



SOUTH KINGSTOWN LAND TRUST

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November 5, 2009

Dear Friend,

Our twenty-sixth year at the South Kingstown Land Trust has been very exciting!

Protecting 40 acres of the Carpenter Farm in Perryville was perhaps our greatest achievement, thanks to all who made it happen. SKLT also hosted speakers to teach us about estate planning, how to protect ourselves from tick bites and identifying invasive plants. There were hikes, stonewall improvements, a significant increase in membership, another successful auction, and just last week, we completed our second fall monitoring day. A hearty "thank you" to all our faithful supporters!

Success story in land management!

There is one story in particular we would like to share: in 1999 Zenas W. Bliss donated 14.5 acres of his family's beloved *Elysium* holdings in Matunuck to the SKLT to be preserved land in perpetuity. Since then SKLT has been working to restore the farmland and old field habitat that existed when the family acquired the property in the late 1800s.

SKLT received a grant from USDA Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program in 2007 to remove the tangle of brush and invasive plants (notably bittersweet, privet and black swallow-wort) that had taken over since the 1960s. SKLT enlisted the help of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service who mechanically cleared over six acres of trees and brush, and followed by mowing and spraying the resurgent invasives.

Next door to *Elysium*, Tom Browning and his father Ralph were developing a herd of Scottish Highlander beef cattle, and clearing a few acres of brush. It was obvious that the cattle had a special knack for brush control! Sensing a win-win situation, SKLT has refocused our strategy to include hooved brush-cutters instead of the mechanical kind at *Elysium*.

The result will be a series of paddocks that will allow the cattle to graze the fields in the spring, late summer and fall, and for ground nesting birds and wildlife to be able to use the area as habitat in June and July. We expect this to be a green, sustainable and economically beneficial answer to land management for years to come.



What's next?

SKLT has been at the forefront of acquiring and protecting open space and farmland in our town. Now, with an inventory of 135 properties and over twenty-four hundred acres, we are responsible for making sure that these properties receive the stewardship they, and our community, deserve. We must evaluate the potential of these properties to provide maximum ecological benefits as wildlife habitat, but also as resources for passive recreation, scenic enjoyment, and activities such as farming and forestry. And we must also provide a presence to prevent the rare, but inevitable, instances of misuse and trespass on the properties in our care.

As with the Bliss property, SKLT needs to work with partners, to put efforts into carefully thought-out long term management, and to marshal the volunteer power, equipment, and financial support to provide effective stewardship.

How can you help?

Fundamentally, it is you, our members, and your volunteer efforts and financial giving that allow us to carry out our management responsibilities and build strong partnerships. Please continue to support SKLT with your donations to these stewardship activities, and enjoy the benefits of healthy and productive habitats, farms, forests, and hiking trails.

Sincerely,



Michael Sherry
President

P.S. Every dollar that we raise during this campaign will be matched by an anonymous donor to support stewardship in RI! Our board is so excited about this opportunity that we have 100% participation by our board members. We are eager to have our members take advantage of this unique opportunity while this match is still available. Could you consider making a more significant gift this year? In these difficult economic times, it is exciting to find a meaningful way to leverage our gifts for conservation.