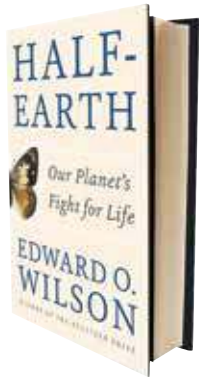


# Importance of Resilience for Open Space

At the Conservators' annual meeting and dinner on May 3, our speaker was Andy Finton, Lands and Climate Director of The Nature Conservancy of Massachusetts.

Andy's topic was resilience, which is land's "ability to recover from disturbance." Disturbance can come in the form of a tornado. Climate change, however, is one of the major disturbances that concerns Andy's team. As climate change makes their current habitats increasingly inhospitable, plants and animals will fare best in resilient lands.



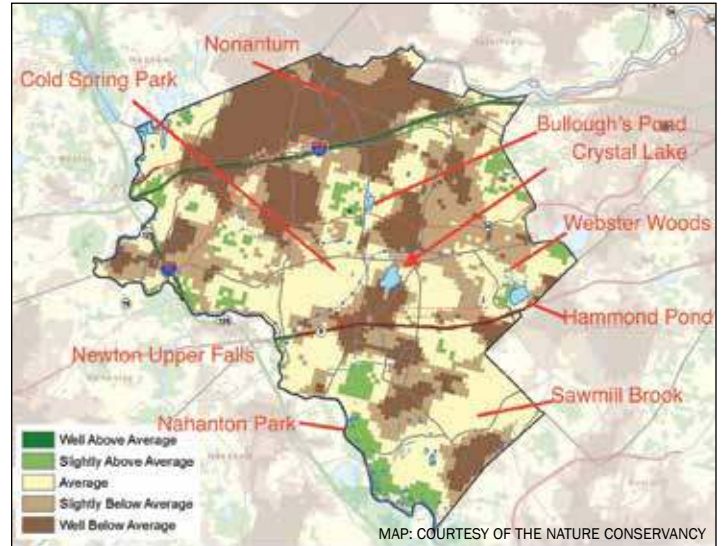
Through analyzing sites in the state, Nature Conservancy researchers discovered that resilience of a piece of land is a combination of landscape diversity (the number of microclimates

it has) and landscape connectivity (its attachment to other parcels of open space).

The combination of diversity and connectedness allows animals — and even plants — to migrate to new areas that will support them.

Andy presented a map of Newton that shows our most resilient sites. The area in the southwestern tip of the city — around Nahanton Park and the Helen Heyn Greenway — is the largest region of resilient land. In the coming year, members of the Conservators will work with Andy to better understand the implications of the map for how we preserve and maintain the city's open space.

Andy explained that the good news for Massachusetts is that we are the leader in New England for state and federal



A map of Newton that shows our most resilient sites. The area in the southwestern tip of the city — around Nahanton Park and the Helen Heyn Greenway — is the largest region of resilient land.

money for land conservation, which he sees as the key to preserving the environment. He recommended reading E.O. Wilson's *Half Earth* to understand the importance of land conservation.

In the question period after his talk, Andy further explained that we can make all of our open spaces more resilient by working to increase the biodiversity they contain (by, for example, preventing the monocultures created by invasive plants) and by increasing the connections between them (even by using culverts).

Please join us as we begin to assess and to improve the resilience of Newton's conservation land and parks. ■

✿ Beth Wilkinson

## 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 56 years ago in June 1961.*

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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](mailto:bethwilkinson@mac.com). Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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