

Littleton Conservation Trust



Newsletter

Winter 2017

Encountering Otters on Long Lake by Dustin Neild



Otter in the Water
Photo by Dustin Neild

To me, one of the truly wonderful things about living on Long Lake - and in Littleton itself - is the proximity to which we live with nature, going about our business in between the fortunate moments when our paths cross.

Though I'd caught fleeting glimpses before, it wasn't until late November, 2014 when I had my first good encounter. The ice was settling in at the back of Long Lake when a "chirp" unlike any bird I have heard got my attention. Setting my binoculars on it, a North American River Otter was acting like a mini Loch Ness monster, coming up and diving down again as it worked to keep some openings in the fresh ice. A few times it sat and watched me from afar, before sneaking off. That winter, I got reports from hikers and skiers who had seen the tell-tale "slides" (tracks made by otters sliding around) in the snow near the Prouty boat ramp. Although I often see signs of their activity - piles of fresh water mussel shells build up and can be seen at their favorite dining spots - It wasn't until dawn last September 17th that I came upon one again. It was in nearly the same location, but this time it was foraging among the mudflats and we were much closer to one another. Otters are well adapted to underwater hunting, a trade-off being that they are notoriously near-sighted above water. This one came up within 30 feet of me and snorted, just like a dog, gathering in my scent, as I raised my camera and squeezed off a few bursts, capturing a moment not soon to be forgotten. ■

Conservation Land Campaign and Urgent Need

LCT needs to raise \$6,000 in support of seeking a \$300,000 Federal LWCF Grant to bring the high priority Williams Land conservation acquisition back to Town Meeting on May 1st. Raised funds will be used for a detailed land appraisal and incidental land transaction expenses. We need your assistance to reach this goal. Two community members have already donated a total of \$750. To donate for this purpose please send a check to the LCT, P.O. Box 594, Littleton, MA 01460, with a memo notation for "Conservation Land Campaign" or visit littletonconservationtrust.org/land-campaign or contact LCT Treasurer Kathy Stevens at 978-486-8847. Any surplus funds will be used for other high priority conservation land purposes. Thank you for your support. ■



Gallery 529 Hosts Charitable Art Benefit for LCT

Gallery 529 of Littleton, in conjunction with the Gallery Café, is pleased to announce "Inspired Blooms" a new juried art show and fundraising effort to benefit the Littleton Conservation Trust (LCT). Throughout February and March, Gallery 529, the vibrant artists' cooperative located at 529 King Street, sharing space with the art themed restaurant Gallery Café in a 1830's rambling farm house, will display the art show with a formal opening on Sunday February 12th from 2 - 4 pm. A percentage of

see *Gallery 529*

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**LCT
Board of Trustees
January 2017**

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www.LittletonConservationTrust.org

[www.facebook.com/
LittletonConservationTrust](https://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 (gifted from far-sighted residents) on which we manage a public trails system.

Littleton Conservation News compiled by Don MacIver

- ➡ The LCT is very grateful for David Sanderson's generous Memorial Gift recognizing his brother Edward P. Sanderson who died in WW II.
- ➡ The LCT voted to accept the 21.5 acre Carye Land at 150 Taylor St. from the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF), adding to a 17 acre parcel on Upper Mill Pond that LCT already owns. LCT will need to coordinate work parties to remove the remnants from an old homestead and accessory structures, and improve the open space for public use and wildlife habitat. Interested volunteers should contact Trustee Rick Findlay.
- ➡ Anson Staples, Eagle Scout Candidate, is working with Trustee Rick Findlay on building a kiosk at the entrance of the Cobb Memorial Footpath at the parking lot on Nashoba Road.
- ➡ Elyse Barry with her Girl Scout Troop 85413 are working with Trustee Dustin Neild by building bat and kestrel houses for their Bronze Award.
- ➡ LCT sponsored two Reuben Hoar Library Programs: The first was the ever popular The Creature Teachers with live animals demonstrated by wildlife teacher Rick Roth, which helped launch the children's summer reading program. The second program which was fully attended was on "Ansel Adams - Environmentalist and Photographer". It was presented by Ansel's book designer and now Professor of Graphic Design and Photography Lance Hidy. LCT purchased for the library several Ansel Adams photography books produced and edited by Lance Hidy.
- ➡ **Littleton Trails**, a public group Facebook site is an interactive site to share stories, photos, and observations of Littleton's conservation lands and area wildlife. See www.facebook.com/groups/639049749490984
- ➡ **Jim O'Neil, LCT Trail Crew Coordinator**, maintains a trail worker email distribution list. When work projects are planned, notifications and updates are distributed to its member list. Jim can be reached at JFOneil63@verizon.net.
- ➡ Free Merrimack River Eagle Festival in Newburyport, 2/18. For full schedule and details, see www.massudubon.org/eaglefestival

Town Boards with Vacancies Need Volunteers

Applications are invited from residents for the following Littleton board positions appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Application forms are available at the Office of the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator, or online at www.littletonma.org. Completed application forms should be returned to that office. The Board of Selectmen is scheduled to interview applicants and make appointments during the month of February 2017.

Conservation Commission (1 position, regulatory board, expiry on 6/30/2019)

Shade Tree Committee (1 position, nonregulatory board, indefinite term)

Sustainability Committee (2 positions, nonregulatory board, indefinite term)

Historical Commission (1 position, nonregulatory board, expiry 6/30/2018)

Zoning Board of Appeals (2 alternate positions, expiry 6/30/2017 & 2018)

Zoning Board of Appeals (1 alternate position, expiry on 6/30/2018)

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

Littleton Conservation Trust Membership Form – 2017

☐ 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 on preserving my own land. | |

Please send form to:

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



Renew your LCT Membership, Donate or Provide Memorial Gift: Continue and Expand Conservation in Littleton

by Scott Lewis

As an all-volunteer nonprofit, every dollar you donate to the Littleton Conservation Trust goes towards conservation, events for the public to enjoy, conservation lands, and conservation education.

LCT memberships are tax deductible donations. Whether renewing your membership or simply donating, this is a good time of year to donate in order to claim a tax year charitable gift donation.

Many LCT members join when our fall / winter newsletter is published so this is the time of year to renew. It always is a great time of year to gift others with membership on special occasions.

Please help us take care of the many protected lands in Littleton so that you, and future generations, can continue to enjoy the outdoors. You can join or renew either online or by mailing a check:

To join or renew online by credit card or through PayPal, go to: littletonconservationtrust.org/donate
To join or renew by check, use the above form.

Thank you for your continued support of conservation in Littleton and your all-volunteer Littleton Conservation Trust. ■

Receive Notifications on Guided Walks and Events

If you enjoy being outdoors, are interested in trails, wildlife, and history in and near Littleton, want to meet people with similar interests, or just need to get out and stretch your legs, consider joining a LCT guided walk. These walks are open to all, free of charge, and fun! Walks will be announced on the Littleton Conservation Trust website, listed in the Littleton Conservation Trust events calendar and automatically sent to the Littleton Conservation Trust email list. Sign up at littletonconservationtrust.org/contact-us/subscribe/.

If you are interested in receiving notifications on outdoor-oriented events and nature observations west of Boston and sponsored by a variety of local organizations subscribe to Sudbury Valley Trustees free weekly bulletin "Outdoors this Week" at svtweb.org/programs/outdoors-week. ■

Owl Prowl and Other Outdoor Adventures

Early January the LCT scheduled a local Owl Prowl to teach about our most familiar resident owls and how to identify them by critical markings and distinctive calls. Unfortunately a winter nor'easter forced a cancellation. Watch the website for updates and most up-to-date events. Subscribe for email alerts. ■

Cloverdale - An Ever Improving Landscape

By Jim O'Neil

The Cloverdale property is a diverse twenty acre portion of the former Cloverdale Dairy Farm which was donated to the Town of Littleton when the Apple D'Or neighborhood was established. The property boundary is outlined with dark line on the



Aerial view with highlighted new loop trail bordered at the bottom with Great Road / 2A by Oak Meadow School and Manion Place

(left) aerial map . The Cloverdale Conservation Area, with the proposed loop trail is flagged and roughly layed out as shown by the light circular line.

In 2011, Rick Findlay and I began an effort to eradicate the invasive Oriental Bittersweet vines, Glossy Buckthorn trees and Multiflora Rose that had engulfed the property since the farm ceased operation in the 1950s. A beaver colony also took up residence and created a flooded meadow in the center of the property. The beaver colony was abandoned in 2012 when a "beaver deceiver" was installed. Since then the meadow has seasonally dried out and has become a beautiful habitat for a multitude of birds and other wildlife. The invasive growth was recently removed showcasing the diversity of the property. From the beautiful two acre pasture to the open, rolling savannah-like grassy plains studded with several old apple, oak and maple trees to the mixed pine and hardwood forest to the beautiful eleven acre abandoned beaver meadow with an unobstructed 1600 foot panoramic view, this property is one of Littleton's finest wildlife habitats. The flagged out perimeter trail is 0.6 mile long and offers spectacular views.

Construction of a boardwalk has been planned across the seasonally wet meadow which will afford better year round access to the attractive property. Several viewing benches are also planned throughout the area. Cloverdale is already being enjoyed by many local

Same Great Road view before and after tangled dead trees and invasives removed



people. Stephen De Florio, a teacher/naturalist at neighboring Oak Meadow School has been conducting nature classes regularly and is looking forward to more exploration when the trail is completed.■



Panoramic view looking across the now open meadow. Boardwalks are planned to ensure easy access and passage year round when the meadow is wet from snowmelt and the rainy springtime. This meadow is a great wildlife viewing area.

Editor's note: Land Stewards Jim O'Neil, Karen O'Neil, and Rick Findlay along with an enthusiastic volunteer work crew have transformed this neglected town parcel overgrown with invasives and tangled dead trees into an attractive open space. Jim O'Neil coordinates the LCT Trail Crew.

Take Jim O'Neil's visual tour of Cloverdale, learn its history, and discover its possibilities. It is accessible at sway.com/wU59XjxcP3NeDbEd or at the LCT website. More views and photos are included.

Nagog Hill Orchard at Nagog Pond Shoreline - An Outstanding Landscape that Screams Help!!!

In 1999, Littleton received a state grant to help purchase the 129 acres Nagog Hill Orchard and associated farm buildings. This preserved the farm which has been operating successfully ever since under a town lease and is a great asset for its scenic beauty and local fruit production.

Same View from Nagog Hill Road
looking eastward toward Nagog Pond



A portion of that town property not used for agriculture, is located on the east side of Nashoba Hill Road, down hill from the old Jack Morrison white barn, and between the Sarah Doublet Forest Parking Lot with split rail fencing and the near shore island on Nagog Pond. That parcel was noted as an area of

outstanding scenic beauty. The roadside view from 2002 graced a town Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan Report cover and was attractive enough to find its way on notecards and in many photos. It was even the site for an outdoor wedding.

Local historian and naturalist John Hanson Mitchell, described the appeal of this expansive landscape and classic scenic view of natural vegetation, wildlife, and water as appealing to the innate human emotional desire for connections with nature much as humans seek out similar views of the natural seashore or mountain ranges. Famed biologist Edward O. Wilson has explained this type of human affiliation for natural forms and living organisms as being primordial and highly valued for human well-being.

In the past, this stunning view was maintained through periodic field mowing and low maintenance. It appears that with Concord's use of Nagog Pond as a drinking water source, concern was raised on the effect of waterfowl on the water quality. As a result customary mowing and maintenance were suspended

and the parcel and landscape view became neglected. While Concord has some legal rights from 1884 legislation, to draw water from Nagog Pond, they do not have control over Littleton and its uses for their land.

Some 15 years later, invasive plants and tangled vines have taken over and masked the landscape previously highly valued for scenic beauty and significant wildlife habitat, not terribly unlike the story of Cloverdale (see related story on page 4).

Same view behind Morrison barn
looking southward toward Nagog Pond



A major concern is that out of control invasive plants on this parcel are also intruding upon the otherwise healthy orchard land, nearby Sarah Doublet Forest and Nature Preserve, and other natural areas. Talks have been initiated on what to do to rectify this deferred maintenance in order to bring this parcel back to its natural splendor and restore one of the main reasons for acquiring this property. ■

Gallery 529

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art sales will be donated to the LCT to further its local conservation land and education work.

More details on the Gallery 529 juried art show can be viewed at gallery529.com/juried-shows/. Gallery 529 is managed by Virginia "Whistle" Wood. More information on the Gallery Café, managed by Elizabeth Greensdale and known for its highly acclaimed traditional American fare created by chef Don McHale, can be found at gallery529cafe.com. ■



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



Calendar of Events

2/12	Gallery 529 Open House Art Benefit for LCT (see page 1)
2/18	Merrimack River Eagle Festival (Sponsored by Mass Audubon and USFWS) See www.massaudubon.org/eaglefestival
5/1	Annual Town Meeting (Article to extend Newtown Hill Conservation Land with acquisition of Williams Land on Boxborough Road)
5/20	Littleton Hidden Treasures Day at Prouty Woods (Watch the LCT webpage for details)
5/1-31	Freedom's Way National Heritage Area's Hidden Treasures Month See freedomsway.org



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

The Book Corner

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

Book Reviews by Kathy Stevens

50 Ways to Save the Honey Bees by Scott Donahue

This book is a good primer about honey bees, their physical make-up, their hive life, their crucial function in our food system, and most importantly their precarious status that requires help from us to survive and thrive. It's a compact little book that is a fairly quick read offering a lot of good information. With an easy to understand format and many pictures, readers are offered 50 ways they can help save honey bees, which are suffering from wide-spread loss of numbers and collapse of colonies. Because bees play an extremely important role in our food supply through pollination, it is critical that we help restore their numbers and health of their hives. A few of the book's suggestions include simple things like buying local honey, volunteering to help local bee keepers with their hives, growing the flowering plants they thrive on, avoiding the use of pesticides, allowing part of your yard to become "wild", and of course becoming a beekeeper. This book can help you get started in doing your part to help the wonderful honeybees, while literally enjoying the fruits of their labor! ■

Vitamin N - 500 Ways to Enrich the Health & Happiness of Your Family & Community by Richard Louv

Vitamin N is author Richard Louv's latest book addressing what he calls "nature-deficit disorder", a term he coined in his first book *Last Child in the Woods* that addressed the alienation of children from the natural world and its effects. Louv advocates for stronger connections to nature for people of all ages, stressing the benefits it provides for mental health and acuity, creativity, reducing obesity and depression, and of course having fun. This is a great guidebook with 500 tips and activities outlined for families and people of all ages, school curriculums and nature-based programs, bringing more of nature into cities, enhancing communities, thoughts for medical professionals, and ideas for potential careers. There are many fun and interesting activities for children that are simple and inexpensive (often using recycled materials and "free" stuff found in nature). Stories of how people are connecting with nature are included throughout the book, demonstrating how people from all walks of life and geographic locals have taken steps to reconnect with their natural surroundings, or bring some natural elements to where they live and work. This is a great resource for those who want to learn about the importance of our connection to the natural world around us, and how to enjoy and embrace it more fully. ■

Postal Patron
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