



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

SPRING ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

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

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Come Join Our 50th Anniversary Celebration Next Month



I hope you will join us as we celebrate fifty years of protecting and preserving land in Newton at our annual dinner and silent auction May 25. Our strong voices are needed as much today as they were in 1961—and here's one story which tells the reasons why.

Over the past few weeks, many of us watched conditions at areas of Nahanton Park, one of our real Newton treasures, go from bad to worse. (See Duane Hillis' article for more in detail.) Snow had been trucked in and stored in huge mounds for months, leaving the meadow, often the site of nesting bluebirds and swallows, deeply rutted and torn up. Piles of tree limbs and Christmas trees were making things worse. After working with the Friends of Nahanton Park and the Conservators, the City no longer stores tree limbs, is reconsidering next year's snow storage policy, and will restore the meadow as soon as possible—we hope, in time for the birds to decide it's safe to nest again this year. Together we worked hard and succeeded this time in protecting this beautiful sanctuary.

The Conservators have dozens of stories like this to tell from the last fifty years. Many of the parks and conservation areas we enjoy today were saved from development or encroachment because of our work. We have also preserved numerous other Newton parcels—now totaling approximately 100 acres—through conservation restrictions. Right now, we are working on three of those projects and have more in the pipeline. I look forward to telling you the stories of these parcels in the months to come.

The speaker at our May 25 celebration is Bob Wilber, Land Protection Director for the Massachusetts Audubon Society. MassAudubon now holds conservation restrictions on more than 5,000 acres throughout the state. Bob is an inspiring speaker who will share with us thoughts about the importance of this work in a suburban environment.

Please help us with our work to preserve special places in Newton by supporting our first ever silent auction, which brings together the local business community with lovers of open space. Here is a small sampling of what you can bid on:

- stunning Nancy Schön tortoise and hare jewelry for you or to give as gifts
- gorgeous Brooks Mathewson and Bill Cullina nature photographs to brighten your walls
- tickets to Huntington Theatre Company, Turtle Lane, New Repertory Theatre, and Handel and Hayden Society performances for special occasions
- foursome rounds of golf from the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course
- memberships from Massachusetts Audubon, the Isabella Stewart Gardner and Newton History Museums to use or give as gifts
- hotel stays from the Newton Marriott, the Sheraton Needham, and Hotel Indigo for out of state friends and relatives
- a colorful bird house from Just Next Door to attract those nesting wrens
- a kayak from Charles River Canoe and Kayak to enjoy our river
- guided bird walks to hone your birding skills

For 2011 continued from page 1:

Please come and enjoy the fun. Invitations will be arriving in your mailbox soon. If you let us know by May 1, you can still be a sponsor or gift donor. Please log on to our website at www.newtonconservators.org to sponsor, donate an item for the auction, or buy tickets to the celebration.

— President Jane Sender

Nahanton Park: Green Meadows or Snow Dump?

Nahanton Park is one of Newton's most beautiful open spaces. Bounded by the Charles River and Nahanton and Winchester Streets, its 55 acres contain a variety of habitats: the riverfront area, a meadow on a drumlin, early successional woods, and a woods of tall pines. It has playing fields, a canoe launch, and some of the best birding in Newton. Migratory birds stop on their way through in season. Bluebirds nest in bluebird boxes in the meadow. A walk along the riverfront path usually turns up waterfowl. In mating season, woodcocks breed on the high ground, with the males making a strange, showy dance. For decades, Nahanton Park has been everything Newton wants an open space to be.

Then came the DPW. Then came the snow.



— Dan Brody



— Duane Hillis

The DPW began using Nahanton more than ten years ago as a place to dump the snow it clears from the streets and parking lots. Dumping was largely limited to a parking area at the Nahanton Street side of the park, but at times it spilled onto the adjacent meadow. Dumping of snow meant compaction of the soil and loss of soil health. A restoration effort became necessary ten years ago. Since restoration, the meadow began to return to a vibrant wildflower field. That is, it did, until this past winter. And the snow.

Open space is different things to different people. To some, it is a meadow of wildflowers, like a Monet painting. It is a

peaceful place to watch birds or take a long, lonely walk. The playing field at Nahanton is a place to play soccer. The gardens are a place to plant. But if you have truckloads of snow and you need a place to dump it, that beautiful meadow begins to look more like a dump.

More snow fell this last January than has fallen in all the winter months in some recent years. The snow was piled high on the city streets. The DPW needed a place for it to go.

Truckloads of snow from DPW trucks began filling the Nahanton Street parking lot in December, and, when those were filled, the Winchester Street entrance became the way to a new dumping ground.

It isn't only the snow that is a problem. It is everything that comes with it: the sand, the salt, the de-icing chemicals. These find their way directly into the Charles. What fell out of the snow dump (or was brought there by people who had decided that Nahanton was Newton's new dump) was all that and more: a refrigerator, old TV sets, bottles, cans, and all the usual street trash. DPW trucks became a major presence at Nahanton, parked and idling along the trail at the Winchester Street entrance. The DPW truck tires are capable of some serious damage. Deep ruts now mark places that once were fields.

Then came the Christmas trees.



— Duane Hillis

In March, as the snow mounds melted, the DPW began using Nahanton as a site to turn trees into chips. This is a heavy, noisy industrial operation. The City had handled this operation at DPW yards in other years. This year, with so much of Nahanton in its use, the DPW brought the Christmas trees and also the broken limbs that had collected on the streets to Nahanton. It made a stockpile at the Winchester Street entrance, where the DPW plans to use a massive "tub grinder"—not the standard small chipper used by landscapers to make chips but a far bigger piece of equipment—to do at Nahanton what had formerly been done at the DPW's Rumford Avenue yard.

Nahanton Park continued from page 2:

All this did not pass without protest. Early in March, a group that included members of the Friends of Nahanton Park and the Newton Conservators met with Chief Operating Officer Robert Rooney, Commissioner Bob Derubeis, and Acting DPW Commissioner, David Turocy. Nahanton Park is under the ownership of the City's Parks and Recreation Department. It was acquired as open space and, by statute, cannot be used for other purposes. But Parks and Recreation is a division of the Department of Public Works, and that in itself may be part of the problem. The group heard from the DPW how use of the park had been necessary this year as an emergency measure, given the amount of snowfall. The group came away with an acknowledgement that damage had been done to the park. DPW stopped bringing limbs to Nahanton Park and made a commitment that the park would be restored.

Mayor Setti Warren was contacted as well. The Mayor is committed to the protection of open space. He responded that "Nahanton Park is a vital natural resource here in Newton and its beauty must be preserved. Our COO Bob Rooney, Parks and Recreation Commissioner Bob DeRubeis and I are working closely with members of the Board of Alderman to clean up and restore the Park. In addition, we are working on a plan for snow removal that is environmentally responsible and ensures that our parks are not damaged even as we work to remove snow quickly and effectively from all our streets and byways."

These commitments from City officials are important. A great deal of work and expense will be involved to restore the park, and, unless the DPW finds the way to handle snow at the yards that it already controls at Rumford Avenue, Elliot Street, and elsewhere, the next time the snowfall is heavy, there will be the same pressure to convert Nahanton Park to a DPW yard.

The damage done to Nahanton Park this past winter has prompted a search for ways to provide better protection. Representative Ruth Balser has led an effort to implement protection under Article 97. (See accompanying story.) What we learn in these efforts will help us to better protect all of Newton's open spaces and parks.

I urge all of you, in all our parks, to be stalwart. When you see abuse and misuse, speak up, band together, and hold others accountable. Open space is priceless and irreplaceable.

✂ Duane Hillis
President of the Friends of Nahanton Park
www.nahantonpark.org / friends@nahantonpark.org

Open Space Protection Under Article 97

Nahanton Park is protected, among other ways, by a provision of the Massachusetts State Constitution known as "Article 97." Article 97 requires that land acquired by a municipality as open space be used only as open space. In 2004, the Massachusetts Audubon Society wrote that "Article 97 requires that any land or easements taken or acquired for natural resource purposes shall not be used for other purposes unless the Massachusetts legislature approves the change by a two thirds vote. Article 97 was intended to be a legislative 'check' to ensure that lands acquired for conservation purposes were not converted to other inconsistent uses."

That would seem like strong protection. However, the 2004 Audubon report goes on to say, "In the absence of clear standards with the force of law, Article 97 votes have become routine legislative business, with nearly every land transfer proposal brought up for a vote approved unanimously. Most legislators feel compelled to vote in the affirmative out of reciprocity: they may need their colleagues' support for their own district's land transfer petition in the future. Roll call votes on land transfers have constituted over twenty percent of all roll call votes taken in the legislature in the past several years."

Over the years, legislation has been introduced, including the most current Bill HB1124, sponsored by Newton's Ruth Balser and co-sponsored by the other Newton Representatives, Rep. Kay Khan, and Sen. Cindy Creem, which declares that "there shall be no net loss of public lands or easements taken or acquired for natural resource purposes as a result of disposition or change in use of these lands." The hearing for this bill was held in late March by both houses of the state legislature. Yet, according to Jack Clarke, Director of Public Policy & Government Relations for Mass. Audubon, the bill is unlikely to pass. Each legislator—even the ones who are most in favor of protecting our natural environment—is unwilling to pass a law that will create a barrier or hamper any "home-rule" decisions where the towns and cities of the Commonwealth seek alternative uses for land held for natural resource purposes.

On the other hand, Mass. Audubon, the Sierra Club, and the Appalachian Mountain Club are all in favor of an Executive Order that Governor Patrick has agreed to sign that accomplishes the same result. Currently this order is under review by the Division of Capital Asset Management to assure that it does not impede the use of current public buildings and land. Other groups, such as the Trustees of Reservations, have also sought over the years "enhanced procedural protections for Article 97 lands."

✂ Duane Hillis

Cedar Waxwings

These svelte and lovely, quiet birds can be seen during most of the year in Newton. During the winter they associate in loose flocks and dine on ripe fruits, including those on juniper (red cedar) trees and crabapples. During the rest of the year they will eat insects as well as berries and fruit. The pictures in this article are from February 20, 2011 in Newton.



— Pete Gilmore

The picture above shows a first year bird, which has no brilliant red edges to the secondary feathers on its wing. It does have the bright yellow ends to its tail feathers. These two flashes of brilliant color, together with the bird's habit of eating cedar berries, give these birds their common name of cedar waxwing. The striking black mask around the eyes, together with the smooth beige, gray and yellowish plumage on the body and wings, creates a very appealing look. The birds' silky smoothness gives them their Latin name, *Bombycilla cedrorum*, in which "cilla" translates as "tail," "cedrorum" as the "cedar tree" and "bombycinus" as "silken." The birds have a feathered crest on their heads, like Cardinals and Tufted Titmice. The crest might give them a wacky appearance, except for the black mask. The mask begins over the beak, runs through the eye, and curves up into the crest. It has a white border and gives a mysterious nuance to the bird's appearance.



— Pete Gilmore

The second picture shows the red tips of the secondary wing feathers on a full adult bird. The longest wing feathers are called "primary" feathers, and the next group of shorter wing feathers are called the "secondaries." The birds in this picture are dropping down onto the snow for a drink. You rarely see only one Cedar Waxwing. Notice the interest in one of the birds for the bird below it. These birds are quite social and you will occasionally see them passing fruit from one to the next down a line on a branch, until one eats the fruit.

There are only three species of waxwings in the world, one being local to eastern Asia and wintering in Japan while the other two are residents of North America. These are our Cedar Waxwings and the rarer Bohemian Waxwings, which are larger and similar to our Cedar Waxwings. The Bohemian Waxwings are more western and northern breeders and also are found across Eurasia. They visit us during some winters. They were seen this winter in western Massachusetts, and a few were on Plum Island in January. The Cedar Waxwings are the ones that are endemic to North America.

Cedar Waxwings share in all aspects of parenting. During courtship, the male and female will sit next to each other on a branch and pass berries back and forth. "Oh, no, dear, I insist," seems to be the generous and affectionate mood. They also will bond by bringing their beaks together. Both parents construct the nest. The two parent birds care for the feeding of the chicks in the nest. Cedar Waxwings do not have a song but do make a distinctive, high-pitched sound, which we can verbalize as "zzzeeee," staying mostly on the same pitch as the sound proceeds. This sound may help establish a small territory. But Cedar Waxwings will also nest in loosely associated groups of several couples. Thus, territoriality is much less pronounced than in most other songbirds.

Cedar Waxwings are among the species of birds that are doing well in proximity to humanity. We plant berry trees around our places. We create the edges of fields and woodlands, which these birds like. So the population of Cedar Waxwings has been increasing, unlike the populations of other songbirds. Cedar Waxwings nest late in the season like goldfinches. Starting a nest in July has the advantage of avoiding parasitic egg-laying by cowbirds. The young cowbird would end up being the sole survivor in the brood. Human alteration of the landscape has also increased the population of Brown-headed Cowbirds in North America, a big problem for many species of songbirds. But this is not so for Cedar Waxwings.

These exquisitely plumaged birds are around in Newton's open spaces. Nurture your spirit and take a slow walk outside in your city's open spaces when you can arrange some time to do so. Beauty is right there.

— Pete Gilmore

Perennials for Sun and Shade



Foam flower (*Tiarella*)

— Beth Schroeder

Here are some of my favorite perennial combinations for use in sunny and shady garden beds and borders. Different light conditions will require different plants if you want your garden to thrive.

Full Shade

The back of my house faces northeast. It gets a bit of reflected light but virtually no direct sunlight. A five-foot-deep bed lies between a stone walkway and the house. I have had success edging this bed with shiny-leaved European wild ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) and fuzzy, ruffle-leaved lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*). Lady's mantle sends up drifts of chartreuse flowers in early June. This bed also contains coral bells 'Purple Palace' (*Heuchera*), twinleaf (*Jeffersonia diphylla*) and several varieties of hosta. Coral bells 'Purple Palace' flowers are not significant, but their leaves add an accent of bronzy red. Twinleaf's eight-petaled, white flowers appear in late May for just a day or two. Twinleaf's double leaves add a quirky interest to the bed, fluttering daintily like butterfly's wings. Watch for their seed pods, which look like tiny lidded trash barrels. As their seeds spread, little groupings of twinleaf will appear throughout the bed. Miniature goatsbeard (*Aruncus aethusifolius*) has delicate, lacy foliage. It has also produced many offspring. Old-fashioned bleeding heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*) creates a sensation of pink and white blooms from early May to mid-June. White false indigo (*Baptisia leucantha*) grows into a large mound and balances the wide-spreading bleeding heart. The vivid green foliage is worthwhile even after the white, pea-shaped blooms are spent.

Medium Shade

Like many houses in Newton, my property is bordered by trees. These trees create a woodland atmosphere with dappled sunlight. Wildflowers thrive in these conditions. Edging plants

include Canadian wild ginger (*Asarum canadensis*), bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*), and lungwort (*Pulmonaria saccharata*). Wild ginger produces maroon flowers close to the soil. It is thought that beetles pollinate this plant. Two of my favorite lungwort varieties are the silver-leaved 'British Sterling' and the silver-spotted leaves of 'Mrs. Moon'. Lungwort blooms in early spring. The flowers begin as pink and turn to sky-blue. When lungwort is happy in its surroundings, you will be gifted with many little lungworts to transplant. *Epimedium* grows in dry conditions where little else will survive. It comes in many varieties, from the larger red-blooming *Epimedium rubrum* to the more delicate white-blooming *Epimedium x youngianum*. Foam flower (*Tiarella*) is one of my favorite shade plants. Many attractive varieties are available including 'Jeepers Creepers' and 'Tiger Stripe'. Their pinkish-white flower spires create a wave of loveliness in the spring. Wild bleeding heart's (*Dicentra eximia*) pink blooms appear from late spring until fall. False Solomon's seal (*Smilacina racemosa*) puts on a show in the spring with clusters of fragrant white flowers at the ends of their arched stems and with berries that turn bright red in the fall. Background plants include four-foot tall, white-blooming goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*), three- to six-foot tall snakeroot (*Cimicifuga racemosa*, renamed "Actaea") with its white flowering spires, and five-foot tall great Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum commutatum*).

Sun

The horseshoe-shaped bed in the middle of my backyard receives the most sun. This is where two groupings of peonies flourish. One group of an unknown variety, inherited with this property, has flowers that are soft pink edged in red. The other grouping is *Paeonia 'Festiva Maxima'* with white petals edged in red. Wild geraniums (*Geranium maculatum*) and many varieties of columbines pop up in different locations. I've "borrowed" columbine seeds from many neighbors and friends to scatter in this bed. Red Oriental poppies, also inherited with the property, create a big splash of color in the beginning of June. Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica*), bearded iris, daylilies and Sedum 'Autumn Joy' fill out the bed. False blue indigo (*Baptisia pendula*) creates a shrub-like mound, and a big stand of switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) creates an off-centered exclamation point behind the sedum.

Of course there are far too many perennials to mention or include in any one particular garden, so I wish you all happy hunting at your local garden centers. Enjoy the many possibilities and be sure to read the plant tags to see what light conditions your new plants prefer. There are many excellent perennial reference books. *Native Plants for North American Gardens* by Allan M. Armitage and *Gardening with Perennials Month by Month* by Joseph Hudak are two of my favorites.

— Beth Schroeder – bsw1@comcast.net

Help Keep Dog Waste Out of Our Waterways!



If you take a close look at the grates for storm drains throughout the city, you will note small plaques that caution “Don’t Dump! Drains to Stream” or “Don’t Dump! Drains to Crystal Lake.” Rain water flows across our lawns and streets, enters the storm drains, runs through underground pipes, and empties into local ponds, the Charles River, or one of its tributaries within hours. In contrast, water that soaks into the ground takes days and weeks to filter through the soil and reach the lake. On the way, impurities are removed from the water by the process of filtration.

On water’s quick trip through the storm drain system, there is no way for those impurities to be removed, and they enter local waterways. Some sources of pollution such as the phosphorus from roads can be hard to control, but there is one source of pollution that is easy to control: dog waste left on the ground near storm drains and bags of dog waste that are dropped into the grates of the storm drains.

Maria Rose, Newton’s Environmental Engineer, reports that “the Department of Public Works often finds bagged dog waste inappropriately deposited into our storm drains.” Larry Beals of Beals Associates, a local engineering and land-use consultant, describes a recent project in another city. “The stream had a number of storm water discharge points up-stream where storm water run-off that was collected in the Town’s system was discharged to the stream. In some stretches, the stream had undercut its embankment, exposing a number of tree roots. These roots created a screening effect and strained various items from the storm water as it flowed in the stream channel. While performing the survey, we were in the stream channel and could look up under the embankment and the number of blue bags full of dog feces was astounding. There were literally hundreds of bags trapped within the roots, not to mention the ones that actually made it into the lake.”

Ms. Rose explained that Public Works often discovers dumped dog-waste bags when they test the storm system’s outfalls into the Charles River and our streams for a variety of pollutants. When they get high reading of *E. coli*, their first reaction is to check the catch basins upstream to see whether the readings are caused by dog waste dumped there. Frequently, that is the cause. Thus, putting the bags into the drains not only endangers the quality of the water in the Charles and other waterways but also costs the city time and money to track down the problem.

Dog waste that enters our waterways can pose a danger to humans: not only *E. coli* (for which the city routinely tests)

but also *Campylobacter*, *Streptococcus*, *Salmonella*, and worms can be found in dog waste and be transmitted to the water where people swim. There is danger to the animals and plants that live in the water, too. Once it is in the water, dog waste begins to decompose. That process uses oxygen from the water, which is crucial for fish and plant life, and converts the nitrogen from the waste into ammonia, which is toxic to fish. Algae thrive in that environment and further degrade the water quality.

What are the solutions to this problem? First, we need to help to educate Newton residents—and dog owners in particular—about how our storm drains work. Ms. Rose has provided the Clerk’s Office with post cards (“Please Scoop the Poop!”) for owners renewing their dog licenses. These cards also were included in a special mailing to all dog owners regarding the new off-leash dog parks. She also distributes another card that explains, “Make the Connection! Storm Drains Empty into Waterways!” Two strategies for further consideration are marking storm drains with a more explicit warning not to dispose of pet waste in the drains and increasing the number of “waste baskets” in public places. San Francisco has an “only rain down the drain” campaign and has installed nets in storm drains to catch waste. Finally, Ms. Rose suggests that anyone who sees any inappropriate items dumped in the storm drains report it to the city’s Customer Service department at 617-796-1000 or via the city’s 311 system.

✎ Elizabeth Wilkinson

Newton Lower Falls Rail-to-Trail Greenway Update



I am happy to report that the conversion of the old former rail corridor and bridge over the Charles River at Newton Lower Falls into a pedestrian path is nearly complete. The bridge has been de-leaded and the decking and railings installed, as you can see in the image taken late this winter. The pathway, stretching between Concord Street in

Newton and Washington Street in Wellesley, will be finished and accessible this spring. We look forward to residents and visitors enjoying a pleasant stroll to the river and over the bridge for shopping and services in Wellesley.

As people come to appreciate the trail, I'm sure that neighbors in the Lower Falls community will be interested in extending the greenway trail over the entire length of this former rail corridor stretching all the way to the Riverside MBTA station. This would further enhance walking and bicycling recreation, as well as offer car-free access to public transportation.

This project was accomplished through the efforts of a coalition of community groups, including the Newton Conservators, along with the Newton Bicycle/Pedestrian Task Force, the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission, and the Charles River Watershed Association. We collaborated with the DCR to contribute money toward completion of the bridge design, to provide input to the pathway, and to promote funding the project under the state's Accelerated Bridges Program.

The success of other local rail trails, such as the Minuteman in Lexington, has shown the dramatic improvements in recreational opportunities and increases in neighborhood value that result. Having a local human-friendly greenway trail and access to open spaces will benefit neighborhood health, personal interaction, and relaxation. I look forward to our continued collaboration on advancing additional rail trail projects in Newton during the very near future. Thanks!

George Kirby
Chair, Newton Bicycle/Pedestrian Task Force

Recycle Styrofoam, Reuse and Donate at Rumford Avenue



Not everything we want to see re-used can be recycled at curbside. Some materials, including clean, white styrofoam, are not curbside-ready but are accepted at the Rumford Avenue Depot. The Depot also accepts cell phones and chargers, mercury containing devices, fluorescent bulbs, paint, printer cartridges, and vehicle batteries. For a complete list go to www.newtonma.gov/dpw/recycling.

The city also has a recycle, reuse and donate list. You can post your items to sell, swap or give away on 2good2waste.com/Newton

Please follow these guidelines when visiting the Rumford Avenue Depot:

- Proof of Residency required; please be prepared to show ID.
- If you are not sure where something goes or if it is accepted at the Depot, please check with the attendant. You can also check the Web site before going, to see what is accepted: http://www.newtonma.gov/DPW/recycling/depot/accepted_depot.htm
- Please do not leave any materials loose or on the ground. All materials accepted for recycling must be placed in the appropriate container.
- The styrofoam recycling project is only accepting clean, white styrofoam pieces. Any large pieces MUST be broken up and placed completely inside the designated container. If you need assistance, please check with the attendant. Do not leave styrofoam loose on the ground.
- The Recycling Depot is for recycling ONLY and does not accept trash.
- Hazardous Waste Collections are only on Wednesdays from 7:30am-12:30pm. Collections continue through October 13th, with one final Saturday collection on Saturday, October 16th. For more information on accepted materials, please see the Web site: http://www.newtonma.gov/DPW/recycling/hazardous_waste/HHW_days.htm

Alison Leary

Invasives Removal— Spring 2011 Update



Ted Kuklinski

As the Spring Walks schedule shows, in May we will continue with invasives removal sessions, at Cold Spring Park, Dolan Pond, Saw Mill Brook Conservation Area, and Blue Heron Bridge.

Japanese knotweed will be addressed later in the season, but first we concentrate on garlic mustard (GM) before it

goes to seed. This year the NewtonServes date of May 15 is perfect for GM pulling, so we are taking advantage and have three NewtonServes invasives sessions on that date.

Our efforts are making a huge difference! We have found that in the areas worked on in the past, there is less GM. The critical thing is to keep up a steady effort. May is prime GM pulling month. Please monitor your yard and your neighborhood, and get the GM out before it takes hold. Bag and dispose in trash—NOT yard waste. Re-visit areas for stragglers and plants that have bolted.

Katherine Howard



Update from Newton Tree Conservancy

Tree activities are in full swing.

Tree Steward Training

—We continued our classes in March and April, with sessions on tree planting and tree pruning. Volunteer pruning sessions occur monthly spring through fall.



Community Tree Plantings

—60 trees will be planted in five neighborhoods

(Manet, Rotherwood, Bowen, Morton, Fessenden). Planting dates are Saturday mornings, April 23 and April 30. Your help those mornings would be much appreciated! More info on our Web site (<http://newtontreeconservancy.org/newsevents/index.html>).

Arbor Day is April 29. NTC will participate, along with Green Decade and Whole Foods, in Newton Community Pride’s annual program that gives seedlings to all third graders in Newton.

NTC Directors—This past year brought the resignations, reluctantly accepted, of Jay Berkson, Doug Dickson, and Deb Howard. Without them, Newton would not have its tree program or the NTC itself. We are very grateful for the hard work and support for trees over so many years from these wonderful contributors, and wish them all the very best. We are also happy that we have been able to add to our ranks three new directors: Penny Caponigro, Barbara Darnell, and Beth Wilkinson. Thanks to them for stepping up yet again—for trees, for Newton, for the planet! There are still vacancies on the Tree Commission, and there is plenty of room for more help with the NTC. We would welcome your involvement.

✎ *Katherine Howard*
President, Newton Tree Conservancy

Newton Conservators Spring/Summer Lectures

Photo Lecture on Birds by Brooks Mathewson

Tuesday June 14th 7:30 p.m.

Newton Free Library – Druker Auditorium

Brooks Mathewson is an outstanding bird educator and photographer. The program is co-sponsored by the Newton Free Library.

Darwin Lecture by Ned Friedman,

Director of the Arnold Arboretum

Monday June 27th 7 p.m.

Newton Free Library – Druker Auditorium

Professor Friedman will speak on Darwin and the origin of flowering plants. As he noted on the Arnold Arboretum’s Web site: “Charles Darwin spent a lifetime studying the big questions of evolutionary biology, and he was baffled by the origin of flowering plants. Recent advances in the fossil record offer clues to understanding what these plants looked like, where they lived, and how they reproduced. We will explore what Darwin termed ‘the abominable mystery.’”

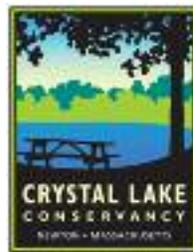
Ned Friedman is Arnold Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology and Director of the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University. The program is co-sponsored by Newton Tree Conservancy and Newton Conservators.

My Green Manifesto by David Gessner

Thursday July 14th 7:30 p.m.

Newton Free Library – Druker Auditorium

David Gessner will discuss his “call for a new environmentalism, inspired by a conoe trip down the Charles River with Dan Driscoll.” David Gessner is a noted nature writer. This will also be a book signing.



Crystal Lake Study

Crystal Lake Lovers—Enjoy the lake with us and help secure its future!

The Crystal Lake Conservancy needs volunteers now for Spring & Summer Environmental study activities:

- Watershed Survey (land based)
- Lake Water Testing (on the lake)

For more information please contact Jean Artin by phone at 617-527-0497 or by email at jeanartin@rcn.com.

Visit our Web site at www.crystallakeconservancy.org.

**Please note walks meet at different times. Some trips are weather dependent.
Contact trip leader if in doubt.**

Saturday April 16 — 9:00am

Bird Walk along Charles River with Waltham Land Trust

Trip Leaders: Alison Leary Mooradian and Ted Kuklinski (617-821-5619).

Join us for a spring bird walk on the upriver trails of the Charles between Waltham and Auburndale. We'll be looking for early spring migrants, lingering winter ducks, and our resident species. This event is co-sponsored with the Waltham Land Trust. Meet at the Watch Factory Parking Lot on Crescent St.



PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Saturday May 7 — 10:00am – 12 noon

Garlic Mustard Pull at Cold Spring Park

Trip leader: Katherine Howard (617-527-1796).

Garlic Mustard, a non-native species high on federal/state Plant Invaders list, is taking hold in our backyards, parks, forests and conservation areas. It quickly covers low light forested areas, shading out other plants, chemically altering the soil to inhibit growth of competitor plants, and altering the habitat for native insects such as butterflies. But where it is just starting to invade, it is easy to be rid of it. It is a biennial easily identified and pulled when the second year plants are flowering in May/June. If not pulled, each plant will scatter hundreds to thousands of seeds later in the season that will become first year plants the next year, and also remain as viable seeds for several more years. It is easy and fun to get it out! We will pull along the Cochituate aqueduct walk. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided; the plants must be disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the Duncklee St. entrance, at the Newton Highlands side of the park.



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

Sunday May 8 — 8:00am

Nahanton Park Mother's Day Bird Walk

Trip Leader: Alison Leary (617-821-5619).

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. Likely finds include brightly colored warblers, vireos, and orioles. Also expect bluebirds, scarlet tanagers, swallows and brown thrashers. Enter the park at the Nahanton Street entrance next to the river. Parking is available inside the park. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Boots are recommended. Walk will be cancelled in steady rain. Co-sponsored with Friends of Nahanton Park.



PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Sunday May 15 — 10:00am – 12 noon

Garlic Mustard Pull at Dolan Pond. A NewtonServes Project.

Trip Leader: Ted Kuklinski (617-332-7753).

See May 7th garlic mustard pull information. We are close to eradicating this soil-damaging invasive from this gem of a pocket park. We will mix in some general nature study so bring binoculars and hand lenses for observing birds, bugs, flowers, and a good variety of pond life. Meet at Dolan Pond conservation area in W. Newton. Street parking is available near the four entrances at Auburndale Avenue, Webster Park, Stratford and Cumberland.



PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Garlic Mustard Pull at Saw Mill Brook Park. A NewtonServes Project.

Trip Leader: Katherine Howard (617-527-1796).

See May 7th description of garlic mustard. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Meet at parking lot on Vine Street.



PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Sunday May 15 — 10:00am – 12 noon

Garlic Mustard Pull at Blue Heron Bridge. A NewtonServes Project.

Trip leader: Eric Olson (617-872-9928).

Fourth year at this bridge site, helping the Trustees of the Reservations with their stewardship of the floodplain forest. We will again mix in some general nature study, so bring binoculars, an insect net, and hand lens if you have them. Park at the Pleasant St. Super Stop 'N' Shop parking lot in Watertown at the corner farthest from the store. This spot is directly in front of you as you enter the parking lot from Pleasant St. There is a path entrance there. Turn left and follow path to the bridge.

Saturday May 21 — 8:00am

Birding and Boating Trip at Nahanton Park*

Trip Leader: Pete Gilmore (617-969-1513). Note: rain date is Sunday May 22.

Join us for a leisurely canoe/kayak trip investigating bird life along the banks of the Charles River from Charles River Canoe & Kayak's location in Nahanton Park. This is a lovely 15-mile stretch of the Charles, where paddlers can enjoy 13 miles of calm water from upstream of Dedham Ave. in Needham to Silk Mill Dam at Newton Upper Falls. Almost all the shoreline is forest or marsh, and much of it is protected parkland. We can expect to see shorebirds like spotted sandpipers, great blue herons, common egrets, and several species of warblers, as well as raptors like red tailed and red shouldered hawks. Canoes/kayaks can be put in the water from this parking lot. Dress appropriately. A hat, sunscreen, snacks and drinks are recommended. Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance next to the river. Parking is available inside the park. Co-Sponsored with Friends of Nahanton Park.



PHOTO: RICHARD DANCA

Saturday May 21 — 10:00am – 12 noon

Follow up Garlic Mustard Pulls (Blue Heron Bridge and/or other locations TBD).

Trip leaders: Eric Olson (617-872-9928) and Katherine Howard (617-527-1796).

See May 15th notice of Blue Heron Bridge and parking instructions. Check with leaders; locations near the Bridge will be chosen depending on where the need is greatest. We may be several hundred yards away from the Bridge so call the phone numbers provided, if you arrive a bit late.



PHOTO: STEVEN SULEWSKI

Sunday June 5 — 10:00am – 12 noon

Japanese Knotweed Pull at Hammond Pond

Trip leader: Eric Olson (617-872-9928).

Japanese Knotweed is a bamboo-like invader from Asia that can create dense 8' tall single-species stands. Knotweed is a tough adversary because any small root fragments we leave behind will spring back to life the following year. Government scientists are seeking biological control agents for this species in Asia but presently, 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 adjacent to pond and within view of the former Macy's store.



PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Sunday June 5 — 2:00pm

Canoe/Kayak Trip at Nahanton Park*

Trip leader: Bill Hagar (617-964-2644).

Join us for a canoe trip from Charles River Canoe & Kayak's location in Nahanton Park. (See May 21 description of "Birding and Boating" Trip and what to bring). Thunderstorms will cancel the trip. Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance next to the river. Parking is available inside the park. Co-sponsored with Friends of Nahanton Park.



PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Sunday June 12 — 2:00pm

Newton Aqueducts Hike

Trip leader: Henry Finch (617-964-4488).

This is a very popular 4-6 mile hike through woods, meadows and fields along the Newton sections of the Sudbury and Cochituate aqueducts. Parts of the paths traverse close to backyards, so hikers do need to be respectful of private property. 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 (Wyman St.).

*** Newton Conservators members get a 10% discount on canoe & kayak rentals.**

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



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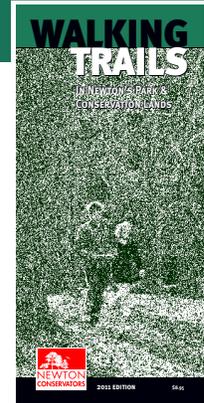
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We have just published an updated and revised guide, *Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands*.

Wonderful spring gift ideas!



Shop online at www.newtonconservators.org/books.htm to purchase Newton Conservators publications.
Discounts for members: *Almanac* is \$15.95 + shipping and the *Trail Guide* is \$7.95 + shipping.

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 50 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 April. 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 ericgreen@tiac.net. Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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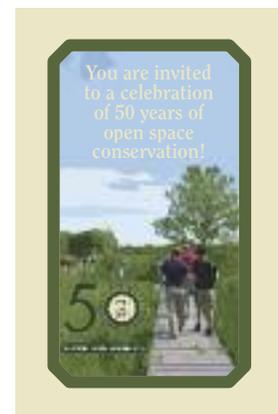
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*Join us for dinner,
a silent auction and our vision
for the next 50 years.
May 25th – 6:00 PM*