

WALKS SCHEDULE SPRING 2018

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Please note: Walks meet at different times. Some trips are weather dependent. Please call trip leader if in doubt.

Saturday, March 31 at 1:00 pm

(Rain or Shine)

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF VERNAL POOLS: FOREST AND VERNAL POOL EXPLORATION AT WEBSTER WOODS

Join us in Webster Woods, Newton's largest conservation area, as we walk the woods and explore the large vernal pool found there. Vernal pools, because of periods of drying, do not support breeding populations of fish. Many organisms have evolved to use these temporary wetlands, where they are not eaten by fish. Join us as we search for obligate vernal pool species, including fairy shrimp, spotted salamanders, and wood frogs. The amphibians are the stars of the show, but you will also watch for mammal tracks and learn about trees and other forest plants. Sampling equipment will be provided; bring hand lenses if you have them. We will walk even in the rain, so dress accordingly.

Meet at the end of Warren Street on the western edge of Webster Conservation Area. For anyone not up to a 1-mile hike (round-trip), you can meet up with the group at 2 pm in the back parking lot (far back) of the former Congregation Mishkan Tefila on Hammond Pond Road; the vernal pool is right there.

Trip Leader: Eric Olson (Cell phone on day of outing: 617-872-9928).

Sunday, April 1 at 1:00 pm

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF VERNAL POOLS: FOREST AND VERNAL POOL EXPLORATION AT WEBSTER WOODS

This popular walk/activity is being repeated from March 31 (see description from that date).

Trip Leader: Jon Regosin (774-364-2443).

Saturday, April 21 at 10:30 am

(Cancelled if it is raining at 9:30 am)

A WALK AROUND HAMMOND POND AND NEARBY PLANT COMMUNITIES

Hammond Pond and the surrounding woods contain a surprising variety of plant communities and a wide diversity of plant species. Their distribution and abundance are affected by both past land use and current environmental conditions. In coming decades, climate change will increasingly affect this area. The walk will emphasize the identification and natural history of common tree, shrub, and wildflower species. Evidence of past land use in the woods and current environmental conditions will also be pointed out.

Meet at the Chestnut Hill Shopping Center parking lot at Hammond Pond, closest to the woods. There is an informational kiosk there. The walk will last approximately 90 minutes.

Trip Leader: Richard Primack, Professor of Plant Ecology, Boston University (Cell phone on day of outing: 857-636-8378, email: primack@bu.edu)

Sunday, May 6 at 2:00 pm

TAKE A REAL HIKE IN NEWTON: DISCOVER THE NEWTON AQUEDUCTS

A 5-mile hike through woods, meadows and fields along the Newton sections of the Sudbury and Cochituate aqueducts. This is a steady but not fast hike. Participants should be in sufficiently good shape to keep up with the group. (There are cutoffs for those who wish to shorten the hike.) Meet in front of the Starbucks coffee shop near the Waban MBTA station.

Trip Leader: Henry Finch (617-964-4488)

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Saturday, May 12 at 8:00 am (Rain Date: May 21)

BIRD WALK AT COLD SPRING PARK

This 67-acre parcel has ample wooded areas, open fields, a brook and wetlands. It is one of the places in Newton where you may hear the call of the Great Horned Owl and observe spectacular songbirds like the Rose Breasted Grosbeak and the Indigo Bunting. Also frequently found at the park are many favorite migrants such as the Red Eyed Vireo, the Wood Thrush, and a variety of wood warblers.

Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome.

Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left, and go to the far end of the parking lot to meet group.

Trip Leader: Pete Gilmore (617-969-1513)

Sunday, May 13 at 8:00 am

NAHANTON PARK MOTHER'S DAY BIRD WALK

Nahanton Park offers a mix of woodlands, wetlands, edge habitat and meadows along the Charles River, making it one of the best birding spots in Newton for both migratory and resident songbirds. Mother's Day occurs during the peak of the spring migration, so we will look for a variety of brilliantly colored tropical birds on their way to breeding grounds further north. Also expect newly arrived resident warblers, vireos, tanagers, orioles, swallows, and wrens.

Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Waterproof walking shoes are recommended. Walk will be cancelled in steady rain. Co-sponsored by the Newton Conservators and the Friends of Nahanton Park.

Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance next to the river. Parking is available inside the park.

Trip Leaders: Alison Leary (617-821-5619), Haynes Miller (617-413-2419)

Sunday, June 3 from 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

COLD SPRING PARK INVASIVE PLANT EDUCATIONAL WALK

Join horticulturalist Bruce Wenning for training in identifying the invasive species that are found in this park as well as in everybody's yards! Learn the traits of invasive species, how and why they are so successful and hurt the native ecosystems, and how you can identify and control them in your yards and neighborhoods. Wear long pants and closed shoes.

Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and go to the far end of the parking lot (circle) to meet group.

Trip Leader: Bruce Wenning (617-962-0646)

Saturday, June 9 from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm (Rain Date: June 18)

FERNS OF COLD SPRING PARK



We will visit the large popular Cold Spring Park that runs south from Beacon Street. We expect to find a dozen different ferns and a horsetail. We will mostly walk on the level paths, but wear long pants and insect repellent. Bring any fern you would like me to identify.

Meet at the Plymouth Road entrance in the southwest corner of the park.

You should be able to park on Plymouth Road between Cochituate Road and Kingston Road.

Trip Leader: Don Lubin (617-254-8464), don@nefern.info, http://nefern.info

PHOTOS PREVIOUS PAGE: LEFT TO RIGHT : DAN BRODY, ISAAC BRODY, DON LUBIN, HAYNES MILLER
PHOTO THIS PAGE: DAN BRODY

About the Plant Invaders



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Garlic Mustard arrived from Europe as a medicinal and garden herb, and is now an invader of our backyards, parks, forests, and conservation areas. It quickly covers vast areas and low-light forested areas, shades out other plants, chemically alters the soil to inhibit germination of competitor seeds, and alters habitat for native insects such as butterflies. It is easy to manage by pulling when the second-year plants are flowering in April/May. If not, each plant will scatter hundreds to thousands of seeds that will become first-year plants the next year, or remain as viable seeds for several more years. The plants must be disposed of as trash, not as yard waste.



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Japanese Knotweed is a bamboo-like invader from Asia that can create dense 8' tall single-species stands. It is a tough adversary, because any small root fragments left behind spring back to life the following year. Scientists seek biological control agents, but until then we must control by hand. Persistence pays with this species, and eradication is possible, but it takes several years to truly finish the job.



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Buckthorn is another non-native shrub that is proliferating in forested areas (see Cold Spring Park), covering the understory and preventing native forests from re-seeding.

Our sessions also tackle black swallow-wort, multi-flora rose, tree of heaven, oriental bittersweet, and black locust.