



# Site Lines

WINTER/SPRING 2009

SOUTH KINGSTOWN  
LAND TRUST

## SKLT'S ANNUAL MEETING AND TICK TALK ON APRIL 5

This year, SKLT's 26th Annual Meeting will be held on April 5, 2009 at the Barn on Matunuck Beach Road, from 2-4 pm. The guest speaker will be Dr. Thomas Mather, professor of entomology at the University of Rhode Island, locally known as "the tick guy." We will watch his newly released film, "Hidden In the Leaves," which was made right here in South Kingstown. Then Tom will introduce us to the latest in tick encounter prevention, and lead us on a hike in search of tick habitat. SKLT members are active outdoors, and will want to be brought up to date on how to take simple, sensible precautionary steps to prevent tick bites and the diseases they cause. To see Tom's latest, go to [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and search: "Ticks are sucking us dry." Don't miss the meeting: the information Dr. Mather has to share is important for everyone!



Photo : Charles M. Lewis

## CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS: SUNDAY APRIL 19

It is sometimes hard to think about spring in the midst of all this cold, snowy weather but we hope it will be here before we know it! So early spring is the time to prepare the trails before the season really gets underway. Our fall monitoring day was such a success that we decided to invite our monitors - and anyone who missed that great day - to ready the trails for the spring and summer season.

On Sunday April 19th we will have another rewarding day cutting back the fall and winter growth, and cleaning up the trails. Clarkson Collins will lead the volunteers along the

DuVal Trail in Perryville, and others if time and numbers permit. Meet at the Barn on Matunuck Beach Road at 12:30 PM with gloves, pruners and cameras to record the event.

All are welcome, but please let us know if you are coming! Come a little early and share a cup of coffee with us before you hit the trails! E-mail Jane at [jane.baumann@sklt.org](mailto:jane.baumann@sklt.org) or call the office at 789-0962.

THANKS TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS FROM MONITORING DAY IN NOVEMBER!  
HOPE TO SEE YOU THIS SPRING FOR TRAIL CLEAN-UP AND AGAIN NEXT FALL!





Photo: Bousquet &amp; Son Photography

## SKLT MAKES GREAT PROGRESS IN LAND PROTECTION

SKLT closed on 5 projects in 2008, protecting another 50 acres in Matunuck, Green Hill, Ministerial Road area, and on Potter Pond. In the fall *Site Lines*, we reported on the Potter Pond conservation easement project, and the 22 acre Ferrick property acquisition in Green Hill, at the intersection of Matunuck Schoolhouse and Green Hill Beach Roads.

Since then, SKLT closed on the purchase of a conservation easement on the Jackson farm in Green Hill, which contains 17 acres of prime farmland soil producing sweet corn and mixed vegetables. The Jacksons sell their produce to the public at a stand near Pat's Power Equipment on Route 1A in Charlestown. If the land were not protected, a residential development of 14 houses could have been built there, impacting nearby surface waters. Water quality in the salt ponds remains an ongoing concern, with continuing efforts by the town and state to replace existing aging septic systems to reduce pollution into the salt ponds. The Jackson land was originally part of the Browning land from the Pettaquamscutt Purchase from the native Americans. Their house dates to 1750 and is called Burnside Acres.

SKLT thanks its partner agencies: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Farm and Ranchlands Protection program, The Nature Conservancy and the Town of South Kingstown's Open Space Program for providing funding to make this preservation project possible.

Also, SKLT was fortunate to receive two land donations in 2008. In April SKLT received a conservation easement donation on just under 2 acres of open fields located on Route 1 in Matunuck from Austin Smith. This land is north of SKLT's Weeden Farm, which was previously owned by the Smith family. This donation preserves views from Route 1 and helps maintain a rural quality along that roadway. In December, SKLT received a land donation of 1.5 acres in Perryville from Scott Nixon and Edith England. This parcel is strategically located near other lots owned by SKLT which are part of our DuVal Trail, so it can be incorporated with other land to extend this trail in the future. We thank these landowners again for their generosity and vision in protecting important natural land in our town.

-Joanne Riccitelli

## SKLT TO HELP RESTORE AMERICAN CHESTNUT TREES

A century ago, the American chestnut tree dominated the eastern forest of North America. Tall and robust, the chestnut provided a straight grained, easily worked, and rot resistant wood ideal for construction of housing, furniture and fencing. It also produced copious quantities of nuts sought out by humans and animals alike as an excellent and delicious source of protein.

The reign of the American chestnut ended catastrophically when spores of the Asian chestnut blight arrived in New York in 1904, and spread rapidly over the chestnut's entire range in a matter of a few short years. By 1930 our nation's forests had lost billions of these trees, with no sign of any natural development of blight resistance. Today, the only traces of the chestnut's former glory exists in a few scattered old trunks that send up shoots, only to fall victim to the virus. Rarely a shoot will mature to flower and produce nuts before dying.

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) was founded in 1983 by scientists who want to restore the American chestnut by cross-breeding American and Chinese chestnuts to produce a chestnut that retains Asian resistance to the blight and displays the tall, straight growth habits of the American chestnut, so it can compete successfully in our forests. TACF is forging an alliance with thousands of volunteers in many states and major research institutions including Penn State and Yale, and has relationships with the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative, the National Wild Turkey Foundation and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

TACF and its state affiliations are now seeking to develop local orchards where they can raise promising hybrid trees for research purposes. Massachusetts has

about 25 such orchards, and Rhode Island has two in northern RI and one in Westerly. The work is painstaking, requiring collection of pollen from American chestnut flowers, often in inaccessible areas, and brushing it onto Asian or Asian-American hybrids in the orchards. Naturally, irrigation, pest control, and other garden work are also necessary over a long period, perhaps 25 years.

When presented with the idea of joining this effort, the SKLT Board of Trustees enthusiastically gave approval for the staff to investigate suitable orchard sites and to look for partners to help in maintenance and operation of the orchards. We found two potential sites with available water and accessibility. We also were delighted to receive a commitment from the URI Master Gardeners Association, whose volunteers will provide start-up and long term maintenance and care, along with TACF-Rhode Island volunteers, who will conduct the scientific work.

We look forward to our new partnership on one of the most important steps ever taken to restore our native woodlands. We will keep you informed as the project unfolds. If you are interested in the American chestnut work, more information is available at <http://www.acf.org>. If you know the location of living American chestnut stumps or shoots in our area, please contact: [clark.collins@sklt.org](mailto:clark.collins@sklt.org), or call 401-783-4999.

-Clark Collins, with assistance from Rudi Hempe

### NOTICE!

**When walking the woods, be on the look-out for signs of Asian Longhorn Beetle infestation!**

**Already in Massachusetts, this large invasive beetle has the potential to devastate our woodlands. We don't want this bug in RI. For more information check the RI Natural History Survey website at [rinh.org/2008/08/13/albinma](http://massnrc.org/pests/alb/) OR <http://massnrc.org/pests/alb/>**

### COME FOR A HIKE NEAR YAWGOO POND!

Saturday May 2nd at 1pm.

Register at [jane.baumann@sklt.org](mailto:jane.baumann@sklt.org), or call 789-0962,

and we'll provide directions on where to meet.





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

Sat. Feb. 14 & 18	English Country Dances, 7:30-10:30 pm
Wed. Mar. 11	Estate Planning Workshop (7 pm) and light dinner for \$5 (6:30 pm)
Sat. Mar. 14 & 28	English Country Dances, 7:30-10:30 pm
Sat. Mar. 21	Land & Water Conference at URI, 8:30 am - 4 pm; for details and registration, visit <a href="http://www.landandwaterpartnership.org">www.landandwaterpartnership.org</a>
Sun. Apr. 5	SKLT Annual Meeting, 2 - 4 pm (see article, page 1)
Sat. Apr. 11	English Country Dance, 7:30-10:30 pm
Sun. Apr. 19	Trail Clearing Day, meet at the Barn at 12:30 pm
Sat. May 2	Trail Hike @ Yawgoo Pond Property, 1 pm, register for directions
Sat. May 2	English Country Dance, 7:30 - 10:30 pm



ESTATE PLANNING WORKSHOP

MARCH 11, 2009

6:30 DINNER  
7:00 PROGRAM

THE BARN AT 17  
MATUNUCK BEACH RD.

SKLT got its start 25 years ago through the generosity of people who left us land and money to protect it. Perhaps this is not the right year for you to give a significant gift of cash to the South Kingstown Land Trust, but you still want to support the preservation of open space... Find out how to do both by learning more about opportunities available through planned giving.

Jim Aukerman, Esq. will be our guest speaker and will introduce planned giving to those of us who are thinking about the legacy we wish to leave. Come early, share a light dinner and enjoy learning about this interesting topic.



EVERGREEN MEMBERS

Anonymous (4)  
Jim and Karin Aukerman  
Robert and Cindi Blakely  
Ian and Gloria Callard  
Clarkson Collins  
Eliza Collins  
Janet Innis  
Charles M. Lewis

Sophie Page Lewis  
Anne S. O'Neill  
Paul and Barbara Schurman  
Michael Sherry and Janice Anthony  
Janice Sieburth  
Carroll and John Tickner  
Eric Widmer and Meera Viswanathan  
Ken and Dottie Woodcock

We are grateful to those deceased members who remembered us in their wills prior to the EverGreen society:

*Dorothea Bond  
Helena-Hope Gammell  
Charles Hoffman  
Polly Matzinger  
John Sieburth  
Mabel Smith  
Harold Thewlis*

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



EVERGREEN MEMBERS HOME FROM JORDAN

I met Eric Widmer on the SKLT hike in the Matunuck Hills in July, and he mentioned his interest in becoming an EverGreen member. In December, I had the pleasure of sitting in front of a cozy, cavernous fireplace in their historic home. Eric's wife, India-born Meera Viswanathan knew it was the right place for them when they drove by looking for property in 1992. Though listed as the Sam Perry House, it was Sam's youngest son, Benjamin whose family lived there from the Pettaquamscutt purchase of 1657 through the 18th century, and they call it the "Old Perry Place." Eric and Meera were home from Amman, Jordan and were willing to speak with me about their decision to include the South Kingstown Land Trust in their estate plans.

Eric was the Dean of Admissions at Brown University until 1994, when he became headmaster of his alma mater, the Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts. In May 2000, the King of Jordan, also an alumnus of Deerfield, was asked to give the graduation speech. He stayed with Meera and Eric, and they came to realize His Majesty's profound love of learning and his desire to start a boarding school in Amman, to replicate his cherished time at Deerfield. In 2006, Eric and Meera answered the king's call to start a co-ed boarding school with socio-economic diversity. Eric says that each day he ponders some decision that needs to be made in this truly new undertaking for academic excellence.

So where does the South Kingstown Land Trust come in? Eric put it this way: "What could be a more compelling cause? We all have a choice as to what we will leave behind that will continue. We may bequeath our land to family, but this part of the earth has such a special feeling... If it is to continue for the future, it must be preserved. It makes us feel better if we can help—and if everyone else who can does their part, then enormous things can be accomplished."

We couldn't agree more! Meera confided that her husband also has a knack for doggerel poetry, in limerick form, so she challenged him to rhyme on "bequest"....

An irreverent ode to Claudia Swain  
by Eric Widmer

They convened at Claudia's behest  
To agree on his Land Trust bequest  
Upon which she then said  
"I wish you were dead!--  
In fact dying today would be best!"

Well, I will put up with a great deal of ribbing for the sake of open space! Welcome to EverGreen, Eric and Meera, and may your excellent health and rancorous humor sustain us for many years to come!

-Claudia Swain



EverGreen Members:

Seated, left to right, Gloria Callard, Karin Aukerman, Dottie Woodcock, Carroll Tickner, Eliza Collins, Barbara Schurman and Janet Innis

Standing left to right, Ian Callard, Paul Schurman, Mike Sherry, Ken Woodcock, John Tickner, Clark Collins and Jim Aukerman

Photo: Deb Stallwood



## MILESTONES

Winter is a wonderful time to reflect on the past year's achievements, and set out an agenda for the new year. Our 25th year was a banner year by any account. So many of our members participated in special events taking place throughout the year. We have recounted some of those times in this issue of *Site Lines*. But, as successful as last year was, we can not stop and rest on our laurels. It is time to think about the next quarter century at SKLT.

SKLT continues to protect more land which must be stewarded in perpetuity. Our legacy society, EverGreen, which began only last year, has grown at an exhilarating pace giving us confidence that we can hope to provide stewardship for the foreseeable future. It is exciting to see such enthusiasm from our supporters about ensuring the future of our properties. We will need to remain diligent and continue to ask for your support for EverGreen.

The Land Trust is not immune from these troubling economic times. We will be increasing our efforts to secure funding for new properties, and for the maintenance of our land and our hard working and efficient staff. Your help, as always, will be most appreciated. Our membership renewal requests will be in your mailbox soon. Please respond as generously as you are able.

And finally, kudos to our great volunteers! What a rewarding day we had in November when we enlisted 65 volunteers to monitor our 130 properties! We had such a good turnout, that we are trying it again in April, when we will prepare our beautiful trails for the season ahead. Join us!

Thanks to each and every one of you who contribute to our success. We couldn't do it without you.

Michael A. Sherry, President

*SKLT would like to have your e-mail address to provide you, our members, with important information about hikes, programs, volunteer opportunities and other exciting activities. If you don't already receive e-mail from us on a periodic basis, please take a moment to send an e-mail to jane.baumann@sklt.org and she will add your name to our growing list of members' addresses. Be assured we do not share our list with anyone else! Then stay tuned and look for more information to come.*

## 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  
Peter Nunes  
Sally Olsen  
Anne O'Neill  
Carl Sawyer  
Paul Schurman  
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,  
Finance & Development Assistant

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

## SKLT'S 25TH ANNUAL MEETING AND PHOTO CONTEST



Photo: Claudia Swain

The 25th Annual Meeting of the South Kingstown Land Trust was held September 28, 2008 at the SKLT Barn. After a welcome from President Mike Sherry and reports from Treasurer Charles Lewis, Land Protection Director Joanne Riccitelli, and Land Management Director Clarkson Collins, Development Director Claudia Swain introduced the new Legacy group, EverGreen, and more than 80 attendees viewed and voted on the first ever photo contest.

Paul Schurman, chair of the SKLT Development Committee, presented the awards. Of the 56 photo entries, honorable mentions went to Sophie P. Lewis for "Chipmunk," and to Clarkson A. Collins for "Susanna's Woods in Summer." Judi Wood earned third place for "Kenyon Grist Mill Pond." Second place went to "Canoes at Wash Pond" by Cynthia Okie. Our first place winner was "Boats" by Eric Shim. The People's Choice Award went to Elizabeth Nelson's "Girl's Day" at the Beach. See the winning photographs at SKLT.org.

Heartfelt thanks to all who participated. It was obvious to all who attended that open space creates a wonderful backdrop for photography here in South Kingstown! We will keep you posted as to the 2nd Photo contest dates for 2009!

## 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 property.  
 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





## EVERGREEN MEMBERS PLANT COMMEMORATIVE TREES

On November 30, SKLT's inaugural EverGreen members gathered at the Barn. This event gave us a chance to thank them for their vision and support. All of these loyal EverGreen members have either given us an outright gift to the EverGreen Fund of \$10,000 or more, and /or have included SKLT in their estate plans.

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To commemorate the beginning of this vital group, two evergreen trees were planted at the entrance to the driveway at the barn. We will eagerly watch them grow, as a living logo. Many thanks to Stewart's Nursery, who grew these lovely trees right here in South Kingstown.

Mike Sherry, president of SKLT, invited each of the members to write down their stories, as to how they decided to become EverGreen members. See page 5 for the story of Eric Widmer and his wife, Meera, who unfortunately missed the EverGreen party, but who invited me to their home, to share their story.

-Claudia Swain



Photot: Sophie Lewis

## Open Space Makes All the Difference



**SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST**  
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