

President's Message

Dear Members,

As usual, the Conservators have been involved in many projects throughout Newton over the summer months. Here is information on what you can do to help with three of our current issues.

Invasive Plants in Cold Spring Park

Our Invasives Removal Team has been hard at work throughout the spring and summer. Do you know that most of the wooded area of Cold Spring Park has lost its healthy understory? Because invasive buckthorn shrubs have taken over from the tree seedlings that ordinarily would grow in a healthy environment, there are no young trees to take over when the current generation of trees dies. Unless action is taken, there will be no natural succession in that wooded land.

How can we prevent that from happening? Members of the Invasives Committee have identified a section of the woods from which they will methodically remove all of the buckthorn, through a combination of pulling small shrubs and cutting the larger ones. Subsequently, they will monitor the section to remove any regrowth and then will work to encourage the return of tree seedlings.

Webster Woods



PHOTO: JACOB STERN
Mayor Setti Warren tours Webster Woods

The effort to preserve Webster Woods, now owned by Boston College, continues. Mayor Warren has been engaged with BC officials in an effort for the City to acquire a public easement on the unbuilt portion of the land to preserve its wooded state. The next step in that process is for the City to obtain an appraisal of the wooded land.

Note that a “public easement” would not necessarily protect the land and prevent building in the future. It is important for us to continue to let the mayor and other elected officials know how important it is to preserve that land, not only because it is home to a vernal pond and associated wildlife like salamanders

but also because it is a critical link between existing state and city conservation land. Building on the BC land would negatively affect the drainage patterns and the conservation value of the other two parcels.

If you'd like more information about the campaign to save Webster Woods, visit the Friends of Webster Woods' Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fowwnewton) or email Jacob Stern (jacobstern2@gmail.com) to request a lawn sign.

West Nile Virus

As of August 2, West Nile Virus was detected in mosquitos in Newton. Earlier in the summer, in an attempt to reduce the mosquito population, the City's health department treated catch basins with a bacteria that kills mosquito larvae but is harmless to other animals and plants. In spite of their efforts, we have a population of mosquitos that are carrying the disease.

Birds (especially our local corvids — blue jays and crows) are at great risk for harm from the disease. People also are at risk (although a much lower one) from the disease. See the Letter to the Editor on page for an example of that. Also, see our summer issue of the newsletter for more information on ways to minimize the mosquito population near you: <http://bit.ly/2alZwSW>.

The most important thing that you can do is to eliminate all standing water on and near your property. Culex mosquitos, those that transmit West Nile Virus to birds and humans, can lay their eggs in as little as half a cup of water.

We look forward to seeing you at our table at the Newton Community Farm's Fall Festival on September 25 at Harvest Fest in Newton Centre on Sunday, October 16.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Thanks for writing the article about West Nile Virus in the recent newsletter. It is very informative and very timely.

You may not know this but I was in the hospital for five days with neuroinvasive (spinal meningitis) West Nile Virus in August 2012. There were 33 human cases that year in MA and I was #4; it was a very bad year in this state and in the US.

It took me a year to recover but I fared well compared to some others that year who are now permanently disabled. DPH decided I was probably infected in my front yard in Newton (about 1 mile south of route 9). I had been paying careful attention to ticks that year in an attempt to avoid Lyme disease (picked 22 ticks off my dog after a February walk by the Charles that year!) but wasn't attentive to WNV and mosquitoes.

Interesting though that just a few weeks before I became ill there were dead birds in our neighborhood and I didn't know why. I wish I had known more about the connection to WNV at that time and I wish there had been more and earlier public information about the risk and indicators. I think it is terrific you are giving people a warning through your article and I hope a lot of people read it.

Terrific summer newsletter in general.....my husband and I both enjoyed reading it. Newton Conservators brings so much value to this community!

— Dede Vittori

**If you haven't renewed your membership already, now is the time.
And consider a gift for a conservation-minded friend.**



2016 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

YES! Please renew my tax-deductible membership at the level checked below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Donor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Individual Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Sustaining Member | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution _____ |

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc.

Visit our website at www.newtonconservators.org if you wish to renew your membership online.



Yellow Warbler

Photo by Suzette Barbier