



THE WREN

February 2024



Protecting and Restoring Habitat



70 Years of Success



Best of Nature Sightings



Conservation Collaborations

1957 Upper Mill Brook WAYLAND 49 ACRES



A nice place for springtime birdwatching. 14 additional acres protected through projects in 1961, 1968, 1986, and 2001.

1959 Baiting Brook-Welch FRAMINGHAM 68 ACRES



Beautiful farmland next to Callahan State Park. 58 additional acres protected through projects in 1976, 1982, and 1992.

1964 Round Hill SUDBURY 39 ACRES



Rises 100 feet around surrounding lands and abuts the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.

Happy 70th Birthday, SVT!



From expansive conservation areas like the 200-acre Memorial Forest to wetland parcels of an acre or two, SVT has helped to conserve 193 properties during our first 70 years. What a legacy for our founders!

In Fall 1953, Allen Morgan, Allen Benjamin, George Lewis, Henry Parker, Willis Ryder, Richard Stackpole, and Roger Stokey set out to protect the open spaces of Wayland from a post-war development boom. Where some conservation groups focused on tracts of land covering hundreds of acres, SVT's founders set their sights on the smaller parcels of wetlands, farmlands, and open space that dotted the region around the Sudbury River.

Our founders always envisioned a time when SVT would serve all the communities in the watershed, and we've brought most of that vision into reality: SVT now owns land or holds conservation restrictions in 25 of the 36 municipalities around the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers.

Today, we also restore wildlife habitats damaged by human activity and climate change. We remove invasive plants, conduct prescribed burns, and plant native seedlings to ensure our conserved lands will remain healthy and strong. And we offer a range of programs that encourage our neighbors and friends to discover and enjoy the region's natural areas.

Starting on this page and continuing on pages 4, 5, and 6, we've highlighted a few of our many land protection successes. We hope you enjoy reading about them and that you spot a favorite property or two.

Of course, SVT never accomplishes anything alone. We work with federal, state, and municipal governments; local land trusts; nonprofit organizations; citizens' groups; and private landowners. Our conservation projects are supported by dozens of private foundations and businesses, thousands of members and supporters, and hundreds of volunteers.

SVT's success is your success. Together, we are leaving a legacy so future generations can always enjoy scenic landscapes, clean water, and healthy natural areas. Here's to the next 70!

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The Wren

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 youtube.com/SVTsightings

SVT is committed to being an equitable and inclusive organization that works in partnership with the full diversity of people in the region to ensure everyone feels welcome to enjoy local natural areas and participate in the efforts to care for these lands.

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The Joy of Silence and Stillness

Lindsey Ketchel, Executive Director

When walking in the woods, I love to notice and revel in silence. Nature provides peace, and with peace I can bring my best self to those around me. The chilly (and often rainy) days of recent weeks have led me to the crisp and quiet woods, to enjoy the serene slanted light of early winter.

But lately some knee trouble has kept me from enjoying long walks on the trails. So, sitting in silence, breathing deeply, and taking in the warm scents of pine and brisk air has become my current nature-bathing routine.

With so many challenges facing us in the world, I truly feel blessed to have access to the wonderful lands that offer these peaceful experiences and guide me forward. I am also honored to be part of the amazing SVT community, and I am looking forward to making deeper connections with you all.

As we manage our busy schedules of work, school, and other obligations, let's be sure to weave nature into our journey. Let us embrace the beauty and teachings of the natural world, creating a space where each new sunrise brings new hope, silent walks in the stillness of the woods deepen our connection with nature, and every shared moment strengthens our community of nature lovers.

Looking forward to a year of growth, discovery, and meaningful connections in nature,

Lindsey



NATURE SIGHTINGS

Our region's smallest owl, the northern saw-whet owl, is a forest bird that is elusive in the daytime. This bird was photographed by Mattie VandenBoom of the Berlin Conservation Commission, who held the owl during a Project Owl-net banding project in Fall 2023.

Prior to the 1990s, northern saw-whets were considered rare and little was known about their migration patterns. Project Owl-net was established in 1994

Mattie VandenBoom



to help researchers understand the migratory and population trends of these tiny owls, and the project now helps researchers communicate with each other and share resources.

You can learn more about Project Owl-net on the Cornell Lab's All About Birds website.

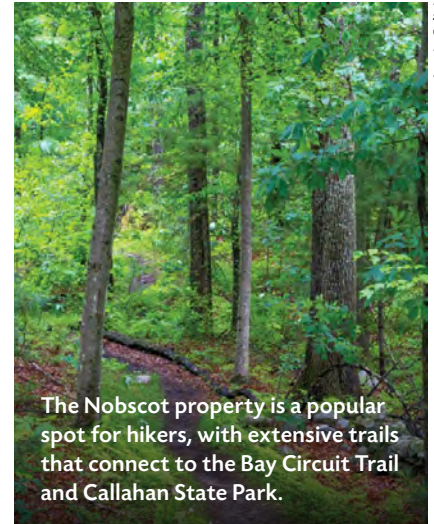
All banding is conducted under a federally authorized Bird Banding Permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Great News for Nobscot

SVT and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) are collaborating to conserve 134 acres of the Nobscot Scout Reservation in Framingham!

We are working to purchase a conservation restriction (CR) on the land from the Mayflower Council, Inc., Boy Scouts of America. The CR will protect important wildlife habitat, treasured hiking trails, and a corridor of open space that abuts Callahan State Park, and it will ensure that Nobscot remains a great resource for Scouts.

SVT is thrilled by the prospect of protecting the entire Nobscot property. (In 2008, we collaborated with the Town of Sudbury to protect the 303 acres on the Sudbury side of the town line.) The current project got a big boost in October, when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts awarded SVT and DCR a \$1.25 million grant toward the CR. We are also seeking additional funding from several foundations who have expressed interest in the project. Stay tuned.



Louis Callisi

The Nobscot property is a popular spot for hikers, with extensive trails that connect to the Bay Circuit Trail and Callahan State Park.



Rick Findlay, an SVT volunteer and a member of the Littleton Conservation Trust, helped pull Asian bittersweet at Smith last fall. Look at that root!

Protecting and Restoring Habitat

With multiple habitat types, three vernal pools, and many interesting land formations, SVT's Smith Conservation Land in Littleton is a haven for wildlife. Unfortunately, aggressive non-native invasives have spread across 22 acres of the property and damaged the essential habitats.

In recent years, SVT staff and volunteers have removed many invasives, and this winter we are clearing about 7.5 acres of nonnative red pine and European tamarack trees. We expect native trees and shrubs to now take root and provide fresh habitat for porcupines, bobcats, salamanders, turtles, and birds.

Welcome to New SVT Staff

The last few months have been busy ones at SVT, as we have welcomed four new colleagues to our staff.

Cecil Hynds-Riddle joined SVT as Director of Development, replacing Grace Fauver, who retired in October. Cecil will oversee supporter relations, community engagement, and communications. She comes to SVT with nearly 20 years of experience in nonprofit fundraising and management, including stints at The Abraham Foundation, Galápagos Conservancy, and Woods and Prairie Foundation.



Tony Scibelli, our new Land Protection Specialist, will work with landowners who are interested in protecting their land and will help them develop the best conservation plan for their property. Tony previously practiced law as a litigation attorney but is joining SVT in a non-legal role, fulfilling a lifelong interest in preserving open spaces and wildlife habitat.



Mike Perrin has come onboard as our Conservation Associate, replacing Samantha Corbin, who left SVT to take a municipal conservation position. Mike will assist in prioritizing properties for protection and educating landowners about conservation options. He previously worked in the conservation departments of the Town of Weymouth and the Town of Kingston.



Finally, **Sally Hild Purrington** is our new Events and Engagement Manager. Sally will plan events such as our Benefit Gala, lead outreach efforts in our 36 communities, and manage our social media pages. She has more than two decades of nonprofit experience, most recently as Director of Community Engagement for The Wayside Inn Foundation.



Please join us in welcoming all of these colleagues.

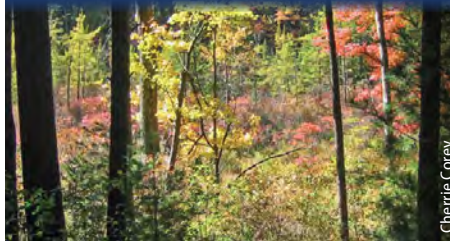
70 YEARS OF SUCCESS



We wish we could show *all* of the lands that SVT has helped to protect, but there just isn't room. We hope you enjoy these highlights. For properties with trails, you can learn more at www.svtweb.org/trails.

Thank you to all our partners and especially to all the landowners who protected their properties so future generations can continue to enjoy these healthy natural areas.

1970 Gowing's Swamp CONCORD 6 ACRES



Cherrie Corey

Unique bog ecosystem known as "Thoreau's bog."

1975 Grist Mill Pond MARLBOROUGH/SUDBURY 18 ACRES



Wetland habitat near Longfellow's Wayside Inn. 9 additional acres protected through projects in 1981, 2022, and 2023.

1990 Turenne Wildlife Habitat SOUTHBOROUGH 19 ACRES



Jill Moonheron

Wildlife plantings demonstration area.

1991 Garfield Woods BERLIN 84 ACRES



Cold-water trout stream and attractive rock outcroppings. Now part of Forty Caves Conservation Area (Berlin/Clinton).

1993 Cedar Hill & Sawink Farm NORTHBOROUGH/WESTBOROUGH 191 ACRES



Tom Sullivan

Part of the 2,000-acre Crane Swamp Conservation Area that spans four municipalities.

1999 Memorial Forest SUDBURY 220 ACRES



Raj Das

SVT's largest property was a gift from the General Federation of Women's Clubs of Massachusetts. Part of Desert Natural Area.

2002 Peppergrass Brook CR WESTBOROUGH 22 ACRES



Wooded wetland that features a tributary of the Sudbury River and has a trail that crosses five bog bridges.

2004 Highland Park HOPKINTON 12 ACRES



Views of the Upper Sudbury River. Trails connect to the 38-acre Saddle Hill land, which SVT acquired in 1998.

2017 Mainstone Farm CR WAYLAND 218 ACRES



Iconic farm and forest landscape. Trail connections to Hamlen Woods, which was protected between 1957 and 1960.

2018 Horse Meadows Knoll CR HARVARD 48 ACRES



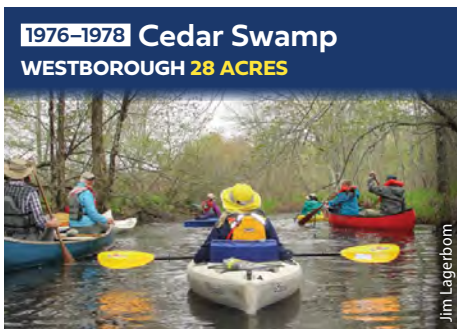
Louis Calisi

A drumlin-shaped knoll overlooking a beautiful naturalized pond

2021 Stonefield Farm APR ACTON 52 ACRES



A collaborative effort conserved a local farm that is now the headquarters of an organization that fights food insecurity.



1976-1978 Cedar Swamp
WESTBOROUGH **28 ACRES**

Headwaters of the Sudbury River. 92 additional acres protected through projects in 1984-85 and 1990-95.

Jim Lagerbom



1984 Cowassock Woods
FRAMINGHAM/ASHLAND **7 ACRES**

Saved from development at the eleventh hour. 45 additional acres protected in 1992

Cindy Winer



1989-1991 Ralph Hill
BILLERICA **64 ACRES**

Beautiful woods and canoe landings on the Sudbury River. Adjacent to recreation fields owned by the Town of Billerica.



1995 Wrack Meadow Woods
BOYLSTON **35 ACRES**

A wetland property with a red maple swamp. 93 additional acres protected through projects in 2003, 2012, and 2015.

Mark Levinson



1997 Kennedy/Bowers & Whitney Field CRs
STOW **36 ACRES**

Wetland, field, and forest habitat traversed by Heath Hen Meadow Brook. 41 adjacent acres protected in 2000.

Louis Calisi



1997 Greenways Conservation Area
WAYLAND **63 ACRES**

Fields and forest along the Sudbury River. Conserved by SVT, Town of Wayland, and Massachusetts DCR.

Dany Pelletier



2009 Yapp CR
LITTLETON **53 ACRES**

A mix of forest and fields with large glacial boulders. Trails connect to those on other conserved lands in the area.

Terri Ackerman



2012 O'Brien Farm CR
WESTFORD **23 ACRES**

A family-owned farm now managed solely to provide habitat for wildlife.



2013 Elliott Concord River Preserve
CARLISLE **9 ACRES**

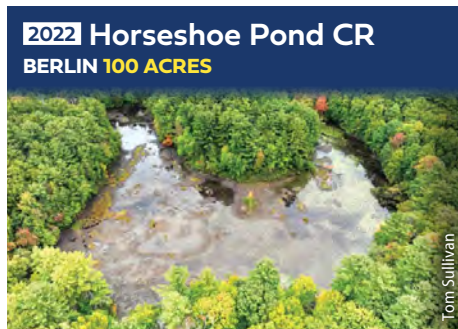
Rare plant habitat. 1,000 feet of riverfront and a canoe landing on the Concord River.



2021 Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area CR
UPTON **68 ACRES**

Several partners conserved this property that sat inside an extensive conservation area with a popular trail network.

Tom Sullivan



2022 Horseshoe Pond CR
BERLIN **100 ACRES**

Northeast corner of Mount Pisgah. Extension of Tri-Town Project (see page 6).

Tom Sullivan



2023 Sargent Road CR
BOXBOROUGH **21 ACRES**

Forested property that protects water resources and creates a link among nearby conservation lands.

70 YEARS OF COLLABORATION

The protection of any parcel of land requires collaboration between two or more partners. There have been many occasions, though, where SVT has worked with numerous partners to conserve large swaths of lands that extend into multiple communities. Here are some examples.



1963 Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge FROM FRAMINGHAM TO BEDFORD 4,500 ACRES



David Blohm

SVT played a major lobbying role in convincing the U.S. Department of the Interior to add 4,500 acres to this essential refuge along the Sudbury and Concord Rivers.

1999 Wild & Scenic River Designation, Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers EIGHT TOWNS 29 MILES



The effort to award the Wild & Scenic Designation to a segment of the three rivers resulted from a collaboration of SVT, OARS, US Fish & Wildlife, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, several Congressional Representatives, and the Towns of Bedford, Billerica, Carlisle, Concord, Framingham, Lincoln, Sudbury, and Wayland

2014-Present Tri-Town Project NORTHBOROUGH/BERLIN/BOYLSTON



Bill Shelley

SVT, the three towns, the Commonwealth, and many landowners have collaborated to conserve quality habitat around Mount Pisgah and the Wachusett Reservoir. To date, we have protected 573 acres on 14 properties.



Jim DeLuco

Best of Nature Sightings. Thanks to the many members and friends who generously share their wildlife images with us, the SVT Nature Sightings webpage is filled with hundreds of incredible images, like this one of eastern kingfisher that was captured by Jim DeLuco.

In late December, the SVT staff collected a few of our favorites into an online album. We invite you to enjoy it, and to share the link with others.

www.svtweb.org/2023photos

Annual Conservation Awards



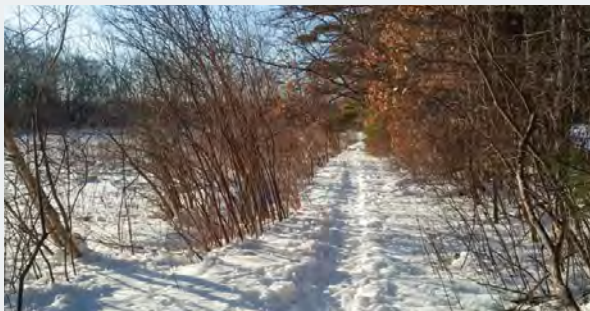
During our Annual Meeting in October, SVT presented awards to six outstanding conservationists. Top, l to r: Ashwath Sridhar of Hopkinton, Youth Steward Award; Dany Pelletier of Maynard, Morgan Volunteer Award. Christine A. Berry of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Distinguished Public Service Award. Bottom, l to r: Jim Makuc of Boylston, Steward of the Land; Susan Mitchell-Hardt of Acton, Lifetime Achievement Award; Robb Johnson, Executive Director of Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition (MLTC), Lewis Conservation Award. Read more about their accomplishments at www.svtweb.org/2023awards

Take a Hike: Greenways

Greenways Conservation Area in Wayland offers nearly 2 miles of relatively flat trails that run through lands owned by SVT and the Town of Wayland.

With its 166 acres of unspoiled woods, fields, and wetlands, plus its 1/2 mile of shoreline along the Sudbury River, Greenways is an ideal place for hiking, snowshoeing, and birdwatching.

Directions and trail map:
svtweb.org/greenways



Monthly Giving is a Gift to Nature

When you support SVT with a monthly recurring donation, **you help us plan ahead** so we can protect land, maintain trails, remove invasives, and bring our community into the wilderness.

In January and February, your recurring gift helps us **remove trees downed by winter storms**. In March and April, we can **prepare trails** for spring hikers. In May and June, you help us **remove garlic mustard** and other invasives that threaten native habitats.

In July and August, your support lets us **plan summer hikes** and other learning opportunities. In September and October, we can lead leaf peeping, owl prowling, and **foraging outings**. In November and December, your recurring gifts help us close out the year strong and **look forward to new beginnings**.

Year round, your monthly gifts help push forward the complex and time-consuming, but oh-so-rewarding, **land protection projects** that protect our open lands for all to enjoy. . . forever.

Many, many thanks to our monthly donors! Start your monthly gift today: www.svtweb.org/support

Conservation Collaborations

Winter Sowing.

SVT recently participated in a Winter Sow Workshop organized by Shelley Trucksis and Jean Milburn, two local native plant gardeners who explained how to sow seeds in mini-greenhouses made from plastic milk jugs. For seeds that require cold stratification, the technique offers an economical way to add native plants to a garden. Not only do native plants support our native pollinators, but once they are established, they also require less water than non-native ornamental plants.

The SVT website includes more information about the process, a link to a helpful video, and a list of seeds that Shelley (who is also a dedicated SVT volunteer) and Jean used, including butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), hairy beardtongue (*Penstemon hirsutus*), and turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*). Plus, you'll also find tips from SVT's Cecil Hynds-Riddle, who has planted seeds for wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*), and calico aster (*Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*). www.svtweb.org/WS2024



Wild columbine



Working with Scouts.

As part of his Eagle Project, Dylan Zickus of Boy Scout Troop 41 in Marlborough (second from left) led the effort to construct a bridge at SVT's Memorial Forest in Sudbury. The lengthy bridge provides a dry crossing on the Pipeline Pass near the Ocean By-Pass Trail, and it helps to protect water quality in nearby Cranberry Brook.



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See page 1

**HAPPY 70TH
BIRTHDAY!**



also: Great News for Nobscot, see page 3



SUDBURY VALLEY TRUSTEES
70th Anniversary Celebration

EMERALD FOREST GALA

16 March 2024 | 5:30 PM | Hudson, MA
RSVP at svtweb.org/gala24 by March 7

Questions? Sally Hild, shild@svtweb.org, 978-443-5588, ext. 123



Service Enterprise Certification

SVT has been certified as a Service Enterprise by the Allive program of the Massachusetts Service Alliance. The certification recognizes our successful upgrade of our Volunteer Program to ensure all volunteers have a positive experience.

Interested in volunteering? Visit www.svtweb.org/volunteer.