



Site Lines

Spring 2026  *Open Space Makes All the Difference*



Accessing the Outdoors: Anytime, Anywhere, Everyone

The South Kingstown Land Trust’s conserved lands include a familiar but ever-diverse mix of landscapes such as oak and pine forests with remnants of mossy stone walls, open meadows alive with pollinators, and fields of whitecap flint corn swaying in the wind. These are places shaped by geology, soils, farmland, weather, season, and time—encountered as much through sound and movement as by what can be seen.

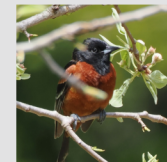
People access these landscapes in many different ways. For some, it is a simple walk from a trailhead into familiar woods or fields. For others, distance, mobility, health, or circumstance can shape how often these places are reached or whether they are reached at all. However it happens, the land remains the same. What changes is how we meet it.

The outdoors is best enjoyed by being in nature: spending time in it, noticing it, and being present within it.

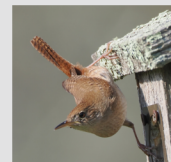
At SKLT, the work is to widen those points of connection by offering more ways to experience it.

The goal is simple: conserved land is not only something to reach one way, but something that can be encountered in many.

From there, there are many paths into the land.



Orchard Oriole



House Wren

Gator & Birding Tours at Weeden Farm



This summer, SKLT’s Gator Tours return, offering visitors with limited mobility a chance to experience conserved land in an accessible way. Using a John Deere Gator, these one-hour rides travel through the “Back 40” of Weeden Farm, allowing participants to enjoy the scenery and landscape without needing to walk the trails.

You will pass through open fields and pollinator habitat, listening to birdsong and taking in the rhythms of the landscape. The tours are not about the ride itself, but about the opportunity to simply be outdoors—feeling the summer air, watching grasses move in the wind, and spending time in nature.

New this summer, SKLT is also partnering with Westerly birder and Birdability Captain Barbara Seith to offer inclusive birding tours. Because everyone should see a bluebird in flight!

Birdability Week, held each October, is a national effort focused on making birding and outdoor spaces more welcoming and accessible to people of all abilities and backgrounds. These tours build on SKLT’s participation last year and extend that spirit through the summer, offering another way to experience nature in a supportive setting. Whether spotting a hawk overhead or listening for songbirds in the trees, participants are sure to learn something new with Barbara, a true bird encyclopedia, leading the way!

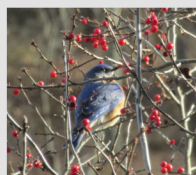
All tours are free and last about an hour. To schedule a visit, email tasha.sussman.moss@sklt.org



Chipping Sparrow



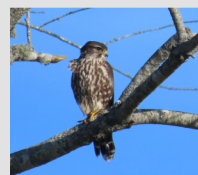
Osprey



Eastern Bluebird



Tree Swallow



Merlin



Bluebird Chicks

Photos Credits: Barbara Seith and Elise Torello

Milestones

It was a great winter to get a lot done around the office, and SKLT has been “deep in the weeds,” I mean files, applying for Reaccreditation. Accredited land trusts must comply with exacting Standards and Practices developed through the years, by the national Land Trust Alliance. The process is rigorous and tedious, but the results are an organization better able to serve our community and the properties entrusted to our care. You are encouraged to share your concerns or praise through the link listed within.

Land is the connector, but people make the difference. There are not enough ways to say thank you and best wishes to outgoing board members Jim Farrell and Heather Mae Breau. Jim’s skills, exacting nature, and attention to detail have left a positive impact on all aspects of SKLT’s financial, investment, and risk systems and processes. Heather Mae, often assisted by daughter Piper, transformed the monitoring program, navigated an updated Strategic Plan, and calmed rough seas with grace, kindness, and thoughtful leadership. I will miss having the opportunity to lean on them and learn from them.

Staffing continues to shift and grow in response to changing needs. Please welcome Kyle Hess, selected to fill the newly created Director of Conservation Stewardship and Land Protection. Changes in property ownership and conservation priorities will give him lots to do throughout his tenure with SKLT.

The blizzard brought record breaking snowfall which crushed the historic pump house at Biscuit City. Work is underway to fully develop plans and raise the funds needed to rebuild the structure and tell the story of its history.

Stay tuned for the re-opening of the Yawgoo Trail later this summer. It took six years, over \$300,000, and countless hours of staff and volunteer manpower, but everyone’s generous gifts of time, talent and treasure will result in an exceptional hiking experience.

Thanks to all who make the South Kingstown Land Trust a reality – We all agree, *Open Space Makes all the Difference...*



Julia Fry Landstreet
Executive Director



South Kingstown Land Trust

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David LaRocque
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Address

17 Matunuck Beach Road
South Kingstown, RI 02879

401-789-0962

Office Hours

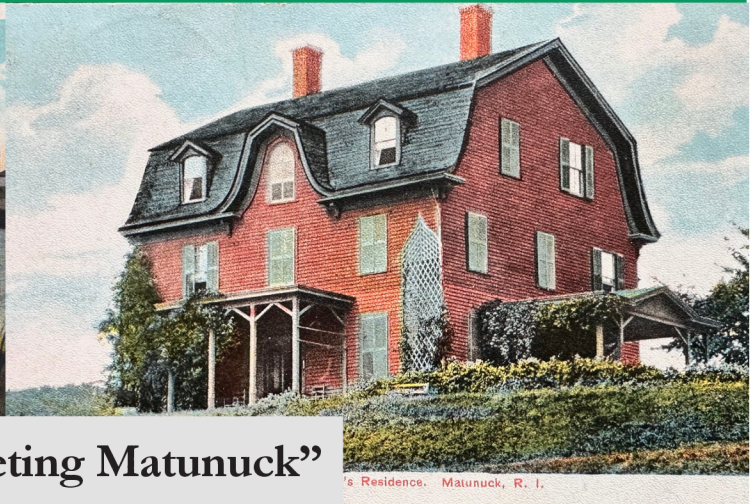
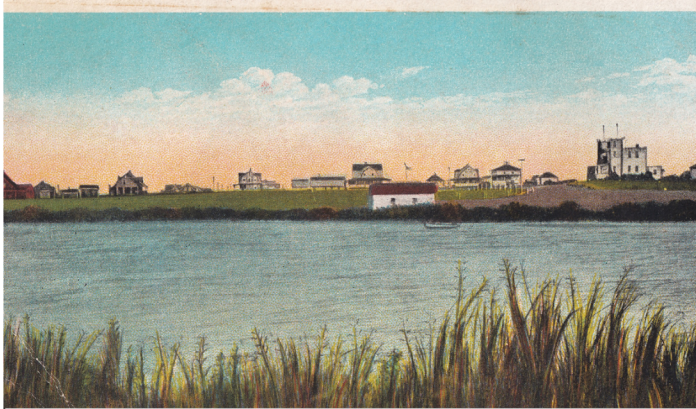
Monday - Thursday
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
and by appointment

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.

Summer 2026 at Hale House



Back by Popular Demand: “Marketing Matunuck”

Perched in the Matunuck Hills with views of farmland and sea, the Hale House has long welcomed summer visitors. Built in 1873 for author, abolitionist, and minister Edward Everett Hale and his family, the house reflects their deep love for the area—with coastal views, leafy woodlands, a kettle pond, and an historic boathouse still standing today. Managed by the Matunuck Preservation Society and protected by the South Kingstown Land Trust, Hale House invites you to explore the history and charm of Matunuck’s past.

This season, Hale House opens its doors on June 17 with an exhibit that debuted in 2025. “Marketing Matunuck” traces the rise of summer homes, hotels, and vacation culture in Matunuck through vintage postcards, maps, and memorabilia.

This summer's programs will feature three painting demonstrations by artists of the Matunuck Art League, and two lectures: Erica Luke: "Faces of History: The Lives and Portraits of Violet Hazard and Oliver Gardiner," and Anne Holst, "Exodus to the Shore: Resorts for Ordinary People."

Exhibit Hours & Events:

Opening Reception: Wednesday, June 17
5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Open Hours

Wednesdays, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

June 24 – September 2

or by appointment

halehouser1@gmail.com

Guest Speakers:

Erica Luke: July 15, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Anne Holst: August 12, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Full schedule of events available at:

halehouser1.org

Postcards courtesy of South County History Center

Accessing the Outdoors_{contd.}: Plein Air Painting with Trish Hurley

Accessibility can also mean creating opportunities to experience nature in different ways. Returning this September, artist Trish Hurley will lead a four-part Plein Air Painting Course at Weeden Farm, inviting participants to spend a few quiet hours outdoors each week painting the late summer landscape.

Participants work in watercolor, acrylic, or their preferred medium while observing the farm’s open fields and surrounding scenery as light and conditions shift.

Programs like this encourage engagement with nature through observation, creativity, and time spent outdoors.



Trish will host the four-part series in September. Details will be announced soon. Questions? email tasha.sussman.moss@sklt.org. Happy painting!

The Story of the Biscuit City Pump House



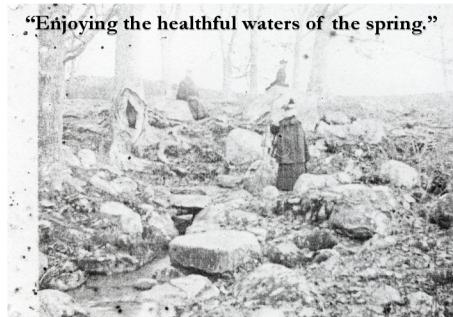
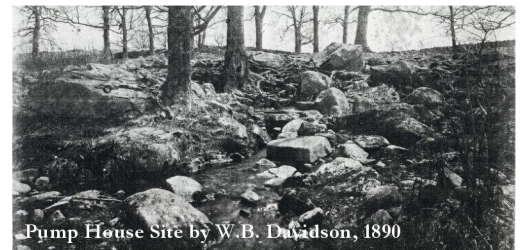
The Biscuit City Pump House represents one of the earliest public works projects in Kingston. It was the creation of two of Kingston's leading citizens--Bernon E. Helme and Mary LeMoine Potter--one supplying the expertise and the other the capital to make it happen. Thanks to their efforts, Kingston had the water resources it needed to prosper and grow, transforming from a tiny village to the thriving town we know today.

When in 1900 a severe drought left wells dry, Helme decided Kingston needed a more reliable water source. He installed an artesian well with a wooden storage tower in town, but the water supply soon proved inadequate.

Helme then turned to Potter, heir to the vast Potter estates, who owned the plot at Biscuit City where an abundant spring, known as the Boiling Spring, bubbled up.

Together they formed the Bernon-Lemoine Water Company and, around 1923, built the pump house over the spring to capture the pure, cold water.

A pump powered by electricity pulled water from the spring and drove it into a pressure tank, which then conveyed the water to Kingston via more than two miles of pipeline extending through Biscuit City Road, Main Street, College Street, and North Road, to approximately 120 customers. The Boiling Spring supplied Kingston's water until 1964, when the current system went online.



With occasional repairs over the years, the pump house remained intact until the historic Blizzard of 2026 when more than 30-inches of snow caused all but the foundation to collapse. A recent \$10,000 grant from the Mary Lemoine Potter Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation kickstarts SKLT's campaign to raise \$50,000 toward rebuilding this important remnant of Kingston's early infrastructure and making it accessible to the public.

– Katherine Long, former SKLT board member and local historian

Black and White Photos Courtesy of the [South County History Center](#).

Help Support SKLT's Accreditation Renewal: Public Comment Period Now Open

“Accreditation is not a one-and-done achievement. It is a continuous commitment to conservation excellence and the day-to-day work required to uphold the promise of perpetuity.” — Land Trust Alliance

The accreditation seal is a national mark of distinction in land conservation, recognizing land trusts that meet high standards for excellence and permanence. It reflects strong leadership, responsible finances, ethical practices, and long-term stewardship, helping ensure conserved places are protected for generations and strengthening public trust in land conservation organizations.

Community members are invited to share signed, written comments regarding SKLT's work and compliance with national quality standards for land conservation.



Public input is an important part of the accreditation review process.

Comments are most useful if received by July 24, 2026. Thank You!

Scan QR Code to Submit Comments or

go to <https://landtrustaccreditation.org/why-accreditation-matters/comment>



EverGreen Legacy Voices: Heather Mae Breau



Heather Mae Breau has never gone too far from home.

Born and raised in West Kingston, she grew up surrounded by the woods, vernal pools, fields, and open spaces that define South Kingstown. She attended West Kingston Elementary, South Kingstown High School, and URI, where she met her husband, Frank, through the university's snowboarding club. Even after briefly living out of state, **Rhode Island pulled her back.**

For Heather Mae and her family, "everything" means beaches and hiking trails, dense forests and salt marshes—all within a short drive of one another.

"I just love it so much. It really has everything I ever needed."

Mostly, it means connection: to the outdoors, to community, and to a deep sense of belonging: ***"I love being able to look out my window and see cows and turkeys instead of condos."*** That connection to place eventually led Heather Mae to the South Kingstown Land Trust, though not in the way most people expect. ***"It was a wedding present," she laughed.***

In true Rhode Island fashion, a friend—and SKLT board member—gifted Heather Mae and her husband an SKLT membership when they were married in 2013, and soon after encouraged her to join the board. Looking back, Heather Mae says she had no idea what she was signing up for, but over 10 years later she wouldn't change a thing. Monitoring was her first real glimpse into SKLT and became a defining experience of her time here. ***"Monitoring will always be the thing that really sucked me in."***

Before digital systems, monitoring meant paper folders, handwritten notes, and long walks across conserved properties. Through that work, Heather came to know South Kingstown's landscapes intimately—not just as preserves, but as living places worthy of protection.

"It really connected me to every property."

That sense of connection is something she returns to often. ***"I love watching people come in for the first time and become lifers too."***

Whether through volunteer work, her daughter's Girl Scouts or stewardship projects, Heather Mae sees SKLT as a place where people connect—not only to land, but to each other. ***"There's something for everybody here, People find what they need here. They heal here."*** That same philosophy guided her decision to include SKLT in her estate plans as a member of the EverGreen Legacy Society. To Heather Mae, legacy giving felt less like a grand gesture and more like a natural extension of care for the place she loves.

"Leaving money to the Land Trust is the least we can do. We're not going to need it anymore."

More than anything, she hopes future generations inherit a South Kingstown that still feels recognizable: open fields, protected forests, accessible trails, and a community that values stewardship. She also hopes younger generations continue to feel connected to the land—and empowered to care for it. Her daughter Piper has been part of SKLT from the beginning, attending Monitoring Day at just nine days old.

"There's no way I could totally step away from this," Heather said. "She feels so connected here too."

Although Heather Mae's term as Board Chair is coming to an end, she makes one thing clear: she is not going far: ***"I'm an SKLT lifer."***

And for Heather Mae, that lifelong connection to South Kingstown, its landscapes, and its community is exactly what legacy is all about—perpetuity for her daughter, for the land, and for the wildlife that call it home. - TSM

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.

Save the Date: SKLT Annual Members Meeting

Join SKLT board and staff at the Barn on Sunday, June 14 from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. for our Annual Members Meeting as we celebrate our progress and look ahead. We'll reflect on the past year, share what we've accomplished together, and look toward what's next.

Guest Speaker: Tomas Koeck

Award-winning filmmaker, journalist, and photographer Tomas will discuss his new documentary series

Ocean State: Rhode Island's Wild Coast, bringing us behind the scenes of this uniquely local project and the state's rich and increasingly threatened shoreline and marine ecosystems.

His work has taken him from the Canadian Arctic to the cloud forests of Central America, with assignments for National Geographic, PBS Nature, the Smithsonian Channel, the National Audubon Society, and ESPN—and now, **here in the smallest state, documenting the essential and unique ecosystems in our own backyard.**



Tomas Koeck

***Active SKLT membership and advance registration are required due to limited space.**

Not sure if your membership is current? Reach out to Tasha.sussman.moss@sklt.org*

Guided Hikes

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

Guided Hike at Crawley Preserve Friday, June 12th, (9:00 – 11:00 a.m.)

Explore the quiet woodlands of Crawley Preserve, a 100-acre property straddling the South Kingstown and Richmond line. As the trail winds through oak and beech forest, hikers will cross small streams, pass rocky outcroppings, and discover traces of the property's past agrarian life. On clear days, the ledges along the Brook Trail even offer distant views towards URI.



Guided Hike at Soon-to-be-Reopened Yawgoo Trail Friday, July 10th, (9:00 – 11:00 a.m.)

Join SKLT on the soon-to-be-reopened Yawgoo Trail! We'll walk the bridges, explore this beautiful landscape, and talk about the history of conservation in the area. The 1.26-mile Yawgoo Pond Trail passes through a kettle hole bog, crosses Mud Brook, and winds through a grove of stately white pine trees. We'll also enjoy sweeping views of pristine Yawgoo Pond.

Reminder: Yawgoo is currently closed.
For your safety, access is prohibited until we officially announce its reopening. Thanks!

Guided Hike at Alewife Brook Preserve Friday, August 14th, (9:00 – 11:00 a.m.)

The one-mile Alewife Brook Trail offers a glimpse of southern Rhode Island's forests and wetlands. Wander beneath a canopy of oak, maple, pine, and hickory, then follow the brook and spot plenty of mountain laurel. This trail highlights the rich mix of upland and wetland habitats that make the landscape so vibrant.



Yawgoo Trail Nears Completion; Reopening Later This Summer



SKLT is excited to share that we are in the final stages of the long-awaited restoration of Yawgoo Trail. The trail, closed since 2020, is still closed as we go to print with *SiteLines*. We look forward to welcoming visitors back later this summer once the ravages of winter are cleared and the trails are safe to reopen.

The 1.26-mile trail winds through oak and white pine forest, vernal pools, Mud Brook, and a kettle hole bog, with views of Yawgoo Pond. A new boardwalk reroutes the trail

through the sensitive wetlands, protecting these resources while providing access. Rather than lose this public resource, SKLT carefully rerouted the trail with attention to conservation and wetland stewardship. The project includes elevated boardwalks, a new bridge, parking improvements, and trail restoration.



With support from **The Champlin Foundation, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Town of South Kingstown, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Bafflin Foundation, and many individual donors**, this long-awaited project is now in its final stages. We are deeply grateful for the patience that has carried it to this point.



Yawgoo Pond is a rare coastal plain pond, a globally vulnerable ecosystem found only along the North Atlantic coast. Fed by rain and groundwater, its water levels naturally rise and fall, creating unique habitat conditions for specialized plants and wildlife. The surrounding forest plays an essential role in protecting water quality and supporting this ecosystem.

We look forward to welcoming you back to Yawgoo Trail later this summer. Until then, the trail remains closed while final work is completed. We appreciate your continued patience and will share the reopening announcement soon.

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!*

Membership - I want to: <input type="checkbox"/> Join <input type="checkbox"/> Renew					
Individual	Family	Steward	Guardian	Conservationist	Benefactor
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$30	\$50	\$100 - \$249	\$250 - \$499	\$500 - \$999	\$1,000 - \$2,499

Already a member and want to make an additional gift? \$

Sustaining Membership

Allows our donors to easily establish and maintain their membership through a simple, 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: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to: South Kingstown Land Trust, 17 Matunuck Beach Road, South Kingstown, RI 02879



EVERGREEN LEGACY SOCIETY

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

OTHER SUPPORT

I'm a landowner interested in preserving my land

My employer will match my gift. I've enclosed a matching gift form

I would like to donate stocks to SKLT. See our guide at sklt.org/supportsklt/

Meet Kyle R. Hess, SKLT's Newest Staff Member

Director of Conservation Stewardship & Land Protection

Kyle brings a decade of Rhode Island-based field and stewardship experience to SKLT, having previously worked with The Conservation Agency, the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. His work has spanned habitat and wildlife monitoring, invasion ecology, GIS-based conservation planning, and technical writing — including Baseline Documentation Reports for protected lands. A lifelong herpetology and plant enthusiast, Kyle also spent 2017–2023 focused on coyote ecology, continuing to advocate for sustainable, science-based management. Outside of work, Kyle is passionate about music, native plant gardening, and spends as much time as he can hiking and fishing with his wife and children. **Please join us in welcoming Kyle to the team!**





South Kingstown Land Trust
 17 Matunuck Beach Road
 South Kingstown, RI 02879

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 Organization
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Join Us at an Upcoming Program or Event

Please register for all programs and events in advance at sklt.org/events_calendar

June 12	9 - 11 a.m.	Guided Hike at Crawley Preserve
June 14	3 - 5 p.m.	Annual Members Meeting, <i>The Barn</i>
July 8	5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	SKLT Connect, <i>The Barn</i>
July 10	9 - 11 a.m.	Guided Hike at Yawgoo Trail
August 9	4 - 6 p.m.	Great Outdoors Celebration & Auction, <i>The Barn</i>
August 14	9 - 11 a.m.	Guided Hike at Alewife Brook Preserve
September 9	5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	SKLT Connect, <i>The Barn</i>
September 20	4 - 6 p.m.	EverGreen Legacy Society Gathering
September	1 - 3:30 p.m.	Trish Hurley 4-Part Plein Air Painting Course, <i>The Barn</i>
October 14	5:30 - 6:30 p.m.	SKLT Connect, <i>The Barn</i>

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 Contact us at info@sklt.org

