

# Littleton Conservation Trust

Newsletter

Fall 2021

## Change in Leadership



After more than 20 years of dedicated service to the Littleton Conservation Trust, President Don MacIver, a lover of open space, kayaking, and land protection, is stepping down from the Board of Trustees when his term ends later this year.

Don first joined the LCT in 1997, becoming president in 1998. Don brought his experience and expertise in a number of environmental and educational fields to the LCT board. In collaboration with the Town of Littleton and other conservation groups, Don led the LCT in numerous successful land preservation projects, including the Cobb, Yapp, Joyce Williams, Prouty Woods, and Smith properties.

Among other important achievements, Don's dedicated efforts to explore the Native American history and significance of the Sarah Doublet Forest led to the LCT being awarded a grant for the preservation of Native American Ceremonial Stone Landscapes from Freedom's Way National Heritage Association (funded through the National Park Service).

Please join the Board of Trustees and all of Littleton's nature lovers in extending our deepest gratitude to Don for his years of dedication to the LCT's mission of land preservation and environmental education.



## Things to Know About Our Open Spaces

Sometimes it is important to go back to the basics. The Littleton Conservation Trust and the Littleton Conservation Commission, along with other organizations, work to preserve and maintain open spaces locally. The organizations also work with others to achieve similar goals around the region.

The Littleton Conservation Trust is a nonprofit organization created to acquire and maintain open spaces in Littleton. We currently have over 300 acres that we protect. Our trail crew also works with the Town of Littleton to help maintain other open spaces in town. The Littleton Conservation Commission is a part of the town government. Among its other responsibilities, it works to administer the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and also helps maintain conservation lands that the town owns.

### What can people do on conservation lands in town?

In general, from sunrise to sunset, you can walk, bicycle, take photographs, sled, fish, walk your leashed/controlled dog, picnic, cross-country ski, plein air paint, and snowshoe. Horseback riding is only allowed on town-owned lands. To find out about activities allowed at specific properties, please visit the following webpage and/or purchase a trail guide:

<https://littletonconservationtrust.org/trail-guide/>

## What is not permitted on conservation properties?

- No motorized vehicles
- No horseback riding on LCT properties
- No harm to plants, rocks, signs, or walls
- No hunting on Town or LCT lands (for other lands, check with property owner)
- No overnight camping without permission
- No creating new trails without permission
- No littering

(See "Things to Know" on page 4)

## Inside This Issue

- P1 *Change in Leadership*
- P1 *Things to Know About Our Open Spaces*
- P2 *Fifth Annual Littleton Little Town Tree Hunt!*
- P3 *Where Will the Turtles Go?*
- P4 *(cont.) Things to Know About Our Open Spaces*
- P4 *What's Happening on Littleton's Trails?*
- P5 *Invasive Aliens: Get Ready for the Weed Warriors*
- P6 *Book Reviews*



**LCT  
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Fall 2021**

- Sam Bell  
508 Great Road 978-486-9278
- Rick Findlay  
Vice President  
46 Beaver Brook Rd. 978-486-4031
- Chase Gerbig  
1 Oak Ridge Rd. 585-704-8167
- Andrew Halloran  
16A Oak Hill Rd. 774-364-0334
- Margaret Hensel  
P.O. Box 353 518-860-8923
- Melinda Hobausz  
167 Hartwell Ave. 978-257-0142
- Dustin Neild  
Secretary  
17 Lake Shore Drive 978-902-4417
- Christine Nordhaus  
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43 Starr Hill Rd. 978-621-1779
- Kathy Stevens  
46 Shaker Lane 978-486-8847

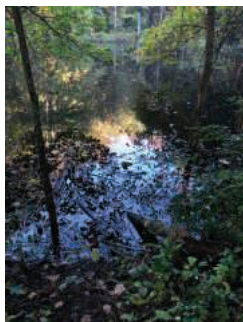
**Volunteers**

- Elizabeth Leaver Editorial Consultation  
Scott Lewis Webmaster  
Karen O'Neil Facebook Administrator  
Jim O'Neil Trail Crew Coordinator  
Natalia Slattery Design and Production

**Online**

- Website:**  
[LittletonConservationTrust.org](http://LittletonConservationTrust.org)  
**Trail Maps:**  
[LittletonConservationTrust.org/trail-guide](http://LittletonConservationTrust.org/trail-guide)  
**Facebook:**  
[facebook.com/LittletonConservationTrust](https://facebook.com/LittletonConservationTrust)

**Can You Guess Where This Photo Was Taken?**  
(Look for the answer at the bottom of page 5.)



The Littleton Conservation Trust (LCT), distinct from the Town's Conservation Commission, is a private land trust that was formed in 1962 to promote Littleton's rural character; to preserve its water, plant, and wildlife resources, and 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, 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](mailto: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 [facebook.com/groups/639049749490984](https://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 [LittletonConservationTrust.org/contact-us/subscribe/](http://LittletonConservationTrust.org/contact-us/subscribe/)

**Join the Board: Help Preserve and Create Conservation Properties**

The LCT board of trustees is seeking new members. If you are a Littleton resident with a desire to help preserve conservation lands and educate the public about environmental issues, we'd like to hear from you. We are looking for candidates who want to work in a cooperative atmosphere, are energized by our mission, and are committed to taking action. Please contact Kathy Stevens at [kstevens@littletonconservationtrust.org](mailto:kstevens@littletonconservationtrust.org) if you'd like to learn more about joining us.

**UPCOMING**

**Activities (A), Walks (W), Outdoor Events (O)**

Date	Time	Event Description
11/17	6:30–8:45 p.m.	(A-virtual) LCT Annual Business Meeting; followed by a video viewing and talk (see last page for details).
Delayed	N/A	(O) Littleton Rock Project - Labyrinth at Castle in the Trees. This project has been pushed back a bit. Geralyn Miller, the project designer, reports that Cataldo's is donating the labor to install the project.
Ongoing	Dawn to Dusk	(W) The hiking challenge is extended through 2021. Go to the website and join in the fun.

**Fifth Annual Littleton Little Town Tree Hunt!**

Organizers Lynne Bourque and Alicia MacDonald have announced that this fun event will be held from Friday, November 26, 2021 through Saturday, January 1, 2022. With the help of local organizations and businesses, a dozen or so individual trees will be decorated for tree hunters to find within the conservation areas in town. Find all of them (documented by photos with you and the trees) and be entered to win one of ten prize packages. This is a fun, free, outdoor family event—so grab some friends, trek through the forests, and find some trees! A list of areas with trees to find, as well as other information, is available on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LittletonLittleTownTreeHunt> or by email: [LittletonLittleTownTreeHunt@gmail.com](mailto:LittletonLittleTownTreeHunt@gmail.com).



# Littleton Conservation Trust Membership and Donation Form — Fall 2021

New     Renewal     Gift Membership     Donation

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Your 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."

For donations under \$1000, we also accept credit card payments online at: [littletonconservationtrust.org/donate](http://littletonconservationtrust.org/donate)

- |                                                                                |                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <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: \$1000 |
| <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:

Christine Nordhaus, Treasurer  
Littleton Conservation Trust  
PO Box 594  
Littleton, MA 01460



## Where Will the Turtles Go?

Editorial by Jim O'Neil

Each year in May, after the spring sunshine has turned the frozen earth into a warm blanket, a spectacular event occurs. Female snapping turtles (*turtle photos right and below right, courtesy of Anne Neary*) travel distances of five hundred feet or more into my yard to lay their eggs in my garden. This may not seem far, but to a turtle, it is quite a hike.



I live on the edge of a wetland area that is home to many wild creatures. There are birds that one sees more frequently, such as cardinals, jays, robins, chickadees, bluebirds, hawks, and male downy woodpeckers (*photo left, courtesy of Heidi Murphy*). There are also a few not-so-common species such as bald eagles, snowy owls, and great horned owls. It has occasionally been my good fortune to encounter coyotes. And there is nothing as wonderful as the sight of a doe and her fawn browsing at field's edge. These occurrences have recently become almost commonplace.



But, what of the turtles? They are not very pretty, actually considered to be ugly by most. They are mean-spirited when they encounter people. They walk funny and smell kind of bad. However, they are one of our last links to prehistoric times. They have a primal instinct for survival. These animals wage a continuous battle to remain on their land.

Human activity has destroyed many natural habitats. What will happen to the turtles when yet another wilderness area is torn

up by a developer's machines? Perhaps they will disappear, declared extinct, just as 22 species of wildlife have been in 2021!

Drastic alterations to the land's structure cannot be beneficial to these creatures. Can lawn-greening chemicals and pesticides be anything but deadly to the wetland habitat? Can increased salt runoffs and septic leaching be a healthful situation to animals and humans alike? We all know these to be negative influences, yet we succumb to the misguided lure of progress.

Will our children and grandchildren continue to experience the grandeur of nature? Or will our legacy simple be memories of a wondrous spectacle? How long will it be before we see these wonders no more?

Development must be strictly monitored if we are to maintain a balance with nature. Wild creatures did not invite us to come onto their land. We must not force them to leave. No one among us has the right to destroy natural habitats. We all have a moral responsibility to find ways to share our lives with nature's gifts.

What are the moral solutions? Conservationists must be vigilant in their efforts to protect this valuable part of life's structure. We must strictly enforce existing laws and regulations regarding conservation and wetland protection. In addition, extensive planning, cluster zoning to preserve open space, and public awareness are some of the solutions.

In Littleton, we are experiencing continuous development pressure. We can make a difference with our careful consideration of all the development projects. What are the benefits? What are the costs? With our votes, we can make our priorities known. The responsibility lies at our door. The choice is ours to make. Whatever course we choose, we will have to live with ... or live without, forever.

Where will the turtles go?



(“Things to Know” continued from page 1)

### Being good neighbors

Many of us would probably be delighted to have a conservation property as a “neighbor.” But being good neighbors takes a bit of knowledge on the part of home owners and those who are maintaining the conservation properties.

### Where are the property lines?

It really is important to know your property lines so that you do not encroach upon conservation land with your activities. Look for the property markers and consult the documentation that you were given when you purchased your property. You can access Assessor Maps at <https://www.littletonma.org/assessor/pages/assessor-maps-2021>. But if you aren't sure where the property lines are, you may want to get your property surveyed by a licensed surveyor.

### Where am I supposed to put all my leaves and twigs?

As we maintain our yards, we generate piles of leaves, grass cuttings, and twigs or branches from trees. The pile right at the edge of your property usually grows and then may start creeping into conservation property. Even though these are natural materials, they do not decompose easily and they may change the habitat of the conservation property and prevent plants from growing properly. If you have yard waste that you can't compost, you can

take leaves and grass clippings to the Littleton Transfer Station (if you have a sticker). You don't even have to put the leaves and grass in compostable bags!

### What about trees on the property line?

As with all trees that overhang your property line, you can trim branches to your property line. However, if you are concerned about a tree that may fall from a conservation property onto your property, please contact the Littleton Conservation Trust or the Littleton Conservation Commission (see *below*).

### What does an encroachment mean?

Encroachment means that either you, or the conservation property, have intruded on land that doesn't belong to you. As mentioned earlier, you are not allowed to dispose of yard waste over the property line. If you encroach on conservation property, you will be contacted by either the Town or LCT so that the situation can be resolved. Conversely, you may contact the Town or LCT if you feel that there is some encroachment on your property.

### Need more information?

If you have concerns about activities on or concerning conservation properties, please write to the Littleton Conservation Trust at <https://littletonconservationtrust.org/contact-us/> and/or call the Littleton Conservation Commission at (978) 540-2428.

## What's Happening on Littleton's Trails?

by Jim O'Neil

The trails that we all walk with our dogs, friends, and family do not maintain themselves. The Littleton Trail Crew, a group of local volunteers, as well as several Eagle Scout candidates have, as in past years, been maintaining and improving the trails.

Many people who drive by the “Littleton Town Forest” sign on Harwood Ave. barely give this area a thought other than “it looks like a swamp.” Don't be fooled by first impressions. Beyond that sign is a beautifully diverse landscape. There are large white pines surrounded by some wet and rocky terrain, as well as a good portion of dry ground, mature oak trees with a scrubby understory, and several pockets of hemlocks.

In December of 2017, Rick Findlay and I began exploring the forest. This 80-acre landscape had been neglected since it was acquired by the Town of Littleton in the 1960s from the Morrison, Glavey, Brown, Bowers, Healey, Adams, Hager, and Caldwell families. Over the past fifty years, it has mostly been explored by Scout troops.

This year, all that has changed. Despite the pandemic and extreme heat and record setting rainfall this summer, work on Littleton's conservation trails has been going strong.

Eagle Scout candidate Brandon LaVoie supervised the creation of a three-quarter-mile long trail on the western side of the Town Forest that was completed in July. The Trail Crew made the rocky and muddy areas of the trail navigable by constructing two boardwalks.

The Trail Crew has also cleared a new loop trail through the remainder of the Town Forest. In the next year, boardwalks will be built across other wet areas. When completed, the trail will provide hikers with a wonderful new area to explore.



On nearby conservation land at the Herget property and Browns' Woods, new trails have also been started and will be completed in the coming year. A future trail at Healey Corner will provide connectivity to the Sprong Property, Newtown Hill, and the Williams Land. This will create a network of trails on nearly 300 acres of contiguous conservation land.

Other projects of note this year were the installation of a parking area for the Williams Land on Boxborough Road as well as three plank bridges along the trail. Trail Crew volunteers also assisted Sudbury Valley Trustees with trail improvements at the Smith Land on Whitcomb Ave. and at Cloverdale, Eagle Scout candidate Griffen Copp provided a boardwalk on the Great Road side of the property for his project. In November, a 280-foot extension of Cloverdale's main boardwalk is planned. Plans for 2022 include more boardwalks at Town Forest and Hartwell Conservation Land.

All of these trail projects are made possible by dozens of volunteers on the Littleton Trail Crew who spend many hours clearing downed trees and logs from the trails with chain saws, lugging heavy lumber into the forested areas to build boardwalks, and cutting and removing brush with hand tools. Volunteers are always welcome to sign up to work with the trail crew. If you would like to help with future projects, please go to the Littleton Conservation Trust website to volunteer.

<https://littletonconservationtrust.org/get-involved/volunteering/>

If you are unable to perform the tough physical tasks that trail work requires, there are many other areas in which to volunteer. With many areas of our town being developed and new families moving in, our conservation properties play an even more important role in supporting the environment and giving our friends and neighbors places to walk, hike, and observe nature. Please consider volunteering. Your help will make a difference.

## Invasive Aliens: Get Ready for the Weed Warriors

In the LCT Spring 2021 newsletter and many others before, we have reported on efforts to identify and contain invasive flora in Littleton. As you know, it can be difficult to control certain invasive species such as Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolate*), Mile-a-minute Vine (*Persicaria perfoliata*), Porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*), or Black swallow-wort (*Cynanchum louiseae*). LCT plans to continue working with the Littleton Conservation Commission and other Town boards and departments to expand efforts to control invasive species around town. The initial goals are to prioritize properties, figure out how to raise and allocate funds, and establish relationships with industry professionals.

As part of our ongoing effort to alert folks in town to the threat of invasive species and to help them with species identification, we are joining the Weed Warriors, a regional effort launched in July of 2020 sponsored by Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) and the SuAsCo CISMA (Sudbury, Assabet, Concord — Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area).

The CISMA plans to expand the Weed Warrior program this coming spring to incorporate more land management area and more volunteers. The efforts in Littleton will be spearheaded by the Littleton Conservation Trust and the Littleton Conservation Commission working through the SuAsCo CISMA. This expansion will help to unify the SuAsCo Watershed's efforts to control invasive flora in the area and create a network of community leaders and volunteers dedicated to conservation.

The need is clear. Our conservation properties are, in some cases, overrun by invasive weeds that are crowding out beneficial native plants. However, you might be asking what it takes to be a Weed Warrior? Read on to find out...



Weed Warrior training is a great opportunity for people who love being outside, have an aptitude for plant identification, and enjoy collaborating to ensure the health of their community ecosystems.

There are two ways to get involved with the Weed Warrior program. First, a volunteer can become a Certified Weed Warrior. To gain certification, each volunteer must attend an SVT training session on plant identification and learn when to use specific removal treatments. After a volunteer receives certification from SVT, she or he can remove the targeted weed(s) from specific properties. In addition, the Weed Warrior can supervise family members who are willing (or mostly willing) to help.

The second way to participate in the program is to attend individual events where Weed Warriors train groups in the field to correctly identify invasive species and learn the control methods that they can take back to their own properties. This is a meaningful way to connect with the community and make a difference.

In early July of this year, two LCT trustees participated in a group (*photo of some participants above*) training session at Browns' Woods for an enlightening and (not too) laborious morning led by Kristin O'Brien, SVT's coordinator of the Weed Warrior program. This session included identifying species and look-alikes, and a lot of hand and weed-wrench pulling. It is not always easy to get these plants to release their hold on the earth, as you can see from the photo (*left*) of Rick Findlay tackling one such stubborn example. Nevertheless, we all had fun. This was a typical event that we hope Littleton can duplicate in the future. Over time – and with plenty of expanded volunteer power – the program will make an invaluable impact on the health of our home landscape. Lily Zanta, an AmeriCorps trainee at SVT, has offered to help coordinate the adoption of Weed Warriors in the coming year and we look forward to her assistance.

Does becoming a Weed Warrior sound intriguing? Do you want to learn how to contain Massachusetts' worst weed offenders? Then fill out a volunteer application at the following webpage and stay tuned for information in the coming months about sessions to pull individual weed species.

<https://www.svtweb.org/support/volunteer/volunteer-needs/weed-warrior>



Answer to page 2 photo location: Hartwell Family Memorial Preserve

Fall 2021

Littleton  
Conservation  
Trust



P.O. Box 594  
Littleton, MA 01460

**Time to Renew Membership  
Consider Gift Memberships!  
See page 3**

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

## Postal Patron

Littleton, Massachusetts 01460

*"Preserving Our Rural Landscape"  
for nearly 60 Years*

### LCT Annual Meeting - Wednesday - 11/17/2021

Annual meeting (6:30–7:00 p.m.) followed by a viewing and discussion of "Restoring the Little Things that Run the World" by conservationist Doug Tallamy (7:00–8:45 p.m.)

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84220621208?pwd=Um-5JSWIKTGp1UktZaHNZNkNIZ0JPdz09>

or: <https://zoom.us/join> and enter Meeting ID: 842 2062 1208  
Passcode: LCT2021



This newsletter is printed on recycled post-consumer waste.

### The Book Corner by Kathy Stevens

LCT donated books can be found at the Reuben Hoar Library.

#### The Kids' Outdoor Adventure Book: 448 Great Things to Do in Nature Before You Grow Up by Stacy Tornio and Ken Keffer

This book is a guide for getting children outside to learn from nature. Aimed at kids aged 13 and under, the book offers readers season-based choices. It also provides an "adventure scale" from 1–5, so it's easy to pick appropriate activities for your kids. Interspersed throughout the book are challenges, nature projects, destinations to seek out, and even seasonal foods and recipes to try. There are plenty of cool facts, useful tips, and game ideas for everyone to enjoy.



#### Flying Frogs and Walking Fish by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page

This delightful book by a Caldecott-Honor-winning author team is about unusual animals and their means of locomotion. There are dogs that "walk" up trees to catch squirrels and animals that tumble, somersault, or jet-propel themselves to get where they're going, all vividly portrayed in colorful illustrations created with torn and cut paper collage. This picture book is meant for young children to enjoy while learning how some "funny" creatures protect themselves and get where they want to go.



#### Silent Sparks: The Wondrous World of Fireflies by Sara Lewis

Who doesn't delight in seeing the flashing glow of fireflies in the summertime? Did you know fireflies are actually a type of beetle that light up through a chemical reaction? *Silent Sparks* will teach readers about fireflies and other bioluminescent creatures. Sara Lewis, evolutionary ecologist and professor of biology at Tufts University, is still admittedly "enraptured by fireflies" after decades of study. Her sense of wonder about the natural world is evident in her writing, which is engaging and informative for learners of all ages. The book gives a "tour" around the world of fireflies and their luminous lives, including their many different varieties, courtship rituals, potent poisons, and reveals some of their seductive mimics. Unfortunately, fireflies are facing challenges from habitat destruction, light pollution, exploitation of their chemicals, and collection by people for their beautiful glow. Lewis outlines ways people can help, like letting grass grow a little taller, leaving some leaf litter and woody debris in places for the larvae, minimizing the use of outdoor lighting, and reducing pesticide use and using organic products as much as possible. The book also has a field guide to common fireflies of North America, and suggestions for how to conduct your own firefly adventures and explorations!

