

Sakonnet Preservation

newsletter of the Sakonnet Preservation Association

The 50th Anniversary Campaign for Sakonnet Preservation

Sakonnet Preservation's Board of Directors is pleased to announce that, with outstanding community support, it has entered the public phase of its \$1million fundraising campaign.

The **Campaign for Sakonnet Preservation** was launched three years ago to build reserves to:

- ensure stewardship responsibilities
- accelerate land protection activities
- increase educational programming
- support general operations

Upon successful conclusion of the Campaign, SPA will be able to focus on additional land acquisition and protection projects. This comes at a time when we are witnessing development at a torrid pace in Little Compton, increasing the urgency of protecting our natural resources and the rural character of our special community.

To date, forty-six gifts totaling over \$600,000 have been either pledged or received. Three leadership gifts of \$100,000 or more have been committed. It is the Campaign Committee's goal to successfully conclude the Campaign by summer 2022 when the 50th anniversary of Sakonnet Preservation's founding will be celebrated.

The committee includes Abigail Brooks, President of the Board, Board members Warren Jagger and Charlie Whipple, Joy Elvin, Director of Operations, and volunteers Chris Burns, Terry Nathan, and Mara Shore. In addition, to help supercharge and lend significant influence to Campaign efforts, a group of local supporters have lent their names as Honorary Co-Chairs.



Mown path in a summer meadow, on a property where Sakonnet Preservation holds a permanent conservation easement

To find out more, or to discuss a contribution, please contact Joy Elvin, Director of Operations at jelvin@sakonnetpreservation.org or any of the committee members named above.

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“What you notice becomes your life.”

Michael Chitwood, poet

This is the sort of simple, powerful quote my sister would stick on the front of her refrigerator from time to time. As it turns out, it became the common underlying theme of the presenters in our first ever Virtual Winter Speaker Series – what each of them noticed infused their life’s work. We were encouraged to pay close attention to what’s going on in the natural world we encounter in our own lives. We were reminded that the memory of experiencing special places has strong feeling attached to it.

Attendee comments during the Q&A sessions following some presentations included shared experiences of keeping a log of seasonal changes in a yard, or on a familiar landscape, or of an individual tree. No matter where we are, there is some facet of nature to observe that is sending messages – if we take the time to pay attention. Our own backyards, repeated visits to a preserve, or travel by an undisturbed landscape expose us to what nature has to share if we choose to take it.

Getting outside became a recommended and welcome antidote to the social isolation Covid forced on us. Full parking lots at entry points to the Simmons Mill Pond, Dunderly Brook and Whitehead Preserves, more people enjoying Wilbour Woods, flocks of friends and families skating at the Ponderosa and Gray’s Mill Ponds for the few safe, cold days, attested to the hunger to be outside and our good fortune to have these conserved properties nearby. Gratitude for the gifts offered to us by open space has been heightened during this remarkably re-orienting time. Our attachment to place is deepened by such experiences, and we have been forced to slow down, and granted the opportunity to *notice*.

We are the beneficiaries of the work done over many years by conservation-minded landowners in our community. They have been responsible for initiating preservation in the 1930s with Wilbour Woods, formally organizing the founding of Sakonnet Preservation Association 49 years ago, and supporting the ongoing efforts to protect the open space and rural character of this special town.

Abigail Brooks, President

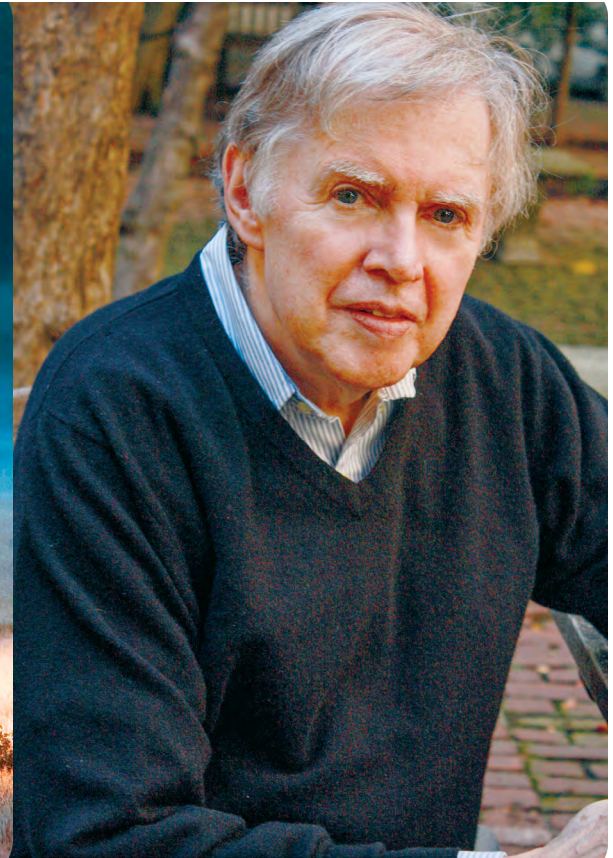
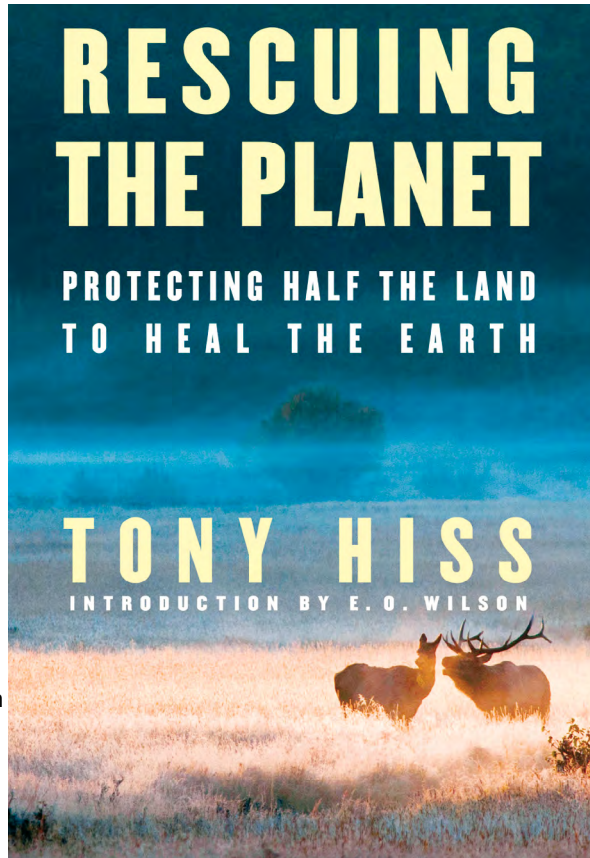
Annual Meeting speaker will be noted author, journalist

"50 by '50" is the slogan coined by veteran journalist Tony Hiss to encapsulate an ambitious, continent-spanning plan to preserve fifty percent of North America's natural lands by 2050, as energetically described in his recently published book, *Rescuing the Planet: Protecting Half the Land to Protect the Earth* (Alfred A. Knopf).

Hiss will be the keynote speaker at the Sakonnet Preservation Association's virtual Annual Meeting on Wednesday, July 14, 2021, beginning at 7.00 p.m.

The author of fifteen books, Hiss was a staff writer at *The New Yorker* for more than thirty years. He has been a visiting scholar at New York University for twenty-five years, and has lectured around the world. His previous books, he writes, "have covered health care in rural Ecuador, train travel, Hunanese cooking, giant pandas, photography, the story of my family, the landscape of the Chicago area, and the future of the New York City region."

Hiss's 1989 book, *The Experience of Place*, won acclaim for his exploration of innovative efforts by architects, planners, and conservationists to create more habitable human environments, whether urban, suburban, or rural. In *Rescuing the Planet*, he expands the geographical and conceptual scope of his investigations to describe the "Half-Earth Project."



Hiss's tour of the continent encompasses, among other landscapes, a vest-pocket park in his Greenwich Village neighborhood, the Northern Boreal Forest spanning northern Alaska and Canada, the Piney Woods of the Florida Panhandle, the Greater Appalachian Realm connected by the Appalachian Trail, the Sonoran Desert of northern New Mexico, and the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2K) Corridor Initiative.

Along the way he introduces a colorful cast of biologists, activists, and members of Indigenous communities who are working on large-scale conservation projects to connect landscapes, physically and culturally.

Please join us for our July 14 Annual Meeting, both to learn about SPA's recent activities and to hear Tony Hiss's hopeful message about the future of the planet.

Larry Anderson

Remembering Lawre



A quite extraordinary woman, Lawre Richmond Goodnow, chose in her too-short life to share her passion for this place and for land protection by serving on the board of Sakonnet Preservation. Following a daunting diagnosis and through months of treatment, Lawre kept showing up at board and committee Zoom meetings. Her unflagging commitment to contribute kept coming forth from her fierce will to live. She remained connected with us in the work she loved; five days following her last email she lost the fight.

These are the only words I could find to share this heart-breaking news with our board members and staff: "I can safely say that all of us felt her extraordinary engagement in our work together — the force and sensitivity of her convictions, her grace, and her gifts of experience and artfulness. Grateful that the worst of her suffering is over, we will carry the spirit of her wisdom and dedication forward while acknowledging the tremendous loss of her presence.

"It is time to hold her extended family in our hearts as we mourn the loss of this treasured friend and colleague."

Abigail Brooks

Here is the eloquent and meaningful obituary her family asked us to share with you:

Lawre Richmond Goodnow (1962-2021) lost her battle with pancreatic cancer on March 27, 2021. She passed away peacefully at home in Little Compton surrounded by her family. She leaves behind Phil Goodnow, her husband of 37 years, and their three children and their families: Hilary Goodnow and John Prevedini; Hannah Goodnow, Elia Del Molino and Maxwell Goodnow Del Molino; and Jonathan Goodnow and Rebecca Kremens. She is also survived by her siblings Helen Richmond Webb, Bill and Karen Richmond, Josie Richmond and Tom Arkins, and their families.

Lawre was a devoted wife, mother, sister, aunt, and grandmother, a 30-year veteran of early childhood and art classrooms, an artist in her own right, a champion of green and open space, and a wicked tennis player. Lawre advocated for the community and inspired everyone with her determination to be a good steward of the environment whether it was supporting local farms, finding creative solutions to single-use plastics, or working to preserve open space. As an artist, Lawre's work echoed her passion for nature and the places she loved most - gardens, fields, stone walls, coastal waters, starry skies, and snow-covered hillsides. Her choice of heirloom patterns, imagery, and fabrics told the stories of her life through recycled shirts, skirts, bed linens, and sweaters.

For nearly 60 years, Lawre epitomized kindness, teamwork, and equality with her own unique blend of patience, resolve and perseverance. She inspired everyone to be their best selves and move through the world with style and grace. She is loved and will be missed. "The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Beyond it, yet within our reach is joy. Take joy!" *Fra Giovanni Giocondo, 1513*

In lieu of flowers, we invite you to support the Sakonnet Preservation Association (SPA), an organization close to Lawre's heart. Their work protects Little Compton's natural riches of forest, wetland, coast, meadow, and open lands, all of which are vulnerable. Gifts in Lawre's memory can be sent by mail to SPA or to the donation link on its website.

A celebration of Lawre's life will be held later this year in Little Compton.

Why do we monitor each of our properties?

Each year, we count on a group of 37 monitors, trained and supervised by our Stewardship Committee, to inspect each of our holdings. Without these eyes on the ground we would not be able to ensure we are living up to the expectations of the landowners who have so generously donated their land to the community for permanent protection from development, encroachment or unnatural damage to conservation values.

There are stories to be told about the kind of violations that we have experienced – sheep sheds or bee boxes or fencing installed on our property, piles of yard waste left by abutters or contractors on our “empty” lots, cutting and clearing to enhance views or gain access to a property from a new angle. These things can happen in a flash, and our job is to help a violator understand the problem and work collaboratively to resolve it. Most often, the damage is not permanent, not intentionally meant to harm, and repairable. To date, we have been fortunate to avoid major problems.

Sakonnet Preservation benefits from the attention paid by our monitors, and the relationships developed with landowners and abutters to our properties. We are indebted to these foot soldiers doing this critical work.

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Majestic American hollies tower over this woodland on a key parcel owned by Sakonnet Preservation

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