

# Littleton Conservation Trust



Newsletter

Spring 2013

LCT Annual Meeting and Summer Solstice Sunset, Saturday, 6/22, on Wilderness Hill Summit  
Tours of Prouty Woods and Morgan Property from 5:00pm  
Cookout from 5:30pm ~ Annual Meeting at 7:00pm ~ Sunset at 7:41pm

Celebrate the Summer Solstice on top of Wilderness Hill with the Littleton Conservation Trust. On Saturday, June 22, the LCT will hold its Annual Meeting and related events from 5:00 to 8:00pm at the William A. King Environmental Education Center on the summit of Wilderness Hill. All are invited to participate at these free events.

Commencing at 5:00, meet and mingle with friends old and new, LCT Trustees, and volunteer Land Stewards who monitor and protect the town's Conservation Lands. From 5:30 onward a grill will be available for cooking. Bring something to grill and something to share. Soft beverages will be provided.

At 7:00, the LCT will hold its Annual Meeting with a review of the year's activities and a short business summary. LCT members can participate and vote on the organization's business transactions. Others can learn about the LCT and what it does for the town. At 7:41 we will toast the Midsummer as we watch the Summer Solstice sunset.



Easiest hiking access is from the gated trailhead at the Prouty Barn at the end of Wilderness Road. Alternative hiking access (1) from King Street at the Two Brothers Trailhead (opposite the Congregational Church), (2) Aspen Road (between #'s 2 and 9), and (3) Edsel Road at #51. Canoe/kayak paddling access is at Prouty's Landing on Long Lake. For those mobility challenged and needing a ride to the summit, shuttle service will be made available from the Prouty Barn with prior arrangements.

This is a carry-in supplies and carry-out trash event. Parking is available at the Fay Park municipal parking lot or behind New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) Headquarters. For more information please call 978-952-2706. Please see Prouty Woods map on LCT website or Facebook page. ■

## Preserving Church Meadows for Permanent Agricultural Use

by Don MacIver

Thank you to the citizens of Littleton for its Annual Town Meeting overwhelming vote on May 6, to acquire the Congregational Church of Littleton (CCOL)'s Church Meadows and preserve it permanently for agricultural use. Necessary funds came from a variety of sources including the Community Preservation Act (CPA) municipal revenues and some significant private donations enabling the acquisition to occur. This seven acre parcel with its USDA prime and state significant agricultural soils hosts the Garden at Church Meadows (GACM), an all volunteer community-wide garden for hunger relief. During the last five growing seasons, GACM has delivered over 10,000 pounds of produce for Loaves and Fishes, our regional food pantry.

Forced to sell Church Meadows to raise necessary funds for the remodeling and expansion of its current church building, CCOL was faced with a dilemma. A private developer outbid the town's fair market value offer. CCOL's creative solution was to fill the funding gap through additional parishioner private donations coupled with LCT's gift of \$10,000 to secure the prime agricultural land's preservation in perpetuity. The town's acquisition preserves the agricultural use, prevents sprawl, and helps protect the scenic vista's along the Great Road agricultural corridor.

By prior purchase agreement, GACM will continue its hunger relief farming through this year. Deb Rosson, the GACM Head Gardener, is coordinating this year's volunteer effort and can be reached at [rosson100@verizon.net](mailto:rosson100@verizon.net). Already, the Littleton Community Farm, the new community educational farming non-profit organization, has signed up to help grow this season's crop ([littletoncommunityfarm.com/2013/06/07/helping-hands-for-hunger-relief/](http://littletoncommunityfarm.com/2013/06/07/helping-hands-for-hunger-relief/)). Volunteer opportunities are still available. While the town vote guarantees this parcel's permanent protection for agricultural use, it is unclear as to how it will be used and who will be involved. The LCT, other private donors, and the public look forward to a fair, open, and transparent process in deciding its disposition for town public benefit. ■





**LCT  
Board of Trustees  
June 2013**

- Sam Bell  
508 Great Road 486-9278
- Bill Brown  
7 Old Orchard Lane 486-3303
- Gerard Cavallo  
8 Uplands Road 486-9761
- Peter Church  
9 Elmwood Road 486-0995
- Rick Findlay  
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- David Gehly  
33 Spartan Arrow Road 486-4290
- Arthur Lazarus  
*Director of Land Stewardship*  
19 Shaker Lane 486-0261
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20 Forest Road 486-0279
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46 Shaker Lane 486-8847
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32 Lake Warren Drive 486-9630
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- Judith Pickett *Counsel*

**www.littletonconservationtrust.org**  
**www.facebook.com/**  
**littletonconservationtrust**

The Littleton Conservation Trust (LCT), distinct from the Town's Conservation Commission, is a private land trust formed in 1962 to promote Littleton's rural character; to preserve its water, plant, and wildlife resources and its unique views; and to provide environmental education. The LCT is caretaker of over 300 acres of property (all gifted from far-sighted residents) on which we manage a system of trails for public use.

## Littleton Conservation News

by Don MacIver

- ➡ Annual Town Meeting approved the acquisition of Church Meadows, a seven acre parcel with prime agricultural soils. Thank you!
- ➡ Town General Elections extended CPA to businesses as is done in almost all other communities. This will provide needed funds for community preservation projects including open space. Thank you!
- ➡ The Town is seeking volunteers for the Open Space and Recreation Report Implementation Committee. They interact with the public and compile information on community needs, state current status, and generate an action plan to meet those needs. They produce a report and monitor progress for achieving stated goals and objectives. For more details, contact Peter Church at 978-486-0995.
- ➡ LCT will fund a live animal event for the Reuben Hoar Library (RHL)'s Summer Reading Program 2013 with the theme "Digging Critters." On July 11th, Thursday, at 3:00 pm, Rick Roth along with the Creature Teachers will display a groundhog, red fox, skunk, tortoise, sand boa, tarantula, and armadillo. For more details see [www.littletonlibrary.org](http://www.littletonlibrary.org).
- ➡ Thank you to DSI-Marketing Communications of 160 Ayer Road for their generous donation of \$250 during their recent grand opening.
- ➡ Anyone interested in obtaining a personal 20' by 20' garden plot either at the new Yapp Community Garden or the well established site at Newtown Hill should contact Rick Findlay at 978-486-8482
- ➡ LCT, your local land trust, and regional land trust Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) raised community awareness with Earth Day lawn signs during Earth Day Weeks.
- ➡ The Peter W. Tierney Trail at Bumblebee Park has been dedicated to Pete in recognition of his 16 years of service as a municipal conservation commissioner. Andrew Sammarco is the Bumblebee Park Land Steward.
- ➡ LCT is always looking for volunteers. For Conservation Land Stewardship, contact Art Lazarus (486-0261). For non-native invasive plant management throughout all conservation lands, and general conservation issues contact Rick Findlay (486-4031). For email alerts and participation on occasional Trail Work Parties, contact the coordinator, Jim F. O'Neil ([jfoneil@comcast.net](mailto:jfoneil@comcast.net)).

If you'd like advance notice of  
Littleton Conservation Trust events emailed to you,  
please send your email address to:  
[fran.meyers@verizon.net](mailto:fran.meyers@verizon.net)

## Littleton Conservation Trust Membership Form – 2013

New       Renewal

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_  
(Date determines year of tax deduction)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_      Email: \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual: \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Family: \$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend: \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter: \$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron: \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor: \$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: \$ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gift to Permanent Fund: \$ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Please send me information about how to preserve my own land.	

*(Provide your email address if you want to receive notification of upcoming walks and conservation-related events.)*

Please cut out this form  
and  
send it to:

Kathy Stevens, Treasurer  
Littleton Conservation  
Trust



## Creating a Forest Opening at Sarah Doublet Forest

by Art Lazarus

Of the 98-acre Littleton Conservation Trust owned Sarah Doublet Forest and Nature Preserve, all but a few acres are densely forested. In an effort to create more biological diversity, open up desirable vistas and showcase interesting features, the Trust is creating two relatively modest forest opening, totaling about four acres. Both areas are adjacent to the parking lot off Charter Way.

One old field adjacent to the east side of Charter Way was overgrown with all sorts of shrubs and invasive plants, especially staghorn sumac. About three years ago, the Trust received a WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program) grant from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service to clear and restore the area to a meadow type environment. A private contractor was engaged to remove all but a few select trees and shrubs. Herbicides were used to eradicate invasive plant and woody species. Grasses have revived and the area is due for its first mowing.

The second area, located south of the caretaker's house, east of the AT&T right-of-way and near an old brick chimney, is more in keeping with a "forest

opening". There is evidence of farming long ago with the presence of many small earth mounds. Several years ago, volunteer stewards began clearing woody debris, thinning and trimming oaks and white pines. Piles of woody debris are scheduled for burning this spring. Already, high and low bush blueberries are growing back. The thinning has stimulated red cedars, white birch and sassafras growth. An inventory of various plants, bird and animal species is planned for this year. It is hoped that bird species common to early successional habitat will return to both project areas.

For readers who would like to explore the areas described as well as the adjacent forest, and do not have a copy of the *Guide to Conservation Land in Littleton* (updated to September 2012), copies (\$10) are available in the Reuben Hoar Library. ■

If you'd like to learn more about dynamic early successional habitat ecology, see the below article:  
"Early Successional Habitat"  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/nrcs143\\_010001.pdf](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs143_010001.pdf)

## Watch Littleton Community Farm Grow



In less than a year, a group of dedicated educators and public spirited community members formed the Littleton Community Farm (LCF), a public-interest farm education not-for-profit organization with the vision to create a gathering place dedicated to fostering an appreciation of and connection among land, food,

neighbors and community. Since reporting on them last LCT newsletter this group has grown substantially. Here are some major milestones in their growth.

*September:* Directors form Littleton Community Farm (LCF).

*October:* LCF incorporates.

*November:* LCF defines Core Values: Honor, Inspire, Grow.

*December:* Directors finalize LCF Mission Statement:

“Littleton Community Farm aims to be a center for farm-based education and a model for traditional and innovative farming methods. Our aim is to inspire through hands-on, multigenerational exposure to farm, land, food, and volunteerism; growing for ourselves and for others.”

*January:* LCF files for 501c3 as non-profit charitable entity.

*February:* LCF logo contest promoted through Facebook, news outlets and the Littleton Public Schools generates more than 40 submissions from design professionals and students.

Board attends growing winter greens workshop.

LCF Facebook page is created.

*March:* Nashoba Technical High School graphic arts student wins the LCF logo contest and a cash prize.

Board attends 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference in Worcester.

Brittany Sidway Overshiner, farmer from Medway Community Farm, joins Board.

*April:* LCF Vision Statement finalized.

LCF Board visits ten community gardens and farms in Germany.

Littletoncommunityfarm.com website goes live.

Produce YouTube video to inform citizens about value of saving Church Meadows property for agriculture.

*May:* Collaborate with Littleton Conservation Trust in securing Town Meeting support to save Church Meadows. LCF approved as charity by Massachusetts Attorney General. LCF partners with Congregational Church of Littleton (CCOL) to continue and promote CCOL hunger relief mission at Church Meadows property during sixth growing season. LCF board has visited eight Massachusetts community farms and small production farms.

LCF Chairman visits English educational community garden.

LCF Director applies for Town Agricultural Commission seat.

LCF participates in Third Thursday and Country Fair events.

For more details please see LCF website at [littletoncommunityfarm.com](http://littletoncommunityfarm.com) and Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/pages/Littleton-Community-Farm/474885695888152](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Littleton-Community-Farm/474885695888152) ■



## Environmental Education for 4th Graders



Lesson on soils and erosion

Each year all 4th grade students from the Russell Street School study Littleton's conservation lands to better understand the natural world in their own backyard. Having completed class-wide fall field trips, students revisit the same landscape to observe and interact with spring seasonal changes. This is the second year that all 4th graders

have made field and spring field trips to the Nashoba Woodlands Conservation Land (the contiguous cluster of Yapp, Cobb, and Morrison Extension conservation properties). Through a grant from the LCT, LCT Directors and other volunteers, parent chaperones, naturalists from Massachusetts Audubon's Drumlin Farm, and Littleton's own dedicated teachers coordinated by teacher John Henshaw collaborate to provide a memorable outdoor educational experience.

Teams of students are directed to a series of six educational stations where they are exposed to various habitats each providing a unique focus. Students learn about fundamental natural processes, applied scientific principles, and observation methods.



Students studying vernal pools and salamander and frog eggs at Cobb Land

Exemplary sessions included lessons on vernal pool habitats with salamander and frog eggs; geologic features and minerals; soils and erosion; streams and pond life; trees, wildflowers and ferns; human influence on the landscape from farming, logging, and development; and field and forest habitats. Additionally students learn about and observe animals such as ducks, owls, skunks, and opossum and as well as the signs of other woodland residents such as deer and the foot high pileated woodpecker. ■

### *In Memoriam of Marge Harvey*

LCT was saddened by the recent passing of Marge Harvey, ever active columnist, teacher, and social activist who walked the talk for the betterment of her fellow humans. Marge was the beloved wife of Dr. Henry Harvey, LCT Founding Trustee. For decades, Marge and Henry have hosted LCT monthly Trustee meetings in their living room and supported the Trust in many ways. Marge will be missed by the Trust and many in the greater community.

## Eagle Scout Award Conservation Projects

To achieve Boy Scouting's highest rank, the Eagle Scout Award, a candidate must plan and complete a significant project. Littleton's records, extending from Roger Conant in 1926 and David and Allen Sanderson in 1945 and 1948, to the present, indicates over 60 Eagle Scout projects have been performed, many enhancing conservation areas and other public open spaces.

In 2013, three Eagle Scout projects were performed. Ben Tessler built and installed a wildlife viewing platform at pond's edge at Newtown Hill Conservation Area. Isaac Tessler built a surrounding wooden fence to exclude wildlife from the new community gardens at the George and Lucy Yapp Conservation Area. LCT Trustee Rick Findlay mentored both Ben and Isaac.

Greg Thumith revitalized the White Tail Way Conservation Area. He placed new trail markers, widened trails, cut down nearby dead and encroaching trees, repaired stone walls, fixed up the picnic area, posted new signage, performed general cleanup, and enhanced the entryway with an enlarged map and new copy of trail regulations. White Tail Way Land Steward Dick Andersen mentored Greg ■



Ben and friends moving platform in place and finished project



Isaac and friends building fence for Yapp Community Gardens



Greg proudly standing by White Tail Way Picnic Area

## Helen Boland's 6th Grade Class Gardens

On Sunday, May 21st, 6th grade science teacher Helen Boland, LCT Trustee, and a group of volunteer parents and students built seven raised garden beds adjacent to the Littleton Middle School. LCT provided planning and design assistance, labor, and a \$500 mini-grant for building materials. This long planned for project will help students learn science through gardening. Above, Helen Boland is shown celebrating the completion of the project accompanied by some volunteers. Outside of school, Helen is a small scale farmer at home. ■



## Prime Time Paddlers Launch 2nd Season

Friends of the Council on Aging along with the Council on Aging (COA) have taken to the water enthusiastically with an active kayaking group. Calling themselves the Prime Time Paddlers (PTP), Nancy Levine has been coordinating the group's activities for a second season. PTP kayaks ponds and rivers throughout the region.

Shown below is the PTP group preparing for this year's maiden voyage on Littleton's own Long Lake by the state boat launch. PTP includes several LCT trustees, including Steve Sussman who formerly led LCT canoe trips on Beaver Brook and various town ponds.



The PTP members have traded in their larger, heavier, more cumbersome and awkward canoes for easy to maneuver personal kayaks which are much lighter and far easier to transport and manipulate.

For seniors seeking more information on PTP, please contact COA (978-540-2470). For anyone interested in renting kayaks or canoes for use on Long Lake, please contact Littleton Parks and Recreation (978-540-2490). ■



LITTLETON



CONSERVATION  
TRUST

P.O. Box 594  
Littleton, MA 01460

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Littleton, MA 01460  
Permit #6

## LCT Annual Meeting

Wilderness House

Summit of Wilderness Road

Prouty Woods Community Forest

Saturday June 22, 2013

5:00—8:00 pm

*Walking Tours from 5:00pm*

*Cookout from 5:30pm*

*Annual Meeting at 7:00pm*

*Summer Solstice Sunset at 7:41pm*

# Postal Patron

Littleton, Massachusetts 01460



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper (20% post-consumer waste)

## The Book Corner

These and other books donated by the LCT are available at the Reuben Hoar Public Library

### **Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food and Community**

by Thomas A. Lyson

In *Civic Agriculture*, author Thomas Lyson of Cornell University makes a persuasive argument for what he calls "civic agriculture": locally based food production that is tightly linked to a community's social and economic benefit. This type of agriculture was prevalent before agriculture and food production became highly mechanized and globalized in the 20th century, and communities were healthier for it. Lyson explains how we went from smaller scale farms that sold their goods within the regional community, adding value to the local economy and social structure, to fewer large (mega) farms that sell across the country and world under corporate structures that mostly benefit the few in control.

The book looks into the history of how corporate agriculture replaced locally based practices through advances in mechanization, the availability of a chemicals, food processing and distribution in an industrially organized, globally managed system. Lyson explores how corporations now control the food system, and contrasts that with the benefits of local agriculture that is more sustainable and an integral part of communities. Various trends in civic agriculture are identified, (farmer's markets, community gardens, roadside stands, CSA's, etc.) and the possibilities offered by a relocalization of food production and processing are outlined. This is a great little book (only about 100 pages) that will help readers understand how our food system got separated from communities, and how we are slowly learning to reconnect. ■

### **Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants** (Updated and expanded)

by Douglas W. Tallamy

This *Bringing Nature Home* is more than just a comprehensive guide to native plants and trees, it is a well articulated treatise on why they are vitally important to wildlife and in turn humans. Tallamy explains the interdependency of living relationships, helping us understand how the simple act of planting native trees, bushes and flowers in our yards and gardens can help sustain life and help reverse some of the habitat destruction caused by the introduction of non-native and invasive species. If you've ever wondered why non-native and invasive plants are bad, this book will answer all your questions.

In addition to a comprehensive look at the connections between the trees, plants, birds, bugs and animals, this guide is packed full of photos that help with identification and enhance your understanding. Tallamy gives pointers on how to eradicate invasives, and offers simple ways to incorporate beneficial native plants into your yard and garden. Included is a comprehensive appendix listing (by region for the whole country) of many types of native species you might want, including trees (shade, shrub and understory), bushes, groundcovers, vines, grasses, sedges and rushes, plants for wet or dry areas, ferns, and more. The second appendix provides the host plants of butterflies and showy moths. I found myself recognizing and better understanding many bugs from my own garden, and copying lists so I know what plants to buy to bring more balanced life to my yard. ■

Reviews by Kathy Stevens