

Newsletter Fall 2020

STM Vote Needed for Purchasing Browns' Woods

>> You Are Needed at Special Town Meeting <<

Saturday, October 17th, 2020, Alumni Field — 9 AM

Please vote to purchase Browns' Woods, Article 8

Approve CPC recommendation to spend up to \$480,000 of designated CPC funding to supplement already secured MVP grant of \$763,050

For full details see svtweb.org/brownswoods

Rick Findlay's testimonial, photos, and map on page 5 Rick is the LCT lead to acquire this open space corridor

Littleton Awarded \$763,050 State MVP Grant to Help acquire Browns' Woods at STM

On September 15, the State announced the latest round of Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grants, including a large \$763,000 award to the Town of Littleton for land purchase and invasive species control on a 23.67-acre wooded property on the southern end of Long Lake (a.k.a. Long Pond). Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) and Littleton Conservation Trust (LCT) are working with the Town of Littleton on acquisition of the property at 119 Tahattawan Road, known as Browns' Woods. It serves as an important open space link between NEFF's Prouty Woods conservation land and the Littleton Town Forest. Additionally, it plays a major role in protecting the headwaters feeding into Long Lake, preventing pollution, sedimentation, and flooding. That helps protect the town's previous investments ensuring Long Lake water quality.

On October 17th, Littleton Special Town Meeting (STM) will vote on the allocation of up to \$480,000 from the dedicated Community Preservation funds to meet the \$1,200,000 land purchase price. SVT will hold a conservation easement (CR) on the property. SVT and LCT will assist with outreach and additional fundraising to cover the additional cost to manage the land as required by the CR. This is only the third time, that a MVP Action Grant was awarded for funding a municipal land acquisition project supported with land trust assistance. Littleton has been fortunate to receive a significantly large state grant to help acquire the Browns' Woods property

Amy Green, Conservation Commission Coordinator/Agent wrote and coordinated the grant proposal with assistance from SVT and LCT. SVT's Christa Collins and her colleagues provided critical technical and logistical support, wrote grant sections, and provided funding to complete the needed appraisal. LCT also assisted with the grant proposal, with Rick Findlay taking a strong lead and advocating a compelling vision. Selectman Chase Gerbig championed

(Continue to "MVP Grant" on page 5)

Annual Meeting ~"Nature's Best Hope"~ 11/19

LCT Annual Meeting at 6:30 pm

"Nature's Best Hope" at 7:00 pm Presentation and Discussion via Zoom

This year's Annual Meeting will be conducted remotely using the Zoom application. It will be followed by the Dr. Ed Bell Educational Forum, which will focus on the ideas and themes presented by University of Delaware Professor Douglas W. Tallamy, ever



popular author of the ground-breaking book "Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants" and the just released this year, "Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard". Participants will be directed to Professor Tallamy's, presentation recently hosted by Grow Native Massachusetts, found at *grownativemass/Great-Resources/experts-videos/Natures-Best-Hope*. (see related article "Helping the Environment Can Start in Your Own Yard" on page 4.) ■



Visit *BatWeek.org* online and explore all the benefits these marvelous flying mammals provide from pollinating our food crops to devouring harmful insects. Learn about our seven local bats. ■

Inside this Issue:

- P1 Special Town Meeting, 10/17, to Acquire Browns' Woods
- P1 Littleton Awarded \$763,050 State MVP Grant
- P1 LCT Annual Meeting, 11/19, at 6:30 pm/ Presentation 7 pm
- P2 Nature Rx— Nature Contact Reduces Stress Hormones
- P3 LCT Membership: Renewals, New, and Gift Memberships
- P3 LCT Awarded Capacity Building Grant from FWHA
- P3 Littleton Little Town Tree Hunt Returns Family Event
- P4 Helping the Environment in Your Own Backyard
- P4 BSA Scouts Benefit Town Conservation Lands
- P5 Rick Findlay on Browns' Woods, Another Opportunity
- P6 Hiking Challenge and Littleton Trails' Wall of Fame



LCT Board of Trustees October 2020

Sam Bell

508 Great Road 978-486-9278

Bill Brown

7 Old Orchard Lane 978-486-3303

Katie Carruth

58 Goldsmith St 978-394-8660

Rick Findlay

Vice President

46 Beaver Brook Rd 978-486-4031

Andrew Halloran

16A Oak Hill Rd 774-364-0334

Daedra Jones

Treasurer

333 Lost Lake Drive 978-448-0320

Groton

Donald MacIver

President

43 Foster Street 978-952-2706

Dustin Neild

Secretary

7 Lake Shore Drive 978-486-4507

Christine Nordhaus

43 Starr Hill Rd 978-486-4356

Jim O'Neil

Director of Land Stewardship

63 Great Road 978-486-3642

Kathy Stevens

46 Shaker Lane 978-486-8847

Steven Sussman

32 Lake Warren Dr 978-486-9630

Elizabeth Leaver Copy Editor Melinda Hobausz Layout Editor Scott Lewis Webmaster

Karen O'Neil Facebook Administrator Jim O'Neil Trail Crew Coordinator

Judith Pickett Counsel

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

Littleton Conservation Trust Contacts

- 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 and updated 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/

Nature Rx— 20 Minute Nature Contact Significantly Reduces Stress Hormones

A recent University of Michigan medical study reveals that just 20–30 minutes of contact with nature significantly lowers the stress hormone cortisol. This effect is equally effective whether walking or just sitting in a special spot viewing scenic natural surroundings. The value of "being in nature" has been known anecdotally and is incorporated in some ancient Asian practices, such as "forest bathing" or "nature bathing". (see www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/04/190404074915.htm for article at ScienceDaily)

LCT, recognizing the public's pent-up demand to get outdoors for well being and exploration during these challenging times, created the Hike 20 in 2020 Challenge. LCT's new program helps disperse a sudden increase in outdoor hiking with its increased impact and congestion on just the best known trails while simultaneously promoting exploration of some of the town's lesser known scenic trails. (see page 6 for related articles "Hiking Challenge is Huge Success!" and "Hike 20 in 2020 Wall of Fame")

To enhance the experience of living "in the moment" in scenic natural surroundings, taking respite in solitude, or just taking a rest from walking outdoors, LCT was delighted to partner with Eagle Scout candidate Stephanie Mullen and her BSA Troop 19 to install outdoor benches on various conservation lands. (see page 4 for related article "Ten Benches for Seven Conservation Lands"). Keep Calm and Take Respite in Nature!

LCT Benefits as a Member of Freedom's Way Heritage Association, Inc.

Freedom's Way National Heritage Area (FWNHA) is managed by Freedom's Way Heritage Association, Inc. (FWHA), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that works in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) to promote the regional identity of 45 communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. LCT has received grant funding for engaging the public to promote the area's Nature, Culture, and History.

The FWNHA geography is an area extending westward from Boston and reaching across central Massachusetts and continuing upward into southern New Hampshire. It binds together some 45 communities joined by their common revolutionary history and their natural and cultural sense of place. The National Park Service supports the FWNHA, primarily through the Minuteman National Park. Massachusetts has five National Heritage areas; the U.S. has a total of 55 such special areas. (See www.freedomsway.org for more details.)

Page 2 Littleton Conservation

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

Littleton Conservation Trust Membership Form — Fall 2020

□ New	□ Renewal □ Gift Mer	nbership D	Date:/
		,	esignates tax deduction year)
Please provide an email a	address to receive notification of upc	oming walks and conservation-r	related events.
Checks should be made o	out to the "Littleton Conservation Tru	st " or just "LCT."	
□ Individual: \$25	□ Family: \$40		
□ Friend: \$ 100	□ Supporter: \$250	Please send form to:	100
	□ Benefactor: \$1,000	Daedra Jones, Treasurer	
□ Patron: \$500	. ,		
□ Patron: \$500 □ Other: \$	· ,	Littleton Conservation Trus	st Silver
□ Other: \$	· ,		st

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

□ Please send me information on preserving my

own land.

As an all-volunteer nonprofit, the Littleton Conservation Trust puts every dollar contributed toward 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 newsletter is published, so this is the time of year to renew. It's also a great time of year to gift others with membership for the holidays.

Please help us take care of the many protected lands in Littleton so that we and future generations can continue to enjoy the outdoors. 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.

Protecting Your Legacy: A Massachusetts Landowners Guide to **Conservation-Based Estate Planning**



Fundamentals, useful estate planning tools, advice, insights, and case-study stories of successful conservation-oriented estate planning is available online here: masswoods.org/sites/masswoods.org/ files/pdf-doc-ppt/Protecting-Your-Legacy.pdf =

LCT Awarded \$1,500 Capacity Building Grant from FWHA

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted LCT, including limiting the capability to engage the public through communications, such as producing newsletters. Previously the newsletter had been produced using computers and printers, along with specialty publishing software, at a local library, which now is not available. Additional other work has been limited by lack of accessibility to scanning equipment and high volume printers. FWHA graciously granted LCT a capacity building grant to remedy that situation. The grant will be used for purchasing a dedicated laptop, high volume printer/ scanner (which will produce trail maps as well), printing supplies, and a one year's license for Zoom to engage the public online. Funding from FWHA is provided by the National Park Service.

Littleton Little Town Tree Hunt Returns for Fourth Year - Join the Fun!

Littleton's own scavenger hunt for decorated trees is almost here! Now approaching its fourth year, the Littleton Tree Hunt has become a cherished holidaytime tradition, inviting residents of all ages to search conservation lands all around town for cute and cleverly decorated trees. The trees are decorated



and maintained by local stewards including various town businesses and organizations.

Organizers Lynne Bourque and Alicia MacDonald encourage participants to see how many trees they can find and to document their discoveries with posted photos and selfies.

See www.facebook.com/LittletonLittleTownTreeHunt.

For additional information, email the organizers at littletontowntreehunt@gmail.com.

Helping the Environment Can Start in Your Own Yard

By Kathy Stevens

Many people want to do their part to help preserve our natural world but aren't sure what can they do to make a difference. A simple but effective way is to help bees, other pollinators, and insects thrive in our yards by shrinking our lawns, and growing more native flowers, bushes, and trees to support them. Having conservation lands around us helps, but we need to create yards that act as connecting corridors between preserved areas so there are more sources of food and shelter for bees, other insects, and the wildlife that depend on them all the way up the food chain.

Shrinking grass lawns is ecologically helpful. It can reduce the use of chemicals and water, while also cutting down on lawnmower pollution and maintenance. Creating more space for native plants by eliminating grass lawns saves homeowners time and money, and gives them the joy of seeing more butterflies, bees and birds in their yards.

It is critical to help pollinating insects thrive because they pollinate 87% of all plants and 90% of flowering plants, making the insects a primary means by which food is made for all animals, including humans. In fact, this need has recently prompted the state of Minnesota to allocate nearly a million dollars in incentives for people to transform their lawns into bee-friendly places by adding wildflowers, clover, and native grasses. In fact, simply overseeding your lawn with some clover can make a difference.

Why use native flowers, bushes and trees? Native species are the only ones that can provide the right kind of food and shelter for native wildlife to thrive and maintain our ecosystem. Nonnative (also called alien or introduced species) don't provide the right bio-available resources for wildlife, for example, native berries have a high fat content that can help provide energy for migrating birds. In addition, native species grow well and are easier to maintain. Wildlife benefits, but so do people.

You can help! Even replacing a small section of lawn with some native flowers, bushes and/or trees, or adding some native plants to your garden beds will be beneficial. Here are a few examples of natives to consider (see resource links below for more): oak, maples, birches, native willow, and cherry trees; elderberry, high bush blueberry, serviceberry, and chokeberry bushes; goldenrod, asters, milkweed, and evening primrose flowers.

In addition to using native plants, cutting down on outdoor nighttime lighting can be helpful. Nighttime lighting can be harmful to insects. For example, artificial light can make it hard for some insects to find mates and can also interfere with the sense of direction in some insects. By adding timers and/or motion sensors so that the lights aren't on all night, you can save moths and other insects that are critical to the food chain. It will also save you on electricity costs.

Resources that can help you identify more plants that are native to this area can be found at nwf.org/nativeplantfinder and www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds. Also, the book Nature's Best Hope by Douglas Tallamy of the University of Delaware gives an excellent understanding and additional resources about how this kind of land stewardship can make a real difference.

BSA Scout Projects Benefit Littleton Conservation Lands



Littleton BSA Scout Troop 19 is all for girls ages 11-17 and follows the traditional Boy Scout program. Four members, Hannah Örton, Mia Carelli, Stephanie Mullen, and





Katelyn Boyer, have completed their Eagle Scout projects and intend to be amongst the first-in-the-nation group of girls to be awarded the coveted Eagle Scout rank at the Boy Scouts of America's 111th Anniversary next February. For more information, see www.facebook.com/Troop19Littleton/ or email the troop's Scoutmaster Gwen Carelli at gwencarelli@gmail.com.

Bumblebee Park Pollinator Project — Mia Carelli



planted three pollinator gardens at Bumblebee Park. In the last few years, the population of native pollinators has been dwindling, with many species being added to the endangered list. This inspired me to build gardens that offer both shelter and sustenance—the flowers provide the pollinators with nectar, the garden location provides them

with a habitat. Through this process, I hoped to encourage native pollinators to return to the area, as well as help bolster population size.

There were many factors to consider. The first factor was ease of maintenance—I didn't want the gardens to need replanting or trimming every year. Taking this into consideration, I decided to use perennials as well as reseeding plants to keep the gardens beautiful year after year. I also didn't want to introduce too many plants that weren't native to the area, so I decided to use mostly native plants. For the plants that are not native to the Littleton area, I used plants that were native to the United States. After planting, the plants were watered until they were established enough to survive on their own. Great job!

Water Drainage Hazard Mitigation Project — Hannah Orton

Hannah's project was to plan and lead groups of rannan's project was to plan and lead groups of volunteers to fix several major water hazards in Prouty Woods Loop Trail. The culverts, material, and engineering will ensure that nature lovers and the high school cross country team can run on the trail without having to go through or around the water hazards. She did an incredible job. Hannah is shown with her project mentor and cross country coach, Casey Kaldenberg.



Ten Benches for Seven Conservation Lands— Stephanie Mullen



Many of us hike the conservation lands here in town, and we feel very lucky that there are so many of them. This spring and summer have seen an increase in interest in all of the trails due to the pandemic. At certain points of the trails, there are lovely vistas and outlooks that can usually be viewed from a convenient, if sometimes uncomfortable, rock or log. However, this spring, Stephanie planned and directed the building and placement of benches on Littleton conservation lands. Footsore hikers are now able to sit and enjoy a peaceful moment. Stephanie did a great job!



BSA Scout Troops 19 and 20 meet at the Multi-purpose Room at the Shattuck St Town Administration Building and are chartered through the LELWD.

Troop 20 Littleton, MA

Garlic Mustard Eradication Project — Peter Nordhaus



was the newly elected youth leader of BSA Troop 20 in March when the lockdown started. As Senior Patrol Leader, all of my ideas for the troop were immediately made impossible, so I had to improvise. I knew that many scouts needed to participate in community service as a requirement for rank advancement, so when LCT Trustee Rick Findlay reached out to me, I was more than happy to offer the service of 20 adolescents with a healthy hatred of garlic mustard.

I organized a socially distanced Community Service Project where the troop and their families pulled garlic mustard, an invasive plant that's difficult to eradicate, all around town. I organized the project because the philosophy of scouting is service-oriented, and pulling garlic mustard can be done in a mask, without gathering into large ğroups and risking infection.

All in all, we pulled more than 500 pounds of the stuff! Everyone pitched in. Thank you Peter, BSA Troop 20, and their families!

Browns' Woods, Another Opportunity — By Rick Findlay

As I approach a half century of life in Littleton I look back at my work with the Conservation Trust on land preservation as one of my life's most rewarding efforts. Despite that effort, Littleton significantly lags behind surrounding towns in land preserved and ranks 6 out of 351 towns/cities for the most amount of newly developed land in the state (Mass Audubon's "Losing Ground 2020" study). Grim though the numbers are, they do not define us. Nor is it time to quit, but to push forward with every opportunity.

On October 17th, at Special Town Meeting, we can vote to provide funding for the purchase of Browns' Woods. It is a project that I have been focused on for many years, working with a very patient Brown family to preserve a beautiful forest while enabling trail access to the commuter rail station.

Similar to Nashoba Woodlands that brought together multiple land acquisitions over time, Browns' Woods will provide connectivity to hundreds of acres of protected land on Long Lake to the north and hundreds more to the south. Similarly, the vision of two commuter bike trails serving both sides of the Long Lake Community, is finally coming together, link by link. With your vote, this popular element of the Littleton Master Plan will be brought closer to fruition.

In addition, the purchase will further other goals of the Master Plan, including mitigation of the impacts of climate change on natural resources and water supply through the conservation of open space corridors and riparian buffers. We all love Long Lake, but must appreciate its fragile nature. A network of beautiful wetlands on the property drain to the lake, and development of this property would not be in our interest.

Browns' Woods will also become a destination site with old foundations that speak to its history. Don't let this opportunity slip by. Come to Special Town Meeting on Saturday October 17th, 9AM, at Alumni Field, and vote your approval for spending Community Preservation Funds to acquire Browns' Woods.

Rick Findlay, LCT VP ■



Upland woods seen in the interior of Browns' Woods which can accommodate walking trails and provide good habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

Bordering grassy field adjoining wooded inland. This land provides a diversity of habitats with a good edge effect which is often attractive to wildlife.





Wooded floodplain with absorbent wetland plants that can hold back storm waters and slowly release them over time. It also retains sediments and pollutants so they do not enter Long Lake.



Black outline is the watershed rim like a rim on a funnel with all runoff water leading to the lowest elevation, here Long Lake. The runoff from the lower left corner, extends to Long Lake, passing by the black dot, representing Browns' Woods spanning between Harwood Ave (thin black line) on the south and Tahattawan Road (red and white dash line) on the north.

("MVP Grant" continued from page 1)

the MVP proposal. Selectmen Joe Knox and Paul Glavey additionally provided strong support for the land acquisition.

What problems will it solve?

The MVP Action Grants were set up to provide financial resources to towns to address climate change impacts such as from extreme weather, inland flooding and severe heat. The grant program emphasizes the use of Nature Based Solutions, which rely on natural processes to solve problems associated with the built landscape.

The Town's MVP Plan, which was approved by the State in January 2019, identified key climate change hazards including loss of trees and their cooling effect, increased erosion from intense rain events, water quality impacts from runoff and low water levels and invasive species. The Town's MVP plan recommendations also included protection of more contiguous open space. The Browns' Woods acquisition would benefit all of these goals.

Mass Audubon's recently released "The Value of Nature" publication which highlights the value of protecting these lands. Forests capture about 7% of Massachusetts annual carbon emissions, and the average acre stores about 103 tons of carbon. The wetlands provide a significant amount of carbon capture and storage and, as Mass Audubon points out, provide important resiliency functions by storing flood waters and slowly releases it, allowing for groundwater recharge and drought resilience.

The grant includes money for wetlands conservation and removal of the invasive weed, *Phragmites* (a.k.a. Common Reed). This restoration work will reduce the risk of flooding and will improve water quality and habitat. The protection of the onsite wetlands and the restoration of the *Phragmites* stand represent a Nature Based Solution to flooding and increased severe weather events. Likewise, the protection of the upland forest will help with enhanced carbon sequestration, better groundwater quality, reduced stormwater runoff, and provide cooling as temperatures increase. See *svtweb.org/brownswoods* for more details.

Fall 2020

Littleton

Conservation Trust



P.O. Box 594



"Preserving Our Rural Landscape"

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage Paid

Postal Patron

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

"Nature's Best Hope"
By Doug Tallamy (7:00–9:00 pm)
Video presentation and short discussion



Thursday - 11/19/2020 Remote by Zoom See LCT webpage for details





Hiking Challenge is a Huge Success!

The ongoing pandemic has made 2020 particularly difficult for everyone. Given the challenges this year has presented, many people have hit the trails for some welcome relief.

In April, LCT established the Hike 20 in 2020 – Littleton Trails Hiking Challenge. Hikers of all ages were encouraged to hike any 20 trails from a list of 28. One hundred ninety people have enrolled thus far. Sixty people ranging in age from three to eighty have finished the challenge, some completing all 28 trails. In addition to being recognized on the Littleton Trails' Wall of Fame Facebook page, finishers received a Hike Littleton Trails patch.

It's not too late to join in. Fall is the perfect time of year to get out on the trails. Now that the cooler weather is here, why not take the challenge?

Please go to the LCT website to enroll. littletonconservationtrust.org/littleton-trails-hiking-challenge/



The goals of the Littleton Conservation Trust along with the Littleton Conservation Commission are to protect, maintain, and improve our open spaces and provide hikers with safe trails into the future. We encourage you to continue exploring, and thank you for your much appreciated support of Littleton's trails.

Hike 20 in 2020 Hiking Challenge Wall of Fame

Congratulations to everyone listed below who has completed the Littleton Trails Hike 20 in 2020 Hiking Challenge. Those listed first completed the challenge earliest.

Rick Hetz ~ Fran Meyers ~ Scali Green ~ Lorelai Marini ~ Zora Marini ~ Meera Gill ~ Sarah Donovan ~ Mark Hollinger ~ Dave Neary ~ Betsy Bohling ~ Britt Sullivan ~ Bruce Sullivan ~ Miles Sullivan ~ Haley Sullivan ~ Linda Holcombe ~ John Harder ~ Jennifer Thomas ~ Wendy Isaac ~ Penny Isaac ~ Yana Dimitrova ~ Kremena Dimitrova ~ Martin Parvanov ~ Daniel Parvanov ~ Heidi Murphy ~ Brian Murphy ~ Lori Fesko Pelrine ~ Kathie Lee ~ Olivia Rosenblum ~ Kimberly Donlon ~ Kevin Donlon ~ Amanda Carotenuto ~ Lia Pines ~ Will Pines ~ Callie Pines ~ Emily Pines ~ Beth Pines ~ Anne Fornicola ~ Eric Hagberg ~ John Hagberg ~ Katrina Hagberg ~ Lauren Hagberg ~ Jen Doerfler ~ Wendy Doerfler ~ Elaine Santelmann ~ Tom Zuppa ~

Henry Pierce ~ Marie Pierce ~

Ben Pierce ~ Richelle Dupont ~

Kevin O'Connor ~ Anne Neary