

ST. SIMONS LAND TRUST NEWS

PRESERVING THE NATURAL AND SCENIC CHARACTER OF OUR ISLAND



SUMMER 2014



Land Trust validates, focuses on big vision: 2000 acres, protected and connected

The St. Simons Land Trust staff and Board of Directors gathered in May at Musgrove Plantation for a day-long strategic planning retreat. The group laid the roadmap for the next three to five years and the Land Trust's "big vision" is now even bigger. "In 2004, we hired a planning and consulting firm from Atlanta represented by H. Randal Roarke, a professor from Georgia Tech, we recruited an advisory group of local leaders, we surveyed the community and wrote the first Greenprint. When we updated it in 2008, our short-term target for land protection was 500 acres," said Executive Director Ben Slade. "Today, there are 1,100 acres protected in County parks, Fort Frederica National Monument and Land Trust properties, but the Greenprint calls for more of this beautiful island to be protected. Our goal is 2,000 acres – 20 percent - preserved through acquisition, conservation easements and encouraging smart growth."

By adopting the Georgia Community Greenspace Program in 2004, Glynn County endorsed the state standard that 20% of land and water in rapidly growing areas should be set aside as open and connected greenspace. When communities reach for this standard and prioritize land protection, the benefits are felt throughout. Studies by the Trust for Public Land have established that land conservation helps local communities by increasing the value of land while reducing the costs of community services. Land conservation also supports an outdoor recreation and tourism industry which brings \$1 billion annually to the Golden Isles. "The work of the Land Trust deserves much credit for protecting the overall character of St. Simons Island," said Scott McQuade, Golden Isles Convention and Visitor's Bureau executive director. The protected parks and trails on St. Simons also provide an opportunity for community members to get outdoors, get active and be physically healthy as well.

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The Land Trust's vision is not only to protect 2,000 acres on St. Simons Island, but also have the properties connected by the Island-wide Trail System and accessible to the public. "This idea of 'protected and connected' certainly sets us apart on the Georgia Coast, and up and down the Eastern Coast as well," said Slade. "So much of what we do is to enhance the quality of life for our residents and visitors- being able to access the beautiful natural areas by bike or foot is so critical to the lifestyle here," he continued. The Land Trust is working with Glynn County and the PATH Foundation to fund the continued enhancement of the Island-wide Trail System.

To achieve this 2,000 acre vision, the Land Trust will call together an advisory committee to reflect input from the community. "St. Simons Island has changed considerably in the past six years," said former board chairman Susan Shipman, citing the new Sea Island acquisition, the College of Coastal Georgia and the recovering economy. "Our members need to be surveyed again so we can be sure the updated Greenprint represents the community's interests." The Greenprint will be the guiding document that will set the specific priorities for the Land Trust's preservation activities. On St. Simons Island today, the bulk of undeveloped acreage is on the north end of the Island. Additional parcels are along Frederica Road, in Harrington, and a few remain on the south end. The proposed 2014 Greenprint update will identify high-priority areas for the Land Trust to focus on.

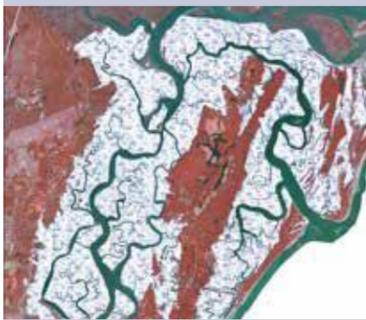
Land Trust members and supporters want to see this work done because they've seen what over-development can do to other places they've loved. "I recently went with my family to Corolla, North Carolina," said Land Trust member Molly Moroney. "I was shocked when I saw how much building was going on." Molly and her husband Bill live on St. Simons and moved here from Dallas, Texas for the laid-back lifestyle and access to pristine natural areas. "I kept thinking about our home on St. Simons Island and how important it is to preserve the land because once it's gone, it's gone for good. This is one of the foremost considerations that the Land Trust takes into account."

The Land Trust will look to the community for its support through annual memberships and major gifts to an ongoing land acquisition campaign over the next five years. We will also be working to educate land owners and developers about the benefits of conservation easements, outright land donations and smart growth. "We can do it," said Dana Pope, deputy director of the Land Trust. "We've done it before. Since 2009, we've raised \$32 million and have now preserved 776 acres. We know we have a generous and passionate community that is determined to save our most important resource, the natural world around us. We believe with their help, together we can achieve this big vision."

DID YOU KNOW



Did you know that *Spanish moss* is a member of the pineapple family? You probably would not have guessed it by looking at them next to each other - one covers a large part of our natural canopy and provides shelter for birds and mammals, while the other is a delicious juicy fruit. Both the pineapple and Spanish moss are members of the Bromeliaceae Family.



Did you know that *salt marsh* covers 38,696 acres surrounding St. Simons Island? This highly productive ecosystem acts as a nursery for many marine species like shrimp, various crabs and periwinkle snails. It also is a beautiful landscape that can evoke feelings of calm and awe from residents and visitors alike.



We've spotted a *Swallow-tailed Kite* flying above Cannon's Point Preserve! The Swallow-tailed kite is a great indicator that summer has arrived - these birds travel from South America to coastal Georgia during the summer months just for breeding. It is exciting to see this elegant raptor over St. Simons Island since they are more typically seen on the mainland.

Photo by Tim Keyes, GA DNR Coastal Bird Biologist

Mosquitoes aren't just blood suckers but also are pollinators and a food source for birds and bats.



More happening at Cannon's Point

Thank you to the many Land Trust supporters that have visited Cannon's Point during our soft opening. We have learned so much about what our visitors want to know, want to see and want to do. We are in the process of implementing a number of visitor-friendly amenities this summer in preparation for Fall 2014.

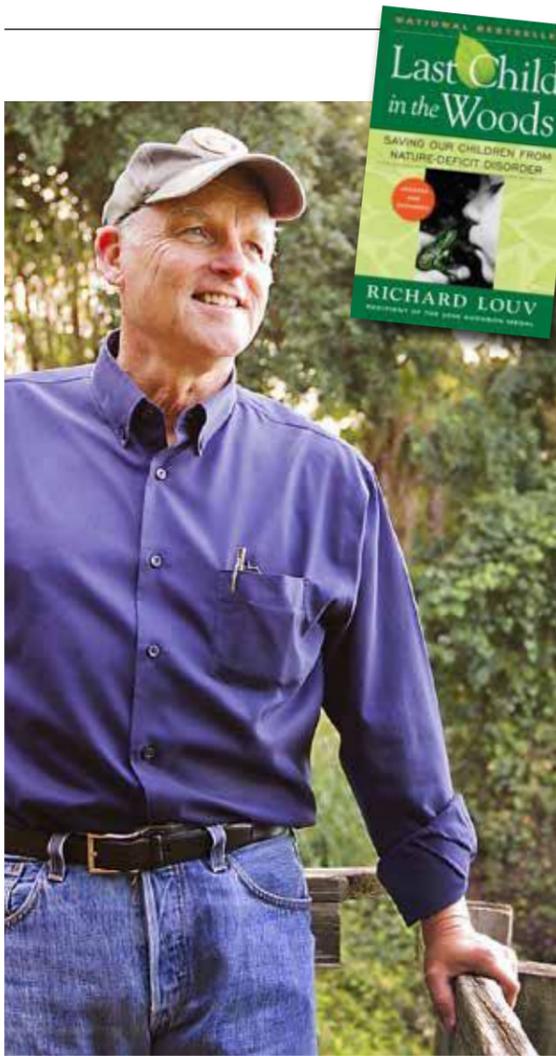
Visitors can expect clear signage and maps detailing nature hike routes, places for viewing wildlife, and sites of historic significance. Along the trails and at the historic sites, there will soon be interpretative signage allowing visitors to learn more about what they are seeing.

The experience at Cannon's Point Preserve is a primitive wilderness experience; visitors should bring their own water, bug spray and dress appropriately. In addition to the self-guided experience at Cannon's Point, the Land Trust is committed to providing a platform for education to local students and youth participating in social service programming. Our vision is to partner with local public and private schools, the 4-H Center, Boy and Girl Scouts, and Boys and Girls Club members - that their immersion in the wilderness might instill a conservation ethic which stays with them long after leaving Cannon's Point. Also, we have already established a relationship with the local College of Coastal Georgia to provide natural sciences and American history students an outdoor classroom for their studies at Cannon's Point.

This project's impact on the community and our organization cannot be overstated. We have created the largest, most accessible wilderness preserve in the region, greatly increasing the public's access to and interaction with nature. We are preparing to bring students of all ages to the land to experience Cannon's Point as an outdoor classroom. The purchase, preservation, and public access of Cannon's Point has revolutionized the Land Trust's role in the community, quadrupling the total land under our management and transforming us into a true conservation and ecological management agency.

Cannon's Point Summer Hours: Saturdays, 8am - 12pm; Sundays, 1 - 5pm. For more information, please visit www.sslf.org.

The Nature of Nature-Deficit Disorder



Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, by Richard Louv, is a great book detailing the importance of nature in the health and wellness of our children. Below is interview with Louv from The Trust for Public Land's magazine Land&People. The St. Simons Land Trust staff has read this book and recommends it to anyone who too has experienced a moment of sheer awe in the woods, at the beach and in the fresh air.



Three years ago, Richard Louv was a San Diego Union-Tribune newspaper columnist and book author who wrote often about social trends. Today he is chief spokesman for a rapidly growing movement that seeks to reconnect children with nature. Published in 2005, Louv's *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* details the many ways in which modern children are disconnected from the natural world. Now in its 14th printing, the book makes a powerful case for the importance of experiencing nature in childhood. Such experience, Louv contends, is essential for both the good of the children and the future of the planet—a message that has hit home with the American people. Louv speaks before packed houses nationwide, and the nonprofit he started, the Children & Nature Network, works tirelessly to promote programs that give children access to nature. Recently he shared with Land&People his thoughts on this work and its meaning for conservationists.

Your book and work call attention to the fact that children get a lot less outdoor play and time in nature today than they used to. Can you tell us a little about your own childhood experiences in nature?

Well, I grew up in the 1950s on the edge of Kansas City and spent hours outside. This was where the suburbs met farmland and woods. I write in the book how many of the farm fields had trees planted between them as windbreaks, and my friends and I would climb high up in them, to look out over the fields and mountains. Or sometimes I would climb alone, and I would imagine I was Rudyard Kipling's *Mowgli*—the boy raised by wolves. High up, the tree would sway in the wind, and it was both frightening and wonderful to surrender to its power. We had a creek to explore. And I built various outdoor shelters and tree houses. Looking back on it now, I realize that nature was both exciting and calming, and it helped me to focus.

In *Last Child in the Woods* you write about how when you talked about your childhood to your son Matthew, he would ask why it was "more fun when you were a kid." Was this what got you thinking about how nature is experienced so differently by today's children?

That was one of many things that got me thinking about it. I have been writing about children and parenting and nature for years, and the more I researched this topic, the clearer I saw this growing and destructive gap between children and the natural world. Today's kids are aware of global threats to the environment but at no other time in our history have children been so separated from direct experience in nature. At the same time, we are beginning to learn the importance of such experience. Recent studies show that nature can be powerful therapy for depression, obesity, and attention deficit disorder. Experience in nature can increase the ability to concentrate in both children and adults. And studies here and in Scandinavia strongly suggest that childhood experiences with nature increase creativity.

You use the term "nature-deficit disorder" to refer to the human costs of alienation from nature. What's changed for kids these days?

Parents typically give a number of reasons why their children spend less time in nature. There's more competition from television and computers; children have more homework and activities that demand their time. And in some instances, they simply don't have access to natural areas. Fear plays a big part, too—fear of traffic, of crime, of stranger-danger, or of nature itself. In some areas, neighborhood covenants and government regulations seem almost to criminalize natural play and put nature off limits. But it's not only children who are subject to nature-deficit disorder. It's a much bigger concept than that. You could say that nature-deficit disorder also affects adults, neighborhoods, whole communities, and the future of humankind's relationship to nature.

Can you say a little more about what today's kids lose by being cut off from nature?

Health is one thing that can be damaged.

Also an understanding of where we fit into the natural world and our communities. Without contact with nature, kids may also fail to develop what Harvard Professor Howard Gardner calls "naturalist intelligence"—an ability to identify and classify patterns in nature that have been with us through all of human evolution. There is also a sensual loss. Direct experience in nature simultaneously stimulates all of a child's senses, and the use of our senses is essential to learning. By moving childhood indoors, we deprive children of a full connection to the world. But most of all, I think our plugged-in kids, who spend so much time in front of the TV and computer screen, are missing out on many chances to feel a sense of wonder. What I'd really like to communicate to fellow parents is that we shouldn't think about a child's experience in nature as an extracurricular activity but as a vital element for healthy child development. That's what the new research strongly suggests.

Your work has certainly struck a chord. *Last Child in the Woods* continues to sell well and a new edition is coming out next year. You are speaking to large crowds around the country about an emerging "children and nature" movement. Have you been surprised by the reaction?

Well, I have been immensely gratified by it, and it has given me hope. The issues in the book touch something deep within us, both biologically and spiritually. When I speak around the country, I like to tell how, as a boy, I would pull up survey stakes to discourage development of the farms near my home. At one speech in New Mexico, a rancher, probably in his sixties, stood up to say that he did the same thing when he was a boy. Then he started to cry. Despite his deep embarrassment, he continued to talk about his fear that his might be one of the last generations of Americans to feel a sense of attachment to land and nature. So many people feel that, and it's what's powering the interest in this movement. Many of us sense that something has been taken from our lives, and we know our kids are missing out. I think that once parents and other adults understand not only what is being lost but also what can be gained by reconnecting our kids, and ourselves, to nature, that great change will follow.

TPL and its supporters work to create neighborhood parks and other close-to-home natural places. What lessons does your work have for conservationists like those who support TPL's work?

Well, of course, we need places for kids to connect with nature, and we need the help of TPL and all conservation groups to make that happen. TPL's Parks for People program in cities is particularly helpful in putting nature where kids live. But we also need to think about specific ways to support children's use of natural areas. One idea would be to dedicate a portion of any proposed open space to children and families, where there could be nature centers, outdoor-oriented preschools, nature education programs, and other offerings. And no matter how good a job they are doing now, conservationists and environmentalists need to do more. They need to realize that the future of the environmental movement—indeed of the planet itself—may depend on this work. Studies show that people who care deeply about the future of the environment almost always enjoyed transcendent experiences in nature when they were children. If nature experiences for children continue to fade, where will future stewards of the earth come from? I hope that *Last Child in the Woods* challenges conservation groups and environmental organizations to ask that question—and then bring their own creativity to the protection of Western society's keystone endangered species: the human child in nature. Ultimately, this is a matter of common sense.

More information on Richard Louv, the children and nature movement, and the Children & Nature Network can be found at www.cnaturenet.org.

"The Nature of Nature Deficit Disorder," *Land&People* magazine, Fall 2007, reprinted with permission from The Trust for Public Land. Sign up for a free subscription to *Land&People* magazine by visiting tpl.org/freemag.



Land Trust announces new board members, says farewell to others

2014 Board of Directors

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Ben Slade, Executive Director
Dana Pope, Deputy Director
Sue Tuttle, Director of Finance and Stewardship
Stephanie Knox, Preserve Manager
Anna M. Hall, Development Manager
Sarah Harris, Development Coordinator

The St. Simons Land Trust welcomes the addition of two new Board Members for the term beginning May 2014 and one new member for the term that began in the fall of 2013.

Lewis Glenn is the vice president of real estate brokerage at Sea Island. Previously he served as president and chief operating officer of Harry Norman, Realtors and has 30+ years of real estate experience. He has served on many boards and councils including the Darlington School, Oglethorpe University, and the Georgia Advisory Council of the Trust for Public Land. Currently, he is a board member at the Coastal Georgia Historical Society. He is a native of Atlanta and with his wife Nancy has three children and nine grandchildren.

Jack C. Kilgore is president of the Consumer Brands Division and co-leader of the United States Canada region of Rich Products Corporation. He has held various top leadership positions with the American Cancer Society, and has served on the boards of Georgia State Chamber of Commerce and the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce. Currently, he is on the Board of Directors as past chairman for Communities in Schools of Glynn County and is co-chairing the Graduation Blueprint Implementation Commission for United Way. He is on the Board of Trustees of the College of Coastal Georgia Foundation, and is on the Boards of Directors for South Coast Bank & Trust of Glynn County and Primo Water Corporation, a public company based in Winston-Salem, Nc.

Deborah Nash is a former executive in the technology industry. From 1993 – 2003, she held executive positions at Microsoft Corporation in Product Support, Enterprise Sales, Consulting, and Marketing, Windows Marketing, and was Senior Vice President, Human Resources. Nash was twice named one of Fortune Magazine's 50 Most Powerful Women in Business. She holds a Bachelors of Industrial Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology and an honorary Doctorate of Sciences from the University of Arizona. She has served on a number of non-profit boards, including the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Tech Foundation. She is a founder of the Blessings in a Backpack program at Altama Elementary School in Brunswick, Ga. and served on the steering committee for the 2012 Georgia Literary Festival.

Rotating off this May are **Chuck Cansler, Frances McCrary** and **Jim Manning**, all three of whom have served in leadership positions on the Board and on Committees. **Frances McCrary** and **Jim Manning** were two of the Land Trust's founding members back in 2000. "We just knew we had something special here and that we needed to do something about it," said Frances. Jim is a St. Simons native and has seen the Island change over the past 50 years. His dedication to the Land Trust is apparent in his ability to go above-and-beyond on Board committees and during important fundraising campaigns. Chuck joined the board in 2008 and was the Chairman during the 2011-2012 Campaign to Preserve Cannon's Point.

Past Board Chairperson **Susan Shipman** was honored this May with the **Dorothy Gilbert Award**, the Land Trust's highest distinction. The award is named for the late conservationist and philanthropist Dorothy Gilbert, who made an outright gift of a 40-acre marsh front property to the Land Trust in 2006, now the John Gilbert Nature Trail. The award recognizes outstanding commitment, service and leadership to the Land Trust. Susan Shipman embodies this award and has led the Land Trust with her clear dedication to conservation and to St. Simons. Susan's knowledge of Georgia ecology as a former executive with Georgia Department of Natural Resources and her ability to get things done propelled the Cannon's Point Preserve acquisition forward to completion. Susan has led the Land Trust to new levels of success and has earned ten-fold the **Dorothy Gilbert Award**.

Become a Member or Renew Your Land Trust Membership Today.

Our Monthly Membership Giving Program

The Land Trust invites you to join a growing number of members choosing to make their annual membership contribution monthly, over 12 months, via credit card. Monthly giving provides a reliable stream of support for the Land Trust's mission. Here's how it works.

- ▶ You determine the amount of your monthly donation.
- ▶ Your credit card is charged each month and you receive an email confirmation. In January, you receive an annual giving statement.
- ▶ Your membership renews automatically each year.

To enroll in the Monthly Membership Program, visit: sslft.org

Your annual membership to the Land Trust allows us to fulfill our mission. Join us today!

Please mail check and form to: St. Simons Land Trust, P.O. Box 24615
St. Simons Island, Georgia 31522 or join online at www.sslft.org.

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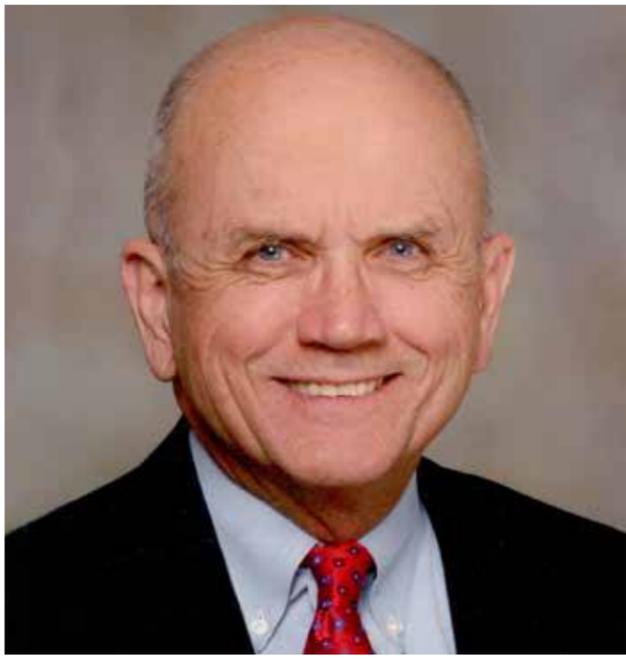
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JOIN OR RENEW TODAY AND HELP PRESERVE THE NATURAL AND SCENIC CHARACTER OF OUR ISLAND





A letter from the Executive Director

In a recent issue, Fortune magazine recognized The World's 50 Greatest Leaders. One of the honorees was General Joe Dunford, current leader of the NATO coalition in Afghanistan. It seems the General was nominated by, among others, retired General George W. Casey, former Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army. A bit unusual for an army guy to recognize a marine.

In the interview for the magazine piece, Gen. Dunford was asked about the experiences that led to his success as a leader. He replied that his first battalion commander told him the three rules of success. The first? Surround yourself with good people. "Over the years," says Dunford, "I've forgotten the other two." That is the way I feel about the extraordinary group of members, members of our board and advisory council, staff and volunteers who have re-

sponded to the mission and vision of the St. Simons Land Trust. There is a palpable feeling of excitement when our vision for the Island is described. In a capsule it is "a network of parks and natural areas, connected by a trail system." Some holdings for active and passive recreation, some for protection of rare habitat and others to preserve the marvelous tree canopy that makes our roads such pleasant avenues. All of these special areas are to be connected by a trail system that will allow access without the necessity of a vehicle. We look to Glynn County to continue to be our partner in this vision.

The vision is powerful and will take talented and dedicated individuals who are excited and in fact compelled to help see us through to success. National standards call for 15 – 20 % of a community to be dedicated to open space, and we feel this is a reasonable goal for an island of 10,624 acres. With dedication we can someday reach this pinnacle.

My sincere thanks to all who have answered the call to make this happen.



Sincerely,

Ben T. Slade, III
Executive Director

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

The Land Trust needs volunteers willing and able to act as rangers and greeters at Cannon's Point Preserve.

These volunteers will be critical to enhancing the visitor experience. If you are interested in joining our volunteer cohort, please visit www.sslt.org/sup_volunteer.php or call 912-638-9109.



2012/2013 Annual Report available online

Visit www.sslt.org to find the St. Simons Land Trust's 2012/2013 Annual Report. Since 2009, our membership support has doubled. In that same period, the value of land assets preserved by the Land Trust has tripled.

Thank you to the many members, volunteers and partners who have contributed in some way to the Land Trust to make our work possible.

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