



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

SPRING ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

Newton's land trust working to preserve open space since 1961

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The Story of Jolly's Hollow: How Conservation Land Builds Community

By Sarah Luria, Associate Professor, Department of English, College of the Holy Cross

Editor's Note: This article was originally published in the *Newton TAB*, November 30, 2017.

For years I have cherished the ability to walk off-road along Newton's aqueduct trail from the Four Corners area to Mason-Rice Elementary School. The highlight of that trip, as many lucky aqueduct walkers know, is the winding path through Jolly's Hollow, a secluded dell with a little stone bridge to one side and shaded by gloriously tall healthy trees. Though the path actually runs through private property, for the past many years a charming pair of signs have invited us in: "Welcome to Jolly's Hollow. Please keep to the paths. Beware of the gardener, she talks!" I always wanted to thank that chatty gardener, and would sometimes glimpse her among her gorgeous flower garden and ornamental trees, but I was too shy to tell her how much it meant to me to walk through her beautiful grounds.



Jolly's Hollow Sign



Newton Conservators President Beth Wilkinson makes an appearance on Chronicle earlier this year talking about the Bracebridge Road conservation restriction.

My wish came partly true the other day, when I met someone planting 50 native low bush blueberry plants under the pine grove near the lip of the hollow where it borders Bracebridge Road. This was André Wilson, who grew up on the property after 1966 when André's father, Harvard physicist Richard Wilson, and mother, Andrée Désirée Wilson, moved there with their six children. (André is transgender and in tribute to Andrée's enabling support has taken and adapted her name.) The elder Andrée was the legendary "gardener" who, during the 50 years she lived there, created this special place. Beginning in the 1990s, as Newton was becoming ever more subdivided, she and Richard began the extraordinary and arduous process that would eventually donate the Wilson Conservation Area to the city and put all but 0.4 acres of their remaining

Continued on page 2

1.9-acre parcel under a conservation restriction that protects this legacy in perpetuity.

One important condition of conservation land is that there be public access. Andrée passed away in 2016, and the property will eventually be sold. Now, in a joint effort by the Newton Conservators and the Wilson family, an official path has been created that runs up along the pine-covered hill where I met André hard at work to enhance the family's gift to the city.



Google aerial map of Jolly's Hollow where the red balloon shows the beginning of the walk northwest through the trees

Trained in architecture and ecological restoration, André represents the latest generation of talented, articulate gardeners on this place. A few days after our meeting amongst the blueberry bushes, we sat down for an interview on a crescent-shaped bench by the lovely half-moon garden. We were joined by Beth Wilkinson, current president of the Newton Conservators, the nonprofit organization that administers the conservation restriction on the private land. Our conversation revealed more about the significance of Jolly's Hollow to the larger community, a story of how Andrée's garden and her commitment to her children and her trees grew to include her neighborhood, her city, and us.



PHOTO: ANDRÉ WILSON

Workers clear the path of trees and place trunks to prevent soil runoff.

Gazing at the back yard, André's memories came flooding back: "I'm like my mother in that places generate the stories. I don't remember things or events in isolation; I remember them when I'm walking through this place." André points to the lawn and kidney-shaped "bird bath garden" before

us that used to be a "regulation size croquet court, except that it had two large trees and mom's garden in the middle, so there were penalties for sending your ball there." Wilkinson notes that "the views of these gardens from the windows of the house were very important to your mother," who designed the gardens to be seen from indoors. So even "these are part of the conservation restriction; the views from the house are protected!"

The gardens and woods that Andrée developed were part of what was once an even larger Newton estate called "Mount Pleasant." The Italianate house and its ample grounds were created in 1856 by real estate developer Roswell Turner. The 1895 Bromley Atlas of Newton (Plate 17) shows the property as an expansive estate bordered by Pleasant Street and Hancock Avenue. <http://www.newtonconservators.org/wilsonmaps.htm>. Neither Park Lane nor Bracebridge Road had yet been cut. The undulating land of the estate included circular drives and two ponds, connected by a stream that used to flow through the hollow under the stone bridge.

Jolly's Hollow lies between the Cochituate and Sudbury aqueducts. "Our parents were big aqueduct walkers, and they loved the public paths along them." André remembers the family taking "a gorgeous walk once all the way to Wellesley." Wilkinson points out that other cities along the aqueducts have accepted the state's offer to make the paths legally accessible to the public—only Newton "has not made walking them legal." Several private property abutters have blocked off access, and Jolly's Hollow is, in fact, a case in point. Earlier owners of the Wilson's property had put a fence across the Cochituate aqueduct path, which Andrée and Richard chose not to remove. It still stands there today. In the 1960s and 70s, André recalls, aqueduct walking was not the popular activity it is now. "We could always tell the rare aqueduct walkers because they had a befuddled look" as they wandered onto the Wilsons' property in search of the way out. Andrée would greet these fellow walkers warmly and point out an alternate route. In time, this invitation to cross her property would become a beloved institution.

The old hollow that André remembers is markedly different from what we see today. The tall trees that shade it now



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
André Wilson has replaced invasive plants with new native plants.

were much smaller then. “It was much sunnier and hotter.” Grass grew plentifully and the Wilson children insisted that paths be mowed on what they called “the big hill” so they would have a thrilling network of sledding trails in the winter. Charlie Worden, who grew up on Pleasant Street in the 1950s, recalls building a ski jump there. Both aqueducts, wooded now, were also sunny and topped by grass that the Metropolitan

District Commission (MDC) mowed. Gail Burgess, whose family owned the property prior to the Wilsons, remembers it being “very wild back there,” covered with thickets of blackberries and brambles.

Wilkinson remarks that the entire grounds were “a big playground,” and André agrees, but adds that after 1966 that playground was private, used by the Wilson children alone. The neighborhood was “a very different scene” back then, André explains. There were not many kids in the neighborhood, but older teenagers cavorted in the back woods and had drinking parties on the “Big Rock” by the Cochituate Aqueduct and left the area covered with broken glass. To protect their children, Andrée and Richard felt the need to fence their property off. André recalls feeling particularly vulnerable. André remembers being bullied from the first day of school at Mason Rice in 1966. “I was a little girl, who knew she was a little boy.” The sheltering thickets of Jolly’s Hollow were a welcome refuge.

The Wilson children grew up and moved away (André lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan). Around that time, André says, the neighborhood began to develop more of a community feeling. Bracebridge and Hancock Streets began holding two block parties a year, and Andrée was inspired to make her property more accessible: “At some point the fences came down”; eventually a formal invitation was made, announced by the friendly signs, to cross the little stone bridge and follow a new path she and Richard created that skirted the hollow and cut across their front lawn. “My parents valued their privacy,” André says, “but their lives were enriched beyond expression by the people who literally walked into and through their lives as they walked through 15 Bracebridge Road. I know this because people now tell me about encountering Mom and sometimes even Dad in the garden and stopping to chat, and then coming back another

day for tea on the front porch.” As their parents grew older, the Wilson children were glad to know that their parents were not isolated, but rather surrounded by friends who watched out for them and the house.

The new path has been created to maintain public access without coming so close to the future owners’ front door. As André works on this project, people often stop, eager to share their memories of the place. “When I talk to people on the path, the sense of gratitude and of wonder, that a homeowner would do this is overwhelming. It is so striking, and it is one reason I spend so much time out there. It amazes me to hear what people say.” One teen-ager reported that he took this path to get to Mason Rice every day for six years and thanked André for being able to walk through the woods to school. The larger Wilson Conservation Area is particularly valuable because it is so useful; it offers a beautiful short-cut to Mason-Rice School, the Newton Centre Playground and T stop. What a pleasant way to run an errand!

Conservation ecologist Aldo Leopold argued that the way to increase stewardship of our environment is to extend our Golden Rule — “Do Unto Others” — to include the land on which we live. In an extraordinary way, Andrée Wilson embodied this ethic. Her desire to protect her children and give them a beautiful place grew into a desire to protect it and share it with others: “My mother had a vision of a different world, where people give without asking for something in return, because it changes everything. My parents opened the path,” André continues, “because they believed in making private space more porous. And they believed that private citizens needed to take responsibility for making public spaces (and services) more accessible and functional.”

Such generosity can inspire each of us to think of how we might actively improve the experience of our neighborhood. Indeed, friendly gestures seem to be on the rise in Newton as doggie bowls, book boxes, and even benches for passers-by to enjoy a rest are popping up on private front lawns. Each of these acts adds pleasure to our “walking city.”

“My mother thought of herself as a citizen of the world,” Wilson concluded as the sun set over Jolly’s Hollow that evening. “I simply would suggest to you, and more broadly to others, that we consider how much more each of us can do to make this world a more welcoming place.”

Information about the Wilson Conservation Area and how to contribute to the upkeep of the new path can be found at the Newton Conservators website: <http://www.newtonconservators.org/wilson.htm> or on the renewal form on page 6. ■

President's Message

Dear Conservators,

In a recent message, fern expert Don Lubin noted that his crocus, snowdrops, and iris are sprouting. Sure enough, when I scraped away the dry leaves in my garden (left there to provide shelter for butterfly larvae and other little creatures), I found little sprouts there, too. Spring is not far off, and as nature re-awakens, the Conservators activities start up again, too.



You can read about many of them in this newsletter: walks and invasive pulls throughout the spring and early summer, Newton Serves on April 29, and our wonderful annual dinner on Wednesday, May 2.

Last year, the attendance at the annual vernal pool walk was so high that we are offering it on two days this year: March 31 and April 1! Eric Olson, the Brandeis ecologist who has traditionally conducted the walk, will be the leader on the first day, and Jon Regosin, Chief of Conservation Science for the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, will be the leader on the second day. Join them to see why it is so important for the city to find a way to preserve Webster Woods.

In fulfillment of her campaign commitment, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller announced the formation of a Webster Woods Advisory Panel to offer guidance on how best to preserve this important community resource. So far, the executive committee has been appointed. It consists of Ken Kimmel (co-chair of Friends of Webster Woods), Lisle Baker (Ward Councilor for Ward 7), Jennifer Steel (Newton's Chief Environmental Planner), Jonathan Yeo (Newton Chief Operating Officer), Ouida Young (Solicitor in the City's Law Department), Barney Heath (Director of Newton's Planning Department), and me. The Mayor will announce the membership of the full panel soon.

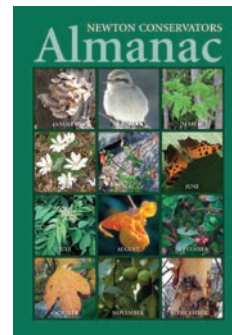
We hope to see all of you at one of our events over the coming months!

Beth Wilkinson

It's Spring. Get outdoors!

Shop online at www.newtonconservators.org/books.htm to purchase Newton Conservators publications. Almanac is \$19.95 + shipping, and the Trail Guide is \$8.95 + shipping.

- **Members receive a discount from these prices when purchasing online.**



Mated Birds Singing Duets



PHOTO: PETE GILMORE

Great Horned Owl near Flowed Meadow

There are a number of bird species around the world in which both male and female sing, and often sing duets with each other. You might think that this happens in exotic places with exotic species, and it does. What is surprising to many Newton residents is the fact that four of our common, local species sing male-female duets. These are our Northern Cardinals, Carolina Wrens, Great Horned Owls and Barred Owls.

Our Great Horned Owls court around the time of the Christmas Bird Count in late December. This singing may begin in November, goes on into January, and then slows as most females are on eggs by February, sometimes with snow on their backs. During the courtship one can often hear them singing duets after dusk or before dawn. They have classic owl hoots in a rhythm that sounds like **Hooo...Hoo-Hoo-Hoo, Hooo-Hooo...Hooo...Hooo.** The female answer is in the same rhythm as the male but is usually higher in pitch than the his song. They sing back and forth to each other, getting pretty intense about it as they get ready to mate. These Great Horned Owls are the top of the avian food chain in Newton. You can find them roosting in large coniferous trees in most of our parks, but certainly in Cold Spring Park, Nahanton Park and along the Charles River in places like Flowed Meadow in Auburndale. Even Red-tailed Hawks must take care around these big owls. Their talons are very powerful. If you want to hear the duets of Great Horned Owls, you might come on the next Christmas Bird Count in late December of 2018. The only drawback is going out at 5 A.M. in December.

The Barred Owls have a hooting sequence and rhythm that lends itself to anthropomorphic phrasing. We usually

describe it as “Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all.”

Hoo-Hoo...Hoo-Hooo...Hoo-Hoo...Hoo-Hooo-AAAAAWWW. These owls tend to breed a little later than their Great Horned Owl cousins. The two species are in different genera, so are not closely related. Where you find Great Horned Owls you will not see Barred Owls. The larger Great Horned Owls are a threat to the Barred Owls. When Great Horned Owls are in Cold Spring Park, or in the large white pines near the top of Windsor Road along the Braeburn Golf Course, you may find Barred Owls along the Cochituate Aqueduct. The female Barred Owl has the same rhythm as her mate-to-be but hoots on a higher pitch. When they are hooting duets you can hear the difference distinctly. These owls have shown up by my feeders a little before dawn in the spring, hoping for an early, unwary squirrel. In both the Barred Owls and the Great Horned Owls it is impossible to tell the gender of the birds by sight alone.

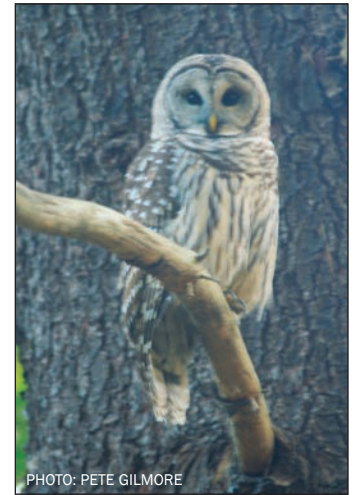


PHOTO: PETE GILMORE

Barred Owl, Cochituate Aqueduct

A less predatory and more brightly feathered songbird around our houses is the Northern Cardinal. They stay with us all year round. They can survive our winters as they are seed eaters. Northern Cardinals are monogamous for the most part. Cardinals tolerate others of their kind during the winter, but again pair up and defend their territory in the spring. Both genders are beautiful



PHOTO: PETE GILMORE

Northern Cardinal

against the snow. When spring is under way you may see a red male cardinal offering food to his more subtly plumaged mate. Her mix of warm browns and lighter reds are a very nice sight when you look carefully. Her plumage contrasts with her bright red beak. The male Northern Cardinals began singing in my neighborhood this year in late January. I usually first notice them in early February, advertising the coming of spring. They are in sync with Punxatawney Phil, but seem more steadily optimistic. We mimic their sound in

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words as some version of “Whit-cheeer...cheeer, cheeer, cheeer, bertie, bertie, bertie.” What is interesting to listen for is the response of the female Northern Cardinal to her mate. The females begin singing about a month after the males have been singing. Their song is the same as their mate’s but is quieter and is often sung from hiding, whereas



PHOTO: LANNY MCDOWELL

Carolina Wren

the male perches up high and sings to the world. He is a prime target for predation when he does this, so he has to remain alert. She wants to be less noticeable as she will be on their eggs and close to their young and so does not want to attract attention. A researcher in Wisconsin has studied female cardinals singing quietly while on their nest. They seem to signal to their mates that it is time to bring food to the nest. When you see and hear all of these warm and relational communications between a pair of cardinals, you are even more drawn to their beauty.

A final pair of birds that sing duets are our Carolina Wrens. Both this species and the Northern Cardinals were originally more southern in their ranges but have adapted to life in more northern places probably because of the changes in habitat around our towns. The Carolina Wrens are very perky, rusty brown birds with a white stripe over their eye. Again, the gender is impossible to distinguish by

sight. This wren was very common in Newton until the record snowy winter of 2014–15, which killed a lot of them. Since that hard winter they have been replenishing their stock in Newton and again are becoming more common. In this species the females have some completely different sounds from their mates. The male Carolina Wren has loud, clear phrases that usually come in triples. One year I made up some mnemonic phrases for one that sang near my house. “Chirpity-chirpity-chirpity” is one “Meateater-meateater-meateater” another, “Teakettle-teakettle-teakettle” another and “Sweeney-sweeney-sweeney” is a fourth. There are many variations, but once you hear one version of a Carolina Wren’s song, you will recognize the next character of this species who sings near you. Often, while a male Carolina Wren is singing his loud, clear song there is an accompanying descending chatter near him. This is his mate. This duet is common enough that it is in the songs included on the Sibley birding app for smartphones, the *Sibley eGuide to Birds*. You sometimes hear her chatter call without the male singing. It sounds like a scold or a warning when you hear it alone. Carolina Wrens sing less frequently during the winter. They do sing all year round. It fills you with good cheer to hear them in the snow.

An online reference for bird sounds can be found at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Macaulay Library web site: <https://search.macaulaylibrary.org/catalog> There are lots of audio recordings for many species in this library and it may take some listening to find a good one. ■

Visit Lanny McDowell’s website for more beautiful bird photography: lannymcdowellart.com

—Pete Gilmore



NEWTON CONSERVATORS
PO Box 590011
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MA 02459

2018 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"/> Additional Contribution \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Donor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Individual Member | |
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You may also make a targeted donation to one of the following specific funds:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodcock Meadow \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordway Endowment Fund \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Stewardship (e.g., Dexter Road, 15 Bracebridge Road) \$ _____ | |

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.



Thoughts of a Conservators Intern

By Bennett Walkes

Having lived my whole life down the street from Webster Woods, I know firsthand the importance and privilege of Newton's conservation land providing a blissful respite from everyday life and an escape into rural life in a city only a short bike ride away from Boston. When I was young, Webster Woods was a universe of unexplored phenomena with each few paces bringing a rock, flower, pond, or wetlands within grasp; I would wander from path to path to wherever my curiosity would take me until I was hopelessly lost.

When the season of vibrant pink and purple azaleas and rhododendrons passed, and their remaining leaves shriveled up, I would slide over Houghton Pond's frozen surface. I spent countless afternoons jumping and scaling the small cliffs formed by the stunning puddingstone rocks and would hide out in their narrow crevasses. It was when these woods were being sold that I first heard about the work being done by Newton Conservators. Throughout my summer spent with the organization, I learned about the threats to these city parks and conservation areas and efforts to preserve and protect our open space for all to use.

The majority of my time with the Conservators this summer was spent pulling invasive species dominating our open spaces. We began early in the season pulling garlic mustard and slowly transitioned into concentrating on much harder to pull species including knotweed, bittersweet, black swallow-wort, and buckthorn. Before the time I spent this summer walking through our conservation land and attempting to identify the fauna, the only human-engineered threats to our wildlife I was aware of were the effects of climate change and development.

The fields of Tree of Heaven and Japanese Knotweed dominating what were once meadows and diverse understories in Cold Spring Park have since opened my eyes to a whole new world of dangers. While pulling each plant out initially came with a twinge of guilt, we were able to witness the benefits of our work after seeing a monarch butterfly lay eggs on native milkweed a few minutes after we had cleared the area of the invasive black swallow-wort. In the name of preserving biodiversity, clearing whole patches of knotweed by scythe and pulling out particularly large buckthorns with the weed-whacker have since become



PHOTO: BETH WILKINSON
Interns Bennett Walkes and Iris Liao tend to planting a pollinator garden in Woodcock Meadow.

more and more enjoyable. However, it has become difficult for me to walk through my neighborhood or even watch a movie without pointing out whatever invasive species I see.

Gardening for insects is a completely new phenomenon introduced to me this summer that starkly contrasted with my garden at home where I used to ruthlessly apply my organic sprays to keep the aggressive ant colonies and rabbits away. We spent part of the summer planting a pollinator garden at Woodcock

Meadow in Nahanton Park. This involved selecting an array of caterpillar host plants as well as nectar plants to support specific species of native pollinators while also stapling a chickenwire fence. While a meadow garden did help achieve a dream of mine to work on a garden with sufficient light, it also required bi-weekly rides across the city with a water bucket strapped to the back of my bike.



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
Bennett Walkes and Newton Conservator Katherine Howard at the Farmers Market in West Newton.

We spent our Tuesdays and Saturdays at the Newton farmer's markets providing outreach about the organization and information about invasive species. This was a very unique experience for me in comparison to the more hostile

responses I've received while doing political canvassing. While the Cold Spring markets consisted mostly of busy shoppers eager to get out of the market, I was really a surprised how open people were to discuss issues facing our open spaces at the Saturday ones. These events also introduced me to city politics and the issues surrounding it with the many candidates who were campaigning for the past election.

This summer — besides developing a massive fear of ticks — I've learned about what it takes to be a good ecological neighbor to local wildlife and the many actions being undertaken by this organization to protect and preserve our parks. ■

In Celebration of Duane Hillis



PHOTO: SUZETTE BARBIER AUTOTIMER

*At entrance to Nahanton Park, from left to right:
Chris Hepburn, Ian Reid, Haynes Miller, Donna Cohen,
Suzette Barbier, Duane Hillis, Judy Dore and Betsy Jacobs*

On December 21, 2017, a small group gathered to honor Duane Hillis. A swamp white oak was planted along with a plaque at the Winchester St. entrance to celebrate his tenure of over 30 years as President of the Friends of Nahanton Park. His tireless efforts as an environmentalist and citizen steward of the park are greatly appreciated by all. Duane was constantly involved in City meetings and developed productive and long lasting relationships with many at Newton Parks and Recreation including Bob DeRubeis and Judy Dore as well as many others.

Duane will be moving to Lenox, Massachusetts to be closer to family. We wish him and his family the best.

We'll miss you Duane!

👉 Identify This Place Photo Contest:

Win a free one-year Conservators membership for yourself or a friend.



PHOTO: DAN BRODY

1. Watch (and listen to!) the video:

http://newtonconservators.org/contest2018_03.htm

2. Can you identify this secluded part of a well-used park? Wood ducks have occasionally been spotted in this marsh, although not often enough to be listed on our inventory of Newton plants and animals (<http://newtonconservators.org/masterlist.htm>).

3. Send us your best guess about the location (<mailto:contest@newtonconservators.org>).

The winner will receive a free one-year membership. If we receive more than one correct entry by May 31, 2018, we'll draw two names from a hat.



Newton Power Choice Program

By Ann Berwick, Newton's Co-Director of Sustainability

The City of Newton is developing a plan for a new electricity program to be named Newton Power Choice. The program will provide an opportunity for Newton to significantly increase the amount of renewable energy in the community's electricity supply. The program is a form of group purchasing known as an electricity aggregation, and it will impact nearly all electricity customers in Newton.

The program will allow the City to use the bulk buying power of the community to provide:

- **Greener electricity**
- **Price stability**
- **Consumer protections**

The program will provide a City-vetted alternative to commercial electricity supply offers you may receive by mail or over the phone.

New electricity choices:

As a program participant, you will have new electricity choices. Newton Power Choice will give you greater control over the environmental characteristics and price of your electricity supply. You can choose to:

- **Receive a standard amount of additional renewable energy, above the minimum amount required by state law.**
- **Opt up to 100% renewable electricity.**
- **Opt for renewable energy in an amount still to be determined.**
- **Opt down to receive no additional renewable energy but retain the program benefits of price stability and consumer protections.**

See <http://masspowerchoice.com/newton> for more details. ■

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 first Friday of each month in which an issue is scheduled to be 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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Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the Newsletter: Sarah Luria, Beth Wilkinson, Pete Gilmore, Bennett Walkes, Friends of Nahanton Park, Dan Brody, Ann Berwick, Ted Kuklinski, and Katherine Howard.

May 2 Annual Dinner Meeting — Changes in New England Wildlife Over Time Featuring Peter Alden, Naturalist and Author

By Ted Kuklinski



Peter Alden

The Newton Conservators Annual Meeting and Dinner will be held on Wednesday, May 2, at the American Legion Post 440 at 295 California Street in Nonantum. A social hour will begin at 6 pm with dinner being served at 7 pm, followed by a brief official meeting and awards ceremony. The highlight of the evening will be a wonderful presentation by author and naturalist, Peter Alden, on “Changes in New England Wildlife over Time.”

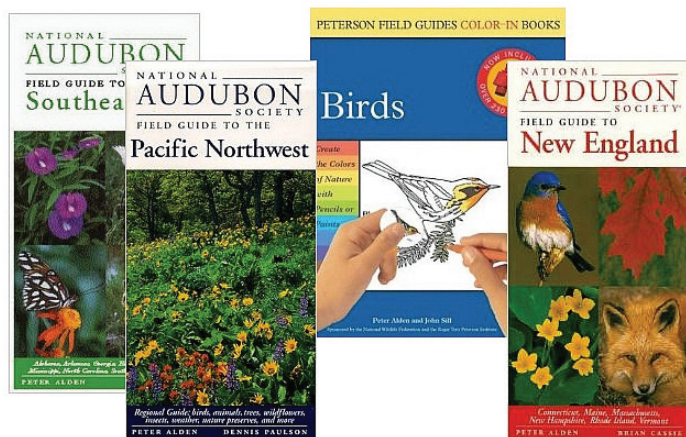
Since the annual meeting venue is so nicely situated next to the Charles River Pathway at the beginning of peak bird migration, Peter Alden will also be leading a one-hour nature walk along the Charles River Pathway from the Post 440 parking lot beginning at 5 pm and returning there at 6. You are likely to see warblers, vireos, and other interesting nesting and migrating species with a true birding expert. This free walk is open to the public.

The awards ceremony will recognize efforts to protect, preserve, and reclaim Newton’s natural areas and to educate and disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. The awards include: the Environmentalist of the Year Award – presented to a local citizen or group who has contributed to improvements in the city’s environment; the Charles Johnson Maynard Award – to recognize efforts to improve biodiversity, habitat reclamation, and natural resource protection; and Director’s Awards for other notable achievements.

Alden will describe how our habitats have morphed from glacial ice cover, to tundra, to boreal forest, to transition forest, to grasslands/farms, and to today’s rewilding forests. He will also discuss how bird and mammal life has changed. Recently we’ve added new elements such as invasive alien plants, pesticides, bird feeders, introduced-species, and widespread bans on trapping and hunting. Learn about

those critters that have vanished and those that have made remarkable comebacks and why.

Peter is a past president of both the Brookline Bird Club and the Nuttall Ornithological Club. He served in the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs for four years and spent 12 years on the Harvard Museum of Natural History board focusing on the Roger Tory Peterson Memorial Lecture series. In 1998 he organized the world’s first Biodiversity Days with Harvard’s Dr. Edward O. Wilson. Biodiversity Days were subsequently held in many Massachusetts communities (including Newton) to catalog our natural environment. Check out his website at peteraldenwildlife.com.



Peter has been scouting out, leading, and lecturing on 300 bird and wildlife tours, safaris, cruises and excursions to 100 countries and the seven seas for diverse organizations such as Mass Audubon, the Harvard Museums, Thomson Safaris, National Geographic and Road Scholar. He has authored 15 books, including the popular, easy to use *National Audubon Field Guide to New England*.

He is currently working on a “travel misadventures” autobiography and new regional Audubon field guides to Texas, the Midwest, Great Plains, and Alaska. Signed copies of a number of his books will be available at a special discount before and after the dinner.

Always a bit irreverent, he is sure to be both informative and entertaining!

You can register for the Annual Dinner by going online at <http://newtonconservators.org/events/dinner2018invite.htm> or by returning the response form in the official invitation that will be sent to all members in early April. Tickets will remain at \$35/person this year. Hope to see you at this exciting annual event with other like-minded individuals interested in preserving our open space and environment. ■

Newton Serves

Please join us on Newton Serves Day

Sunday April 29th

for meaningful work that helps our open spaces and the plants, insects, and birds that depend on them.



Keeping invasive plant species at bay is critical to the health of our parks and conservation areas.

Many hands make light work.

Newton Conservators will sponsor sessions at Cold Spring Park, Dolan Pond, and Blue Heron Bridge.

We will also sponsor many other sessions on other days into May and June. Please see the list of Invasive Sessions and Walks on pages 12-15.

We hope to see you!

— Katherine Howard

Do You Use Amazon for Purchases for your Home or Business?

As explained in past newsletters, Amazon Smile is a program through which Amazon donates 0.5% of most purchases (yes, \$5 of every \$1000) to a nonprofit (501c3) organization of your choice (the Newton Conservators, we hope!).

How does one use Amazon Smile? Instead of going to Amazon.com, you go to Smile.amazon.com. On your first visit, you will be asked to choose a nonprofit organization to receive the bonus donation. Enter “Newton Conservators,” and you are ready to go. The rest of your shopping proceeds exactly the same as if you had logged in to Amazon.com initially.

Even with relatively few members using the program so far, the rewards have grown. For the first quarter we participated in 2014, we received \$22.32. For the most recent quarter in 2017, we received \$40.18.

If you have any further questions about the program, check the FAQ page: <http://smile.amazon.com/about>.

Newton Conservators Invasive Plant Sessions Spring 2018

Newton Conservators, in addition to sponsoring walks in the spring and fall, also fights invasive plant species to preserve and improve the native habitat at our parks and conservation areas. Sessions may be weather dependent — call the leader if in doubt. Check our website (newtonconservators.org) for the separate Walks calendar and for updates to this schedule.

Sunday, April 15, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Buckthorn demonstration project, Cold Spring Park.

We will continue the work, started a year ago in collaboration with horticulturalist Bruce Wenning and ecology professor Eric Olson, to save the red maple swamp, believed to be one of the oldest forested areas in Newton. The maple and oak swamp is in danger of dying out due to its understory being shaded out by invasive nonnative buckthorn. We will maintain and expand the buckthorn-free demonstration areas to allow the forest to survive. *Leaders are Bruce Wenning and Katherine Howard, 617-527-1796 (home) or 617-721-2571 (cell).*

Sunday, April 29, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Garlic Mustard Pull at Dolan Pond (NewtonSERVES Project). 76 Webster Park, Newton, MA 02465
www.newtonconservators.org/5dolan.htm

Meet at Webster Park (a street off Webster Street) entrance of the Dolan Pond Conservation Area in West Newton. (Park there or at the other entrances at Stratford Road and Cumberland Road.) Come help us eradicate this soil-damaging invasive garlic mustard from this gem of a pocket park. We also continue to control the Japanese Knotweed; every year it gets easier. We will also do some nature study, so bring binoculars for observing birds and other creatures that make this vernal pool area home. We may also do some general cleanup and path chipping. Wear sturdy shoes, long pants, long sleeves, and garden gloves. *Leader is Jerry Melnick, 978-423-4311.*

Register online at <http://www.newtoncommunitypride.org/NewtonSERVES-volunteer.php> after April 1.

Sunday, April 29, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull (NewtonSERVES Project). 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461
www.newtonconservators.org/14coldspring.htm

The park is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, buckthorn, and other species. We will keep the Cochituate Aqueduct walk under control after previous years' pulls, and work on the meadow and Beacon Street parking lot areas. Wear long pants and garden gloves. The invasive plant material will be properly disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Enter at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and go to the far end of the parking lot (circle) to meet group. *Leader is Katherine Howard, 617-527-1796 (home) or 617-721-2571 (cell).*

Register online at <http://www.newtoncommunitypride.org/NewtonSERVES-volunteer.php> after April 1.

Sunday, April 29, 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Invasives Pull at Blue Heron Bridge (NewtonSERVES Project) near Super Stop & Shop, 700 Pleasant St., Watertown,

MA 02472

www.newtonconservators.org/4charlesmoody.htm

We will work along the Charles River Greenway at this bridge site, helping the Trustees of Reservations with their stewardship of the floodplain forest, mixing in nature study — bring binoculars and an insect net and hand lens if you can. Park at the Watertown Super Stop & Shop (700 Pleasant St.) at the corner farthest from the store. There is a path entrance: turn left, and follow path to the Blue Heron Bridge. Or, park at Albemarle Rd. or Nevada St. a block away from the river.

Leader is Eric Olson, 617-872-9928.

Register online at <http://www.newtoncommunitypride.org/NewtonSERVES-volunteer.php> after April 1.

Sunday, May 6, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Invasives Pull at Sawmill Brook Conservation Area.

Opposite 120 Vine St., Newton, MA 02467
www.newtonconservators.org/26sawmill.htm

Sawmill Brook Park is a lovely, long, natural trail connecting Newton to West Roxbury. It has garlic mustard and black swallow-wort infestations at its entrances and along Lagrange St. and Wayne Road borders. We will work at each entrance and along Lagrange and Wayne, and patrol previously worked areas. Wear long pants and garden gloves. The invasive plant material will be properly disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the Vine Street entrance. *Leader is Katherine Howard, 617-527-1796 (home) or 617-721-2571 (cell).*

Saturday, May 12, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Invasives Pull at Blue Heron Bridge #2 (repeat visit). Near Super Stop & Shop, 700 Pleasant St., Watertown, MA 02472
www.newtonconservators.org/4charlesmoody.htm

We continue to work along the Charles River Greenway at this bridge site, helping the Trustees of Reservations with their stewardship of the floodplain forest, mixing in nature study, so bring binoculars and an insect net and hand lens if you have them. Park at the Watertown Super Stop & Shop (700 Pleasant St.) at the corner furthest from the store. There is a path entrance: turn left, and follow path to the Blue Heron Bridge. Or park at Albemarle Rd. or Nevada St., a block away from the river. *Leader is Eric Olson, 617-872-9928.*

Saturday, May 19, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull #2 (repeat visit). 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461
www.newtonconservators.org/14coldspring.htm

Cold Spring Park is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, and other species. We will spend a few hours keeping the Cochituate Aqueduct walk under control after previous years'

Continued on next page

pulls, and work on the meadow and parking lot areas. Wear long pants and garden gloves. The invasive plant material will be properly disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and go to the far end of the parking lot (circle) to meet group. **Leader is Katherine Howard, 617-527-1796 (home) or 617-721-2571 (cell).**

Sunday, May 20, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Nahanton Park Invasives Pull. Near 507 Winchester Street Newton, MA 02461

www.newtonconservators.org/30nahanton.htm

Many native habitats, including the grassland Woodcock Meadow, home to threatened American Woodcock, and open woodland habitats, are threatened by invasive plants. They out-compete native plants, reduce biodiversity and negatively impact birdlife. Nahanton Park suffers from invasions of black swallow-wort, multi-flora rose, Tree of Heaven, buckthorn, garlic mustard, and black locust. Join us to improve the beauty and diversity of this special park (and help the American woodcock) by spending a few hours cutting back/removing these invasive species. Sturdy shoes, long pants, long sleeves and work gloves are recommended. Meet in the large parking lot off Winchester Street. **Leaders are Katherine Howard, 617-527-1796 (home) or 617-721-2571 (cell) and Suzette Barbier.**

Sunday, May 27, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Japanese Knotweed Pull at Hammond Pond. Near 309 Hammond Pond Parkway, Newton, MA 02467

www.newtonconservators.org/18webster.htm

Japanese Knotweed is a bamboo-like invader from Asia that can create dense 8' tall single-species stands. It is a tough adversary, not because it's spiny or strong or even particularly hard to pull. But any small root fragments left behind spring back to life the following year. Scientists seek biological control agents, but until they find some, we are stuck controlling the plant by hand. Persistence pays with this species, and eradication is possible, but it takes several years to truly finish the job. Bring pitchforks, garden spades, and hand pruners, if you have them. Meet at small parking lot off Hammond Pond Parkway at Route 9 adjacent to pond at "The Street" mall. **Leader is Eric Olson, 617-872-9928.**

Saturday, June 2, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Houghton Garden/Webster Invasives Pull. Opposite 210 Suffolk Rd., Newton, MA 02467

www.newtonconservators.org/19houghton.htm

We are tackling garlic mustard and black swallow-wort near the entrance of Houghton Garden where it borders the T Track crossing to Webster Woods and near the deer park. Help us keep these invaders out of Houghton Garden! In case of poison ivy, wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided; the City will dispose properly as trash, not as yard waste. Meet opposite 162-210 Suffolk Rd. (off of Hammond Street) at the entrance to Houghton Garden. **Leader is Katherine Howard, 617-527-1796 (home) or 617-721-2571 (cell).**

Sunday, June 3, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Cold Spring Park Invasive Educational Walk. 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461

www.newtonconservators.org/14coldspring.htm

Join horticulturist 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 own yards and neighborhoods. Wear long pants and closed shoes. **Leader is Bruce Wenning, 617-962-0646.**

Sunday, June 3, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull #3 (repeat visit). 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461

www.newtonconservators.org/14coldspring.htm

Cold Spring Park is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, and other species. We will spend a few hours checking the Cochituate Aqueduct walk, to keep it under control after previous years' pulls, and work on the meadow and parking lot areas. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided; the City will properly dispose as trash, not as yard waste. Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and go to the far end of the parking lot (circle) to meet group. **Leader is Katherine Howard, 617-527-1796 (home) or 617-721-2571 (cell).**

Sunday, June 10, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Charles River Quinobequin/Hemlock Gorge Invasives Pull. Near 2 Ellis St., Newton, MA 02464

www.newtonconservators.org/21hemlock.htm

We will control garlic mustard, knotweed, and black swallow-wort infestations inside beautiful Hemlock Gorge Park, and the adjoining lovely walking trail along the Charles River at Quinobequin Rd. Help keep the invaders out of these beautiful parks! Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided; the City will properly dispose as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the parking lot at corner of Quinobequin Rd. and Ellis St. at Rt. 9 intersection. **Leaders are Jerry Reilly and Katherine Howard, 617-527-1796 (home) or 617-721-2571 (cell).**

Sunday, June 17, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Charles River Quinobequin/Hemlock Gorge Invasives Pull (repeat visit). Near 2 Ellis St., Newton, MA 02464

www.newtonconservators.org/21hemlock.htm

We will continue our control of garlic mustard, knotweed, and black swallow-wort infestations inside beautiful Hemlock Gorge Park, and the adjoining lovely walking trail along the Charles River at Quinobequin Rd. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided; the City will properly dispose as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the parking lot at corner of Quinobequin Rd. and Ellis St. at Rt. 9 intersection. **Leaders are Jerry Reilly and Katherine Howard, 617-527-1796 (home) or 617-721-2571 (cell).**

➤ To learn more about Plant Invaders, go to page 15
and view pictures and descriptions of the most common invasives.

WALKS SCHEDULE SPRING 2018

www.newtonconservators.org



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)

Saturday, May 5 at 8:00 am

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.

Continued on next page

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 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)

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 10)

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.



NEWTON CONSERVATORS, INC.
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NEWSLETTER

Newton's land trust working to preserve open space since 1961

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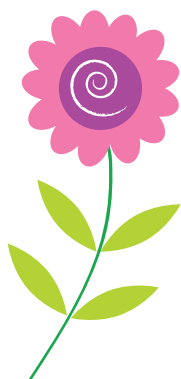


ILLUSTRATION: SUZETTE BARBIER



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Prairie Warbler
photo by Haynes Miller

Go Green! ...and all the other colors of the rainbow. You can view this newsletter at <http://bit.ly/2rXvnit>. To elect not to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, update your membership profile at www.newtonconservators.org