



Little Compton Landscapes

Newsletter of The Sakonnet Preservation Association

Winter 2013

Volunteer Spotlight: Geoff Dennis Gifts His Time and Talent

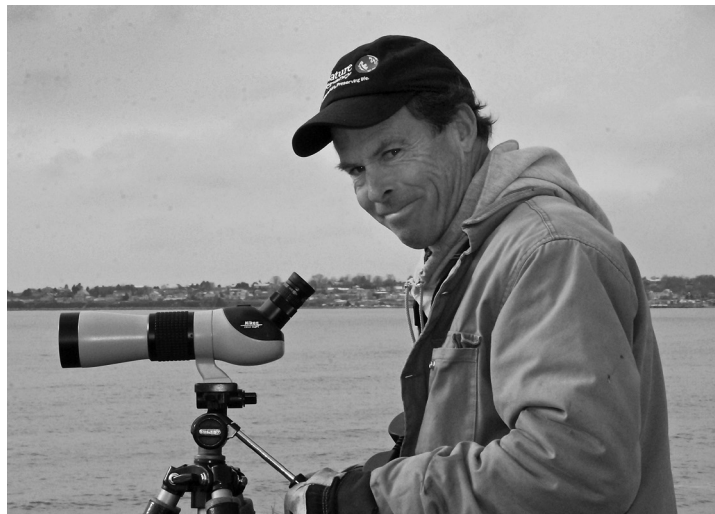
Many community members are familiar with Geoff Dennis, the inveterate and gifted birder in our midst. He is often invited to show his spectacular photographs of birds that inhabit our landscape all year long. What few are aware of is Geoff's ongoing dedication to monitoring and cleaning up our East and West Islands as well as Goosewing Beach.

Nearly four years ago we asked Geoff if he would take two SPA Board members to the islands for a look. As a shellfisherman, Geoff is adept at managing and landing a boat in the shallow, rocky seas around the islands off Sakonnet Point, islands which were given to SPA by Jessie Lloyd O'Connor. That May visit opened our eyes to the volume of trash that gets caught in currents and dumped there. Empty plastic and glass bottles, plastic bags, aluminum cans, fishing line, lobster traps and buoys, tires, lumber, Styrofoam cups and flotation from boats and docks get trapped in the spiny multiflora rose bushes and buried under rocks on both islands. The following September sixteen of us, spear-

headed by Geoff, spent two days collecting, hauling, smashing and removing several boat-and truckloads of trash from the islands to the town transfer station.

Since then, Geoff has never stopped. Dismayed by the human impact on restorative places of true quiet and beauty, he makes regular visits to the islands

on his own. He is careful to avoid the April through August breeding and nesting season of the gulls and cormorants that use the islands as rookeries. He observes remarkable bird and butterfly sightings, and he returns to shore with the trash he has collected, sometimes a fish or two, and amazing photos of wildlife in his camera.



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We are all beneficiaries of this man's generosity and interests — the cleanup of our island habitat gets done, and he shares his photographs which illustrate a number of our pub-

lications. We are indebted to Geoff and most grateful for his help and his example of stewardship in places of respite for both humans and wildlife.



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Preservation Association**

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Good Things Come in Threes

SPA has added three more conservation easements to its list of conserved Little Compton properties. We are indebted to these landowners for choosing to permanently protect a portion of Little Compton's natural resources, habitat and rural character, entrusting SPA with the stewardship responsibility for each one.

Well Worth the Wait

In 2001, Dee Osborn approached SPA about donating a conservation easement on one of her lots. Her 4.5 acre meadow abutting Wilbour Woods includes wetlands, historic stone walls and a mown field. Dee wanted the field to remain open and hayed, and to use a portion for gardening. The September 11 crisis occurred in the midst of those negotiations, and Dee put her vision on hold. In February 2012 Dee's son, Rush Taggart, contacted us about re-visiting her idea. Needless to say, we were thrilled.



The Osborn and Taggart field is important to us for a number of reasons. It is visible from West Main Road, further protecting public views along a major town roadway. It expands a nearly unbroken swath of permanently protected lands stretching north, east and south along the Dunderly Brook and its watershed, as the stream makes its way to Briggs Marsh through Wilbour Woods and beyond. Its historic stone walls, a key component of our landscape, are certainly worthy of protection. We were happy to wait for Dee's vision to become a reality.

Turtle Bluff

The Montgomery and Dolan families on Chace Point donated an easement to SPA on an open coastal lot where the home of Mary Maguire once stood. At its western edge is a small shrub wetland that provides habitat. Coastal thickets, and open areas like this one, provide crucial shelter for birds, butterflies, dragonflies and waterfowl during the spring and fall migrations along the Atlantic flyway.



This lot on a small bluff serves as a buffer against coastal erosion, and it abuts other undeveloped coastal parcels. It is visible from Rhode Island Sound and falls within the Little Compton Agricultural Lands Scenic Area, the State designation that defines lands possessing public value. One of the goals of Little Compton's Comprehensive Plan is to preserve and enhance the traditional visual appearance of Little Compton, and an easement such as this one helps do just that.

Wax Property

Our third donation in 2012 is a conservation easement on a two-acre meadow off Old Harbor Road on the Westport, Massachusetts state line. The easement is part of a larger farm and woodland property that had been owned for many years by one person. New owners Bob and Bonnie Wax are protecting a portion of their property to honor the wishes of that previous owner. Their field is enclosed by stone walls and high woodland. The lot lies within the Quicksand Pond watershed, and the State has mapped it as Prime Farmland Soils in the RI Soil Survey. It is not hard to imagine the field as part of the old farm it once was.

We value this meadow as a link between previously conserved properties. Abutting to the north are nearly 24 acres protected by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. To the south are 25 acres held by the Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust. Creating corridors of permanently protected lands for wildlife is a high priority for SPA. Preserving the Waxes' field helps maintain this landscape habitat for many animal and plant species, while it protects historic farmland and the water quality upon which we all depend.



John V. Kean's Name Added to Administration Reserve Fund

In 2005, lawyer John V. Kean donated an easement to SPA on 2.5 acres of open meadow and stone walls behind his house on West Main Road. This long-time supporter of SPA provided those of us who had the pleasure of knowing him with an experience of gentlemanly courtliness from another era. Following his death in 2012, he left a substantial bequest to this organization. To honor his gift, the Board voted to add his bequest to its Administration Reserve Fund and to name the fund in his memory. These reserves have been set aside to support future expenses associated with the organization's staffing needs.

Bequests *There are many ways to include the Sakonnet Preservation Association in your estate plans:*

- Name the Association as a beneficiary of your retirement plan
- Leave a specific amount, percentage, or the residue of your estate to the Association
- Designate a particular asset to the Association (securities, real estate, artworks, etc.)
- Name the Association in the succession plan of your donor advised fund or family foundation
- Include the Association as a beneficiary of a testamentary or living trust
- Name the Association as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy
- Please contact your attorney for specialized legal language to ensure that your bequest intentions will be properly fulfilled

SPA Memorial Donations

Clint Thompson Clint Thompson spent much of his life relishing gardening and the outdoors. He and his wife Jane have blessed Little Compton with a vision of paradise on a hill overlooking the Watson Reservoir. Many have witnessed their combined talents each spring in the gardens surrounding their home. There was no sight quite like their peony garden in full bloom on a June day — hundreds of sturdy green stems, all manner of colorful tissue paper-like petals floating above, in row after row spilling down the hill. Before his death in the summer of 2012, Clint requested that SPA be the recipient of memorial donations. An outpouring has come to us from near and far. His legacy lives on through these gifts that make it possible to continue protecting some of the landscape that meant so much to him.



Bob Porter Nearly every day Bob Porter was visible through the window of the SPA office as he arrived to enjoy his coffee with friends at the Art Café. When Bob died last year, he left a very large hole in the community where he stood (or sat) during his ten years living here. He contributed his personal brand of kindness and humor, and his interest in history included local lore gathered at the Commons Lunch as well as at the Café. His wife Jana, who served on this Board, continues to share her considerable talents in the community. A generous donation to this organization was received in memory of Bob.



Damaris Sayre Atwater In December of 2006, Damaris Sayre "Dicie" Atwater donated a conservation easement to SPA to protect a meadow of over four acres near Congress Street and her family's home off West Main Road. Following her death, an anonymous donation was given to SPA in honor of her life. Dicie took great pleasure from living in this beautiful town, and she left us a legacy by permanently protecting her wetland meadow.



Enhanced Easement Incentive Renewed Through 2013

Recently Congress renewed a 2006 incentive that enables moderate-income landowners to get a significant tax benefit for donating a conservation easement on their land. Since it was first enacted, this valuable conservation tool has helped land trusts across the country work with willing landowners to protect hundreds of acres. Property owners who act quickly to conserve their land can now enjoy these benefits, which are currently scheduled to expire on December 31, 2013.

Landowners who donate conservation easements to the Sakonnet Preservation Association are inspired by many things: they love Little Compton, they feel connected to their land, and they wish to leave a legacy for future generations. This inspiration is central to our work of permanently protecting valuable natural resources. But

for most of our donors, giving a conservation easement is a major financial decision. The federal income tax deduction that comes with a donation helps make easements possible for landowners in our community.

The legislation allows easement donors to:

- Deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30%)
- Deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income if the majority of that income came from farming, ranching or forestry; and
- Continue to take deductions for as long as 16 years (previously 6 years)

To learn more about the enhanced incentive visit:

www.lta.org/easementincentive

Note from the President

This issue of our Newsletter certainly has a theme. It is all about giving. On these pages you can read about the generous landowners who have recently donated conservation easements on their property to SPA. We also feature the gifts of our talented volunteer, Geoff Dennis, and we acknowledge the meaningful memorials and bequests given to support our work.

Might you be interested in giving to SPA? If you are not already a member of our organization, please consider becoming one. You can fill out the form on the back page of this newsletter and become a member now.

SPA depends on the financial support of its membership to continue its important mission of “preserving the rural character and natural resources of Little Compton for the lasting benefit of the Community.” Please join!

– Abigail Brooks





Sakonnet Preservation Association

P. O. Box 945, Little Compton, RI 02837 • Phone/Fax: 401.635.8800

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	\$ _____

Name _____

Permanent Address _____

Town _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Summer Phone _____

E-mail _____

Summer Address _____

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



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