

# Littleton Conservation Trust



Newsletter

Fall 2010

Dr. Ed Bell Forum - A Regional Environmental Forum

## Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision of the New England Landscape What are its implications and opportunities for local communities?

Wednesday, December 8 - 7:30 to 9:00 PM

Indian Hill Music

36 King Street, Littleton, MA

*Free admission and open to all - Light refreshments*

This year's Dr. Ed Bell Forum presenter is Jim Levitt, Director of Conservation Innovation at the Harvard Forest and Research Fellow at the Ash Institute of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Jim, trained as an anthropologist and management consultant for the private and public sectors, brings a unique perspective in implementing innovative conservation efforts envisioned in this groundbreaking study.

The Dr. Ed Bell Forum will showcase the innovative ideas underlying the recently released report "Wildlands and Woodlands - a Vision of the New England Landscape". This report (W&W) has gained considerable attention by conservationists, private landowners, the public at large, and government alike. Recently featured in the *Boston Sunday Globe Magazine* section, this study was co-authored by an interdisciplinary team of 20 researchers and practitioners from area universities, land brokers, non-profits, and government. W&W has reached some startling conclusions which promote both economy and environment, while preserving much of the New England landscape as we know it today. Of special interest are the ideas of private ownership of woodlots, protection of wildlands preserves and "working landscapes" such as farms and sustainable forests, and the implementation of innovative techniques such as aggregation and mitigation funding. You can find more details about this report at [www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org](http://www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org)



*Wilderness Hill Prouty Woods Community Forest  
photo courtesy of LandVest*

*The Dr. Ed Bell Forum is an annual conservation-oriented lecture. Dr. Ed Bell was a long time Trustee of the Littleton Conservation Trust. Dr. Ed Bell and his wife, Dr. Ellen Bell, both provided considerable volunteer effort and time to the community. In appreciation of the deep sense of nature instilled in them, the children created this forum in their parents' memory.*



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[www.littletonconservationtrust.org](http://www.littletonconservationtrust.org)

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.

## Remembering Carey Prouty

by Don MacIver

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, Carey Elizabeth Prouty died at the age of 95. Carey, her late husband, Donald, and brother-in-law, Roger, were all landowners of the 108 acre Foster Street Prouty homestead and adjoining woodlands. They all envisioned protecting it for the benefit of the Littleton community. Upon Don's sudden death in 2002, Carey and Roger realized that vision with the sale of the property to conservation buyer New England Forestry Foundation, which relocated its headquarters to the homestead and the woodlands as the Prouty Woods Community Forest. This was accomplished through a generous family donation, a state land protection grant, discounted sale of a woodlands conservation restriction to the town providing perpetual protection and public access, and concessions of three generations of Proutys.

Carey, Don, and Roger were generous in allowing the LCT to create trails across their private lands and in permitting everyone to walk their woods and access their Long Lake beachfront. The very popular Two Brothers Trail was named for brothers Don and Roger, as well as the two geological drumlins, Wilderness and Starr Hills, which overlook the lake. Other trails loop the property and mount Wilderness Hill, providing spectacular northwest views of the Wapack Mountain Range framing a distant view of Mount Monadnock.

Carey, like her late husband Don, was active in the community. She was a 25 year tenured Choir Director at the First Church Unitarian and Board Director of Indian Hill Music. Don served the town as Town Meeting Moderator, Town Counsel, and LCT Counsel. Roger, a retired history professor, resides in Boston. The LCT is very appreciative of the generosity of the entire Prouty family.

## LCT Monthly Hikes

Come discover Littleton's conservation lands. Littleton has a variety of conservation lands and open space. Each month the LCT will lead walks to introduce the public to a different local conservation land. Please consult the LCT website at [www.LittletonConservationTrust.org](http://www.LittletonConservationTrust.org) or call 978-952-2706 for more information.

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

## Littleton Conservation Trust Membership Form – 2010

New       Renewal

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

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

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

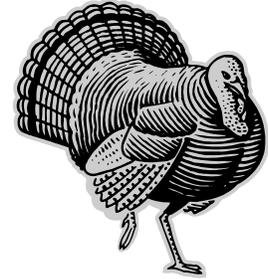
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <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  
PO Box 594  
Littleton, MA 01460



## Town Meeting Approves Cobb Conservation Properties Acquisition

At Special Town Meeting, on November 8<sup>th</sup>, the town overwhelmingly passed the warrant article for the purchase of Cobb Lots 5, 6, 7, and 9 by a margin of 10 to 1. This acquisition culminated a ten-year effort to preserve this outstanding conservation land with its varied habitats and rich passive recreation opportunities. It provides a special benefit for the five abutting residential communities and two schools. With its multiple entry points and interconnected trail system, it provides easy access for all residents. The purchase consolidated the protection of these and adjoining conservation and town lands thereby providing a significant unfragmented 185 acre resource area with its environmental integrity intact. Special thanks are extended to the Town Administrator, Finance Department, Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Conservation Commission, Sudbury Valley Trustees, Littleton Conservation Trust, the Cobb Family, and all the voters of Littleton for making this collaborative effort so successful. A springtime onsite celebration and walking tour will be provided for all by the conservation community.

## Littleton Photo Contest and Gallery

by Bill Brown

We received several great photos of wildlife, wildflowers, trails, and scenic vistas, all taken in the Town of Littleton. The farthest entries were sent from Katarzyna in Poland! The winning photos, shown here, are:

1. 'Ice Fishing on Long Lake' by Susan LaSante
2. 'Mountain View' by Steve Reidy
3. 'Long Lake' by Adam Hemingway

To see larger images in color, and the rest of the photo contest entries, visit the LCT website [www.littletonconservationtrust.org](http://www.littletonconservationtrust.org) and click on the LCT Photo Contest button. Many thanks to all who participated! We are in the process of setting up a Photo Gallery on the website, where you can post one photograph per month. Watch for the new button on the LCT Home Page to be labeled 'LCT Photo Gallery.'



We are all familiar with loops. Chicago has its loop, Littleton has a loop, too. Knitters create loops with needles and wool, skaters carve loops with their sharp blades and foresters design loops in the forest to take the recreational hiker or lover of silent spaces on circular paths through forests and meadows, past primeval trees and alongside pristine bodies of water. Such a splendid loop exists right within the confines of the Prouty Forest and is readily accessible for anyone who can walk. We drove up Wilderness Road, the road just beyond the parking lot which is adjacent to the fire station and Fay Park, then past the entrance to the New England Forestry Foundation headquarters up to the gate and parked in front of the white barn-like building on the left.

My octogenarian footing being none too steady, I pulled on my boots, locked the car and off we went. About three hours later, having completed the loop and after a good swim, we were back in the car fully refreshed with a little sack full of the writing, which I did while sitting by the lake. And while I was writing Eva took time to meditate. That made for a harmonious and peaceful sitting together.

However, we were not entirely alone on this walkabout. Soon after we started on the loop trail, where it was a bit moist, I spotted a pretty little snake. Sadly, before I could figure out who she or he was, it disappeared into the denser green grass. Too bad I thought.

We have been going on this loop trail and other nearby trails for some forty years now, ever since Don, Carey, and Roger Prouty made their generous offer to us newcomers to use the forest anytime. Don and Carey are no longer on this earth, but their spirits still dominate this wilderness and we are very thankful for the Prouty family's generosity.

There was a long tradition among a clique of Littletonians to drive up to the lake, meet there for an outing, have a cooling swim at what was called Prouty's landing, sunbathe a while, and then pack up and go home again.

This was also a traditional spot for ice skating and ice boating, if the winter weather allowed. Many a successful ice hockey game was undertaken there, followed by the traditional camp fire, hot chocolate, and marshmallows. On the less bright side were the immersions in the icy cold, when Henry Harvey's heavy iceboat went through the ice and he had to pull himself out with the long nails he had brought along for just that possibility, or when my skates accidentally chopped a hole in the soft ice near the edge and my feet got soaked and cold as I pulled back to the thicker ice.

But one of my favorite memories of that particular spot relates to the natural world. Whenever we used to sit there, often for breakfast having carried a thermos of good, strong coffee and other necessary breakfast supplies with us during the summer breaks from teaching and researching, we'd see a fairly fat black water snake undulating along, coming out from under the pond lilies and other greens, obviously hunting for the good-sized frogs which also inhabited that arena. I felt on very friendly terms with this snake although I never got to know its name. Turtles, too, including the occasional snapper, made this spot their home. Swallows would dart back and forth and dash over the water as did lots of brilliantly green lilybellies. Their extreme flight patters with their sudden sideways movements always caught my attention. How did they manage to maneuver as they did?

By extreme contrast, the great blue herons would stand motionless in the water on the opposite shore waiting, ever waiting for the right-sized fish to swim along before its arrow sharp beak slashed into the water to spear its small meal. In sharp contrast is the flight of birds of prey, forever circling, forever emitting their piercing hunting shrieks as they suddenly seem to free fall onto their prey.

It is all within the perimeter of the morning's walk, following the signs of the loop and the invitation of the stone walls by the water's edge that our morning's delight is rounded up. It's one fine benefit of living in Littleton.

## Grassland Restoration Project

The grassland restoration project at Sarah Doublet Forest is progressing. Chainsaw crews and mechanical equipment have reduced offending vegetation to piles for winter burning by volunteers. The project, funded by a federal Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) grant, will remove Bittersweet and Common Barberry that had gotten beyond the control of volunteers.



*Before and after pictures  
of the  
grassland restoration project  
at Sarah Doublet Forest*



Over the course of the past six years this column has tried to introduce readers to the dozen species that most threaten Littleton in terms of habitat destruction, diminished biodiversity, and landscape aesthetics. There is nothing more beautiful than the New England countryside and nothing sadder than the sight of it being swallowed by 60 foot waves of Bittersweet. Alas, these species are here to stay, and we can only hope to protect our own property and the open space we have invested so much in. Had we known that any one of these plants would cause pain and financial hardship, we surely would have been more vigilant from the start.

There is an opportunity to show that vigilance now. Volunteers are working throughout the state in an effort to seek out and destroy a new wave of invasive plants expanding their range north with warming temperatures. Of importance to us is a plant called Mile-a-Minute Vine (also known as MAM, *Polygonum perfoliatum*, Devil’s Tail, and Asiatic Tearthumb). It is very aggressive, competing well with Bittersweet in its ability to envelop or cover. A couple of years ago it was thought that there were only two sites in the state. With growing awareness, it has popped up elsewhere, including here in Littleton and neighboring Westford.

In September, volunteers from town stuffed garbage bags with the vine in an effort to keep birds from the ripening seed. We will be monitoring the site for the next five or six years to prevent dormant seed from reestablishing the population. MAM is an annual and requires only pulling to keep under control, however, once seed has formed, vines should be pulled, bagged and incinerated.

At this time, discovery is of utmost importance. If you come across Mile-a-Minute, take a photograph, note the location and report it on line at <http://massnrc.org/pest> or by phone to the MDAR Plant Pest Hotline: 617-626-1779. The Littleton Conservation Trust is always ready to help. Please call Rick Findlay for assistance: 486-8482.



*Mile-a-Minute vine*



*Volunteers clearing Mile-a-Minute vine from a parcel of land in Littleton*

**New Year’s Day Hike**

Start off New Year 2011 right with a hike on conservation land with plentiful wildlife and scenic vistas! On January 1, 2011 at noon, the LCT will join the Harvard Conservation Trust for a hike on one of their local conservation lands led by an experienced naturalist. Bring sturdy shoes, warm layered clothing, personal water and snack, and a new perspective. We will start off your New Year right. The rest of the year is up to you!

For more information call 978-952-2706.

**Make Merry on Saturday, December 4th!**



Look for the LCT booth at the Holiday Bazaar held at the Littleton Middle School. We will have a variety of nature-oriented gifts available for purchase as well as conservation land guides. Back by popular demand, the LCT will raffle a pickup load of seasoned firewood.

LITTLETON



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**It's time to renew your membership!**  
(see page 3)

 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

***GET OUT! 150 Ways For Kids and Grown-ups to Get Into Nature and Build a Greener Future***  
by Judy Molland

This book provides 150 ideas on how to get kids and adults outside and engaged in the natural world. With a theme of making it fun, the book encourages parents, teachers, and group leaders to start with simple things to embrace nature, like turning a walk into a safari, playing camouflage tag, or simply listening to frogs and bird songs. Next, some long-term and challenging projects, plans and outings are offered to develop a deeper understanding of nature, like raising butterflies, building and monitoring bird and bat houses, gardening, and camping. GET OUT! then turns to ways that you can shop, cook, and clean to live more lightly on the earth. Next the book offers ways to get active with more than just the typical 3 R's (reduce, reuse, recycle), encouraging us to pay attention to the details. Finally, the reader is invited to get involved and speak up about environmental issues, like organizing a cleanup day, jump starting recycling efforts, and speaking out on a blog or writing to your representatives. Try one idea, or try many - each one will help make a difference! . ■

***Eaarth: Making Life On A Tough New Planet*** by Bill McKibben

In his newest book, *Eaarth*, well-known environmental author and activist, Bill McKibben, sets forth a well-documented argument as to why the planetary changes caused by global warming are happening faster than expected, and why we need to pay attention. McKibben argues that things have already changed so much that we might as well rename the planet "Eaarth". He makes his case by detailing the many and varied ways that global warming has already effected the planet. McKibben points out that the financial impact of these increasing planetary changes is already being felt - think of the money needed to repair New Orleans, and the trillions of dollars needed to transform our energy systems.

McKibbens lays out the basic foundation for a new and more sustainable system not based on the endless economic growth underwritten by the carbon-based fuels that got us here. We need to focus more on alternative energy sources and conservation, diversified crops and farming methods. In general, we need to think about community and life on a smaller, simpler scale.

This is a thought provoking book that will make any reader think more carefully about what is happening to the planet, and what they can do to make the necessary transitions on our new "Eaarth". ■

Reviews by Kathy Stevens