring benefit of our community.

Officers

President: Michael A. Sherry
Treasurer: Charles M. Lewis
Secretary: Sophie Page Lewis

Trustees

James V. Aukerman
Michael Bontecou
Kathleen Peterson Hahn
Christopher Little
Kevin McDonough
Doug McGovern
Margaret Munroe
Peter Nunes
Sally Olsen
Anne O'Neill
Carl Sawyer
Paul Schurman
William Wallace
Virginia Lee, Trustee Emerita

Staff

Joanne Riccitelli,
Land Protection Director
Clarkson Collins,
Land Management Director
Claudia Swain,
Development Director
Jane Baumann,
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Main Office
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401-789-0962
Field Office (SKLT Barn)
17 Matunuck Beach Road
401-783-4999

Site Lines Designer, Cindy Sabato, Volunteer

POTTER POND LAND PROTECTED

SKLT purchased a conservation easement on 5.5 acres on Potter Pond in July, funded by generous neighbors concerned about maintaining the rural nature and high water quality of the pond. The conserved land runs between The Great House, owned by Roy Dubs, and the northeast shore of Potter Pond, and has significant pond frontage. Gently sloping mown fields cover the majority of the easement area. The land is located within a historical district – the Potter Pond Archeological District, and the house itself, listed as the John Potter House or Great House, is listed as an historical candidate site.

This acquisition contributes to the pastoral atmosphere of the area and helps to protect the water quality of Potter Pond. The land remains privately owned and will not be open to the public. SKLT thanks the neighbors for stepping up to preserve the water quality and scenic nature of this pond and Mr. Dubs for sharing this vision.



View of Potter Pond and Conserved Land

Credit: Joanne Riccitelli

PROGRAM IS MAKING STEADY PROGRESS



Highlanders in Elysium, 2008

Credit: Clark Collins



Happy 25th Birthday South Kingstown Land Trust!

Save These Dates in 2008!

Sat. Oct. 4 & 18	English Country Dance @ SKLT Barn, 7:30-10:30 pm
October 25	Hike at Browning Woods trail, 1 pm
Sat. Nov. 1, 15 & 29	English Country Dance @ SKLT Barn, 7:30-10:30 pm
Sun. Nov. 2	Fall Monitoring day @ SKLT Barn, Orientation 11 am, Dinner 5 pm
March TBD	Estate Planning and Land Conservation Workshop @ SKLT Barn
April TBD	SKLT Annual Meeting - moving to the Spring in 2009!



WEEDEN FARM WALL RESTORATION COMPLETED

On August 30th, SKLT's seasoned crew of stone wall reconstructionists (aka "stoners" or "rocks stars") happily put the final stone in place in the Weeden Farm wall, which runs 2,700 feet south of the Barn driveway on Matunuck Beach Road. The project began in April '06 with a wall-building seminar by Kevin Baker of Stonescapes, Inc. of Barrington, RI, and continued on twice a week during the summers of '07 and '08

A dedicated and varied group of Land Trust members and friends of both genders, from their teens to early eighties, volunteered all of the labor. As they proceeded down the wall, their skills and efficiency increased, which was lucky—because the rocks got larger and heavier on the slow march southward. The skill of Michael Bontecou and the pluck of the red Kubota tractor were indispensable as the average weight of the rocks was measured first in tens and then hundreds of pounds. We wondered at how the original builders



Credit: Clark Collins

managed to create these walls in the 1800s.

The effect of the project on the area is striking. Before, a tangle of invasive brush vines and trees created a tunnel effect down the road, and now passersby see acres of cornfields, hayfields, and pasture. The progression of plowing, harrowing, planting, crop growth and harvesting

mark the phases of the spring and summer. In fall, the open fields attract migrating Canada geese, with a few snow geese and cranes in the mix. Red-tailed hawks and Harriers patrol the fields in the late season. One feels an immediate connection with the agricultural history and culture of South County.

Our thanks to our crew: Michael Bontecou, Sophie Page Lewis, Charles Coolidge, Peter Rundlett, Charles Taggart, Stephen Letcher, Jean Quinn, Ted Watson and sons Teddy and Parker, Daniel Collins, Abel Collins, Lodowick Collins, Mary Brown and son Tyler, Larry Fortin, Jarod Scherer, Eric Scherer, Doug McGovern, Brad Doyle, Bert Hess, Peter Nunes, Susan Lovejoy, Melissa Watson, Pamela and Dave Matteson, Carl Sawyer, Stan Cobb, Jim Anderson, Dave Anderson and Paddy McKeag.

MORE DANCING WITH SKLT!

After a successful inauguration of English Country Dancing at the Barn in the spring, we are launching into a full fall schedule of dancing. Dances will be held on Saturday nights from 7:30 to 10:30pm, with a break for refreshments. Dates are October 4 and 18, and November 1, 15 and 29. Beginners are truly welcome!

English country dance is a social mixer, with different partners each dance, so bringing a partner is not necessary. Discounted admission for SKLT members - \$8, and \$10 for non-members.

SKLT GROWS NEW LEGACY SOCIETY: EVERGREEN



The story of EverGreen begins during our twenty-fifth year as a land trust! President Mike Sherry rolled out the concept of initiating a bequest group to ensure SKLT's commitment to the lasting effects of open space. We are thrilled to report that we now have 17 inaugural members! Inaugural membership will be accepted through the end of this calendar year.

EverGreen members have either made an outright gift of \$10,000 to our legacy fund, or have told us that they have included us in their estate plans. Their vision for SKLT will ensure that the lands we protect, today and in the future, will provide the natural beauty and sense of place that is South Kingstown, now and for generations to come.

One of these members is Janice Sieburth, who with her late husband John, included us in their estate plans in 1999 and sent us a copy of their wishes.

I was eager to meet Janice – a person who had a clear idea of her own legacy. She agreed to meet me for lunch on a warm day in July, after Virginia Lee, a past board member and friend called to make an introduction. John had been a professor at URI's Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) for 31 years and was well known – his obituary appeared in the New York Times in January 2007. John wrote two textbooks and 187 research articles about marine biology. After he retired in 1990, he continued to do research on the pond in front of their home, in a boat he made and equipped himself. It was not hard to imagine a person who was so involved with the natural world, wanting to help preserve it.

Janice grew up in Tacoma, Washington where her mother would report that "the mountain was out today", referring to Mt. Rainier. Janice was a nutrition student when she met John in Boston. She said she married him because he was the only young man who would talk seriously to her about science. Janice and John had five children together. While raising children, she went back to school part time and earned her graduate degree in Library Sciences. Once she received her degree, she worked at the GSO. Four of their children have become PhDs. It is not surprising that Janice loves to have her family and grand children visit. During the winter months she e-mails the natural history events in her backyard—the red-tailed hawk that dined on mallard, the mink that ran across her yard with a full mouth. Janice reported a bumper crop of blueberries were picked from their canoe this summer, while her granddaughter was visiting. It is clear that the legacy she is leaving reaches beyond the South Kingstown Land Trust.

Janice said she was happy to have their names recorded as EverGreen members, and is wearing her EverGreen pin proudly! The South Kingstown Land Trust is very grateful to have them as members.

For additional information about EverGreen, please contact Claudia Swain at our Main Street office at 401-789-0962.