

Sakonnet Preservation

Newsletter of the Sakonnet Preservation Association

2019 Annual Meeting

It was standing room only at our Annual Meeting in July, featuring a fascinating talk by Professor Christine DeLucia on "Place, Heritage, and Caretaking in Native and Colonial New England: Memoryscapes of King Philip's War." The presentation revisited the pivotal Native American resistance movement and colonial conflict known by settlers as King Philip's War. This conflict retains its historic significance palpably in our southeastern corner of New England, particularly in this community of Little Compton.

The names Sakonnet, Awashonks and Benjamin Church are familiar to most of us. Professor DeLucia described the confluence of longstanding Native places with colonial ones, influencing how we remember and honor them, and inviting us into better understanding and acknowledgement of this complex history.



Christine DeLucia

The evening before the annual meeting, Sakonnet Preservation convened a meeting of community leaders with Professor DeLucia to begin a dialogue about how the Little Compton community might more accurately present Native

American history. She began her comments by noting that there were no Wampanoag at the table and that any collaboration going forward must include Wampanoag representation.

She described a variety of avenues that might be successful in Little Compton, such as archaeological study, re-examination of primary source doc-

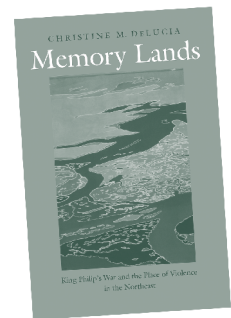


Metacom (King Philip), Wampanoag sachem, meeting settlers.

uments, and wetlands interpretation as areas of human existence alongside flora and fauna. Dr. DeLucia had much to say about how to engage with the historical and living Native American communities. She recommended the documentary "We Still Live Here" and the book "Braiding Sweetgrass" as educational resources.

We look forward to continuing the discussion begun in July. We appreciate the input of Marjory O'Toole of the Little Compton Historical Society, representatives of the Town Council, town administration and school committee, as well as members of the Sakonnet Preservation board of directors.

Based on the comments of attendees, we have set the bar quite high for next year's annual meeting speaker! Thank you to the Little Compton Community Center staff for making this year's meeting such a pleasure, and thanks to all of you who came out on that beautiful evening. Dr. DeLucia's book sold out at the meeting but is still available on AmazonSmile if you would like to learn more. If you missed her fascinating talk, there is a video link on our website www.sakonnetpreservation.org.



– Lawre Goodnow, Abigail Brooks and Kathy Clarendon

Sakonnet Preservation

Board

Abigail Brooks President

Sheila Mackintosh Vice President

Bill Theriault Treasurer

Ann Beardsley Secretary

Paul Bazzoni

Michal Brownell

John Cook

Lawre Goodnow

Nan Haffenreffer

Maureen Harrington

Warren Jagger

Judy Melanson

Perky Nellissen

David Palumb

Charlie Whipple

Part-time staff

Kathy Klees Clarendon

Director of Development
and Communications

Mary-Kate Kane

Director of Stewardship

Newsletter editors

Raya Goff

Janet Jagger

7 South of Commons

Little Compton, Rhode Island



sound finances
ethical conduct
responsible governance
lasting stewardship

President's letter

Your comments are greatly appreciated

Earlier this year we surveyed our members and others in the community, asking what we are doing well and what we could be doing better. We are honored that so many of you took the time to thoughtfully answer our questions and share your insights with us. We are YOUR Sakonnet Preservation, community-supported by our members, working diligently to keep Little Compton special. Your comments help keep us on the right track.

So what did we learn?

Nearly all respondents expressed sincere appreciation for our work — thanks!

Below are some of the issues and questions that came up, with our responses:

"Initiate a plan for approaching potential donors of land." We are creating mapping that will help us determine priority areas for conservation, with the intention of approaching landowners directly about preserving their land.

"Why do you preserve scrub forest? Focus on coastal scenic properties rather than land the owners can't give away." Scrub forests protect the surface water we rely on to fill our wells by providing significant undisturbed habitat and by limiting development. Forested lands visible along our roadways contribute significantly to the scenic rural character of our town.

"SPA's record of protecting gifts of land is enviable and encouraging, but you might also do more to protect properties which require an element of outright purchase. Little Compton hasn't the time and there is too much at stake to rely on gifts alone!" We recognize that as Little Compton real estate has become more valuable, our reliance on donations of land has limited our impact. To become

President's letter *(continued)*

a more dynamic force in land conservation we need the support of the entire community to build the financial resources necessary to pay both for our operations and some land purchases too. We have been helped by partnering with the Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust and RI Department of Environmental Management on several purchases.

"Land protection should take precedence over walks and talks." We believe that walks and talks are a complement to land protection, highlighting areas of vulnerability and educating all ages about our natural treasures.

We take all of your comments to heart.

It is a real boost to be reminded how many of you have been loyal members for ten years or more, to learn that nearly everyone reads and enjoys our print newsletters, and that so many of you are welcoming our monthly e-news —
Thank you!

"You are great...I look out onto preserved land and am so grateful."

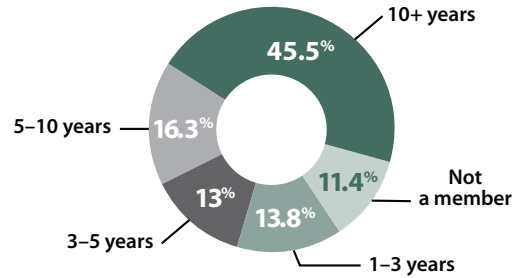
"I trust SPA to be a caretaker of the vision of maintaining the pastoral nature of the town."

Please follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and sign up for our e-news if you haven't already. We thank you for everything you do to make our work possible.

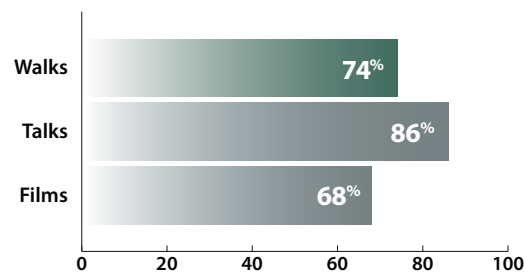
— Abigail Brooks

SPA Member Snapshot

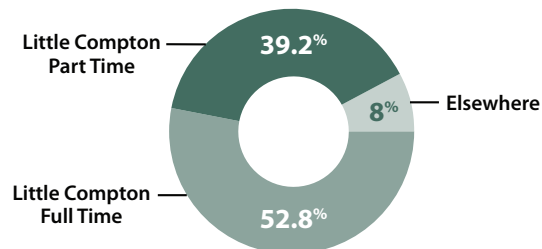
How long have you been a member?



What type of event interests you?



Where do you live?



By the Numbers

728 – Number of members

56-70 – Largest demographic age segment

58 – Properties protected

460 – Acres protected

33 – Volunteer property monitors

\$109,458 – Value of volunteer hours

New Member Spotlight

Lily Burns Hernandez grew up in Tiverton and Little Compton, riding her bike to camp at Warren's Point Beach Club. Now, when she and her family visit Little Compton, she gets on a plane from Abu Dhabi!

Lily and her husband Hector purchased land here six years ago, but have no definite plans for when, or even if, they will build. "Vivienne is five and a half and it is so important to us that she have roots, a place she can always call home. We come back here every summer — this year she is attending camp at Warren's Point, just like I did. I love that she can enjoy the same sort of childhood things that I did."

"Little Compton is remote and untouched in the best possible way. Living most of the year in the desert, we love the comfort of Tiverton and Little Compton — the green and the farmland." – LILY BURNS HERNANDEZ

"I learned about Sakonnet Preservation from family and friends, so I checked out the website and realized that this is an organization I want to support. I asked myself what can I do to help keep this place the way I remember for my daughter, and decided that investing in the work of Sakonnet Preservation is something I want to do."

Lily and Hector are celebrating their tenth wedding anniversary next year. As they discussed which exotic place they would like to visit to celebrate, they decided that they would prefer to spend more time here. They want their daughter to develop the friendships and traditions that have sustained Lily throughout her life. The Hernandez' still don't know what they will do with their land, and maybe the decision will be left up to Vivienne. "We are happy to have protected this piece of untouched land, even if we never do anything with it." It can be that important anchor called 'home' any time they choose.

During our conversation, Lily mentioned that Hector, a microbiologist, might be willing to teach a children's program here next summer. We are excited about the wonderful possibilities!

– Kathy Klees Clarendon

We Get By With a LOT of Help From Our Friends

When the old hand pump at the Ponderosa collapsed a while back, a large rock was placed atop the remaining pipe. This spring, when the Ponderosa was being spruced up with major assistance from volunteer Fred Bridge, Paul Borges of Bodington Plumbing offered to cap the old well. Paul wanted me to know that it took only a blade of grass

to contaminate a well. Sakonnet Preservation so appreciates Paul's thoughtfulness, Donny Wordell's work, and Lindsey Borges's follow through. It takes a village to keep Little Compton special, and this is a wonderful example of how that works. *Thank you all!*

– Sheila Mackintosh



Hector, Vivienne and Lily Hernandez.

New Property = New Management Plan

When Sakonnet Preservation receives the invaluable gift of land, the fun begins for the stewardship director. I get the opportunity to dig in and get to know this new property, its unique qualities and the benefits it provides. I gather information from a variety of sources to develop a management plan specific to the new property.

This summer, Sakonnet Preservation was fortunate to receive a gift of land donated by Jim and Janet Field. This beautiful open field connects to land already conserved by the Fields through an easement with us, and the properties look out to the Sakonnet River.



Field property. Photos: Mary-Kate Kane

After an initial site visit, I become acquainted with a new property by employing online maps and desktop research. Using the various map layers available from Rhode Island Geographic Information Systems (RIGIS), I learn about the features of the property and dive deeper into the land's characteristics and special values. As examples, properties containing wetlands provide benefits such as water quality improvement, flood protection, erosion control and wildlife habitat; forests sequester carbon and provide habitat for birds and other wildlife. Open fields and meadows near the coast, like this new property, provide important habitat for migratory and grassland-nesting birds.



Marking boundaries.

The map layers prompt me to re-search numerous questions. Does the property support habitats for any rare or endangered species? Are there historic or cultural features on the land such as stone walls or cellar holes? Within which watershed does the property lie? Does the property provide scenic value according to the RI Landscape Inventory Study?

Sometimes I reach out to the Rhode Island Natural History Survey to learn about rare plant and animal species that may use that area of Little Compton. Reading soil survey maps and descriptions, I look for “Prime Farmland Soils” or “Soils of Statewide Importance” on the property. I also look through historic aerial photography, dating back to 1939, to see how the land was utilized and managed in the past.

After desktop research, I visit the property again to observe and record the flora and fauna present, then photo-document all the boundaries so that SPA knows exactly where this new property begins and ends. Each year going forward monitors will need to find these bounds in order to confirm that no encroachment has occurred and that conservation values have remained intact. This property will remain open space forever, thanks to the foresight and generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Field.

Recording all this information in a management plan at the time of acquisition creates a baseline. When looking back years from now, Sakonnet Preservation will be able to see how climatic changes have affected the land and the ecosystems which it supports.

Management plans — which have been developed for every property SPA owns — are essential in setting goals to care for the land into the future. They also tell stories of the past, inventory plants and animals currently using the property, and provide a snapshot in time. Developing a management plan for a property is not only essential in the preservation of land, it is also how we honor the protection of open space.

– Mary-Kate Kane, Stewardship Director

Monitoring Our Coastal Ponds

Oxygen depletion? Secchi disk? Hydrometer? Sodium thiosulfate solution? These terms became the vocabulary of about 20 Little Compton and Westport volunteer monitors who “document and evaluate nitrogen-related water quality and long term ecological trends” of Quicksand Pond and Briggs Marsh under the auspices of The Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program’s Citizen’s Water Quality Program.

Early in the morning on 26 scheduled days from May 30th — September 19th, 2018, the monitors gathered data at each collection site at Briggs Marsh and Quicksand Pond regarding water depth, temperature and clarity, after which water samples were taken to test oxygen depletion and salinity. Samples were taken at both 15 cm beneath the water’s surface and 30 cm from the bottom. The monitors analyze the samples in the field according to the protocols established by the Buzzards Bay Coalition (BBC).



Quicksand Pond Photo: BBC

On four of the 26 days, water samples from both estuaries were examined to determine nitrogen levels, which is often raised by residential septic systems and farming runoff. When nitrogen levels are elevated, microscopic phytoplankton and macro algae’s (seaweed) growth is stimulated. One variable particularly affecting water quality in our coastal ponds is the intermittent nature of their breaching, when higher-saline seawater and a pond’s brackish water are exchanged.



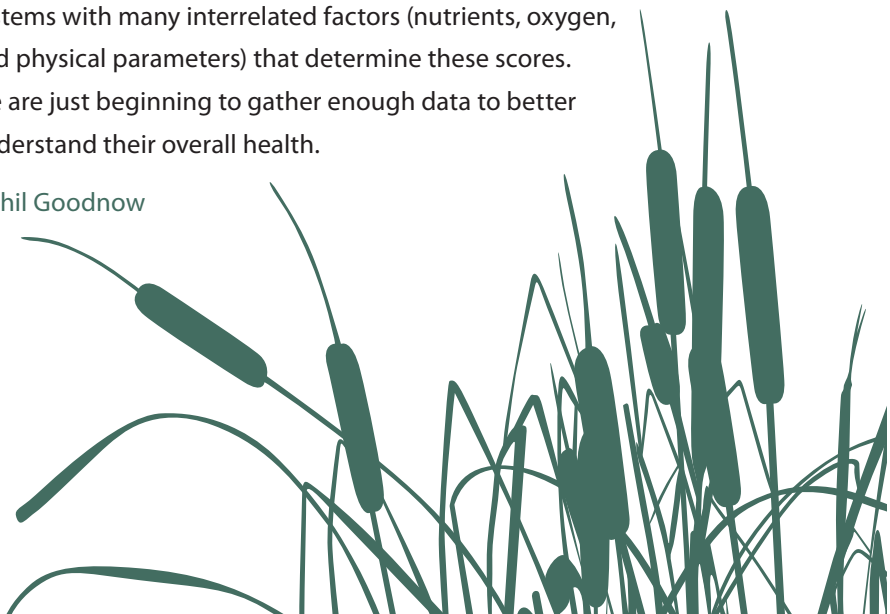
Sunset at Briggs Marsh Photo: Leslie Wilson

What has the monitoring revealed about the health of the Briggs Marsh and Quicksand Pond estuaries? First, this data is preliminary, and more years of data are needed to validate observations. Note that this volunteer monitoring and testing is ongoing through the current summer of 2019, and that data is not included here. Based on the 2018 samples from two Briggs Marsh test sites

(behind Briggs Beach and at Dunderly Brook which feeds Briggs Marsh), the overall Bay Health Index of Briggs Marsh is 10 out of 100 which puts it in the “Poor Health” category. Quicksand Pond data is gathered from several sites, two of which are slightly upstream on rivers feeding the north end of the pond. While Quicksand Pond’s water quality has elevated concentrations of nutrients, its algae content, clarity, and dissolved oxygen concentration has shown improvement since 2016. Its Bay Health Index is now “fair” at 51 out of 100, while two years ago it was “poor” at 35/100. There has been improvement in both estuaries in their total nitrogen, dissolved phosphate and dissolved oxygen levels.

Estuaries like Briggs Marsh and Quicksand Pond are complex systems with many interrelated factors (nutrients, oxygen, and physical parameters) that determine these scores. We are just beginning to gather enough data to better understand their overall health.

– Phil Goodnow



Got ticks?

"They can wait for months, clinging to the edge of a blade of grass, for the whiff of an animal's breath or vibration telling them a host approaches."

— WALL STREET JOURNAL 3/27/12

I hope your summer went well — and that you had few encounters with ticks.

According to the University of Rhode Island (URI) TickEncounter Resource Center, there are more ticks in more places than ever before. They have now crossed the Atlantic and are multiplying in England, increasing the public health impact of tick-transmitted disease. Lyme disease, babesiosis, and anaplasmosis are some of the diseases carried by ticks.

There has never been a greater need for tick-bite protection and tick-borne disease prevention.

Some tips on prevention:

- Practice daily tick checks
- Wear clothing that is pre-treated with Permethrin, a synthetic insecticide similar to a natural chemical in chrysanthemums
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing picaridin, DEET, or oil of lemon eucalyptus
- Remove clothing and shower as soon as possible after spending time outdoors
- Tumble clothes in a dryer

If you find a tick that may have been attached for more than 24 hours, you can send it to **The Tick Report**, at www.tickencounter.org, to be tested for diseases the tick may be carrying. It's a great resource on all things "tick."

Seek medical advice and remember, prevention is key. Be safe. Information taken from www.cdc.gov/Lyme & www.tickencounter.org.

— Nan Haffenreffer MS, RN,
Sakonnet Preservation board member

Sakonnet Preservation

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

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

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

☐ Individual \$25 ☐ Family \$35
☐ Sustaining \$100 ☐ Patron \$250
☐ Sponsor \$500 ☐ Benefactor \$1,000+

Become a Sustainer: ☐ \$5 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 per mo.

Please make checks payable to SPA or ☐ Visa ☐ M/C ☐ AMX
Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____

Signature _____

We will gratefully acknowledge all supporters in our newsletter, unless you would prefer to remain anonymous.

☐ I/We prefer to remain anonymous.

Please print name(s) below as you would like to be acknowledged.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

☐ 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!



Lees Market Receipts

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.

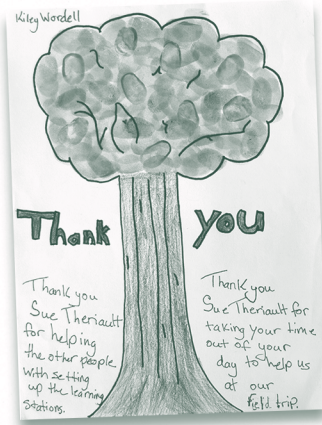
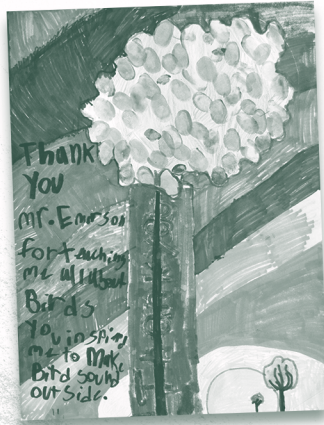
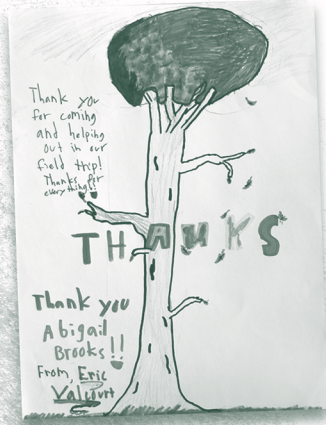
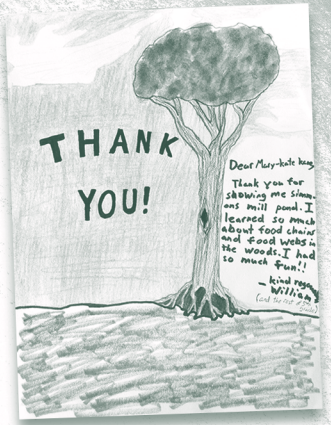
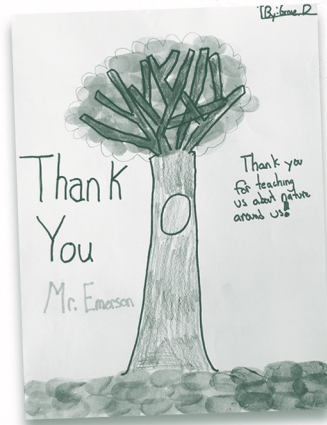


Start your Amazon shopping at Amazon Smile, and .5% of your eligible purchase goes to SPA. Go

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

Thank You Kids!

Thank you notes from Wilbur-McMahon 5th graders after our Spring field trip. Check out the rest on our website — they are great!



Sakonnet Preservation

P O Box 945

Little Compton, RI 02837

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.

Postal Customer

Non Profit org.
US Postage
PAID
Little Compton, RI
02837
Permit #48