

Sakonnet Preservation

newsletter of the Sakonnet Preservation Association

Our generous wetlands

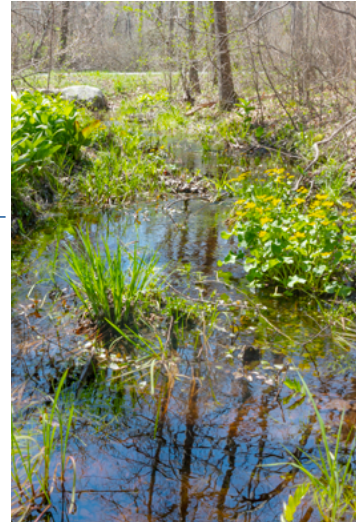
A 'water view' can be had from nearly anywhere in Little Compton, as long as we broaden the definition to include wetlands. Our landscape is shaped by emerald-green depressions made by glaciers millenia ago. In addition to our beaches, coastal marshes, ponds and reservoir, over a quarter of Little Compton is wetlands, surrounding us every spring with loudly singing birds and frogs before exploding into a wall of verdant foliage and buzzing insects.

Each passing season changes the sights, sounds and smells of our wetlands. While undergoing this metamorphosis, wetlands are steadfast in their service, providing cool, clean and reliable water for our rural community. Falling rains and melting snow replenish our wetlands and are quite literally the only water source that keeps our forests and gardens alive, our lawns and hayfields growing green, and our tubs full for bath time. During a prolonged summer dry spell when it seems all the land has turned brown and crispy, our wetlands hold vast amounts of water under cover of peat, mosses, shrubs and trees. The bedrock beneath our community, criss-crossed with a lattice of fractures, draws purified rainwater from these wetlands and disperses it to the thousands of wells we all rely on for daily life here.

Our generous wetlands face many challenges today, underlining the need for conservation and stewardship from land trusts like Sakonnet Preservation. [The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA) forecasts Rhode Island will experience an increase and intensification of precipitation in the coming years. These more frequent and intense downpours will wash down from our farm fields, lawns, roofs, driveways and paved roads, and funnel into our winding intermittent streams, more quickly filling up our wetlands with rainwater. The increased stress of these changing rainfall patterns will coincide with more prolonged periods of heat and drought. These wetland communities will rely on every native plant to produce shade to cool the ground beneath and slow the evaporation of water in our soils. Research has shown invasive species, a common sight along the edges of our forested wetlands, tend to consume more water than the native species that they displace, and host harmful pests like deer ticks and spotted lantern fly.

As we look ahead to the changes in weather and land use, we will be increasingly reliant upon (and, one hopes, thankful for!) our forested swamps, wet meadows and other wetland types that will continue to provide us with our high quality of living and a healthy ecosystem.

Adam Yorks



Sakonnet Preservation

Officers, board, staff

Abigail Brooks President

Sheila Mackintosh Vice President

Bill Theriault Treasurer

Ann Beardsley Secretary

Paul Bazzoni

Michal Brownell

Herb Case

John Cook

Davy Cutts

Nan Haffenreffer

Maureen Harrington

Warren Jagger

Geoff Manning

Jeannie McAllister

Judy Melanson

Peter Rowley

Joy Elvin

Executive Director

Adam Yorks

Director of Stewardship

Susannah Johnson

Administrator

Warren Jagger

Newsletter Designer

Kathleen O'Halloran

Newsletter Editor

P O Box 945 (mail)

73 Simmons Road, Unit C (office)

Little Compton, Rhode Island 02837

401.635.8800

sakonnetpreservation.org



sound finances

ethical conduct

responsible governance

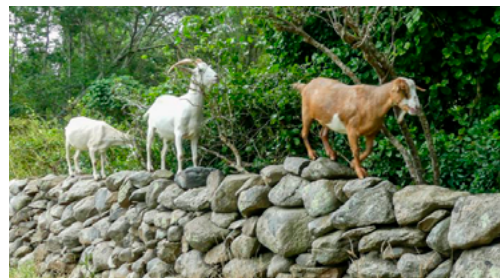
lasting stewardship

From the President

The particularity of place

I came across this phrase in a recent newspaper piece, and it caught my attention. What a great term, I thought, for what we are trying to protect here in Little Compton!

Every landscape and every community has distinguishing features. All of us can name some of the characteristics of this town's resources, history, and landscape that we find deeply meaningful



and that hold us: our open fields and stone walls that represent a long history of agricultural uses, unimpeded vistas to the water, common and uncommon wildlife sightings in our niche of migratory routes for birds, fish, and insects, wooded lots that once provided a significant source of fuel and building material, a built landscape with a common thread of colonial architecture represented widely in what is newly built, a town common backed up to open field and forest, the capacity of our landscape and undisturbed wetlands to supply our individual needs for drinking water. We might use these, and more, to describe Little Compton's *particularity*.

When we go about the business of conserving properties, we focus on their features that represent some measure of the town's particularity in service to our community. Each contributes in some measure to our common need for natural resources and also honors our deeply felt respect for this town's heritage and uncommonly beautiful landscapes. Conservation helps protect the particularity of this place we hold so dear.

Abigail Brooks



Re-seeding Rhode Island

It's a beautiful late September afternoon when I follow Sue Theriault, ReSeeding Rhode Island Steering Committee Chair, into an unassuming patch of plants between West Main Road and Old West Main Road – what is known to some Little Compton residents as the Meehan Triangle. Among stands of wild plants are patches of *Aronia floribunda* (purple chokeberry), a native shrub that produces dark purple fruits in the fall and provides native birds with a late-season food source. As we chat about the land history of Meehan Triangle, Sue and I gather ripe fruits into plastic bags. Later that day, I go home and squish these fruits between my fingers, inky dye staining my skin as I sort seeds onto paper towels.

Established in 2022 by the [Rhode Island Wild Plant Society \(RIWPS\)](#), ReSeeding Rhode Island is a multi-year initiative to collect and propagate wild-collected, ecotypic seed across the state for the purpose of seed amplification. We operate under the assumption that plant material derived from locally-collected wild seeds will be best adapted to Rhode Island environmental conditions. Once the wild-collected seed is dried and cleaned, it is grown out into plugs by our horticulturist, Barbara Shaughnessy. The plugs are then transferred to foundation plots at our partnering farm and land trust sites where the plants will mature and produce their own seed. The seed from these foundation plot plants will provide an ecotypic seed source for Rhode Island-based restoration projects and homeowners interested in growing native plants.

As the field botanist for ReSeeding Rhode Island, I spend the majority of my work time following leads for populations of our “target” native species. These leads may come from *iNaturalist* coordinates, records from fellow botanists, or my own observations from time spent in Rhode Island's natural habitats. Since ReSeeding RI relies



Seed collecting at the Meehan Triangle

on an initial seed source from wild populations, we approach this work with respect for our natural world and prioritize the self-sustainability of these wild populations. Gaining explicit written permission from land stewards to collect species on their property is the first step in ensuring sustainable collecting. I also follow the Seeds of Success Protocols (SOS) as established by the Bureau of Land Management. These protocols include adhering to practices such as collecting seeds from a population that contains more than 50 individuals, and collecting less than 10% of the available seed on a given day. Additionally, we collect only common, native species in Rhode Island.

My work for ReSeeding Rhode Island has brought me to sandy power line habitats in Charlestown and thriving swamplands in Cumberland, to the expansive salt marshes of Warren and forested habitats in Westerly. Now, we have added Little Compton to our ReSeeding RI map as a site of seed collection for purple chokeberry – and hopefully more species in the future!

Shannon Kingsley



Aronia floribunda, or purple chokeberry

Land trusts and gardening – synchronizing stewardship

Gardening is a humbling experience. Those who are drawn to the activity have their own reasons that sparked their discovery of the innate impulse to garden. Perhaps it was inspired by a relative's sharing their passion, or maybe from the yearning to regain some measure of control during the disorienting pandemic. My revelation came about after two at-sea deployments. As I transitioned out of the Navy, I found comfort and stability by getting my hands in the soil.

Upon settling in Rhode Island, I had the opportunity to expand my knowledge of gardening by participating in the [URI Master Gardener program](#), which trains volunteers to serve as educators at various projects throughout the state. The program is a semester-long training course that delves into a variety of topics, such as botany basics, soil science, and gardening for wildlife.

Learning to be a steward of your space generates compassion because it is a tactile reminder of our interconnectedness. Observing how an unproductive lawn can transform into a buzzing hub of insects benefiting from native plants and attracting birds awakens an inherent responsibility to protect this integrated functioning network of species and plant diversity.



As recommended by the Native Plant Trust, the nation's first plant conservation organization, the greatest way to help conserve plant diversity is to get involved with your local land trust. The missions of land trusts and gardening programs are complementary, each employing grassroots efforts to inform the community on best land stewardship practices. This can be accomplished individually by gardening for habitat or on a larger scale by helping land trusts maximize their limited conservation dollars by prioritizing properties with heightened biological value. Evolving our definition of what beauty means in the garden can yield an ecological support system and create the opportunity to witness vitality unfolding outside your window.

Susannah Johnson

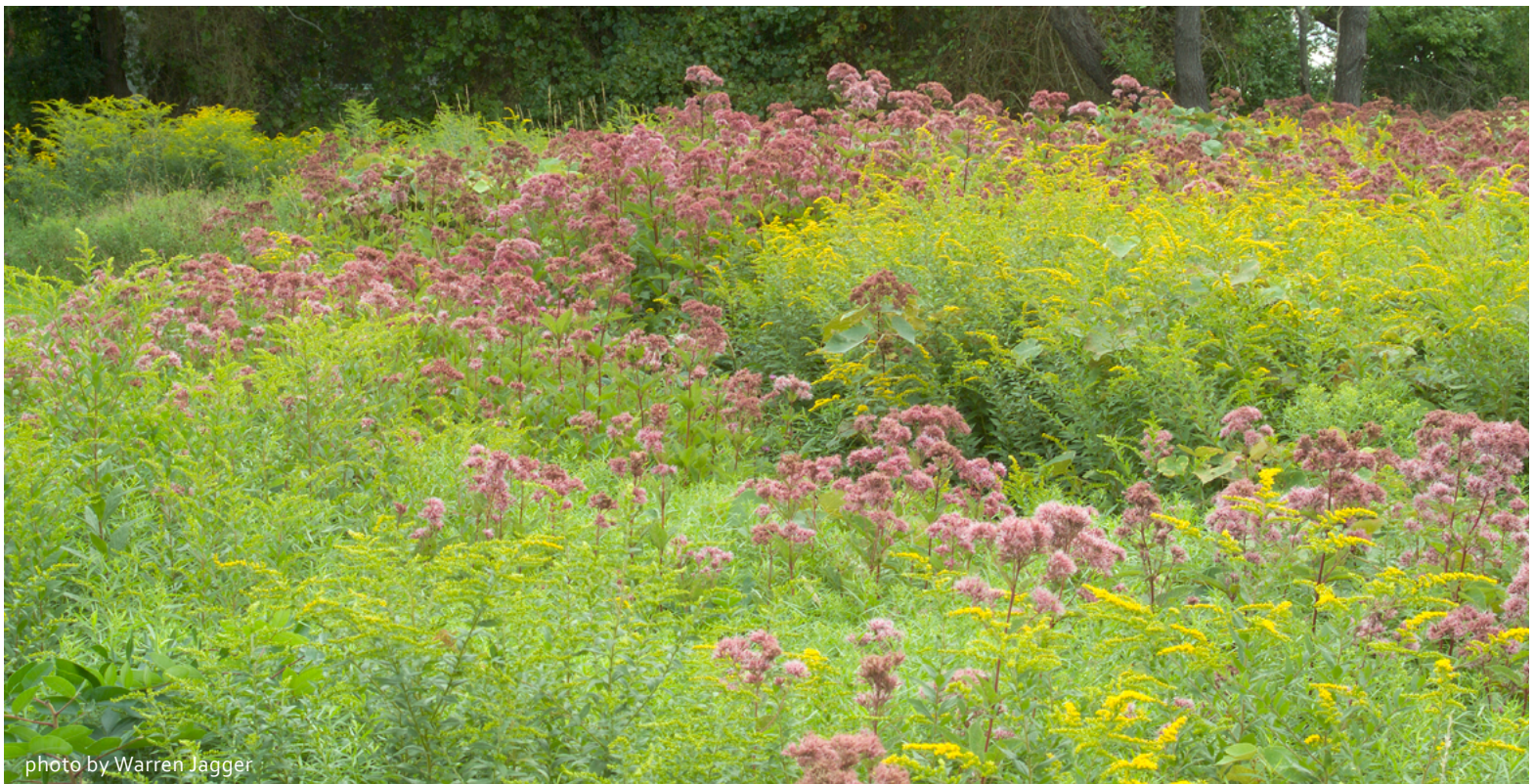


photo by Warren Jagger

Stewarding your land as habitat

Simmons Mill Pond Preserve, managed by the [Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management](#), offers a serene setting with six tranquil ponds amid a sunlit forest. It encompasses over 500 acres that provide a haven for walkers and hikers, fishers and hunters. Its trails, stone walls and fishing sites have been maintained with great devotion for over a decade by Roger and Gail Greene, seen at right. They have created imaginative and cleverly crafted educational interpretations of the flora, fauna, and historical elements throughout the Preserve.

In early October, Roger Greene led two SPA-sponsored workshops on stewarding land as habitat. Whether caring for a tiny plot, or several acres, his workshop was a hands-on walk through his own garden and nearby areas of the Preserve, discussing land management in general and his and Gail's own management practices. Each attendee was encouraged to think about their own setting and ask questions to help them understand, plan for, and encourage others to practice sustainable, habitat-conscious land management.



Colleen Cronin for ecoRI News

Within Little Compton, there are many diverse ecosystems and habitats inviting different land management practices. For example, within the Simmons Mill Pond Management Area, there are many examples of the unique coastal maritime oak-holly forest, a rarity in southern New England. The land is also habitat for the nocturnal Southern flying squirrel.

Both workshops were quickly oversubscribed, and Roger Greene has offered to host more in the spring of 2024. To keep up with [Sakonnet Preservation](#) news and offerings, please [subscribe to our monthly on-line newsletter](#).

Joy Elvin

Our work with your help

Among the various conservation groups working in Little Compton, [Sakonnet Preservation](#) is distinguished by its willingness to accept properties for conservation that may not be a priority for other groups. We are open to accepting small parcels which make up a high percentage of the remaining undeveloped land in our community. Such parcels are vital for protecting groundwater, habitat corridors, historic stone walls and scenic vistas that define our landscape.

An accredited 501c3 non-profit organization, [Sakonnet Preservation](#) relies almost exclusively on donor contributions. Its primary work is twofold: preserving open space and providing conservation education to all ages in the community, the latter with planned activities, volunteer opportunities, and web and print



Land on Old Harbor Road, conserved by [Sakonnet Preservation](#)

newsletters. Donations supporting our work can be paid by check; online credit card payment through our [website](#); with contributions from donor-advised funds; with gifts of appreciated stock; or with Required Minimum Distribution funds from an IRA. Our correct mailing address is PO Box 945, Little Compton, RI 02837. For direct transfer of funds or financial instruments please contact us for instructions.

Land Trust Alliance Rally 2023 – thoughts of a first-timer

Each year, the [Land Trust Alliance](#) holds a conference (known as the Rally) bringing the land conservation community together from all over the USA, Canada and overseas to network and learn from experts and each other. This year, the 36th annual Rally was held in Portland, Oregon, and over 2,222 inspired and passionate land conservation practitioners attended. This event is the only national gathering of the land trust community each year, and a celebration of the dedication to conserving these cherished places in our communities.

As a first-timer, I was overwhelmed by the diversity of persons attending, persons of all ages and backgrounds all firmly rooted in the land trust community, from board members to college students, lawyers to farmers and all at different stages of their careers or land trust involvement. The days were fast paced and intense and filled with workshops, seminars and plenaries covering a broad range of topics, with multiple networking events in the early morning, lunch breaks and evenings. The magnetic buzz surrounding the Rally and opportunities to learn, share ideas and inspire one another was compelling. I found myself with conflicting schedules as there was always more than one session I could benefit from attending, and exhausted at the end of each 14 hour day. I am already looking forward to next year's Rally [which is here in Providence, RI from September 25 – 28, 2024](#).

Attending the Rally was inspiring, and I urge you to watch some of the plenary speeches which can be found at youtube.com/@LandTrustAlliance. I left with overwhelming gratitude to each person I met and learned from. Our organizations may be in different states or even countries, be of different sizes, but the mechanics of what we do is the same, and at the heart of each of us, is the love of the land we cherish and dedicate ourselves to protecting.

Joy Elvin



Panelists, left to right:

Bonnie Lewkowicz Program manager, Access Northern California, Bay Area Outreach & Recreation Program, Berkeley, CA

Zoraida Lopez-Diago Vice president of development, communication and strategic partnerships at Glynwood, Cold Spring, NY

Wenix Red Elk Public outreach and education specialist for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's Department of Natural Resources, Pendleton, OR

Ashley Demosthenes President & CEO of the Lowcountry Land Trust, Charleston, SC



Jumping worms – the squirming scourge to soil structure

The issue

Jumping worms cause an imbalance to soil nutrition by depleting nutrients, disturbing soil fungi and decreasing the water-holding ability of soil.

Although other nonnative earthworms are advantageous for gardens and compost piles given their ability to break down decaying organic matter, jumping worms dramatically alter the soil profile and nutrient cycling process.

How to identify jumping worms

Jumping worms get their name from their vigorous, sporadic flailing when disturbed. Jumping worms are between four to five inches long and have an iridescent sheen to their bodies.

They have a distinctive opal-white colored band that is located 14 to 15 segments from the head.

Unlike earthworms, which burrow, jumping worms prefer living under stones or plant pots. Jumping worms continue to spread by moving affected plants, soil, compost, mulch, and fishing bait.

Jumping worms turn rich organic soil into small crumbles that resemble coffee grounds or taco meat.

Steps you can take

Do not buy or use jumping worms for bait, vermicomposting (worm composting), or gardening.

Use a reputable producer of bulk mulch and compost. Heat-treating the material to a temperature of 130°F for three days can destroy the jumping worm cocoons.

Check your property for jumping worms using a mustard pour. Mix a gallon of water with 1/3 cup of ground yellow mustard seed and pour into the soil. The mustard pour will not harm plants, but it will drive any jumping worms to the surface where you can easily remove them.

If you have a small population of jumping worms, you can handpick and destroy them by placing them in a bag. Leave the sealed bag of jumping worms in the sun for at least 10 minutes then throw the bag away.

For more information:

[RI Wild Plant Society](#)

[UMass Amherst](#)



Susannah Johnson

Sakonnet – an intern’s dream posting

My name is Helmi Caesar. I come from a small coastal city in the western part of Indonesia called Langsa, in the province of Aceh. Growing up in my hometown, I discovered a love



for the environment while exploring rice fields and mangrove forests. My dedication to environmental conservation arose from witnessing the gradual decline of the mangroves due to relentless deforestation for firewood. I chose to pursue Marine Science as my undergraduate degree in Indonesia, delving into coastal management.

In 2021, I received an Indonesian government scholarship to study for a master’s degree in Environmental Science and Management at the University of Rhode Island. That curriculum led me to an eye-opening internship with **Sakonnet Preservation** starting in July 2023. Here I had the opportunity to assist and learn from the Stewardship Director in monitoring conserved lands, writing reports, and crafting maps.

Little Compton reminds me of my hometown’s sea-meets-farmland environment, creating a captivating landscape, and I have become more aware of how hard the residents try to preserve that character. My internship was transformative. I learned how community involvement is critical in land conservation, and gained knowledge in monitoring vital resources within our lands. This experience laid the groundwork for my dream: returning to Aceh to establish an organization emphasizing community-driven mangrove conservation. I envision a framework that actively engages locals, mirroring the inclusive approach I have experienced at **Sakonnet Preservation**.

Become a member and supporter

- ☐ new membership
- ☐ renewal
- ☐ \$25 individual
- ☐ \$100 sustaining
- ☐ \$500 sponsor
- ☐ \$35 family
- ☐ \$250 patron
- ☐ \$1000+ benefactor
- ☐ I want to be a sustaining member
- Please charge my credit card \$ _____ each month until it expires or I make a change.

We gratefully acknowledge all supporters in our newsletter. If you wish to remain anonymous, please check ☐

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

To make a gift or become a member online visit sakonnetpreservation.org/membership

To make a gift of appreciated stock, or to discuss deferred giving, please call 401-635-8800.

name _____

address _____

city/state/zip _____ phone _____

seasonal phone _____ email _____

special seasonal mailing instructions/dates _____

☐ My check, payable to **Sakonnet Preservation** is enclosed.

Please charge my ☐ visa ☐ mastercard ☐ american express

_____ exp _____ security code _____

Your gifts to Sakonnet Preservation are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Thank you.



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.

sakonnetpreservation.org
401.635.8800

Postal Customer

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.

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

Sakonnet Preservation
P O Box 945
Little Compton, RI 02837