



Site Lines

Winter 2026  *Open Space Makes All the Difference*



Programs, Events, and Activities: Explore, Learn, Connect

Programs and events play an essential role in connecting the community to open space. From Guided Hikes and Lecture/Potlucks to Gator Tours, Monitoring Day, Youth Trout Fishing, and the Great Outdoors Celebration and Auction, our activities provide hands-on opportunities to explore, learn, and connect with SKLT and the land.



Guided Hikes and Trails: SKLT manages over 14 miles of public trails, open every day for anyone to explore the unique landscapes of South Kingstown. Monthly guided hikes, led by SKLT staff, highlight features such as glacial moraines, kettle ponds, and native plants like mountain laurel, which blankets Duval Trail in pink petals each summer. Along the way, hikers may encounter remnants of colonial structures and the many stone walls that define Rhode Island's agrarian past—built to clear farmland of rocks, and contain livestock.

NOTE: Guided hikes now take place on the second Friday of each month.



Lectures and Potlucks: In 2025, SKLT welcomed speakers such as Russ Cohen, who discussed Edible Invasives, and David Gregg, who led a Moth Night. Our lecture series continues in 2026 with engaging topics, including Casey Johnson on Pollinator Projects (January 22), David Bird on Becorns (January 29), RI Beaver Management on Coexisting with Beavers (February 10), and Jim Gwiazdzinski on Falconry (March 5) - **reservations are required.**

If there is a topic or speaker you would like to see at SKLT, Email tasha.sussman.moss@sklt.org

Gator Tours and Accessibility: Thanks to The Champlin Foundation and others, in 2025 SKLT launched Gator Tours (the utility vehicle, not the reptile!) to make nature more accessible to visitors of all abilities. On a tour at Weeden Farm, you will explore the “back 40,” including an expanded pollinator patch, bluebird boxes, the osprey pole, and the flint corn field. In 2025, we launched a partnership with Westerly Birders Captain Barbara Seith during Birdability Week to promote inclusive birding.



SKLT will continue offering both staff-led Gator tours and specialty birding tours with Barbara. Due to weather conditions, winter dates are flexible. Please reach out to Tasha to schedule.



SKLT Connect: Interested in a behind the scenes look at the work and activities of the SKLT? Every other month, the SKLT Board invites you to: learn and ask all your questions, explore our Barn, tractor shed, and offices; connect with fellow nature lovers; and enjoy light bites and drinks. Whether a longtime member, new to SKLT, or just curious, everyone's welcome. Bring friends and family, explore, enjoy, and get to know the SKLT community!
Sign up on our website at sklt.org/events.

Milestones

Winter in New England so much snow and more on the way – hooray!

Many thanks to all the people and businesses who financially support SKLT. It is as humbling to see the names of familiar friends as it is to watch the list grow every year. Your support has made it possible for SKLT to increase its impact and engage with new communities – **thank you.** SKLT is looking to expand the staff with the creation of a new position straddling land protection and the stewardship of CE properties. The Director of Conservation Stewardship and Land Protection will add much needed “depth to the bench” when it comes to stewarding easements.



Currently, SKLT staff is deeply involved with applying for Re-accreditation. This intensely rigorous process happens every five years

requiring a comprehensive review of all land transactions, violations, financial statements, policies, meeting minutes, et al. SKLT has been accredited since 2016, and we look forward to meeting the challenge again this year.

Partnering with other non-profits is a key component when it comes to activating SKLT properties. Some examples include The Matunuck Preservation Society handles programming the Hale House, ASRI organizes birding walks, and the Appalachian Mountain Club providing trail first-aid courses. SKLT now hosts Ocean State Kids’ weekly Owl Adventure Club: Child led Nature Play every Wednesday morning at the Woodcock Campus. For those of you who know me there is not one thing I value more than connecting children with nature, and Curley (my spaniel) surely loves when they ask if he can come out to play.

**I encourage you to also go outside and play –
*Open space makes all the difference....***

Julia Fry Landstreet

Julia Fry Landstreet
Executive Director



In Memorium: It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of Dwayne Mack. An avid outdoorsman, longtime farmer, neighbor, and cherished friend of the South Kingstown Land Trust, Dwayne will be dearly missed.

South Kingstown Land Trust

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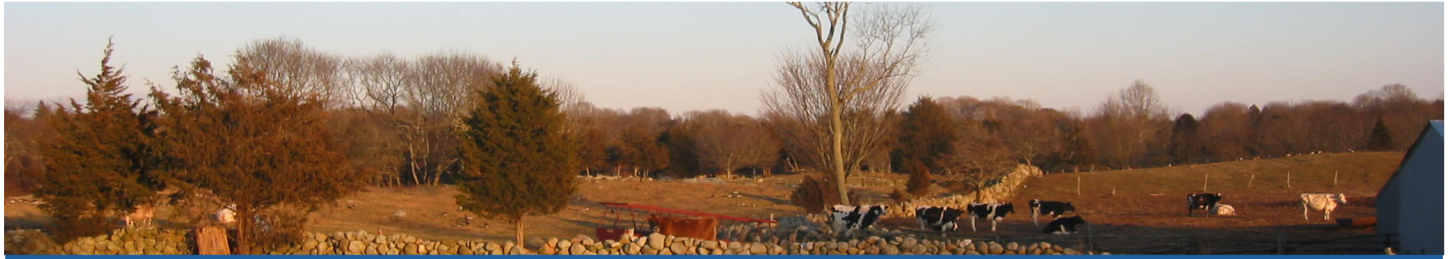
Office Hours

Monday - Thursday
10:00 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.



Caring for the Land in 2026: What's New in Monitoring

The Stewardship Ambassador Program

Each year, SKLT staff and volunteers visit every property under our care—more than 200 across South Kingstown. These visits are a core part of our stewardship work, but in 2026, we are making an important update: the launch of the **Stewardship Ambassador Program** for Conservation Easement properties.

Stewardship Ambassadors, members of SKLT's Stewardship Committee, will support staff by assisting with monitoring visits and communication with landowners. Under this updated program, each CE property will be visited by staff and/or a trained volunteer who has reviewed the property's records and aerial imagery from the Town of South Kingstown's GIS system. Ideally, SKLT will meet landowners on-site to walk the property together and answer any questions, helping build trust, prevent misunderstandings, and support long-term compliance. Following each visit, staff reviews the findings, finalizes the monitoring report, and shares a copy with the landowner.

Supporting Easement Holders With Clear Information

To support this more collaborative approach, SKLT has developed a new **Conservation Easement Handbook** for landowners. This plain-language guide explains what a conservation easement is, outlines the roles of both landowners and SKLT, and clarifies terms such as grantor, reserved rights, and baseline documentation. It also provides guidance for projects that may require prior approval, helping landowners plan confidently and avoid unnecessary confusion and expense.

Why This Matters

Monitoring is not about identifying violations, it is about protecting conservation values, maintaining accurate records, and building strong relationships. Regular visits and clear communication help address small issues early, keeping easements effective, enforceable, and meaningful. By strengthening both our monitoring practices and the tools that support them, SKLT is better equipped to steward the lands entrusted to us—now and into the future.



Get Involved!

Enjoy the outdoors, have an eye for detail, and want to see another side of SKLT's work? Join us for Monitoring Day on **March 14**—a hands-on introduction to stewardship monitoring.

No experience needed; just bring a cell phone. Training is provided during a full day in the field. To learn more or sign up, contact Martha Day at martha.day@sklt.org.

Once trained, volunteers and staff will undertake the monitoring of SKLT's fee simple* properties over the next two weeks or until the leaves come out!

Scan QR Code for Conservation Easement Handbook



**** Fee Simple Property:** Fee simple properties are fully owned and managed by the Land Trust, such as public trails and farmland.



*Stewardship is an ongoing commitment—and monitoring is how we keep it strong.
Open Space Makes all the Difference...*

Guided Hikes - Switched to the 2nd Friday of the Month

All Hikes are Free. Registration is required. Inclement weather cancels. All ages welcome. Please no dogs.

Guided Hike at Browning Woods Friday, March 13, (9:00 – 11:00 a.m.)

This meandering 3-mile “lollipop” trail winds over a wetland and intermittent stream before gradually climbing nearly 200 feet through wooded uplands. Along the way, visitors can explore the remains of the historic Browning homestead, a long-abandoned cellar hole, and an old cemetery tucked into the landscape. Join us on March 13 to explore this historic spot.



Guided Hike: Rare Access to Closed SKLT Property Friday, April 10th, (9:00 – 11:00 a.m.)

Join SKLT for another rare opportunity to explore the wetlands, woods, and fields of a conserved property normally closed to the public. Directions will be provided to participants, and while the walk will take you off established trails, it should be suitable for most hikers. Don't miss this chance to discover one of SKLT's hidden gems!

Guided Hike at DuVal Trail System Friday, May 8th, (9:00 – 11:00 a.m.)

The largest of SKLT's trail systems, DuVal winds through rolling hill-and-kettle terrain formed by a terminal moraine left behind as glaciers retreated at the end of the last ice age. A little more challenging than our other trails, with more than 7 miles of trails, there will be plenty of options for us to explore together!



Programs, Events, and Potluck Lectures



Coexisting with Beavers February 10 (6:00 – 8:00 p.m.)

Join us for a community potluck and a talk with wildlife expert Molly from Rhode Island Beaver Management. Learn how she tackled rising backyard beaver ponds using humane flow devices, protecting both her property and the local ecosystem.



All About Falcons March 5 (6:00 – 8:00 p.m.)

Join us at the SKLT Barn to meet Rhode Island master falconer Jim Gwiazdzinski and learn about the ancient practice of falconry, with a chance to see various majestic raptors up close.



Monitoring Day Saturday, March 14 (8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)

Every year, SKLT hosts Monitoring Day, an annual opportunity for volunteers to help the land trust in its vital task of monitoring over 3,000+ acres of protected land! Volunteers will gather at the SKLT Barn for training, instructions, and supplies, and then visit one or more chosen properties, walk the boundaries, and report back to SKLT per the monitoring instructions.

Youth Fishing Day Saturday, April 12 (6:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

The perfect chance to teach your kids how to fish! Join the opening day of trout season at the youth-only fishing Scott Evans Memorial Pond at Biscuit City Preserve in Kingston. The pond will be stocked with brook and rainbow trout by RI DEM. SKLT staff and skilled volunteers will be on hand to assist as needed.

No registration required. Staff/volunteers will be on site until 4:00 p.m.
ONLY children ages 14 and under may fish.





2025 Open Space Circle



FOUNDER'S CLUB \$25,000+

Rhode Island Foundation -
 Hale House Endowment Fund
 The Champlin Foundation
 Richard Klesse
 Ken and Dottie Woodcock
 Ardith Wood*
 Anonymous
**deceased*

FOUNDER'S CLUB \$10,000-\$24,999

James & Hope Farrell
 Christopher S. Gaffney &
 Karen Kames
 Leaves of Grass Fund
 Cornelia Lewis
 Parsons Kellogg, LLC
 Susan Lynde DuVal Phipps
 Foundation
 Robert Willig

PRESERVATIONIST \$5,000 - 9,999

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 Terry Conelias
 Barbara Fahey
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 Katie Frost
 David & Terese Gregg
 Carolyn A. Griswold
 Katharine Bontecou Charitable Trust
 Lindsay & Charles Coolidge III
 Susan Seyfarth Lovejoy
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 Julia McGovern
 Susan & Daniel Merrick
 Paul & Mary Pyne
 RI Foundation- Letcher Family Fund
 Jonathan Seely
 Edward Watson, Jr.
 Anonymous
**deceased*

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 Diane Keehner Blakely
 Edward Buzzi & Susan Clasby
 Joe Catelli -Shoreline Properties

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 Linda & Howland Green
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**deceased*

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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 info@sklt.org with changes. **Thank you!**

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In Memory of Matthew Meyer

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Clarkson Collins & Marcie Cummings
Shana Conley
Margit Conopask & Jeff Bluestein
Lindsay & Charles Coolidge III
Martha Day & C.N. Hetzner
David & Brenda Dillmann
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The Samuel E. Perry Gristmill: A Living Piece of Rhode Island History



The Samuel E. Perry Gristmill—Rhode Island’s only water-powered gristmill still in operation—is preparing for a necessary pause. After one final grinding this winter, the mill will temporarily pause to allow for critical repairs to the sluiceway gate at the pond’s edge. Time and water have damaged this vital structure. Repairing the sluiceway is essential to keeping the mill operational—not just as a historic site, but as a working part of our landscape. For a 300-year-old mill, this kind of maintenance is what allows tradition to continue.

The pause comes at a time when the mill remains very much alive. Today, under the leadership of Kevin McCloskey and miller Rob Lyons, it operates year-round, with regular grindings and ongoing maintenance. Powered by water and hand-chiseled granite millstones, the mill grinds Rhode Island Whitecap Flint Corn grown at SKLT’s Weeden Farm by Carpenter Farms, **keeping the entire process local—from field to mill to table.**

As the mill prepares for this next chapter, there are always ways to stay connected. Grinding dates are limited and scheduled based on weather, corn supply, and volunteer availability. To be notified about future grindings, including when operations resume, email tasha.sussman.moss@sklt.org to be added to the gristmill mailing list.

The gristmill represents whole-place preservation—protecting not only a historic structure, but the land, agricultural practices, and traditions connected to it. Cared for decades by Bob and Diane Smith and gifted to SKLT in 2012, **the mill now relies on a new generation of stewards, reminding us that preservation is not static.** It is active, communal, and ongoing measured not only in years, but in care, effort, and the steady turning of stone. **If you would like to get your “hands dirty,” Kevin and Rob are always eager to welcome new volunteers interested in helping care for the mill, sluiceway, etc. To be part of that work, please email info@sklt.org.**



EverGreen Legacy Voices: Mary-Gail Smith



Photo by Bert Hess

Mary-Gail Smith has always known where she belongs. Long before Green Hill was home, the Rhode Island shoreline was a place she kept returning to—first as a teenager driving to Misquamicut, later as a seasonal resident finding her way back again and again. She bought her beach house in 2011 and retired to South Kingstown full-time about ten years ago, drawn by the steady presence of the water and the familiarity of a place that had long felt like her own.

She puts it simply: “I always knew I wanted to come back.”

“Open space isn’t optional. It’s essential.”

What followed wasn’t a slowing down, but a settling in. After 24 years as a stay-at-home mother, Mary-Gail returned to college with just six credits from the 1960s. The same year her daughter was a junior at Trinity College and her son a freshman at Yale, Mary-Gail became a freshman herself. From there, she built a career in fundraising, specializing in planned giving—work rooted in foresight, trust, and care for what comes next.

When she moved to South Kingstown full-time, Mary-Gail understood that place alone wasn’t enough—community mattered just as much. Widowed and living alone, she picked up the local paper, circled what caught her eye, and showed up. She joined eight groups right away. Years later, she remains deeply involved—volunteering, serving in leadership roles, and co-founding Friends of Green Hill Pond. As she says, **“Volunteering and being involved really matters to me.”**

The outdoors has always been her constant. Mary-Gail walks nearly every day and goes to the beach daily in the summer, a rhythm she has kept for almost 50 years—watching light change on the water, weather move in and out, seasons pass without ceremony. Her approach to conservation grows from the same attentiveness. She explains it this way: **“You don’t walk through the woods thinking about conservation—you’re just enjoying the experience. But that experience only exists if the land is protected.”**

Mary-Gail believes deeply in balance, recognizing Rhode Island’s housing needs while also knowing that without intention, many of the places people love would already be gone. **“Balance is the hardest part — but it’s also the most important.”**

The South Kingstown Land Trust was one of the first organizations Mary-Gail circled when she arrived. After attending events and forming connections, including SKLT in her estate plan felt natural—especially during a period of reflection and loss. She chose to make her Evergreen Legacy gift unrestricted, trusting the Land Trust to respond to future needs with care and flexibility. As she puts it, **“I want a future that still has green in it.”** For Mary-Gail, legacy isn’t about recognition. It’s about continuity—ensuring there will always be room for quiet, for balance, and for the kind of unencumbered beauty that first made this place feel like home. - TSM

Read Mary-Gail’s full story—and learn more about the Evergreen Legacy Society on our website at sklt.org.
Are you an EverGreen Legacy Member and would like to share your story? I’d love to hear from you!
Contact tasha.sussman.moss@sklt.org.

Protect the Open Spaces that make South Kingstown Home

Your support for open space preservation strengthens our organization and invigorates 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 fully tax-deductible. TIN: 05-0516985. *Thank you!*

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February 1	5:00 p.m.	Full Moon Hike, <i>Weeden Farm</i>
February 10	6:00 p.m.	Potluck & Lecture: Coexisting with Beavers, <i>The Barn</i>
February 11	5:30 p.m.	SKLT Connect, <i>The Barn</i>
March 5	6:00 p.m.	Potluck & Lecture: Falconry with Jim Gwiazdzinski, <i>The Barn</i>
March 13	9:00 a.m.	Guided Hike, <i>Browning Woods</i>
March 14	8:30 a.m.	Monitoring Day, <i>Weeden Farm</i>
April 8	5:30 p.m.	SKLT Connect, <i>The Barn</i>
April 10	9:00 a.m.	Guided Hike, <i>Secret Closed SKLT Property</i>
April 12	6:00 a.m.	Youth Fishing Day, <i>Biscuit City</i>
May 8	9:00 a.m.	Guided Hike, <i>DuVal Trail System</i>
June 10	5:30 p.m.	SKLT Connect, <i>The Barn</i>
June 14	3:00 p.m.	Annual Meeting, <i>The Barn</i>
August 9	4:00 p.m.	Great Outdoors Celebration & Auction, <i>Weeden Farm</i>

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 Contact us at info@sklt.org

