NEWTON CONSERVATORS
WINTER ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

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

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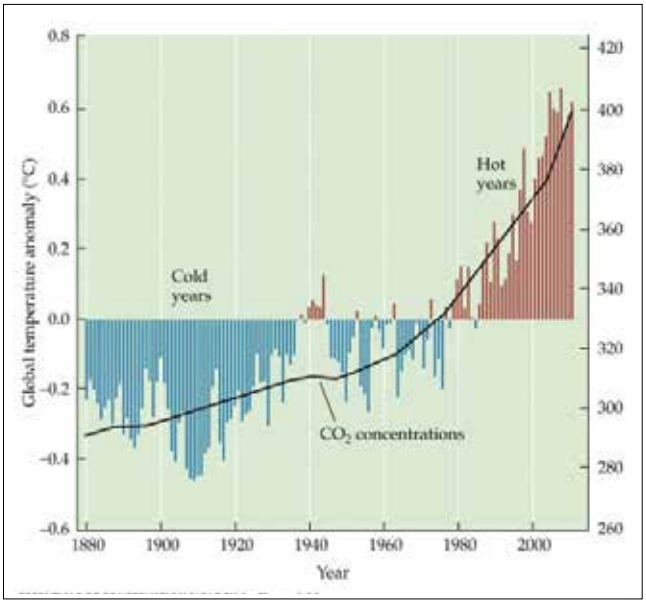
Climate Change: What It Means for Newton and How We Can Help

By Richard Primack, Professor of Biology at Boston University

In October 2012 Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast of the United States. It took the lives of almost 300 people and caused billions of dollars worth of damage. It submerged much of the New York City subway system, disrupted electrical power for millions, and required months for recovery. Boston narrowly missed Sandy's 13-foot storm surge, but someday we likely won't be so lucky—and climate change will be a contributing factor.



Over the past 130 years, global temperatures and carbon dioxide levels have been rising. From Essentials of Conservation Biology, 6th Edition. Used with permission of Sinauer Associates.

When I began studying climate change in 2002, the effects here in eastern Massachusetts were much less obvious than they are now. We can see that many aspects of our lives are changing as a result of a warming climate. For example, ice skating on Newton ponds in winter—a favorite memory of my childhood—has become increasingly rare because of inadequate ice.

Some of the changes caused by a warming climate are mere inconveniences. Others are changing parts of our communities and family life in ways that affect us deeply and help define who we are. I grew up walking and exploring the Hammond Woods in between Newton Center and Chestnut Hill. I found my calling as a botanist in those woods, and I hoped to pass this passion for nature and exploration on to our children. But I was faced with a new danger in Lyme disease, which is spreading and intensifying in part because of a warming climate that extends the tick season earlier in the spring and later in the autumn. I still took my kids exploring in the woods, followed by tick checks, but many parents do not—they fear ticks and the health problems of Lyme disease. That loss of time in the woods, which used to be so important to Newton's children, saddens me.

Given the magnitude of the impacts, climate change can feel overwhelming, and it can seem like we are helpless to do anything about it. But we can respond. In what follows, I will describe some of the basics about climate change here in Newton and the Boston area–and how we can address this pressing situation.

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What does "climate change" really mean?

Bird's-foot Violet

The best known, and in some ways most important, characteristic of climate change is that the world is getting warmer. Over the past 100 years, the global temperature has increased by 1.4 degrees F. That may not seem like much, but nine of the ten warmest years on record globally have occurred since 2000. Some cities like Boston have warmed much more than average because they have the dual effects of both global warming and warming due to the growth of the city.

It can be hard to see or feel this change because not every year is warmer than the last, and we still get cold days and cold stretches—remember the record cold weather during the winter and spring of 2014—but abnormally warm days, months, and seasons are much more common now than they were in the past. Newton residents may have noticed the increasing number of days and nights that they need to cool their houses with air conditioners.

Red Oak

This rise in global temperatures is being driven by the increasing atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases, caused by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, natural gas, and oil. Greenhouse gases in the atmosphere act like a transparent blanket on the Earth: they let sunlight pass through but prevent some of the resulting heat from leaving Earth's atmosphere. We need some greenhouse gases in the atmosphere in order to make the Earth a pleasant place to live. However, just like having too many blankets on your bed leads to feeling too hot in the middle of the night, putting too much of these greenhouse gases into the atmosphere is starting to make the Earth too warm.

These increases in heat-trapping gases and warming temperatures, in turn, affect lots of other parts of our climate system and our world. Patterns of precipitation and storms are changing: some places are getting drier, others wetter—sea ice and glaciers are melting; sea levels are rising; and the oceans are becoming more acidic. These changes affect our natural ecosystems and also human necessities such as where and how we grow crops, the reliability of our water supplies, where and how we build roads and buildings, how we preserve our national parks and conservation lands, and how we manage pests, diseases, and allergies and maintain our own health.

Lady Slipper Orchid

For people living in Boston, the easiest way to "see" these changes in climate is in the earlier flowering and leafing out of plants and the earlier appearance of birds, bees, butterflies and other animals in the spring. Spring events are happening a week or more earlier than they were in the past. You can literally see these changes by looking at historical photographs or museum specimens or by reading old journals, including those of the Henry David Thoreau. I describe many of these changes in my new book, *Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau's Woods*. One of the most striking examples for me is the pink lady's slipper orchid; thirty to forty years ago, this beautiful woodland orchid typically opened its first flowers in mid to late May. Now it often flowers in the first week of May.

The particular problem of sea level rise.

For Boston and coastal New England, the rising sea level is an especially serious threat. Over the past 100 years, the global sea level has risen by about 8 inches. This is due to two features of climate change: first, water expands as it warms and takes up a larger volume, a phenomenon called thermal expansion, and, second, warmer temperatures are melting the world's glaciers and the polar ice caps. It is estimated that by the year 2100, sea levels will be 1 to 3 feet higher than today and perhaps as much as 6 feet higher.

Monarch Butterfly

Much of Boston is built on former mud flats and tidal marshes along the Charles River, the Mystic River, and inside Boston Harbor, including much of the Back Bay, Allston, Brighton, East Boston, Cambridge, Everett, Charlestown, Somerville, and other areas. These low-lying sections of the city are currently protected from storm surges by sea walls, the Charles River dam and the Mystic River dam. However, these barriers to the sea were designed to withstand hurricanes from the last century. As the sea level rises and as hurricanes

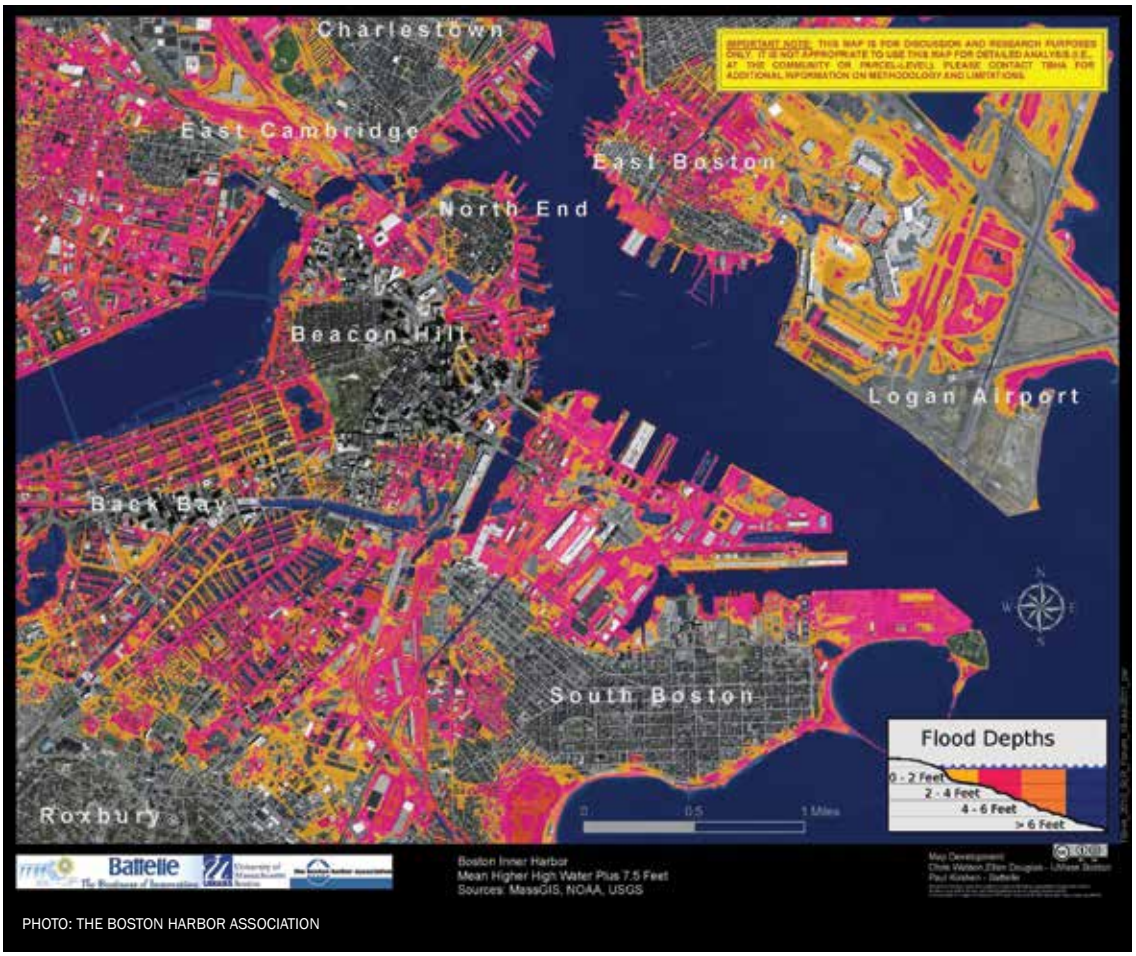

PHOTO: THE BOSTON HARBOR ASSOCIATION

Areas vulnerable to flooding are highlighted in color in this map of the Inner Harbor of Boston; the Charles River basin is shown in the upper left.

become more intense, there is greater likelihood that future storm surges similar to Hurricane Sandy will overwhelm the sea walls and dams that protect Boston. In this scenario, all of the lands previously covered by seawater at high tide will be vulnerable to flooding, causing massive damage and disruptions to metropolitan Boston.

What can we do?

The most important thing that we, as individuals, can do to deal with climate change is to get involved. New Englanders have a tradition of civic engagement and of being adaptable and innovative. We have many organizations, such as the Newton Conservators, that can be leaders in dealing with climate change—and Boston is a hub for academic research and practical thinking.

Some of the solutions for dealing with climate change are daunting but not impossible. We can contact our state and federal representatives and agencies to voice our support for both national and international policies and actions that stabilize and reduce the production of carbon dioxide and protect our communities and the environment in the future. We should also encourage the efficient use of energy in buildings, private homes, and vehicles. Preparations also need to be made for the near future —for example, we should strengthen and build up seawalls and dams that protect Boston and other low-lying coastal cities; adapt our roads, bridges, buildings, and other infrastructure to changing climate conditions; and adjust our farming, forest management, conservation, and health care to a warming climate and new diseases.

We can also support and participate in research to better understand how climate change is affecting our world. My primary role has been to conduct research and empower citizen scientists to contribute their observations of the natural world. In my research, I have used our wealth of historical journals, photographs, and naturalist records to examine how plants and animals are responding to climate change. The residents of the Boston area have compiled some of the longest, most valuable records in North America of flowering, bird migrations, ice out and other natural phenomena. These local observations are valuable to scientists around the world. You can contribute too, by participating in new web-based citizen science projects such as eBird, FeederWatch, Nature's Notebook, and iNaturalist.

We cannot stop climate change overnight, but by getting involved, monitoring what is happening, supporting local actions to reduce greenhouse gases, and adapting to changing conditions—as New Englanders always have—we can take the lead in dealing with the threat of climate change. ■

You can read more about Dr. Primack's research on his lab's website: bu.edu/biology/people/faculty/primack/
Also check his research blog: primacklab.blogspot.com

President's Message

As the new year begins, the Conservators board has great plans and projects for the next twelve months, and we hope that you'll join in on some of the activities listed below.

- It's time for our popular Trail Guide to be updated. We've been walking the trails and making notes about things that should be added or changed. If you noticed any errors or think that something new should be added to a map, please let us know.
- Robert Warren, the Managing Director for Conservation for the Trustees of Reservations, will be the speaker at the annual meeting and dinner on Wednesday, May 6. Please mark the date on your calendars now, and there will more information in the spring issue of the newsletter.
- We're also planning a new half-day event at Nahanton Park on Saturday, June 6! It will include a variety of walks and activities. It will be a terrific day for conservation-minded folks of all ages to join together to enjoy nature and one of Newton's under-utilized parks. See the notice for more details!
- In the past, our popular walks have been listed in only the Spring and Fall issues of the newsletter. We've found, however, that sometimes there wasn't enough advanced warning of the events; therefore, we will list the walks for the upcoming season in every issue. There will be more added in the next edition.
- A new section of this newsletter —**What's on Our Website?**— provides information on one of the many features that Webmaster Dan Brody keeps up to date on our website. Each newsletter will spotlight a different section of the site with which you might not be familiar. Look, also, for our new **Book Corner**, in which readers can let the rest of us know about nature/conservation books that they recommend. We'd love to know what you've been reading.
- Finally, we're delighted that biologist and climate-change expert Dr. Richard Primack took time from his research to write our cover story on climate change in Newton and what you can do to help to ameliorate it.

Happy 2015!

Beth Wilkinson

Prepare for spring...

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 $6.95 + shipping. Buy today!

Caching, Bird Memory and Us

If you watch your feeders now and see a White-breasted Nuthatch coming for sunflower seeds, you may notice that this upside-down artist will return frequently. What a greedy little bird! If you can continue to watch where the nuthatch goes with the seed, you may spot it hiding a sunflower seed under the bark of a nearby tree. Nuthatches will wedge seeds in the crevices of rough-barked trees for future use or will put seeds in crevices temporarily in order to smack them open with their substantial beaks.

The storing of food for future use, known as "caching," is a behavior pattern of quite a few birds. Our local White-breasted Nuthatches and Black-capped Chickadees are two local species that do this.

Black-capped Chickadee

After storing the food, the bird in question has to remember where to return later to look for the stash. In fact, researchers have found that Black-capped Chickadees grow new neurons in the hippocampus area of their brains each fall and winter. This part of bird brains, as well as our brains, is the area where memory functions are located. Presumably the chickadees are increasing memory functions to help find and remember food sources, including their own caches. This research is of interest to us as it was long thought that we could not grow new brain cells.

An Argentinian biologist, Fernando Nottebohm, has worked with canaries and with both wild and captive Black-capped Chickadees. The wild chickadees experienced more brain cell growth than the captive birds. They have more need of spatial memory in the winter to locate food sources. Nottebohm's research has spurred research on human diseases, including Huntington's disease .

The neuronal growth in the canaries was in a different part of the brain: the HVC, the high vocal center. This area of the brain is related to the learning of complex new songs. Thus, birds also grow new neurons as they approach the season of breeding and the singing of their often-complicated songs. One can imagine the amount of new vocal learning in our local young mockingbirds or catbirds.

More research by Nottebohm's group--and at Boston Children's Hospital--has uncovered neuronal stem cells in humans that could help with memory problems such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. These stem cells were found after the ability to remember song was erased in Zebra Finches and then regrew.

The corvid family of birds, the crows and jays and ravens, are very adept at caching food and have pretty amazing memories. Ornithologists have studied some of these species intensely. All three genera have representatives in Newton: we see Blue Jays, American Crows and Northern Ravens.

Blue Jay pairs will stash food and keep it secret from other Blue Jays, chasing them off when necessary. This behavior is more common when food is difficult to find. When there are a lot of feeders around, there is no need for caching. American Crows have similar behaviors, and both Blue Jays and American Crows are silent when they are busy caching food. They don't want to attract attention to their food cupboards.

An ornithologist at the University of Washington, John Marzluff, has shown that not only can crows remember individual human faces, but they can pass along this information socially to the next generation. He had folks wear two different types of masks and go among crows. One sort of masked person trapped the crows. Five years later, the crows remembered the trapping masks and also had taught this to their relatives and offspring. All of these crows got agitated and mobbed the people wearing the trapping masks.

The most amazing memory feats documented in American corvids are those of the Clark's Nutcracker, an audacious and bright jay-like bird of the West. They cache thousands of pine seeds over the summer and depend on remembering where they stored the food in order to make it through the winter. They remember many of the caches and seem to use a system of local landmarks to find the stores.

Northern Ravens may be the most intelligent birds that appear in Newton. The University of Vermont biologist, Bernd Heinrich, has written two fascinating books about ravens, "Mind of the Raven" and "Ravens in Winter." The ravens that have been seen in Newton, so far, have been seen in the spring and summer, when there would be little need for caching.

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Waltham, West Roxbury and Wellesley College are the raven nest sites that are closest to Newton. As I write this article in December, I am hearing a Northern Raven croak along the Cochituate Aqueduct, west of Cold Spring Park. During cold winters in Maine and Alaska, the ravens will follow wolves and human hunters, planning to be the first scavengers at the kill. After eating for the present, they then often cache chunks of meat for the future.

Northern Shrike

Another bird that caches is the Northern Shrike. This small, gray bird turns up in Nahanton Park during the winter. It feeds on insects and small birds and mammals. Shrikes have curved beaks like hawks (which can be seen in the accompanying photograph) but are not closely related to hawks. Shrikes are more closely related to the vireos, which look more like our wood warblers. According to recent research reported in *Science Magazine*, they may have evolved from a distant dinosaur relative that they have in common with the predatory birds we call raptors. Most birds lost the predatory beak, but not the little shrikes. During the winter, a shrike will store extra food by lodging it in the crotch of a tree or hanging it on a thorn. They return later to finish eating the stored food.

Another behavior that is similar to caching is found in the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, which is in the woodpecker family. They drive holes through the bark of tree, to the living layer of cambium cells. The resulting ooze of sap attracts insects to the sweet fluid flow. The sapsuckers then return to dine on the insects. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers are hard to come across during our winters: most of them are south of Newton for the winter. The photo shows a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on a tree that is replete with old sapsucker holes. Some of the holes appear to have been enlarged to get at the insects around them. Both males and females are quite striking birds to see, but it is the males that have the brilliant red throats.. They all have the large beak shown in the picture. ■

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Pete Gilmore

LANNY MCDOWELL'S PHOTOS CAN BE FOUND AT: WWW.LANNYMCDOWELLART.COM

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

NEWTON CONSERVATORS

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Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc.
Visit our website at www.newtonconservators.org if you wish to renew your membership online.

Cedar Waxwing
Photo by Pete Gilmore

A New Year's Resolution to Compost

The New Year is an excellent time to turn over a new leaf – or a potato peeling... a carrot top... or even an apple core. Winter fruits and vegetables provide a bounty for the compost bin, and surprisingly, winter is as good a time as any to start the composting habit.

"For almost nineteen years, we've been happily shrinking our waste via Composting," enthuses Newton consultant and gardener Vanessa McClinchy. "Between composting, re-purposing, and recycling, we're down to the equivalent of one-third of a kitchen trash bag each week and never use yard waste bags, as we compost all of our fallen leaves through the winter. An added bonus has been the legions of happy red worms that keep our composters humming so efficiently that I now donate my extra barrels of 'black gold' to my friends."

But can a resolution to start composting really begin in January? Isn't it too cold? While heat from the external environment helps speed the composting process, it isn't absolutely necessary.

"Heat and worms (mutually exclusive of course) are over-rated in my opinion," says Brandeis ecologist and Green Decade board member Eric Olson. "The real players are bacteria, fungi, and time." Indeed, any organic material you heap untended will, over time, become compost. If you want compost for the next growing season, however, you have to put in a little more effort. You can make a short term bin by drilling multiple holes in an old plastic garbage can or purchase a compost bin from the City of Newton. The City offers two easy-to-assemble designs, both of which can be easily assembled and put into use even in the dead of winter. Visit www.newtonma.gov/gov/dpw/recycling/composting/bin.asp for more info. Any decay will be delayed by cold or freezing but will quickly resume once Spring arrives.

Experienced Newton composters are divided over whether to make or to buy compost bins. Naomi Rush Olson, a West Newton social worker and environmentalist, says she loves the two side-by-side, open-topped, wood bins husband Eric built. "My husband built them by digging cedar posts in at the corners and hammering ubiquitous and affordable boards from old pallets to the sides," she explains. "I like our big open bins because you can usually tuck the food waste under some dry leaves or grass clippings and make them less obvious to neighbors." The front, or façade, of the bins is built a bit lower so that it's easy to get at the compost in process with a pitchfork (Rush Olson favors a lightweight pitchfork with a weather-resistant handle), which "is a fun thing to do when the weather is nice, and doesn't need to be done in winter," she continues. "We add waste to one side until we can't anymore and then switch sides, perhaps two or three times a year, allowing the "full" side to ripen and settle."

"We used the Newton black plastic composters for years and very successfully," says Newtonville pianist Stephanie Rogers, "but we did outgrow them, so my husband built a large triple-bin system out of wood. We can fit anything in there!" The triple binning allows for piles in different stages of "ripeness," or decomposition, so one is always ready for use.

"I love composting – leaves, grass clippings, kitchen waste – but I hated my composter," explains digital journalist and Newton Girls Soccer board member Ralph Ranalli. "It's one of those converted plastic barrels that held olives or whatever. For years and years I coveted one of those ComposTumblers with the fancy crank handle: I would read the Mantis catalogue like some guys read car magazines." Ranalli was at an estate sale last spring when he spied a ComposTumbler in the woman's garden. "On a whim I asked whether it was for sale and it was. I got it for about 1/10 the price of a new one. Stunk up my car on the way home, but you should have seen the smile on my face."

Self-proclaimed "devoted composter" Matt Yospin extols the virtues of his latching rotary composter, which is called into service year 'round. "All our food scraps, lawn clippings, and leaves (I mow them to mulch every fall, mix them with green stuff all year)" find their way into Yospin's composter. When it comes time to plant his extensive vegetable garden in the spring, Yospin need only give his composter one final twirl, and he's in business.

The other thing a new composter will need is a bucket or other container to hold compost fixings in between trips to the pile. "I like having something convenient and attractive in the kitchen to toss our non-greasy, non-meat food waste into," explains Rush Olson. "What had worked best for us is a stainless pail with a handle and a nice simple lid. It fits on our counter without taking up too much space; it's easy to

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE CITY OF NEWTON WEBSITE - BUY A COMPOST BIN

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carry in and outside, easy to rinse out, and the lid means you can close it if need be, which is nice if you have had to get rid of something that spoiled in the fridge."

Eric Olson says that for the home composter, the addition of lots of fall leaf rakings is key, which significantly dilutes "green" material with "brown". By "green" Olson means "nutrient-rich, potentially very fresh, active material that, piled up on its own, would become a soggy and potentially quite smelly mess versus the relatively inert carbon rich material like fallen leaves or hay or shredded paper." In farm settings, he continues, "green" would include "fresh livestock poops of any kind, like chicken litter, and also cow or horse manures, especially when mixed with urine and, thus, quite wet." In a suburban setting, though, "green" means mostly kitchen scraps – but not always.

"We started composting when we bought our first house, 15 years ago," remembers Rogers. "Finally having a yard was the big inspiration but also a wonderful book I happened upon – *Secrets to Great Soil*, one of the Storey Gardening series – totally converted me to the cause." For years, Rogers kept rabbits, "and their bedding and droppings were like rocket fuel for the garden!" Vegetable gardeners might want to avoid using animal waste, however. Rogers' spectacular garden contains only flowers and shrubs – as some home compost piles don't grow hot enough to destroy any animal pathogens.

"Really, composting need not be tricky," says Olson reassuringly. The "turning and recipes can accelerate things, and by having open bins, it's easier to add leaves as needed and monitor for yucky moments when there may be some bad odors being generated. The solution to slimy looking material and odors is always the same: add more leaves (brown) to fluff the mess up and dilute the high nutrient stuff that is prone to produce slime and odors. Keeping some plastic bags or even paper lawn bags of leaves next to the bin is a good practice, you have a handy source of brown as needed."

Former Alderman Greer Tan Swiston is happy to tick off the free benefits composting can provide for all Newton citizens. "It greatly reduces my trash and consumes the coffee grinds from the office, makes use of the trash barrels that became obsolete with the new city barrels and produces some fairly nutrient rich soil every year." Swiston, who composts, "mostly because my mom always did," also finds that her yard is quieter with no leaf blowing. Her family of four produces less trash, only half filling their trash barrel every other week, and, in the fall, "I get a bit of exercise each week... going out to clear out driveway and walkway," of leaves to add to the compost mix.

And then there is the matter of a little neighborly, if not one-upmanship, then persuasion by example. "The difference between our healthy plants – and the number of bees that frequent them – has come to the notice of our neighbor, who will neither compost nor embrace organic seed and growing habits," says Vanessa McClinchy. "We hope to convince him some day!" ■

Margaret Doris

Compostable Items

- Fresh grass clippings
- Shredded leaves
- Kitchen trimmings and peels from vegetables and fruits
- Sawdust (NOT pressure treated)
- Garden discards such as dead flowers and plants
- Vegetable and fruit peelings• Manure (from horses, cows, chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs, hogs or sheep. Do not compost any wastes from dogs or cats.)
- Black and white sections of newspapers (shredded or torn up)
- Torn cardboard or cereal boxes
- Rotted fruits and vegetables
- Pine needles
- Coffee grounds (with or without filters)
- Tea leaves
- Nut shells
- Seafood shells and fish bones
- Cooked rice or pasta
- Egg shells
- Paper napkins and paper towels
- Melon rinds (cut small if possible)
- Dryer lint
- Stale bread
- Expired canned fruit and vegetables
- Soggy breakfast cereal

BOOK CORNER

A review of
Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau's Woods by Richard Primack

In 2001, as Newton resident and BU Professor Richard Primack began to look around Boston for undeniable signs of climate change, he learned that, unbeknownst to most biologists, Thoreau kept detailed records of the plants he found during his walks in the Concord Woods in the mid 1800s and also their bloom times.

Through years of his own walks, Dr. Primack was able to find most of the same plants growing near Walden Pond and around Concord. He decided to observe them to compare the bloom dates noted by Thoreau to those in the present. He embarked on this project with little idea of what would be the result of his comparisons.

As the first natural philosopher and nature writer of the United States, Henry David Throreau has been an inspiration to generations of environmentalists. Thus, it is fitting that Richard Primack went to Thoreau's Walden Pond to look for evidence of climate change

Dr. Primack writes with clarity and grace about what he saw during the five-years he spent walking through the woods: the spotted salamanders in the Concord Woods, the beautiful gossamer-winged butterflies and the ants that farm their caterpillars, and the complicated interdependencies of natural elements such as the red maple tree, the oriole that arrives to nest just as the tree leafs out, the caterpillars that serve as food for the oriole chicks, and the bees that pollinate the violets.

The sum of the effects of the many specific examples lead the author—and us-- to the inescapable conclusion that climate change is here and is having a strongly negative impact on our local environment.

Dr. Primack resolutely decides that he will not limit himself to the status of the observer, to documenting the losses. Instead, he presents a list of "wedges," strategies that all of us can adopt to stabilize the planet's carbon emission levels. How appropriate that Thoreau's basic philosophy is at the core of all of them: to live simply.

I found Dr. Primack's words and approach to be inspiring. In spite of the distressing topic, *Walden Warming* is a pleasure to read. Every page reveals the author's love of nature and his close connection to the plants and creatures of our region.

Beth Wilkinson

MISSION
Newton Conservators, Inc.

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

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

The Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 54 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: Richard Primack, Pete Gilmore, Margaret Doris and Beth Wilkinson. As always, thanks to Doug Leith for his excellent proofreading.

What's On Our Website?

Do you go to our website to learn about upcoming events? Do you turn to NewtonConservators.org to read about recent developments in preserving open space: the construction delays on the Upper Falls Greenway, the status of the floating walkway on Hammond Pond, or the city's plan to purchase Waban Hill Reservoir? Do you check out our website when you're trying to decide which city park to visit?

Our website, NewtonConservators.org, is a good source for all of that information—and much more. Webmaster Dan Brody keeps the information on the site up to date and also has added a wide array of related features and sources. Over the coming year, each issue of this quarterly newsletter will present one of those features.

First, some general background about the organization of the website: when you go to the website, you'll notice that the list of contents on the left side is divided into two sections. The top green section contains all the information about Newton's parklands; the yellow section lists information about the Newton Conservators and related resources.

Our focus this month is on the sixth item in the yellow section: **Images and Videos**.

Newton is fortunate to have many talented visual artists living in the city. Many of them have captured the beauty of the open space that the Conservators strive to preserve. Dan Brody has gathered an array of artwork that depicts Newton landscapes. He also has included links to the artists' websites to facilitate your further exploration.

Do you know of other artists that should be added to this collection? If so, please notify Dan at websitemgr@newtonconservators.org.

"The artist and the photographer seek the mysteries and the adventure of experience in nature."

— *Ansel Adams*

Weston Woods by Dinora Justice

NEWTON ARTIST

Dinora Justice's work is a personal, highly biographical exploration of the complicated relationship between humans and the natural environment. She is a Brazilian artist who received her Master of Fine Arts degree from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston in 2014 and her BFA from the Art Institute of Boston in 2001. She works primarily in painting and video. Dinora has won awards for her work in painting, video/animation and writing. She started exhibiting in solo and group shows in 2002 and is avidly collected in the US and abroad. She lives and works in Newton, MA. Website: www.dinorajustice.com

Donate to the Newton Conservators When Shopping on Amazon.com

Amazon Smile is a program through which Amazon donates .5% of most purchases (yes, $5 of every $1000) to a nonprofit (501c3) organization of your choice.

How do you 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.

Some Conservators board members have been using Smile.Amazon.com for two or three months, and it has worked smoothly. We've already received our first quarterly payment for eligible purchases by a transfer to the Conservators bank account.

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

We are not encouraging members to abandon local shopping (and, in fact, offered our local booksellers a listing on our website to support them). However, if people do make purchases on Amazon, it would be nice to have them benefit us.

Collectively, the donations will add up over time. Our first bonus check was $40. With more members participating, the proceeds will be significant, possibly covering some of the costs of maintenance at our properties.

WALKS SCHEDULE SPRING 2015

www.newtonconservators.org




PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT : SUZETTE BARBIER, MATT BAKKER, SUZETTE BARBIER, DON LUBIN

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

Sunday, May 10 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. 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.

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

Saturday, May 16 at 8:00 AM

Bird Walk at Cold Spring Park (Rain date: May 17th)

This 67-acre parcel has ample wooded areas, open fields, a brook and wetlands. It is one of the places in Newton where you may hear the call of the Great Horned Owl and observe spectacular songbirds like the rose breasted grosbeak and the indigo bunting. Also frequently found at the park are many favorite migrants such as the red eyed vireo, the wood thrush, and a variety of wood warblers. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left, and go to the far end of the parking lot to meet group.

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

Saturday, June 20 from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Fern Walk at Webster Woods (Rain date: June 21)

The Webster and Cohen Conservation areas and the DCR Reservation form a large wooded expanse that stretches from the shopping malls of Route 9 almost to Newton Centre. The woods extend on both sides of Hammond Pond Parkway and both sides of the MBTA Riverside tracks and are home to 20 species of ferns and related plants. We will visit the southeast corner near Hammond Pond and see about a dozen kinds of ferns. Wear long plants to protect against poison ivy and bugs. If you have a hand lens, bring it. Bring any native fern you would like me to identify. Park and meet near the woods behind the shopping center, between the pond and Hammond Pond Parkway.

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

More walks will be added in the Spring issue of the newsletter.

Mark Your Calendar!

New Comprehensive Conservators Event at Nahanton Park on June 6

Everyone is Welcome! Bring your friends and neighbors, too!

Come to enjoy this park, which includes riverfront, community garden plots, meadows, wooded hillsides, wild blackberry bushes, wetlands, a pond, and a plateau overlooking the river valley.

Enjoy talking with other Conservators and learning from our board members and advisors.

Bird Walks starting early in the morning

• Fern Walk led by Don Lubin • Canoe and Kayak Tours • Introduction to Native Plants • Walk to meet the Trees of Nahanton Park • Introduction to Invasive Plants of Newton • Invasive-Plant Pull • Scavenger Hunt for Children

See the Spring Newsletter for more information!

NEWTON CONSERVATORS, INC.
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NEWTON CONSERVATORS

WINTER ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

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

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IN THE WINTER ISSUE:

Swamp Sparrow
Photo by Matt Bakker

Go Green! ...and all the other colors of the rainbow. You can view this newsletter at www.newtonconservators.org/newsletter.htm. To elect not to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, update your membership profile at www.newtonconservators.org