



# Southern Madison Heritage Trust

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

December 8, 2018

Greetings from  
the Board of  
Southern Madison  
Heritage Trust



Harvey Kliman  
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Art Zimmer

**Good news continues this year** -- that is our message to you. We have improved the trail at the Schapiro Reserve on Randallsville Road with regular mowing we can now handle ourselves.

**SMHT now has the capability** to mow trails on protected lands ourselves, thanks to a grant from the Mid-York Foundation (Thank you!). The grant allowed us to purchase a trailer to tow lawnmowers owned by board members to the Schapiro and Leland Reserves to save the expense of hiring a landscaper to mow the trails. Local residents have volunteered to mow the trail at the Gateway Reserve and the adjacent trail along the Madison Feeder canal. SMHT now has a total of about 3.5 miles of trails open to the public at SMHT locations around the Village.

**We applied for and received** a Colgate Upstate Institute Summer Field School Fellow last summer. Rising senior Claudia Buszta flew a drone over all five SMHT protected properties and produced high-resolution photos of them. SMHT is required to monitor our protected lands annually to make sure the provisions of protection are not violated. Claudia gave us overviews with much higher resolution than any available from satellites, such as Google Earth. She also prepared on-the-ground photographs to produce complete monitoring reports for the properties, an important requirement as SMHT moves toward national accreditation, a three-year project. Another land trust has already contacted us about this project to learn how Claudia accomplished the project. Image of Gateway Reserve shows mowed trail.



**SMHT is collaborating** with the Cazenovia Preservation Foundation (CPF) and the Chenango Land Trust (CLT) in a grant application (which has good prospects of being funded by the NY State Office of the Land Trust Alliance) to hire a person for 18 months to develop aspects of our three organizations' capacity to function more broadly and efficiently. The preliminary plan is to help with organization of

finances, donations, donor tracking, and publicity, including newsletters and improvements to our websites. This grant if approved will require a substantial match from each of the participating organizations. We will need your help to fund this program.

**Leland Reserve:** SMHT continued to provide the 5<sup>th</sup> grade environmental field trip program with visits last spring and this fall by Hamilton Central School. Field trips will be arranged in the winter (on snowshoes that we provide) and spring. We also will arrange for a Madison school field trip next spring. 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 at both schools are enthusiastic about continuing the program.

**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.

**Plans for 2019:** Our goals for the year include, in addition to the project with CPF and CLT:

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 develop the necessary steps as we work towards national accreditation, a three year process.

**SMHT board members collaborate** with a variety of non-profits and landowners in New York, in the course of our work to preserve open space and natural resources. This year, SMHT worked with the Partnership for Community Development and the Chenango Canal Association in a project with Cornell students to improve the signage along the Towpath Trail. Watch for the new signage and mile markers. SMHT also worked with the PCD on the development of the new recreational website [www.GoSoMad.com](http://www.GoSoMad.com) that includes the SMHT trails.

**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,



Harvey L. Kliman, President