

Welcome to the Gordon King Life Estate

(Town-owned)

Who is Gordon King?

Gordon King and his family moved to nearby East Leverett in 1951. He was Professor of Arboriculture and Park Management at the Stockbridge School of Agriculture, University of Massachusetts, and led many community groups (recruiting/cajoling others to join him) including: the Leverett Volunteer Fire Department, Camp Anderson (a children's summer camp on Lake Wyola), the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, 4-H, and Boy Scouts. There are still hand-made snowshoes hanging in the homes of the Leverett boys who made them.

How did he use this land?

This area was the King Pasture where the family raised beef cattle until at least 1979. At first a few Christmas Trees were planted on the eastern edge - and then the trees replaced the cattle - and, over time, the Christmas trees gave way to the blueberries you see today.

Gordon used to claim that he had the only divided highway (you can barely see the second track as you come in from Shutesbury Road) and the only covered bridge in Leverett. The covered bridge was built by sons John and Jim. It was named Aughoo after the area in Ireland where Gordon's grandmother was born.

How is this land used now?

In August 2001, Gordon and his son deeded the property to the Leverett Conservation Commission for "the preservation of the Town's natural aesthetic and ecological resources in perpetuity." As a Life Estate, Gordon and Jim reserved the right to continue to use the land for agricultural purposes. Jim continued to care for the Christmas trees and blueberries until his death. While Gordon is no longer able to work the land, we continue to honor the agricultural use of the property.

The Conservation Commission and Leverett Trails Committee volunteers now maintain this property, including the blueberries. They have created and now maintain the trail network. If you would like to help or if you have stories to add, contact info@rattlesnakeguttertrust.org or concom@leverett.ma.us or call the Leverett ConCom 413-548-1022 x3.