The South Kingstown Land Trust (SKLT) is pleased to announce the protection of an additional 111 acres of open space over the last two months, putting the organization's total protected land at 3,072 acres!

On Yawgoo Pond, the Land Trust worked with landowner John Richmond to purchase in fee 13.85 acres and to protect four additional acres with a conservation easement. Richmond contributed to the project with a "bargain sale," but it would not have been possible without grants through the RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), matched by tireless fundraising efforts and incredible largesse from neighbors who understand the valuable habitat resource of Yawgoo Pond.

The Smith family continued their legacy of land protection and contributed a five-acre conservation easement on Balch’s Point. This natural area overlooking Wash Pond can be seen from the Hale House and features the unique kettle pond ecology of Matunuck Hills.

Peter and Katherine Younger donated a .9-acre parcel in Green Hill. Through the years they had visited the property with their telescope at night, taking full advantage of the uniquely dark skies we enjoy in South Kingstown. Current “residents” of the parcel left behind an antler shed and some deer and coyote scat.

A beloved member of the equestrian community, Bonnie Smith (pictured right), worked with the Land Trust to place a conservation easement on more than 24 acres at Smithbridge Stables. Funding for this project was made possible through a “bargain sale” and grants from the US Dept. of Agriculture, NRCS, and RIDEM/Agricultural Land Preservation Commission.

The Kingston Improvement Association permanently protected the 63-acre Potter Wood with a conservation easement tailored to both the passive and active use areas. The expenses were covered by member donations and a grant from the RI Foundation’s Mary LaMoine Potter Fund. Volunteers have been hard at work implementing a forest management plan, clearing debris from the trails, and making needed repairs to features on the property.

These vital projects would not be possible without the efforts of former SKLT Land Protection Director Joanne Riccitelli, who brought these projects close to the finish line before retiring in late 2021. In addition, each of the landowners committed to contributing to the Clarkson A. Collins Stewardship Fund to ensure the Land Trust’s ability to protect the land in perpetuity.
MILESTONES

It is a great privilege and humbling exercise to read and proof this issue each year. Listed within are the hundreds of supporters who, through their financial support, make our work possible. I love reading every name, picturing faces, and recalling the stories shared touching people's heart. Chris cares most about protecting additional properties, Rob loves the Grist Mill, Claire and Stephen love the trails, Sue escapes daily with her dogs, and the list goes on and on. Thank you to those listed herein, your passion and generosity fund the Land Trust, both spiritually and financially.

After months and years of effort, with the generosity of landowners and funding partners, SKLT closed on five additional land protection projects totaling more than 111 acres in recent months. The properties are located from Green Hill to West Kingston; they include farmland, wetland, forest, and riparian buffer. Some remain in private hands and the largest parcel, the 63-acre Potter Wood, is open to the public. Matt and Tyler have been working to update our property and trail maps to include and highlight these additions.

You may not be aware that SKLT prints and distributes over 2,500 trail maps annually. These can be found at the trail head kiosks, at our office, and online at sklt.org. Visitors have been sharing their observations from the trails through the website, and these are super helpful as we build our database and continually update our bird and plant lists.

As 2021 brought many successful land acquisitions, it also brought a record level of serious encroachments. The bad behaviors include a neighbor who clear cut half an acre and damaged wetlands to create a staging area while they rebuilt their home, a neighbor who decided the woods were too messy close to their house, opened the stonewall and removed all of the understory, someone practiced digging a trench with their new tractor, another cut mature trees on protected land so their newly planted orchard had more sun, others dumped their yard waste, and three people cut unauthorized trails so it was easier to access our trails from their home. Some of these issues have been addressed, some remain in progress, and all were identified by monitoring.

Monitoring Day continues to evolve. 2022 will be the first year SKLT monitors its properties directly through our land management software, LandScape. There will be a training event on Saturday, March 12th. Please reach out to tyler.maikath@sklt.org if you would like to participate.

Since the groundhog predicted six more weeks of winter, I hope they continue to be as beautiful as the fields blanketed with newly fallen snow under a full moon. And I hope we are all able to spend more time outside. Open space makes all the difference.

In gratitude,

Julia Fry Landstreet
Executive Director

SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST

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Address
17 Matunuck Beach Road
South Kingstown, RI 02879
401-789-0962

Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
and by appointment

Website: sklt.org
Email: info@sklt.org

The mission of the South Kingstown Land Trust is to protect and steward natural resources, open spaces, and cultural landscapes for the benefit of the community, now and forever.
Samuel Perry Grist Mill Keeps On Grinding

The historic Samuel Perry Grist Mill on Moonstone Beach Road was grinding away like (very) old times on December 29, 2021 for an impromptu Grinding Day!

The historic mill and adjoining three acres on Mill Pond were acquired by SKLT in 2012. The mill is a very rare, perhaps unique, example of a water-powered grist mill in continuous use from the early 18th Century. It generates enough power to turn half-ton hand-chiseled five-foot-diameter granite millstones and specializes in grinding white flint corn.

Thank you so much to SKLT boardmember Kevin McCloskey and all of the grist mill volunteers for maintaining this beloved, historic, cultural gem so that it can keep grinding for future generations. Did someone say Johnny cakes!?

Growing for South County

One of SKLT’s focuses is protecting privately owned farmland with conservation easements that acknowledge the benefits of agriculture.

SKLT also owns 365 acres of farmland, which we lease at market rates to local farmers. In 1996, SKLT purchased a 51-acre farm on Tuckertown Road from Shirley and Hollis Tucker, owned by their family for generations.

In SKLT’s care, agriculture continues. When Greenview Farm left their lease in 2021, SKLT requested proposals, and began meeting with interested farmers. With plots as small as one acre available, SKLT can help young farmers establish their businesses when there is little farmland available to purchase. We are pleased that four growers have signed five-year leases with us, and we are close to signing with a fifth.

We encourage you to support Twinflower Apiary, Chris and Kristina’s Market Garden, Luckyfoot Ranch, Back Rhode Flower Farm, and Marigold Rhode along with all our farm partners. A full list will be available on the SKLT website soon.

For more information about our farmland leasing program, please contact Land Management Director, Tyler Maikath at tyler.maikath@sklt.org.
Michael M. Bontecou  
Master of the Fine Arts of Conservation Practice  
for the South Kingstown Land Trust  

By Clarkson A. Collins

Michael B. is SKLT’s most senior employee, having worked for 34 years in all phases of designing, clearing, repairing, and maintaining more than 15 miles of wooded trail systems, such as the DuVal Trails, Browning Woods, Yawgoo Pond, Thewlis Woods, Biscuit City Pond, Alewife Brook Preserve and many others.

Through rain, snow, and summer heat, he has worked on removing fallen trees, draining flooded and eroded areas, building bridges, repairing fences, and blazing pathways. Michael also distinguished himself as a mechanic and farm equipment operator, particularly his expert tractor skills, lifting heavy boulders onto the walls at Weeden Farm with great care for the handworkers involved.

Michael displays the same excellent touch while mowing the narrow grass strip along Matunuck Beach Road amid the summer traffic and preparing bonfires for summer and fall events.

For 34 years (and you’d never believe it to look at him), Michael has been a man for all seasons, and we sincerely thank him for his truly awesome skills, good humor, intelligence and enthusiasm for our cause.

Thank you Michael!

... 

Clarkson Collins has been involved with SKLT since its founding in 1983, serving on the Board and as its first Land Management Director.

Clarkson, Michael, and Dot the trail dog worked closely together for 27 years, blazing trails, restoring habitat, and nurturing the beloved outdoor spaces that the community depends on today.
2021 Open Space Circle

**FOUNDER'S CLUB $25,000+**
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Letcher
Rhode Island Foundation - Hale House Endowment Fund
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Woodcock

**FOUNDER'S CLUB $10,000 - $24,999**
Kevin & Regina Conley
James & Hope Farrell
Fox Family Charitable Foundation
Ryan Harvey
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Bishop & Mrs. Hays Rockwell
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**PROTECTOR $2,500 - $4,999**
Mrs. Helen Behrens
Belmont Market
Jessica & Michael Bradley
James Brady
Clarkson Collins & Marcie Cummings
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Peter Dunn
Jane Dwyer
Ellen & Lawrence Grebstein
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Julia & Bev Landstreet
Leaves of Grass Fund
Susan Seyfarth Lovejoy
Tim & Jodi Meyer
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Martha Day & C.N. Hetzner
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Christopher S. Gaffney & Karen Kames
David Goss & Julia Taylor
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Kathleen Greenman
Carolyn A. Griswold
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Katharine Bontecou Charitable Trust
Edward Lawton
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Richard Sayer
Michael A. Sherry & Jan Anthony
State Street Foundation, Inc.
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Dr. Caroline S. Wilkel
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The Matunuck Group
Tom’s Market Catering
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Elizabeth Walker
Mr. & Mrs. Randolph Watts
Westerly Community Credit Union
Dr. Eric Widmer & Dr. Meera Viswanathan
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<td>Patrick McNulty &amp; Abigail McInerney</td>
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We have made every effort to be accurate with our recognition. If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, please accept our apologies and contact matt.eldridge@sklt.org with changes. Thank you!
Ronald & Eugenie Maine
Jill Fine Mainelli
Barbara Margolis & Colleen Gregory
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Marilyn Mattera
Erica Mayer & Thomas Best
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Emily & Chris Pistilli
Glenn Place
Neil & Robyn Pothier
Providence Mutual Fire Insurance Company
Susanna Prull
Tim Rancourt
Greg Raso & Marianna Zotos
Sean & Joan Reilly
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Larry Rothstein
Tom & Alicia Routliffe
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Pamela Santos
Jeremiah Sardelli
Katherine Sayles
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Christine Schwab-Boudreau
Mr. & Mrs. Henry R. Schwarzbach
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Jeanine & Ian Silversmith
Brian Simpson
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The Rev. & Mrs. Peter Spencer
Karla Steele
Page Steele
Mr. Peter A. Stisser & Ms. Diane E. Russ
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Everett & Kris Stuart
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Suzanne Waters
Mr. David Wilder
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Wojciechowski
Steve Wood
Alan Woodmansee
J. Vernon & Cynthia Wyman
Debra Zannelli
Anonymous (6)

IN MEMORIAM
In Memory of Katharine Bontecou
Katharine Bontecou Charitable Trust
In Memory of Roger Freeman Jr.
Roland Coates & Liz Freeman
In Memory of David Gold
Nicoel Gammino
In Memory of Leona & Milton Kelley
Charles & Ann Kelley
In Memory of John MacFarlane
James & Maureen McInerney
In Memory of William Matteson
Diane Burdick
Scott Campbell
Barbara Chaves
Gail Dobrowski
Bob Fournier
Bonnie Gold
Linda & Howland Green
Tamar Greenleaf
David & Linda Henry
Pam Matteson
Jim & Anne O'Neill
Suzanne Waters
In Memory of Patricia McGovern
Dr. Patrick & Mrs. Regina Brannon
Philip Cooney
Donna Harris
Michael McGovern
In Memory of Mom & Dad
Bob Larrabee
In Memory of Anne Mullin
Constance Hamilton
In Memory of Dr. Charles D. Nash Jr.
Leanne O'Brien
In Memory of Laurence W. O'Rourke
Mary & Tom Heyman
Dr. & Mrs. Malachi S. O'Connor
In Memory of Jeanne Patric
Brightview Senior Living
In Memory of Gordon Smith
Tara Leviesque
In Memory of Burton Strom
Ronald Chopoorian
In Memory of Judith Wood
Judith Swift

IN HONOR
In Honor of Michael Bontecou
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Crolius
Anne & Jim O'Neill
In Honor of Clarkson Collins
Molly Johnsen
Hannah & Homer Johnsen
In Honor of Martha Day
Lisa Fiore & Nick Finamore
In Honor of Constance Hamilton
Aline Couture & Jean E. Burke
In Honor of Max Hempe
Rudi Hempe
In Honor of Barbara Hendrick
Linda & Howland Green
In Honor of Robert Kislywicz
Judith Smith
In Honor of Julia Fry Landstreet
Clarkson Collins & Marcie Cummings
In Honor of Susan Seyfarth Lovejoy
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel S. Richards
In Honor of Joanne Riccitelli
Katherine Long & George Bertholet
Claudia & Peter Swain
In Honor of Tom & Helen Rowe-Drake
Sara & John Heckscher
Mr. Noel B. Rowe
In Honor of Joe & Mary Smith
Glenn & Leslie Gazzolo
In Honor of James Verinis
Meryl & Murry Cohen
In Honor of Dr. Caroline S. Wilkel
John & Pandora Wohler
Over the years, the Land Trust has had the pleasure of working with ambitious and eager young people on their Gold Award for Girl Scouts of America or Eagle Scout Service Project for Scouts BSA. These projects serve as the Scout’s pinnacle achievement, requiring them to organize and supervise a service project for their community. Scouts have completed four projects this past year for SKLT, improving wildlife habitat and public access and engagement.

Last summer, Charlie Lucia of Troop 1, Wakefield, built and erected an Osprey pole and platform at Weeden Farm. We are very hopeful that a pair of Ospreys will find the platform and nest this year.

Alex Walsh of Troop 44, Matunuck, installed and repaired several bog bridges at Biscuit City Trail, crossing a muddy trail. “Even though, during Covid-19, it was the worst time to do a project, I pushed through, and I didn’t let it stop me from completing my project and helping my community,” says Alex of his efforts, which he completed in November.

Travis Coleman of Troop 1, Kingston, worked efficiently to construct and install a new bird nest box trail at Weeden Farm. Bluebirds and Tree Swallows will be nesting in these 16 boxes in just a couple months.

Sophia Boardman pulled double duty, completing her Gold Award with Troop 269, with a geocaching project, and constructing and installing several Wood Duck boxes for her Eagle Scout project with Troop 2, Kingston. “Working with SKLT, I have learned how to communicate and lead, important skills I will need in adulthood,” says Sophia. We are sure that geocachers and Wood Ducks will be enjoying her efforts for years to come.

Several other Scouts now have projects in a planning stage. We look forward to working with them and are deeply appreciative for the dedication and service of all. Thank you!
As summer turned to fall in 2021, neighbors of SKLT’s Biscuit City Preserve in Kingston discovered a young male beaver had surprisingly chosen the preserve’s small pond to set up shop. It didn’t take long before the busy beaver had built its lodge and began damming the stream that feeds White Horn Brook.

Staff met with the state biologist and came up with viable next steps for co-existing with a beaver who sought to build his future in a suburban neighborhood. SKLT made repairs to the trail and installed a “Beaver Deceiver,” water flow pipes that to allow water to flow downstream while tricking the beaver into thinking his dam is still working. The land trust has also protected several trees surrounding the pond with fencing.

As the winter temperatures set in, the beaver seemed to turn it’s focus towards it’s food cache and has been living harmoniously with the “Beaver Deceiver” pipes.

Thanks to conservation efforts, beavers have been making a strong comeback in Rhode Island since they were spotted again for the first time at Carbuncle Pond in Coventry in 1976. Despite their reputation for flooding roadways, beavers play an important role in the environment by creating habitat upon which many other species depend, from river otters and muskrats to ducks, dragonflies, and amphibians. Beaver ponds also help to recharge aquifers, dissipate floods, filter pollutants, and ease the impact of wildfires.

Stay tuned for more updates on the Biscuit City beaver and please maintain a respectful distance when visiting the beaver at Biscuit City.
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 $_________.

**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 ________________________________

**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

**GENERAL DONATION**

I'm already a member, but I would like to make an additional donation in the amount of $_________.

**OTHER SUPPORT**

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

**EXPLORE SKLT TRAILS ON A GUIDED HIKE**

**Second Friday of every month. Free (registration required). All ages. Binoculars and boots recommended. No dogs allowed.**

**Guided Hike at Biscuit City & Potter Wood Trails**

Friday, April 8th (9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.)

Trek through the beautiful woodland meadow known as Potter Wood before crossing the street to Biscuit City Trail. You'll swing by the historic mill foundations while looking for marsh marigolds, aka kingcups, that begin to pop up in April.

**Guided Hike at DuVal Trail**

Friday, May 13th (9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.)

Join a fun guided hike exploring SKLT's most extensive trail system, the DuVal Trail. On this longer, more difficult hike, you'll be on the lookout for migratory birds and other wildlife as well as interesting plants and wildflowers springing up beside the trail.
## Join Us at an Upcoming Program or Event

Please register for all programs and events in advance at sklt.org/event-tickets

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<td>March 11</td>
<td>9 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Guided Hike, <em>Crawley Preserve Trail</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Monitoring Day, <em>The Barn</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>6:30 - 8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Fishers &amp; Other R.I. Critters with Laken Ganoe, <em>The Barn</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>9 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Guided Hike, <em>Biscuit City &amp; Potter Wood Trails</em></td>
</tr>
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<td>April 22</td>
<td>All Day</td>
<td>Earth Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>9 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Guided Hike, <em>DuVal Trail</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>9 - 11 a.m.</td>
<td>Guided Hike, <em>Alewife Brook Trail</em></td>
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<td>August 7</td>
<td>4 - 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Great Outdoors Celebration &amp; Auction, <em>The Barn</em></td>
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