

Littleton Conservation Trust



Newsletter

Fall 2014

New Year Day Open House for All

by Don MacIver



Start off the New Year right with a relaxing open house, hosted by the Littleton Conservation Trust,

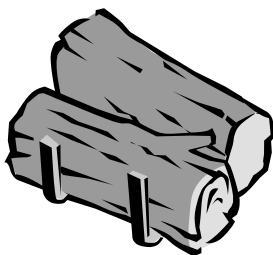


at New England Forestry Foundation's (NEFF) Headquarters at the Prouty Homestead, 32 Foster Street, from noon to 4pm.

Parking is available at the parking lot at Fay Park by the Fire Station. It is an easy walk up Wilderness Road to NEFF Headquarters on the right.



Come and mingle with friends old and new, LCT Trustees and Land Stewards who monitor and protect the town's conservation lands, and others from the area. Enjoy the fire, hot beverages, snacks, possible games, and LCT led excursions in the surrounding 108 acre Prouty Woods Community Forest.



Bring appropriate clothing and outdoor equipment (e.g. Warm hiking boots, snowshoes, skates, etc.) for prevailing weather conditions if participating in outdoor recreation. All are invited. This community event is free and open to everyone.

Feel free to bring along friends and any extra holiday goodies to share with others. ■



Spring Programs Revisited—Backyard Bears

by Gerry Cavallo

Our spring newsletter summarized two community education programs that Littleton Conservation Trust sponsored: "Living with Bears" and "Suburban Foraging". These programs gave us lessons on how to coexist with the wildlife and plants that surround us. An early autumn accident on Route 495 provided an



Roaming Expert Forager

example of how the two programs were linked. During the "Living with Bears" program, the MA Wildlife speaker advised we only keep our bird feeders up between Christmas and St. Patrick's Day while the bears are hibernating.

see *Backyard Bears*

continued on page 5

Snowplowers Needed—Adopt a Trailhead

by Jim O'Neil



Littleton Conservation Trust oversees many properties that are suited to winter activities like snowshoeing, hiking, cross-country skiing and observing winter wildlife. We are fortunate to have several stewards equipped to remove snow from parking areas. However, most trailheads go unplowed, limiting winter activity.

We are hoping to keep more lots open this winter. If you have a plow and would like to volunteer, we would like to hear from you. If you are a professional, we realize that the customer comes first and that



see *Snowplowers Needed*

continued on page 3



**LCT
Board of Trustees
December 2014**

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www.littletonconservationtrust.org
www.facebook.com/Littletonconservationtrust

Clipart via FCIT educational license

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 (gifted from far-sighted residents) on which we manage a public trails system.

Littleton Conservation News compiled by Don MacIver

- ➡ On Nov 8, 2014, Littleton Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Member Ann Grace, along with Littleton Trail Steward Olin Lathrop and LCT Trustees Rick Findlay and Don MacIver attended the state's annual recreational trails conference to learn about recent programs, grant opportunities, and techniques for use in Littleton.
- ➡ On Nov 18, 2014, the Littleton Sustainability Committee, along with Town Administrator, Selectman Melissa Hebert, LELD Staff Member Nick Lawler, met with the state's Green Communities Regional Coordinator Kelly Brown to explore how Littleton can enter the state's Green Communities Program and qualify for grants and other benefits. The presentation can be found at the Sustainability Committee's website at: www.littletonma.org. This month, Littleton qualified for entering this widely popular program promoting energy efficiency.
- ➡ On the same Sustainability Committee webpage is information on how to acquire a low-cost rodent-resistant compost bin (10.5 cubic foot "Earth Machine") through the Highway Department.
- ➡ The Cloverdale restoration project (reported in the Spring 2014 LCT Newsletter) is progressing. The project is being re-advertised to seek lower cost bids. The LELD generously removed out-of-control and invasive trees and shrubs where they were apt to interfere with overhead power lines. New lower bids and a contract for the remainder of the needed work is imminent. The refurbished Cloverdale meadow and farm pond will provide Littleton with a scenic eastern gateway along Great Road which can be used either for grazing or as an outdoor picnic area and passive recreation area. Cloverdale has been neglected for many years and is overgrown with invasives. It was acquired by the Conservation Commission as a trade land from the Park and Recreation Department when that agency requested previously designated conservation land abutting the Russell Street School and just beyond the Littleton Track.

Winter Moth Survey by Mass Natural Resources Collaborations



Male winter moth resting on the side of a house at night.



Female winter moth found on the trunk of a tree. Note the tiny, vestigial wings; female winter moths cannot fly.

More information: massnrc.org/pests/pestFAQsheets/winter%20moth.html
If you are seeing winter moths please take the below online survey:

massnrc.org/pests/blog/2014/11/2014-winter-moth-survey

See related story **Winter Moth Invasion** on page 5

For donations under \$1,000 we also accept credit card payments online <http://littletonconservationtrust.org/donate>

Littleton Conservation Trust Membership Form – 2014 - 2015

☐ New ☐ Renewal

Date: ____/____/_____
(Date determines year of tax deduction)

Name: _____

Address: _____

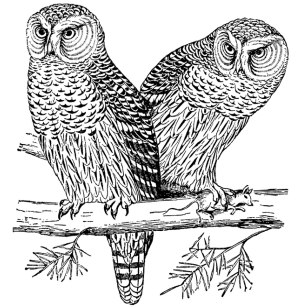
Phone: _____ Email: _____

*Please provide an email address to receive notification of upcoming walks and conservation-related events.
Checks should be made out to the "Littleton Conservation Trust " or just "LCT".*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <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. | |

Please send form to:

Kathy Stevens, Treasurer
Littleton Conservation Trust
PO Box 594
Littleton, MA 01460



Now Accepting Credit Card Payments for Online Donations

by Scott Lewis



Thank you to the many members who have taken time to comment on this year's LCT website update. Your feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. When we launched the updated site we told you that we'd be offering online donation capabilities in the future. Many members prefer to pay with a credit card or simply don't want the hassle and environmental impact of printing the paper form and mailing their donations. We're pleased to announce that we're now accepting online membership and general donations on the website. Major credit cards and Paypal payments are accepted.

You can find the online donation options on a new page on our website. You can access the online donation page at littletonconservationtrust.org/donate or from the link on the "Become a Member" page which is in the "Get Involved" menu on the website.

We request that anyone donating more than \$1,000 send us a check to reduce the impact of credit card processing fees on our ability to put your donations to good use in serving our mission. Additionally, anyone that prefers to pay by check is welcome to continue using the form which can be found here in the newsletter or printed from the website using the link on the "Become a Member" page mentioned above.

Whether you prefer to use a credit card online or mail a check, now is a good time to renew your membership or consider a larger donation to LCT in time for claiming the deduction for this year's taxes. ■

Snowplowers Needed continued from page 1

days can be very long. Plow when you can. We're happy to let visitors to our website that may be prospective customers know that your business supports LCT through these in-kind services.

Please consider adopting one of the following areas that are typically in need of plowing:

- Sarah Doublet Forest parking lot on Nagog Hill Road
- Cobb parking lot on Nashoba Road
- Long Lake Park parking lot on Harwood Ave
- Long Lake Park parking lot on Middlesex Drive
- Mill Hill parking area on Mill Road
- Mary Shepherd parking lot on Powers Road
- Hartwell Family Preserve parking lot on Hartwell Avenue

If you can help, please contact Rick Findlay at 978-486-4031 (ricfin@comcast.net), Art Lazarus at 978-486-0261 (ajlazarus@vizon.net) or Jim O'Neil at 978-486-3642 (jfoneil@comcast.net).■



Invasive Aliens—Join the Resistance Part XVII

by Rick Findlay

Weed Wrenches (weapons) available on loan!!!

In support of the ongoing battle against invasive plant species, the Littleton Conservation Trust has acquired a number of devices designed to extract unwanted shrubs, vines and small



Wrenching experience for author Rick Findlay

trees from the ground. These “weed wrenches” were purchased for use by our small army of volunteers, but the Trust also invites homeowners to borrow them for any private invasive vendettas. We have long known that any long-term success preserving our wonderful landscapes ultimately requires an educated and active private sector. Anyone interested in a ‘loaner’ and demonstration can contact Andrew Sammarco or Rick Findlay. We are also available to help homeowners identify invasive species on their own properties.

Autumn and spring are good times for spotting certain species such as Burning Bush, Glossy Buckthorn, Shrub Honey-suckles and Bittersweet seedlings. Unique coloration on plants that typically hold their leaves later, and frequently emerge earlier, than natives make them more conspicuous. These are excellent times to attack with a Weed Wrench.

Pictures and information about locally invasive species are available on the Littleton Conservation Trust website, and a Google search will produce more than a million results, many very informative. ■



Weed Wrench's jaws clutching shrub

Tree Lore: The Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*)

by Art Lazarus

For a greater appreciation of the wide variety of trees in our region, it is helpful to know some interesting features and history of some tree species. As an example, the pitch pine tree is not necessarily outstanding in appearance but knowing its characteristics and history can make a walk in the woods more enjoyable. The pitch pine can be distinguished by the three needle bundle, its rugged conical cones, and its rough, deeply furrowed broad, scaly ridges that expose brown inner layers. Our region is near the northern most limit of its range, being much more common on Cape Cod and the New Jersey barrens. Locally, the best stands of pitch pine appear to be in Sarah Doublet Forest, especially on the Ed Bell Trail.



Pitch Pine three needle bundles and large female cone. Photo by W.D. Brush, hosted by the USDA- NRCS PLANTS Database

One of the most interesting features of the pitch pine is that it is the most fire-tolerant tree in the region. The trunk of the tree, from the ground up, is covered with needle tufts that surround buds. Each bud can initiate new growth in the event of a forest fire or other forms of severe damage. If all of the needles are burned off, the buds will allow the tree to re-foliate. Pitch pines typically grow in well-drained sandy soils and dry rocky exposures. Over a long period of time the pitch pine gives way to hardwoods, but can grow to heights of 40-60 feet with a diameter of 1 to 2 feet.

Pitch Pine was so named due to its high resin content within the knotty wood. Colonists made turpentine and tar for axle grease. Pitch pine knots were used as torches at night. ■

References:

1. Tom Wessels, 1997, “Reading The Forested Landscape”.
2. Art Lazarus, 2008, “Forest Tours: Edible, Medicinal, Poisonous Characteristics And Historical Uses of Trees And Shrubs”, Prouty Woods Community Forest, New England Forestry Foundation.

For more information on the pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) consult the New England Wildflower Society's online plant identification guide “Go Botany” for detailed description and more images:

gobotany.newenglandwild.org/species/pinus/rigida/

Exciting Times at Littleton Community Farm

by Amy Tarlow-Lewis



Late summer and early fall was an exciting time for the Littleton Community Farm. We began by preparing 2.8 acres of land leased from the New England Forestry Foundation. The land was organized into two fields, each approximately 0.75 acres. 8,000 pounds of lime was spun out on the

soil and a dedicated volunteer rotovated the area twice, pulling up weeds and invasives. Three other volunteers donated time, labor and equipment to excavate tons of large rocks and boulders from the field.



Agricultural Director Brittany plowing

Our farmer friends, Brittany and Kevin Overshiner of Medway Community Farm donated time and equipment to plow the land that had lain fallow for the past several decades. After a second soil test was completed, Brittany

and Kevin returned to disk harrow the field and spread a mix of winter rye and hairy vetch.

LCF friend Richard O'Neil volunteered his time and equipment. LCT Trustees Sam Bell and Rick Findlay additionally volunteered their time and equipment both here and at the town's hunger-relief community garden, Garden at Church Meadows.

Brittany Sidway Overshiner is LCF's Agricultural Director, in addition to serving as the Farm Manager and Executive Director of the Medway Community Farm.



LCT Trustee Sam Bell removing boulders to help the Community Farm prepare fields for farming

More information is at: www.littletoncommunityfarm.com ■



A Message from our Friends at NEFF

Keep Calm and Walk in the Woods

See "Explore Our Woods" at: www.newenglandforestry.org

Backyard Bears continued from page 1

The year round option was to suspend the feeder at least 8 feet off the ground on a thin wire in a way that the bear can't climb or knock down the support. I attempted the latter option by attaching a wire between two corners of the house and was quite pleased when the bear came around again and was not able to reach the feeder.

I also tried suburban foraging with mixed success by consuming the invasive species: Japanese Knotweed, Jerusalem Artichoke and Autumn Olives. Let me just say that the first two were rather earthy but I immediately became a fan of Autumn Olive berries both fresh and preserved. We learned in the foraging lecture that the Autumn Olive was planted along interstate highways when they were built and have now spread throughout surrounding towns. Bears also like the Autumn Olive berries and there's the connection which could have been a contributing factor to the unfortunate demise of one Littleton bear along Route 495 in late September. And so the bears and berries we were learning to love may have been linked in more ways than we imagined. ■

Winter Moth Invasion from MassNRC.org

It's that time of year again: winter moths and other related species have started to show up at porch lights across the state. The winter moth (*Operophtera brumata*) is an invasive species first discovered in Massachusetts in the 1990s. Winter moth caterpillars are highly efficient tree defoliators, often stripping the leaves of oaks, maples and other hardwood trees down to lacy skeletons.

In mid-to-late fall, at a time of year where insect activity is practically at a standstill, these small brown winter moths will be seen across the eastern half of the state, sometimes congregating at porch lights by the hundreds. There are other similar-looking native moths active at this time of year, such as the Bruce spanworm moth and the fall cankerworm moth, but they are typically not seen in such large numbers. While the state does not regulate winter moth, some towns/cities do tree treatments. The Elkinton Lab at University of Massachusetts Amherst currently has a biological control program underway (for more information: elkintonlab.wordpress.com/research/)

The UMass Extension Services' Winter Moth Identification and Management Fact Sheet can be found here: extension.umass.edu/landscape/fact-sheets/winter-moth-identification-management

Mass Natural Resources Collaborations (MassNRC) is a cooperative program from the UMass Center for Agriculture, UMass Extension, Mass Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), and the USDA. ■

LITTLETON



CONSERVATION
TRUST

P.O. Box 594
Littleton, MA 01460



*"Preserving Our Rural Landscape"
for over 50 Years*



***LCT New Year's Day
Open House***
at NEFF Headquarters
32 Foster Street, Littleton
Thursday January 1, 2015
Noon - 4pm

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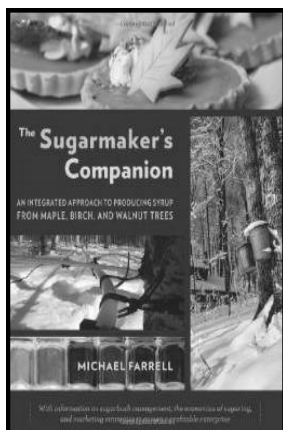
The Book Corner

These and other donated books can be found at the Reuben Hoar Public Library

The Sugarmaker's Companion: An Integrated Approach to Producing Syrup from Maple, Birch, and Walnut Trees

by Michael Farrell

The Sugarmaker's Companion is a truly comprehensive guide to all aspects of sugaring and much more. In addition to syrup production from a variety of trees, it provides valuable information on sugarbush (the forest of tapped trees) management, how to get other valuable products/uses from the forest, the economics of sugaring and strategies for marketing your products.



This book is meant for a wide audience - everyone from readers with a simple interest in how syrup is made, to those who want to start a business or expand an existing one. Tree identification, sugarhouse design, tapping techniques and systems, a myriad of products in addition to syrup that can be made, and an inspiring look at successful sugar enterprises (with how-to's on getting there yourself) are all covered here. ■

Other books donated by the LCT in 2014 that are available at the Reuben Hoar Library

Reviews by Kathy Stevens

The Complete Guide to Saving Seeds: 322 Vegetables, Herbs, Flowers, Fruits, Trees, and Shrubs
by Robert Gough & Cheryl Moore-Gough

Gaias Garden: A Guide To Home Scale Permaculture
by Toby Hemenway

Harvest: Field Notes From A Far Flung Pursuit of Real Food
by Max Watman

Preserving Wild Foods: A Modern Forager's Recipes
by Matthew Weingarten & Raquel Pelzel

Resilient Farm and Homestead: An Innovative Permaculture and Whole Systems Design Approach
by Cornelius Murphy

Top Bar Beekeeping: Organic Practices For Honeybee Health
by Les Crowder & Heather Harrell

Past LCT book donations to the library well exceed 100. ■