



SOUTH HERO LAND TRUST

Newsletter

Fall 2018



Middle school students repair a picnic table and clear cattails at the pond behind the school. Photo credit: Rob Swanson

Making Learning Accessible and Real

“I like to take students outside to find math everywhere they look, to find their consonant blends or spelling words, or to see physics and kinetic energy in action.” Michael Moretti, who prefers to be called Moretti, has been working with teachers and students at Folsom Community and Education Center for the past year, helping teachers find ways to incorporate movement, fresh fruits and vegetables, and other healthy choices into their classroom activities. (Moretti is an advocate with RiseVT, and is embedded in two Grand Isle County schools.)

“Some adults argue that it will be too distracting to be outside...” says Moretti, “but being in the world they live in gives them the opportunity to apply what they learn to their world, to help make it more accessible and real, and

I like to take students outside to find math everywhere they look.

**~Moretti,
RiseVT Advocate**

continued on page 3

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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Master Naturalist Program Launches

Day One of the VT Master Naturalist: South Hero Program took place in September. If you are interested in joining in, email Guy Maguire at guy@shlt.org.



Master Naturalist candidates explore Lessor's Quarry with teachers Stephen Howe and Alicia Daniel



Master Naturalist candidates take a break from looking for fossils during a private tour of Eagle Camp

continued from page 1

see how what they learn matters in their life instead of just in a classroom.”

Helping students engage with the world outside of the classroom is one of the central goals of the work that South Hero Land Trust is doing at Folsom right now. With funding from the Lake Champlain Basin Program, RiseVT, and Outdoor Gear Exchange, we are partnering with the South Hero Recreation Commission and teachers at Folsom School to expand the South Hero Recreation Park (which abuts the school playground) into an outdoor classroom for students at the school as well as for families across our community.



A student and volunteer saw boards for garden benches. Photo credit: Rob Swanson

A Non-Traditional Space

This will not be a traditional classroom space, with benches and white boards. Rather, we are attempting to support teachers and parents in exploring the natural world outdoors through learning stations, exploration tools (like binoculars, magnifying glasses, and tracking kits), and activities for learning outdoors.

“I am really excited about our work with Folsom to develop an outdoor classroom because for me, the outdoors was where I felt comfortable, and where I opened up to learning.”

*~Guy Maguire,
South Hero Land Trust*

the school playground. And a poetry station has been built in the park. Further learning stations will be built this fall. When complete, there will several activities to go along with each station, along with Outdoor Exploration toolkits for the classroom. Plus, this summer we provided special Explorer Backpacks filled with books, science tools, and art supplies to the South Hero Library, which anyone can borrow to explore the classroom or any outdoor space year-round.

Students Build their Own Classroom

And we are working with students at the school to build the learning stations too! As part of the annual Middle School Day of Service, three teams of middle school students headed outside to work on the outdoor classroom space. One group cleared brush and branches along the Water Wigglers trail so that students will be able to explore the woods. A second group cleared cattails from the edges of the pond and repaired picnic tables so that students can learn about pond ecology this fall and skate in the winter. And the third group built four new benches in the Folsom School & Community Garden. We can't wait to take the kids outside again to learn in this great space they helped build.

Learning about Hunger while Helping their Neighbors



Two students hold up the corn they picked at Pomykala Farm. Photo credit: Rob Swanson

A Different Kind of Schoolday

On September 7th a group of middle school students from South Hero did something a little different. It was a Wednesday afternoon, and instead of being in the classroom, studying the formation of the planet, or learning the basics of algebra, they got on a bus and rode to Pomykala Farm in Grand Isle. They were there to meet Koi Boynton and Hannah Baxter, two gleaners with the Healthy Roots Collaborative, to harvest corn on the farm.

Hannah had spoken to Ben Pomykala two days earlier. Ben said that they had finished harvesting the sweet corn for the year, but there was still plenty in the fields. It was a little small, but perfectly good eating. Would Hannah bring some volunteers to pick the corn and bring it to one of the food shelves in the region?

Hannah knew this would be a perfect job for these students. It would be a great way for them to learn more about where the food they eat comes from, and to get a better understanding of some of the challenges that families in our community face, like buying enough food to get through the month. The students stripped the field clean, packing the corn into boxes. The corn was then taken to Islands in the Sun and Saint Amadeus Church in Alburgh, and from there to our neighbors' tables.

“We are treating people with kindness and compassion and helping them meet a basic need of caring for their children.”

**~Kaight Althoff,
Food for Thought**

Harvesting for our Neighbors

The Healthy Roots Collaborative (HRC) has been working with farmers in Grand Isle and Franklin Counties to harvest extra fruits and vegetables and distribute them to charitable food sites in our community for three years now. South

Hero Land Trust has been a member of the Collaborative, and worked with Collaborative staff and volunteers on this program since it began-making connections with Grand Isle County farms, charitable food organizations like Food for Thought and CIDER, and local volunteers to help with the harvest. HRC worked with 10 farms this year, and distributed food to six sites in our county, serving primarily families with young children and seniors- the two most vulnerable populations in our region.

As Kaight Althoff, co-founder of the Food for Thought Program says, this work is an important part of being good neighbors. “We are treating people with kindness and compassion and helping them meet a basic need of caring for their children when school isn’t in session. So many kids receive free lunch during the school year, and when school is out, Food for Thought is there to fill in the gap and help families.” For

many families, fresh fruits and vegetables are the first thing they stop buying when their budget gets tight, and the gleaning program and Food for Thought are working to overcome this. Kaight remembers a donation from Island Blueberries that went to families last summer, and one of the mothers was so excited. She said “I always walk by the blueberries in the store because they are so expensive, but today we will have blueberries!”

Farmers are the Real Heroes

Hannah Baxter, Gleaning Coordinator for HRC, says that most farms have “unofficially woven giving back to the community into their business plans,” and many have giving to the Vermont Food Bank or local food shelves for many years. HRC is there to make that easier, by harvesting the produce with volunteers, and delivering it right to the recipient sites.

Pomykala Farm has been a critical partner in Grand Isle. They were hesitant to have HRC come to the farm at first, they were already donating to the Food Bank. “But when they saw the volume of vegetables that HRC could take, and the effort we made to distribute it, all while making it easy for them...” says Hannah. “they became our most regular partners. Hannah wants to be clear- HRC is providing a great service to farmers and charitable food sites, but the farmers are the ones donating the produce- it is their generosity that is feeding our neighbors.

One of Hannah’s favorite parts of the program is getting kids out on the farm to glean. She helps organize field trips for local schools and camps. She says it is a great learning opportunity, as well as a chance for kids to make a difference in their own communities. There is no better way for kids to learn about hunger, and where their food comes from, than gleaning on the farm. And if they can do something about hunger in their own community at the same time, the message is that much more powerful. Hannah says that the kids ask a lot of questions and that you can “really see them thinking” about what it means to help each other. South Hero Land Trust is proud to be part of this important work in Grand Isle County!

Want to Know More?

If you’d like to learn more about the Healthy Roots Collaborative Gleaning Program visit <http://healthyrootsvt.org/what-we-do/> or contact Hannah Baxter, Gleaning Coordinator, at healthyrootsgleans@gmail.com.



*Counselors from YWCA Camp Hochelaga glean at Pomykala Farm.
Photo credit: Hannah Baxter*

“When they saw the volume of vegetables that HRC could take, and the effort we made to distribute it, all while making it easy for them...”

*~Hannah Baxter,
Gleaning Coordinator*

Thank You Volunteers!

From Green Up Day to Friends of South Hero Trails, volunteers make our work possible. If you are interested in learning about volunteer opportunities, contact Guy Maguire at guy@shlt.org.



Weeding beets planted by middle schoolers for the Annual Pasta Dinner in October



Planting the new Pollinator Garden, which will be part of the Outdoor Classroom



Volunteers cleared invasive Garlic Mustard from the Landon Community Trail



Repairing the fence line at the Landon Community Trail with Jeff from Lake Champlain Land Trust

Fall Events Calendar

October 6 Champlain Islands Farmers' Market Harvest Fest

Join local farmers and crafters for the grand finale of the 2018 outdoor season, with live music by Fertile Soil, and special harvest activities. All of your favorite vendors will be there. RiseVT will be back to engage us all in fun games designed to get you moving in the crisp fall air, and SHLT will be making fresh gazpacho on the smoothie bike!

10:00 AM-3:00 PM behind St. Rose of Lima in South Hero. Free and open to all.

October 9 Nature Ramble with Naturalist Chuck Hulse

Join us to explore the forests, fields, and shorelines of South Hero with an eye for exploration, a curious mind, and a desire to learn more about the world around us. October's walk will be at Allen Point, exploring the shoreline of South Hero.

5:30-7:00 PM. Free and open to all. No RSVP necessary.

October 13 Fall Photography Workshop with Green Mountain Exposure

We'll visit farmsteads, forests, and fields to photograph South Hero's most beautiful scenery in prime morning light, and spend our time practicing exercises that fuse natural history with composition and camera technique. Participants will leave with beautiful photographs and a powerful new approach to walking in the woods.

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Cost: \$45 for SHLT members, \$50 for non-members.

November 8 Growing the Working Landscape Conference

The Healthy Roots Collaborative is hosting a one day workshop for farmers' around the region, with topics such as raising grass fed beef, hemp, sustainable forestry, farm finance, and more. Learn more and sign up at <http://healthyrootsvt.org/event/growing-the-working-landscape/>.

Visit the South Hero Land Trust events page to learn more and sign up: www.shlt.org/events/



Love being outdoors?

Want to learn about the natural history of the Champlain Islands?

Looking for a great way to give back to your community?

Join the Vermont Master Naturalist South Hero Program!

A year long course (4 day long workshops) covering the natural history of South Hero from plate tectonics to modern agriculture, followed by guided volunteer projects with South Hero Land Trust. Learn more and apply at www.shlt.org/master-naturalist

FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER



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Save the Date!

Explore the new outdoor classroom and learning stations at the South Hero Recreation Park

Saturday,
November 10

more details will be posted soon at www.shlt.org/events