



Little Compton Landscapes

Newsletter of The Sakonnet Preservation Association

Summer 2010

Mack Woodward to Speak on Little Compton "Townscape" **How Land Conservation Supports Historic Preservation**

William McKenzie "Mack" Woodward, architectural historian for the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission for many years, will be the featured speaker at this year's Annual Meeting of the Sakonnet Preservation Association.

Mr. Woodward will address the value of conserving land and how doing so supports historic preservation. His perspective includes not only the preservation of historic buildings but also elements of the landscape, including scenic vistas and man-made features such as stone walls and open farm fields, that represent historic uses of the land and complement its built environment.

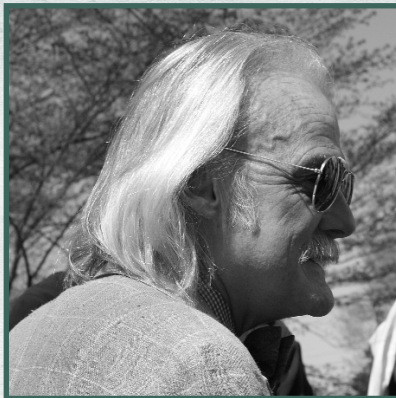
The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 6, at the Sakonnet Golf Club Playhouse. Doors open at 6 PM, and there will be a light supper and cash bar offered. The event is free and open to the public.

A native of Texas, and a part time resident of Little Compton for a number of years, Mr. Woodward has worked since 1976 for the Rhode Island Historical

Preservation and Heritage Commission. His publications are extensive, and include all aspects of Rhode Island preservation. As part of an effort to catalogue historic features of the 39 Rhode Island cities and towns undertaken by the Commission, Mr. Woodward completed the Little Compton edition in 1990 entitled "Historic and Architectural Features of Little Compton." It remains a beautifully rendered and useful resource to this day. His work has been nationally recognized by awards from the American Association for State and Local History and the Society of Architectural Historians.

The Annual Meeting of **Sakonnet Preservation Association**

WILL BE ADDRESSED BY



Mack Woodward

Tuesday, July 6, 2010
6PM

Join the SPA for light supper with a cash bar

Sakonnet Golf Club Playhouse

all are welcome!

The Sakonnet Preservation Association is honored to have Mack Woodward as its speaker.



**Sakonnet
Preservation Association**

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P.O. Box 945
7 South of Commons
Little Compton RI 02837
sakonnetpreservation.org

President's Letter

Accreditation by the national Land Trust Alliance has become the focus of an expanding proportion of our Board's attention since January of this year. This "good housekeeping seal of approval" in the land conservation community is the gold standard of a land trust's conservation practices. SPA's perpetual obligation to protect the conservation values of its properties, and to honor the wishes of landowners who seek permanent protection of these values, asks no less of us than to meet this standard.

With undaunted courage, a can-do attitude and a much-needed sense of humor (along with some wicked macaroons and good coffee), the vice-president of our Board, Chris Burns, has led our accreditation "team" marching through the criteria used by the Accreditation Commission to evaluate how we do business. When accreditation comes, it will be both hard-won and deserved. And in the process, we will have learned a great deal about what we do very well and what needs improving.

The internal audit accreditation requires highlights how much work has been done by so many who laid down the foundation and then built this organization over the past thirty-eight years. Without the support of our community of members, the generosity of Little Compton's conserving landowners, and a legacy from the Board members that preceded us, we would not have been able to come this far.

Now it is time for us to seek the opinions of Little Compton citizens, our membership, and other stakeholders both within and outside our community. On the following page you will find an opportunity to comment on what you know of our practices measured against the Standards and Practices of the Land Trust Alliance. We would greatly appreciate your taking the time to do so. Your comments represent an important part of our application and will be taken seriously by the Accreditation Commission as they review our submission. — *Abigail Brooks*

PUBLIC COMMENT NOTICE

The Board of Directors of SPA would appreciate your comments on the practices of our organization as measured against the Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices. Public comments form an important part of the organization's application for accreditation. The method for doing so is described below.

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The Sakonnet Preservation Association (SPA) is pleased to announce it is applying for accreditation. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. The Board of Directors of SPA is committed to seeking accreditation as evidence of its dedication to practicing land conservation at a national level of excellence.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how the Sakonnet Preservation Association complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust.

For the full list of standards see:

www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/indicator-practices

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit:

www.landtrustaccreditation.org

Comments may also be faxed or mailed to:

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission

Attn: Public Comments

112 Spring Street, Suite 204

Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

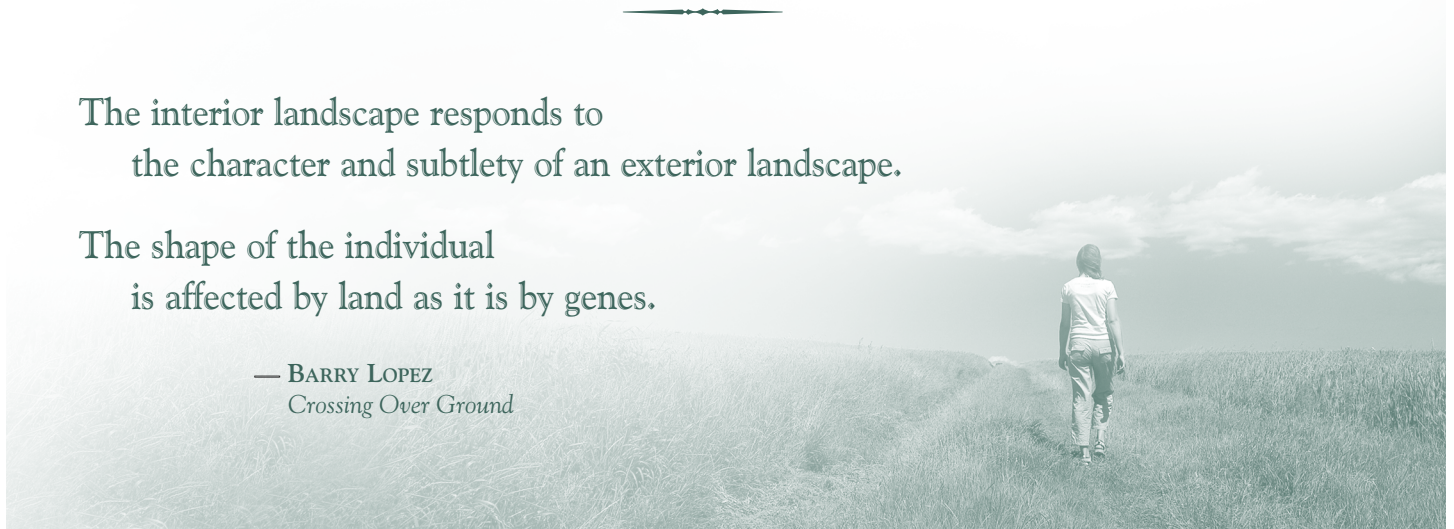
Fax: 518-587-3183

Comments on the Sakonnet Preservation Association's application will be most useful if submitted by August 29, 2010.

The interior landscape responds to
the character and subtlety of an exterior landscape.

The shape of the individual
is affected by land as it is by genes.

— BARRY LOPEZ
Crossing Over Ground



BOOK REVIEW: *Following the Water*

by Dominique Browning

Every once in a while a book comes along to remind us why we in Sakonnet are so lucky to live in a watery countryside teeming with wildlife — and why we are in danger of losing what is most precious about that. In *Following the Water*, naturalist and artist David Carroll takes us on a series of walks through his New Hampshire wetlands, beginning in March, with the first trillings of the treefrogs, and continuing until November's frosts set in for good.

Carroll's passion is the turtle, in particular the wood and spotted turtles. Every year, beginning when he was a child, he has sought out these creatures in their streambeds, swamps, pools and marshes, and followed them in their migration, noting their habitat, their meanderings, their enemies. "My life has come to be measured in first turtles." A friend who accompanies him one day listens carefully as he describes his reverence for these small creatures, and tells him, "They say that the Sufi is always looking for his beloved. You are always seeking your beloved."

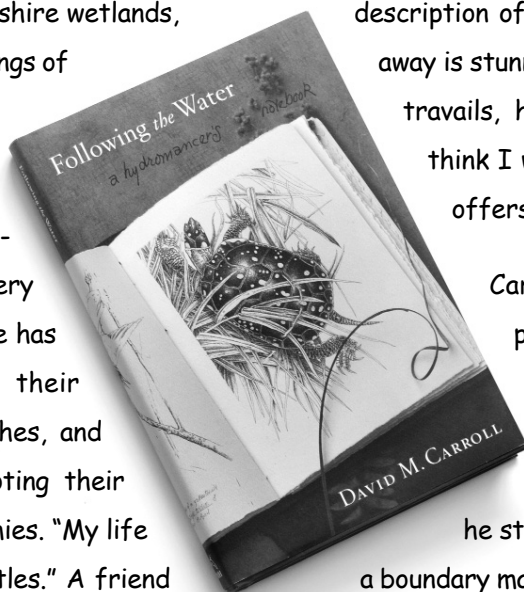
Indeed, this naturalist's approach is reverential, for the annual return of the turtles to their nesting grounds is an awe-inspiring feat. While we are out with him, we feel the "dark, moist riparian earth"; we listen to the red-winged blackbirds' sharp calls; we watch the ribbon snake slither away; peer into the crowns of the royal fern mounds; we wonder at the metamorphosis of the mayfly — and, with him, we begin to lose the brisk staccato of time dictated by our busy agendas as we melt into the ancient and languorous cycles of life and death.

Every year, conditions have gotten more challenging for his beloveds. The waters on which all these creatures rely are increasingly marginalized, pushed off course or wiped out entirely by fancy housing developments. The otters, more penned in, seem more aggressive; Carroll's description of finding turtles with their legs eaten away is stunning. As Carroll documents the turtles' travails, he occasionally assists them. I don't think I will ever forget the scene in which he offers a hatchling its first drink of water.

Carroll's line drawings are elegantly precise and his prose style is as fluid as the medium that inspires him; it is tinged with the poetic sensibility that infuses this love affair. When

he stumbles, at the end of his travels, upon a boundary marker, our hearts sink with his. "Where do we not go?" he asks, bemoaning the clear signs of a recreational area in the planning. He advocates moving beyond stewardship to preservation. His cherished wetland has become "a marked place," which bodes ill for its future. Our connection with nature has been made at nature's expense. "A room of its own is biodiversity's only requirement." To which I can only reply: Amen.

*Dominique Browning's new book is *Slow Love*; she writes a column for the Environmental Defense Fund website, and blogs at SlowLoveLife.com*



Sculptor Betty Burroughs Woodhouse moved in 1943 to her cottage next to the meadow where the fishermen mended their nets. The following piece was found among her papers. Betts died at home in her cottage in 1988.

The Fisherman

by Betts Woodhouse

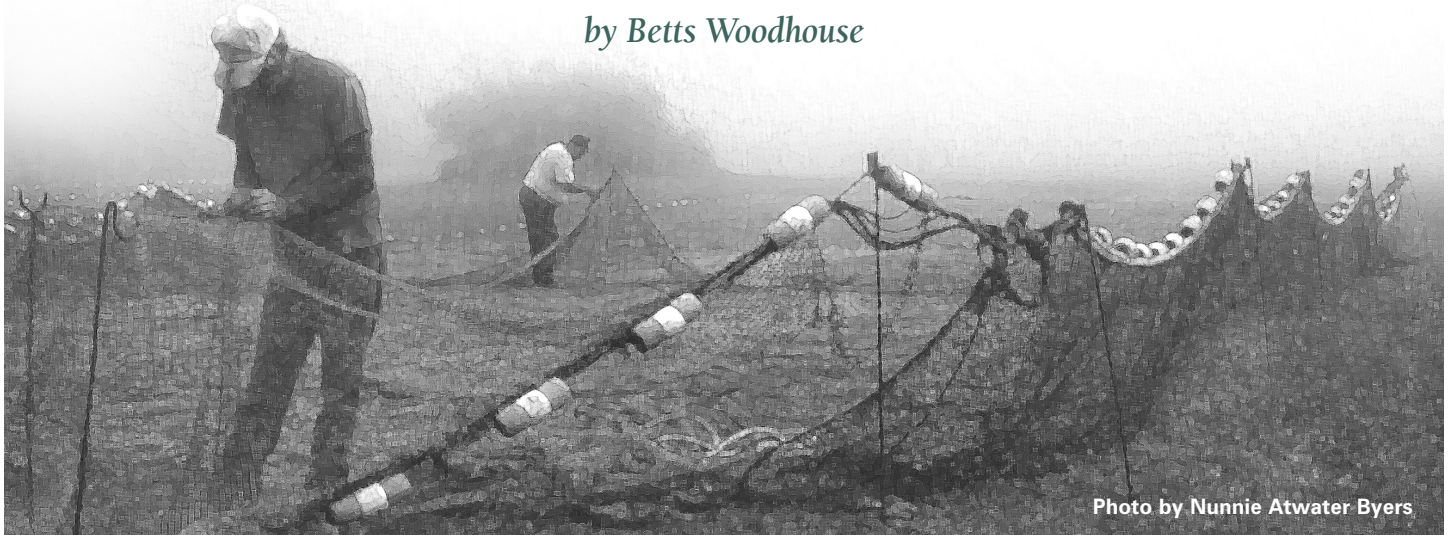


Photo by Nunnie Atwater Byers

Net menders — in the days of tarred twine the meadow was full of men, in blackened leather aprons, delicately tatting, the shuttles slipping in and out of the torn nets, the wind bending the grass in waves — like the fur of an animal. The massive figures, the delicate gestures, in the moving air.

Friends and companions, for in those days I carved big figures in wood or stone outdoors. Before getting down to work, I'd greet Phillip — whose friends called him P.G. to distinguish him, I suppose, from other Phillips. "Good morning, Phillip." He'd say "Morning" looking down at his busy hands. Then he'd tell me about his daughter "on the honor roll" — I'd counter with news of my son's scholastic ability. Over the years, we talked them into college — taking pride in their progress. Phillip's daughter was going for a master's degree, her thesis being on New England fishery. I liked this so much I said, "We've got to face it, Phillip, we have bright children."

Phillip, still looking down at his feet, his hands idle said, "We have another daughter who never grew up, she's thirty now but still five years old." I said, "What does she do?" He said, "She helps her mother" then after a pause, "It's hard on her mother."

Phillip is dead; Captain Holder Wilcox is dead (that dignified respected man); Carl Wilcox died in his forties. (I went to the funeral and saw my friends, unrecognizable without their hats — white foreheads above bronze features). In fact, the last time I saw Phillip was at that funeral.

Now, my only connection with that crew is the son of Phillip's partner. We are on familiar terms, because in a way, I knew his father. The other day he said, "I've just thought: My father worked for Captain Wilcox when he was my age, and here I am working for Tony, doing what my father did." He said this with satisfaction.

I respect Tony. The great nets are spread in the meadow, but being nylon they tear less. The drama now is the dance — gestures spreading the nets to dry or loading them up on moving trucks. And the swirl of gulls filling the sky.

Fishermen continue to mend their nets in the meadow to this day. In 2004, a conservation easement on the property was donated by a group of landowners to SPA. The easement includes specific permission for the fishermen to mend their nets.



Sakonnet Preservation Association

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER.

Enclosed is my tax deductible membership contribution.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1,000+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Gift | \$ _____ |

Sakonnet Preservation Association

P. O. Box 945, Little Compton, RI 02837

Phone/Fax: 401.635.8800

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Consider The Gift of an SPA Membership!

sakonnetpreservation.org
401.635.8800

For Information:

The Sakonnet
Preservation Association,
a non-profit land trust,
is dedicated to preserving
the rural character
and natural resources
of Little Compton
for the lasting benefit
of the Community.

Our Mission

Sakonnet Preservation Association

P. O. Box 945
Little Compton, RI 02837-0945

