

Spring Hill Farm – FALL 2022

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Don't miss an issue !!

The SHF Trust and Advisory Committee were pleased to get positive feedback regarding our newsletters. So here we are, rolling along with **Issue FIVE !**

Don't want to miss an issue? Send us an email to:
SHFtrust@yahoo.com
(include "Subscribe to Newsletter" in the subject line). You will be added to our mailing list.



Early fall with just a hint of color



Quarterly newsletter for Spring Hill Farm
A non-profit town owned farm
96 Towle Road Chester, NH 03036

It's been a full year of seasons here at SHF. Last winter was kind (relatively). The new roof that was installed on the barn last fall kept the hay dry and the structure protected. As with any year, weather was a huge factor in hay production. Last year was too wet, this year was too dry, and if we are lucky next year should be "just right"! The Ortins leased the high tunnel area again and ran a successful CSA, as well as starting their new venture with goats that target eating invasive plant species. The cattlemen grazed 10 healthy cows on the fields behind the barn. (Drive by slowly right now and you may spy a new baby calf or two.) The SHF trails were officially marked, and the pollinator and Monarch areas are continually being improved in the trail area. Additionally, Boy Scouts have been involved with some farm upgrades. SHF is pleased that the base of support and involvement with the people of Chester has grown. We had a very successful joint effort Winter Carnival, and our own Fall Festival and Benefit Trail ride. Proceeds from these events helped to make the purchase of the ADA ramp a reality. Next year is looking bright. Please stay tuned and know that your support is much appreciated. We have plans!!!

SHF FUN FACT:

Years ago, it wasn't unusual for buildings to be moved to new locations. According to the Profile of Historical Calendar of Chester, NH 1722-1972, on December 6, 1920, the Knowles School was moved to Towle Road. The Church farm was the viewing area. Pies, cake, doughnuts and coffee were provided for the men for lunch by Mrs. Lane, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. True and Mrs. Prescott.



A magical version of SHF!



Did you know?

New Hampshire's has over 70 native tree species. We have both hard and soft wood including: cherry, beech, chestnut, elm, birch, and balsam fir.

Although pines and balsam firs do not shed their green needles, they do contribute their pleasant scent to be enjoyed by all during walks in the woods!

On the Horizon

Coming soon...

New kiosk with map to help you navigate the trails at the farm.

2ND Annual
Winter Carnival date at SHF:
Date : TBD



For more information go to
www.chesternh.org

"If a year was tucked inside of a clock, then autumn would be the magic hour".

- Victoria Erickson



RAMP PROGRESS !!!

As the saying goes, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. However, when dealing with goals, the shortest distance may be quite circuitous. In other words, a plan may take several different directions, but in the end the arrival at the ultimate goal is what is most important.

SHF has been trying for 2 years to make a handicap accessible ramp a reality for the farmhouse. Originally, we considered having a private contractor design and install an aluminum ramp. The “no maintenance” aspect of the aluminum structure was very attractive; however, the dollar quote was quite high and due to the cost, we pivoted towards a wooden design. Obtaining a wooden design for the ramp was the next focus. A full design for a wooden ramp was completed over a series of months and we had dimensions and a bill of material list that still needed some tweaking, but we were very close to starting to purchase material and ground breaking activities. But...but...but...WAIT...enter in the Internet, which allows access to millions of used items for sale within any region. An eagle-eyed SHF Trust member located a used aluminum ramp for sale in excellent condition that was in the far reaches of Vermont. Luck was on our side because this ramp was exactly the dimensions we needed for our design and mere a fraction of the cost of the initial aluminum ramp quote. Two trust members set out on a long 3-hour road trip (each way) with a 20-foot trailer in tow to purchase the new ramp and bring it back to its new home in Chester.

SHF is most happy to report that as you read this, the new ramp is set in place (dry fit) at the farm. The next steps are to establish the design for the ramp foundation and modify the farmhouse with ADA compliant: new exterior door, interior thresholds and bathroom(s).

The journey to get here has been made possible by donations from the public, an Eversource grant, and a very generous anonymous grant, as well as fund raising efforts thru the Fall festival, and Derry Trail Riders. We will need to continue to raise funds for the completion of the ADA bathroom and hope that the community will continue to support the upgrade. We have great plans to open the farmhouse and host workshops, meetings, and sessions to combine learning opportunities for farm, agriculture and nature related subjects.



This ramp had all the hand railings included, and very roomy landings. The self-leveling design makes for greater ease of assembly.

Of special note, Chris Goodell of Level Ramping Solutions donated a few parts that were missing. (They did the original installation of this ramp in Vermont!)

Autumn means transition time for most insects

Now that the leaves are falling and the temperature is dropping, where do all our insect friends go? At Spring Hill Farm, all the leaf litter, tree holes and logs are common shelters for overwintering adult insects. Some insects, like our beloved Monarch Butterfly, have migrated to warmer grounds in Mexico. By contrast, The Mourning Cloak Butterfly is usually the first butterfly that is noticed in the Spring, and this is because it hibernates in tree holes or other shelters during the winter. As in some insect larvae, it reduces the water content of its body, and builds up glycerol which acts as an antifreeze. Most of New Hampshire's native or wild bees spend the winter in their nest cells as pupae, emerging as adults the following spring or summer. Their nest cells are either in the ground or in cavities. Ground-nesting bees use loose soil and leaf litter. Cavity-nesting bees, representing about one-third of native bees, use hollow plant stems or holes in wood left by wood-boring beetles.

In general, insects can survive cold temperatures easiest when the temperatures are stable, not fluctuating through alternate thaws and freezes. Many insects can gain shelter and nourishment through the winter in a variety of micro-habitats. Among these niches are under the soil, inside the wood of logs and trees, and even in plant galls. Then there are a few insects that stay active in winter. For example, the nymphs of dragonflies, mayflies and stoneflies live in waters of ponds and streams, often beneath ice. They feed actively and grow all winter to emerge as adults in early spring.

So, remember, when things grow quieter in the colder months, there is always life right beneath the surface.

(UNH.edu and Smithsonian for reference)



Two Hairy Woodpeckers have a stare down on a snag tree at Spring Hill

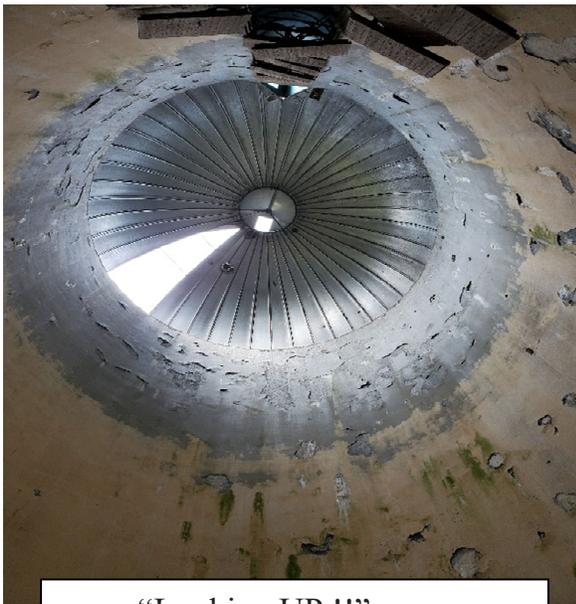
Silos Changed American Farming

Feeding cattle in the winter was a big challenge for the American farmer back in the 1800's. The livestock needed nutritional forage to get through the cold months. Lack of storage for the feed was the problem. In the 1870's the first silos appeared in the US. Surprisingly, these first silos were horizontal and were made of wood or stone and dug partially or fully into the ground. ("Silo" is derived from the Latin word, "Silus", which means Cellar).

Storing green fodder (called making ensilage) requires that air be eliminated, so as not to spoil the feed. The tower type silo proved to be a better design for eliminating air and it replaced the horizontal version in the early 1880's. The first vertical silos were rectangular and made of wood or stone. Air pockets in the corners, as well as excessive outward pressure on the rectangular structures forced the design to change. It was revised to the common cylindrical version you see today. The early round silos were made of wood and fieldstone but were not airtight, and the wooden version was prone to rot and fire. Farmers began successfully using concrete stave silos around 1910. As seen at SHF, the silo is made of masonry units with interlocking edges. Mortar was applied between the joints and round or flat metal bands reinforced the staves. The inside of the silo was sealed with a layer of thin concrete. The design grew to be the most popular due its relative lower cost and it did not require any special masonry skills.



The concrete stave style silo at SHF



"Looking UP !!"
(From inside the SHF silo)



The silo, a big part of the landscape at SHF



GET OUTSIDE!!

We often focus on the Spring Hill Farm (96 Towle Road) side of Muriel Church's gift to our town. However, there is another treasure of land donated by Ms. Church located just off Lane Road. At 492 Lane Road there is just under 150 acres, part of the property extending just into Raymond. This parcel of land, with its rolling hills, dense forest and classic stone walls has multiple uses depending on the season. During the summer it is used for haying; one of the ways we honor Ms. Church's desire to remain a working farm. In all seasons though, this beautiful area is a wonderful place for hiking, biking, walking, horse riding and birdwatching. Winter is fast approaching and that brings the awesome opportunity of snowshoeing, cross country skiing and a wonderful sledding hill! Following a good snow, the first hill at 492 Lane Road offers great spots for the sledder wanting to get some speed and for the more timid ones as well.

If you wander to the back of the property, you will find some great trails through the forests that will drop you out on Shattagee Road in Raymond. You might even see the hint of a maple operation!

A bit further down the road at 540 Lane Road lies the access to about 65 acres of more Muriel Church property. This area is great for a challenging bike ride, a nice horse ride or a great walk. This property as well stretches all the way back to Shattagee Road.

We welcome you to come and respectfully explore this area of your town!

Autumn arrives at SHF:



Sunsets creep up earlier; and the leaves bid us a final farewell with a shout out of color



Scenes from SHF Fall Festival – Sep 10, 2022





Scenes from SHF Benefit Trail Ride – Sep 25, 2022

