

LUCT (Land Use Change Tax) and it's benefit to the Merrimack Community (through the Merrimack Conservation Commission).

LUCT is a tax paid to the Town when undeveloped land under a lower tax rate (current use) becomes developed.

In Merrimack, NH, the Merrimack Conservation Commission (MCC) has received 50% of LUCT funds over the course of many years. These moneys have gone into a fund that the commission can access for small or large projects and for land acquisitions through purchase or donation.

This has proved to be an outstanding tool for achieving our goal. By majority vote, the MCC has approved withdrawals from this account to fund such things as trail bridge projects, the expansion of the Horse Hill Nature Preserve parking lot, ecological surveys and the acquisition of many acres of land to add to our conservation areas (such as the recent expansion of Grater Woods).

The benefit of this arrangement with the Town, without a doubt has allowed the MCC to further its mission to the benefit of the citizens of Merrimack.

Of course, as Merrimack becomes increasingly developed over the years, the amount of land available and susceptible to LUCT has become greatly diminished. This means that the money well is drying up and the MCC will have to look for alternative funding for major future purchases and other maintenance projects on our conserved lands.

I would encourage other conservation commissions to look into a similar arrangement with their towns. This would provide funds to allow for the continued preservation of land in your community, as the LUCT by its nature comes from land that is lost to development.

The sooner the better!

Mike Boisvert, Merrimack Conservation Committee