

## CLIMATE CHANGE COMES TO THOREAU'S CONCORD

Climate change means species loss. And the evidence is here, in Concord, according to Richard Primack, who addressed the Newton Conservators at their annual dinner. Henry David Thoreau was a close observer of nature. A hundred and fifty years ago, Thoreau recorded in detail the date for the first spring appearance of various animal and plant species near Walden Pond. By comparing data from Thoreau and new data from a study by their Boston

University research team, Primack and Abraham Miller-Rushing have found much earlier blooming dates or arrival dates for certain migrating species, resulting in mis-synchronization of natural cycles. The result, says Primack, is a dramatic decline in biodiversity from the agrarian Concord of Thoreau to the present, with most of the decline occurring in the past 50 years.

Primack gave a wonderful presentation that covered his laboratory research efforts over the past decade on plant flowering activities. His laboratory group does research on conservation biology and plant ecology, including tropical ecology and climate change biology. He presented his research showing that many plants in the area where Henry David Thoreau once lived are now blooming earlier than at the time of Thoreau's record. The current climate shows a temperature increase of more than two degrees Centigrade. Dr. Primack concludes that this is due to climate change and urbanization.

His laboratory group has been investigating the flora in the Concord area for over five years and has found significant differences in the flowering times of some plant species. In a recent publication (*Ecology* 89(2), 2008, pp. 332-341), he reported that these plants are now flowering, on average, a week earlier than reported by the botanical records by Thoreau and others. He found that plant flowering times are most correlated with mean temperatures in the months before flowering. Many plant species are no longer found in the area; this likely is due to the change in climate. His laboratory group is investigating whether or not the missing species are primarily plants that flower with a particular day length time period instead of plants that are strictly temperature dependent. He also discussed studies that found insects hatching earlier, a trend similar to that for temperature sensitive plants.



# ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

Problems arise with the migration of birds from South America that have their own photoperiod schedule and may arrive too late to effectively start their offspring, as their insect food base has moved to a new life cycle stage. Among the other observations by Primack and his team are these:

- plants flowering eight days earlier than they did 150 years ago
- wood ducks arriving six weeks earlier
- birds from the southeast U.S. arriving earlier, but not birds from South America
- 27% of species observed by Thoreau now extinct
- 36% now rare in Concord
- 21 orchid species in Thoreau's time, versus seven now
- 75% of species native 150 years ago, versus 61% now
- 84 new species
- 243 missing species

Most of Concord in Thoreau's time was cleared land used for agriculture. Rare species in Concord are found in high concentrations at disturbed areas, including the former town dump, rather than at re-forested locations. Primack advocates active management of open spaces to create clearings where species that are now rare can flourish. He also advocates that we assist nature in re-locating species that may be endangered, moving species that historically have made a home in New Jersey or points south to our community and re-locating species from here to points north.



*Richard Primack in the field*

Professor Primack's presentation was particularly well received by the Conservators, who gave him numerous questions to field. It was an exciting evening that was capped by a very moving presentation on the effects of global warming. You can learn more about Professor Primack's research by clicking on his website at Boston University (<http://people.bu.edu/primack/>).

*- William Hagar and Eric Reenstierna*

At the annual dinner, the Newton Conservators made awards to members of the community who have been especially effective in their support of open space.

The Environmentalist of the Year Award was given to the Crystal Lake Conservancy, for its part in helping the city secure the acquisition of two parcels adjacent to the Crystal Lake Bathhouse, for their advocacy for the lake, and for their role in planning for its future. The Conservators joined this group with a \$15,000 grant for study of the lake. Five members of the Conservancy were honored: Janice Bourke, Robert Fizek, Schuyler Larrabee, Sedjan Nedeljkovic, and Barbara Wales.

The Charles Maynard Award, given for advancing the cause of biodiversity, went to David Backer for his leadership of the city's Environmental Sciences program, a summer program of environmental field study for dozens of Newton teens.

Three Directors' Awards were made to individuals:

- Alderman Lisle Baker, for his long-time work on behalf of open space interests, most recently involving a Conservation Restriction for the Commonwealth Golf Course, to protect it as open space in perpetuity;
- Carol Stapleton of the Newton Parks and Recreation Department; and
- Susan Avery, head of the Conservators' Land Management Committee, for her leadership of a group that has made detailed records of species present at all Newton's major open spaces.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

*Outgoing President Beth Schroeder delivered this address at the Newton Conservators' Annual Dinner.*

In the past year, the Newton Conservators welcomed two new board members to our group: Willis Wang and Alison Leary. We also welcomed returning board member Mike Clarke. We were pleased to be a co-sponsor of the

Newton Tree Conservancy (NTC). Our board member, Katherine Howard, is serving as NTC president.

The Land Management Committee, chaired by Sue Avery, continues to monitor Newton's open spaces and to work on the Newton Almanac – to be published this fall. Jane Sender and Larry Burdick began a land stewardship program, which includes yearly visits to properties with conservation restrictions. Board members and advisors will be invited to come along on these walks in the future.

Eric Reenstierna has been editing and publishing our quarterly newsletter. Ted Kuklinski has continued to inform us with his e-news. Our Web site is better than ever, thanks to the talents of Dan Brody. Frank Howard has continued to film our endeavors, most recently filming the planting of new trees by the Newton Tree Conservancy.

The Trails Committee, headed by Henry Finch, will begin adding signage to trails in Newton. The Newton Conservators have an especially long and interesting list of spring walks for the public this year, coordinated by Alison Leary.

The Newton Conservators have a new computer-friendly logo, designed by Pat Robinson. This is the first logo change since our original logo was designed by Jean Husher in 1961. Our membership list has been updated to an automated system that allows members to join online. Jane Sender, Katherine Howard, and Dan Brody made this possible. The Newton Conservators adopted a Conflict of Interest policy.

Last November the Newton Conservators submitted a broad "wish list" of goals to the Community Preservation Committee. Grant Committee members Bill Hagar, Alison Leary, Margaret Albright, and Willis Wang approved six grants: cold frames at Newton North High School; trail marking at Cabot Woods by NNHS students; an organic garden for Oak Hill School; a community garden at Lincoln-Elliott School; a harvest garden at Ward School; and scholarship funds for the Environmental Science Program.

The Newton Conservators supported rebuilding of the Lower Falls DCR Bridge Preservation Project, contributing \$4,000. We thank Larry Smith for diligently following up on this project. We contributed \$15,000 to the Crystal Lake Master Plan and accepted a conservation restriction on this property. We thank Ted Kuklinski for working toward the success of this project. We are about to accept a conservation restriction to protect the Commonwealth Golf Course. An escrow fund will be

created to help protect this property. Special thanks go to Willis Wang for working on this project.

- Beth Schroeder



*Outgoing President Beth Schroeder (left) and Incoming President Jane Sender  
- photo by Frank Howard*

## GRANTS

The annual dinner was a wonderful evening. Particular interest was centered around the poster presentations of student research projects that were funded by the Conservators. Students stood by their posters in the front of the dining room and took questions on their projects.

Nona Barnicle presented the work she and Franka Godenzi did to install directional signs at Cold Spring Park for walkers, joggers, and naturalists. Cabot Woods maps and signage will allow more participatory exercise/education for both young and old alike. These students also focused on the history of the area, overlapping the theme in their Advanced Placement history class.

Sophie Duncan constructed a cold frame and grew vegetables in the cold months for a jump start of the normal growing season. This cold frame project at the Newton Angino Community Farm used a variety of cold sensitive plants. Funds from the Conservators' grant were used to build a cold frame that increased the growing season for vegetables from late winter to spring using only the rays from the sun to provide plants with required light for photosynthesis while also to maintaining temperature with the infrared light. Cold frames have clear tops -

usually glass - which allows the sun's light to penetrate and provide the energy and heat (trapped infrared light) necessary for growth. The choice of cold-hardy greens including Swiss chard, spinach, arugula and kale provided dietary treats for all. The use of a solar powered automatic vent prevented overheating of the frame contents. Sophie was able to use the plants in this study for many tasty salads.

The Oak Hills middle school organic garden project was presented by Courtney Beckerman and Jessica Wadden. (It was too late an evening for the middle school children to attend.) Initial steps were taken to set up the organic garden to be used by students and staff at the Oak Hill School. The entire school community is collaborating to gather vegetative material from the cafeteria and elsewhere for composting. After composting, this organic fertilizer will be used to nurture a garden of vegetables and flowers that will be subsequently grown in the garden plot. Personnel from the Newton Angino Community Farm helped with the gardening process. Planned additions to some school lessons will connect the garden with the educational process. This linking of biology topics to real gardening experiences will augment and enhance the students' knowledge of the process for years to come.

Erin Fan and Bing Wang, Newton North High School students, initiated an anti-litter campaign. Their project title was "The Impact of Litter on the Environment," and their poster was filled with attached litter items that are found discarded on our roadways and parks. Their project was to make people more aware of litter pollution. Funds were used to support an education theme that educated students and residents about the harmful effects of littering to watersheds in particular. Bing and Erin had a logical plan of progression by first testing the water quality of the Charles River at several sites, followed by using that information to educate the community toward public awareness and sustainability. This information increased community knowledge and awareness towards proper sustainability. Most of their activities were spent on educating the public on the harmful effects of plastics that are obscuring our beautiful landscape with cups, bottles and wraps.

The Board of Directors of the Newton Conservators, Inc approved funding of \$2,000 for an Environmental Studies Program Scholarship. The funds were used for student support to participate in this year's summer program. The current Environmental Science Program (ESP) includes hiking trips to Blue Hills, Mount Monadnock and Mount Washington. It allows students to immerse themselves and better understand the environment. The Environmental Science Program's focus on environmental science topics

both inside and outside the classroom provides students with an essential background that will help them and their parents appreciate the local environment. Other activities reinforce the importance of the environment and how best to protect and improve what we have in our environment.

- William Hagar, for the Grants Committee

## TREASURER'S REPORT

It will come as no surprise that 2008 was not a banner year for Newton Conservators' finances. Just as for other not-for-profits, the economy took a toll on our donations and on our investments. Despite this, in many other ways it was still a good year for the Conservators.

We began the year with unrestricted net assets of about \$190,000. By the end of the year, our unrestricted assets were down by \$41,000 to \$149,000. About half of that decline was due to the reduced value of our investments, and the other \$21,000 was due to drawing down on our assets in support of important special projects. We supported Crystal Lake with a \$15,000 planning grant, and we supported the DCR Rail Bridge in Lower Falls with \$4,000 as part of a coalition of cities and organizations.

Before the investment decline and those special projects, our net income from operations was a \$752 deficit, or about "break even." We had \$17,000 of membership dues, gifts, and map sales, lower than in our budget and in prior years. Expenses were about \$18,000, and that included about \$6,500 for grants. In addition to those expenses, we also had our normal operating expenses of insurance, newsletter, and membership development costs.

Investment income declined by \$20,000, driven by decline in the value of our Fidelity index fund. We were also invested in a Money Market account and in Treasury notes, and we did not have losses on those parts of our portfolio.

In addition to the unrestricted assets, we also had activity in donor-restricted funds. Newton Tree Conservancy "spun off" as its own non-profit with \$1,000 of restricted funds. Houghton Gardens expended \$10,000 for grounds improvements. We took in \$2,350 of donations restricted to the Crystal Lake Conservancy effort.

In summary, total unrestricted and restricted net assets ended 2008 at \$208,000, about \$50,000 lower than the previous year.

- Katherine Howard

# AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Newton Conservators' Audit Committee, consisting of Lalor Burdick, Margaret Albright, Peter Kastner, and Eric Reenstierna, met with Katherine Howard, Treasurer, on March 16, 2009. The Committee verified every Balance Sheet account by reconciling beginning and ending balances and by checking transactions during the year. The Committee paid particular attention to the Cash account and verified that transactions were supported by invoices, receipts and/or authorized in the Minutes of Board meetings.

We believe the statements published by the Treasurer present fairly the condition of the organization and wish to thank her for the time and effort she has expended on behalf of the Newton Conservators.

The Committee discussed various filings with the City of Newton, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Internal Revenue Service and believes that the Newton Conservators is in compliance.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lalor Burdick, Chairman, Audit Committee

## SUMMER BIRDS OF COLD SPRING PARK

This spring has been an exciting time for people who keep track of the birds in Cold Spring Park. A rare bird, a Eurasian teal, has been with us for months now. He first appeared in January but was then frozen out by winter ice. He returned and has been around the exertrail, about 100 yards into the Park from the little wooden bridge at the end of the Beacon Street parking area. Haynes Miller, a Conservator, saw him there on May 26<sup>th</sup> with his inamorata, a female mallard. She is three times his size, but they are in the same genus of ducks. He has been regularly intimidating male mallards much larger than he is, to keep this lovely hen for himself.

Eurasian teal are relatively rare here. Three or four are seen in Massachusetts each year. You often are peering at them at a great distance, in the middle of a large flock of our own native green-winged teal. They have different markings that are not easy to see at a distance. Our bird has been close to us for months. This kept a flow of bird-

watchers from around New England streaming into our Park. Eurasian teal do hybridize with our native green-winged teal species. If the Newton Eurasian teal can produce offspring with his mallard lady-love, then we will have some very interesting young ducks around shortly.



- photo by Pete Gilmore

There already has been a hen mallard with 12 little ducklings in the marsh near Beaconwood Road. These were all quite kosher. Keep your eyes alert for a hen mallard with unusual ducklings. You may also watch for wood duck babies, as wood ducks nest in the trees in Cold Spring Park. The male wood ducks are ornately gorgeous, and the females are also quietly beautiful.

From this point on, the song of the bird will always be described, since this can make finding the birds much easier. Use the songs to home in on an area, then "go for the visual." Bird listening and watching instead of just watching is usually, but not always, more productive. For most of us, it is more enjoyable.

In the area of the marsh between Beaconwood Road and the exertrail there are two very colorful species of birds nesting. The Baltimore Oriole is a bright orange and black bird larger than a sparrow. It is related to the red-winged blackbirds that are also around this area of the park. The Orioles have loud whistled calls and are often higher in the trees, particularly willows. Their nests are pendulous sacks which hang down from the branches like bags woven out of grasses. The female is similar in coloration to the male but is a duller orange.

A second species in this same area is the yellow warbler. These birds are smaller than sparrows and either sing perched up in shrubs and the lower parts of trees or dart

around looking for food. They are completely bright yellow and the males have red streaks on their yellow chests. They sing constantly in this marshy area. Their song might sound like “sweet-sweet-sweet-so-so-SWEET” with the “so-so” phrase dropping down the scale and the last phrase going up.

A pair of the larger red-bellied woodpeckers is nesting in this area. They have bright red napes and alternating black and white coloration down their backs. They are larger than robins, about the same size as the much browner flickers, which are also around. They make a whinnying call that is very easy to pick out, once you have focused on it.

If you venture into the more wooded areas of the park, you are in the territories of rather different species of birds. Some of these are the scarlet tanager, the wood thrush, the restart, and the wood peewee. The first of these, the male scarlet tanager, is bright scarlet all over, except for jet black wings. It is a real tropical sight. It usually is in the canopy of the larger oaks. The female has the same wings but is yellow-green otherwise. The song has a rhythmic cadence - the sound of a robin singing with a burr in its throat. Both birds prefer the higher areas of the trees, but you can get lucky. Just be sure to check your cardinal experiences.

The second species, the wood thrush, look the same for either gender. It has white underparts with bold spots on its chest. The back is brown with a strong orange-brown color on the nape and back of the head. It is usually in the understory of the larger trees where it nests and the male sings. The song is the most beautiful song in Cold Spring Park, human divas notwithstanding. It is a series of flutelike phrases that rise in pitch as it is delivered. It has an eerie, other-worldly tremor at the end, such as might occur in an audio for a Chinese painting.

The wood peewees are small, sparrow-sized birds that sit quietly on branches of the larger trees waiting for insects to fly by. They then dart out and catch the insects on the wing. They belong to the family of birds called flycatchers because they all share this mode of dining. Both sexes of wood peewee look the same, with wing-bars, or white areas on their folded wings. The male sings “peeeuuurrr” or “peeeaweee” repeatedly from his perch. A similar flycatcher, the eastern phoebe, is also in the park but has no wing-bars. It repeatedly pumps its tail and sings a harsh “phebe” song. The phoebe has a darker head than its body color, whereas the wood peewee is mostly the same color above. Both are lighter below. The wood peewees do not bob their tails.

The redstarts are small birds in the same family of birds as the yellow warblers mentioned before. This is the wood warbler family. It is a New World family of birds, not occurring in Africa or Eurasia. The redstarts are deep red-orange and jet black in the males and with yellow replacing the red-orange in the females, which are sometimes referred to a yellowstarts. Immature, or first-year, male redstarts have the colors of the female. They dart around in the canopy or below, eating insects. Their song is a series of sibilant notes which either go up or down at the very end.

This small selection of attractive species can be something to look for, but you will encounter more than these if you go looking. The idea is to have a reason to get out into nature, and check out what is around you. Butterflies, dragonflies, wildflowers, frogs and turtles are all near us. Go with a friend or two and relax into the world. Get to know the invasive species that are overrunning the state, the kudzu of the north. Keep an eye out for the Asian long-horned beetles that may be coming our way. But most of all, give yourself some peace inside, by going outside.

- Maurice “Pete” Gilmore

## BIG TRASH CHANGES

The Newton Conservators are among the many organizations that support the City of Newton’s move to a more sustainable and environmentally sound solid waste policy. This has culminated in a move to automated trash pick up, an expanded recycling program, and limited pay-as-you-throw trash fees.

The City has been participating in a pilot program underway since last November in different neighborhoods. A survey conducted by the Department of Public Works (DPW) has demonstrated that the vast majority of pilot households (91%) were satisfied with the auto trash program and even more (95%) were satisfied with the move to single stream recycling. Single stream recycling simplifies recycling by putting all recyclables in one container with no need to sort.

As a result of the pilot program’s success, the City will expand it citywide. The new program is to begin on October 5<sup>th</sup>, with preparations before. Each household will receive either a 64-gallon or a 36-gallon blue trash barrel and a 64-gallon green recycling barrel. A second barrel for those who need it can be bought for \$200 per year. Another option is to purchase extra bags for about \$2.25 each. But most households will likely find that the 36- or

64-gallon trash containers are more than enough, because the fact is that most household waste is either recyclable or compostable.

The other significant impact of this program was that in the pilot areas there was about a 27% reduction in the amount of trash produced and a 23% increase in the amount of recycling. This will add up to big savings for the city, as the cost of waste disposal will only continue to go up, and the days of the 20-year waste disposal contracts are behind us.

The more that is diverted from the waste stream means more money is saved in terms of “tipping fees,” which is the amount it costs to pick up and dispose of trash. All of Newton’s trash is incinerated in the waste to energy facility in the town of Millbury. Tipping fees are currently between \$140 and \$152 a ton for trash and about \$100 a ton for recyclables. So anytime a ton of trash is diverted into the recycling stream, the city saves \$40-\$52. This really adds up in a city that throws away 29,000 tons of trash each year. The city will immediately start saving about \$90,000 a month when the new system is in place. But the potential is there for the city to save a great deal more. The Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) calculates that the savings could be in the millions of dollars per year when “avoided” costs are included. (In our case it is the money saved by sending less trash to the incinerator.) Also, in better economic times there will likely be a valuable market for recycled materials and the city can actually get paid for many materials, including paper, aluminum and glass. This is a case where “going greener” really makes fiscal good sense, as there is no other way the city could save that kind of serious money in these tough economic times.

- Alison Leary

## WARREN STREET SITE

A two-acre site at the end of Warren and Elgin Streets adjacent to the large open space at Webster Woods has long been on the City of Newton’s open space list. The site is divided by an intermittent stream. On one side of the stream was a single-family house owned by the Wilson family. The Wilsons tended the land, most of which is wooded, and tended a nearby field, mowing the grass to maintain it for informal play. (See related story by Octo Barnett below.) The City’s interest has long been to protect the vacant part of the site as part of the larger Webster open space.

When the property came on the market in recent years, the Conservators joined with a neighborhood organization to try to reach an agreement with the Wilson family for protection of the part of the site targeted in the Open Space Plan, the half of the site that is nearest Webster Woods. Alderman Lisle Baker joined the effort. Unfortunately, no agreement was reached, and the property was sold by the Wilsons to a new owner.

The new owner’s proposal has several features that are attractive to open space interests. Where the site may allow for more than one building lot, the new owner has proposed only one house, to replace the Wilsons’ home. The plan calls for removal of invasive species, replacement with native plants, and upgrade of the road, among other items. The plan has been brought to both the Conservation Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission for approval.

The Newton Conservators’ support has been crucial for the protection of similar properties around the city in recent years. Funding through the Community Preservation Act has been available where acquisitions have been made, including a Conservation Restriction on land across Elgin Street from this site. The Conservators continue to advocate for protection of the eastern half of the site adjacent to Webster Woods and for full public access by way of both roads.

- Eric Reenstierna



turkey fanning on Brentwood Avenue  
- photo by Bonnie Carter

# WEBSTER PARK ACCESS

The Webster Conservation Area and the adjacent MDC land on the west side (Newton Centre side) of Hammond Pond Parkway include 60 acres of natural woodlands, several miles of woodland paths, wetlands, brooks, a vernal pond, Gooch's caves (Roxbury Conglomerate fissure caves), Cake Rock (Roxbury conglomerate with sandstone), sandstone ledges with ripple marks, 26 native wildflowers (including pink ladyslippers and marsh marigolds), and 14 different varieties of ferns.

Access to this large, natural area is available from the end of Warren, Elgin, and Madoc Streets, but the access from the end of Warren Street is the only one to allow off-street parking and to permit easy access on a gentle grade to a number of easily accessible woodland paths and to the nearby Webster Brook, wetlands, glacial boulders, and a vernal pool.

In the Handicap Accessibility Prioritization Project of the Five Year Assessment Plan recently developed by the Parks and Recreation Commission, this area was one of four identified in Ward 7 where additional work was needed to facilitate handicap access. In addition, this area was the only one in Newton to receive the highest rating as a Nature Area and was one of the few rated very highly on the Aesthetics Evaluation.

Also at the end of Warren St. is the seven-acre Webster Playground, which has a large, grass field surrounded by trees. This is a wonderful spot for bird watching, ball throwing, or play. This playground and associated parking area were given to the City Of Newton in the 1930s by Edwin Webster to always remain as a park for the enjoyment of all the people of Newton.

- *Octo Barnett*

## LECTURE: TREE PESTS

To a packed house of tree lovers in the Library's Druker Auditorium, on Monday May 18<sup>th</sup> the Arnold Arboretum's Julie Coop spoke about tree pests.

Julie is the Manager of Plant Health for the Arnold Arboretum and is a certified arborist. She began her career with Harvard on the grounds crew at Case Estates in Weston. She was refreshingly "down to earth," bringing many samples of tree twigs and pests with her to pass

around the audience. She seemed to really know and love all the trees and samples that she showed us.

She covered the topics a homeowner would want to know about the pests that we deal with here, how to identify them, how they are managed at the Arboretum, and what a homeowner can do. Topics included the hemlock woolly adelgid and the winter moth. These are both introduced insects with no or few local predators. She discussed how to manage them and noted that the winter moth, like the gypsy moth, will probably be seen in cycles. To protect your trees from repeated defoliation, which can kill the tree, you may want to have your trees professionally sprayed (timed in April/May just as the caterpillars are emerging, as they must ingest the chemical). If a tree has been defoliated it will quickly replace its leaves, and you can nurture it in other ways such as with mulch (2-4" of low flat mulch not touching the trunk and NOT in "mulch volcanoes" around the trunk!) and water if there is a dry spell, while you are considering what to do for next year.

Julie reviewed many other pests, some of which are not yet in this region and others that are more cosmetic than real threats to plant health. Emerald ash borers, willow leaf beetle, eastern tent caterpillar, and anthracnose, the fungal disease often affecting dogwoods, were discussed.

Julie spent the longest and scariest part of the program presenting the Asian Long Horned Beetle, which in August 2008 was found in Worcester and is now thought to have been there for seven to ten years. About 20,000 trees have been removed from the quarantine area of Worcester. She passed around samples of the beetles, their egg hole exit holes (when they emerge in mid summer), and their frass (the "sawdust" they drop from their borings), all of which are large and very distinctive. The exit holes are perfectly round at a half inch diameter and are always horizontal. A pencil inserted is horizontal, or parallel to the ground. Unfortunately the beetles are hard to spot, even by professionals, as their activity is often high up in the canopy of the tree.

The one good thing about Asian Long Horned Beetle – it does not fly! This explains its slow spread – the beetles crawl from their tree when it becomes overpopulated to the next tree via touching leaves and branches. Also there are quite a few species the beetle does not like: oak, all conifers, lindens, and beech.

We must all be on the lookout for ALHB. Another lesson is never to transport firewood – a prime way that insects are spread. Julie shared that the NASCAR route, with its roving campsites, is thought to be linked to the spread of insect pests.



The program was co-sponsored by the Library, Newton Conservators, Newton Tree Conservancy, Arnold Arboretum, and Friends of Hemlock Gorge.

- Katherine Howard

# TREE CONSERVANCY UPDATE

## IN MEMORIAM

Gene Cronin, long-time member of the Newton Conservators, died recently. Gene was a wonderful model of someone who loved his community and tried his whole life to better it. For any of the Newton Conservators' proposals, he was always ready to write a letter of support. He was quite active around West Newton, where he was a great historical resource. He was known as "the mayor of West Newton." He was always nice to chat with when we would bump into each other. The park next to the Newton Police Station in West Newton looks nice partly due to Mr. Cronin's efforts. He will be missed around here.

- Ted Kuklinski

## CHARLES RIVER CLEANUP

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Charles River Clean Up was held on April 25<sup>th</sup> on a gorgeous, bright Saturday morning. Approximately 3,000 volunteers picked up litter at more than 80 sites along the banks of this mostly urban river. It is estimated that more than 20 tons of trash was picked up along the river. My group started out at the Dealtry Pool site near Watertown Square. We picked up everything from Styrofoam cups to computer monitors.

Along the way I observed painted turtles basking in the sun, the black and orange orioles whistling in the trees, and the persistent songs of the yellow warblers and warbling vireos in the foliage. As I worked, I thought about how pristine this river once was until it became a receptacle (starting hundreds of years ago) for sewage, heavy metals, dyes, oils, and non point sources of runoff from roads and parking lots from the communities along its banks. Despite these assaults, life persists in the waters and along the river's banks. It is true that the Charles River is significantly cleaner than it once was, but we still have a long way to go.

- Alison Leary

The year 2008 was a great year for the Newton Tree Conservancy. So much was accomplished: we incorporated, got our 501(c)(3) status from the IRS, developed a work plan, received a start-up grant from the Charles River Neighborhood Foundation, had a logo designed (thanks to designer Pat Robinson!), got our Web site up (thanks to The New Studio!), held a wonderful kick-off event on October 26<sup>th</sup>, and ended 2008 with a successful membership drive, thanks to the sponsorship of Newton Conservators and the generous support of so many of the Conservators members.

We have also been busy in 2009. On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, we held our first community tree planting, as part of the City's Arbor Day observance, at five sites on Watertown Street in West Newton. The homeowners at the five sites had all agreed to water their new trees for the first two years. On Saturday May 16 at Newton Pride's plant sale, we talked to people about trees and "got the word out" about the NTC. On May 18 we (along with Newton Conservators, Friends of Hemlock Gorge, and Arnold Arboretum) sponsored a program at the library on the subject of tree pests with speaker Julie Coop of the Arnold Arboretum. (See the separate report in this newsletter on this program.) The audience was large and appreciative. The talk was filmed and will be on NewTV soon.

Our Web site, [www.newtontreeconservancy.org](http://www.newtontreeconservancy.org), is a great resource. It contains a report and photos of the October 26<sup>th</sup> kickoff event, materials for your own tree walk in the beautiful Newton Cemetery, links to articles on the Asian Long Horned Beetle infestation in Worcester, and information on our events.

Citizen Pruner training was held in March, conducted by our own tree expert Marc Welch, the City's Director of Urban Forestry. The next formal training will be in the spring. Our monthly pruning sessions are ongoing, and if you would like to get involved this year, just get in touch.

Other activities include planning our tree planting programs, finalizing NTC's "case statement" for grant requests, and preparing for future educational programs. We would welcome your involvement with any of these activities and your support of the NTC.

- Katherine Howard

# EDITORIAL

Several years ago, The Newton Conservators created a Land Management Committee. The Land Management Committee has become one of the Conservators' most active branches. The task of the Land Management Committee is to do just that: to manage land. Management can mean abandoning a passive land stewardship role in favor of more active management. Richard Primack, the speaker at our annual dinner, demonstrated that the locations in Concord that are the most bio-diverse are not that town's re-grown woods but, instead, its disturbed sites (including the former town dump), which offer insects, birds, and other wildlife the food sources and habitat found in open fields. The Wilson family (see story in this newsletter) for years has maintained an open field in the big open space at Webster Woods. They didn't own the land. But with the permission of the owner, the City, they managed it.

The Conservators are part of this trend. For years, we have actively managed land we own, at Ordway Park and now, at Dexter Road. This year, we branched out. Read about some very large efforts in this issue of our newsletter. Conservators are everywhere around this city, pulling garlic mustard, removing other invasives, and uprooting knotweed. Those efforts are rewarded when native species return in place of the invasives.

Our aim is not only to protect land. It is to protect biodiversity. Protecting biodiversity means finding a different gear. It means going from passive to active. It means taking a real hand in the management of the land.

## INVASIVES REMOVAL UPDATE

With time running out to pull garlic mustard before it releases its thousands more seeds, we have recently held several invasives sessions and will have two more in the next week. So far the sessions have gone quite well. We have worked at Hammond Pond, Sawmill Brook Park, Dolan Pond, and Webster Conservation area. When this newsletter goes to print, sessions will have been held at Cold Spring Park and Blue Heron Bridge on the Charles River Pathway, as well. It has been heartwarming to see the mix of people (Conservators members, Tab readers, blog readers, concerned neighbors, flyer readers, and other various connections) and the age range of the workers. (A nine-year-old boy named Joe had to be the hardest worker

I've seen!). We continue to be careful to avoid wetlands and to follow the permission process of the Conservation Commission. I have enjoyed meeting and working with many wonderful people in this effort and I thank them all for their hard work, as well as Eric Olson and Ted Kuklinski for their co-organizing.

- Katherine Howard

### The Newton Conservators Officers and Directors 2009

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**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 48 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 [ericreen@tiac.net](mailto:ericreen@tiac.net). Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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**If you have not already done so this year, use this form to renew your membership in the Conservators. Also, please consider a gift to support our work.**



*Celebrating 48 years  
of open space advocacy  
in Newton*

**Newton Conservators Membership Form**  
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- YES, I'd like to start/renew my one-year membership with the Newton Conservators to help preserve open space in Newton. I'll receive informative newsletters and emails and be invited to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities.
- I'd like to make an additional tax-deductible contribution to support the work of the Newton Conservators: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Please do not share my name and address with other groups.

<b>MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS</b>	
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# NEWSLETTER

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

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