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Welcoming Summer and Long Days!

Did you know?

Fun facts

Successful workday on May 21st

Eagles at SHF !!..... (SCOUTS)

Goats at SHF?

Pollinators at the farm

Haying at SHF

Mission statement of Spring Hill Farm: to preserve and promote the legacy of Muriel Church through the continuance of agricultural operations and the stewardship of both open land and forests, while providing educational and recreational opportunities to the public.

Issue
FOUR



Spring Hill Farm – SUMMER 2022

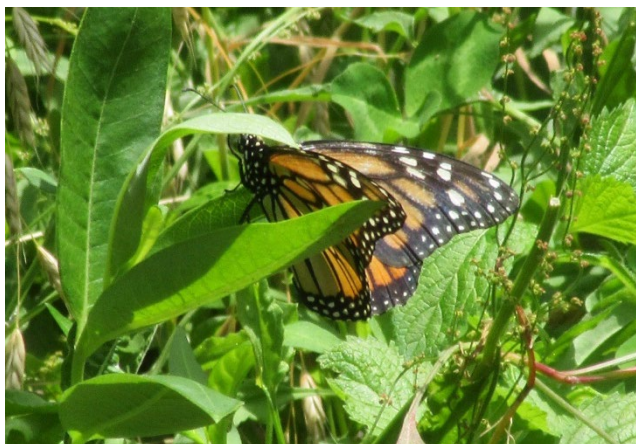
Don't miss an issue !!

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

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.



A beautiful Monarch amongst the milkweed

MONARCH BUTTERFLY PROJECT

Recently the International Union for the Conservation of Nature issued a warning regarding the iconic monarch butterfly. The organization declared the butterfly to be "endangered", which is only two steps away from becoming extinct in the wild. The monarch's plummeting numbers are blamed on habitat loss, climate change, and pesticide and herbicide use. The milkweed plant is the only plant baby monarch caterpillars eat, and it's where the adult butterflies lay their eggs. Without it, the species simply could not exist. In addition to healthy pesticide free milkweed, the adult monarch butterflies need nectar-bearing flowers, including late season bloomers to provide monarchs with fuel for their annual fall migration.

At Spring Hill Farm, volunteers have been increasing pollinator plantings in the field behind the pond and observing the small stand of milkweed growing there. We plan on adding more milkweed seeds this fall and planting more actual seedlings next spring. There are other areas around the farm which have milkweed growing as well. Every plant is precious now! The Spring Hill Farm natural areas are places the town can utilize to create and maintain crucial habitats if needed. We hope to do so for the magnificent monarch butterfly. If you would like to help the monarch butterfly and grow milkweed and native pollinator plants in your own yard, please contact the Chester Conservation Commission at conservationcommission@chesternh.org for guidance.

SHF FUN FACT:

In his book *Chester Revisited*, Richard Holmes states: "Now, over ninety years of age, Miss Church still runs a working farm with ten horses and ponies, seventeen cattle, five hogs, forty-five chickens, four roosters, two dogs, and sundry young stock being raised for beef and veal."



Dry conditions have created increased vegetation in the area of the pond.

On the Horizon

Coming soon...

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

Fall Fest date at SHF is set:
Vendors, games and demos!
Sat. Sep. 10th

SHF Benefit Trail Ride with horses:
Lane Road Fields
Sun. Sep. 25th



For more information go to
www.chesternh.org



Did you know?

New Hampshire's state insect is the ladybug. Apart from bringing luck, these little critters lend a helping hand to farmers by eating other insects that harm crops.

NH's favorite bug was designated in 1977 following a promotional campaign by students at Broken Ground Grammar School in Concord. There are approximately 450 species of ladybugs within the US.

"Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability".



Sam Keen

Get Out and Enjoy!

One of the great beauties of New England is how seasons don't just casually sneak by. You don't need to consult a calendar to know winter is losing its hold as the sounds of silent snow-covered grounds turn muddy. The vernal pools filled with the chirping of spring peepers boldly announce and the brilliant yellow forsythia screams of the coming spring. One by one, each flower, grass, and tree wake up offering a new experience as you head out on the trails. Before you know it, we are smack in the middle of summer with brambles of blackberries, raspberries, wild blueberries, and huckleberries giving you sweet treats along your hikes! The dense foliage provides the much-needed shade as you explore the paths. It won't be long now before the green canopy begins to mimic a setting sun as all the trees prepare for a winter sleep. Yet they won't leave without one great final show of striking crimson, brilliant oranges and deep yellow, before they drop their leaves and prepare for the cold blanket of white certain to follow. So "now" is always the time to get out and explore! Take a pair of binoculars and see if you can find the birds you hear. Download a plant identification app and see what is growing this season along the trail.

Muriel Church property has the trails at Spring Hill Farm as well as the land on Lane Road (use # 480 for the gps address) to explore. Each offers a unique outing. As a bonus, there are geocaches placed out there to give your hiking experience a bit of a treasure hunting twist!

In preparation for your visit, we've made it easier by designating parking areas across the street from the farmhouse at Spring Hill Farm. Grab a map or scan the QR code for easy navigation along the route. However, if you chose to not take a map, there are some recently added trail marking signs to help guide you along the way!

Eagles at SHF....Scouts, that is !!!

When a youth member of "Scouts BSA" (the Boy Scouts of America, now including girls) attains the rank of LIFE Scout, they have one final remaining goal before their eighteenth birthday: to attain the highest rank available to Scouts—the rank of EAGLE SCOUT!

But, to earn that distinction, they must identify, plan, fundraise, project-manage, and show their leadership capability with an Eagle Scout Service Project that benefits their community, or some other non-profit organization.

Spring Hill Farm has recently been the beneficiary of two such projects, and a third is in the works.

John Hobden of Troop 405 in Derry, part of the Massabesic District of Daniel Webster Council, BSA, has completed construction of four raised planter boxes on the front of the property, to the left of the driveway next to the historic house.

This summer, his brother Caleb Hobden is transforming the old chicken coop, on the same part of the property, into a potting shed. Both projects will be used by the *Spring Hill Farm Trust* and the *Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee*. These two committees are working together and continue to make improvements to Muriel Church's farmhouse and its surrounding land, now owned by the town of Chester.

Jaden Gaudet, senior patrol leader of Troop 163 in Chester, is in the approval process for the construction of a kiosk for the trail system at Spring Hill Farm

Other projects are available for consideration by future Eagle Scout candidates from the area. Any Scout who is interested should contact SHFAC@ChesterNH.org with



MAKE HAY WHEN THE SUN SHINES

The old adage of making hay while the sun shines is so true. With the equipment that the farm utilizes, haying a field requires at least three days in a row of sunny dry weather. The first day is spent mowing the field with either a rotary mower or a sickle bar cutter pulled behind a tractor; the second day the field is tedded (hay fluffed up to dry better) with a Tedder; while on the third day the hay is raked into rows and transformed into square 40–50-pound bales by a hay baler. Then the fun begins, especially on those humid 95-degree days picking up the bales of hay from the field, loading the bales onto a hay wagon, driving to the barn, unloading, and stacking the hay in the barn ready for sale. This year's haying is well under way and Richard LeBlanc and Chuck Myette have just finished the first cut on eight of our fields yielding about 600 bales.

While the hay is the same as in Muriel's time, the equipment used, and hay storage, was much different. Muriel tells of mowing the fields by hand when she was young with scythes and horse drawn sickle bar cutters. The hay was allowed to dry for a day or so and then was raked into piles. It was then tossed by pitchforks loosely onto the hay wagon. She recalled fondly, jumping on the hay in the wagon to pack it down. Once driven to the barn, the hay was tossed again loosely into the hay lofts for storage and use by her horses and cows. Very little of her hay was sold to the public in those days.

She also recalls when tractors replaced horses, although not completely at first. You see, the early tractors were in her opinion, too big and heavy for our New England fields and meadows. They were not able to get close to the edges of the field or along stone walls so common here in New England and they were too big and heavy to mow in wet areas of the field or in meadows. Horses on the other hand generally had no problem mowing in those areas. Eventually, the labor and time saving tractor replaced the horses, but as Richard and Chuck can attest, they avoid the wet areas with the tractors. How embarrassing, and ironic would it be, however, if we made the mistake of getting stuck in those wet areas and having to hook up a pair of draft horses to pull us out!

Want some good old fun? Join us in the fields for a second cut in September. We always are in need of volunteers.



“Back then”...loose hay



Today...this hay will be teddered, raked, and made into 40 lb. square bales.
(Nice job, Rich)

GOATS AT SHF with Christy and Nick Ortins!

The Geary Goats



Meet the Team

The Geary Goats joined us at Spring Hill Farm in late July! They are a mixed aged crew of six, all Nubbian/Toggenburg crosses. Our head guy is Blue. He has three little brothers, Tim, Gerry, and Don, and two sisters, Jinx and Ru

Their Job

The Geary Goats have been tasked with the job of invasive plant management at Spring Hill Farm. They will be constantly moving to new locations to take advantage of their gift of a hefty appetite.

Why invasive plants are a problem

Invasive species are plants that have been moved from their natural location and brought here for various reasons. Due to their abilities to thrive in conditions that do not favor native flora they take over and create monocultures that are not conducive to the health of native plants and animals. These goats will hopefully eat their way to a restored natural ecosystem balance.



Scenes from SHF Work Day – May 21, 2022



**Not to worry, that is just a scarecrow on the ground.
But, MADE YOU LOOK!**



It was HOT on our Spring Work Day, but 16 people braved the heat and came out to volunteer for the day. The garden was weeded and plants were planted. The barn and sheds were cleaned, hay was moved, masonry repair to the foundation, the peeling porch siding was scraped and primed and trail signs were hung. All in all a very productive day. Thank you to everyone that helped!

It takes a village and we have a GREAT one!

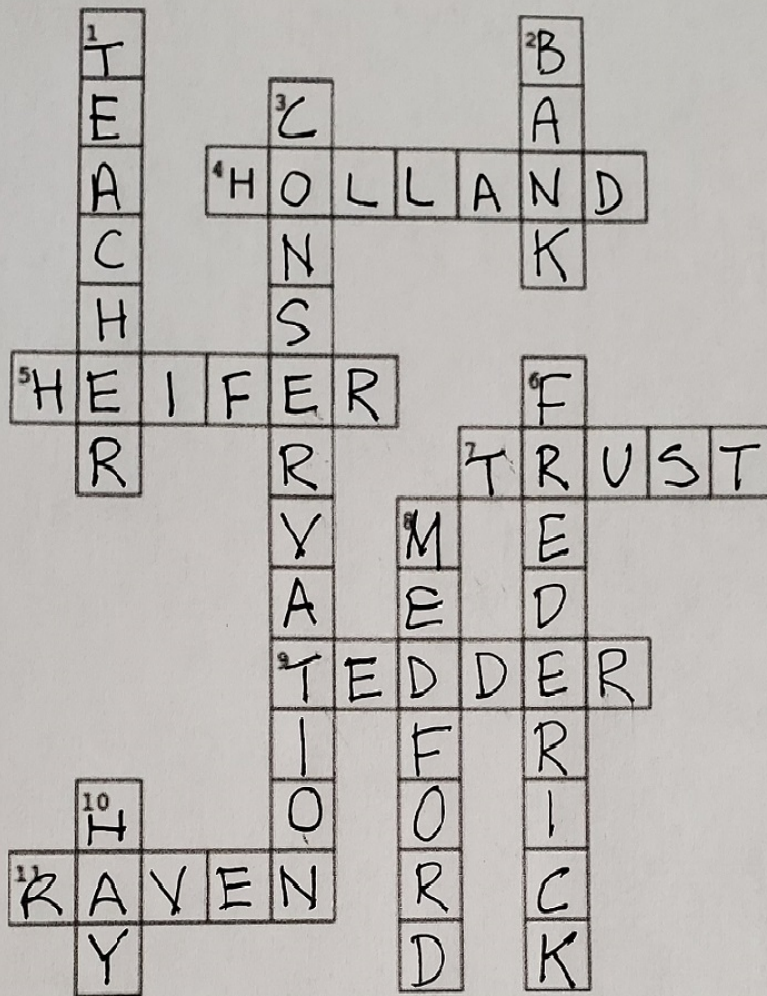


Painting the Finished Eagle Project- "Chicken coop, turned Potting shed"



SHF Issue THREE- ANSWERS

SHF Crossword



Across

4. Tractor manufacturer: New _____
5. young female cow
7. Legal protection for SHF for
perpetuity
9. Hay making equipment
11. Large black bird

Down

1. Muriel's profession
2. type of barn design at SHF
3. land protection purpose for SHF
6. Muriel's father
8. Muriel's birthplace
10. Farm Product