



Susanna's Woods Forest Legacy Tract, Rhode Island

December 1998



Left to right: Clark Collins, South Kingstown Land Trust; Paul Ricard, Rhode Island Division of Forest Environment; Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Almond; and former landowner, Miss Helena-Hope Gammell attend tract dedication to the Forest Legacy Program.

Photo by Deirdre Raimo

fire at the age of 14 and who had loved spending time on her aunt's property.

"Hats off to Miss Helena-Hope Gammell and the other players for bringing this wonderful project to fruition and preserving another unique piece of our natural environment," said Rhode Island Senator John H. Chafee, who has looked forward to this program's achievements.

South Kingstown Land Trust (SKLT) Director Clark Collins noted, "Protection of this parcel from development maintains a greenway that we have been safeguarding throughout our existence."

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supported this Forest Legacy project through its contribution of time and money and assisted the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) by obtaining survey, title, and appraisal services. The DEM will hold title perpetually, but has agreed to transfer management to the SKLT, which will oversee activities of a silviculture program developed by Miss Gammell and her consulting forester.

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The Forest Legacy Program protects important forests from conversion to nonforest uses. These forests provide essential wildlife habitat, protect water quality, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, afford outstanding scenic views, are home to historic sites, and/or provide the opportunity to continue traditional forest uses. A Federal-State partnership allows landowners to keep their land private while ensuring it remains forest forever through the use of conservation easements.

In an ecologically delicate region of Rhode Island that is facing tremendous development pressure, a tranquil forested hillside in south Kingstown will stay undeveloped forever. The State of Rhode Island paid Miss Helena-Hope Gammell \$445,000 for the outright purchase of a 75-acre tract on December 1, 1998. The funds were provided by the USDA Forest Service through the Forest Legacy Program.

The parcel is one piece of a major forest resource and has been used as woodlot since the early 18th century. "The tract will continue to provide the traditional forest values each of us cherish and conserve open space in this fragile environment," said Paul Ricard, Rhode Island Forest Legacy Program Manager.

Lying on a terminal glacial moraine, the property skirts the important pine barren ecosystem and lies over the aquifer of a public water supply. The tract is adjacent to several parcels on which Miss Gammell previously transferred conservation easements to the South Kingstown Land Trust. These parcels comprise a forest called "Susanna's Woods," named in honor of Miss Gammell's niece, who died tragically in a house