



EARTH MATTERS

Research and Education in Ecology and Sustainable Living

2010 update ☐ printed on recycled paper

Dear Friends of Sequatchie Valley Institute,

As a new decade begins, we at SVI look forward to a time when “green” is the new buzzword. For over 13 years, we have been ahead of the curve with our emphasis on sustainable lifestyles and living in harmony with nature. Finally, solar energy, green building, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity are becoming commonly discussed and accepted. Nature deficit disorder is a recognizable ailment for our youth. Now, more than ever, the mission of SVI is vital and alive.

In 2009, the accomplishments of our all-volunteer crew were remarkable. Activities included numerous educational tours of our forest, gardens, and sustainable structures to groups ranging from 1st graders to college students and senior citizens. Our completed conference center hosted numerous meetings, classes, and parties. Food For Life was well-attended with excellent presenters and many workshops. Spring Wildflower Hikes and the National Solar Tour were well attended.

Communities of people have developed around us, many begun by our former interns and co-workers. More and more young people are seeking meaningful lives, building homes creatively and developing small-scale farms for local food production. Our gardens, vineyard, and orchards have thrived, with a goodly amount of preserved food for this cold winter. Outreach has included our presence at the ecovillage, Planet Roo, at Bonnaroo, the massive music and art festival with over 90,000 people that takes place yearly just an hour from SVI. The excitement of cob (clay) building was shared with children at the Creative Discovery Museum and teachers at the Tennessee Environmental Education Association Conference. These activities are seeds that germinate and spread. Each child

that feels mud between her fingers, who shouts with joy along our woodland trails and stares with awe at our bluffs, smells the herbs in our gardens and picks blueberries from our bushes, takes a bit of wonder away, a wonder that will stay with them forever.

All these activities were organized and led by our dedicated unpaid staff and interns. We hope that we can accomplish even more in 2010, although our staff numbers have been depleted. We cannot expect people to donate their time indefinitely, and so we would like to be able to provide our workers with some compensation. All of our fees are minimal so they are affordable for everyone, and we want to continue this policy, as well as providing scholarships for our programs. We are also in need of funding to complete unfinished projects such as the Moonshadow Solar Greenhouse and especially for maintenance of our structures.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Please consider a donation this year to SVI. Become a member—we are planning a whole new system of benefits for members, including access to trails and picnicking on our 400 acres of beautiful forest. Bring the kids to the wood! A membership costs about the same as a video game and provides far more adventure and excitement.

With your help, we can continue to provide planet-healing alternatives for a sustainable future. Please join with us.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Kimmons, Art and Education Director
Sequatchie Valley Institute

The newsletter of the Sequatchie Valley Institute at Moonshadow

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2009 Review

Saturday Tours

Our tours on the third Saturday of each month have been very successful with many happy visitors. Thanks to Alex Fear and Chris Gilligan for conducting the tours.

Ulinawi

Ulinawi, the neighboring community started by our former interns, Nada and Bradley Jones, is becoming well established now, with some great people helping out. An impressive clay bag structure is moving upwards slowly. Projects include gardens, chickens, goats, and a gravity-fed water supply. The former SVI building workshops are now being conducted at Ulinawi, which has more ongoing structures than SVI at this time.



Barking Beetle Conference Center

This beautiful three-floored structure, built in part with a grant from the Community Foundation of Chattanooga, is becoming a vortex for SVI events. It provides a unique shelter high in the trees when rain prevents outdoor programs. The structure also provides room for large groups. Moonshadow is a beautiful venue for meetings and workshops, but has been bursting at the seams when numbers reach 30 to 60 people. Now we easily have capabilities for over 50 people who can meet in comfort under shelter. We have even used it as a “campground” for scouts and students when the weather was too inclement to stay in tents.



Plans for the Conference Center

Retreats, conferences, non-profit meetings, workshops, parties, and more. A current idea is to host weddings. The Wedding Rocks, where Joel and Michelle were married, is a beautiful outdoor site, and the Conference Center provides an alternate location in case of rain as well as an excellent reception area.

One of our restrictions for large groups is our small parking area, so we are considering establishing a new location for parking.

January



January 10. Webb School Outdoor Class Visits

January 26. Home School Day at the Tennessee Aquarium

January 30. Johnny and Carol celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary by traveling to New Zealand and Australia for three months, hiking, camping, and learning about new bioregions, leaving SVI in the capable hands of Asha, Patrick, and Chris.

February

February 24. UTC Sociology class field trip.

February 27. Sewanee Creek Community representative visits.

The Board visioning workshop helped determine SVI goals and activities for the year.

A seed exchange and spring celebration was led by Cerulean.

Randall, our gardener for 2008, was joined by Trish for the beginning of Spring gardening .

March

March 9. Tour group visits. Mountain Justice Spring Break Program with 27 student activists visit and help out

with projects here. This group came to discuss strategy and planning for the upcoming year in the struggle to stop the use of mountain top removal for coal mining in Appalachia.

March 28. Spring Wildflower Hike.

March 29. Shiitake Mushroom Workshop with 15 participants who worked enthusiastically to inoculate over 40 logs. Each person took home a lovely inoculated log and enjoyed a delicious shiitake-filled luncheon.

April

April 7. Class from University of the South visits for a tour.

April 12. Second Spring Wildflower Hike.

April 15. Visit from 6th-8th graders from Chattanooga Montessori School, including a 3-hr tour, lunch, and a hike.

UTC Earth Day presentation.

April 21. David Brainerd School Senior Class visited for hike and tour

April 25. Party for the Planet at the Tennessee Aquarium.

April 27. Co-Sponsor of the Beehive Collective's Presentation in Chattanooga about the Mountaintop Removal Poster.

Trish worked with the Bethlehem Center for children in Chattanooga from April to June helping to plant a garden with the children.

SVI joined the Buy Fresh Buy Local organization in Chattanooga with participation in the Buy Fresh, Buy Local Food Guide.

May

May 14. Collegedale Academy Senior Ecology Class Visit.

May 17. Patrick taught a workshop on Fermentation in Chattanooga.



May 21-31. Food For Life had 96 participants. Programs and workshops were presented by 23 great speakers, including Sandor's fermentation workshop and Carol's food preservation and native edibles and medicinal plant hike, a shiitake inoculation workshop, and more.

Appalachian Voices, a story and portrait project about Appalachia, interviewed the SVI staff and Food For Life

participants.

June

June 1-5. The Warren County School Honors Summer Program. Fifty kids from Grades 1-6 came to us each day for 5 days for a three-hour hike and tour. We broke them into 3 groups, each with an experienced guide, and took them up separate trails. The kids were great! We hope they will be able to come back next year.



June 9-15. Bonnaroo. SVI again participated in Planet Roo, the ecovillage section of Bonnaroo. We built a lovely straw-bale house, as usual, with very elegant clay slip designs. See our website for photographs.

We shared our love of sustainable building with over 90,000 music lovers, many of whom were entranced with our goals

and our unique building skills. We're fond of telling the story about the young man who left Bonnaroo early. According to his girl friend, he went home to start building a clay house! Asha and friends performed on the solar stage. Our staff sold their handmade crafts. This provided much-appreciated income, as none of us are salaried.



June 23. Creative Discovery Museum Scientist in Residence Program. Carol and Johnny took buckets of clay, sand, and straw to the Museum and, with



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the help of passing kids, built a cob house! See the web for pictures of this exciting and educational event.

Gardens. Our interns, staff, and gardeners were busy planting, weeding, and harvesting. We shared our knowledge of the enduring skills of canning, drying, and freezing, producing lots of delicious healthful products, including apple & pear butter, apple & pear cider, dried shiitake mushrooms, grape and muscadine juice, mead, wine, and tomato sauce.

July- August



Building Workshop at Ulinawi sponsored by SVI.

Gardening and food preservation projects continue.

September

Sept. 26. Tennessee Environmental Education Association Annual Conference, Nashville, TN. Session: Use Mud to Build Green-Inside or Out! Carol and Johnny presented a workshop for SVI on use of cob building in the classroom and schoolyard, to encourage creative thinking and understanding of green sustainable building. See pictures on our website.

October

October 3. National Solar Tour. Thanks to Chris for organizing the tour this year. More and more people each year are interested in alternative energy systems.

October 30. Wine in the Woods. Over 40 people attended our yearly fundraiser, this year with a Halloween costume theme. We were honored by seven donors with donations of wine from Tennessee vineyards. Of course, our own wines, champagnes, and meads were featured. Over 40 people had an excellent evening, with lots of wine and food. Our new conference center, Barking Beetle, provided plenty of space for tasting sessions, accompanied by



an excellent band from Chattanooga. A number of people spent the night with us, and awoke to discover that heavy rains had brought down our creek. People who parked on the SVI side of the creek were trapped till the next day! Not many wine tastings end like this. We provided meals and our unexpected visitors helped with clean up and hiked on our trails.

Potlucks. We began joining with our neighboring friends and communities in the Sequatchie Valley for monthly get-togethers and potluck dinners.

November-December

December 11-13. Solstice Party and Open Studio. This annual event attracted many revelers. We combined the party with a work day to begin raising the roof beams for the new wood-fired kiln shed in Sassafras Flats. Artists in our community displayed their work in Barking Beetle. Carol presented an Open Studio event at Sweetgum, with her pottery on display, and provided hot herb teas, cider, and Johnny's famous fudge to visitors.

COMMENTS FROM CAROL'S ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE CLASS
AT UTC AFTER VISITING MOONSHADOW

"The most beautiful thing was the river...I would love to sit on the bridge for hours and just listen to the water rush past! It is interesting that you can drive through the water.

The home was lovely. The tiny broken shards of mirrors around light bulbs were aesthetically pleasing and helped to radiate more light into the rooms. I loved the enormous fireplaces as well. All of the windows in the house made it bright and cheerful. It is clear to me that the people who live at SVI are selfless people that would rather live without a few luxuries to help their environment than to live like most of the rest of the world in selfish overuse.

The sacrifices they have made have encouraged me to live lighter on the Earth. I don't plan on getting solar panels and growing all of my own food, but I put the environmentally friendly light bulbs in all of my lights; I open the windows instead of turning on the A/C; and I recycle all my paper products. I hope that other people are also encouraged by the wonderful example SVI has set." Christy Myers.

"I have never been interested in a science class before this one. While my instructor talked to us about her way of life, I kept thinking about all the saving of energy. When she invited us to SVI I knew nothing would prevent me from going. ... I was amazed at the black dirt in the garden. It looked as good as my dad's tomato garden in Michigan. They explained that they used llama manure to fertilize it. The garden had different plants mixed together, not the same crops in rows. They also had plants that would prevent bugs from killing the crops.

The house was built by hand, and I could almost visualize Carol and Johnny working on it. It looked so peaceful and serene. There was no television set, but it looked so inviting to read a good book, or to cuddle on the circular couch and talk by the fire. This house was a home, something you don't see much of anymore. I know they used car batteries to store electricity, and fluorescent bulbs, grew their own food, conserved on water, etc. But something we didn't learn in our class was the love, dependency, respect, and joy that this house had produced." JoAnn Poschke

"I enjoyed my visit to SVI because I was exposed to a very practical and efficient lifestyle by which humans can better co-exist with and preserve the Earth's land, organisms, and natural resources. I learned about rotational cropping and the use of recycled materials, like carpet, to help prevent erosion. I was exposed to means by which humans can preserve life by living less wastefully." Jessica Martin



"I would have to say this was one of the most beautiful and interesting places I have seen. Everything about the self-built house was amazing and unique. The solar energy is harvested by solar panels that transfer the energy into batteries. This entire place was amazing and I would love to be involved in something like this later in life." Jared Dooley

Check out our website for more info about events and workshops: www.svionline.org

and you can join our email list,
or become a fan on Facebook

Ways to Give to Sequatchie Valley Institute

Cash Gifts

Gifts of cash are fully deductible up to a maximum of 50% of your adjusted gross income. For example, if your adjusted gross income for the tax year is \$50,000, up to \$25,000 of charitable gifts may be deducted for the tax year. Any excess can generally be carried forward and deducted over as many as five subsequent years. Make a gift to toward Sustainability in honor or in memory of someone today!

In-Kind Equipment and Material Donations

Gifts of equipment and materials are fully deductible up to a maximum of 50% of your adjusted gross income. Please see our current Wish List at svionline.org/about-svi/wish-list/

Companies Match Gifts

Some employers will match your charitable gifts, meaning your gifts are worth even more. If your company or firm has a matching gift program, simply enclose the form along with your check.

Gifts of Stock: How to avoid capital gains

If you own stock, it is almost always more tax-wise to contribute stock than cash. This is because a gift of appreciated stock generally offers a two-fold tax saving. First, you avoid paying any capital gains tax on the increase in value of the stock. Second, you receive an income tax charitable deduction for the full fair market value of the stock at the time of the gift.

Make sure you have owned the stock for a “long-term” period of time (this generally means that you have held the stock for more than one year) to qualify for these significant tax advantages.

Gifts of appreciated stock are fully deductible up to a maximum of 30% of your adjusted gross income.

Gifts of Real Estate: Acreage, Homes, Vacation Homes, and More

A residence, vacation home, farm, acreage, or vacant lot may have so appreciated in value through the years that its value would mean a sizeable capital gains tax.

By making a gift of this property instead, you would avoid the capital gains tax at the end of the year, and, at the same time, receive a charitable deduction for the full fair market value of the property. It is also possible to make a gift of your home, farm, or vacation home so that you and your spouse can continue to use it for your lifetimes while you receive a tax deduction in the tax year.

Gifts of Life Insurance: A Good Policy For Giving

A gift of life insurance can provide a significant charitable deduction. You could purchase a new policy or donate a policy that you currently own but no longer need. To receive a deduction, designate the Sequatchie Valley Institute as both the owner and beneficiary of the life insurance policy. Check with your insurance agent for details.

Life Income Gifts

You could transfer cash of stock to SVI and establish a “charitable remainder unitrust” or “charitable remainder annuity trust” that would provide you with a 5% or greater annual return. This income would be paid to you and/or a loved one for life, after which the assets would be distributed to SVI. Through such an arrangement, you would be increasing your income and making a meaningful (and tax-deductible) contribution to SVI at the same time.

Bequests

The federal estate tax can still take approximately 40% to 50% of one’s estate at the time of death. That’s a higher tax bite than the income tax! It definitely pays to do some advance planning with your attorney and other professional advisors.

We hope you will consider a charitable bequest in your will — to benefit SVI while you save estate tax dollars at the same time.

** This information was derived from: Sinclair, Townes & Company Fund Raising Counsel: “Growing Your 2005 Annual Fund Major Gifts & Planned Gifts”*

Are you able to give donations to non-profits and get matching funds from your workplace? If so, your \$50 donation could be worth \$100 to us!



The mission of the SVI is to offer society an opportunity to experience and learn about living in harmony with nature by providing: a dynamic model residence and learning center; education, research, land conservation and restoration; and a vision for attaining a sustainable future.

BECOME A MEMBER OF SVI!

Dogwood Level

Individual/Family (2 adults and children): \$25/\$40

Benefits: See below

Sweetgum Level

Individual/Family: \$50/\$80

Benefits: 20% discount on workshops.

Hickory Level

Individual/Family: \$100

Benefits: No-impact camping* and overnight stay in bungalows for reduced price*

Chestnut Oak Level

Individual/Family: \$500

Benefits: Free weekend in bungalow of your choice*

\$_____ Other donation

All memberships include:

- Members-only family celebration of nature and food
- Invitation to Wine in the Woods fundraiser
- Free tours for members and friends on open house days
- Hiking on our trails and picnicking on open house days
- 10% discount in our art gallery and on book sales
- Discount on workshops

* Reservations for primitive camping or overnight stays in our rustic hand-crafted bungalows must be made a minimum of one month in advance. Not all dates are available. Structures are unheated. Wine in the Woods invitations are limited to persons over 21 years of age. Contact SVI for details.

You may pay via PayPal at our website, svionline.org or send a check to: Sequatchie Valley Institute, 1233 Cartwright Loop, Whitwell, TN 37397. If you should have any questions, please call Carol or Chris at (423) 949-5922 or email officemanager@svionline.org

SVI is a non-profit educational 501(c)(3) organization.

Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. EIN: 62-1715492

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