



Southern Madison Heritage Trust

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

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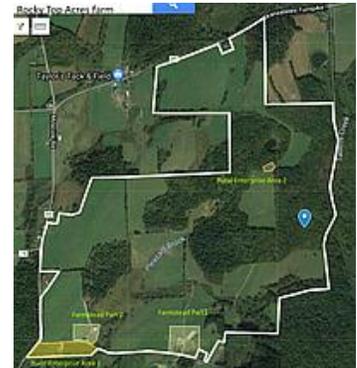
December 7, 2023

Greetings from
the Board of
Southern Madison
Heritage Trust



Welcome to new board member Mike Loranty, Colgate Geography Professor.

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. We are anticipating wrapping up in early 2024: the title is clear and a survey done. Baseline report and appraisal are next. The aerial photo shows the farm area of 530 acres with four specific zones carved out for the farmsteads, residences, an enterprise zone and a rental cabin for agritourism.



Wetland Conservation/Restoration Project at Schapiro Reserve:



The Upper Susquehanna Coalition completed the project to restore the wetland and hillside areas to something like 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. Honeysuckle was cleared and 4300 trees and shrubs planted. It will take a few years for the growth to be apparent. Photos shows protective

tubes around seedlings and one of the 16 migrant workers hired by USC. Shredded honeysuckle shrubs that were in this area cover the ground. Greg Owens managed the project and participated in the selection of the shrubs and trees. Come spring, go take a look. You will be amazed!



Ongoing Projects: All of the SMHT properties and easements will be monitored in 2024 as required in our long term goal to achieve accreditation. Semi-annual roadside cleanup continued on 2 miles of Rte 12B. The HCS 5th grade visits to Leland are on schedule , and both educational and fun for all involved. An area, where much of the tree planting has occurred over the last 15 years, has been designated the “Fifth Grade Forest.” The “Forest,” a mix of deciduous and conifers has over 100 trees, some 15-25 ft tall.

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 2024 include:

1. Creating a connecting trail from the Schapiro Reserve to College Street in Hamilton which would connect to the southern end of the O&W RR Trail leading into the village center. Three Colgate students worked on a plan during fall semester as part of their environmental studies major. Their work was presented to the Village Trustees and at a student lunch that Greg Owens and Harvey Kliman attended. The PCD is looking at funding through a 2024 NYS Transportation Alternatives Program. The next steps include discussions with the Village on the exact location of the trail near the waste water treatment plant on Village land. Wetland may require a boardwalk for part of the connecting trail.

2. We are working on the design of a handicap accessible trail and parking area at the Leland Reserve. We are in the planning stages and are considering a 5-6 ft wide crushed stone surfaced trail. This would be the only accessible trail within 20 miles of Hamilton. The parking area, included in the project, has to be moved onto the Reserve because our current area is leased from Burt Marshall and the future use is uncertain. We will seek funding from granting organizations.

Bill Todd, one of our very long-term board members, passed away in 2022. The trail around the Leland Reserve meadow was named for him and a plaque erected in his honor.

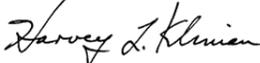
It was very satisfying to meet so many of you in person at our annual picnic in August! We plan to continue that custom with informative speakers about land use and the environment.

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 5th 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 for information about our protected lands and activities or pay a visit to one of our properties with trails.

Thank you,  President