



SOUTH HERO LAND TRUST

Newsletter

Spring 2019

The Woods are Worth Protecting: Childhood in South Hero



Exploring the woods on Fox Hill at Crescent Bay Farm

I've shared some stories of my own childhood in the Champlain Islands over the years. Running around in the woods, playing in the brook, gardening with my mother, climbing trees with my brother. Those years spent outdoors taught me so much about the natural world and myself, and set me on the path to doing the work I do today: working with the South Hero community to protect the land that makes our community so special and helping folks get outside to enjoy it.

I received a delightful email last spring after our "Meet the Lambs" event at Paradise Bay Farm. Upon receiving an invitation to the event, South Hero Land Trust member Martha Cushman was flooded with memories of summers spent on Paradise Bay when she was a young child. She wrote to me to share some of those memories.

Between 1938 and 1984, Mrs. Cushman's family rented a cottage from the McConnell family on the southeastern tip of Cedar Cliff, high above Lake Champlain. One of the memories she shared with me was of going to collect their mail and milk. She wrote that she would "walk from the camp across the beach on the low end of the bay, turn

continued on page 2

I would very often take this walk with Mrs. McConnell, who had kindly consented to introduce me to the wildflowers along the way so that I could earn one of my Girl Scout merit badges.

~Martha Cushman

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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left at Mr. Richards' house, head up the hill through a wooded area and finally come out into the meadow and sunshine. We would then walk to the road... on the north corner was an old barn with silo, and on the south corner [of the barn] was the mailbox holding the milk." Mrs. Cushman then wrote, "I would very often take this walk with Mrs. McConnell, who had kindly consented to introduce me to the wildflowers along the way so that I could earn one of my Girl Scout merit badges."

There was something magical about this memory, eliciting for me hot summer days, dusty roads, and wildflowers along the verge. It is the magic of childhood, and more specifically, of a childhood spent outdoors.

Having read this lovely memory, I wondered if other South Hero Land Trust members would be willing to share their own stories with me. Over the next several months I was lucky enough to collect some wonderful memories.



Trillium blossom along the Landon Community Trail

Richard Bingham and his family began coming to South Hero in 1938, at the end of the Great Depression. They rented a cottage next door to Martha Cushman's family. He says that "life at Camp Cedar Cliffs was just wonderful." There were three families who came every summer for many years. The Bingham's would arrive around Memorial Day, when the lake was still cold. It would be a big event to get into the water right away.

The McConnells had two boathouses and two outboard motorboats, as well as a big inboard boat called the 'Merrimack.'"

Each summer the three families would make an

event of taking a boat to Cedar Island or Savage Island for a picnic. Savage Island had a sandy beach where they would hunt for "moonstones," gathering all the "little polished quartz pebbles tumbled by the sand." They would go fishing and catch huge buckets of perch, clean them, roll them in cornmeal, and have a big fish dinner.

We'd bike to White's Beach and swim all summer long. We'd take a piece of driftwood and float far out into the bay.

~Steve Robinson

Thirty years later, Steve Robinson was a farm boy in South Hero. "We'd bike to White's Beach and swim all summer long. We'd take a piece of driftwood and float far out into the bay." Steve also remembers playing Little League baseball, camping on Fox Hill with the Boy Scouts in winter to earn his Polar Bear merit badge, and duck hunting with the principal of Folsom School.

And in another thirty years, Silva Warren was growing up in the South Hero woods and fields. Silva wrote to me from Mount Holyoke College, where she is in her senior year. “I loved being a kid in South Hero. I spent a lot of time playing outside all year in our yard, playing games, building snow forts and creatures, playing in the sprinkler, and eating food out of our garden.” In the winter she would build tiny homes for animals and have snowball fights with her sister and dad. Summers were spent at White’s Beach with other South Hero families. “I remember playing in the water until I literally turned purple, getting out, and then getting back in as soon as I could stand it.”



Time to be wild and explore the woods and other natural places is an important part of childhood in a rural community like South Hero.

Silva was one of the first students to participate in “the Land, the Farms, and Me,” a place-based agriculture and nature education program that South Hero Land Trust helped create at Folsom Community & Education Center.

For nine years she and her classmates spent time at local farms and natural areas, learning from farmers, foresters, and community members. “The best part of being a kid in South Hero was all of my access to the outdoors. I feel very lucky to have had the lake and a wonderful backyard, as well as all the other natural spaces.”

The Land, the Farms, and Me is one way that South Hero Land Trust has helped make sure that children in South Hero are still experiencing the magic of a childhood outdoors. The community trails we have protected and built help ensure that children and their families have access to outdoor spaces near home for exploration, recreation, and learning.

Beginning with the Round Pond Natural Area in 2001, and looking forward to the opening of the Tracy Woods Trails soon- we work hard to make sure that these spaces are protected for generations to come. Through our Naturalist Walks and other programs, we encourage community members to get outside and explore the land with us. We are proud to work with the local community to protect the places where children and community members of all ages get outdoors, and experience the magic of exploration and play in the woods.



Two girls have fun and learn to “see” trees in a new way on Fox Hill at Crescent Bay Farm.

The best part of being a kid in South Hero was all of my access to the outdoors.

~Silva Warren

These stories from Martha Cushman, Richard Bingham, Steve Robinson, and Silva Warren show how access to nature- whether in your own backyard or to the beautiful lake surrounding us- is an essential part of childhood in South Hero, and something well worth protecting. Thank you for being a part of this journey, and protecting these special places with South Hero Land Trust.

What are your favorite memories of childhood, whether in South Hero or another special place? I would love to hear your stories. Email me at emily@shlt.org.

From Learning in the Garden to Learning at the Farm

Learning from the Garden

Last spring the fifth and sixth grade science classes at Folsom school studied root vegetables as part of a project on plant growth and scientific experiments. At the end of the unit, they decorated three raised beds in the school garden and planted carrots, beets, and potatoes with South Hero Land Trust. The third and fourth grade learned about pollinators and planted a salad garden with us.

The vegetables harvested in the summer were donated to Food for Thought, a program of the South Hero Congregational Church that provides boxes of healthy food to low income families during school vacations. The vegetables harvested by the students in the fall- boxes of tomatoes, peppers, and basil- were used by the school meal program.

South Hero Land Trust staff and teachers at the school are excited to use this community garden as a learning space as well as a food production space. Students do math while building beds and planting seeds, they learn about the role of pollinators by watching the bees and other insects, and they learn history and geography from planting vegetables from around the world.



A student weeds the strawberry bed in the school garden.

Beyond the Garden

The garden is not the only way South Hero students are learning from the land and community. They participate in field trips to local farms and natural areas, often hosted in partnership with South Hero Land Trust. From maple sugar walks at Crescent Bay Farm, to visiting the dairy barns at Islandacres Farm, to harvesting apples at Hackett's Orchard and Allenholm Farm- students are learning real world skills from local community members. All of these activities are part of Farm to School, a national movement to incorporate local food, farms, and community into our schools.



Students learned about sunflowers and biofuels with UVM Extension at Crescent Bay Farm during a past field trip.

What is Farm to School Anyway?

As the National Farm to School Network puts it, "farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools." Students at schools with strong programs have increased access to healthy, local foods as well as learning opportunities through school gardens, cooking lessons, field trips, and more. Each school program is a little different, but in Vermont, schools are working in three areas. In the cafeteria we are increasing purchases of local foods and supporting healthy meal choices. In the classroom we are using farms, gardens, and other outside spaces to enhance education. And in the community we are building connections to local

farmers and community members who can help teach our kids.

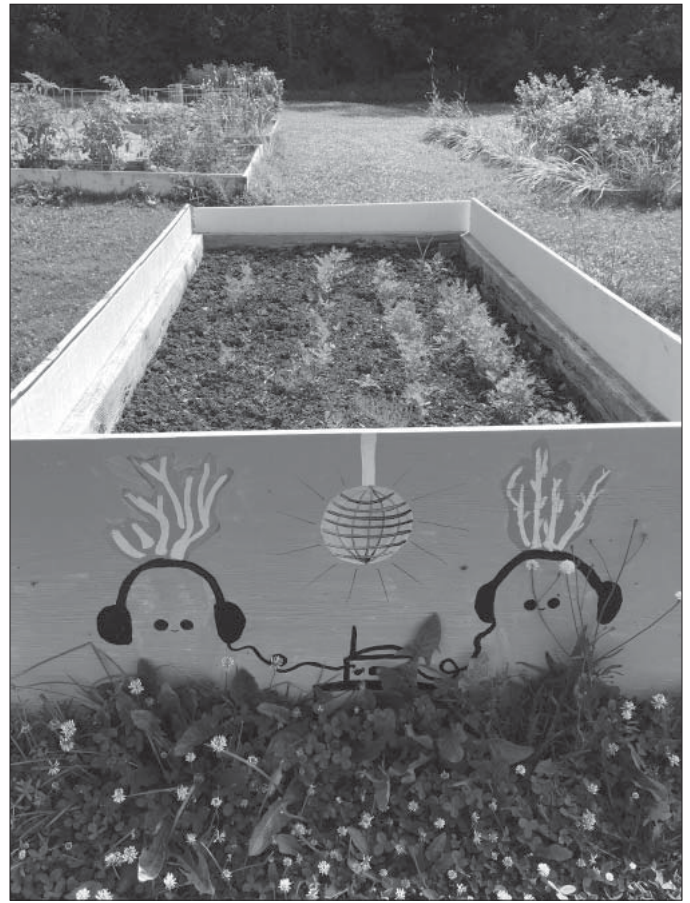
A New Partnership in Farm to School

South Hero Land Trust is excited to be expanding our Farm to School program in the upcoming year through our partnership with the Healthy Roots Collaborative. The Collaborative has been doing farm to school work with several Franklin County Schools, and by working together we hope to reach more schools across Grand Isle and Franklin County.

We will be working with schools across our two counties to get more local foods into the cafeterias, engage students in taste tests and cooking lessons, plan farm field trips, plant school gardens, set up farm mentor programs, develop lesson plans based on using the farm and natural resources in each community, and more. We'll also provide training for teachers, staff, and community volunteers.

This new partnership will allow us to reach more schools and more students, to support more local farms, and to support strong school-community connections in our region.

If you are excited about Farm to School in your community, please get in touch. We'd love to help you become a volunteer!



Middle school students decorated three raised beds for growing carrots, beets, and potatoes.

Celebrating Memories on the Landon Community Trail



The new bench on the Landon Community Trail celebrates farmer Erik Wells, and was created as a spot where we can all share our love of adventures in the woods.

Last fall we celebrated the memory of farmer Erik Wells with a new memorial bench on the Landon Community Trail- a trail Erik helped build overlooking a farm he loved deeply.

The bench is located at the highest point of land on the Landon Farm (now home to Pigasus Meats) and has views of Round Pond Natural Area, Lake Champlain, and the Green Mountains. We hope that visitors to the trail will enjoy a brief rest, and a place to share their stories and memories of time spent in the woods.

The bench was designed, built, and donated by SHLT member Michael Alger- thank you! The trail is open every day from dawn-dusk for walking, snowshoeing, and skiing. We hope to see you on the trails soon.

Exploring South Hero through Wind, Rain, and Snow!

Students in South Hero Land Trust's VT Master Naturalist Program have embarked on a year long investigation of the natural history of South Hero and the Champlain Islands. Beginning with the geology and landforms of the Island; covering the glacial history of the region; and moving on to the arrival of plants, animals, and humans in Vermont- the students have been outdoors in all weather. They will be covering modern history and the flora and fauna of today this spring, and then take on volunteer projects to build and share their learning over the summer. Check back in the fall for updates on their adventure!

Many thanks to our instructors in the program: Alicia Daniel of the VT Master Naturalist Program, geochemist Stephen Howe of the University at Albany, hydro-geologist Craig Heindel of Waite-Heindel Environmental Management, and ethnobotanist and retired UVM professor Kit Anderson. Thanks also to the Lake Champlain Basin Program for funding.



Master Naturalist students learn to dig soil pits with hydro-geologist Craig Heindel in November.



Master Naturalist students explore the Landon Community trail with ethnobotanist Kit Anderson in February.



Moretti smells the citrusy scent of the sulfur yellow buds of a young bitternut hickory tree along the Landon Community Trail.



Julia shows rocks with fossils to her classmates during an exploration of Lessor's Quarry with geochemist Stephen Howe.

Dreaming of Spring at South Hero Land Trust: Upcoming Events

March 22 Wally's Place's 11th Birthday Celebration & SHLT Fundraiser

Wally's Place is turning 11. Help celebrate this exciting anniversary and support SHLT too! The crew at Wally's Place will have fun activities happening all day, and Emily and Guy will be on hand to talk about SHLT's latest projects. Wally's Place will donate 25% of profits from the day to SHLT to support land conservation and farm viability projects in our community. Plus, get your photo taken in the Wally's Place bagel photo booth, enter the annual raffle, and enjoy some birthday cake!
6:00 AM- 2:00 PM. Wally's Place: Bagel and Deli, Rte 2, South Hero. Open to all!

March 23 Maple Open House at Crescent Bay Farm

Head to Crescent Bay Farm to see the sugar bush in action. Activities include a walking tour up Fox Hill with farmer Nick Lane, as well as a special maple exploration of the sugar bush for kids with SHLT Programs Director Guy Maguire. Both start at 10:00. Afterwards, head over to the sugar house to enjoy a taste of maple syrup, maple activities, a tour of the sugar making operation, and to see the fresh sap become sweet maple syrup. Meet at Snow Farm for the walk and kids' activities, or head straight to the sugar house at Crescent Bay Farm to watch the sugar-making. The sugar house will be open all weekend.
10:00-11:30 AM Saturday: maple walk and children's activities. 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Saturday & Sunday: sugar house open. Crescent Bay Farm/Snow Farm, West Shore Road, South Hero. Free and open to all. Email guy@shlt.org to RSVP for the walk or kids' activities.

April 28 Annual Spring Wildflower Walk

Join nature-enthusiast and SHLT board member Chuck Hulse on a tour of spring wildflowers along the Landon Community Trail, and hunt for these ephemeral spring beauties. This annual walk is a perennial favorite and not one to miss! Chuck wrote an e-book on wildflowers of the Landon trail, which is available on our website, check it out before the walk or anytime.
9:00-11:00 AM. Landon Community Trail, Landon Road, South Hero. Free and open to all. Email guy@shlt.org to RSVP.

May 4 Green Up Day

Join your friends and neighbors on May 4th for this annual community clean-up effort. South Hero Land Trust is organizing a Green Up of the beaches, streets and trails that make South Hero special. There will be volunteer options for the whole family, and all volunteers are invited to our free "Thank You" BBQ at the Folsom Playground afterwards. An hour or two of your time will make a huge difference in cleaning up our community for spring and summer recreation.
Get the details on all the fun at www.shlt.org/events. Sign up by emailing guy@shlt.org or calling 802-372-3786.

May 4 Play Day & Grand Opening at the Water Wigglers Learning Path

Join us to explore the new Water Wigglers Learning Path in the South Hero Recreation Park behind Folsom Community & Education Center. There will be fun activities for the kids and short guided walks along the trails. Guided walks will take place at 11:30 and 12:30, and self-guided walks will take place throughout the day. All the fun will take place at the same time as the Green Up Day "Thank You" BBQ, which will be held this year to celebrate our great Green Up Day and Trail Volunteers. We hope you will join us to check out the trail!
11:00 AM- 1:30 PM at the South Hero Recreation Park. Free and open to all.

May 31 Save the Date! South Hero Land Trust Annual Celebration

Save the date: join us at Snow Farm to celebrate the land and honor the people who make South Hero's community special. We're mixing things up with an evening celebration this year, and there will plenty of good food, good company, the latest SHLT news. We'll be in touch with more information soon, but please save the date for this annual celebration.
More details to come, check our website this spring to learn more.

Visit the South Hero Land Trust events page to learn more and sign up for newsletter and event invitations at www.shlt.org/events!

SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER



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*Play Day @ the new
Water Wiggler's
Learning path*

Join Us!

Explore the new Water Wiggler's Learning Trail and learning stations at the South Hero Recreation Park, with activities for all ages!

*Saturday,
May 4th*

*more details to be found
inside and at
www.shlt.org/events*