



Little Compton Landscapes

Newsletter of The Sakonnet Preservation Association

Summer 2011

Author Janet Taylor Lisle to Speak at SPA's Annual Meeting

The Sakonnet Preservation Association (SPA) is pleased to have Janet Lisle, award winning writer of children's books, as the featured speaker for our Annual Meeting on July 5th at the Sakonnet Golf Club Playhouse.

Janet is the author of *First Light: Sakonnet 1660-1820*, a history of Little Compton published in 2010. In her comments, she will be elaborating on the history of East and West Islands with stories about the exclusive West Island Club based on research she is doing for her forthcoming sequel to *First Light: Sakonnet*. All are welcome to come hear this spellbinding author relate details of our landmark Sakonnet Point properties.

In 1983, Jessie Lloyd O'Connor donated East and West Islands off the southern tip of Lloyd's Beach to our organization. Well aware of the past uses of the islands, she was determined to see that they be spared development and made available for the public to enjoy. SPA has

The Sakonnet
Preservation Association
presents



Janet Taylor Lisle
"Fat Cats and Rumrunners:
West Island's Illustrious Past"

Tuesday, July 5, 2011
6 – 8PM

Join the SPA for light supper with a cash bar
Sakonnet Golf Club Playhouse
All are welcome!

since managed them as habitat for the seagulls, cormorants and geese that breed and raise their young there, and for the migrant neotropical birds that pass through in Spring and Fall seeking nourishment and rest along their epic seasonal journeys north and south.

Our Annual Meeting will include a silent auction as well as the sale of the book *Sakonnet Point Perspectives* and notecards with representative photos of three SPA properties.

We hope you will be able to join us to celebrate our accomplishments that include our recent accreditation award by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

We are justifiably proud of being one of only seven volunteer land trusts in the country to hold this distinction.

Please note the amendment to our by-laws on page 4 of this newsletter to be voted on at the Annual Meeting by the SPA membership.



Sakonnet Preservation Association

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President's Letter

On Saturday May 14th, plant specialists, conservationists and landowners, including several farmers, gathered for a walk and talk sponsored by SPA. We had help from local landowners Sheila Mackintosh, John Gwynne, Hope Taylor, Bill Richmond, and Judith Danforth.

The twenty of us who gathered represented SPA, The Nature Conservancy of RI, the Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust, the Tiverton Open Space and Land Preservation Commission, the Tiverton Land Trust, the Westport Land Conservation Trust and the Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust, as well as a variety of landowners. We met with specialists from the University of RI Plant Sciences Dept., the RI Natural History Survey, and The Bobolink Project (a RI and Vermont-based program assisting farmers with practices protecting these birds) to view the arrival of this year's bobolinks and to share ideas about management and conservation. We observed the



Hope Leeson, R.I. Natural History Survey and Garry Plunkett of the Tiverton Open Space and Land Preservation Commission.

spring territorial activity of the bobolinks and experienced the substantial benefits that come from cross-pollinating ideas and expertise among individuals with a wide range of skills, interests, and geographical focus.

There is such natural richness to be protected and balanced with human uses on the landscape of Little Compton. Is it possible to develop land management practices that support both farming and haying and the protection of declining species of grass-nesting birds? What are some ideas for controlling the invasive plants black knapweed and buckthorn plantain that are spreading rapidly and perhaps threatening the habitat of these grass-nesters and that are certainly impairing the quality of hay for farm animals? It was inspiring to hear and share ideas and to consider how we might bring some of our questions and recommendations to a larger audience.

I felt privileged to have this experience, and I look forward to continued information-sharing that will enhance the work of our various organizations for the benefit of our communities. – Abigail Brooks

Little Compton Population Explodes In The Spring

Little Compton is blessed to be both a waypoint and a destination for an amazing variety of migratory birds called "neotropicals." Neotropical migratory birds breed in Canada and the U.S. during our summer and spend their winter in Mexico, Central America, South America or the Caribbean islands. Some of us mark our seasons with the sound of arriving or departing bird calls such as those of red-winged blackbirds or flocks of geese. As a conservation organization, protecting habitat that supports both migrant and year-round birds is a priority for SPA. Geoff Dennis, a local quahogger and eminent birder, has supplied us with his listing of the incredible variety of migratory birds that stop by to rest and feed on their way farther north (transients) or choose to make Little Compton their spring and summer home, breeding and nesting in our coastal shrubs, fields and forests. Are there some you have seen or heard?

Warblers arriving in early April

Pine Warbler (arrive 1st week of April, breed in LC)
Palm Warbler (arrive 2nd week of April, transit LC to breed north)

Warblers arriving and breeding, or likely breeding in LC area. Arrive last of April, more first week of May, peak in mid-May

Yellow Warbler (common)
American Redstart (common)
Ovenbird
Prairie Warbler
Blue-winged Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Hooded Warbler

Others that will arrive and transit LC

Wilson's Warbler (transient)
Canada Warbler (transient)
Mourning Warbler (transient)
Blackpoll Warbler (transient)
Bay-breasted Warbler (transient)
Cape May Warbler (transient)
Black-throated Green Warbler (breed as close as Weetamoo)
Yellow-rumped Warbler (winter in small numbers, most in south)
Blackburnian Warbler (transient)
Northern Waterthrush (breed in RI, don't believe in LC)
Louisiana Waterthrush (breed in RI, not LC)
Black-throated Blue Warbler (transient)
Magnolia Warbler (transient)
Nashville Warbler (transient)
Tennessee Warbler (transient)
Northern Parula (transient)

Vireos arriving during the same time frame as Warblers:

Red-eyed Vireo (breed in LC)
White-eyed Vireo (breed in LC)
Yellow-throated Vireo (not sure if they breed in LC, maybe Simmon's management area)
Warbling Vireo (transient)
Blue-headed Vireo (transient)
Philadelphia Vireo (transient)

Thrushes that arrive and breed in LC:

Wood Thrush
Veery

Orioles arriving and breeding here last of April, peak mid-May

Baltimore Oriole
Orchard Oriole

Flycatchers last to arrive of neotropical migrants. Earliest (Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher) end of April. Others (Acadian, Willow) arrive mid-May. LC breeders.

Eastern Kingbird
Great Crested Flycatcher
Acadian Flycatcher
Willow Flycatcher
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Eastern Phoebe (early migrant. Arrival late March, peak early April)

Flycatchers that transit LC (all uncommon in spring)

Alder Flycatcher (transient)
Least Flycatcher (transient)
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (transient)
Olive-sided Flycatcher (transient)

Cuckoos: Two species I have heard calling during breeding season in my yard, so likely to breed in L.C. Secretive bird, difficult to find any time of year.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Black-billed Cuckoo



Bobolink photo by Geoff Dennis.

Individuals that breed in LC:

Scarlet Tanager (breed in LC, first arrive late April, peak mid-May)
Bobolink (first arrive in late April, peak first half of May)
Ruby-throated Hummingbird (arrive mid-April. Peak early May)
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (arrive mid-April, most by early May)
House Wren (first by mid-April and peak first week in May)
Gray Catbird (very common breeder. A neotropical, though some do overwinter in LC. Migrants follow same time frame as others, first arrive late April, peak second week of May.)

Sakonnet Preservation Association's Amendments to Bylaws

Background

The Board of Directors of the Sakonnet Preservation Association, Inc. is proposing to the Membership changes to our Bylaws. The Bylaws were last amended on July 8, 2009. The proposed amendments are in response to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission's* request that the Association clarify in its Bylaws that the Board President and the Treasurer may not be compensated for professional services.

Summary of Amendments

A brief summary of the Bylaws changes is listed below. A copy of the proposed Bylaws changes, approved by the Board of Directors on November 17, 2010 and to be presented for a vote of the Membership at the Association's Annual Meeting to be held on July 5, 2011, may be found in the Association office and will be available at the Annual Meeting. If you wish to have a copy of the proposed Bylaws changes forwarded to you via email or as a print copy, please contact our Administrative Assistant, Holly Lippert, at 635-8800 or at spa.lc@verizon.net.

Article V. Officers, Section 9. Compensation Paragraph 1

The President (presiding officer) and Treasurer are prohibited from receiving direct or indirect compen-

sation for services. They may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred while carrying out Association business.

Paragraph 2 and Article VI. Board of Directors, Section 11. Compensation

Other Officers and Directors shall not receive any salaries for Board service, but may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses. Officers, other than the President and Treasurer, and Directors may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses and may be paid reasonable compensation for services that would otherwise have been contracted out, provided such compensation is approved by the Board, such service is in accord with all Board policies, and the Board documents the decision and the amount of compensation in the Board minutes.

Contact Information

If you have any questions in advance of the Annual Meeting regarding the proposed changes to the Bylaws, please contact Chris Burns, Vice President of the Sakonnet Preservation Association, at 635-8800.

**The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awards the accreditation seal to land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence and demonstrate the ability to protect important natural places and working lands forever. The Sakonnet Preservation Association, Inc. was awarded accreditation on February 3, 2011.*



Reflections of a New Monitor on Preserving Open Space

After living away from Little Compton for over 20 years I was amazed to return in 2008 and find many of the vistas of my childhood still intact and relatively unchanged. Living in cities has made preservation of open space something I value and will work to protect. It was on a friend's recommendation that I contacted SPA about volunteering as a property monitor. It seemed the perfect way to do something for the community, the town and my childhood memories.



Sydney Tynan and Jennifer Sauffer Prior

After a comprehensive training, Heather Steers, SPA's Stewardship Committee Chair, escorted me on my first monitoring venture of 2011. We visited with Sydney Tynan, Master Gardener, who has donated a conservation easement over 2 acres to the SPA. She was kind enough to

give us a short tour of her gardens before leading us to the parcel she donated. Heather and I knew we would have to re-flag and paint the markers at the property corners.

The 2010 monitoring report indicated they were hard to find. We were well armed with maps, flagging tape, and fluorescent spray paint. Monitoring before the leaves were out made finding the markers much easier, but we still ended up stumbling across a drainage ditch and getting caught in the brush in order to get close enough to paint and flag the posts. I have really enjoyed my first season with SPA and congratulate them on their recent accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. I hope I can be of use to the SPA for a long time. – Jennifer Sauffer Prior

Kids Only Trout Fishing Opening Day

Soon after the 6 AM start of this year's trout fishing season on April 9, young and not so young arrived at The Ponderosa on Meeting House Lane for the first "Kids Only Trout Fishing Opening Day" at the pond. The Ponderosa is the most frequented SPA conserved property. The day was sponsored by the Little Compton Grange. Last spring, Walter Elwell, the president of the Grange, contacted Rhode Island Fish and Wildlife and asked if they could stock the pond for such an event. Following an inspection, they agreed to do so for opening day, 2011. The trout were delivered on April 8.

Walter and Norma Elwell arrived at The Ponderosa at 5:30 on Saturday, a chilly 28 degree morning, with hot coffee, chocolate and cider, and doughnuts for all who might show



Walter and Norma Elwell

up. Over 100 people signed in that day, so Norma was kept busy replenishing refreshments.

Throughout that day and the next, children 13 and under and their parents, grandparents and friends fished earnestly and enthusiastically with real and fake worms in hopes of landing a "big one." Even though they were unsuccessful the first day, it was clear that everyone was enjoying learning to fish, or perfecting their skills, and being outside together on a lovely spring day. Fishing at the Ponderosa pond, adults now included, has been continuing since April 9.

SPA is grateful to the Elwells for initiating such a wonderful event, and we look forward to working with them on "Kids Only Trout Fishing Opening Day" again next year.

– Heather Steers *Chair of the Stewardship Committee*



Sakonnet Preservation Association

P. O. Box 945, Little Compton, RI 02837 • Phone/Fax: 401.635.8800

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER.
Enclosed is my tax deductible membership contribution.

- Student \$20
- Individual \$25
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Phone _____

Summer Phone _____

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Consider The Gift of an SPA Membership!

sakonnetpreservation.org

401.635.8800
For Information:

The Sakonnet Preservation Association, a non-profit land trust, is dedicated to preserving the rural character and natural resources of Little Compton for the lasting benefit of the Community.

Our Mission

Sakonnet Preservation Association
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Little Compton, RI 02837-0945

