

Littleton Conservation Trust



Newsletter

Fall 2018

Saving Edith and Paul Smith Property LCT and SVT Working Together



Southwesterly View Over Beaver Brook Marshlands

What is at Stake and Why is this Land a Critical High Priority for Immediate Acquisition?

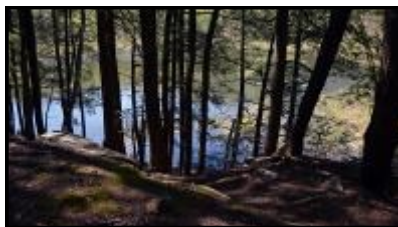
Edith and Paul Smith amassed some 60 acres of magnificent land between Beaver Brook and Black Pond straddling Whitcomb Ave. It includes scenic historic farm fields with barn, extensive granite stone works, wooded wetlands, marshland habitat along Beaver Brook, woodlands, healthy vernal pools, rich biodiversity, and a rugged ridgeline overlooking Black Pond with spectacular views that could easily be mistaken for a landscape out of northern Maine.

With the passing of Edith and Paul and the three adult children living on the West Coast, it is time to acquire, permanently protect, and professionally manage this treasured landscape through collaborative efforts.

Why is this Landscape Significant?

The critical Beaver Brook wooded marshland provides significant habitat for threatened species including turtles and salamanders and protects and replenishes the downstream Whitcomb Drinking Water Wells. It is situated in the midst of a mosaic of adjacent protected conservation lands – Harvard Conservation Commission land to the west, Littleton Conservation Commission land to the north, and Littleton Conservation Trust lands south and east. The Smith land allows necessary roaming corridors for black bear, bobcat, deer, fox, coyote, deer, fisher, and turkey as well as through-hiking on interconnected trails.

(Continued on page 3)



Black Pond Ridge Trail
Overlook

Annual Meeting ~ Eyes On Owls: Friday 11/16

LCT Annual Meeting at 6:30 pm

Live Owl Presentation at 7:00 pm

Littleton High School Performing Arts Center
56 King St. (Rt 2A/110), Littleton
(1 mile west of I-495, exit 30)

Free, open to all, accessible, light refreshments
Appropriate for ages 5 through adult



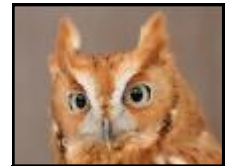
Marcia with
Snowy Owl

Field naturalist **Marcia Wilson** and wildlife photojournalist **Mark Wilson** return with the ever popular Eyes On Owls program. They will display six lively owls separately and walk them around the audience for close views, photos, and questions. Preceding will be a short informative slide presentation and a rousing “hooting lesson” with audience participation. Mark and Marcia Wilson will share their knowledge of field marks, signs,

and naturalist skills that you can use to find wild owls, without disturbing them, while introducing you to six live owls up close!

See www.EyesOnOwls.com for details. ■

(Above owl photos: © Mark Wilson, Eyes On Owls / Wildshot)



Screech Owl

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November 2018**

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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

➡ **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. Email JFOneil63@verizon.net.

➡ **Littleton Trails**, a public Facebook group is an interactive site to share stories, photos, and observations of Littleton's conservation lands and area wildlife. See www.facebook.com/groups/639049749490984

➡ **LCT 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 www.LittletonConservationTrust.org/contact-us/subscribe/

LCT Calendar of Free Events—November and December

11/3	10-am - Noon	Natural History of Smith Property - led by SVT/LCT RSVP on SVTweb.org program calendar page.
11/17	1-3 pm	Littleton Community Forest at Prouty Woods for scenic foliage, hilltop landscape vistas, and lakeside trails.
11/23	1-3 pm	"Black Friday"/"Walk off the Turkey" Long Lake Park Walk
11/23 - 12/31	All Day	Town-wide Tree Hunt on conservation lands returns. See page 5 for details and photos from last year's event.
12/1	10 am - 3 pm	LCT at the Holiday Bazaar, Middle School, 55 Russell Street Come, view, and select from wide assortment of nature-oriented gifts. Enter the raffle. Drop by, and say "Hello" 2019 LCT Memberships Available - Renewal, New, and Gift
12/8	1-3 pm	Sarah Doublet Forest: ancestral home of the Massachusetts Praying Indian Tribe and core for the historic Newtown Indian Village and earlier Nashobah Praying Indian Plantation.

See LCT webpage for more details and updates for these walks/hikes and events.

LCT Volunteer Opportunities:

Newsletter Editor: Need experienced writer for copy editing and layout using MS Publisher desktop publishing application. Twice a year issues. Accept stories and photos from newsletter volunteers. Experienced guidance available.

Membership Coordinator: Need creative resource to enhance membership by working with program and outreach volunteers and engaging public.

Contact: Info@LittletonConservationTrust.org

Littleton Holiday Bazaar

Nature-oriented Gifts ~ Raffles ~ Conservation Trail Guides
LCT 2019 Memberships - New, Gift, and Renewal
December 1st, 10 am - 3 pm, Middle School, 55 Russell Street

Come Visit LCT!

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

Littleton Conservation Trust Membership Form — Fall - 2018

☐ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Gift Membership

Date: ____/____/____

Name: _____

(Date designates tax deduction year)

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:

Daedra Jones, Treasurer
Littleton Conservation Trust
PO Box 594
Littleton, MA 01460



(continued from p 1, "Saving Edith and Paul Smith Property")

The state's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program's BioMap 2 designates this property as critical core habitat and diverse landscape that will provide resiliency for wildlife and plants needing to adapt during ongoing climate change. The Smith Property is at the headwaters of three major river basins - the SuAsCo, (Sudbury-Assabet-Concord River Watershed), Nashua River, and Stony Brook.

It will provide passive recreation for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, wildlife-watching, and quiet outdoor enjoyment. There is a possibility to provide a necessary small parking lot on the northwesterly side to provide easy access for public trails throughout. Additionally there is potential to return the southwesterly grazing lands back to small lot farming overlooking the scenic Beaver Brook marshland.

Why so Little Cost for so Much Public Benefit?

Through personal sacrifice, the Smith's continuously accumulated extensive farm land and woodlands and gifted overlain conservation restriction easements to the LCT, thereby protecting it from development but lowering their own fortunes. Upon Edith's passing her three adult children, following their mother's wishes, voluntarily eliminated two potential building lots, ensuring unfragmented lands but reducing their own inheritance. These magnificent lands could have become a private "no trespassing" estate. To provide public access and professional conservation management for benefit of people and wildlife, the Smith children have been working closely with Sudbury Valley Trustees, SVT, (the regional staffed conservation land trust) and LCT (your local all-volunteer conservation land trust). The antique homestead and aging barn have been sold off thereby eliminating building maintenance costs. The remaining conservation land is being sold for public benefit at a significant discount. The Harvard Conservation Com-

mission will buy the 13 acres in Harvard, leaving 47 Littleton acres, nestled in the midst of adjacent and protected public access conservation lands, still to be purchased. SVT is hard at work raising \$150,000 from grants and foundations, leaving just \$35,000 (about \$745 per acre) to be raised by individuals through crowdfunding contributions, spanning both small and large donations. LCT and SVT are collaborating and encouraging contributions from all for this public interest community effort. Contributions can best be made to the SVT crowdfunding page at: www.mightycause.com/story/Z4cauf. Alternatively donations can be made to SVT at: www.svtweb.org/Smith or directly to LCT (with memo for Smith Property purchase).

SVT will acquire the Smith Property, make public access accommodations, and professionally manage the natural resources as the new conservation land owner. LCT will continue as Conservation Restriction/Easement holder for the full 60 acre Smith Property, even as the land ownership changes, and will collaborate with SVT in the property's conservation management.

Who is SVT and How is SVT Helping Littleton?

SVT's name is confusing since it has evolved into a staffed regional land trust serving all 34 towns within the SuAsCo Watershed. The eastern portion of Littleton lies within the Assabet River drainage area so all of Littleton is served by SVT. LCT has invited SVT to acquire the Smith Property as the conservation owner and to work together with LCT as the Conservation Restriction/Easement (CR) holder, given SVT's successful track record. SVT wrote the \$500,000 grant for Littleton to purchase the George and Lucy Yapp Conservation Property and now serves as that property's CR holder. Additionally, SVT exercising a Right of First Refusal (ROFR), secured the Herget CR easement for public access from Foster Street to the Town Forest. SVT has collaborated with many surrounding communities in raising funds for acquiring farmland and conservation lands. ■

Who Are These People? Over 100 Conservation Volunteers! by Jim O'Neil, Director of Land Stewardship

Littleton is graced with over 1300 acres of beautiful conservation lands, dotted with numerous well maintained hiking trails. These properties are owned by the Town of Littleton, Littleton Conservation Trust, New England Forestry Foundation, and hopefully soon, Sudbury Valley Trustees.

Have you ever wondered who the people are who maintain these trails? Sometimes you see them out on the trails but often, their efforts are behind the scenes.

These volunteers are our “watchers in the woods”. Cutting fallen trees, clearing and burning brush, building and repairing trails and boardwalks, mowing fields, building and monitoring bird nesting boxes, controlling invasive plants, removing trash, and even picking up tons of rocks by the pail full, are all tasks that these dedicated folks have accomplished in the past year.

In 2017, **37 Littleton Land Stewards, 66 Littleton Trail Crew** members and nearly a **dozen Senior Tax Work-off Program** volunteers participated in 925 work events for well over 1000 hours to keep Littleton's open spaces safe and available for all to enjoy.

No matter which group these volunteers are assigned to, they are all “stewards of the land”, doing what they love for the benefit of all. The next time you come across one of these volunteers, please say “Hi”.

This quote from John Muir epitomizes the dedication of all those women and men involved in the stewardship of our Littleton conservation lands.

“The battle we have fought, and are still fighting for the forests, is a part of the eternal conflict between right and wrong, and we cannot expect to see the end of it. ...So we must count on watching and striving for these trees, and should always be glad to find anything so surely good and noble to strive for.”

New Oak Hill Kiosk at Harvard Road Trailhead

Eamon O'Connor standing in front of his Eagle Scout project - a new trailhead kiosk at the Oak Hill Conservation Land's new parking lot on Harvard Rd., near Sawyer Lane and close to the Harvard Town Line. The parking lot is built on one of two lots recently donated by neighbor and LCT friend Peter Woll. Initially offered to LCT, LCT



recommended that they should be annexed to the town-owned Oak Hill Conservation Land which is under the care, control, and custody of the municipal Conservation Commission. Eamon's structure conforms to a new conservation land standard developed by volunteer carpenter **Chris Mountain** and LCT mentor **Rick Findlay**. Nice work! ■

Hike at Oak Hill Conservation Land

by Bill Brown



On Saturday September 29th, Land Steward and LCT board member **Bill Brown** led a 2.5 mile hike with 600 feet of ascent at the Oak Hill Conservation Land. We had 15 participants; 10 from Littleton and five from Acton, Chelmsford, and

Bedford. Littleton Selectman **Chase Gerbig**, also a LCT member, acted as Sweep to ensure that we all stayed together. Conservation Commissioner **Andrew Sammarco** also hiked.

We viewed the grooves worn in the rock by the iron-bound stage coach wheels in the 1830's near the start of the Red Summit Trail. We then hiked over to and along the edge of the Tophet Chasm, which is where glacial Lake Nashua drained and cut a deep chasm. There are three interesting glacial erratics on the South side of the Chasm; the hikers in the upper photo are in front of the largest one, Egg Rock.

There were at least three large Bull Frogs in the vernal pool, which should normally be dry this time of year, near the head of the Chasm. We observed an abundance of mushrooms on this hike, including many pretty Purple Corts (Violet Cortinarius). [Editor's Note: While technically not poisonous, Purple Corts, also known as Violet Webcaps, are frequently confused with similar looking poisonous varieties. When wet they are slimy and are known to be foul smelling. Far better just to enjoy their beauty in their expanse spanning across the forest floor.]



We then wandered over to the Blue Inner Loop trail and took that to the highest point in Littleton (about 504'). The left photo shows our happy band at the informal cairn that marks this spot.

From there we stopped at Lookout Rock, enjoyed the vista towards Boston 26.5 miles away, and returned to the parking area via the Yellow Boundary Trail.

Please see the trail and property descriptions and area map on the LCT website:

littletonconservationtrust.org/tws_holding/oak-hill/



LCT Photo Contest



Enter your best photos taken on conservation properties in Littleton in 2018. All entries must be received by end of day on November 5, 2018. Winners will be announced at LCT's Annual Meeting on November 16, 2018. See:

littletonconservationtrust.org/lct-photo-contest/ ■

Littleton Little Town Tree Hunt Returns!!

Last year's wildly popular Tree Hunt on 14 Conservation Lands for naturally growing trees decorated by local community sponsors has returned thanks to organizers **Lynne Bourque** and **Alicia MacDonald**. Photos from last year's fall event are



shown to the left. Participants have the rest of the year to find all specially decorated trees and document their discovery with a selfie. Full rules and details can be found here:

www.facebook.com/LittletonLittleTownTreeHunt/

Email organizers at littletonlittletowntreehunt@gmail.com ■

Hartwell Property Scavenger Hunt



On Saturday, 10/6, on the Columbus Day Weekend, over 100 eager participants engaged in the LCT's first nature-oriented Scavenger Hunt at the Hartwell Preserve. Participants collected natural objects, answered

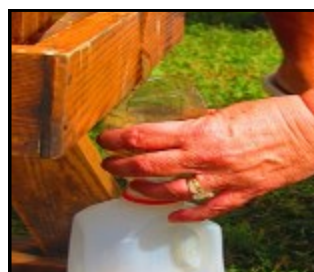
riddles, and snapped selfies of required items as they roamed over the conservation land. Organizers included **Lori Pelrine, Melinda Hobausz, Kathy Stevens, and Daedra Jones**. On right is demoed LCT's new fashion swag - a zippered backpack with LCT logo. All participants received one. ■



Charles and Debbie Auger, who operate and lease the Nagog Hill Farm orchard from the town donated 4 large boxes of McIntosh and Ginger Gold apples to LCT, as they have done for many years, so children and adults alike could experience making their own hand pressed cider from fresh local apples. Adjacent photos show children dropping cut apples into the mash hopper, while another rotates the grinding wheel. The slotted wooden pail of apple mash is pressed downward with an interior wooden disk driven by a vertical screw action manually powered by horizontally rotating a long wooden handle using child labor. Strained cider flows by gravity into a wooden frame which then drains into containers for sampling.

Thanks to the LCT Country Fair Volunteers: **Sam Bell, Kayla Blair, Richard Buckles, Rick Findlay, Andrew Halloran, Daedra Jones, Scott Lewis, Don MacIver, Jim O'Neil, Lori Pelrine, and Andrew Sammarco.** ■

LCT Apple Mashing and Hand Pressing Cider by Children at the Littleton Country Fair



(Photos by **Kayla Blair** and **Andrew Halloran**)

Fall 2018

Littleton
Conservation
Trust



P.O. Box 594
Littleton, MA 01460

**Time to Renew Membership
Consider Gift Memberships!
See page 2**

Non-Profit Organization
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*"Preserving Our Rural Landscape"
for over 50 Years*

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LCT Annual Meeting (6:30-6:45 pm)

***Eyes On Owls: Who is Watching You?
Live Owl Program (7:00-8:00 pm)***

***Friday - 11/16/2018
Littleton HS Performance Center***



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

The Book Corner *by Kathy Stevens* *LCT donated books can be found at the Reuben Hoar Library*

Greywater Green Landscape

by Laura Allen

Greywater Green Landscape is a how-to book about creating a system to use the "greywater" from your household to irrigate your yard and garden. Greywater is the water from sinks, showers and laundry that isn't good enough to re-use in the house, but works great for watering needs outdoors when done right. It's a terrific water saving method because you are saving groundwater, like a rain barrel or water catchment system saves and uses rainwater.

The first part of the book tells you everything you need to know to help you decide what kind of greywater system could work for you, like calculating your water flow rates, understanding your soil structure and plant types for maximum effect, what cleaning products are best to use and what plumbing codes and regulations you need to know for your system setup.

Part 2 sets out the specifics of how to build and maintain the various systems ('laundry-to-landscape', gravity-flow, pumped and manufactured, and others). Diagrams, photos and drawings complement the detailed technical explanations, offering a comprehensive view of the possibilities of how the system will function, as well as how beautiful your yard and garden can look re-using the water that normally just goes down your drains. ■

The Encyclopedia of Animal Predators

by Janet Vorwald Dohner

The Encyclopedia of Animal Predators is a comprehensive reference book that includes dozens of different animals of prey. In addition to examining their traits and behaviors, it is a guide to identifying their tracks and signs of habitation that gives domesticated animal owners information on how to protect their livestock, poultry and pets. The author's purpose in doing so is a dedication to the idea that with the right knowledge and understanding, we can learn to live in better harmony with predators and thereby coexist with a healthy, functioning ecosystem that they help maintain.

Dohner starts with a brief history of the conservation and preservation movements that grew in reaction to the harm done to wildlife due to early beliefs that predators were forces of destruction that should be hunted and destroyed. She then gives the reader a close and informative look at 15 different categories of predators and several members of each, including canines, felines, bears, weasels, rats, birds of prey, turtles, snakes and many others. Finally, she sets out specifics on various nonlethal methods of prevention and protection from predator attacks at home, farm and ranch. This book is a good resource for a school research project, general study of these animals, and as a guide for anyone with pets or livestock seeking to keep them safe and to live more harmoniously with our fellow creatures. ■