



# The Littleton Green Action Group

By Jack Apfelbaum

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.



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The Littleton Green Action Group (LGAG) is a recently-formed group of citizens committed to addressing the issue of global warming on a local basis. The LGAG held our second monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 11, 2007. Nine people attended. Here is a summary of the topics we discussed during the approximately 1 ½ hour meeting :

### Fuel used by town-owned vehicles?

The question was raised: What kind of fuel do the town owned vehicles use, especially diesel trucks which could use bio-diesel? We need to do some more research.

### How green are Littleton's school buildings?

There is a lack of information on how green the town buildings (including school buildings) are and how well they are being monitored. Currently, the monitoring and controlling is primarily done by janitors as there are no facility managers in the system, anywhere.

According to Richard Crowley of the Permanent Municipal Building Department, the new middle school is up to par on the current green standards. The high school, built several years ago is okay under the previously-issued state specifications for green buildings. Russell Street School is in bad shape as far as its systems (HVAC) and controls in general are concerned. It needs maintenance and "rejuvenation" in various fields. Moneys have been requested.

Paper recycling—or the lack of it—in the schools was discussed. Can better paper collecting be done at the various schools? Beverly Cyr (Secretary to the Board of Health) mentioned that a company will be putting a bin near the town hall for collecting office papers and newspaper (all lumped together) and paying the town for the scrap paper.

### Buying green energy?

There was also discussion on how citizens of Littleton could buy green energy. Tim Harvey gave an overview of how that can be accomplished. Individuals can buy green certificates. However, these don't actually tie in with the energy cost charged by LELD to a particular user. Discussion is to be initiated with the Light Department on bringing more green energy into town.

### Bike paths and trails?

We discussed bike paths and trails to improve air quality by reducing the amount of in-town driving. Rail to trail options were also discussed. The need for action on this line was stressed. It was suggested that students, under the direction of their professors at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, might develop a plan for the town.

### Rain barrels?

The value of rain barrels was presented. The Light Department has installed some of these in the Long Lakes area. Could rain barrels be made available to the town as a whole?

*The local group, LGAG, is now affiliated with MCAN – the Massachusetts Climate Action Network. The next meeting of LGAG will be in early May at the home of Jack and Eva Apfelbaum, 92 Foster Street. Please call 486-3440 for more information.*

We've updated the LCT Web site!  
To see our new look and the updated online trail guide go to:  
[www.littletonconservationtrust.org](http://www.littletonconservationtrust.org)

## Littleton Conservation Trust Membership Form – 2007

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



### Prouty Woods Community Forest – Discovery Day on June 16    by Art Lazarus

The New England Forestry Foundation and the Littleton Conservation Trust are sponsoring "Discovery Day 2007" at Prouty Woods on Saturday, June 16 from 10 AM to 12 noon. The public is invited to go on a tour of the property. One focus will be on the restoration of the American Chestnut tree. Jim Coull, NEFF Director, will describe the efforts to start a plantation at Prouty Woods and the amazing history of the chestnut tree. Another part of the tour includes learning to



*American Chestnut leaves and nuts*

identify common trees, becoming familiar with poisonous plants, and medicinal uses and the interesting folklore surrounding our plants and trees. This part of the tour will be lead by Art Lazarus, NEFF Forest Steward.

### Guide to Conservation Land in Littleton – An Update    by Art Lazarus

The Littleton Conservation Trust has updated the town trail guide for March 2007. The booklet has maps and descriptions of all 20 accessible conservation areas in town. The guide is for sale at the Reuben Hoar Library and the town Conservation Commission office for \$6.00. The money received covers reproduction cost only. The updated "LCT Guide" was prepared by Art Lazarus and Melissa Spurr, both Trustees of the Conservation Trust.

The primary differences between the May 2005 and the March 2007 edition are minor modifications to the trail system, signing, access, and other improvements. The May 2005 edition is still useable. The Reuben Hoar Library has a free list of the changes that can be inserted in the May 2005 edition. No new conservation area have been added since 2005. However, two new connecting trails have been constructed under the direction of Trustee Rick Findlay. One trail connects the Hartwell Preserve to Russell Street and the other connects the Cobb Forest to Sarah Doublet Forest.

### Bird Sighting: Pileated Woodpecker!

by Kathy Stevens

On the morning of March 16, I happened to glance out of a window of my house on Shaker Lane and a flash of red caught my eye. I quickly realized it was a pileated woodpecker searching for bugs on a hickory tree. I had the opportunity to watch this 15 to 18 inch-long beauty peck away in search of food, and fly to multiple trees in my yard over a 10 minute period. Although I have seen many smaller woodpeckers (like the downy) at our suet feeder, this was a special treat, especially because of the amount of time I was able to observe it. So keep your eyes open and you too may get to observe this beautiful bird, largest of the woodpecker family.



# The Community Preservation Act and Why It Is Critical to Littleton

by Don MacIver

On Election Day, May 12<sup>th</sup>, Littleton voters will have the opportunity to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and gain the same generous financial and community benefits that the vast majority of neighboring towns have enjoyed over the past 5 years! The CPA program, created by our Senator Pamela Resor (then our Representative) and former Senator Bob Durand, is intended to address both the financial and community needs of towns just like Littleton. Most of the surrounding towns voted it in, leaving Littleton as the vacant geographic doughnut hole!

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*The time to adopt the CPA for our financial and other community benefits is on Election Day, May 12<sup>th</sup>!*

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Basically, a small surcharge on property taxes is charged and put in a fund for open space and recreation, historic preservation, and affordable housing. A local CPA committee solicits proposals for projects within these areas from residents and town committees, recommends the most beneficial proposals to be funded for town meeting vote, and citizens have the final say at town meeting as to what and how much is funded, thus giving full citizen control over what is spent. It is estimated that for a house assessed at \$450,000.00 the surcharge would be just \$10.65 per tax quarter. In Littleton's CPA program, all low-income residents, all low and moderate-income seniors, and all industry and companies (including working farms) would be completely exempted from any surcharge.

Of all the money collected for the CPA program, the state matches with additional state money. For each of the last 5 years the state has matched all local funds by 100%. In the future, the state might not be able to double local funds. Legislation has been filed to guarantee that all future matches will be at least at the 75% level. What other tax program returns more money to the local community than was collected? What other tax program keeps all money local and under complete citizen oversight?

Many towns use the money generated from the CPA as seed money to leverage against grant money. For example, the town of Hopkinton leveraged \$1 million seed money to fund a \$6 million actual project cost. The town of Acton, like many other CPA towns, insists that all project proposals have a leveraging funding component to make the money go further. In addition to a low surcharge, which is low-income friendly, senior-friendly, business-friendly, and farm-friendly; a state matching component; and a leveraging funding component, the proposed project funding is stretched even more through community spirit and good will. Typical was when Acton engaged in a historic CPA project to repair the old town hall roof, a local citizen out of community spirit provided the required slate roofing material at half-price. In the last 5 years, one community was able to use the CPA program to complete some 30-community projects!

Consulting planners, hired to help advise on how to maintain Littleton's small town character as the town grows, and "Smart Growth" planners, invited to address Littleton on the most current tools to direct growth, all questioned why Littleton hasn't taken advantage of this popular program.

The CPA program—with its state matching funds, leveraged financing, and community spirit—is an outstanding example of citizens working together collaboratively to stretch limited financial resources for everyone's benefit. The time to adopt the CPA for our financial and other community benefits is on Election Day, May 12<sup>th</sup>!

For more information, see "Community Preservation" under "Current Projects" on the LCT Web page at <http://www.LittletonConservationTrust.org> to view the Littleton CPA Fact Sheet with links to other CPA sites and a map of the 119 communities who have adopted the CPA. In addition, a video recording of the town's recent informational meeting on the "CPA and What It Means for Littleton" is available at the Reuben Hoar Library.

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



*This is the sixth in a series of articles intended to alert the Littleton community to the growing threat of invasive plants to our precious New England landscape. Plant populations that have been stable, sometimes for centuries, are now spreading uncontrollably. For additional information visit:*

*[http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive\\_plants/weeds/index.shtm](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/index.shtm)*

*Previous articles covered:*

- *Japanese Knotweed* (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
- *Burning Bush* (*Euonymus alatus*)
- *Oriental Bittersweet* (*Celastrus orbicullatus*)
- *Japanese and European Barberry* (*Berberis thunbergii and vulgaris*)
- *Glossy and Common Buckthorn* (*Frangula alnus and Rhamnus cathartica*).

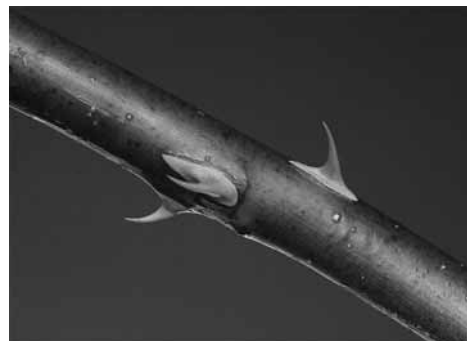
*This article focuses on Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*).*

*Future articles will highlight the following species:*

- *Norway Maple* (*Acer platanoides*)
- *Shrub Honeysuckles* (*Lonicera tatarica, morrowii, hybrids*)
- *Garlic Mustard* (*Alliaria petiolata*)

*All of these plants are alien or exotic to this region. They have few natural enemies to keep them in check, and most spread at a prodigious rrate, often by birds. All can colonize to the exclusion of native flora, and some are extremely persistent and resistant to control.*

*Our goal is to increase awareness and encourage residents to work on their own properties and neighborhoods. Littleton has an opportunity to set back the onslaught of invasive plants by acting now to reduce seed output. If we do not, we risk losing local biodiversity and the very 'nature' we take for granted.*



### **A Rose by any other name . . . *pllease!***

Multiflora Rose is an oriental species with a long history of use as a rootstock for ornamental roses. Over the years it has been promoted as wildlife food and cover, erosion control, highway planting and as 'a living fence' to contain cattle.

It was so highly thought of that State agencies gave away cuttings to encourage its use. Today we recognize it as a threat to open woods and fields, and have banned its importation and sale in Massachusetts.

Nevertheless, with each plant capable of producing half a million seeds and a host of birds anxious to plant and fertilize them, we have a problem that will not go away. My gardening reference Bible puts it this way: "LANDSCAPE VALUE: None in the residential landscape; has received a lot of attention for conservation purposes; makes a good place for the 'critters' to hide, yet can be a real nuisance, for the birds deposit the seeds in fence rows and open areas, and soon one has a jungle; use this species with the knowledge that none of your gardening friends in the immediate vicinity will ever speak to you again" (source: *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* by Michael A. Dirr).

It is hard to find a property in Littleton that does not have at least one Multiflora Rose growing somewhere. Plants can be grubbed out or repeatedly cut back to the ground. It is particularly sensitive to Roundup, and a dilute 1-2% foliar spray has been reported effective. Mid-June is a good time to spot flowering plants in the landscape.



*Multiflora rose—flowering*

*Multiflora rose—tangled mass*



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# Postal Patron

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## The Book Corner

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

### *Peterson Field Guides: Eastern Forests North America* by John Kricher & Gordon Morrison

This comprehensive field guide to Eastern forests is written by John Kricher, a professor of biology at Wheaton College here in Massachusetts. Kricher is a well-known naturalist and author of several field guides and books. He also provided the many photos for the guide. The abundance of detailed sketches of birds, mammals, trees, flowers and more are from Gordon Morrison, one of America's leading wildlife artists.

This is a great guide for observation in the forests of New England (and the East) due to its comprehensive approach to all aspects of the forest. Not only does this guide include many types of flora and fauna normally covered in separate guides, but it takes an integrated look at how they function and effect each other, the patterns and adaptations of the natural landscape of the forest. This is truly a guide that allows you to go beyond mere identification, and offers you understanding of how it all works together.

### *Rainforest* by Thomas Marent

The first thing I have to say about *Rainforest* is: what a gorgeous book! This is a large coffee table style book that is the result of 16 years of travel through the rainforests of 5 continents by Swiss nature photographer, Thomas Marent. Every page of this book has beautiful photographs of the vast variety of living species he encountered around the world. Each is identified, and the behaviors and cycles of many species are explained. His personal commentary is also included, giving us an insight into his profound love of the natural world.

This book also brings to mind thoughts of how wonderfully beautiful and diverse life on Earth is, and that we should do what we can to help preserve it before much is lost.

Reviews by Kathy Stevens

