



Little Compton Landscapes

Newsletter of The Sakonnet Preservation Association

Winter 2015

Many Conserved and Town Properties in Little Compton with Public Access

It may come as a surprise to our readers how many permanently-conserved as well as our town-owned properties in Little Compton are open for public use. It is easy to take them for granted. Some permanently conserved properties owned by our conservation groups have public access (see numbered list below, aligns with map on page 3). Other properties protected with development rights and conservation easements are not open to the public. Together these conservation tools have served to protect the town's historic and rural character by preserving scenic vistas and the working farms that define our landscape. There is cause for celebration that we live in a place where so many landscape features and access points have been permanently protected for the benefit of all.

Almost any day of the year, the parking lot at the **The Ponderosa (1)**, Sakonnet Preservation Association's (SPA) signature property on Meeting House Lane, holds at least one car or truck belonging to someone enjoying this small freshwater pond. In winter it is often the first pond to freeze that is big enough to accommodate skaters. Purchased from the Camara family, it has long served as a recreational draw. Each April it is stocked by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) for the opening day of fishing season, and the Little Compton Grange provides warm drinks and refreshment for young people interested in trying their hand at catching a trout or two.

The largest conserved area in town is the RI Department of Environmental Management's (RIDEM) **Simmons Mill Pond Management Area (2)**, over 600 acres of historically significant woodland, ponds and meadows. An SPA-sponsored public walk there this past September was guided by Roger and Gail Greene, who shared their research about its history and led us along some of its well-maintained trails. The Management Area's high woods provide ample habitat for birds and a rejuvenating stopover for those migrating north or south. As a major feature within the Quicksand Pond watershed, its protection helps ensure that this pristine coastal pond to the south remains in good shape. Fishing and hunting are allowed within the Management Area in season.

Near the center of town, **The Dundry Brook Trail (3)** on the Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Bumblebee Preserve has opened this beautiful watershed property to all of us, making it possible to view the seasonal changes that occur in a wet woodland that is so characteristic of the remaining undeveloped land in Little Compton. Its beech groves and oak-holly forest, as well as the understory that supports jack-in-the-pulpit, anemone, orchid, marsh marigold and countless ferns, provide a constantly changing panorama and host an array of migratory and resident songbirds. The boardwalk leads to a farm stock pond, an entirely different ecosystem of freshwater and meadow habitat.

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THAT HAS HELD ON TO ELEMENTS
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Wilbour Woods (4) is a gift given to the town by Mrs. Henry Lloyd in memory of her mother-in-law, Jessie Bross Lloyd, for permanent protection and use by residents. Dundry Brook, also stocked by DEM, flows through on its way to Briggs Marsh. The roadway, picnic tables and benches are maintained by the Town and other community volunteers for public use.

South Shore Beach, Goosewing Beach and uplands (5) provide the pleasures of walking, swimming, surfing, kayaking and birding, plus educational programs for all. The Town and the Nature Conservancy maintain elements of each beach. Adjacent to South Shore is the **P.T. Marvell Preserve (6)**, a coastal meadow bordering Tunipus Pond with trails and a look-out tower cooperatively owned and maintained by the Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust (LCACT), the Nature Conservancy and Sakonnet Preservation Association.

Town Way (7), on the Sakonnet River at the end of the road with that name, and the **Town Lot (8)** on the ocean at the end of Grange Avenue, which was given to the Town by Hester B. Simmons for public recreation, provide parking and shoreline access.

The Goulart Farm (9) on Maple Avenue is an example of a property protected by the LCACT that allows for active farm use and public access. Birds find a compatible habitat in this area that supports a local farm business. *Additional properties owned by the LCACT, all of which allow public access, are featured in gray on the map.*

At Sakonnet Point there is public access and a boat ramp on the small beach along the **south shore of the Harbor (10)**, with parking space provided across the street as part of the RIDEM's **Haffenreffer Wildlife Refuge (11)**. Access to **Lloyds Beach (12)**, now protected by TNC, is open to residents of the Town and their guests. The Sakonnet Point Club has constructed a **public walking path (13)** along the southern and western shoreline of the boat

parking area, and the **harbor's breakwater (14)** has been a popular public fishing spot since it was built by the Army Corps of Engineers. The **Town Dock (15)** provides access to fuel, parking and equipment for use by local fishing boats and recreational boaters.

Two SPA-owned properties off Sakonnet Point with public access are **East and West Islands (16)**, a gift to this organization from Jessie Lloyd O'Connor. Access is limited to mid-August through March when nesting and fledging of young cormorants and seagulls is not underway. The islands are attractive both to birders during migration in the spring and fall, and to history sleuths interested in exploring the remnants of the West Island Club that once hosted wealthy powerbrokers of the late 19th and early 20th century who fished its waters for striped bass.

The town's cemeteries (17) should be included in any inventory of publicly-accessible open space. As the Little Compton Historical Society will attest, there is much to be learned of our town's history in these places.

The recreational areas on the Common — the **school Playground, Veterans Field and the Peckham Lot, the town tennis and basketball courts (18)** — as well as **Wheeler Field (19)** in Adamsville, and the Sakonnet River shoreline access at the **end of Taylor's Lane (20)**, all allow for public use and add to the variety of accessible properties maintained by the Town.

Little Compton continues to be a place that has held on to elements of its historic and rural character that past generations would recognize. A good number of privately held properties have been conserved over the years and are now open to the public, thanks to the generosity of landowners and the work of a variety of local and state organizations and the Town. These examples are reminders of what is available to us now and for future generations to enjoy.



**Sakonnet
Preservation Association**

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President's Letter

2014 was another challenging yet successful year for our volunteers. They contribute an enormous amount of talent and time accomplishing accreditation-worthy land protection, stewardship and public education for this organization and the community. What an inspiring group with which to work!

Our Annual Meeting at the Sakonnet Golf Club Playhouse in July featured a wonderful presentation by conservation landscape architect and local resident John Gwynne. He continues to bring expertise from years of urban and international work to the local challenges of field management, consulting with us and other conservation groups as well as with individual landowners.

The annual conference of the national Land Trust Alliance, held in Providence this past September, drew over 1,900 land conservationists from as far away as Australia and Hawaii. Seven board members attended, and Sheila Mackintosh, Holly Lippert and I were workshop presenters. The RI Land Trust Council led a welcoming reception and organizational effort that "did our little state proud."

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SPA was the first of its kind in the state, organized to preserve "the rural character and natural resources of Little Compton for the lasting benefit of the Community."

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We continue to work on projects started in 2014 — undertaking a complete overhaul of our strategic plan and its associated annual work plans while preparing to submit our application for accreditation renewal due this coming September. A board retreat in mid-October revealed the dedication, intelligence and good will, as well as good humor, of this hard-working and committed group.

We closed this past year by adding another conserved property to our list of holdings. We are grateful to the Morans for choosing conservation as their option for releasing ownership of their property.

With the generosity of landowners, the support of our membership, the dedication of our volunteers, and the efficient skills of our administrative assistant, we are able to fulfill the mission of this forty-three-year-old land trust.

Thank you to all! – Abigail Brooks



**Sakonnet
Preservation
Association**

wishes to thank

*Malcolm and Elissa Moran
for their generous donation
of a 6.2 acre undeveloped parcel
on West Main Road.*

*The Morans' donation, contiguous to
a previously conserved 13.63 acre parcel,
expands the protection of
wetlands, wildlife habitat, and the rural
character along a scenic roadway.*

*We are grateful and honored to be the recipient
and caretaker of their property.*



Bobolink Expert Noah Perlut to Speak at the Community Center

Please put Wednesday evening, April 15, at 7 PM on your calendar to hear Noah Perlut speak at the Little Compton Community Center about managing fields for bobolink habitat. He will discuss *The Dynamic Bobolink: Conservation Challenges and Opportunities in New England*. The event is co-sponsored by SPA and the Little Compton Garden Club.

Currently an assistant professor at the University of New England in Biddeford, ME, Dr. Perlut has spent years researching how field management practices affect grass-nesting birds, particu-



Photo: Geoff Dennis

larly bobolinks. Birds are prime indicators of how human activity influences the natural world. We hope some landowners will be inspired to use this information, choosing to steward their own properties using conservation practices that supplement the habitat and resource protection of organizations working locally.

Please join us for an entertaining and informative conversation about these delightful birds and how we can help them thrive. Refreshments will be served, and the event is free and open to the public.

Bioblitz Coming to Town in June

Another event to put on your calendar is the Little Compton BioBlitz, scheduled for June 12 & 13. BioBlitz is being sponsored by the RI Natural History Survey working with local residents and organizations including SPA. From 3 PM Friday to 3 PM Saturday, participants of all ages will be able to join teams collecting as many local species as they can in 24 hours from two designated locations. Examples of species to identify can range from trees and shrubs, amphibians and spiders, to fungi and lichen. With the help of volunteers, scientists and naturalists, it is an opportunity to create interest in nature as well as a baseline listing of local species diversity and threats from invasives. The Town Council has declared Saturday, June 13 "Little Compton Nature Day," and a number of exhibits and events are planned for Veterans Field. More information will be available as the event date gets closer.

Memorial Donations Support Conservation

We were moved to receive a donation recently in memory of David Poor, son of Sidney Tynan. A portion of Sidney's property is protected with a conservation easement held by SPA.





Sakonnet Preservation Association

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Yes, I would like to join or renew my membership.

Enclosed is my tax deductible membership contribution.

- Student \$20
- Individual \$25
- Family \$35
- Sustaining \$100
- Patron \$250
- Sponsor \$500
- Benefactor \$1,000+
- Special Gift \$ _____

Name _____

Permanent Address _____

Town _____

State _____ Zip _____

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Summer Address _____

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 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

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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Sakonnet Preservation Association

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