

Littleton Conservation Trust



Newsletter

Spring 2012

LCT Annual Meeting— Summer Solstice on Wilderness Hill Summit Guided Tours, Cook Out, Nature Games, Sunset Viewing

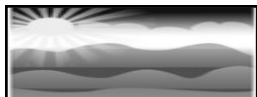
by Don MacIver

This year's Annual Meeting will be at the Wilderness House on top of Wilderness Hill at the Prouty Woods Community Forest on Saturday June 23rd from 5:00 to 9:00 pm. All are invited to participate at no cost.

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 6:30, 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 8:15 we will toast the Summer Solstice, watch the sunset, and view emerging stars.



Hiking In:

Hiking access from 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.

Paddling In:

Canoe/kayak access at Prouty's Landing on Long Lake.



Mobility Challenged:

Shuttle service from the Prouty Barn with prior arrangements.

Other Details:

Carry-in and carry-out. Parking available at the Fay Park municipal parking lot or behind NEFF Headquarters. For more information please call 978-952-2706. Please see Prouty Woods map on LCT website or Facebook page. ■

Saving the Couper Farm

by Rick Findlay

After the passing of Vincent Couper many years ago, the care of the homestead passed to his nephew Frank. Frank Couper visited regularly and I got to listen to his reminiscences of childhood summer visits. Early on we worked together to try to save the dilapidated barn, only to have it collapse under heavy snows shortly before work would have begun. With Frank's unfortunate death last year, the family decided to sell the farm and has offered to work with the Town. The Couper Farm Preservation Committee was created to develop a cost effective plan while representing various interests including Park and Recreation, the Agricultural Commission and the Conservation Trust.



As Committee Chairman I am pleased with early discussions and confident that we can preserve most of the agricultural lands and scenic views while allowing for future playing fields, trails and a possible site for a future municipal building.

The historic homestead was lost to fire and neglect and the surrounding land will require significant cleaning up of debris and invasive plants. Nevertheless, the land surrounding the barn foundation is full of young fruit trees and rusting farm equipment (cultural relics), a suitable site for a community farm and museum where we could teach our children about Littleton's past as well as the pleasures of growing food.

Coincidentally, the fate of the Long Store, across the street from the new Police Station, hangs in the balance with demolition fast approaching. The 300 year old structure should be preserved if only for the history clinging to each beam and board. But unlike the old houses that have recently succumbed to the wrecking ball, the Long Store is unique as an architectural form that speaks of a modest agrarian past, well before the Shakers with their own unique style.

The Long Store could have a future on the Couper Farm as a museum, library, and place for the Country Gardeners, Conservation Trust, seniors, 4H and others to meet and work.

It is a time for dreaming. The Couper Farm Preservation Committee welcomes thoughts and suggestions. And then there is the work... ■



**LCT
Board of Trustees
June 2012**

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
Vice President
46 Beaver Brook Road 486-4031

David Gehly
33 Spartan Arrow Road 486-4290

Henry Harvey, M.D.
Founding Trustee
1 Wilderness Road 486-3211

Arthur Lazarus
Director of Land Stewardship
19 Shaker Lane 486-0261

Donald MacIver
President
43 Foster Street 952-2706

Fran Meyers
Secretary
16 Valley Drive 486-3776

Kathy Stevens
Treasurer
46 Shaker Lane 486-8847

Steven Sussman
32 Lake Warren Drive 486-9630

Virginia Sprong *Trustee Emeritus*

Charles Roth *Trustee Emeritus*

Edith Smith *Trustee Emeritus*

Judith Pickett *Counsel*

This Could Be You! *Newsletter*

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

compiled by Don MacIver

- ➡ Looking for LCT Newsletter Editor—2 issues per year. A great way to volunteer your talent to promote local community conservation!
- ➡ Thank You Melissa Spurr for 10 great years as Newsletter Editor.
- ➡ Littleton wins Comprehensive Agricultural Planning grant from MAPC regional planning agency. LCT and Community Preservation Committee leverages \$60,000 grant with \$6,000 match.
- ➡ Littleton Annual Town Meeting approves transfer of Morrison Orchard Extension and Plante Tax-Title Land to the municipal Conservation Commission thereby enlarging the abutting conservation lands of Nashoba Woodlands and Oak Hill respectively.
- ➡ LCT funds Reuben Hoar Library (RHL)'s Summer Reading Program 2012: "Dream Big: Read" popular live animal program "Wingmasters: North American Birds of Prey" on August 2nd (Thursday), 7:00-8:00 pm, in the Town Hall's Multipurpose Room.
- ➡ RHL successfully concludes half year "Littleton Reads" series of events focused on Michael Pollan's bestseller "The Omnivore's Dilemma." Events included a Farmers' Market, book discussions, and associated food related workshops. LCT was a major funder and supporter.
- ➡ LCT Thanks Land Steward Karen O'Neil for creating LCT's fun and fantastic Facebook page. (see related article)
- ➡ LCT, your local land trust, and regional land trust Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) raised community awareness with Earth Day lawn signs.
- ➡ Pete Tierney, retired Littleton science teacher, concluding 16 years of solid service on municipal Conservation Commission. Thanks!
- ➡ LCT is always looking for volunteers. For Conservation Land Stewardship, contact Art Lazarus. For Trail Maintenance and non-native invasive plant management throughout all conservation lands, contact Rick Findlay.

As a LCT land management practice, Mike Callahan and helper install a network of pipes and metal mesh enclosures as a "Beaver Deceiver" to outsmart beavers so they don't flood Cobb Memorial Trail and adjacent conservation lands. Check it out. The nearest trail entry way to the Cobb Conservation Land is at the Nashoba Road parking lot.



Littleton Conservation Trust Membership Form – 2012

☐ 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



Landscape Diversification Project by Art Lazarus

The largest holding of the Littleton Conservation Trust is the 98-acre Sarah Doublet Forest. About 96% is densely forested. Recently we seized upon an idea to diversify areas for the benefit of wildlife, grasses, and fruiting bushes so to create a greater esthetic appeal. The idea was promoted in Chuck Wooster's Northern Woodlands article "Management Idea: Creating A Permanent Opening." Opening even a couple acres will attract seldom seen bird species. Wooster states that "permanent openings can open up lovely vistas, showcase interesting features, and become destinations for regular walks."

The recently restored open field adjacent to Charter Way funded by the USDA's Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and coordinated by Trustee Rick Findlay provides a more diversified landscape. The Trust has selected an additional one-acre area to create another permanent opening. This location is 100 yards south from the parking lot beginning at the old chimney adjacent to the entrance trail. Several years ago, this area was partially opened where crops were grown many years ago on hundreds of very small earth mounds. The area contains second growth oaks, cedars, sassafras, birch and white pine with a dense undergrowth of leaf covered grasses and blueberry bushes. We are gradually thinning the small tree undergrowth and leaving larger trees.

Branches have been stacked for eventual chipping. Volunteers John Lally, Andrew Sammarco, and Trustee Art Lazarus are doing all work by hand.

It is planned to do some wildlife and wild-flower planting and install some bird-houses. Already it is a pleasant place to rest, relax, and appreciate the interesting landscape. ■

New!!! LCT now on Facebook

by Karen O'Neil



The Littleton Conservation Trust is on Facebook! Here you will find links to conservation properties and maps, information on upcoming events, resources on important topics, newsletters, stories, photos and more. Join the conversation by posting your own photos and experiences or suggesting a topic you'd like to see covered.

To find us on Facebook, go to <https://www.facebook.com/LittletonConservationTrust>

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

The Littleton Conservation Trust will celebrate its 50th year this fall. Inspired by the example set by the Sudbury Valley Trustees in late 1962 Herb Sontoff called a meeting of several respected citizens of Littleton to see if there were interest in forming a similar organization here. He realized that there was a good deal of open undeveloped land in town privately owned and in danger of uncontrolled development. Besides himself this group consisted of Stanley Conant of the United Elastic Corporation, Frances Flaherty, Ray Gehling Jr., Henry Harvey, Lois McWilliams, Les Nelson, and Hurd Willett. Don Prouty and Bennett Sanderson gave legal advice and eventually arranged to have the Littleton Conservation Trust recognized as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Stanley Conant became its first president.

Littleton had been a small rural town of dairy farms and apple orchards. Route 495 had just been built but was little used at first. The sharp rise in the cost of building lots was a thing of the future. Some owners of undeveloped land were willing to donate land to the Trust as a charitable deduction from their income taxes. The first donation was 10 acres of forested land off Nashoba Road by John Adams Kimball and his wife Priscilla and an adjoining 14.8 acres of forest given by Josephine Whitcomb. Paul and Edith Smith of Whitcomb Ave. gave nine acres of their lower meadow bordering Beaver Brook. They persuaded their neighbor, Bert Webster, to sell 11 adjacent acres along the brook for \$ 50 an acre. Later the Smiths put conservation restrictions on other sections of their land. Ruth Frost gave two small parcels at the junction of Newtown Road and Nashoba Road. The Frost

family later gave nine more acres in this same area. Harry and Virginia Sprong gave two triangles at the junction of Harwood Ave and Tahattawan. They later gave 39 additional acres behind their house adjacent to the Newtown Hill Conservation Commission land. What is now the Sarah Doublet Forest came from Fanny Knapp and Edith Jenks, two retired Childrens' Hospital nurses acquired a 96 acre hilltop farm at a bargain price and worked for John Morrison. Friends, especially Lois McWilliams, persuaded them to deed their land to the Trust. Actually Fanny Knapp transferred her half during her lifetime requesting only that there be no trails built during her lifetime. Later the whole property with the cottage for a caretaker family came to the Trust. Chuck Roth, Director of Education for the Mass Audubon Society planned and developed the Wunnehew and Tattatiquinea Trails. When the Morrison Orchard was bought by the Town additional access was built on Nagog Hill Road leading to the Sarah Doublet Forrest via the Edgar Bell Trail.

Over the years others have given land or placed conservation restrictions. Among them are the Cobb Trustees, Edith Smith, Vera Cohen, and the New England Forestry Foundation. Roger Conant gave Conant Park off White Street in memory of his wife. It is one end of the Two Brothers Trail which goes all the way to Long Lake. Between the Town's Conservation Commission and the Littleton Conservation Trust, Littleton has many excellent forest, meadow and hilltop trails on Oak Hill, Newtown Hill, the Cobb property, the Morrison Orchard extension, and thanks to The New England Forestry Foundation the Prouty Woods. ■

LCT Environmental Education for Seven Classes of 4th Graders

by Don MacIver

The LCT successfully concluded its student field trip series at the Nashoba Woodlands Conservation Land (the contiguous cluster of Yapp, Cobb, and Morrison Extension conservation properties) with the Russell Street School 4th grade classes, supplemented with naturalists from Mass Audubon's Drumlin Farm, and Littleton's own dedicated teachers. Some 14 student teams visited some 6 student learning stations in both the fall and spring providing some 168 learning sessions focused on Littleton's local landscape. Exemplary sessions included lessons on vernal pool habitats, geology and minerals, erosion, pond life, wildflowers, human influence on the landscape, local forest habitat, and native animal visitors such as the ever popular owl, duck, and skunk. The LCT funded the program. Superb teamwork and shared expertise from all made the trips a smashing success by all standards. ■



Wood Frog and Fourth Grade Student

Quote from Parent: "...Thank you so much for putting together such a terrific 4th grade field trip today. We had a great time exploring the Yapp Land. All of the stops we made were engaging and educational. The kids had a blast and we all learned plenty about the forest, soil, vernal pools and skunks! Kudos to the Conservation Trust and its volunteers. It was everything a field trip should be and right in our own back yard.."



Left to right, Drumlin Farm Teacher Naturalists Sue Beede, Susannah Elliott, (LCT Teachers Fran Meyers and Don MacIver), Pat Cochran, Wendy Ernst. Not shown are LCT Teachers Rick Findlay, Kathy Stevens, Steve Sussman, and Bill Brown.

The ongoing battle with invasive plants is not going well but we may see reinforcements coming armed with the latest technology. Smart phones with specific applications (apps) will allow volunteers to identify and map invasive plants and insects, and then track removal efforts.

"Outsmart Invasives" is a free app developed by UMass Amherst, Mass. DCR and the University of Georgia to enlist citizens in invasive plant monitoring efforts. A visit to their site and a viewing of their creative YouTube video is entertaining and educational. The app helps with identification and streamlines reporting. There should be a way to tailor this app for a local campaign.

In recent years there has been interest from the scouting community and school classrooms in organizing a Garlic Mustard Pull similar to what has been done in nearby communities. With the advent of this kind of technology, the time is ripe and anyone interested should contact me. At the same time, our fight with Garlic Mustard is still primarily a homeowner issue and remains the biggest threat to property values short of an oil spill. For a major infestation there is no simple solution, at any cost, and complete removal requires a multiyear commitment. At this time most homebuyers are unaware of the issue, but in time invasive plants will be a part of the home inspection process and a shock to some home sellers.

Now is the time to pull and bag garlic mustard plants. Joggers and dog walkers can be a great help by spotting and removing small, new clusters. Hopefully soon there will be a mechanism in place so that they can also record and report locations.

Visit our Website and Facebook page for more information. ■



Garlic Mustard Understory



Garlic Mustard Flower and Seed Pods

Visit the Tirone Memorial Trail

by Art Lazarus

A pleasant one-half mile long loop trail at Long Lake Park has been established for the enjoyment of all. Formerly known as the "Red Trail," it has been upgraded and is now named the "Charles L. Tirone Memorial Trail." This trail memorializes Charles who was the dedicated Land Steward for over 12 years. Charles passed away in December 2011 at age 79. This trail was his favorite area that he walked almost every day. His efforts were largely responsible for the gradual improvements in a frequently vandalized area, where now it is nearly pristine.

The trail starts at the parking area at the end of Colonial Drive. The trails marked with new red metal blazes follows the Long Lake shoreline for about 1000 feet. A new short loop trail takes you into the interior of the Tirone Trail loop, past the signed "Vernal Pond and Hemlock Grove" and continues past a beautiful hemlock grove and gigantic white pines with two vernal ponds. The current land stewards of the 180-acre woodland preserve and meadow are Jim and Karen O'Neil and Art Lazarus. Long Lake Park is under the jurisdiction of the town Conservation Commission and is maintained by Littleton Conservation Trust Land Stewards. On the beautiful Sunday afternoon of March 18, a large three-generation contingent of the Tirone family witnessed the memorial sign installation and toured the loop trail, listening to the delightful sounds of the peeper frogs. ■

LITTLETON



CONSERVATION
TRUST

P.O. Box 594
Littleton, MA 01460

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

Postal Patron

Littleton, Massachusetts 01460

LCT Annual Meeting

Wilderness House
Summit on Wilderness Road
Prouty Woods Community Forest
Saturday June 23, 2012
5:00—9:00 pm



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

Empire of the Beetle: How Human Folly and a Tiny Bug Are Killing North America's Forests

by Andrew Nikiforuk

In this latest book by journalist Andrew Nikiforuk, the seemingly insignificant and boring subject of bark beetles (and other beetle species) becomes an important and interesting look into forest ecosystems and climate change. By investigating bark beetle outbreaks in western North America beginning in the 1980's that killed more than 30 billion pine and spruce trees, Nikiforuk unveils the continuing connections between the beetles' natural appetite for aging wood and human activities. The bark beetle has acted as the "cleanup crew" for forests for millions of years, making way for new growth and diversity. But through society's intensive logging, fire suppression, unsuccessful science, public policy and rising global temperatures, conditions have been created for unprecedented expansion of the beetle's population, resulting in devastated forests. By drawing on the work of experts in entomology, botany, forestry and accounts from long-time residents of the forests, this book makes the reader understand that we need to learn more about even the smallest creatures (these beetles are the size of a grain of rice) and better understand their impact on the environment and ultimately us. ■

Polar Bears: The Natural History of a Threatened Species by Ian Sterling

This is a fantastic and comprehensive book on polar bears and the arctic environment, written by Ian Sterling who has studied polar bears for 40 years. Covering a wide variety of topics that offers an in-depth look into all aspects of things polar, the book's 300 plus pages are chock full of facts, maps, charts and of course, great photographs. Everything is covered: the polar bear's present day distribution and population in the arctic, their evolutionary origins (they used to be brown terrestrial bears), their relationship with humans, hunting, reproduction, behavior, what makes them tick, how to study them, and how they survive in their arctic world (sometimes by eating our garbage!). Sterling also looks into past and present conservation efforts on behalf of the bears, environmental issues affecting them, and what impact climate change and melting arctic ice are having on their long-term numbers and survival. Finally, for those looking for even more information, there is an extensive bibliography of sources to delve into. ■

Reviews by Kathy Stevens