



Little Compton Landscapes

Newsletter of Sakonnet Preservation Association

Fall 2017

Why 'Saving Acres' Isn't Enough...

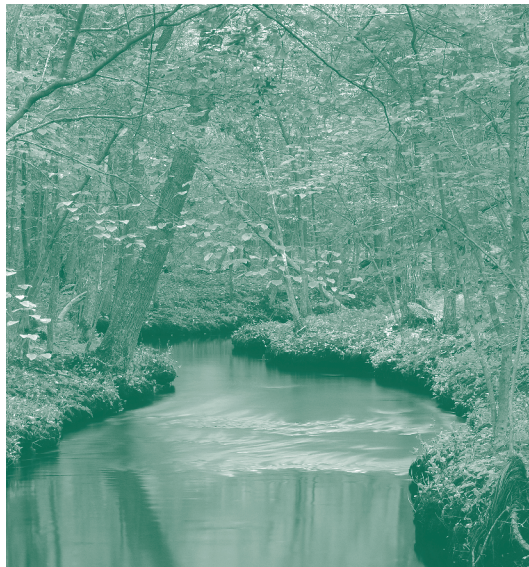
by Carol Lynn Trocki

Everyone deserves to live in a healthy community and enjoy a connection with nature.

I believe this. If you are reading this right now, I'm guessing you do too. You are probably also someone who has benefitted from living in a healthy community with access to nature. How blessed we are to call Little Compton home. We all benefit from the work of groups like Sakonnet Preservation, the Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust, The Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island who all work to permanently protect land in our town. We also benefit daily from the many private land-owners who manage and maintain the fabric of our landscape through their individual land use choices, whether their land is permanently protected or not.

As a conservation biologist I have spent my career working with land trusts and conservation groups, studying ecological systems and teaching others how to care for and manage healthy land and wildlife populations. Conservation easements, deeds to development rights, and outright ownership by conservation holders are all important legal tools for restricting development. But they are only a first step. I believe the much more important — and much more interesting — question is not 'How many acres do we save?' but 'What are we saving them for?'

There are many possible reasons, of course. The opportunity to take a hike in the woods? See a beautiful water view? Access safe, healthy, local food? Clean drinking water? Or maybe (my personal favorites) for the magic of dark night skies and fireflies?



***People thrive where land is healthy.
We need a connection to land;
it is how we are made.***

Which one of these matters most to you isn't as important as the fact that you believe one or more of them does matter. Landscapes are complex systems. Understanding myriad changing, and sometimes conflicting, human values is surely a messy business. But I have learned a few things on which I believe we can count:

People thrive where land is healthy. We need a connection to land; it is how we are made. I believe we need to ask more questions — of ourselves and each other — to find our way forward in difficult times.

What do you care about? Why do you love it here? How does the land speak to you?

I suspect our answers to these questions are always our path back to a sense of connection. Because when you feel connected to something, you care. And people invest their energy in the things they care about.

(Continued on page 5)



Sakonnet Preservation Association

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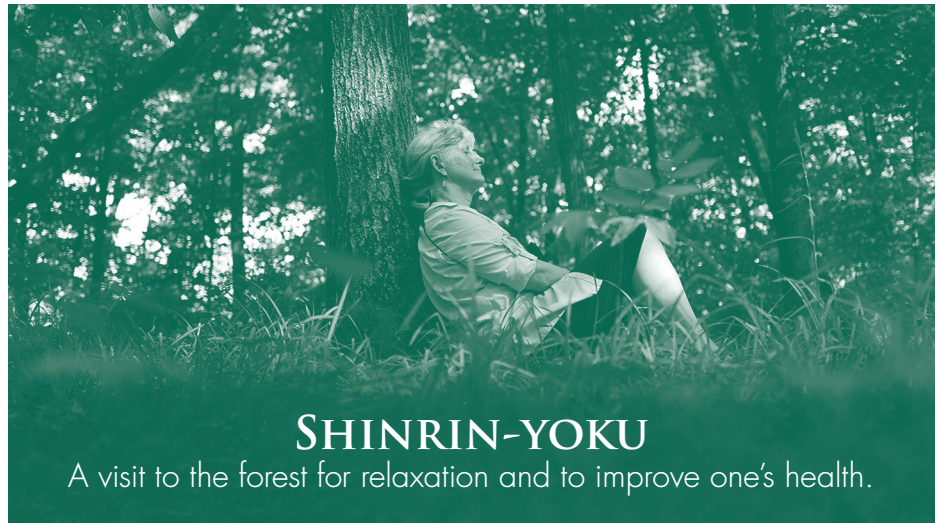
Sound Finances
Ethical Conduct
Responsible Governance
Lasting Stewardship

Little Compton Landscapes

President's Letter

Some Thoughts on "Forest Bathing"

The concept expressed by the Japanese words *Shinrin-yoku*, translated roughly as "forest bathing," seems a perfect term for describing the restorative experience of time spent in wild and natural environments when we pay close attention to our surroundings. This form of withdrawing from the distractions and disturbances of everyday life has been treasured by many around the world who have access to such places. We are fortunate to have as many as we do in our corner of New England.



The term was coined in the early 1980s by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Since then, extensive research into forest bathing's benefits —

including reduced blood pressure and stress, as well as boosts to immune system functions and improved mood — has made it a part of Japan's national health program, prescribed by doctors and covered by health insurance. Although its health consequences make sense intuitively and have motivated the conservation-minded for generations, scientific verification adds to the growing list of measurable public benefits that come with permanently protecting undeveloped natural refuges.

Particulars of the practice have begun to take hold in other countries, including ours. Sakonnet Preservation is planning a forest bathing experience in Little Compton — *stay tuned!*

— Abigail Brooks

Welcome New Board Members

We are very pleased to welcome Perky Nellissen and Judy Melanson to our hard-working Board of Directors. Perky has become an integral part of the community in the last twelve years. She organizes the paddle tennis club, referees field hockey and lacrosse, works for Wilbur's, Wilma's and Shethar Real Estate, serves on the LC Community Center board and is an avid bicyclist. Whew! "I've always had an appreciation of open space in Little Compton, but never truly thought about what it takes to keep it this way. I look forward to working with SPA to do my part."

Judy's road to the board began ten years ago when she wrote a letter to the editor of the *Sakonnet Times* praising the work of local conservation organizations. At that time, she had young children and commuted full time to Boston. A marketing expert, her clients include Hilton, Caesars and Royal Caribbean. She is now able to become active with Sakonnet Preservation and is thrilled to do so. "I love the woods — I've been forest bathing my whole life, long before there was a word for it!"

Welcome Perky and Judy!



Sakonnet Preservation Association



Perky Nellissen



Judy Melanson

SPA New Stewardship Director

Hi! I'm Mary-Kate Kane, the new Stewardship Director for Sakonnet Preservation. As I move into my new role here, I look forward to meeting you and learning more about this beautiful town.

"Stewardship" at Sakonnet Preservation refers to the management of the responsibilities that come with every property and easement SPA acquires. This includes the annual monitoring by board and community volunteers of all 58 properties to ensure that the stipulations included in deeds or easement agreements are being fulfilled. Stewardship is an integral part of conservation, and I'm excited to be a part of it.



Mary-Kate Kane

"Stewardship is an integral part of conservation, and I'm excited to be a part of it."

Many of my past experiences have helped me appreciate the strong connection we have to the land — growing vegetables on small organic farms, caring for children in a nature-based preschool, and planning for more resilient communities at the RI Coastal Resources Center — have all taught me important lessons about caring for the land that provides us with so much.

When I'm not working at Sakonnet Preservation, I work with the Eastern RI Conservation District. I live in Newport, and in my spare time I love finding new coffee shops, growing food in my community garden, spending time with my cat, Aster, and exploring new places to hike or picnic.

Count 'Em – Five!

Little Compton is extraordinary in many ways — largely due to the hard work and cooperation among the **FIVE** conservation organizations that are active in this town.



In 1972, a committed band of residents joined together to form **Sakonnet Preservation Association**, Rhode Island's first community land trust. We have worked with landowners and partners ever since to ensure that the landscapes that define Little Compton are preserved forever. For these forty-five years, we have been building a foundation of conservation experience and expertise, while also building community support for conservation. Sakonnet Preservation is funded entirely through private donations and grants.

In the mid-1980s, the **Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust** was conceived when four former board members of Sakonnet Preservation came up with a plan to protect some of the town's larger remaining open properties. They proposed establishing a transfer tax on all real estate transactions that would be used to fund open space purchases.



In 1986 Little Compton voters formally established the Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust at the Financial Town Meeting.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is an international conservation organization with a Rhode Island office working statewide, including in Little Compton. Its work is focused on protecting larger parcels with ecologically important habitat and resources.

Audubon Society of RI is an independent statewide conservation organization, founded in 1897 to foster the conservation of wild birds and other forms of wildlife through land protection, environmental education, and advocacy.

Rhode Island State Department of Environmental Management secured the largest landscape of contiguous properties in Little Compton for conservation, creating the Simmons Mill Pond Management Area.

Our collaboration helps to leverage both interest and funding to protect the town's farms, fields, forests, and natural habitats. While each organization has a unique orientation and specific interests, all are committed to working together for the betterment of Little Compton.

A Look at Our Annual Meeting

Sakonnet Preservation's 2017 Annual Meeting was a big success — thanks to everyone who attended!

Many thanks to Don McNaughton for his compelling Appalachian Trail Hike presentation and to Kris Donovan for the photographs.



Why 'Saving Acres' Isn't Enough (Continued from page 1)

Sakonnet Preservation was founded in 1972, the same year that Apollo 17 offered us the iconic 'Blue Marble' view of an illuminated earth - an image that has since become one of the most reproduced in human history.

In April, 2017, we reached a global human population of 7.5 billion. This planet is small and land is finite. We've exceeded our carrying capacity, and climate change, pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and conflict are the result. The world is getting more crowded and the challenges more complex each day. We will need new tools, new ideas, and a more diverse and engaged audience in order to meet them. What is the thing you love most? What would call you to invest?

I would love to hear your thoughts and to continue this conversation. Carol Lynn Trocki – cltrocki@gmail.com

Wilbur School 5th Grade Field Trip

A successful June field trip to the Simmons Mill Pond Management Area with 28 Wilbur School fifth graders initiated Sakonnet Preservation's latest effort to bring environmental education to local students. With John Gwynne and Bob Emerson serving as expert guides, the students were first given a classroom introduction to what they might find in the Management Area and then spent the school day walking the trails listening and looking for birds, learning about forest and pond habitat and keeping an eye out for other inhabitants of this splendid preserve environment in their "back yard" that included a beautiful ring-necked snake.



Sakonnet Preservation Association

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

Phone/Fax: 401.635.8800

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

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

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___ Family \$35

___ Sustaining \$100

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___ Please send periodic email updates of SPA programs and activities. We will not share your information with anyone.

If you are interested in making a gift of appreciated stock or would like to discuss your estate plans, please call 401.635.8800. www.sakonnetpreservation.org

OTHER WAYS TO HELP!

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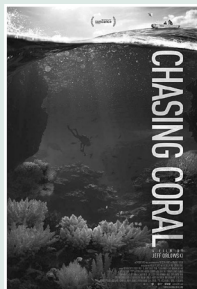
Send us your receipts, or drop them at the office – we'd love to say hi! The good folks at Lees will donate 1% of your spending to SPA.



Start your Amazon shopping at Amazon Smile, and .5% of your eligible

purchase goes to SPA. Go to Smile.Amazon.com/ch/23-7225987, or type in Sakonnet Preservation Association when prompted.

SPA 's 2017-2018 Movie Presentations



Saturday, November 11, 2017
7pm – LC Community Center

Chasing Coral

Coral reefs around the world are vanishing at an unprecedented rate. A team of divers, photographers and scientists set out on a thrilling ocean adventure to discover why and to reveal the underwater mystery to the world.



Friday, January 26, 2018
7pm – LC Community Center

American Experience: Rachel Carson

A profile of scientist and writer Rachel L. Carson (1907-1964), whose 1962 book *Silent Spring* helped launch the modern environmental movement.

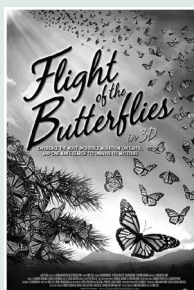


Saturday, March 24, 2018
7pm – LC Community Center

Forest Man

The story of Jadav Payeng, an Indian man who single-handedly planted nearly 1400 acres of forest to save his island, Majuli.

along with...



Flight of the Butterflies

A film of hundreds of millions of monarchs in their remote overwintering sanctuaries and along their migratory routes from Canada and across the U.S. to Mexico.



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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