

At Sanborn Mills Farm, preserving the past and planning for the future go hand in hand!

Sanborn Mills Farm

April 2017 eNews



www.sanbornmills.org

One log helps another around the farm . . .

Before there were hydraulic lifts, heavy weights were moved by ingenuity and often with the help of some kind of ramp, which is what we use at the sawmill to move the logs from the mill pond up to the deck where they can be rolled onto the carriage to be sawed.

Our ramp is supported by three red oak logs that extend right into the pond. Each log is 30 feet long and set at an angle of approximately 25 degrees. The logs are pulled up the ramp using an endless chain winch powered by a belt that runs off the saw arbor shaft, which in turn is powered by water running through the turbine.



Rolling a debarked log down to the sawmill. (Photo LMG)

Weather and use take their toll over the years so our millwright Brian Clough assisted by Jake Farmer have been busy this week replacing the worn out logs on the sawmill ramp.

The process starts with debarking the logs to minimize insect infestation down the line. The pond was temporarily drained so the logs could be put in place. Once positioned, the decking is put back on.

Everything should be back in working order by the end of the week.



Brian & Jake debarking the logs for the new ramp. (Photo LMG)



New logs in place & the deck being rebuilt. (Photo LMG)

Just how do you lift a millstone to clean it?

Before and after you grind any kind of grain, it is important to clean the lands and furrows (flats and grooves) of the millstones of any residue and debris that can accumulate. If you don't, mold and bacteria can grow and then you are in big trouble.

Lifting the runner stone (the top stone that moves to grind the grain) up from the bedstone (the lower stone that doesn't move) is the tricky part because it can weigh 800 to 1,000 pounds.

Millwright Brian Clough and Jake Farmer just replaced the original wood crane and metal tongs that lift our granite runner stone.

The process involved making a special multi-part jig to bend the curve in the tongs. Another operation was to punch - rather than drill - an inch and a half hole through the spreader that holds the tongs. Drilling would have removed metal and rendered the end product not nearly as strong.



Punching the spreader. (Photo RS)



The new crane, tongs in action. (Photo BG)



Individual units welded to the jig creates the curve for the tongs. (Photo RS)



Spreader with handle nut assembly. (Photo RS)



Detail of the metal cap at the base of the shaft. (Photo BG)

In other news at the grist mill, the new octagonal shaft that was featured in the March eNews has been installed. The bottom end of the shaft sits on a wood bearing cut into a timber. The top of the shaft connects to the cutting head of the corn cracker. In the next phase of the project, the crew will build wooden gears to power the corn cracker from the water wheel.

Special thanks to master blacksmith Ralph Sproul of [Bear Hill Blacksmith](#) who with the assistance of Brian Clough and Jake Farmer, fabricated all the metal parts needed for the grist mill work.



Brian and Jake installing the shaft under the grist mill. (Photo BG)

Exploring our future . . .

As part of our continuing research into the expansion of educational programs here at the farm, we are holding a series of convenings with experienced administrators and educators.

Last August we held a convening to discuss the issues inherent in draft animal education. On April 1 & 2 we hosted a second convening to explore crafts education.

Thank you to the following people who took time from their busy lives to share their expertise and thoughts with us:

- Betty Belanus, folklorist/curator, [Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage](#), Washington, DC
- David Brose, folklorist/archivist, [John C Campbell Folk School](#), Brasstown, NC
- Stephen Earp, historic potter, [Stephen Earp Pottery](#), Shelburne Falls, MA
- Craig Evans, [master weaver](#)/textile & loom historian, Brookfield, NH
- Dereck Glaser, Executive Director/Master Blacksmith, [New England School of Metalwork](#), Auburn, ME
- Miguel Gomez Ibanez, architect & cabinet maker/President, [North Bennett Street School](#), Boston, MA (by phone)
- Susie Lowe Stockwell, Executive Director (retired), [League of NH Craftsmen](#), Sutton, NH
- Ralph Sproul, master blacksmith; [Bear Hill Blacksmith](#), Webster, NH
- John Siegel, master wood turner/machinist, [Big Tree Tools](#), Wilmot, NH

Also attending were several SMI Board members and the SMI Management Team. The convening was facilitated by Esther Cowles of [Fernwood Consulting](#).

Stay tuned for some highlights of Esther's report.



Craft Convening participants in the Great Room.

(Photo LMG)



Craft convening participants (left to right) David Brose, Stephen Earp, Craig Evans & Jon Siegel. (Photo LMG)

Getting ready for the growing season . . .

Spring is finally here and all around New Hampshire buds are emerging from the branches and sprouting in greenhouses. It is a perfect time to set up your gardening headquarters, make an inventory of what you have, and figure out what you are going to need for the growing season.

Our gardening headquarters have moved to the oldest building on the farm - the Old Carriage Barn!

We wish all our gardening friends a successful season.



*Head gardener Michelle Smith preparing for the season.
(Photos LMG)*

Updates on the Blacksmith Teaching Studio . . .

Our 2017 workshop season began on April 7 with our first Blacksmithing Basics workshop. A hearty thank you to our on-staff building crew for their work to upgrade the teaching studio.

We want to thank Dereck Glaser of the [New England School of Metalwork](#) for his recent suggestions on how to improve the draw of the forges. With some minor modifications, they are all working great now.



Instructor Garry Kalajian working at the teaching forge. (Photo LMG)

Blacksmithing seems to be more popular than ever. If you are interested, check out our [workshop calendar](#). Openings start this fall.



One of our first students of the season - Frank Babcock of Pittsfield, NH. (Photo LMG)

Our photographers for this eNews are . . .

BG - Brian Grimaldi

RP - Ralph Sproul

LMG - Lynn Martin Graton

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A traditional New Hampshire farm and nonprofit organization dedicated to sustainability, creativity, and preserving folklife skills and agricultural knowledge so that the best of the past can help shape our future.

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