



# Site Lines

Summer 2020  Open Space Makes All the Difference



Photo by Emily Commisky

Thank goodness for SKLT's members and supporters. Spring 2020 has brought more change than any of us could have imagined and you have continued to renew your memberships, visit the trails, and support the community despite all adversity – thank you.

While how we worked was different there was plenty going on this spring. The most dramatic change in how SKLT serves the community has been use of our trails. When the State, US Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy and others closed their trails, SKLT made the decision to keep our trails open as long as is possible and safe, and trail-use has increased more than four-fold. Most visitors are respectful of the trails by following the social distancing guidelines, keeping their dogs under control and removing pet waste from the site. But we have also had more incidents of trespassing with mountain bikes, ATVs, and people digging for treasures. Interestingly, we have found very few trail users are members, and most do not know that member support is how we pay to keep the trails open, safe, and maintained.

Doug McGovern is working with volunteer/member Katherine Long to do a comprehensive assessment of SKLT trail signage. A kiosk will be installed at Alewife Brook Preserve in anticipation of its public opening later this summer (Hooray and thanks to Michael Bontecou! More information to follow.), and content will be improved or added at Weeden and Yawgoo. With support from the South County Garden Club SKLT will be able to add plant identification and historical context signage at Browning Woods.



Doug McGovern, GIS Manager, helping to erect gate for SKLT tenant.

Another aspect of SKLT's "mission" is to keep farmland in production and to keep farmers farming. Staff work hand-in-hand with the SK farming community, assisting our smaller tenants with mowing, lending equipment, and small repairs of fences and gates. And we are working to install a well and irrigation system for a parcel with four tenants. There are also countless opportunities to ensure our easement partners with farms have the access to resources we are aware of to help them.

Even with all the changes COVID has brought to how we work, stewardship in perpetuity is our work and it would not be possible without our community of members, supporters, and volunteers. Thank you. *Julia Fry Landstreet*

# MILESTONES

Hooray for summer 2020 even amidst a pandemic, and hooray for *Site Lines*' new look. We live in the most beautiful place and protect the prettiest of lands, so we thought why are we not sharing the pictures in color? In addition, some members have asked to receive all correspondence electronically. Now both are realities. Thank you fabulous volunteer Lauren Lawder for the newsletter and Angela for your database wizardry. Now more than ever I am grateful for the ways we can connect and share the special beauty of our community.

Of note this spring, Clarkson was awarded the RI Land Trust Council Peter Merritt Award for Land Conservation at the Land and Water Summit for his tireless contributions to conservation and stewardship. Also, SKLT welcomed Annie, Clarkson, and Elise, three fabulous individuals, to lend their gifts as Directors. A real surprise was the offer from a donor to work with Jeff Sweenor of Sweenor Builders to re-shingle and re-roof the Grist Mill. Sweenor Builders will also be working with a

team to oversee the completion of the sluiceway restoration so ably begun by the Gardners and Superior Septic Service. We are looking forward to the Mill being back in operation this summer.

The *Great Outdoors Celebration* will not occur under a tent nor include a lively auction but our tireless committee is planning a super fun way for friends to visit the fields at Weeden and celebrate there and beyond, all while remaining socially distant.

Wash your hands, wear sunblock, and know how much we at the South Kingstown Land Trust appreciate all you do to support the natural world.



*Julia Fry Landstreet*

## SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST

### Officers

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

### Directors

Jessica Bradley  
Heather Mae Breau  
Clarkson Collins  
Ellen Grebstein  
Kevin McCloskey  
Timothy Philbrick  
Anne B. Richardson  
Jeanine Silversmith  
Elise Torello  
Ted Watson  
Caroline Wilkel

### Directors Emeritus

Charles Lewis, Trustee Emeritus  
Sophie Page Lewis, Trustee Emerita  
Michael Sherry, Trustee Emeritus

### Staff

Julia Fry Landstreet  
*Executive Director*  
Joanne Riccitelli  
*Land Protection Director*  
Michael Bontecou  
*Land Operations Coordinator*  
Doug McGovern  
*GIS Manager*  
Angela Brunetti  
*Development Coordinator*

### Main Office

227 Robinson Street  
Wakefield, RI 02879  
401-789-0962

### Field Office (SKLT Barn)

17 Matunuck Beach Road  
401-783-4999

**Website:** [www.skl.org](http://www.skl.org)

**Email:** [info@sklt.org](mailto:info@sklt.org)

Site Lines Design: Lauren Lawder

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The mission of the South Kingstown Land Trust is to protect and steward the natural resources, open spaces and cultural landscapes for the benefit of our communities now and forever.



**Building Now...** In these complex times, SKLT is blessed to have the restricted funds in place that enabled us to move forward with the construction of the tractor shed and office/welcome center on Matunuck Beach Rd. Thank you to those who have helped to make this possible. We are thrilled to provide jobs for members of our community during this tough time. These photos show the erection of the tractor shed and office/welcome center. Consider taking a joy ride to view it in person!



**Protecting Forever...** Protecting in perpetuity the land in our care is more important than ever. The comfort and escape SKLT properties have offered for many these past months are threatened by legal disputes and cataclysmic natural events. Dramatic weather, infestations of foreign plants, insects and diseases all require significant responses in funds and effort. The need for the Clarkson A Collins Stewardship Fund is ever more apparent as SKLT resources transition from land protection transactions to active land stewardship. SKLT continues to work with landowners to protect additional land in the community but 75% of staff time is required for land management and community services.

Please consider supporting today: <http://sklt.org/supportsklt/capital-campaign/>



# Great Outdoors Celebration



Photo by Deb Stallwood



Photo by Kevin McCloskey



Photo by Bridget Gilchrist

Most of you know that the highlight of SKLT's calendar each year is our Great Outdoors Celebration & Auction. This year, we have made the hard decision to cancel the Auction. But we still plan to celebrate! These past few months, the world has formed a deeper appreciation for the great outdoors, open spaces, fresh air, local food, and the beauty of nature. We have cause to celebrate now more than ever.



Photo by Elise Torelló

The Great Outdoors Celebration is SKLT's largest annual fundraiser and provides the funds crucial to ongoing land protection and stewardship. We ask you please support our vital work by sponsoring the Celebration. There will be a festive, drive-by event on Sunday, August 9 at the Barn,

17 Matunuck Beach Road for sponsors and ticket holders (in order to maintain social distancing staggered times will be communicated the week of August 3rd). Sponsors will be featured in our event program and marketing. Keep an eye out for an invitation to the event. In the meantime, sponsorships and tickets can be purchased at <http://sklt.org/event-tickets/>

## Summer Challenge

We also encourage you to [#celebratethegreatoutdoors](#) all summer long. Pick up trash along your road and in your community. Plant a garden or support local farms and agriculture. Take up birdwatching. Why not challenge yourself to hike every SKLT trail this season? The possibilities are endless. Share with us how you are celebrating! Take photos and tag us on Facebook and Instagram, or email [info@sklt.org](mailto:info@sklt.org) with your adventures.



# Meet our New Directors!

Due to the forced postponement of the Annual Meeting of members, the three candidates below have been approved on an interim basis by the Board of Directors. They have begun the new-board-member orientation process and have started to serve on SKLT committees. At such time as it is possible to convene an Annual Meeting, they will be presented to the membership for election as specified in the bylaws.

**Clarkson Collins** hardly needs an introduction! Clarkson retired as SKLT Land Management Director (2006-2019) in December and was asked to join the Board in January. Involved with SKLT since its founding in 1983, he served on the Board and as its President from 1992 to 2004. His experience and insights are invaluable, and we are very glad he will continue to steward the properties protected by SKLT.

**Anne Richardson** has spent a part of every summer in South County. She and her husband permanently moved to the area in 2000 and relocated to Pond Street, overlooking Robinson Farm this past May.

Anne is a URI Master Gardener and has been active in horticulture and garden design for many years, serving on the boards of The South County Garden Club, The South Ferry Church, The Courthouse Center for the Arts, The Dunes Club, The Point Judith Country Club, and The Handicraft Club. Anne is the proud mother of three and grandmother of six.

**Elise Torello** has lived in South Kingstown for about 24 years and raised her two sons here. She is a two-time graduate of URI and volunteers with the URI Watershed Watch. She has both volunteered and worked for the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association and the Salt Ponds Coalition, focusing on water quality monitoring and data management. She has been a water quality monitor of Potter Pond for 12 years. When she's not spying on the local fauna with her wildlife camera trapping, she's usually out hiking or kayaking. Elise is a past member of the Rhode Island Rivers Council, the South Kingstown Planning Board, and the Salt Ponds Coalition Board of Directors.





## Hale House

Out of concern for the health and safety of the visitors and docents the Hale House will not open to the public for the 2020 season. The Matunuck Preservation Society is taking full advantage of the extended shut-down to undertake restoration projects and enhancements often a challenge in a historic unheated structure. We look forward to sharing the new features inside and out in the 2021 season.



Photo by Kevin McCloskey

## In Fond Remembrance

Stuart Sherman was a loyal friend of SKLT. He protected his land and was particularly dedicated to the Samuel Perry Grist Mill. Stuart even made the shingles for the mill by hand. His knowledge of growing flint corn and operating the grist mill was extensive. It has been said that he knew the exact revolutions (rpm) of the millstone by ear! It is only thanks to Stuart and former mill owner Bob Smith that the knowhow has been passed down to others, keeping the agricultural history and Stuart's memory alive.

## How the CARES Act Impacts Charitable Giving

The CARES Act passed this spring introduced a new deduction up to \$300 per taxpayer (\$600 for a married couple) in annual charitable contributions, available to those who take the standard deduction (taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions). It is an "above the line" adjustment to income, thus reducing taxable income. The Act also allows those who do itemize their deductions to deduct much greater amounts of their contributions. Individuals can deduct cash contributions of up to 100% of their 2020 adjusted gross income on itemized 2020 tax returns. Please consider SKLT in your charitable contributions this year!



There's more than one way to give to the Land Trust! Consider a tax-deductible in-kind donation. From tick protection and sunscreen for staff and volunteers, to day-to-day office supplies, to materials for successful and eco-friendly events, and more, in-kind gifts help us out in so many ways.

And don't forget to add South Kingstown Land Trust as your Amazon Charity every time you shop on AmazonSmile - it really does work! You can find our wish list and AmazonSmile page at [smile.amazon.com/ch/05-0516985](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/05-0516985).

# 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! The South Kingstown Land Trust 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

- Individual..... \$30       Family..... \$50
- Steward..... \$100-\$249
- Guardian..... \$250-\$499
- Conservationist..... \$500-\$999
- Benefactor..... \$1,000-\$2,499

## 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 legacy gift to SKLT and qualify to be an EverGreen member through

- Estate Plan  Trust  Other
- Please contact me about making a legacy gift

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to: South Kingstown Land Trust, 227 Robinson Street, Wakefield, RI 02879*

## SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

This program allows our donors to easily establish and maintain their membership through a monthly, automatically recurring gift.

I want to become a sustaining member at the monthly amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my credit card:

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

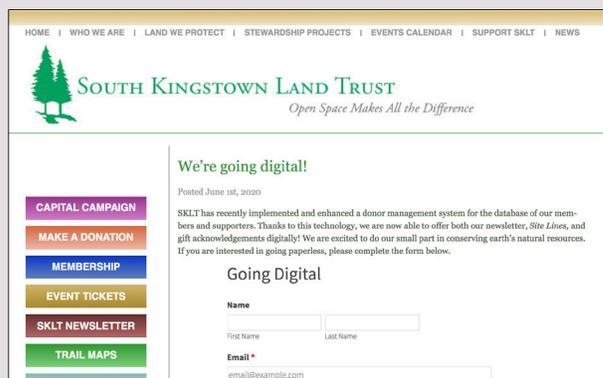
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## OTHER SUPPORT

- I'm a landowner interested in preserving my land.
- My employer will match my gift. I've enclosed a matching gift form.

# We're Saving Trees and Saving Paper!

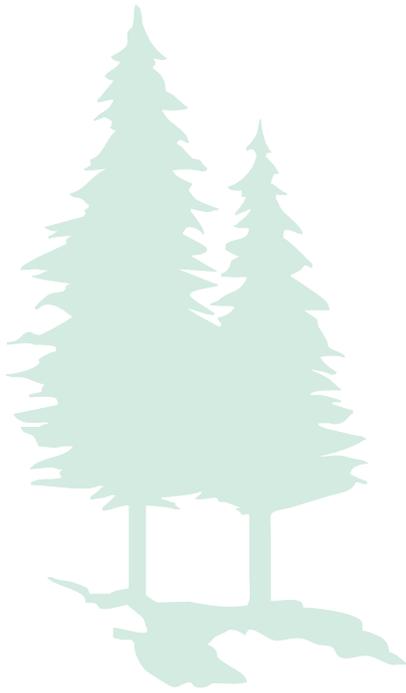
SKLT has recently implemented and enhanced a donor management system for the database of our members and supporters. Thanks to this technology, we are now able to offer both our newsletter, *Site Lines*, and gift acknowledgements digitally! We are excited to do our small part in conserving earth's natural resources. If you are interested in going paperless, you can sign up for either or both by visiting our homepage at [sklt.org](http://sklt.org) and completing the form "going digital."





SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST  
 227 ROBINSON STREET  
 WAKEFIELD, RI 02879

Non-Profit  
 Organization  
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 Permit No. 132



## Save the Date!

Every 1st Saturday	10:00am	All Ages Rx Hike, Browning Woods Trail*
Thursday, July 16	8:30am	3rd Thursday Hike, Thewlis DAR Trail*
Sunday, August 9		Great Outdoors Celebration, Weeden Farm
Thursday, August 20	8:30am	3rd Thursday Hike, Crawley Preserve*
Thursday, September 17	8:30am	3rd Thursday Hike, Weeden Farm*
<i>Check email and website often for updates and upcoming events</i>		

\*We hope to resume our guided hikes this summer. Registration required and will be capped. Subject to change with current CDC guidelines. Register at <http://sklt.org/events-calendar/>

Find us on



@South Kingstown  
Land Trust



@SKLandTrust



@SKLandTrust



**Not on the SKLT email list?**

Contact Angie at [angela.brunetti@sklt.org](mailto:angela.brunetti@sklt.org)  
 She'll take care of you!