

Cold Spring Park Needs Some Love

By Alan Nogue, Park abutter and Founder, Friends of Cold Spring Park



This schematic shows the extent of Cold Spring Park.

A beautiful 67-acre green space in the heart of the city, Cold Spring Park supports an incredible variety of uses by residents from all corners of Newton. A shady 1.4 mile trail through woodlands and wetlands is used 365 days a year — for hiking, birding, jogging, dog-walking, exercising, and just plain nature-loving. Student and adult athletes take advantage of playing fields, tennis and basketball courts. Our high school track teams use the trail for practices

and meets. Zervas students and parents walk to school. There's a seasonal weekly Farmer's Market. Not to mention an annual Halloween Corgi Dress-Up Day. Yes, dogs in costume.

But over decades of heavy use, the trail around the park that is central to most park uses, has suffered from serious erosion. Exposed roots, rocks, and landscape fabric pose tripping hazards. Some sections are nearly perpetually muddy.



Annual Bird Walk at Cold Spring Park led by Pete Gilmore

The natural areas of the park, especially Newton's oldest and largest red maple swamp, are also suffering, with invasive species taking over the understory, smothering maple

saplings, and providing a shrinking habitat for native birds, insects and other wildlife. The Newton Conservators does a great job sponsoring invasive pulls at Cold Spring and other city parks, but they clearly need more help.

Last Spring I started a petition to fix up the trail. As I talked to people in the park, I learned of broken bones, lacerations, and concussions from people tripping and falling on the trail. I learned of seniors who had stopped using the trail



New, better-designed, exercise stations have been installed at four locations throughout the park.

because they were afraid of falling; of a high school track coach considering not using the trail any more for his award-winning team because of too many injuries.

With over 450 petition signers, and the support of City Councilors Downs, Rice, Noel, and Danberg, the Conservators, and the Waban and Newton Highlands Area councils, we had two great meetings with Parks & Rec to discuss improvements to the park. They were already

planning to replace old dilapidated exercise stations, thanks to a generous bequest. They had lined up an Eagle Scout candidate to extend wooden walkways over muddy areas. And they were eager to do work with local residents to do more.



New wooden walkways installed by Alex Rivero and Scout Troop 9 now help park visitors negotiate rain accumulation through Cold Spring Park.

But Parks & Rec, like other departments, is budget constrained. We could get in the city Capital Improvement Program queue, with a wait of five or more — maybe many more — years, or we can pitch in ourselves.

Many smaller green spaces and public amenities in Newton have Friends groups that help advocate for them, raise money for improvements, and recruit volunteers to help with maintenance. Thus the recent creation of Friends of Cold Spring Park.

Things are already looking up. Thanks to our advocacy and guaranteeing funding, we were able to double the width of the beautiful new wooden walkways recently installed by Alex Rivero and Scout Troop 9. Parks & Rec has completed installation of new, better-designed, exercise stations. An organizing group with participation from the Conservators, Area Councils, Zervas PTO, and others has been meeting to develop a Mission statement, structure, and plans for future improvements and fundraising. And the Conservators have

graciously agreed to be our fiscal sponsor, enabling us to accept tax-deductible donations.

Parks & Rec is already working with the Water Department to divert the stormwater discharge pipe that regularly floods the trail to Zervas when it rains. Next up, they will be restoring the stone dust between Zervas and the first bridge toward the Beacon Street parking lot, and repairing some of the worst sections between the parking lot and dog park.

Finally, we will work with Parks & Rec and the Conservators to increase efforts to preserve and protect the park for those who cannot advocate for themselves — native plants, and wildlife, and future generations. We aim to help

develop a long-term management plan to maintain the health and vitality of the park.

A web page is under construction. Meanwhile, you can follow progress on our Facebook page, or join an email list by emailing FriendsOfColdSpringPark@gmail.com. Finally, please consider joining the Friends by sending a tax-deductible donation, with a check made out to Newton Conservators, with Friends of CSP in the memo line, to Friends of Cold Spring Park, Box 62003, Newton Highlands, MA 02164. Memberships are \$15 for low-income, students or seniors; \$25 for individuals; \$50 for families. If you love the park and can afford to contribute more, additional donations will be greatly appreciated! ♦



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN TODAY!

YES, count me in! I want to be a nature steward and help Newton Conservators protect and preserve the natural areas in our community.

Please renew/accept my tax-deductible membership at the level checked below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Directors' Circle *NEW! | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Individual Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Donor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Sustaining Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution \$_____ |

Want to make an even bigger impact? Help us support these conservation areas:

- Woodcock Meadow \$_____
- Ordway Endowment Fund \$_____
- Land Stewardship Areas (Dexter Rd., Bracebridge Rd.) \$_____

*Contributors at this level receive a copy of the Newton Conservators Almanac. All new members receive Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands.

NAME _____ EMAIL _____
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I would like to volunteer!
Please email me.

Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc. and send to P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459, or visit NewtonConservators.org/membership.htm to renew/join online. Consider including Newton Conservators in your estate planning. Contact us at president@NewtonConservators.org.

MISSION

Newton Conservators, Inc.

The Newton Conservators promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open space for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters.

A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land, buildings and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, educational, recreational, literary and other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare of the people of our community.

The Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 57 years ago in June 1961.

The Newton Conservators' Newsletter® is published four times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc., in June, September, December, and March. Deadlines for these issues are the second Friday of the month before the issue is published.

We welcome material related to our mission from any source. Send proposed articles or letters by email in MS Word or rich text format to bethwilkinson@mac.com. Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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