



SOUTH HERO LAND TRUST

Newsletter

Winter 2011

Building Bridges: Planning for the Future of Agriculture in Grand Isle County

Community Organizations and Farms Team Up

South Hero Land Trust is continually working to promote farm viability and connect the community with local farms and food. In the last year we have been partnering with Grand Isle County farmers to strengthen the regional agricultural economy. The first phase of this project has been an agricultural inventory of the county and peer-to-peer networking opportunities for farmers and food business owners. We are building momentum for the next phase of new projects and partnerships.

Ruth Wallman of the Lake Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce and Dr. Heather Darby of Darby Farm and UVM Extension have partnered with SHLT throughout this work. Recently we held the first two peer-to-peer meetings for farmers, which were enthusiastically attended by over 30 area farmers and community members. These meetings will give farmers the opportunity to learn from each other, collaborate on new projects, and build a strong agricultural network across the county.



Over 35 farmers gather to view crop trial plots at Borderview Farm

Farmers Gather to Learn about Crop Trials at Borderview Farm

Roger and Claire Rainville hosted the initial meeting at Borderview Farm in Alburgh. Roger and Heather Darby have been conducting field trials around Vermont and have test plots in Alburgh for several varieties of grains, oilseed crops for biodiesel, feedstocks, and more. They are researching the best soil types and growing conditions for each. They hope to identify varieties of crops that could provide new sources of income for Vermont farmers and feed growing demand for local food sources. Farmers were interested in the results for new crops like hops and wheat, as well as opportunities for growing and processing oilseed crops.



Farmers brave the rain to learn about different grape varieties at Snowfarm Winery

Snow Farm Winery Hosts Discussion of Agritourism

Harrison Lebowitz of Snow Farm Winery hosted the second meeting. Snow Farm has made a practice of welcoming the public onto their vineyard through wine tastings, local food events, summer concerts, bike tours, and more. After touring the vineyards and processing facilities, the farmers discussed opportunities for agritourism in the Champlain Islands and ways of collaborating with each other through growing and marketing projects.

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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South Hero Land Trust Supports Statewide Initiatives

In Vermont we are incredibly lucky that so many people understand the importance of our working landscape. SHLT is committed to keeping South Hero's and Vermont's working landscape productive and vital. Our farmland, open meadows, and woodland offer economic, cultural, scenic, environmental and recreational benefits that are essential to our quality of life. To this end, I wanted to make sure that you are aware of a number of important initiatives that are happening across the state.

Vermont Working Landscape Partnership

SHLT has joined the Vermont Council on Rural Development in a new partnership of individuals and organizations around the state called the Vermont Working Landscape Partnership. This new nonpartisan and broad-based partnership is leading a year-long campaign to keep our farm and forest economy vital. It will bring a focused Action Plan to the Governor and legislature—one that will help everyone trying to make a living from the land. For more information: www.vtrural.org

The Farm to Plate Strategic Plan

At the end of 2009, the Vermont legislature approved a bill that directed the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, in consultation with the Sustainable Agriculture Council and other stakeholders, to develop a 10-year strategic plan to strengthen Vermont's food system. On January 12, 2011, after 18 months of work and input from the citizens and farmers of the State, the executive summary of the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan was unveiled. The plan contains 33 goals and 60 high priority strategies that will lead to job creation, greater economic output, and increased access for Vermont and regional consumers to healthy, fresh food over the next 10 years. For more information: www.vsjf.org/project-details/5/farm-to-plate-initiative

South Hero Land Trust supports both of these effort and welcomes the opportunity to discuss them with you.



Landon Community Trail Complete: Experience Forests & Fields on Local Trail

Community Welcomed to Enjoy New Trail

The Landon Community Trail opened this fall, in time for community members to enjoy the stunning autumn colors from the hillside trail at Wells Family Farm. The path winds up the hill and loops through the hardwood forest for about three quarters of a mile. Three vista points reveal views of open farm fields, Lake Champlain, and the Green Mountains.

Partnership with Lake Champlain Land Trust Results in Increased Access to Farms and Nature

The new trail is the result of a multi-year collaboration with the Lake Champlain Land Trust. It represents a celebration of the best of South Hero: a beautiful working landscape, a strong, engaged community, and a town rooted in the land around us.

Lake Champlain Land Trust and SHLT worked in partnership to clear and build the trail, install split rail fencing for protecting walkers from the electric fences and farm animals, and coordinate with landowners Erik Wells and Annette Burger to create a

maintenance plan and signage. The two land trusts collaborated to plan the trail, raise funds, and coordinate community volunteers on several workdays. Chris Boget reported on the trail project in LCLT's newsletter, writing that, "we can't thank the South Hero Land Trust enough—they have been

essential partners sharing the project's many varied tasks throughout the process."

Trail Celebration Planned for Springtime

The Landon Community Trail was officially opened this fall with a small celebration of South Hero Land Trust and Lake Champlain Land Trust staff and board members. The land trusts will be holding a special first spring walk for the community later in the year. Keep your eye out for our calendar of events for the date and time!

Please Note: the trail will be closed occasionally for farm work and for major hunting seasons. Please see the trail head sign for more information and respect trail closures for your own safety as well as the farmers'.



Charlie Tipper finds a birds nest along the trail and walkers stop to take a peek



Sophia Wells cuts the ribbon at the official trail opening

"We can't thank the South Hero Land Trust enough- they have been essential partners"

**- Chris Boget, LCLT
Executive Director**

Directions:

From the village of South Hero: travel east on Route 2 to Landon Road. Turn right on Landon Road, travel approximately one mile, watch for trail sign and parking on right side of road, before the intersection with East Shore Road. Trail head is behind sign.

From Colchester and Sand Bar: travel northwest on Route 2, approximately 1/2 mile north of the Sand Bar, turn left on Landon Road. Travel approximately one mile, watch for trail sign and parking on right side of road, before the intersection with East Shore Road. Trail head is behind sign.

Educating Young Stewards of the Land: *The Land, the Farms, and Me* Receives Praise from the Community

Dear Diane Lemieux and Minner Hobbs,
(of Folsom Educational Center and the South Hero Land Trust respectively)

On the morning of Tuesday October 12, 2010 two classes from Folsom Educational Center came to our farm for a field trip. My husband Bob and I were most pleased to host the group of students. Everyone on the trip was well behaved, respectful, and demonstrated an eagerness to learn about farming. Teachers Mary Jo McCarthy and Kathy Vandervord had prepared students extremely well for the visit.

Food the students harvested on our farm included broccoli, leeks, carrots, cabbage, and tomatoes. Acorn squash was washed and packed into bushel boxes. Vegetables were then transported back to school and students were involved in washing and bagging the produce. Subsequently students donated food to the CIDER meals at the Congregational Church and provided food to the school kitchen.

As farm owners, we appreciated this inclusive broad educational approach to a field trip where students are involved in several facets of the farming process and were then directly involved in providing food for others in the community. We feel this hands-on approach for young students is an exceptional teaching method. Folsom has definitely taken the lead in this area.

We commend the students, faculty, and parent volunteers for a job well done. The South Hero Land Trust's support for *The Land, The Farms, and Me* Program as well as the funding for the transportation costs of field trips is commendable. All those involved are certainly supporting worthwhile learning for youth.

Sincerely Yours,
Jane and Bob Pomykala, Pomykala Farm, Grand Isle, VT



Four Winds Institute Recognizes LFM as an Exemplary Environmental Education Program

One of the innovative aspects of the *The Land, the Farms, and Me* is the connections that it builds between South Hero students and the local community. Community members and organizations partner with Folsom to provide a diverse array of lesson plans and field trips. Students are encouraged to think about their lives as embedded within the community and resources of South Hero.

The Vermont non-profit Four Winds Institute has recently recognized *The Land, the Farms, and Me* as a model program for schools and communities across the state. The non-profit works to advance understanding and protection of our environment through natural science education that is based in our local communities. They are creating an online roadmap of environmental literacy for Vermont that will highlight programs around that state that meet those goals. *The Land, the Farms, and Me* has been recognized as a program that exemplifies strong community connections and success in promoting environmental literacy in VT.

COMING SOON - Check out "The Land, the Farms, and Me," the Champlain Islands Farmers' Market, and other great community programs at <http://environmentalliteracyvt.org/>.

Feasibility Study Investigating On-Farm Renewable Energy Wraps Up: Report on Findings

Energy Efficiency Should be First Step for Farmers

As many farmers and homeowners know, the first step to saving money on heating and electricity bills is energy efficiency. Increasing insulation, turning down the thermostat at night or when the house is empty, switching to efficient appliances as they need replacing, and other similar measures is the best way to begin to reduce energy consumption.

When the consultants for our renewable energy feasibility study, Spring Hill Solutions, first met with farmers, they made sure that we remembered to think about efficiency first. Many local farms have already worked with the local energy efficiency consultants, Efficiency Vermont, to become more efficient. Bob Buermann, representative of South Hero's ICE committee and co-owner of participating Paradise Bay Farm has been working hard to bring this very message to the community. Buermann says, "There is so much we can all do to take the first important steps towards energy efficiency. Weatherizing your home and business, and investing in energy efficient appliances will always be a smart choice."



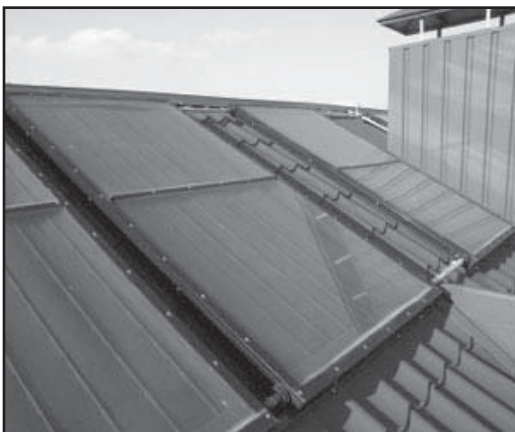
Solar photo-voltaic tracking system, photo courtesy of: http://www.gosolarcalifornia.org/about/images/csi_solar_array.jpg

“Vermont has good solar exposure relative to the rest of the country”

- Damon Lane
Spring Hill Solutions

Solar Energy Potential in South Hero is Good for Renewable Energy Projects

In terms of renewable energy resources for local farmers, Spring Hill Solutions was excited about the energy from the sun in South Hero. According to their report, “generating energy from the sun cost-effectively requires (1) solar exposure for at least six hours each day, and (2) a surface upon which to mount modules. Despite its reputation as a cloudy state, Vermont has good solar exposure relative to the rest of the country and much of the rest of the world.” South Hero receives more sunshine than Germany or Japan, the countries with the most solar energy installations in the world. Solar photovoltaic and passive hot water systems may be a wise investment for homes and farms in the region on a case by case basis.



Roof mounted solar hot water system, photo courtesy of: http://www.gosolarcalifornia.org/solarwater/images/solar_water_375x250.jpg

Spring Hill Solutions Recommends Investing in Passive Solar Hot Water Heating

With our strong solar resources in mind, Spring Hill Solutions recommended that all of the farms invest in a passive solar hot water system, for homes and barns. Solar hot water systems are relatively low in cost to install and the payback period in energy savings is short, generally less than 10 years. These systems rely on the sun to heat tubes of water

Out and About in the Islands: Wintertime News, Updates, and Events



October	November	December
<p>Ski, Snowshoe, and Boot Tracks Reveal... New Trail is a Success!</p> <p>In October the Landon Community Trail at Wells Family Farm was officially opened to the public. Lots of community members have already been enjoying the snowy trail! SHLT will be hosting a spring walk to celebrate the trail later this year. Watch for our calendar of events for details.</p>	<p>Farmers Gather to Strengthen Agricultural Economy</p> <p>During meetings at Borderview Farm in Alburgh and Snow Farm Winery in South Hero, farmers and community members discussed ways to work together on projects like marketing, agritourism, and more.</p>	<p>The Future of Vermont's Working Landscape Discussed at Statehouse</p> <p>On December 10th Minner and Emily participated in the Summit on the Future of Vermont's Working Landscape in Montpelier. Folks from around the state gathered to discuss new policy and projects for preserving and promoting the working farms and forests of Vermont.</p>
January	February	March
<p>Snowfall Brings Ski Weather to South Hero Land Trust</p> <p>Emily is skiing to work when the weather is fair. So if you are passing by and don't see a car, the office may still be open. Please feel welcome to stop and visit!</p> <p>Winter Farmers' Market Continues</p> <p>The market continues on the first Saturday of each month through April. Preserved food from last summer's harvest is available each month.</p>	<p>Film Looks Back at Life on VT Dairy Farms in the 1950s</p> <p>On February 5th SHLT cosponsored a showing of <i>The Summer of Walter Hacks</i> (A George Woodward Film) with the Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce and Grand Isle County Natural Resources Conservation District. The story of a boy growing up on a 1950's era VT dairy farm was made all the more exciting with the thundersnow storm on the same evening!</p>	<p>Maple Sugar Season Around the Corner</p> <p>Sugaring season in South Hero is coming up! Dave and Julie Lane will be boiling sap at Crescent Bay Farm when the sap starts running. Vermont's Maple Open House Weekend will be March 19th- 20th, and sugar houses across the state will be open to visitors. Check out the VT Maple web site to find an open sugar house near you: http://www.vermontmaple.org/</p>

Looking Forward to Summertime and the Champlain Islands Growing Season

Local Farms Invited to Join 2011 Guide

South Hero Land Trust will be publishing the 2011 “*Champlain Islands Grown*” *Guide to Agriculture* in late May. All area farms who are not already participating in the guide are invited to contact us about having entries in this year’s version. 2,000 copies were distributed last summer through areas stores, farms, farmers’ markets, and community action agencies. Restaurants and stores serving local foods are also invited to participate! Past participants should have received a new information packet this year, please contact Emily if you have not.



Adam Farris of Blue Heron Farm shows off the interesting shape of an heirloom tomato from his fields

Local Community Asked to Support Printing Guide

South Hero Land Trust is committed to providing this great resource to the local community, and we work hard each year to add new farms and businesses to the guide. We rely on support from members, local businesses, and grants from the State of Vermont and foundations to publish the guide each year. If your family or business would like to support printing and distributing the guide, consider making a donation or advertising in the guide.

We will be collecting new and revised entries until March 31st. Please contact Emily at (802) 372- 3786 or emily@shlt.org to get a producer information request form or to learn more about advertising opportunities and donations.

Summer Farmers’ Market Season is Around the Corner

The Champlain Islands Farmers’ Market is getting ready for the summer. Farmers are starting seeds and cleaning out greenhouses. Crafters are tucked away in studios, building up their stock. Cooks and bakers are trying out new recipes. The first summer market in South Hero will be Wednesday, June 2nd. Mark your calendars, and start dreaming of fresh asparagus and baby spinach!



Jellies, pickles, and applesauce at the Champlain Islands Farmers’ Market

Winter Market Season Continues in March and April

Don’t forget the Winter Market season, there are two more markets at the South Hero Congregational Church. March 5th is Maple Day, with hot pancakes served by Crescent Bay Farm, and a backyard sugaring display by market vendors Lemon Lily Farm and My Kids’ Kitchen. Samples of ice cream and other maple treats will be available! April 2nd will be a seed starting demonstration, so bring your questions for advice from the experts! The Farmers’ Market takes place on the above Saturdays, from 10:00 am- 2:00 pm.

If you are interested in being a vendor at the farmers’ market, please visit their website: www.champlainislandsfarmersmarket.blogspot.com.

If you are interested in helping with South Hero Land Trust’s Champlain Islands Farmers’ Market event series, please contact Emily. Watch for our calendar of events this spring, it will give details for our farmers’ market events series and other summertime fun!



Address Service Requested

South Hero Land Trust
PO Box 455
South Hero, VT 05486



winter vegetables • free range eggs • fresh breads and baked goods • hot meals • pickles • jams • applesauce

Champlain Islands Winter Farmers' Market



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

March 5th
April 3rd

Stop by for children's activities, get
new recipes for winter meals, enjoy
breakfast or lunch...

*The summer farmers' market season will begin Memorial Day weekend and
continue all summer, South Hero on Wednesdays and Grand Isle on Saturdays*

wine • fresh pasta • maple syrup • honey • handspun yarns • tie dye • knitted items • hand-crafted jewelry