The Ebenezer Keyes Conservation Area is a 157-acre property located off Keyes Rd. and Princeton St. in West Gardner. It consists of a mix of woodlands, small ponds, an open sandlot area, a certified vernal pool, access to Parker Pond, and provides watershed protection for the nearby Otter River.

Prior to NCLT acquiring the conservation area, this vacant, partially disturbed land had become a known area for illegal dirt bike and ATV use, fireworks, underage drinking, and drug use. The adjacent tightknit neighborhoods raised concerns about the current uses and objections to all the proposed major developments, wishing to protect their neighborhood from further disturbance.

Funding from CFNCM has allowed NCLT to initiate the transformation of this former neglected property into a safe, clean, and accessible recreation area for residents near and far. To date, a welcoming trailhead has been established at Princeton St. and improved trail access to Parker Pond. Partnering with neighbors and police has reduced the illegal use of the property, including dirt bike and ATV activities.

NCLT is working with the Conway School of Landscape Design to develop a comprehensive management plan to meet the community’s needs.