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Live Free and Dig

with the Littleton Garden Club

Local conservation

BY MARY BINGMAN

Littleton Garden Club

Our region contains scenic areas like the Connecticut River Byway that goes right through Littleton. We're so fortunate to have natural attractions for both residents and tourists. It helps us to flourish in many ways.

Land conservation is a tool for our future. We can foster economic development by highlighting and protecting our community's natural assets. These resources include its scenic beauty. We still have lovely undeveloped ridge lines and many rural landscapes. Many public recreation opportunities exist on land and in the water. The Ammonoosuc River is one important local resource that we all see regularly. All those plus lands around public and private drinking water wells; they all need strong ongoing protection measures.

Caring for local lands define the legacy we leave behind for future genera-

tions.

In Littleton, we have a vibrant Conservation Commission group to oversee lands we choose to protect.

Recently I had a conversation with a 20-year member of the Commission- Tom Alt, about his conservation experiences.

The Conservation Commission is made up of informed and active volunteers. They hope to ensure proper stewardship done in a way that the original benefactors expected.

I asked about some of their challenges. One involves the efforts to attract tourists while managing conserved areas. Some formerly "local use only" areas now experience record usage by tourists.

Tom mentioned that The Dells, Kilburn Crag, Pine Hill area and the "new" Eaton Town Forest have had social media coverage that has made it easier for them to access those areas.

Another big challenge

involves the balance between protection and the town's active policy of development. There is value in identifying and promoting conservation of undeveloped open space. A recent attempt to develop the Eaton Town Forest area was thwarted by strong opposition by conservation-minded citizens.

I learned how ongoing maintenance occurs in areas like the Crag where I occasionally hike.

For at least 20 years, the group's skilled volunteers did all the maintenance & repairs themselves. They do as much work as possible using "North Country sweat equity!"

Tom said, "That has helped to keep the budget needs low and ensures the job gets done the way we want." He then mentioned the important point of seeking younger volunteers with the same hands-on work ethic & respect for proper stewardship going forward.

North Country resi-

dents who are fortunate owners of larger parcels of undeveloped land can continue to keep the land "natural" and avoid developing it.

Tom mentioned, "The 'Farmer's Final Crop' of fragmented forests & fields into yet another housing development is so well documented now as to be mostly unnoticed by all but the most observant." That left me hoping some of these treasured parcels fall into the hands of stewards like those on the conservation commission in our town.

Profound thanks to the Littleton Conservation Commission for the very important work they do:

Roger Merrill, Val Poulsen, Gardner Kellogg, Tom Alt, Lori Jo Gardner, Joseph Ransmeier, Jeff Merrill and Jim Duranty.

The Littleton Garden Club welcomes new members! For more information about our club or our meetings go to our Web site: <https://www.littletonnhgardenclub.org/>.