



Site Lines

WINTER/SPRING 2011

**SOUTH KINGSTOWN
LAND TRUST**

DON'T MISS OUR ANNUAL MEETING, SUNDAY APRIL 3RD

The South Kingstown Land Trust is fortunate to have Peter Lord, environmental reporter for the *Providence Journal*, present his thoughts on the last 100 years of land conservation in Rhode Island at our annual meeting on Sunday, August 3. Peter was asked to formulate this topic for a chapter in Charles H. W. Foster's book *Twentieth Century New England Land Conservation: A Heritage of Civic Engagement*. "The history of land use and particularly open space and water resource protection is an important one. C.H. Foster, former commissioner of natural resources, state forester and first secretary of environmental affairs, is the right person to assemble an 'A' team of environmentalists, educators and public officials to chronicle how the six New England states first recognized needs, faced crises, benefited from an insightful individual's largess, followed a charismatic leader or otherwise shaped their environmental holdings, programs and policies," wrote Bernard Drew in the *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* in fall 2010 of Foster's endeavor. Peter certainly filled the bill for Rhode Island.



In addition to his work at the *Journal*, Peter teaches journalism at the University of Rhode Island and serves as the Director of Journalism for the Metcalf Institute of Marine and Environmental Reporting at the University's Graduate School of Oceanography. In 2008, he was named a Distinguished Achievement Award recipient from the University of Rhode Island College of the Environment and Life Sciences. Peter's balanced and thoughtful approach has kept Rhode Islanders up to speed on health and environmental topics since 1979.

SKLT's annual meeting begins at 3 pm at the Barn, followed immediately by Peter's talk. During the annual meeting, we will review SKLT's work in 2010, elect Trustees and review our financials. Refreshments will be served.

FIND THE GEOCACHE ON DUVAL TRAIL

Have you ever been geocaching? It is a fun activity using a hand-held GPS device to locate a "treasure" box hidden somewhere. The coordinates for locations of various boxes can be found on numerous web sites, and sometimes there are other clues. Once found, the finders sign in and follow the instructions in the box. Well, there is a geocache somewhere on the Duval Trail! If you are interested in how to start, go to Geocaching.com and learn more about it. Then, find the coordinates for our cache at the DuVal Trail overlook, grab the kids and the GPS and head for the trail. Let us know what you find!



Photo: Claudia Swain



Photos: Joanne Riccitelli

PRESERVATION IN THE MATUNUCK HILLS

At the end of 2010, SKLT gratefully accepted the donation of a conservation easement on land in the Matunuck Hills on Ministerial Road. The landowners, who wish to remain anonymous, wanted to limit the development of this area, so they contacted SKLT. The conservation easement is now permanently protecting 9.4 acres from excessive development, allowing for construction of only one home on the remainder of the property. SKLT worked with The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island to complete the transaction, and now both organizations have a role in ensuring the permanent protection of this land.

The Matunuck Hills area is a roughly 1,000-acre forested region that contains more than twenty pristine New England Coastal Plain Ponds nestled within the glacial moraine. Coastal Plain Ponds are a globally vulnerable natural community type found only within the North Atlantic coastal region, and this area in South Kingstown is the state's best example of this rare community type. Fed only by rain or springs, these ponds are characterized by dramatically variable water tables. The rare and unusual plants that survive along these ponds' alternately parched and inundated shores are conservation targets. Typical examples of plants that have adapted to this habitat include Plymouth Gentian and Rose Coreopsis. Preservation of the uplands to the ponds is also critical to the protection of these species.

The land remains privately owned and is not open to the public. SKLT thanks the landowners for deciding to permanently protect this property for the benefit of the water quality of Long Pond, the continued integrity of scenic Ministerial Road, and the long-term protection of the Matunuck Hills region.



THAT TIME ALREADY? MONITORING DAY MOVES TO SPRING

In November 2010, SKLT held its most successful monitoring day yet, with almost every property visited and documented by dedicated volunteers. Could it be that it's time to monitor again already? Well, yes! And that's because this year, we are shifting our monitoring day to the early spring to avoid any possible conflict with hunting season in case of a need for a rain date (which would have been nearly impossible last year).

We hope you'll understand our dilemma and agree to come out on Sunday, April 10th to do it all over again! For those of you who have adopted a property or two, you will get a whole new perspective on that piece of land, seeing it in the early spring before the trees leaf out. For those who may have had a scheduling conflict last fall - here's another chance to volunteer.

Monitors in November learned about SKLT's participation in a pilot climate change project just beginning at that time. We'll give an update on the project after the monitoring and before our usual delicious

dinner, which will consist of a delightful spring menu that you are sure to enjoy. After dinner, we hope you'll join us around the bonfire for some warmth and good company.

We've become so efficient in this effort that it won't be necessary to devote the entire day to the monitoring. Instead, we'll report to the Barn at 1pm and return by 4 pm for the talk and dinner at 5 pm. Please let us know if you plan to join us on April 10th. And if you want to monitor, but can't make it that day, give us a call and we can send you out on your own ahead of time. If you wish to monitor the same properties that you monitored in the fall, let us know that too.

Inexperienced volunteers are more than welcome to join us for the first time! We'll train you, and you'll have the option to join an experienced team. We look forward to seeing all our regular monitors, and lots of new faces too! By the way, the rain date has been set for May 1, but we hope we won't need it. Register by e-mail to jane.baumann@sklt.org or call the office at 789-0962.

GREENVIEW FARM EXPANSION

In 2003, SKLT purchased development rights on about 13 acres of prime farmland on Tuckertown Road, protecting this land forever. This is the home of Greenview Farm, a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm where members purchase shares of organic produce and visit the farm each week from May to October to pick up their shares, chat with farmers Craig and Emily Totten, and exchange recipes, cooking ideas and general enthusiasm. Greenview Farm's wonderful produce is in high demand, and the Tottens have a waiting list of families eager to share in the bounty.

SKLT is pleased to be working with the Tottens again, leasing them part of our Tuckertown Road property, formerly the Hollis Tucker Farm, not far from Greenview Farm. SKLT bought this 51-acre parcel in 1996 with funding from United Water, which supported the acquisition to provide drinking water quality protection for their nearby wells in the Mink Aquifer. The Tottens will lease about 20 acres, more than doubling their cultivated acreage at Greenview and enabling them to add many new families to their CSA.



Photo: Joanne Riccitelli

Greenview farm as it was preserved in 2003

Save These Dates - Events at SKLT Barn (unless noted)

Feb. 12, 26	English Country Dances, 7:30 to 10pm
Mar. 12, 26	English Country Dances, 7:30 to 10pm
Mar. 26	Land & Water Summit at URI, 8:30am to 4pm
April 3	SKLT Annual Meeting, 3pm, with guest speaker Peter Lord
Apr. 9, 23	English Country Dances, 7:30 to 10pm
April 10	Monitoring Day, 1pm*
May 7	English Country Dance, 7:30 to 10pm
May 14	Biscuit City Day, meet at site, 2pm*
June 4	Chestnut Orchard tour/open house, 1 to 3pm*
June 18	Prest family farm hike, meet at site, 11am*
July 3	Perryville Days – save the date!
July 9	Matunuck artists colony – history talk & hike, meet at site, 4pm*
Aug. 14	Auction – save the date!

* Please call 789-0962 or email jane.baumann@sklt.org to register

LAND & WATER SUMMIT AT URI IN MARCH



Calling all land and water conservation advocates! This day-long conference provides Watershed Council, Land Trust, and Conservation Commission board members, staff, volunteers and others with the information, skills and connections you need to be effective and great opportunities to network with like-minded conservationists around the state. The Summit will be held on Saturday, March 26th from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm at the URI Memorial Union on the Kingston campus. Visit www.landandwaterpartnership.com for information and to register. SKLT staff members Joanne Riccitelli and Claudia Swain will each be presenting workshops at the conference. Come join us for a very informative day!

SKLT APPLAUDS RENEWAL OF CONSERVATION TAX INCENTIVE

Congress just renewed a tax incentive for private landowners—especially working family farmers and ranchers—who protect their land with a voluntary conservation easement. The incentive, which had expired at the end of 2009, helped SKLT work with willing landowners in South Kingstown to conserve nearly 400 acres of productive agricultural lands and natural areas between 2006 and 2009.

Conservation-minded landowners now have until December 31, 2011 to take advantage of this significant tax deduction for donating a voluntary conservation easement to permanently protect their land. When landowners donate a conservation easement to SKLT, they maintain ownership and management of their land and can sell or pass the land on to their heirs, while foregoing future development rights.

The renewed incentive impacts a landowner's federal income tax in the following ways. It:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;

- Allows farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and
- Increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from six to 16 years.

Conservation easements have become an important tool nationally for protecting our watersheds, farms and forests. SKLT joins America's 1,700 land trusts and their two million supporters in thanking Congress for making this important conservation tool available.

According to the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization that provides a voice for land trusts in Washington, DC, bills to make this incentive permanent have 274 House and 41 Senate co-sponsors from all 50 states. This legislation is supported by more than 60 national agricultural, sportsmen's, and conservation organizations. To learn more about the enhanced incentive visit www.lta.org/easementincentive.

THINKING ABOUT YOUR LEGACY?

How would you like to be remembered? Are you considering a charitable gift during your lifetime from your retirement assets, but have been discouraged because of the income tax penalty? If so, then we have some good news for you! On December 17, 2010, Congress extended the IRA Charitable Rollover Provision through December 2011. The extension allows individuals 70½ and

older to donate up to \$100,000 from their IRAs, tax free, to qualified public charities like the South Kingstown Land Trust! As with any estate planning, it is suggested that you confer with your family lawyer or trusted consultant. Please consider the lasting legacy your gift will have to preserve open space in South Kingstown! Contact us for more information.

CHESTNUT ORCHARD OPEN HOUSE AND TOUR, JUNE 4TH

For two years, SKLT and the URI Master Gardeners have been running a nursery. Not a nursery for youngsters, but rather one for an almost extinct tree, the majestic American Chestnut. On a lovely piece of land trust property, surrounded by fields, hidden from Tuckertown Road, and visited regularly by bluebirds, almost 230 new seedlings are being coddled and coaxed to grow. These are hybrid trees with both American and Chinese chestnut genes. The Chinese chestnut is immune to the devastating disease that claimed all of New England's towering chestnut trees, but lacked the height and breadth of the more



Photo: Claudia Swain

commanding American chestnut. Researchers have now bred the immune gene into the American chestnut in hopes that the New England forest can soon be repopulated with a new, immune American chestnut.

This project has excited all those who work on it, and it is finally time to show it to you. On June 4th between 1 and 3 pm, we hope you'll join us for an open house at the Chestnut orchard off

Tuckertown Road. At 2 pm, a guided tour will be led by Rudi Hempe, leader of the Master Gardener group helping with the project. The driveway to the orchard will be clearly marked for you on June 4th. Follow Tuckertown Road to the signs, but please register first!


MILESTONES

Here we are in February already! The darkest days of this snowy winter are behind us and we at the land trust are marking up our calendars and making schedules for the year to come. 2010 was a good year for SKLT, and we are confident that 2011 will be even better.

Although we have over 700 families who receive this newsletter, you are not all active members. One of our goals for this year is to increase our active membership. It is imperative that we continue to grow so we can meet the increasing demands of stewarding our properties. If you are receiving *SiteLines*, you know about the important work we do in South Kingstown. Perhaps you have hiked our trails, monitored property for us or attended a program and dinner at the Barn. Now, we need you to be an ambassador for the Land Trust and invite your friends and neighbors to become members and support our work.

As we grow in numbers, our voice and our mission gain strength and importance. We are planning a broad mailing to solicit membership but will need volunteer help to make that happen. It is a daunting challenge that we feel is important at this time. Please let us know if you can help with that project; and invite those you know who may not be members to join us!

In the meantime, we welcome you to participate in our programs at the Barn and look forward to seeing you.


Michael A. Sherry, President



ALL HANDS ON DECK!

We really enjoy sharing great speakers and movies with you – and have done more of them lately, including the Rachel Carson film *A Sense of Place*, the movie *Fresh*, and recently speakers Todd McLeish and Angelo Simeoni! To keep up this pace, we've noticed that it's time to ask for more hands to help lighten the workload. We could use some help with set-up, kitchen work and preparing for the evening, as well as clean up. Please send an email to jane.baumann@sklt.org if you're willing to be on an email notification list, where we'll let you know what we're doing, and how we need help. You can then reply by email as to your availability. Thanks for all you do for SKLT!

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
Vice President: Paul Schurman
Treasurer: Charles M. Lewis
Secretary: Sophie Page Lewis

Trustees

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

Staff

Joanne Riccitelli,
Land Protection Director
Clarkson Collins,
Land Management Director
Claudia Swain,
Development Director
Jane Baumann,
Membership Coordinator
Mike Bontecou,
Land Operations Coordinator

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

Site Lines Designer, Cindy Sabato, Volunteer

NEWS FROM THE SKLT MEMBERSHIP DESK

Ever wonder about the many tasks involved in running a land trust? One of those is baseline documentation of properties, which provides a record, maps, photos and other data about property and/or conservation easement that SKLT receives. Shown here are the members of the Baseline Documentation team, left to right: Jane Baumann - Membership Coordinator and Notary Public, Doug McGovern - Trustee and map-maker par excellence, Sophie Page Lewis - Board Secretary and fearless leader, and Clarkson Collins - Land Management Director and report author.



Photo: Claudia Swain

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+

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

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 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

313 Main Street, Suite C, Wakefield, RI 02879



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Site Lines



DON'T MISS BISCUIT CITY DAY ON MAY 14



Photos: Claudia Swain



Ever wonder about the ruins of the old mill, or the spring house on the Biscuit City property? Come and join us for a stroll around the pond and a journey to the rich past of this historical property. Our capable leader, Katherine Long, is a member and vigilant land steward for SKLT who now works for the Preservation Society in Newport County. Meet at the site at 2 pm. Register to Jane.Baumann@sklt.org for directions.

Open Space Makes All the Difference