



Site Lines

SPRING 2017

SOUTH KINGSTOWN
LAND TRUST

SKLT's ANNUAL MEETING: LEARN ABOUT RAPTORS

On Sunday, April 30 at 3 p.m., after conducting a short business meeting, SKLT will host a presentation at the Barn about raptors. Lauren Parmelee, shown here with Eec, a Barred Owl, is the Senior Director of Education at the Audubon Society of Rhode Island (ASRI) and will be teaching us about birds of prey.

Lauren has been active in science education for many years, working at a variety of museums, nature centers and research facilities around the country. She is an experienced birder who leads walks around the region and regularly teaches a popular Beginning Birding class for Audubon members.

In addition to its educational programming, ASRI is involved in several conservation projects that help raptor populations in our state. In 2017, they will be focusing on protecting grassland habitats, where such bird species as American Kestrels and Eastern Bluebirds are of high conservation concern. ASRI also operates the Providence Peregrine Webcam, which allows schoolchildren and others to take an up-close look at a family of peregrine falcons each spring as they nest and raise their young atop the Superman Building in Providence.



Photo: Sharon Riley, Audubon Society of Rhode Island

In her presentation, Lauren will speak about raptors, specifically the species that can be found in South County. And yes, she's bringing Eec with her!

We thank Lauren for coming to share information about these beautiful creatures with us. Join us, and bring a friend. They can become members of SKLT at the meeting and enjoy the fun.

SKLT's business meeting will kick off the event, with a financial review, operations update, election of trustees and a vote on changes to our bylaws.

2017- FOCUS IS ON STEWARDSHIP

SKLT now stewards more than 2,700 acres spread throughout South Kingstown. Each and every parcel has its own unique qualities and features. Many require a management plan and active stewardship to preserve and enhance the qualities we all treasure. *Site Lines* articles feature a small sample of the many SKLT stewardship responsibilities that members help to fund.



THANK YOU TO SOPHIE

After 21 years of serving on the Board of Trustees, most of them as Secretary, Sophie Page Lewis is transitioning to her new position as Trustee Emerita. Although leaving the board, Sophie is committed to continuing her work on various projects that play an important role in the life of the South Kingstown Land Trust.

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Sophie planned the very first Monitoring Day, now in its 10th year, and designed it to enlist the help of many volunteers. We featured Monitoring Day in our application to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, and Sophie will continue to help manage this important annual event.

Sophie has also shared her time, talents and resources making the annual “Great Outdoors Celebration and Auction” a tremendous success and fundraising mainstay for SKLT. Members will smile thinking about the magical illustrations, courtesy of Sophie, found on annual renewal letters.

In December 2010, SKLT feted our hard working, self-effacing board secretary and volunteer at a party. We gave her a “Rock Star” award, along with special rocks from her many admirers. Sophie earned this moniker working on the stone wall restoration at Weeden Farm.

At the 2013 annual Land and Water Conservation Summit at the University of Rhode Island, Sophie received the Peter Merritt award, presented by R.I.



Photo: Joanne Riccitelli



Photo: Claudia Swain

Department of Environmental Management Director Janet Coit (*pictured below right*). It is one of the most prestigious awards for land conservation in Rhode Island and is presented annually to an outstanding volunteer who has dedicated time, energy, and other resources to conserve places that are important to our state. We all applaud Sophie’s good work for SKLT.

And to further her commitment to SKLT, Sophie included the Land Trust in her estate plans, becoming an EverGreen member.



EverGreen members have made a very special, lasting commitment to the community by naming SKLT in their estate plans (bequest, trust, life insurance policy, IRA) or by making an outright gift of \$10,000 or more.

SAVE THE DATE: MONITORING DAY IS SUNDAY, APRIL 2

We invite you to join us out on the trails, back woods and farms of South Kingstown for our annual Monitoring Day! SKLT Trustees and staff are busy preparing for this annual event, one of our most important stewardship responsibilities. Monitoring Day is a big undertaking that can't be done without the help of our loyal volunteers.

Monitoring Day is the day SKLT visits each one of our 160 properties with a checklist and camera to certify there are no violations or other problems that need to be addressed. The exhaustive effort requires participation of Trustees, repeat monitors (affectionately known as the "Old Faithfuls") and a slew of new volunteers every year. Monitoring has grown and evolved over the years, and we now employ a multi-



Photos: Joanne Riccitelli

faceted approach. Trustees and "Old Faithfuls" begin the process mid-February, but plenty of properties will need to be monitored on April 2.

If you want to explore and monitor SKLT's preserved lands, come and choose the property you'd like to monitor. We'll meet at the Barn at 2 p.m. for a short tutorial session, and then pair old-timers with first-timers before sending everyone off around the community.

As a thank you for everyone's help, we'll host a thank you "Afternoon Tea" from 4–5 p.m., after everyone has returned from the field. This is always a great day, and we welcome everyone—young and old, experienced and newcomer—to come and visit one of the iconic properties that SKLT has conserved in perpetuity.

Please register at anne.oneill@sklt.org or by calling 789-0962 ext. 204.



You never know what you'll find on our properties!

WHAT HAPPENED TO PLUTO?

In 2006, Pluto lost its status as a planet, and if you're like us, you have no idea why and still think "nine" is the answer to how many planets are in our solar system. Join Scott MacNeill from the Frosty Drew Nature Center & Observatory on Thursday, March 16 at the Barn for an educational talk about why Pluto is no longer a planet. We'll start with a potluck at 6 p.m.; Scott will begin his presentation at 7 p.m.





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

Feb. 28 & Mar. 1	Xerces Pollinator Training
Saturday, Mar. 4	All Ages Hike, 10 a.m., Browning Woods Farm Trail
Thursday, Mar 16	Pluto talk, 6 p.m. potluck, 7 p.m. program
Saturday, Apr. 1	All Ages Hike, 10 a.m., Browning Woods Farm Trail
Sunday, Apr. 2	Monitoring Day, 2 p.m. (<i>see story on page 3</i>)
Sunday, Apr. 30	Annual Meeting, 3 p.m.
Saturday, May 6	All Ages Hike, 10 a.m., Browning Woods Farm Trail
Saturday, May 13	DuVal Trail Hike, 10 a.m.

For information on the English Country Dances held at the SKLT Barn, go to kingstonenglishcountrydance.org/.

*Please register at info@sklt.org or call 789-0962 ext 205



Engage with us:
SouthKingstownLandTrust



FOR THE BIRDS

Building and hanging a bird box on your property is an easy way to provide habitat for native bird species. Plus, it affords a wonderful opportunity to enjoy bird watching. A properly designed bird box can closely replicate the natural cavities in dead or decaying branches that many birds prefer for nesting. Although most birds prefer natural cavities for nesting, with the correct design, a nesting box can serve as a good replacement. By using untreated wood and galvanized screws, and incorporating simple design elements such as a sloped roof and ventilation holes, you can help keep birds



protected from predators and the elements.

We have several bird boxes on SKLT properties, including purple martin and kestrel houses at Weeden Farm and bluebird boxes at our Chestnut Orchard.

To find out which bird boxes are right for your yard, visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *Right Bird, Right House* online tool available at www.nestwatch.org, where you'll also find detailed plans to help you build, mount and manage them. When you finish, send us a photo and we'll post it to social media!



Photos: Michael Bontecou

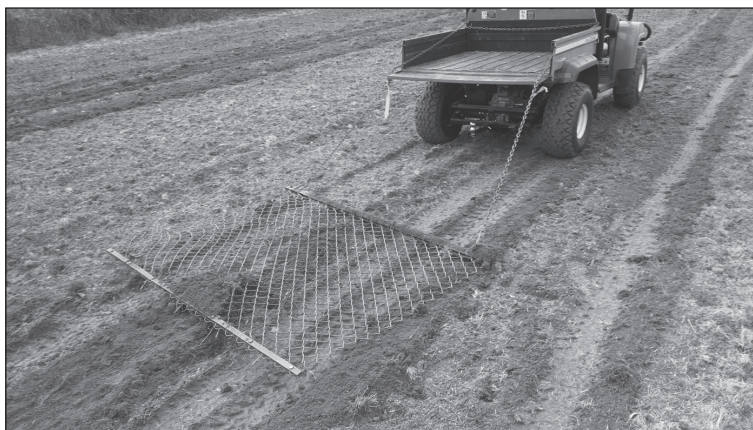
SKLT EXPANDS OUR POLLINATOR PROGRAM

In our mission to protect the natural resources and environmental health of South Kingstown, SKLT has been focusing our efforts protecting and enhancing the habitat and health of native pollinators in face of a nationwide crash. Bee and other insect populations propagate approximately 75 percent of the world's plant species and 30 to 40 percent of the produce we depend upon for our dietary needs.

The causes of such abrupt declines include the spread of parasites and bacterial diseases, effects of large-scale agricultural practices and wide-spread use of insecticides intended to protect gardens and crops, but which also decimate beneficial insects. New England's wild honeybee populations have virtually disappeared, leaving a huge hole in our state's pollinator supply, affecting not only our home gardens but also commercial fruit and vegetable production.

SKLT is partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, and such private non-profits as the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, South County Garden Club, and Mary LeMoine Potter Fund, to increase native pollinator habitat and breeding success on our farm properties and wooded land.

Where feasible, we have cleared areas of non-productive invasive plant species to reintroduce pollen-producing plants



Readying the ground at Weeden Farm Photo: Clark Collins

such as those at Weeden Farm and Biscuit City. In December 2016, a one-acre swath planted with Xerces Society Northeast Pollinator Mix at Hollis Tucker Farm showed promising results. Now, we are involved in a comparative project featuring a fall planting of 400 native-grown pollinator seedlings and a nearby tilling and pollinator seeding of 0.4 acres of field. We thank Richard and Suzanne Enser of Ragged Orchid Farm, Rhody Native Nurseries, the South County Garden Club and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for their assistance in these efforts. We'll keep you posted on the progress of our pollinators!

LEARN MORE ABOUT BENEFICIAL INSECTS

Join the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service at our Barn for a full-day training on the latest science-based approaches for attracting and conserving beneficial insects. Native bees and other beneficial insects can provide free pollination and pest management services. Find out how to protect and manage habitat for these vital insects on the farm and in home and community gardens. Two trainings will be held: one on February 28 and one on March 1. Registration information is posted on our website at www.skl.org.



MILESTONES

Welcome to Rhode Island! Thank you all for the warm and informative welcome you have offered me the past few months. It has been exciting to meet the many of you who have protected and preserved the incredible features that make South Kingstown the jewel it is.

I have savored hiking the trails through a crimson fall and winter snow, delighted in the inaugural installations at the Sculpture Trail, appreciated the painstaking restoration of the Hale House, scurried home to make jonnycakes after a grinding, slurped oysters from Potters Pond and stood frozen in awe by the beauty of a full moon rising over the fields at Weeden Farm. What a special part of the world.

The Board of Trustees has provided me and the others on staff a terrific, revamped strategic plan. Stewardship is tops on the list. The lofty responsibility of protecting and preserving these resources in perpetuity guide every decision.

To that end, my first order of business was to welcome Doug McGovern to the staff in the land management division. The position received interest from over 25 candidates from Maine to New Haven. Doug's experience in the field as well as with GIS and baselines will make him an invaluable member of the team.

I look forward to meeting all who make up the SKLT family. Please feel free to call, email, or just say hi when you see me on a trail.

Sincerely,

Julia Fry Landstreet

Julia Fry Landstreet
Executive Director/President



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
Timothy Philbrick
Carl Sawyer
Michael Sherry
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Sophie Page Lewis, Trustee Emerita

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Julia Fry Landstreet,
Executive Director
Joanne Riccitelli,
Land Protection Director
Clarkson Collins,
Land Management Director
Michael Bontecou,
Land Operations Coordinator
Anne O'Neill,
Development Director
Jeanine Silversmith,
Membership Coordinator
Doug McGovern,
Land Operations 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 Designer: Cindy Sabato, Volunteer

SKLT RECEIVES DONATION OF ROBINSON FARM

Jim and Susie Bowers have been working steadily since 2004 to protect their farm, the Robinson Farm. They first donated to SKLT an easement on 3.6 acres. Then they sold the development rights on 57 acres, which we were able to purchase with grants from the USDA NRCS and the Town of South Kingstown. In 2013, the Bowers donated the underlying fee interest on 45 acres to SKLT, and at the end of 2016, they donated the fee title on another 10.5 acres. Throughout this period, the farm has been actively growing hay and pasturing beef cows, and now, SKLT leases the land back to the farmer who has worked it for years.

When landowners love their land, usually they want to take care of it themselves, for as long as they can. At some point, though, many decide to turn over stewardship of their



Photo: Joanne Riccitelli

land to an organization that can protect the land in perpetuity. SKLT will forever protect the Robinson Farm; Jim and Susie can depend on that. SKLT thanks them for their gift and their vision.

✂ — — — — — ✂ — — — — — ✂ 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 want to: ☐ Join ☐ Renew at the following level:

- ☐ Individual \$30 ☐ Family..... \$50
- ☐ Steward \$100-\$249
- ☐ Guardian \$250-\$499
- ☐ Conservationist \$500-\$999
- ☐ Benefactor \$1000-\$2,499
- ☐ Protector \$2,500-\$4,999
- ☐ Preservationist \$5,000-\$9,999
- ☐ 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

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via email, please let us know!*

Site Lines



HAPPY TRAILS!

S KILT has more than 12 miles of hiking trails and enjoying them is easy to do. Help make managing them just as easy, by following these basic principles of trail etiquette and our staff—not to mention wildlife—will thank you.

- Pack it in, pack it out. Trails don't have trash cans, so please pack out all your trash, leftover food and dog waste.
- Stick to the trail. Walk single file in the middle of the path to prevent erosion, minimize plant damage and avoid ticks and poison ivy.
- Leave the wheels at home. Mountain biking, ATVs and other vehicles are prohibited on our trails.
- Take nothing but photographs. Observe and enjoy, but leave natural objects like plants and rocks how you found them.
- Be a responsible dog owner. Keep your dog under control and close to you, and clean up after your pet. Dog waste takes a full year to decay, and when left on the ground, bacteria and parasites in it can remain in the ground for years.
- If you see something that needs attention, please call the office at 789-0962.

