



# **SOUTH HERO LAND TRUST**

*Newsletter*

*Fall 2014*

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## **New Beginnings on the Landon Farm: Welcoming East Shore Vineyard to South Hero**



### **Conserved Farmland Stays Available for Agriculture in the Future**

Over time, farmland, like all land across Vermont, transitions from one family or business to another, changing as markets grow, as families age, and as communities shift. Our goal at South Hero Land Trust, when we conserve farmland, is to keep agricultural land and soils available for farming and affordable for farmers into the future. In a small and tight-knit community like South Hero, it can be sad to see one farm go out of business or a family move away- but conserving farmland gives us hope for the future.

When the Wells family asked the Vermont Land Trust to buy the Landon Farm from them, we were all sad to see them go. But we were eager to lend our local expertise and support to Vermont Land Trust as they looked to the future of the Landon Farm, and began a search for new farmers to keep the land in production.

### **Finding New Farmers for the Landon Farm**

As we reported this spring, VLT quickly began a search for new farmers for the land, sending out a Request for Proposals to potential farmers. During the summer VLT and SHLT reviewed over a dozen proposals, and interviewed several farmers, working hard to find a farm that would be a good match for the Landon Farm and the South Hero community. We are thrilled to share our latest news. East Shore Vineyard has been chosen to lease and eventually buy the Landon Farm!

### **A Local Vineyard Expands to South Hero**

East Shore Vineyard has been based on the east shore of Grand Isle for the past 14 years. Founded by Bob & Linda Livingstone, and now owned by their son-in-law Ben Durant, East Shore Vineyard produces several award-winning wines, including their popular Louise Swenson and Traminette. They currently raise 11 acres of grapes in Grand Isle, and will use the Landon Farm to expand their production significantly.

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# 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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## A Time of Transitions

### A Note from our Executive Director



*Dear Friends and Neighbors,*

*As I sit to write this letter, it hardly feels like fall with the warm temperatures and sunshine, but leaves turning and geese heading south are sure signs that autumn is indeed here! As we transition from summer to fall, I can't help but reflect upon the many changes we have experienced this year.*

*As you'll read in the pages of this newsletter, 2014 has been a year of transitions. South Hero Land Trust and Vermont Land Trust worked hard to bring new farmers to the Landon Farm. This fall East Shore Vineyard has begun to get the land and buildings ready for growing grapes and making wine. It is an exciting time for the community, the farmland, and East Shore Vineyard (please read more about this in the cover article).*

*We have had two major transitions on our Board of Directors. In August we said goodbye to Charlie Tipper, who stepped off the Board after 17 years of hard work and dedication. Charlie has been such an important part of this organization since its founding and we are extremely grateful to him and for his legacy!*

*We are very pleased that Lisa Pendolino has joined our Board. Lisa is a dedicated community member and mother of two school-age children. She has served on the Folsom School Board and has experience with non-profits through her role as Managing Director of the Ben & Jerry's Foundation. We are lucky to have her on the Board. Welcome Lisa!*

*There is another big change ahead for me personally. I'm so excited to announce that I will be having a baby in December! I'll be taking some time off this winter, leaving SHLT in the very capable hands of Emily Alger. I'll be back after my maternity leave, ready to dig in for another great year!*

*With all of these transitions, we've had an opportunity to stop and take stock in what we have. I feel incredibly fortunate for the support we receive from this community! Together we are protecting a special landscape and creating a vibrant economy rooted in the land, farms, and people of South Hero.*

*Thank you for making this important work possible.*



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Wine is a value-added agricultural product, and East Shore Vineyard will make use of the unique climate and soils of the Champlain Islands to produce wines distinct to the region and vineyard. They hope to grow about 50 acres of grapes in South Hero, making it one of the largest vineyards in the state. "I really can't think of a better place for us to expand our vineyard. The soils, topography, infrastructure, and even the name of the road (East Shore Road), fit our operation perfectly! We are feeling a little like Cinderella these days. Now comes the hard work of getting the farm up and ready for pressing and growing grapes. We are up for the challenge," said Ben Durant, after hearing the news that their proposal had been selected.



*Holly, Ben, and Peter- three of the great ESV team*

Welcoming a second vineyard to South Hero will help make this community and the Champlain Islands a destination for agri-tourists and wine enthusiasts- with Snow Farm Vineyard also producing grape wines and Forbidden Orchards producing ice wine in South Hero, and Hall Home Place producing ice cider, hard cider, and apples wines in Isle la Motte. As Dave Lane of Snow Farm says, "we welcome East Shore Vineyard to the community. We believe that it will be good for business to have another vineyard in South Hero, good for the orchards and other agriculture related businesses as well. More critical mass of value-added business to draw consumers to the Islands is a win-win for us all!"

Eventually East Shore Vineyard plans to make, age, bottle, and sell the wine at the new farm, as well as have a tasting room. This fall they are moving into the new space and getting it ready for the 2015 growing season. Please join us in welcoming them to South Hero!

## News From Our Farmers: Farmers Market Winter Schedule

Stock up on fall vegetables, local meats and cheeses, maple syrup, jams, jellies, pickles, and more. Find unique, handmade gifts for your family and friends- from goat milk soaps or herbal teas to jewelry and hand spun yarns. Enjoy a meal, a cup of coffee, or a sweet treat in the warm, cheerful marketplace of the Champlain Islands Winter Farmers' Market!



\*\*\* Saturday, October 11th \*\*\*  
Saturday, October 25th  
Saturday, November 8th

Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>  
Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>

Winter Markets are held from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
South Hero Congregational Church, South Street, South Hero

\*\*\* Special Harvest Festival Market on October 11 \*\*\*  
held at St. Rose of Lima Church, Rte 2, South Hero

# Conservation, Community & Partnership: Celebrating 17 Years with a Great Partner

We were so pleased to host our Annual Celebration with Vermont Land Trust this year! We have partnered with VLT on eight conservation projects in South Hero, beginning with our very first project at Allenholm Farm in 1997. Our latest collaboration was the purchase of Sawyer Bay Farm, and the subsequent conservation and sale of that property to Health Hero Farm in late 2013. Both organizations were excited to be in the Champlain Islands to celebrate our long partnership and the completion of that project. We enjoyed a beautiful summer day on the farm with our neighbors and friends from SHLT and VLT.

There were morning fieldtrips to area farms, natural areas, and geologic sites. Allenholm Farm, Islandacres Farm, and Hackett's Orchard all hosted visitors from around the state. The four farmers at Health Hero Farm gave a tour of their fields and barns, explaining some of the soil building and water conservation practices that make their beef and vegetable operation a great match for that land.

We enjoyed a delicious picnic lunch catered by Cook Sisters Catering, a South Hero business. The meal almost exclusively featured ingredients from local Islands farms and businesses. Blue Heron Farm, Darby Farm, Grand Isle Pasta, Health Hero Farm, Islandacres Farm, Island Homemade Ice Cream, Pomykala Farm, Savage Gardens, Wally's Place, and White's Blueberries all contributed ingredients. Special thanks to Cook Sisters, Hackett's Orchard, Grafton Village Cheese, VT Creamery, VT Smoke & Cure, and VT Tent Company for generous donations.



*Enjoying the delicious picnic lunch while listening to Keynote Speaker Travis Marcotte*

VLT Director Gil Livingston and SHLT Director Minner Hobbs spoke, along with VLT Board Chair Charlie Sincerbeaux and SHLT Board President Bob Chutter. It was great to hear about the successes of each organization over the last year! Over ice cream and apple crisp, we took time to listen to keynote speaker Travis Marcotte, Executive Director of the Intervale Center. He spoke wisely on the importance of partnership and immense value of building relationships with the communities that surround us as well as across the state and across sectors. By sharing our unique strengths and abilities- our knowledge, creativity, hard work, determination, and more- we can be more innovative, more capable, and take on bigger projects and ideas than ever before.

As a non-easement holding land trust, we are well aware of the value of creative partnership. Travis' message was a clear affirmation of our work. SHLT does all conservation projects in partnership with other land trusts and conservation organizations. VLT is a frequent partner on farmland projects. We are equally grateful for and enthusiastic about our other steadfast conservation partners, including Lake Champlain Land Trust, VT Housing and Conservation Board, and the VT Agency of Agriculture. We look forward to many more years working together!



*Charlie Tipper and Minner Hobbs with keynote speaker Travis Marcotte (center)*



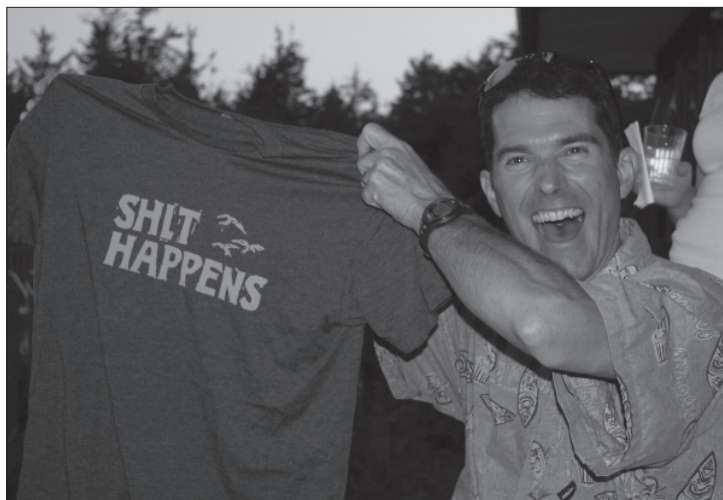
*Chrissie Mack (second from the left) of Cook Sisters Catering with some of her great team!*

# Thank You Charlie!

## Honoring a Founding Director of SHLT

Over 17 years ago, mounting pressure on local farms put a spotlight on the importance of South Hero's agricultural heritage, and Charlie Tipper approached a group of South Hero community members about the need to protect our irreplaceable land base for agriculture, wildlife habitat, clean water, and outdoor recreation. Knowing South Hero was home to a unique community and special way of life, Charlie and the rest of the newly formed South Hero Land Trust Board (Ray Allen, Leigh Cole, Ohmer Corbin, Mitzi Johnson, Tim Maxham, and Kathleen Swanson), got to work.

Today, South Hero Land Trust has conserved over 1,700 acres in South Hero, has over 600 members, and is engaged with supporting farm viability across the Champlain Islands. Charlie's leadership and dedicated support have been essential to our success, and to the fun we've had along the way!



*Charlie Tipper holds up one of the new South Hero Land Trust tee-shirts we had printed in his honor!*

In August, Charlie stepped down from the board. "It has been an honor to work with such an amazing group of people who all love the wonderful place that is South Hero," said Charlie recently. Though he is no longer on the board, he will continue to be involved in SHLT and we hope to see him often- biking in South Hero with his family, enjoying the waterfront in Burlington, and stopping by the Farmers' Market! In honor of Charlie's 17 years of hard work and good spirits, SHLT has donated a two year share of of Health Hero Farm's Vegetable CSA to CIDER's senior meal program. Thank you Charlie!

## Farm & Food Update: Lake Champlain Islands Agriculture Network

The farmers, chefs, bakers, and other food business entrepreneurs of the Islands who are members of the Lake Champlain Islands Agriculture Network just wrapped up a second wonderful summer of farm dinners. The network exists to support a forum for farmers and other business owners to exchange ideas, learn from and support each other, encourage innovation through collaboration and partnership, connect to consumers as an agricultural community, and build markets for Islands agricultural projects.



*A couple of four-legged visitors at the Snow Farm dinner.*

The network partners work hard to reach these goals, and the "Savor the Islands" Farm dinners are one part of their work. The goal of these dinners was three-fold: to connect the local community and visitors to Islands farms and food businesses through fun, delicious, and educational events; to increase local buying in the community by connecting consumers to the products and farms of the Islands; and to support and facilitate local food purchases by Food for Thought- which directly benefits kids at risk of hunger in our county.

Health Hero Farm, Hackett's Orchard, Snow Farm, and Blue Heron Farm all hosted events for the network this summer. Each event featured local seasonal ingredients prepared by network members, served outside in the farm fields, alongside farm tours, live music, and fun! Thanks to all of the hosts and guests for participating!

# What happens in South Hero... A Season of Great SHLT Events





## A Few Other Images from Around Town



1) Spring Wildflower Hunt at Round Pond State Park with Lake Champlain Land Trust, 2) Scooping Island Homemade Ice Cream at the Green-Up Day BBQ, 3 & 4) Meet the Lambs at Paradise Bay Farm, 5) Michael, the Accidental Farmer, at our cooking demo at the Farmers' Market, 6) Making dumplings at the final Farmers' Table Cooking Class of the spring. 7) SHLT & VLT staff worked hard to plan our Annual Celebration, 8) Director Dick Heilman and member Tom Williams at the Annual Celebration, 9) Sunflowers at Crescent Bay Farm, part of UVM Extension's biofuels project, 10) A frog on the trail at Round Pond State Park, 11) Eric Noel moving the cows to new pasture at Health Hero Farm, 12) Amanda of Savage Gardens sells fresh eggs and vegetables to customers at the Farmers' Market.

# FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER



Address Service Requested

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## Annual Membership Drive!

*Our membership drive will be arriving in your mailbox shortly.*

*We hope you'll join us for another amazing year of land conservation, community events, educational programs, and supporting local farms in South Hero.*



## Please Renew Your Support Today!