

Join us for a trail walk at the Gateway Reserve on Saturday, October 3, 10 AM



Southern Madison Heritage Trust

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Serving the six towns of Brookfield, Eaton,
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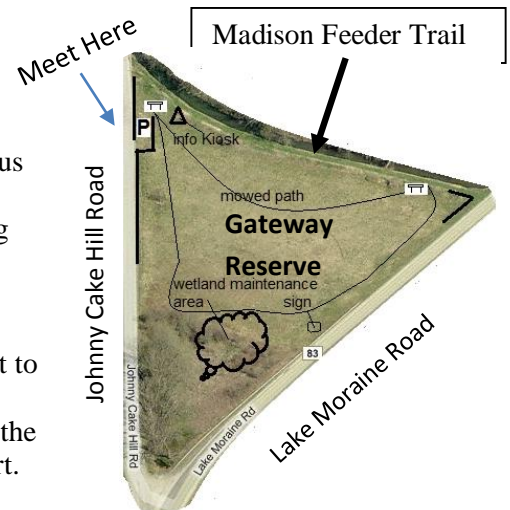
September 10, 2015

Greetings from the
Board of Southern
Madison Heritage
Trust.

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Good news in every area of our work -- that is our message to you this year. We want to report on the progress of our new property, the Gateway Reserve, on the Conservation Easement on Brackett Woods, and on our growing partnerships locally and beyond. **Please join us on a trail walk at the Gateway Reserve on Saturday, October 3, 10 AM for our official dedication of the property at the junction of Lake Moraine Road and Johnny Cake Hill Road**

The Gateway Reserve in the Town of Madison, one mile north of the Village of Hamilton, at the intersection of Lake Moraine Road and Johnny Cake Hill Road; a 4 acre parcel which was purchased with donor funds in 2013, and is pictured here in an aerial view. It also has been the focus of funding by the Mid-York Foundation and the Land Trust Alliance. These funds have been used for a Management Plan; parking for visitors; a walking path to provide easy access to the Madison Feeder Trail; a pond; and educational opportunities for elementary school students. Named for its "gateway" characteristics, this parcel at the intersection of Johnny Cake Hill Road and Lake Moraine Road, connects the Madison Feeder Trail to the east to Payne Creek and west through a Chenango Canal Association property, alongside the Brackett Woods to Route 12B. Next year we hope to connect the trail to Brackett Woods across the feeder and to trails at the Hamilton Airport.



SMHT has been successful in getting grants from the Mid-York Foundation and the New York Section of the national Land Trust Alliance to provide improvements for public access to the property and the Madison Feeder Trail. These funds are dedicated to the improvements and long-term stewardship of the property and may not be used for normal SMHT operations. For this reason, we need to continue fund raising to support our activities. A card and envelope are enclosed for your convenience.

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A second property in Madison, 25.6 acres, now has a Conservation Easement on it because of the forethought and generous efforts of Tom and Liz Brackett. This property has additional educational potential, borders the Madison Feeder and has a wonderful waterfall, "Scott's Falls" so named for the Scott family who farmed the area for many decades. We envision this property to be a destination reached via the Madison Feeder Trail from the Gateway Reserve. There are significant challenges in achieving this goal. The feeder trail is on the side of the feeder opposite the property, requiring a bridge or boardwalk from the trail to the conserved property. We will need to work with the NY State Canal Authority to get permission for this construction. In our initial contacts, the Canal Authority has already expressed interest in improving public access to the trail and nearby properties and we will be pursuing this goal next year.

SMHT board members partner with a variety of non-profits and landowners in New York, in the course of our work to preserve open space and natural resources. We work regularly with the Chenango Canal Association, the Chenango Land Trust, the national Land Trust Alliance (LTA) through the New York State section of the LTA, The Nature Conservancy, and New York State Parks and Trails.

Because we have a **strong educational component** in our mission, we offer a full outdoor program to the 5th graders at Hamilton Central School, shown exploring the stream at the Leland Reserve. This program completed its eighth year in the spring. The teachers at Hamilton Central School are enthusiastic about continuing the program. We are planning to expand the program to the Madison Central school for the 2014-15 school year. We are regular recipients of Colgate Upstate Institute Summer Fellows and one worked with us and the Chenango Canal Association to develop marketing and grant materials for the Madison Feeder Trail.



As SMHT becomes more visible in our six-township community, we are fortunate to receive inquiries from a number of other non-profits, landowners, etc. We collaborated with Heritage Farm on construction of two benches for the Gateway Reserve as a pilot for their developing a small business building benches for the public. SMHT anticipates buying additional benches for the Leland Reserve. We work closely with our neighbor to the south, the Chenango Land Trust and we are recognized as an active and pioneering all-volunteer land trust by the Land Trust Alliance.

Grant funds we have received are dedicated to property stewardship and improvements and may not be applied to operations. We require assistance from generous donors to cover our operating costs, such as liability insurance for properties open to the public, our 5th grade program with the Hamilton Central School, outreach to the community, printing and similar office costs. As an all-volunteer organization, 100% of donations are used to run the organization. We cover travel and regional Land Trust Alliance meetings at our personal expense.

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 in our six-town area. Check out www.SMHT.org for more information about us, protected properties and our activities.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harvey L. Kliman".

Harvey L. Kliman, President