NEWTON CONSERVATORS

AUTUMN ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

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

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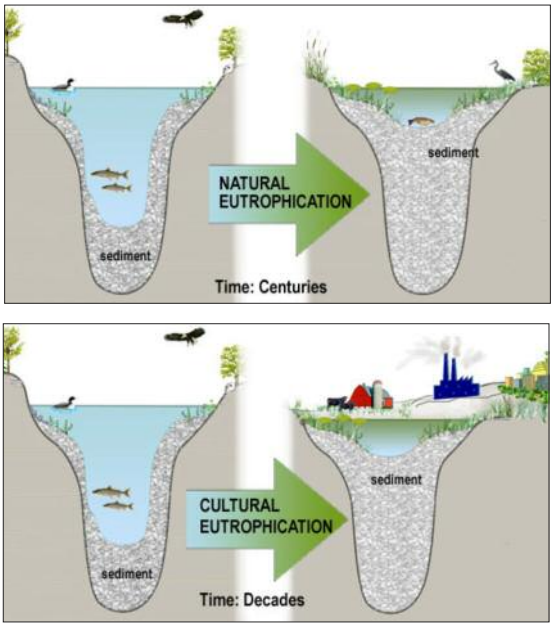
The "Green" State of Crystal Lake and What You Need to Know

By Maria Rose, Environment Engineer, City of Newton

Summertime provides the ideal conditions to enjoy our local parks, beaches and conservation areas, but this summer the swimming conditions at Crystal Lake were less than ideal. If you were here in early August, then you probably noticed the bright green color of the lake water. If you'd like to know what happened and why, then read on…



Figures 1 & 2: The process of eutrophication can be both natural and human-induced. Natural eutrophication, where the basin gradually fills in from nutrient and sediment inputs, occurs over long time periods—on the order of centuries. Human-induced, or cultural eutrophication, occurs on a much shorter time scale (decades) as a result of human disturbance and nutrient inputs.
Source: RMB Environmental Laboratories. Eutrophication. 2009.

A widespread blue-green algae bloom occurred, which precipitated a swimming ban at Crystal Lake for much of August. The blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, appear like thick green paint on the lake's surface. (See photo on p. 2.) Hot, sunny weather and slow moving water provide ideal conditions for algae blooms. With last season's mild winter and a hot, relatively dry summer, the stage was set for an early algae bloom. Crystal Lake often experiences a late-summer algae bloom. Algae are mostly microscopic plants that may be free-floating (phytoplankton) or attached to a substrate (periphyton). "In a moderately rich lake, there could be nearly one hundred species of algae in a tablespoonful of lake water. In a eutrophic lake, there may be millions of cells in a gallon of water." (*The Practical Guide to Lake Management*, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MaDEP) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) 2004).

Based upon regional information and data we have gathered about Crystal Lake, it is a moderately (nutrient) rich lake. However, if warmer winters and significant human impacts continue, the lake will become "eutrophic." Eutrophication is the process by which a body of water acquires high concentrations of nutrients (in particular, phosphorus and nitrogen) that promote excessive algae growth. As the algae die and decompose, high levels of organic matter deplete the water of oxygen. Eutrophication of freshwater ecosystems results in serious water quality problems that can have broader implications. These include unsightly algae blooms; depletion of dissolved oxygen, resulting in fish kills; depreciation of lakeshore property values; and negative impacts to recreational uses in and around the lake.

As shown in the Figures 1 and 2, all lakes and ponds will eventually yield to eutrophication, but human activity can accelerate this process significantly—unduly shortening the life of a lake or pond if left unchecked.

"Green" State of Crystal Lake continued from page 1:

The blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, appear like thick green paint on Crystal Lake's surface. *Schuyler Larrabee*

If we want to slow down the eutrophication process, we need to modify our cultural behaviors. One of the primary ways we can effect change is to limit the phosphorus inputs to our waterbodies. Sources of phosphorus include fertilizers, sediment, automobile exhaust, wash water, and human and animal waste. Phosphorus is conveyed to Crystal Lake via stormwater runoff. Although it is unrealistic to think stormwater runoff ever will be completely "clean" in our modern society, the quality certainly can be improved. There are many things that you can do to improve stormwater runoff quality and to reduce the ecological impacts to Crystal Lake:

- Test your lawn to determine what nutrients it needs before applying fertilizer, and consider using lawn clippings and compost as part of your lawn-care regimen.
- Switch to zero-phosphorus fertilizer. Those with phosphorus are unnecessary (unless starting a new lawn) because phosphorus is abundant in our local soils—and it costs less to make the switch!
- Utilize the City's free yard-waste collection, and never dispose of grass clippings along the bank of any lake, stream or river.
- Reduce and/or treat stormwater runoff from your own property as much as possible. Consider planting a rain garden, using rain barrels or dry wells and replacing impervious areas, such as driveways and patios, with permeable pavers or porous pavement.
- Use a car wash, where water is treated and recycled, instead of washing your car in your driveway, where detergent-laden water may enter the drainage system.
- Pick up after your dog, and properly dispose of the waste in the garbage.
- Reduce areas of exposed soil on your property to eliminate sediment runoff in the drainage system.
- Perform regular maintenance on your septic system to prevent backups.
- Do not feed wild animals, especially geese and ducks, to minimize animal waste in the lake.

The City supports these initiatives with various educational programs and strives to set a positive example. Recently, the Department of Public Works installed a water quality treatment device and a series of underground recharge units to infiltrate the stormwater runoff from the Crystal Lake bathhouse parking lot—which previously discharged directly to the lake, and the Parks and Recreation Department specified zero-phosphorus fertilizer for maintenance of 200 acres of land.

President's Message

Jane Sender

We have devoted much of this quarter's newsletter to the problems facing Newton's water bodies—particularly Crystal Lake and the Charles River—as a result of this year's algae bloom. Maria Rose and Amy Rothe have done a wonderful job of describing the problem and discussing what we as homeowners, drivers and dog walkers can do to reverse this damaging growth of bacteria.

I have lived on a cove of the Charles River for 24 years and have been involved with the problems facing the river's health all that time. The very weekend my husband and I moved into our house in July 1988, neighbors in waders were in the water off our back yard pulling water chestnuts. Coming from Boston, we were quite intrigued that this is what people did for fun in suburbia. We joined right in, and in the process began to learn about the fragile health of the river and what could and should be done. Twenty four years and literally hundreds of thousands of public and private dollars later, the river is in worse shape, not better. Why?

There are many reasons, not the least of which is a stop-and-go commitment on the part of the state with respect to the river to stay on top of this issue. But there are two other very significant reasons that trouble me deeply. Our love affair with a beautiful green lawn never seems to cool. Our attachment to quick fixes like chemical treatments seems imbedded in the American psyche. The Department of Conservation and Recreation has treated hundreds of water bodies throughout the state with chemicals and embraces this as a way of dealing with the problem rather than focusing on curtailing fertilizer use, controlling storm-water runoff on their properties and finding other long-term solutions. I liken it to a physician prescribing statins to an obese patient to control high cholesterol without any mention of weight loss, diet and exercise. The reason for the high cholesterol is in part what the patient is eating; just as the reason for invasive aquatic vegetation is that we are feeding the water bodies with phosphates and other chemicals. The problems won't go away without treating these behaviors.

There is an old saying that the easy way out is the quickest way back in. As we continue to embrace only solutions like harvesting and chemical treatment, we unfortunately will be fighting these battles for the same way for another twenty-four years. I know it's not easy to change behavior, but we must if we want to protect these beautiful areas, not only for human enjoyment but for the many other species foraging and breeding in these habitats.

Blue-Green Algae in the Charles River

Amy Rothe, CRWA Director of Communications

Have you noticed a green scum while on the Charles River in the last few months? Or perhaps you have read about the recent blue-green algae bloom advisories in the news? This summer, the Charles witnessed several blue-green algae blooms, from Newton down to the Charles River locks. Also known as cyanobacteria, blue-green algae are actually aquatic bacteria that, like algae, produce their own food through photosynthesis. Prolific growths of one or more types of cyanobacteria, or blooms, are typically observed in the Charles when water temperatures rise and river-flow falls. The Charles River has long suffered from excessive amounts of phosphorus, which enters the river through polluted stormwater runoff. The phosphorus acts as a fertilizer for the river: it feeds the cyanobacteria and causes it to grow in abundance. Additionally, the photosynthetic cyanobacteria thrive in warm water, and temperatures this summer have been some of the warmest on record. Charles River Watershed Association has had an active cyanobacteria monitoring program in effect since 2006, and this year is the first time we have observed a bloom in Newton.

When blue-green algae die, they release toxins that may be harmful to humans and animals. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention advises that contact with high levels of cyanobacteria has been found to contribute to eye, ear and skin irritation, and ingestion may lead to more serious health effects. Dogs that drink river water during a blue-green algae bloom are also highly susceptible to adverse reactions, and, in some cases, ingestion may lead to death.

Public health risks are not the only concern, however: blooms of cyanobacteria and other vegetation also can contribute to larger environmental problems. Large blooms can prevent sunlight from reaching submerged aquatic vegetation below. When a large mass of aquatic life (like blue-green algae and invasive species) dies, decomposition can deplete the river of valuable dissolved oxygen, which fish, mollusks and other aquatic animals rely on to survive. Extreme dips in dissolved oxygen levels may result in fish kills. All in all, the presence of blue-green algae can have a profound impact on the river's health and ability to sustain life.

Phosphorus is present in many items that you may use at home, so there are many ways you can help reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the Charles. Test your soil to see if it actually requires any additional nutrients in the form of fertilizers, as many local soils do not. Most fertilizers contain phosphorus as a major ingredient, so if you do require additional nutrients, consider composting instead. Car exhaust also contains phosphorus, and this is deposited on driveways, streets and parking lots. Consider walking, biking or taking the T to nearby destinations instead. Also, be sure to pick up after your dogs and properly dispose of all waste in the garbage or pet waste composter. You can also help by reducing and treating stormwater runoff from your property through the use of rain gardens, rain barrels and permeable pavers.

Cyanobacteria, blue-green algae, growing in the Charles River.

Reducing stormwater runoff pollution not only leads to a healthier Charles but to an economically viable region as well. Larry Smith, the owner of Charles River Canoe and Kayak, states, "Our business depends on a healthy Charles, and we continue to grow and thrive as the water becomes cleaner."

The Charles River Watershed Association's (CRWA) programs address the root causes of blue-green algae blooms. CRWA works to eliminate phosphorus from entering the river and to decrease stormwater runoff by encouraging and implementing green infrastructure development (GI), which captures and cleans water where it lands instead of funneling it off to the river. For more information on CRWA's GI projects or blue-green algae in the Charles, please visit www.charlesriver.org.

Battling Weeds in the Charles River: A Front-Line Report

One hundred years ago, warm summer weekends would have seen the Lakes District of the Charles River dotted with paddlers in their canvas-covered canoes. These days the scene is not that different, with the fiberglass descendants of those canoes joined by colorful kayaks, rowboats, stand-up paddleboards, and pedal craft. Today, however, a major challenge presents itself: keeping the river clear enough to support continued recreational uses. As the

Battling Weeds in the Charles River continued from page 3:

Charles meanders through an increasingly developed watershed, storm runoff, parking lots, and fertilizers add phosphorus and other nutrients to the river in increasing concentration. These cause havoc with the natural balance of life in the river, which in turn can affect how the river can be used.

The Charles River contains a great diversity of flora and fauna, including many invasive species. The deep sediment and nutrient rich water supports invasive water chestnut, fanwort, and milfoil along with the non-indigenous American Lotus. The rapid spread of these plants has made many coves inaccessible and restricted boating and wildlife movement in the Lakes District of the Charles in Newton, Waltham and Weston. Concerned neighbors, businesses, and users have joined to raise money and prod government officials into action. This summer, over 100 tons of invasive weeds were removed with strong financial support from the neighborhood. Over 500 volunteers were assisted by a small mechanical harvester. Unfortunately, that effort hardly matched the weed growth, and a much larger 3-5 year effort will be required to control the most aggressive species, water chestnut. The management plan proposes that the State fund the initial cleanup effort and then yearly management continue at a much lower level funded through local efforts.

Editor's Note:

You will notice that our newsletter begins with three articles on blue-green algae, each from a different perspective: the bloom in the lake, the bloom in the river, and the river bloom from the perspective of someone who spends a lot of time on the river and whose business depends on its health.

Why so much attention to one topic? Because it is an important one for our city and one that will get worse as the earth's temperatures continue to rise. The cultural solutions suggested at the end of the articles by both Maria Rose and Amy Rothe are similar. The repetition is intentional so that all of us can realize how important it is. Many of us think that we also need to consider further improvements in our storm-drain system, something that will not be popular in this economic climate. Please take the time to read all three articles. Let us know if you have comments or suggestions. Although we publish quarterly, we will publish letters and responses to articles.

Beth Wilkinson

One indication of the nutrients in the river was this summer's blue-green algae bloom. A blue-green algae bloom is a relatively unusual occurrence for the Lakes District. It does not restrict boating but has the potential to release toxins. The algae bloom and surrounding publicity did decrease rental activity at Charles River Canoe & Kayak in Newton. Fortunately, Charles River Canoe & Kayak has four other locations, which enabled classes and other activities that involved lots of contact with the water to be relocated. Rentals continued in Newton, and customers who called were informed of the situation. A few chose to visit the other rental locations in Cambridge, Boston, Nahanton Park, or Natick at Lake Cochituate State Park. No one reported any ill effects from the water, and washing facilities were available for those who were concerned. The algae bloom in the Lakes District cleared within a few weeks, and great boating returned by the last weekend in August.

Larry Smith, President, Charles River Canoe & Kayak

Park Signs Enter the Digital Age

You may have noticed a symbol like this one in a magazine advertisement or on a billboard. It's a QR, or Quick Response, code.

When this particular code is scanned, it takes the user to the web page for Ordway Park, a small park in Newton Corner that's owned by the Conservators. We've installed two QR-enabled signs at the edges of Ordway Park. We hope that passers-by will see a sign, scan the code, and learn more about the park and about the Conservators.

Most smartphones have scanners that can automatically open a particular web page when the phone is pointed at the code. For Android phones, the Google Goggles scanner app is preinstalled on the phone. On the iPhone, Windows phones, Blackberries, and other smartphones, a free scanner app can be installed.

The Conservators plan to install QR-enabled park signs and trail markers in various locations in the city. They will allow walkers to view trail maps on their phones,and to learn more about our parks and conservation areas.

Dan Brody

Newton's New Open Space Plan

Newton's new Open Space Plan (OSP) is arriving just five years late, but it's nearly here. The OSP considers Newton's natural resources, open space assets and community needs. It is guided by Newton's Comprehensive Plan (which was informed by the last OSP) and a committee of stakeholders—including representatives from the Conservators, the Community Preservation Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Green Decade, sports organizations, bicycle groups, and numerous other community groups—in addition to a public survey of Newton residents and public hearings.

One of the concerns cited in nearly all venues was the lack of maintenance, not only for parks, playgrounds and conservation lands, but also for public street trees. A surprisingly high interest was expressed for linear pathways such as the Aqueducts, the Upper Falls Greenway along Needham St. and the controversial old railroad spur line that links Riverside Station to Wellesley and also connects to a trail along the Charles and the Old Circuit Line to Auburndale. A vision was expressed for developing a network of greenways throughout Newton that would also involve the Charles River Pathway and connect village centers.

Some long-standing items remain on the OSP action lists: eventual acquisition of the two remaining lots near the Charles River on Wabasso St and a large parcel on the Charles near Norumbega Park, developing a plan for the Pine St. land fill and adjacent land, and placing a conservation restriction (CR) on part of the Temple Mishkan Tefila land adjacent to the Webster Conservation area.

The extension of the CR providing public access on the privately owned parking lot adjacent to Hammond Pond as well as new CRs on adjoining lots are listed. Another action item is to explore opportunities for negotiating CRs on suitable portions Newton's golf courses, particularly on areas near bodies of water. Another new item is to delve into the feasibility of acquiring the MWRA reservoir on Manet Rd. in Chestnut hill for recreation.

As in the previous OSP, the new plan suggests the acquisition of some small parcels such as the Verizon parking lot on Court St. for vest pocket parks. Also new is the suggestion to investigate and preserve the historic almshouse landscape at Nahanton Park, which, up until 1964, was Newton's Poor Farm and is the site of today's community gardens.

Many other open-space issues are discussed and targeted in the new OSP, which should appear fairly soon on the Newton website, most likely at: http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/gov/planning/lrplan/os/default.asp

Michael Clarke

Controlling Invasive Plants: Let's Start In Our Own Back Yards

Many of us participate in garlic mustard pulls at Cold Spring Park and read about the Audubon survey of the invasive plants in Nahanton Park, but some of us don't notice that we have invasive plants in our own yards. They've become established climbing up our trees, twining through our shrubs, and getting lost among our perennials.

Why is that a problem? First, because eventually they may displace the plants that we've chosen to put into our gardens, but, more importantly, because from their hiding spots in our yards, these invasive plants will produce seeds that will be eaten by birds, squirrels, chipmunks, and other animals and excreted in other areas, from which they will continue their spread. (Interestingly, ingested seeds have a higher germination rate than do seeds that just have fallen to the ground.) Thus, just because we don't see a particular invasive plant taking over in our yards does not mean that it is not spreading. Invasions by plants like these are a leading cause of extinction and biodiversity loss.

Here are five increasingly common invasive plants that can be found in yards throughout Newton. (All of the accompanying photos were taken within a few blocks of my Newton Centre house.)

Oriental Bittersweet *(Celastrus orbiculatus)* is a deciduous vine that is the heartiest and perhaps most widespread of Newton's invasive plant community: older vines can grow to be 4 inches in diameter and 60 feet tall. Oriental bittersweet can be found winding its way around trees and shrubs in yards, open spaces, and even densely shaded woods. It is spread not only by birds and mammals but also by people who are attracted to its showy deep orange fruits surrounded by the yellow-orange wings of the open pods and use the vine to make decorative fall wreaths. If left to grow, the vine can kill trees by girdling or smothering them; it kills shorter plants by covering them and preventing photosynthesis. It was introduced to the United States from China in the 1860s and first appeared in Massachusetts in 1919.

Oriental Bittersweet *Beth Wilkinson*

Controlling Invasive Plants continued from page 5:

Black Swallow-wort — Beth Wilkinson

Black Swallow-wort *(Cynanchum louiseae)*, a perennial vine with purple star-shaped flowers and thin pods, was brought to Ipswich from Europe in 1854 and was noted to have escaped into the wild from a Cambridge garden by 1867. It is extremely invasive and since has spread through New England gardens and into wild areas in the Northeast, the Midwest, and California. It can spread by wind-dispersed seed or underground rhizomes. In the wild, fields of established grass and goldenrod can be taken over by this invasive vine. It also has replaced milkweed populations, and initial investigations into its effect on the monarch butterfly, which requires milkweed for reproduction, indicate that the butterflies will lay eggs on the swallow-wort plants, but the larvae do not survive. Because it is not a good food source for native birds, they, too, decline when black swallow-wort becomes dominant.

Climbing Nightshade *(Solanum dulcamara)*, a vine in the potato family, has beautiful purple flowers with yellow centers in the summer and bright red berries in the fall; it has distinctive, deeply lobed three-part leaves that are shaped somewhat like a lop-sided three-leaf clovers. Its berry is very poisonous to humans and livestock but edible for the birds that disperse its seeds; the leaves, too, are highly toxic to people. In Newton, the vines often are seen climbing over hedges. It was introduced to the United States from Europe for ornamental and medicinal uses and became widespread by the 1800s.

Climbing Nightshade

Multiflora Rose *(Rosa multiflora)* originally was brought to the United States from Japan because its hardiness made it seem ideal for erosion control and living fences. As late as 1960, state conservation departments recommended it as an ornamental planting that would provide food for wildlife and even distributed cuttings to landowners for free. Ultimately, they learned that it forms dense thickets in woods—and yards—and crowds out the less aggressive native plants. Furthermore, it is spread easily by birds (especially mockingbirds, cedar waxwings, and robins). A single plant can produce over 500,000 seeds (a million by some estimates) each year, which can remain viable for up to twenty years.

Multiflora Rose — Beth Wilkinson

Garlic Mustard *(Alliaria petiolata)* was brought to the U.S. from Europe in the mid 1800s as a cooking and medicinal herb. Unfortunately, in spite of its benefits, it invades fields and woodlands displacing native plants. Garlic mustard changes soil conditions to inhibit the growth of many other plants. It's been found in Newton's woodlands for years but recently has found its way into our yards as well. It's a biennial herb that remains as a low rosette for its first year and then in the second year has heart-shaped leaves with toothed edges that grow from 6 to 36 inches tall. (If you're not sure whether a plant is

Galic Mustard

Controlling Invasive Plants continued from page 6:

garlic mustard, just crush a leaf. If it has a light garlic scent, it is.) In May small white flowers appear and then are replaced by hundreds to thousands of tiny black seeds that are easily dispersed by the wind, allowing the plant to spread at an alarming rate. Early in the spring, the young plants can out-compete the less-hardy native plants, but they do not provide food for wildlife as the native plants do.

All of us will do a favor for the Newton's environment in if we check our yards for these five invaders and remove any that we find, preferably before they have gone to seed. Do not put any seed-bearing invasive plants or their roots into compost or city yard-waste bags because that will help to disperse them even more. Finally, planting native plants in place of the removed invasive plants will help to keep them from returning.

Information about these and other common invasives such as Japanese barberry, Winged euonymus, and Creeping buttercup can be found in the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England: http://www.eddmaps.org/ipane/ipanespecies/ipanespecies.htm

Beth Wilkinson

Fall Garden Chores

Beth Schroeder

Fall is approaching, and I find myself missing the spring and early summer blooms. My garden is looking a bit tired this time of year. Our summer was hot and dry. Without the sprinkling system in the back yard there wouldn't be much left. With a mature, fully planted garden, my task involves reshaping and editing. Fall is a good time to tackle these chores. Let's do an overview of the tasks that will create the most benefits.

Lawns may be a little brown and crab-grassy now, but you can make them look better. If your lawn doesn't have a defined edge, it is time to re-edge. A lawn with a true "shape" rather than a slow fade into the edges of the lot is much crisper and makes even chaotic perennial borders look pulled together. I like a round- or oval-shaped lawn best. A softly curving edge is also flattering. Even long straight garden beds look nicer with a sharp edge. My preferred method is to lay a rope or garden hose into an attractive shape. You could also use a measuring tape and orange marking paint to draw a circle. Cut into the ground along the garden hose or paint line with a shovel to create a two- to three-inch deep groove. Remove the lawn on the flowerbed side of the cut. Remove any perennials a few inches into the flowerbed as well so that the edge is obvious. You will need to weed these edges about once a month during the growing season to maintain them.

The second biggest job is tidying up perennial beds. Do you have faded bleeding hearts lying prostrate in your garden? Snip off and dispose of faded perennials. We'll miss them, but they'll be back next year. Daylilies and irises that are flattened can have a haircut, too. I cut off perennials that fall over into the path of my lawn mower or across my paths. If they are blooming, they come into the house as bouquets. You may want to spread the seeds of some perennials and biennials: snip off the stems at the base; shake out the loose seeds; and snip off the seed heads, letting them fall into the flowerbed. If you have a leaf shredder, shred your fall leaves to create a layer of mulch for your planting beds. You won't need to haul leaf bags to the street. Shredders are noisy, but they eat through piles of leaves in minutes. They are available for less than two hundred dollars. Be sure to wear protective eyewear and ear plugs.

If you know me, you know that I don't like shrubs trimmed to look like giant "meatballs," but some shrubs are better with regular shearing. The goldmound spirea next to my front door is a prime example. I love looking at the chartreuse leaves in that spot, but my spirea grows too big for the space. A quick trim keeps it sized right and looking pretty. Pruning in November when your shrubs are dormant is best, but dead bits can be snipped off anytime. I think the best time to prune is whenever you have time or when you are motivated. If your shrubs are leggy or too big, remove them. Many old-fashioned, flowering shrubs grow to be twenty feet wide and may have been planted two feet from your driveway. You can purchase new dwarf-variety shrubs that will fit your landscape better. My pet peeve is to see the first floor of a house buried by shrubbery. Remember shrubs are not window treatments. You can purchase new, smaller varieties that will not recreate this overgrown look in the years ahead. When my neighbors sold their house last year, the new owners took out the overgrown mountain laurels from in front of the house. They gained twenty feet of front lawn and added appropriately sized new plantings. Their house and garden look so much better. I've never heard anyone say "I wish I hadn't removed that overgrown shrub".

You may need to hire a landscape pro to trim some of your larger shrubs and trees. It isn't worth a fall and an injury to do jobs that are too big. My Sargent crabapple is happy in a low, moist spot in my garden, and it is growing too big for my property. A professional will need to come and reshape it.

Fall Garden Chores continued from page 7:

If you have a grove of Norway maple seedlings in a back corner of your property, remove them before they shade out your garden. Norway maple's surface roots steal water and nutrients from other plantings. If you have dead branches in your high canopy trees, have them removed before the snows of winter add weight and bring them crashing down.

Your hardscaping may also need some attention. I hate leaf blowers, but I secretly own one. It comes out of hiding a couple of times a year to blow suburban fallout from my driveway, pathways and sidewalks. Leaf blowers are not efficient for using on lawns or flowerbeds, and I'd rather hear the sound of a bamboo rake. I put my large concrete jardinières under the porch roof so they don't fill with snow and crack. They look pretty filled with evergreen boughs in the winter months. Other garden pots should be washed and stored away for winter.

Don't forget our outdoor friends. Bird feeders should be washed and refilled. If you use thistle seed, you will have fewer visits from sparrows and squirrels. In winter months, put out sunflower seeds for birds and peanuts for squirrels. Bird houses can be cleaned so they are ready for next year's broods. A birdbath with a heating element will keep water available in winter months. Sooner than we think the snow will return.

Beth Schroeder, bsw1@comcast.net

In the March 2012 issue of the Newsletter, John DiMiceli wrote that the city is losing more than 650 street trees each year because of age, structural instability caused by the absence of pruning, storm damage, vandalism, road salt, and gas leaks. In reaction to that loss, Newton Tree Conservancy Vice-President Julia Malakie wrote the following entries on the Village14.com blog:

Goodbye Newton Trees

As a combination tribute, and lament, for all the street trees we have known which will be disappearing and not replaced any time soon, and to increase awareness (if that is still needed!) of the hazardous trees out there, I have recently begun tweeting, in no particular order, one tree a day from the city's list of dead and/or hazardous trees to be removed.

Sample Tweets

"196 Linwood Ave, Nonantum, #Newton MA – 24"
Norway maple.
Broken limb over sidewalk.

"65 Falmouth Rd, West #NewtonMA – 27"
Norway maple. Some major limbs have "self-pruned."

Open Tree Service Requests Are Now on City Website

Pending tree removal requests are now listed on the city website:
http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/gov/parks/forestry/maintenance/default.asp

Besides, removals, Urban Forestry Director Marc Welch has also posted the list of open pruning requests. This will be useful, because unlike removals, which have the metal tags, trees on this list are not marked in any way. But now if you see a tree you are worried about, you can see if it's already made the pruning request list. (That's not to say it might not have gotten worse since first being reported.)

Keep in mind that it's not just dead trees that may be hazardous. A tree could have a full canopy, but a structural defect, like this crack developing in an ash tree (which got removed last year as a result). If you spot anything like this, report it! More eyes are better than fewer.

TREE DISPLAYS AT LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER

Check out the superb display cases at the Newton Library until the end of September! They contain wonderful tree displays done by Newton Tree Conservancy directors. One display showcases some of Newton's most "notable trees," both historical and present day specimens. The other display promotes the Citizen Pruner program, including fascinating visuals of what to do—and what not to do—when pruning trees. These are in the "Atrium displays," next to the main circulation desk going towards the reference room. NTC would love to get your feedback, your submissions of more notable trees, and your involvement in our programs.
http://www.newtontreeconservancy.org/index.html

NEWTON CONSERVATORS

WALKS SCHEDULE

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

PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Sunday, September 23 at 1pm

The Canoe Trip at Nahanton Park

Trip Leader: Bill Hagar (617-964-2644)

This canoe/kayak trip will start at the Nahanton Park area. This is a beautiful section of the Charles River from which you can go upstream to the far reaches of Needham, Dedham and Wellesley. Interested nature lovers can bring their own canoe or kayak to use or can rent one of them at the new canoe/kayak/water stand rental that is now located at Nahanton Park. The area up stream is a region of significant beauty with almost pristine conditions of local marshes and tree lines. Cutler Marsh is particularly impressive in depth with different patterns of wildlife overlapping the background tree line and marsh views. The fall is a good time to follow the massive numbers of turtles and other wildlife that have successfully been born to this unique stretch of water. We also will be observing the numerous birds that make their spring/summer/fall homes in this appealing habitat. We will pass by Powell's Island, Millennium Park, the large Dedham Ditch and then will stop for lunch on Cow Island. The trip back will be similar except that we will have the current helping to carry canoeists and kayakers back. Bring lunch/snacks, drinks, sunscreen, and a hat. Bring binoculars of you have them. Thunderstorms will cancel the trip.

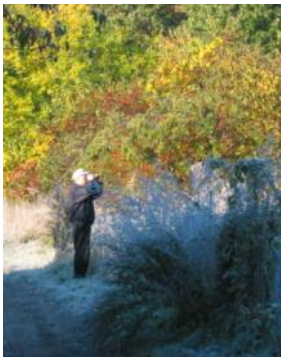


PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Sunday, September 30 at 8am

Fall Birdwalk at Nahanton Park

Trip Leaders: Haynes Miller (617-413-2419) and Alison Leary

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 fall migrants as well as for resident species. Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance off of Nahanton St. between the JCC and the Charles. Parking is available inside the park. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Walking shoes are recommended. Co-sponsored by Friends of Nahanton Park and Newton Conservators. Trip cancelled in steady rain but okay if light rain or drizzle. If in doubt, call Trip Leader Haynes Miller.


PHOTO: RICHARD DANCA

Sunday, October 14 at 8am

Fall Birdwalk at Nahanton Park

Trip Leaders: Alison Leary (617-821-5619) and Haynes Miller

Follow up to earlier bird walk (see above walk description). Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance off Nahanton St. between the JCC and the Charles. Parking is available inside the park. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Walking shoes are recommended. Co-sponsored by Friends of Nahanton Park and Newton Conservators. Trip cancelled in steady rain. If in doubt, call Trip Leader Alison Leary.

Saturday, October 20 at 8:00am (Rain Date: Sunday, October 21)

Fall Birdwalk at Cold Spring Park

Trip Leader: Pete Gilmore (617-610-2477)

Fall is an excellent time to look for birds. We'll explore the various habitats at Cold Spring Park in search of resident and migrating birds. Turn left inside the Beacon Street entrance. Meet at the end of the parking lot. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Boots are recommended. In case of steady rain, rain date is Oct 21. If in doubt, call Trip Leader Pete Gilmore.


PHOTO: HENRY FINCH

Sunday, October 21 at 2:00pm

Aqueducts Bike Ride

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

This very popular bike tour follows the Aqueduct Trail through Newton, Needham and Wellesley. While mostly leisurely, it is sometimes strenuous. The tour is for ages 12 and up. Children must be accompanied by an adult, and all riders must wear helmets and use bikes that are able to travel off road. The tour runs through established paths, pinewoods, meadows and hills. You will travel near backyards, and riders should be respectful of the privacy of homeowners.

Meet in front of the Starbucks near the Waban MBTA Station.

PHOTO: DAN BRODY

Sunday, November 11 at 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. See the loop map. (There are cutoffs for those who wish to shorten the hike.)

Meet in front of the Starbucks near the Waban MBTA Station.

NOTES

Applications Due by Friday, October 8

Newton Tree Conservancy's Tree Planting Program

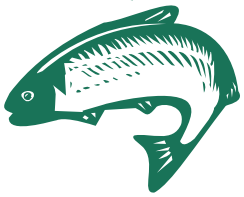
Does your street need trees? Are you interested in joining with your neighbors and the Newton Tree Conservancy (NTC) to plant trees on your street? The NTC is now accepting applications for the spring and fall Community Tree Plantings for 2013. With the assistance of generous grants from Newton Community Pride's Stella and Leo Levi Tree Endowment Fund and members of the community, the NTC has planted more than 150 street trees over the past three years. In November, we will meet our new goal of planting 100 trees in just this year alone.

You are eligible to apply for our planting program if you can assemble a group of at least five properties (preferably within a one- or two-block area) with space on the city-owned berm for a total of eight or more trees. (Individual homeowners may not apply.) Groups chosen to receive trees must agree to water and weed the trees weekly for the first two years, to select three members to take a free three-hour class on how to plant trees (taught by Marc Welch, Newton's Director of Urban Forestry) and to provide volunteers to assist on planting day. In return, NTC will provide carefully chosen trees appropriate for the site as well as the volunteer labor and expertise to plant the trees.

The city is losing more than 500 street trees each year and has no regular budget for planting replacement trees. The NTC, a membership-supported non-profit, works to address this problem and to maintain Newton's tree-filled beauty. The application deadline is Friday, October 8. Program details and application forms (as well as information about making contributions to support this work) are at http://www.newtontreeconservancy.org/.

Bobby Braceland Park Improvements

Park renovations have recently been completed at Bobby Braceland Park on Chestnut Street in Upper Falls. The parking lot has been revamped and a crosswalk with signage has been installed to enable easier pedestrian access across Chestnut Street. A new double tennis court is already getting steady use. And there is a new official off-leash area at the very back of the park, down the hill. There is no fence separating it from the rest of the park, but there is a significant natural boundary (the hill) that should do the trick. Users should not let your dog off leash anywhere else at Braceland Park! In particular, please remember to keep you dog on leash when you leave your car, until you are in the legal off leash area. There are signs, barrels, and a mutt mitt station. To use the off-leash area, your dog must have a Newton off-leash medallion (about 1000 have been issued so far this year).



Charles River Shad Restoration

This past summer, 500,000 American shad larvae, were released into the Charles River at the boat access ramp on Woerd Avenue in Waltham. This was the first of many stockings along the Charles—officials plan to release 3 million larvae into the river as part of the American Shad Propagation Project. Read more on this effort in a report by Mark Albano, at http://environment.blog.state.ma.us/blog/2012/08/field-report-charles-river-shad-restoration.html?utm_campaign=great-outdoors-newsletter&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=mass.gov/eea.

PHOTO: DAN BRODY

September 15, 2012 to May 15, 2013

Paddling a Kayak or Canoe—Wear Your Lifejacket!!!

People in kayaks and canoes are reminded that from September 15, 2012 to May 15, 2013, paddlers must wear their personal flotation devices (PFDs) while boating. According to the Massachusetts Environmental Police, most boating fatalities in Massachusetts are due to boaters who fail to wear PFDs while in small craft in cold water or cold weather situations.

The new year will be upon us shortly, now is the time to renew your membership. And consider a gift for a conservation-minded friend.

NEWTON CONSERVATORS

NEWTON CONSERVATORS
PO BOX 590011
NEWTON CENTRE
MA 02459

2013 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

YES! Please renew my tax-deductible membership at the level checked below:

- ☐ $100 Patron
- ☐ $75 Donor
- ☐ $50 Sustaining Member
- ☐ $35 Family Member
- ☐ $25 Individual Member
- ☐ Additional contribution ___

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

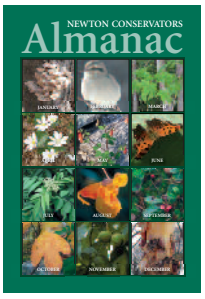
EMAIL _____

Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc.

Visit our website at www.newtonconservators.org if you wish to renew your membership online.

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

Wonderful autumn gift ideas!



Shop online at www.newtonconservators.org/books.htm to purchase Newton Conservators publications. Discounts for members: Almanac is $18.45 and the Trail Guide is $8.95.

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 over 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 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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NEWSLETTER

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

AUTUMN ISSUE

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Go Green!
…and all the other colors of the rainbow.
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Cyanobacteria, blue-green algae growing in the Charles River (see page 3).

If there are issues that you would like to see covered in the *Newton Conservators Newsletter*, please send your suggestions to Bethwilkinson@mac.com.