



# Southern Madison Heritage Trust

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Serving the six towns of Brookfield, Eaton,  
Georgetown, Hamilton, Lebanon, and Madison

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December 7, 2022

Greetings from  
the Board of  
Southern Madison  
Heritage Trust



Welcome to new board members, Laura Caughlan and Harmon Hoff.

**Grant Received:** SMHT received a NYS Ag & Markets grant to acquire qualified appraisals on three farms which are interested in future conservation of the farm. The appraisals will be critical in the grant application process in the next round of farmland protection grants offerings expected in early 2023. The potential is for SMHT to protect ~750 acres of productive farmland.

**Farmland Preservation Grant:** As noted in previous newsletters, SMHT was successful in receiving a NY State Farmland Preservation Incentive Grant – “Dairy Transitions” of \$825,628 for a farm in Brookfield. It has been slow progress in clearing the title to the farm, but that is expected to be done soon so the rest of the project can be completed in 2023. The aerial photo shows the farm area of 518 acres with four specific zones called out for the farmstead, a residence, an enterprise zone and a rental cabin.



**Public Access/Maintenance:** There has been heavy use of all our trails, which continued this fall, with the exception of Leland Reserve which is closed during hunting season. To keep our visitors safe, SMHT board members and volunteers replaced the bridge decks at the Leland and Schapiro Reserves. The latter shown in the photos, fell to SMHT as the NYS Canal Corporation is not providing any structure maintenance on the Chenango Canal system except the dams on the reservoirs.



**Wetland Conservation/Restoration Project at Schapiro Reserve:**

SMHT is working with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition to restore the wetland somewhat similar to its

historic condition. The purpose is to enhance downstream water quality and remediate the damage done by farming and disturbances during the many years the land was in active use.

The USC is a network of 22 County Soil & Water Conservation Districts in NY and PA that are within the Upper Susquehanna River Watershed. USC's mission is to protect and improve water quality and natural resources in the Upper Susquehanna River Basin. USC has identified areas at the Schapiro Reserve where the potential exists to increase the habitat and functionality of the on-site wetlands by re-establishing forest cover with the planting of 3200 trees native to the region. Invasive species will also be removed in those areas.

Greg Owens will oversee the project with assistance from Prof. Jordan Kerber, who will minimize disturbance to any Native American resources that are found on the site.

**Ongoing Projects:** All of the SMHT properties and easements will be monitored in 2023 as required in our long term goal to achieve accreditation. Semi-annual roadside cleanup continued on 2 miles of Rte 12B. The HCS 5<sup>th</sup> grade educational visits to Leland went on schedule.

**Volunteer Support:** Students from SUNY Morrisville again removed invasive species expanding the area of meadow at the Leland Reserve. Colgate COVE students worked on cutting brush opening up trails at the Schapiro Reserve. Volunteers assisted with the road cleanup and bridge deck repairs.

**Our goals for 2022/23 include:** Providing access to the 25.6 acre Brackett Woods and Scott Waterfall for a fourth public trail and a different set of habitats for public visits & 5th grade ecology field trips. SMHT plans to extend the trail along the Madison Feeder from the Gateway Reserve to connect with the Hamilton Airport trails and farther to the Village of Hamilton. These projects have been delayed by a lack of response from the NYS Canal Corporation as noted above. SMHT will be seeking primary funding from several grant opportunities to finance the bridge and trail extension, planned for construction next year. We expect the total costs to be in excess of \$25,000 and hope to be successful in acquiring foundation funding.

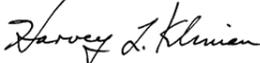
It was very satisfying to meet so many of you at our annual picnic in person in August! We plan to continue that custom with informative speakers.

**No newsletter is complete without a request for support. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to SMHT. Your donation will help enable SMHT to continue its valuable work of conserving open space and agriculture in our six-town area and continuing our popular education program with Hamilton and Madison 5<sup>th</sup> grades.**

**As an all-volunteer nonprofit, 100% of funds are dedicated to SMHT's mission and fully deductible according to IRS regulations.**

A card and envelope are enclosed for your convenience.

**Check out [www.SMHT.org](http://www.SMHT.org) for information about our protected properties and activities.**

Thank you,  President