



# SOUTH HERO LAND TRUST

Newsletter

Autumn 2011

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## The Farmers' Table: Cooking Demonstrations at the Farmers' Market Connect Community to Farms & Food



*Matt Bartle explains how to make grilled vegetable sandwiches & fresh pestos from garlic scapes, kale, & herbs*

### Local Chefs Partner with SHLT to Serve Up Local Food

South Hero Land Trust hosted three cooking demonstrations at the farmers' market this summer, serving samples of seasonal, local dishes to community members. Customers were very interested to have a taste and be inspired by fresh market produce.

Eben Hill of the Red Barn Cafe at Allenholm Farm, Matt Bartle of Wally's Place, and Christine Mack of Three Sisters Catering were all well up to the challenge of creating spontaneous, delicious, simple dishes from ingredients donated by the farmers at the South Hero Farmers' Market.

### Building Connections Between Farms, Restaurants, and the Community

The "Farmers' Table" cooking demonstrations serve to connect farmers to customers. Chefs provide samples of simple but

interesting dishes that customers can recreate at home using local, seasonal ingredients. Examples include grilled asparagus, kale pesto, and cantaloupe mint gazpacho. They expose customers to new crops like okra, ground cherries, and squash blossoms. Customers learn about the farms producing meats, vegetables, and fruits in the Champlain Islands, and meet the farmers who are usually out in the fields.

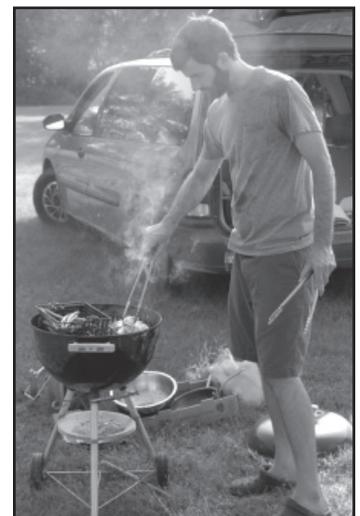
These events also connect farms to restaurants. The local chefs who volunteer their time and skills get to try out local produce, meet the farmers, and experiment with new ingredients.

SHLT hopes that over time these events will increase direct market sales in the Islands, and increase the quantity and diversity of local foods available through restaurants and other local specialty food businesses.

*Many thanks to our chefs and to our farm donors: Blue Heron Farm, Pomykala Farm, Savage Gardens, MR Harvest, the Accidental Farmer, and Canamak Farms.*



*Chrissie Mack slices eggplant for the grill, to wrap around chevre & roasted red peppers*



*Eben Hill grills fresh chicken & asparagus over charcoal & apple wood*

## **SOUTH HERO**



## **LAND TRUST**

a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the farmland, woodland, natural and recreational areas, and open spaces which give South Hero its distinctive quality of life.

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### **Board of Directors**

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# Working to Secure Land for Small, Diversified Family Farm



Jennifer Prince

*Adam, Christine, Delia, and Sadie of Blue Heron Farm*

## **Small Farms Essential to Feeding Local Communities**

The number of small farms in Vermont who are leading the way in direct sales to consumers is increasing rapidly across the state. These family farms are proving that small, diversified farms using creative marketing strategies, play an essential role in providing fresh, healthy foods to the communities near them.

Blue Heron Farm is owned by Christine Bourque and Adam Farris. Their diversified organic vegetable farm on 30 acres in Grand Isle, is an example of this trend. Their fresh produce is supplemented with a small herd of sheep, two cows, and a flock of chickens. They have a 50 member Community Supported Agriculture program, sell at three farmers markets, and sell eggs to area groceries. They also provide fresh eggs and vegetables to "Food for Thought" a summer lunch program for children of low income families in the Islands.

## **Working to Conserve Blue Heron Farm**

With the leadership of Vermont Land Trust (VLT), SHLT has been working with Christine and Adam to enable the couple to purchase the land that they have been farming since 2004. VLT successfully applied for funding from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to fund part of this project! The rest of the money needed to conserve the farm must now be raised from the local Islands Community. If the Land Trusts are successful, the conservation of the land will enable the couple to purchase the farmland at an affordable price.

Blue Heron Farm, like many small, family farms, is critical to a healthy farming system and community. The land conservation community is thrilled at the possibility of being able to secure this farmland for Christine and Adam's operation. We look forward to bringing you more exciting news about this project and how you can help turn this opportunity into reality. For more information about how you can help, call or email Minner at (802) 372- 3786 or minner@shlt.org.



# Local Partnerships Grow: Champlain Islands Agriculture Network

## Partnerships Allow Farmers to Share Resources

Farmers in the Champlain Islands are practical, skilled, and really good at growing crops in our unique environment. They know how to care for the land, and when to plant corn, peppers, or tomatoes. They adapt to changeable weather patterns, and face the risks of early frosts, flooded fields, or harsh winters with flexibility and optimism. They are interested in new ideas, specialty crops, and new agricultural techniques. They are excited to expand and meet new market demands, to cooperate in the production of unique regional foods, and to participate in training new generations of farmers.



*High tunnels protect young peppers & tomatoes at Darby Farm in Alburgh*

Despite their knowledge, adaptability, and excitement, it can be challenging for farmers to access and assimilate new information, while also caring for their farms. Things like planning new marketing ventures or crop plantings, getting advice on hiring employees or interns, and many other tasks can be hard to fit into a farming schedule. The partnerships created by the new Champlain Islands Agriculture Network will help farmers share information and equipment, train each other, enter joint marketing schemes, and strengthen agriculture in the Islands. South Hero Land Trust continues to partner with local farmers, specialty food businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and UVM Extension to build this network.



## Champlain Islands Agriculture Network Defines Mission & Adopts Logo

This past spring the group spent time considering the goals and values that they shared, and created vision and mission statements. Like South Hero Land Trust, they envision a vibrant agricultural community in the Champlain Islands, with strong and sustainable farms and specialty food businesses. They hope that the Islands will be a destination for visitors, and a source of quality agricultural and specialty food products throughout the region.

Some of the goals of the group include: producing high quality agricultural and value-added products in the Champlain Islands, being environmental stewards of the natural resources and working landscape of the Champlain Islands, helping our local community and citizens thrive through improved farm viability, and creating an Islands brand that will increase recognition of our quality Islands products. The network hopes that by working together and sharing resources, they will be able to positively impact the future of agriculture in the Islands.



*MR Harvest of Grand Isle sells fresh tomatoes and tomato sauce at the Farmers' Market*



*The farm stand at Savage Gardens in North Hero has vegetables, berries, & eggs for sale*

# Exploring South Hero Farms: Connecting Young Children to Local Farms

## New Events Connect Children to Local Farms

*The Land, the Farms, and Me* educational program at Folsom School brings South Hero students into the community to explore the natural and agricultural resources of the town. Through place based curriculum in the classrooms, and field trips to local farms, natural areas, and Islands' landmarks, students are able to make connections between what they learn in school and the local community. This encourages stewardship and civic engagement in the students, as well as grounding their education in the real world.

This fall, South Hero Land Trust introduced two new events to connect the community to local farms. The first was for young children, while the second catered to families.

*“This is the best day ever!”*

~ Anna Kinney, age 4

## Young Children Explore Orchard on Scavenger Hunt

On a sunny September day a group of twelve children, mostly preschoolers, and their parents met Minner and Emily at Hackett's Orchard for a special scavenger hunt. With photographic books of plants, animals, and farm equipment, they walked through the trees looking for frogs, butterflies, apples, tractors, and other fun things.

They had a wagon ride with Devon Plumley, watched Ron Hackett feed fresh apples into the apple washing machine, and learned about sorting apples from Kori Caldwell. They had fun exploring the orchard with their parents, and found lots of insects, amphibians, and wildflowers. Linda Kinney reported her granddaughter Anna running past her at one point, when she stopped to say “this is the best day ever!”



*Kids and parents search for frogs in the stream at Hackett's Orchard*



*Ava and Amy Savoy, and Gwen Hobbs enjoy a wagon ride through the orchard*



*Anna Kinney finds a pumpkin that is just her size*

## Family Bicycle Tour of Three South Hero Farms

An intrepid group of bikers braved the cold weather on October 2 to bicycle between three conserved farms. We visited Hackett's Orchard, Allenholm Farm, and Islandacres Farm. We enjoyed a tour of the apple sorting room at Hackett's, a wagon ride at Allenholm, and a visit with the cows and calves at Islandacres. Cider doughnuts, apples, and cheddar cheese finished off a fun farm tour.

These events are one more way to connect the community to local farms and food in South Hero. We hope they will engage a broad group of families in the community.

# Local Farms & Food Bring Us Together: Celebrating 14 Years with Potluck Feast

## Food is a Common Ground for Our Community

Simply sitting around the table with family and friends for a meal can be a conversation starter lately. Growing attention is being paid to the route each ingredient in a meal takes from farm to table. Topics such as food safety, food security, and healthy food choices are being discussed at the local, state, and national level.

We've been making difficult choices about food for years, choosing between low fat, high protein, or whole grain options. Organic, local, and free-range, have now been added to the plethora of possibilities. We are talking about food deserts, loss of agricultural land and lack of training for new farmers, the links between food security, diabetes, and obesity, and the growing population of hungry families in Vermont.

Thank goodness for people like Molly Stevens who are helping us through these conversations in a positive, meaningful way. Molly has long been a part of these discussions through her work as a chef, teacher, and board member of the VT Fresh Network. She reminded us in her speech at our Annual Meeting, that at the center of this dialogue is recognition of the importance of food. Food is our common ground. We all eat. We want to be healthy. We want strong families and communities. Food brings us together, gives us common goals, and common traditions for celebrating, whether through a simple dinner with our family, or an elaborate festival meal.



*Molly Stevens reminds us to see food as common ground*

## Connecting Food and Land through Conservation

SHLT was founded to protect the unique agricultural landscape of South Hero. We believe that the land, like food, is our common ground. At our 14<sup>th</sup> annual celebration this summer, we were graciously hosted by our friends Harrison and Molly Lebowitz at Snow Farm Winery. The scenery was beautiful, the potluck lunch was as abundant and delicious as always. As we came together to celebrate the land we live on and the food we grow here, we were affirmed by Molly's keynote address.

Whether it be the Farmers' Market, the Champlain Islands Agriculture Network, or educational programs like *The Land, the Farms, and Me*, SHLT is working to connect farmers and the community to each other and to the Islands landscape. New farm stands and markets, increasing local food in restaurants, and the success of the farmers' market all indicate the positive progress we are making as a community. Fresh local food continues to be common ground in the Champlain Islands. Thank you all for celebrating food, farming, and another great year of successes with SHLT. Thank you Molly for your vision and optimism!



*Director Bob Chutter catches up with Ron and Celia Hackett of Hackett's Orchard*



*Marley Tipper shows Minner and guests a card trick under the tent*

# Out and About in the Islands

## Events at the 2011 Summer Farmers' Market



*Deb Plumley of Hackett's Orchard demonstrates making fresh applesauce at the South Hero Farmers' Market*



*Brad and Marcy Summers make a purchase from Savage Gardens at the Farmers Market at St. Rose of Lima Church in South Hero*



*A new calf from Islandacres Farm visited the South Hero Farmers' Market on a rainy day, much to the delight of children*



*Delia Farris of Blue Heron Farm enjoys her first copy of the "Champlain Islands Grown" Guide to Agriculture*



*Islanders gather at the farmers' market to buy fresh produce, tasty meals-to-go, special treats, and catch up on the latest news!*



*Naomi King points out a Purple hepatica blossom during our Wildflower Walk, co-hosted by Lake Champlain Land Trust*

## **Bicycling Farm Tour of Conserved Farms in South Hero**



*Families get a tour of the sorting room at Hackett's Orchard, watching the apples float onto the conveyer belt and be sorted*



*Bicycles line the barn at Islandacres Farm, where families were treated to a visit with the cows and new calves*

## **Spring Wildflower Walk at the Landon Community Trail**



*Sophia Wells finds a birds nest and other treasures during our Spring Wildflower Walk on the Landon Community Trail*



*Walkers enjoy the view and dappled spring sunshine through the branches of maple trees at the height of the trail*



LOOK FOR OUR ANNUAL  
MEMBERSHIP DRIVE SOON!

Address Service Requested

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# Champlain Islands Farmers' Market: Winter Markets Begin in October

## Winter Market Calendar

South Hero Congregational Church (South Street)  
10:00 am - 2:00 pm on the following Saturdays:

- October 15
- November 5
- November 19
- December 3
- December 17
- February 4
- March 3
- April 7

*Stop by for children's  
activities, enjoy breakfast or  
lunch, choose special gifts,  
and buy local produce &  
specialty foods*

# WINTER



# FARMERS' MARKET

Don't miss the Columbus Day Harvest Market at  
St Rose of Lima Church, October 8th, 10 am- 2 pm

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