



Site Lines

SPRING 2018

SOUTH KINGSTOWN
LAND TRUST

HAPPY 35TH BIRTHDAY SKLT!

A Retrospective on the South Kingstown Land Trust's Approaching Middle Age

In the cold of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
And the moon is a ghostly Galleon tossed on cloudy seas
And the road is a ribbon of moonlight, looping Matunuck's moor
The Land Trust's time-honored shadows, stride up to our Barn's front door.
They rap with a twig on the window, but find no meeting there,
Is it the wind that moves the table-- and draws around the chairs?
Or is it Gammell, Guarriello, Kittredge--Freeman, Littlefield and Watson
Here to comb through our minutes and assess how our work's done,
And in thirty-five years the square miles of land won?

-My sincerest apologies to Alfred Noyes, author of The Highwayman.

As one of the original members of the South Kingstown Land Trust board of trustees, I can say that the spirits of six persons who, on January 27, 1983, created the South Kingstown Land Trust—Ivory Littlefield, Roger Freeman, Edward Watson, Helena-Hope Gammell, Virginia Kittredge, and Anthony Guarriello—are still very much with us.

At that time, the town was experiencing a huge burst of residential development, and it became clear that the Town's zoning and planning laws alone were not up to protecting the valuable natural resources that form the basis of the town's well-being. The University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography was in the final stages of a Salt Ponds study (1976-1984) that confirmed many of these concerns.

With the support of such environmentally-minded leaders on the Town Council as Duncan Doolittle, Gilbert Indeglia, Gaytha Langlois, Roger Freeman and Anthony Guarriello, and the Outreach efforts of URI, the planning board invited speakers to discuss alternative means of

protecting South Kingstown's natural resources. Among the most interesting was the concept of a land trust that could preserve the lands of critical concern identified in the Salt Ponds study by buying them, rather than through regulation. Littlefield, chairman of the Planning Board, and Doolittle, then a former councilman, quickly enlisted the core of a South Kingstown Land Trust.

Upon Littlefield's passing in 1985, SKLT pressed forward under Doolittle's guidance, having received its first three land donations totaling 30 acres from Helena-Hope Gammell in 1983 and 1984. By 1990, SKLT notched its 100th acre saved. The next decade showed exponential growth, with over 1,000 more acres in conservation by the end of 1999. Today, at 35, with staffing at 135 hours per week, we are keeping pace with a thriving membership of 1,500 supporters and more than 2,800 acres in our care, and keeping peace with our founders.

— Clarkson Collins



SKLT ANNUAL MEETING: THE RHODE ISLAND BIRD ATLAS 2.0

On April 29 at 3 p.m., SKLT will host our Annual Meeting at the SKLT Barn. After a short business meeting and update on what's happening at the Land Trust, Charles Clarkson will present "The Rhode Island Bird Atlas 2.0: A Year - Round Perspective."

2

For the first time, Rhode Island has documented not only breeding birds within the state, but also wintering and migrating birds. Bird Atlases provide data on the distribution, abundance and long-term change of bird populations within a state. Because birds are effective indicators of environmental change, these metrics can be used to determine habitat health, and atlases are often employed by conservation agencies to inform land management strategies.

The Rhode Island Bird Atlas is unique in that it is the first atlas to survey year-round use of habitats by birds. This all-season atlas collects data on the use of Rhode Island habitats by breeding, wintering and migrating birds, allowing us to model the importance of these habitat types on an annual basis. Combined with detailed habitat mapping tools and advances in the use of NEXRAD radar, the current iteration of the Rhode Island Bird Atlas will be a valuable tool for conservation groups wanting to promote biodiversity through habitat management. In its third-year of data collection, the atlas has already shed light on a number of significant changes to the avifauna of Rhode Island. Changes in climate and habitat have resulted in the loss of multiple species from the state while others, such as the common raven, yellow-bellied sapsucker and common eider have expanded their ranges and established breeding populations in the Ocean State.

Charles Clarkson, originally from the mountains of Central Virginia, has always gravitated towards birds and decided there could be no more satisfying life than one devoted to his feathered friends. Clarkson graduated with a doctorate in avian toxicology from the



Charles Clarkson

University of Virginia, where his primary focus was on the impact of mercury on the growth and development of nestling water birds. Following the completion of his PhD, Charles moved to Rhode Island in 2011 and began teaching at Salve Regina and Roger Williams universities. In 2015, Charles was employed as the coordinator for the Rhode Island Bird Atlas, a five-year, statewide project aimed at documenting the distribution and abundance of our birds.

3RD THURSDAY HIKE: #GETOUTSIDE SK!

Join us for a new 2018 hike series called #GetOutsideSK! Every third Thursday at 8:30 a.m., we will lead a hike on a different SKLT trail, as part of a campaign to #GetOutsideSK! By giving guided hikes at one of our featured trails each month, our goal is to inform both our members and our community of the many trail opportunities available in South Kingstown. Join us - and bring the dog (on a leash), kids, grandkids or just yourself!

Please check website and Facebook for location, directions and any weather-related changes.

JACKSON FAMILY LAND PRESERVED

At the end of 2017, SKLT was grateful to receive from the Jackson Family donations of conservation easements on 3.8 acres of land on Post Road in Green Hill, just south of Route 1. Where three houses could have been built, the family instead has decided to keep the land together and protected for the next generation of Jacksons to farm.

In 2008, SKLT worked with John Jackson to preserve his 18-acre farm to the south of this family homestead. John's previous experience with us led him to suggest protection of the family land to his brother Walter and sister Judy Chorlog.

The front lot is predominantly flat open agricultural land, used about

five years ago to grow flowers for sale, but that now is fallow. The back lots are forested, with a canopy of mostly white pine, some pitch pine, red cedar, red, black and white oak and cherry. The understory is fairly open. All the protected lots contain prime agricultural soils, and because the entire family compound is located within a community wellhead protection area, preserving this land is important

to protecting drinking water quality.

The Jackson's property will remain privately owned, with no public access, as with all Land Trust properties preserved through conservation easement. The goal of a conservation easement is to protect the property's natural and agricultural value, encourage active agricultural use and prevent subdivision and residential construction.

- Joanne Riccitelli



Jackson Family Land

Photo: Joanne Riccitelli



WELCOME ANGELA!

Angela Brunetti joined the Land Trust this January as our Development Coordinator. She has worked in membership and donor relations at the Newport Historical Society, the General Society of Mayflower Descendants in Plymouth, Mass., and the University of Rhode Island Alumni Association. Angela received her graduate degree in Museum & Gallery Studies from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and her undergraduate degree in History from Saint Michael's College, Vt.. She originally hails from Connecticut and moved

to southern Rhode Island only a few years ago. Though Angela loves traveling and skating for a roller derby league, the majority of her hobbies keep her outside—kayaking, camping, hiking, gardening, and walking the area with her dachshund. We are thrilled she will be working for SKLT and advocating for open space!

SAVE THE DATE

Join Us For These UPCOMING SKLT EVENTS

Saturday, Mar. 3	All Ages Rx Hike, Browning Woods Trail, 10 a.m.*
Wednesday, Mar. 14	Potluck & Lecture: Restoring Rhode Island's Rivers, SKLT Barn, 6 p.m.*
Thursday, Mar. 15	3rd Thursday Hike, Biscuit City, 8:30 a.m.*
Saturday, Apr. 7	Monitoring Day, SKLT Barn, 8:30 a.m.*
Saturday, Apr. 7	All Ages Rx Hike, Browning Woods Trail, 10 a.m.*
Thursday, Apr. 19	3rd Thursday Hike, DuVal Trail, 8:30 a.m.*
Sunday, Apr. 29	Annual Meeting, SKLT Barn, 3 p.m.*
Saturday, May 5	All Ages Rx Hike, Browning Woods Trail, 10 a.m.*
Wednesday, May 9	Potluck & Lecture: Chestnut Blight, SKLT Barn, 6 p.m.*
Thursday, May 17	3rd Thursday Hike, Crawley Preserve, 8:30 a.m.*
Sunday, August 27	Great Outdoors Celebration and Auction, SKLT Barn, 3 p.m.

For all events, space is limited. Please register at:
info@sklt.org or (401) 789-0962 x202.

***Events listed are free and made possible by the
generous support of SKLT members.**



Engage with us:
SouthKingstownLandTrust



POTLUCK SUPPER & LECTURE SERIES

Scott Comings, The Nature Conservancy's associate state director, has been at the forefront of the Conservancy's work in Rhode Island. Join us on March 14, as Scott recounts Conservancy-led efforts to reconnect the lower Pawcatuck River for river herring and other wildlife. He'll also give us a preview of upcoming fish passage projects closer to home on the Saugatucket River.

Then, join us on May 9 for "Disaster Struck: The Chestnut Blight." Kendra Collins, New England regional science coordinator for the American Chestnut Foundation, in partnership with the South County History Center, will talk with us about the cause and effects of the blight that devastated the forests and ecosystems of South County and the current efforts by SKLT and others to bring back the American Chestnut.



From the Collection of the South County History Center, c.1906

BOBCAT STUDY UPDATE

The University of Rhode Island's scientific study of the state's bobcat population continues. At SKLT's Annual Meeting in April 2016, lead researcher Amy Mayer presented an overview of the study and its early results. Since then, Amy and her team have captured five bobcats and collared three of those.

Of particular local interest, in December 2017, the team caught a 27-pound male bobcat at SKLT's Weeden Farm. He was fitted with a GPS collar, and within a week, was tracked at Ninigret Park in Charlestown and at Green Hill Beach a month later. They will track him for the next year. The other collared bobcats were captured in Westerly, near Crandall Swamp, and at Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge in Charlestown. In early January, researchers also caught two juveniles, one each in Westerly and Cranston, that were too small to collar, but were examined, measured, and given ear tags.

Because trapping is so difficult, the URI team is beginning a camera study to help map the distribution of bobcats in southern Rhode Island. SKLT will continue to support URI's effort by allowing cameras on Weeden Farm, where bobcats have already been spotted, and at one or two other locations. The study will have a winter field season of about

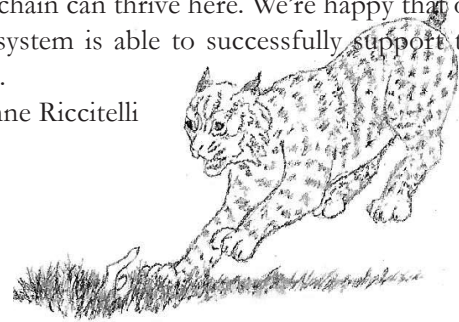


University of Rhode Island Bobcat Project

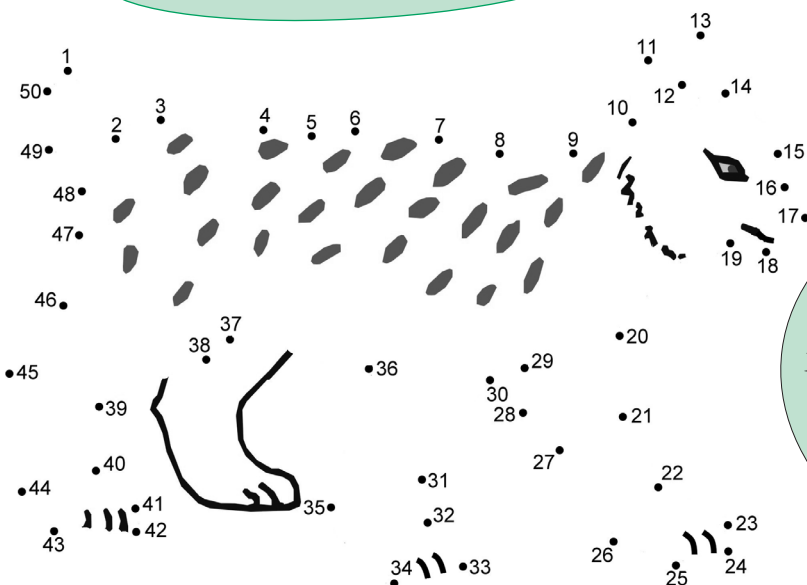
eight weeks, followed by a second field season over the summer.

SKLT works hard to protect our remaining natural lands so that native animals at all levels of the food chain can thrive here. We're happy that our local ecosystem is able to successfully support top predators.

— Joanne Riccitelli



KIDS CORNER



FUN FACTS:

Bobcats' scientific name is *Lynx rufus*. The adults weigh about 19-35 pounds and average 2 feet tall. They eat mainly rabbits, rodents and squirrels. Bobcats are most active at twilight and during the night. Keep your eyes open for this distinctive feline and its distinctive "bobbed" tail!

Drawing by: Sophie Page Lewis

MILESTONES

Happy 35th Birthday SKLT.

SKLT has been non-stop outdoors for 2018 with the monthly Park Rx All Ages Hike at Browning Woods, the wildly successful Blue Moon Hike and our new Third Thursday Hikes at different SKLT properties as part of the campaign #GetOutsideSK. This past Fall was busy for us all with the protection of a new property, the Thewlis Woods Clean-up and a fun, successful Denali Night Out— Thank you Denali! In January we had two fabulous events: An (Ugly) Sweater Volunteer Appreciation Party and a Flannel, Fire & Spice for our generous EverGreen Members and Major Donors.

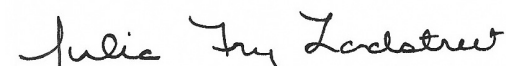
Included in this newsletter is a listing of those who were able to donate more than \$100 last year. The support and generosity of these individuals have a tremendous impact on SKLT -THANK YOU.

The new year not only has rung-in a new hike series, #GetOutsideSK, but has brought us a new Development Coordinator, Angela Brunetti! We are excited to have her on our staff and looking forward to her helping us reach our membership and financial goals.

It has been an amazing first year for me and it will be an amazing 35th Birthday year for SKLT. The tasks and goals corresponding with our Strategic Plan have outlined an incredible path for SKLT to follow. For SKLT the real work begins after the land has been protected: monitoring, trail building and maintaining, tending stone walls, battling invasive plants and errant litter. The list goes on and although none of it is glamorous, all of it is critical. We are looking to a comprehensive approach, addressing these issues from infrastructure to implementation which I look forward to sharing with you at the Annual Meeting in April.



Open Space Makes All The Difference...


Julia Fry Landstreet, Executive Director

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: Martha Day
Vice President: Susan S. Lovejoy
Secretary: Linda Green
Treasurer: James Farrell

Trustees

Heather Mae Breau
Edward Cimilluca
Ellen Grebstein
Kevin McDonough
Joe Orlando
Timothy Philbrick
Carl Sawyer
Cindy Sabato
Michael Sherry
Sherwood Small
Caroline Wikel
Richard Youngken
Charles Lewis, Trustee Emeritus
Sophie Page Lewis, Trustee Emerita

Staff

Julia Fry Landstreet, Executive Director
Joanne Riccitelli, Land Protection Director
Clarkson Collins, Land Management Director
Michael Bontecou, Land Operations Coordinator
Doug McGovern, Land Operations Coordinator
Angela Brunetti, Development Coordinator
Mo Howard, Outreach Coordinator

Main Office
227 Robinson Street, Wakefield, RI 02879
401-789-0962
Field Office (SKLT Barn)
17 Matunuck Beach Road
401-783-4999

Site Lines Design: Cindy Sabato

WISH LIST

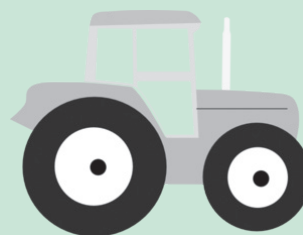
SKLT is seeking volunteers and donations of tangible items for office and land stewardship. Our current "Wish List" includes:

Tangible items:

- F-350 dump truck
- 8' Flail mower attachment, front fork lifts for John Deere Tractor
- Replacement string trimmer for Chestnut operation
- Lawn tractor w/ 48" deck
- 12' x 4' John boat
- Fuel cards for maintenance equipment

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Mailings
- Hike Leaders
- Event Volunteers
- Event Committees
- Bird & Plant Lists



If you are able to contribute, please contact Julia Landstreet at Julia.landstreet@sklt.org.

7

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. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

MEMBERSHIP:

I want to: ☐ Join ☐ Renew at the following level:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family..... \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steward \$100-\$249 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian \$250-\$499 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservationist \$500-\$999 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor..... \$1000-\$2,499 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protector \$2,500-\$4,999 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preservationist..... \$5,000-\$9,999 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Founders Club..... \$10,000+ | |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

GENERAL DONATION:

I'm already a member, but I would like to make an additional donation 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 land.
- ☐ Please contact me about making a Legacy gift.
- ☐ My employer will match my gift. I've enclosed a matching gift form.

Please make checks payable to:

South Kingstown Land Trust

227 Robinson Street, Wakefield, RI 02879



SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST
227 ROBINSON STREET
WAKEFIELD, RI 02879

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Wakefield, RI
Permit No. 132

Site Lines



CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS: MONITORING DAY 2018!

On Saturday, April 7, join us for our Annual Monitoring Day! Get out and walk the back woods, fields and farms as we undertake our biggest commitment to stewarding our land. Each year, SKLT has the legal responsibility to monitor each of our 160 projects and over 2,800 acres of preserved land in South Kingstown.



That's a lot of land to cover, and we need your help!

Monitoring Day is a great opportunity to experience the protected properties that are not open to the public, as well as to become more intimate with some of our most popular, and lesser-known, trails. If you are interested in helping us first-hand in our most important responsibility, please contact us at: mo.howard@sklt.org or 401-789-0962 x202. If you are interested in monitoring a specific property, such as one near your home or one you have monitored in previous years, let us know in advance and we will do our best to get the property most desirable to you.

Rain Date: April 8, 2018.

#GetOutsideSK

OPEN SPACE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE