



# Site Lines

FALL 2014

SOUTH KINGSTOWN  
LAND TRUST

## MOUNTAIN LIONS IN SK?

As fall settles in, SKLT kicks off this event season with a very exciting program. On Thursday, October 30th, South Kingstown's resident mountain lion expert, Bill Betty, will talk about the eastern mountain lion's return to Rhode Island.

Because a number of our members have reported sightings of what may be a resident South County lion, we thought our members would be interested in this story. Mr. Betty began giving presentations on the mountain lion in Connecticut in 2005. His interest in the animal grew along with the public's, and he is now in great demand throughout the area by those who have seen the animal as well as by outdoors groups and organizations. His presentation will include stories and pictures of this beautiful, elusive animal, sometimes called a cougar, catamount or puma.

Mountain lions once roamed most of the country, but were despised by farmers and ranchers whose animals were prey for the hungry cats. By the dawn of the 20th century, they had been eliminated from most of their range in the East and Midwest. But as deer is their favorite meal, and



there are plenty of those around, the mountain lion has quietly returned. Local and state governments in New England generally refute Betty's claims that the lions live here, but many believe otherwise.

Join us at the Barn, 17 Matunuck Beach Road, on October 30th to hear and see what Bill Betty has to say. A potluck dinner begins at 6 pm, with Betty's presentation at 7 pm. Please register early with [jane.baumann@sklt.org](mailto:jane.baumann@sklt.org) as seating is limited.

## JUST IN TIME FOR COOLER WEATHER...

Thanks to our land management programs, SKLT has firewood for sale. Primarily oak and maple, the three- to four-foot length wood is ready for your custom cutting and splitting, at \$50 for a

standard pick-up truck load. Call Michael Bontecou at 742-4515 for information.



Photo: Claudia Swain

## THE POLLINATOR PREDICAMENT

by Clarkson Collins

Sitting on the front lawn with my son, now 36, and watching my three grandchildren, four-year-old twins and a 12-month-old, cavort across the clover and fescue on a beautiful summer morning is hilarious and a sure source of future memories. But it was a bit like a cloud passing over the sun when my son said, “Dad, do you remember when you played with Dan and me when we were this old?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Then tell me what’s changed.”

After a few seconds it was clear: there are no bees. Not one of the bees that my children had to avoid was among the white flowers. I had given up amateur bee keeping years ago, when bee mites first appeared, sapping the strength of the hives, and now with the threat of Colony Collapse Disease, most honey bees are struggling for survival across the continent.

Pollinators like bees perform an essential role in nature’s web. Recent studies estimate that 75 to 80 percent of flowering plants depend on pollination, mostly by insects, although butterflies, hummingbirds, bats and others contribute somewhat. Because fully 30 percent of our food depends on insect pollination, pollinators, despite their modest appearance, hold a keystone role in the world’s ecology and economy. As we see pollinators, the wealth they support, and the food chain they enrich, decline precipitously, what can small organizations like land trusts do to help?

Pollinator decline seems to be related not only to over-use of insecticides applied to croplands and backyards, but also to large scale monoculture, out-of-cycle agricultural practices, the spread of non-native invasive plants that hold no attraction for indigenous insects, and other human alterations to land and climate.

Simply by protecting existing native habitats, conservation organizations are also protecting critical pollinator habitat. With progressive management, we can minimize or eliminate use of harmful pesticides. Haying can be rotated, delayed or suspended to allow native insects to benefit from flowering plants, and also protect ground nesting birds and small mammals at the same time. Invasive plant species that displace native vegetation can be combatted. Even small refuges can provide nesting and habitat areas that significantly benefit pollinators, and local gardeners.

SKLT, like many other land trusts, is taking advantage of programs developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). On our 250-acre Browning Woods/Kenney property, we have cleared four acres that are being planted with native flowering plant species that benefit pollinators, and have drilled bee nest holes in wooden blocks and tree stumps. On the 100-acre Weeden Farm, we are managing 11 acres as native plant habitat for several varieties of goldenrod and other forbs, prolific pollen sources, and leaving significant areas of meadow. In Kingston, the 11-acre Biscuit City property is being restored with native forest understory habitat, native flowering and berry-producing shrubs and wetland plants.

You are invited to visit and enjoy these beautiful and productive natural areas, and create memories with friends and family—and look out for the bees!

P.S. Thanks and credit to the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, and the USDA-NRCS for their inspiration and guidance in managing our open spaces.



Biologist Gary Casabona will discuss the role of specific plant species as providers of pollen, nectar, and nesting sites, as well as the importance of site preparation prior to seeding. You’ll also take away relevant aspects of insect life history, especially for bumblebees, and plants

## LEARN HOW TO ATTRACT POLLINATORS TO YOUR YARD

Join us on Thursday, November 13th, for a program on how you can create or enhance your own pollinator habitat with herbaceous or woody species.

that also benefit other wildlife species, such as migratory songbirds.

Casabona has been the statewide wildlife biologist for NRCS in Warwick since 2011. He oversees habitat projects for New England cottontail, native pollinators, scrub/shrub birds, wetland restoration, fish passage, and oyster restoration. Prior to his position in Rhode Island, he worked for USDA-NRCS in New Jersey for 14 years. When he’s not at work, Casabona can usually be found birding, or making incredibly loud noises with a guitar strapped over his shoulder.

Come to the Barn, 17 Matunuck Beach Road, at 6:30 pm for potluck appetizers, followed by Casabona’s program at 7 pm.

## CHASING ICE

A winter evening is a great time to see a movie at the Barn – this one about ice and glaciers and how they are changing. Mark your calendars now (as *Sitelines* won’t be published again until February) for the award-winning documentary *Chasing Ice*, on Thursday January 15th at the Barn. We will have a potluck supper at 6pm and start the movie at 7pm. If you want to sneak a peek before then, check out the movie’s trailer at [ChasingIce.com](http://ChasingIce.com).

## SKLT AT LAND TRUST ALLIANCE RALLY 2014

Staff and trustees from SKLT took full advantage of the Land Trust Alliance’s premiere training conference, Rally, held last month in Providence. SKLT hosted a sold-out field trip to the new Jones loop trail, a grinding at the Grist Mill, a lovely lunch at the Barn, and a lesson in stone wall restoration. All five of SKLT’s part-time staff and five dedicated trustees attended parts of the three day event, learning new and exciting things to bring back home. Rally 2014 was a fabulous opportunity to host land trusts from around the world and show off our beautiful state!





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

Thurs. Oct. 30*	Mountain Lions talk, 6 pm potluck, 7 pm program
Sun. Nov. 2*	Family Treasure Hunt, Weeden Farm, 2-4 pm
Thurs. Nov. 13*	Pollinators talk, 6:30 pm potluck appetizers, 7 pm program
Sat. Nov. 15*	Hike in the Matunuck Hills, 3 pm, register for directions
Sat. Dec. 6	American Chestnut Foundation Annual Meeting, 11 am, all welcome
Thurs. Jan. 15*	Movie: Chasing Ice, 6 pm potluck, 7 pm movie

For information on the English Country Dances held at the SKLT Barn, go to [kingstonenglishcountrydance.org/](http://kingstonenglishcountrydance.org/). SKLT members get a discount on admission!

\* Please register at [jane.baumann@sklt.org](mailto:jane.baumann@sklt.org) or call 789-0962 ext. 1.

## CATCH UP ON THE BISCUIT

SKLT's Biscuit City property, in an idyllic stream valley on the west side of Kingston Hill, just keeps getting more beautiful – for people, wildlife and especially pollinators!

When we last reported on the project, SKLT Trustee Ellen Grebstein was leading the charge to rid the trail of invasives and replace them with more than 100 native trees and shrubs ideally suited for forested cover, sandy and rocky soils, spring and summer flowers, and berries in winter. Among the plantings are shadbush, American holly, winterberry, tupelo, native azaleas, red and black chokeberry, highbush blueberry, witchhazel and viburnum. The new plants are watered with a pump purchased with a Mary Lemoine Potter fund grant. A new trail loop leads from the mill ruins at the west end of the property, crossing the brook and joining the trail



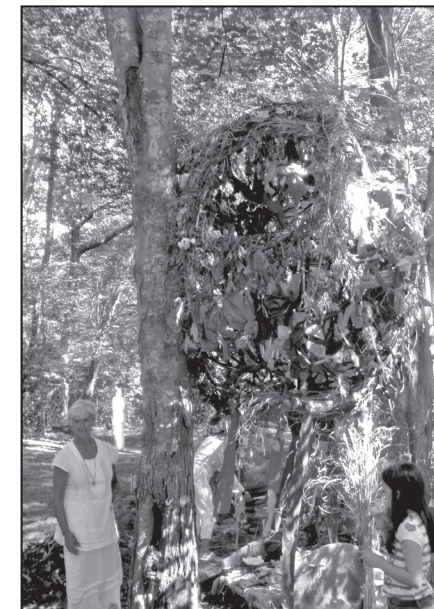
Photo: Ellen Grebstein

around the pond.

A special improvement – the masterful clearing and cleaning of the old miller's house foundation near the dam – is the result of Kelby Anderson's and Jaqueline Lindstrom's Girl Scout Silver Award project. They deserve a great deal

of credit for their rugged determination against barberry bushes and other invasive shrubs.

The last phase of this year's project will be to improve the surface of the main pathway to improve footing and drainage. Thanks to all who have encouraged us with their hard work, lemonade and cookies, donations of equipment, funds and supplies, and especially their neighborly interest in the project. If you want to help, please call the office at 789-0962 or email [jane.baumann@sklt.org](mailto:jane.baumann@sklt.org). The property is open to visitors daily from sunrise to sunset.



Photos: David Floyd, John Powers, Anne O'Neill

## NEW SCULPTURE TRAIL OPENS

What do you get when a talented member offers to do a project on an SKLT-protected property in Green Hill? The wonderful, colorful Sculpture Trail that opened as a Land Trust Days event on September 7th, that's what. Currently, 23 unique pieces, from as many sculptors, decorate the trail. Some hang from trees, many move in the breeze, and one, a big metal steer called "Sir Loin," greets visitors from his vantage point front and center. Judging from the reactions of almost 200 visitors at the opening, the Sculpture Trail is a huge success for SKLT and for Troy West, who brought the idea to us and helped to make it happen. The trail, located on Green Hill Beach Road just north of the Matunuck Schoolhouse Road intersection, is open daily, sunrise to sunset. Visitors can pick up trail maps at the site.



In May, EverGreen members enjoyed a ride through the fields at the historic Robinson Farm to celebrate SKLT's receipt of 45 bucolic acres of farm and woodlands from the Bowers family. EverGreen was established to recognize and honor our special friends who have invested in SKLT's future through their planned gifts.

Photo: Deb Stallwood



## MILESTONES

### *Conservation, Community and Connectedness*

Some of my earliest memories are of eating jonnycakes made by Bud Browning and his mother, Isabel. They were best served thin and crispy. Throughout my life I have made and consumed countless jonnycakes. (Note: spellcheck keeps trying to put an “h” in jonnycake!) It wasn’t until about ten years ago that I began to think about where the corn meal comes from.

My wife, son and I visited Bob and Diane Smith operating the Carpenter Grist Mill. My infant son got his first taste of jonnycakes, while Bob, Diane and I talked about preserving the mill and about the history of the mill. A picture of Bud’s wife, Virginia, as a little girl dangling her feet in the water hung on the wall. Stuart Sherman, who took care of our cars for many years at Pitcher’s garage, was running the mill with Bob then, and Stuart’s son, Duane, was helping install parts that he fabricated in his machine shop. Peter Timpson, who has kept the sluiceway clear and water flowing to the mill for many years, assisted with operations. Kevin McCloskey, ever the backbone of support, performed countless tasks associated with producing the corn meal. I am sure there were others who assisted with this labor of preserving a way of life that had been going on at this mill for hundreds of years.

Fast forward a decade, and Bob and Diane have preserved that mill by donation to the South Kingstown Land Trust. They continue to operate the mill, most all of those who assisted a decade earlier are still involved, and many new volunteers have come on board to assist. Rob Lyons and his team have learned to operate the mill and perform much of the maintenance with assistance and wisdom from the “old timers.”

It is gratifying to see the physical conservation of the mill connect together people in the community that I have known most of my life and people that I have just met.

Best of all are the jonnycakes!!!

Sincerely,

  
Mike Sherry, President

Like SKLT on Facebook!



## 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 Sherry  
Vice President: Martha Day  
Treasurer: James Farrell  
Assistant Treasurer: Charles Lewis  
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### Trustees

Heather Mae Breau  
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### Staff

Joanne Riccitelli,  
Land Protection Director  
Clarkson Collins,  
Land Management Director  
Jane Baumann,  
Community Relations Director  
Michael Bontecou,  
Land Operations Coordinator  
Anne O’Neill  
Development Director

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

Site Lines Designer, Cindy Sabato, Volunteer

## WHEN YOU’RE OUT ON OUR TRAILS, BE OUR EYES AND EARS

We need your help! As SKLT continues to grow and open more trails for the public’s enjoyment, we find it’s difficult for our small staff to be on the trails as often as we would like. We know that many of you are regular users of our trails and we would like you to be our eyes and ears while you are there.

If you see something that needs to be addressed, please let us know. Our land management crew wants you to have a great experience, and if there’s a problem, we want to address it immediately. Michael Bontecou creates and tends our trails, so contact him at 401-742-4515 or at [michaelbontecou@gmail.com](mailto:michaelbontecou@gmail.com). You could also contact Jane Baumann in our main office at 401-789-0962 x1 or [jane.baumann@sklt.org](mailto:jane.baumann@sklt.org). Thank you for helping to preserve these special places.

Photo: Clark Collins



## 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 .....\$30
- ☐ Family .....\$50
- ☐ Protector .....\$75
- ☐ Steward .....\$100-\$249
- ☐ Guardian .....\$250-\$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

227 Robinson Street, Wakefield, RI 02879



SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST  
227 ROBINSON STREET  
WAKEFIELD, RI 02879

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Site Lines



### FAMILY TREASURE HUNT AT WEEDEN FARM

Come have some fun in the fields around Weeden Farm and learn a few things too. SKLT will host a treasure hunt there on Sunday November 2nd from 2 to 4 pm – we'll provide interesting clues and hints to lead you and your family to interesting spots around the 100+ acre property. Meet at the Barn at 17 Matunuck Beach Road at 2 pm and we'll send you off with a map and list of questions. Around 3:30 pm, we'll have a bonfire and the makings for s'mores. Let us know if you'll be coming so we can plan – contact [jane.baumann@sklt.org](mailto:jane.baumann@sklt.org).

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Photo: Claudia Swain

*OPEN SPACE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE*