



# Southern Madison Heritage Trust

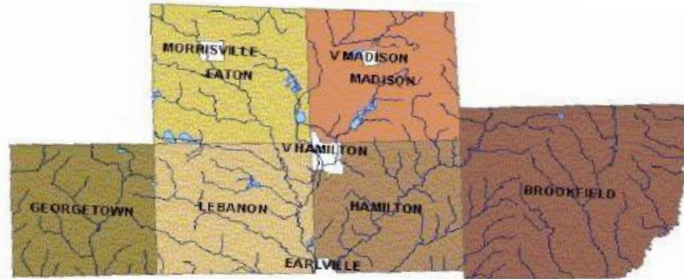
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Serving the six towns of Brookfield, Eaton,  
Georgetown, Hamilton Lebanon, and Madison

December 8, 2019

Greetings from  
the Board of  
Southern Madison  
Heritage Trust



Harvey Kliman  
*President*  
Mike Boardman  
*Vice President*  
Debbie Kliman  
*Secretary*  
Deede van der Mandele  
*Treasurer*  
Greg Owens  
*VP for Land Conservation*  
John Novak  
Adam Schoonmaker  
Thomas Parish  
Carolyn Todd  
Bill Todd  
Art Zimmer

**Good news continues this year** -- that is our message to you. We continue to maintain nearly 3.5 miles of trails around Hamilton, open to the public from dawn to dusk, on the three properties owned by SMHT: Leland Reserve on Preston Hill Road, Shapiro Reserve on Randallsville Road, and Gateway Reserve on Johnny Cake Hill Road. Board members and volunteers maintain the trails.

**Volunteer Support:** SMHT is fortunate to have the labor of student groups from Colgate and Morrisville State. The Colgate COVE students trim brush and generally make the trails at both Leland and Schapiro more open and user friendly. The Morrisville students are in a class on invasive species. They provide the hands-on heavy labor to dig out old honeysuckle and other invasives, freeing up local trees and shrubs. This is an annual field experience as part of the course and the students discover how hard it is to remove the invasives with hand labor. They are also rewarded to see how their efforts are allowing native shrubs and trees to develop properly.

**Leland Reserve:** SMHT continues to provide the Hamilton Central School 5<sup>th</sup> grade environmental field trip program with visits in the winter (on snowshoes we provide), spring, and fall. We also will arrange for a Madison school field trip next spring. The students plant trees provided by SMHT and over the last eleven years have developed an area we call the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Forest. We plan to install a marker to designate the area. Well over 100 trees have been planted to date, including pine, spruce, maple, black walnut, and redbud.



Photo: 5<sup>th</sup> graders in SMHT logo t-shirts as reward for participating in the field school.

These **strong educational** programs are taught by board members Greg Owens, Forester with DEC, and John Novak, retired Colgate Professor of Biology. Exploring the stream at the Leland Reserve is the highlight of the fall and spring trips. This program is in its eleventh year and the teachers are enthusiastic about continuing it.

### Plans for 2020

**New:** SMHT will be working with two, possibly more, local farms, in developing succession plans for the younger generations to continue farming. SMHT will work with the PCD to develop the state grant applications to purchase the development rights on the farms. SMHT would hold conservation easements to protect the farms from non-agricultural development. Funds from the purchase of development rights would allow the older generation to retire and the younger generation to take over the farm with minimal debt. This is an exciting project and has the possibility of supporting successful farms for succeeding generations. The NYS grant program is restricted to dairy farms, critical for our region.

**Our continuing goals** for the year include;

1. Providing access to the 25.6 acre Brackett Woods by working with the Canal Corporation to cross the Madison Feeder with a bridge or boardwalk. This will open the opportunity to provide a fourth public trail and a different set of habitats for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade ecology field trips.

2. Extending the trail along the Madison Feeder from the Gateway Reserve to connect with the Hamilton Municipal Airport trails and hence to the Village of Hamilton.

3. Continuing to implement the necessary steps, including annual property monitoring, as we work towards national accreditation, a three-year process.

4. Semi-annual trash pickup on 2 miles of 12B north of Hamilton. The picture to the right is a typical haul.

5. To keep the trail open at the Schapiro Reserve, we will need to replace the wooden deck of the bridge crossing the feeder canal. This is a significant maintenance expense.



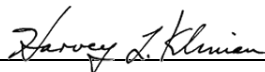
**We work closely** with our neighbor to the south, the Chenango Land Trust, and we are recognized as an active and pioneering all-volunteer land trust by the New York Office of the Land Trust Alliance.

**Grant funds** we receive are dedicated to property stewardship and improvements and may not be applied to operations. We require assistance from generous donors like you to cover our operating costs, such as liability insurance for properties open to the public, our 5<sup>th</sup> grade program with the Hamilton and Madison Central Schools, 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 costs of travel and attendance at 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 and continuing our popular education program with Hamilton and Madison 5<sup>th</sup> grades. A card and envelope are enclosed for your convenience.**

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

Thank you,



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SMHT - Conserving Land in Southern Madison County