



NEWTON  
CONSERVATORS

FALL ISSUE

# NEWSLETTER

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

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## Water Underground

*By Alderman Deborah Crossley*



Over the past two years, Newton has accomplished a lot of good work that you cannot see.

That is, the city has been steadily and planfully investing in restoring our sewer and water systems. This year we have set our sights on restoring the stormwater system – that vast network of catch basins, main drains, open streams and culverts that are there to keep our neighborhoods and village centers above water.

Many Conservators are aware that Newton's stormwater system is in need of much repair, that heavy rainstorms cause periodic flooding in some areas around the city, and, as well, that new state requirements are forthcoming that will exact more stringent standards of water quality where our storm water discharges into the environment. Many have observed that the level of system maintenance is inadequate to keep the existing vast network of catchbasins and pipes clean and well functioning.

Neither flooding nor pollution are acceptable outcomes: we want a plan that will bring us to an effective and reliable stormwater management system for the city that will have the least impact on the environment.

When I last wrote to the Conservators in late 2012, ([www.newtonconservators.org/storm\\_water.htm](http://www.newtonconservators.org/storm_water.htm)), the city had only begun to implement the strategic plan to restore Newton's sewer and water systems, adopted and funded with the July 2012 (FY13) budget. We drew big plans and they are fully underway.

In fact we have accelerated the sewer restoration work to put the city on track to complete that work in ten, rather than eleven, years. This is the work to clean, line and repair – and occasionally replace – the public sewer mains and manholes in ten Project Areas comprising the entire city.

Remember, work to repair our leaky sewer system is essential and important to keeping our groundwater and stormwater outflows clean. In particular, over a century ago about 70 miles of Newton's sewer mains were installed over underdrains designed to remove water from utility trenches and to divert the natural ground water to allow for development. These are being systematically disconnected and sealed off from the sewer mains as we restore each section of the sewer system. In addition to restoring capacity to the system, cleaning and lining of pipes to remove infiltration (ground water seeping



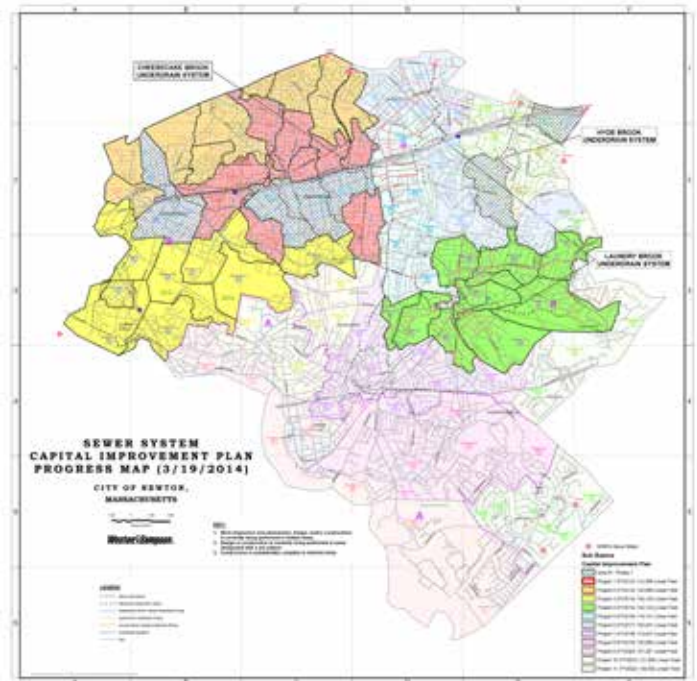
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## STORMWATER ASSESSMENT

After interviewing several firms, the project to conduct a citywide stormwater system assessment and develop a Stormwater Infrastructure Improvement Plan (SIIP) was awarded to Weston & Sampson engineers. They hit the ground running, completing all of the field investigation and assimilation of data over the spring and summer. In addition, they have drafted criteria we can use to prioritize the work, which we are reviewing in light of how much work the city can fund and manage in the short and longer term.

Remember that Newton's stormwater system comprises a vast network of interconnected parts, pieced together over a century of development on land that was once laced with open waterways. The water is, of course, still there, but has been engineered to get it 'out of the way' of our homes and neighborhoods. It is captured via over 12,750 catch basins that have to be kept clean and funneled through about 320 miles of main drains, walled open stream beds and underground culverts.

Engineers walked over 14 miles of stream beds, photographed debris, sediment, etc., identified all 200+ interior inlets and outfalls (to and from culverts), noting conditions. We can now complete the map of the entire system, both above and below ground. They identified and mapped ten flood prone areas around the city. In each case, the problem is defined, visible conditions measured and photographed (such as sediment and debris in open stream beds and culverts), a scope of work anticipated – and needed information identified. It is a comprehensive investigation, sufficient to bring us to the strategic planning stage.



*What is the nature of the work that is indicated?*

There are many repairs to be made to improve the conditions of system elements. We can see crumbling outfalls, spalled concrete, undermined masonry walls fallen into confined stream beds, sediment deposits and debris. There will certainly be some pipe replacements needed. Another way to look at initial projects, however, would be to address a range of repairs specific to resolving problem areas--particularly in flood prone areas. Repairs to improve capacity via increased on-site absorption may as well involve naturalizing certain areas, such as has been proposed for Cheesecake Brook.

Over the next few months, our consultants will be working with city staff from both public utilities and environmental engineering to help us evaluate and to prioritize the work over a period of time, according to relative levels of urgency. The City is planning to incorporate work into next years' capital improvement plan and budget. We are on track to have a plan by the end of the calendar year and to present it to the Board of Aldermen early in the new year.

Which brings us to a big question: *How do we pay for this additional work?*

Newton was among the first Massachusetts communities to establish a stormwater utility fund. We each pay a flat fee into this fund every quarter – and have been for many years. Residents pay \$25/year, and commercial businesses pay \$150/year. The fund accrues about \$750,000 annually,

but this is not sufficient to cover more than adequate maintenance, operations and small repairs. There is little left over for capital work.

We hope to implement a stormwater fee that is based on impervious area, a proposal first made a few years ago. The goal is to generate sufficient funds to do the capital work and as well as funding a maintenance program that protects our investment.

Using a typical residential property as a base unit (and they are remarkably consistent), commercial rates would vary according to the amount of impervious area they own. So restructured, the corner barber shop would pay a nominal fee, but a mall with a huge parking lot would pay many more times that fee.

*What can you do?* Stay tuned.

Both the League of Women Voters' Environmental committee, the new Green Decade Water committee and many members of the Newton Conservators have been following our work, including several who have related expertise. We welcome your input. This fall and winter, there will be several meetings of the Board of Aldermen to discuss the stormwater work to and consider rates and the funding plan.

Although many of the participants have changed, the Water-Sewer-Stormwater (WSS) working group continues to meet regularly to review progress and further our goals. Alderman Fuller and I provide updates to the Board of Aldermen several times a year in the Board Friday packet. ■

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## Wilderness Act Turns Fifty

The Wilderness Act was signed by President Lyndon Johnson fifty years ago—on September 3, 1964. That act set created 54 wilderness areas, a total of 9.1 million acres of land.

The act defined a wilderness as “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”

In the past fifty years, the extent of the protected wilderness has grown to 750 areas and 110 million acres (approximately 5% of the land in the United States), and thirty additional areas await the approval of Congress. In an article on Huffingtonpost.com, Senator Edward Markey points out that areas such as Georges Bank, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Red Rock wilderness in Utah are yet to be protected.

What was not foreseen in 1964 is the way that humans would affect those wilderness areas through climate change, leading to a marked increase in invasive plant species, a change in water patterns from decreased snow pack (with more flooding in winter and drought in summer), and the



shift of species of plants and animals and decreased biodiversity as the climate warms. Those issues may well lead us to reconsider the current hands-off management approach—not only to wilderness tracts but also to our local conservation lands

For more on the current state of the wilderness in our country, see Senator Markey's thoughts about how we can do more to protect the wilderness at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rep-ed-markey/from-walden-pond-to-wilde\\_b\\_5759694.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rep-ed-markey/from-walden-pond-to-wilde_b_5759694.html).

There is an interesting and well-researched overview of how climate change is likely to affect those areas at [www.fs.usda.gov/ccrc/topics/wilderness](http://www.fs.usda.gov/ccrc/topics/wilderness).

Ron Meador at MinnPost provides an interesting overview of writing on the wilderness at [www.minnpost.com/earth-journal/2014/09/happy-50th-wilderness-act-excerpts-weeks-best-coverage](http://www.minnpost.com/earth-journal/2014/09/happy-50th-wilderness-act-excerpts-weeks-best-coverage). ■

—Beth Wilkinson

## President's Message

As you undoubtedly know, the mission of the Newton Conservators is to promote the creation and preservation of open space in the city. Our members fulfill our mission in a variety of ways, including leading the fascinating walks listed at the end of this issue, overseeing the invasive-plant pulls described in Katherine Howard's article, and sponsoring the informative talks at our annual meeting and at the library throughout the year.

The Conservators hold the conservation restrictions on eight properties owned by the city (including the Commonwealth Golf Course and the public path by Levingston Cove at Crystal Lake) and actually own three properties that were gifts from generous residents: Dexter Woods, Ordway Park, and Awtrey Dell. Caring for those properties is an important and demanding task for a small group of volunteers, and they need some help and support from other Conservators members and supporters.

This summer, several large red oaks in small Dexter Woods, the quarter-acre property on Dexter Road in Newtonville, needed attention. The trees, which grow along the bottom edge of the steep property, stretch toward the street and the properties on the other side to reach sunlight over the tops of the houses. Because only the tops of the trees reach the sunlight, all of the branches are clustered at the top of the trees, putting a lot of weight and stress on the healthy trunks. In July, one of the trunks broke. For safety, we thinned the tops of trees and had to remove one tree that could not be reduced further. We did, however, leave a 20-foot "snag," that will provide nourishment to insects and local birds that make their homes on the property.



*Dexter Woods Tree Thinning*

We give thanks to arborist Nate Ceniz of CedarlawnTree, who gave us a reduced price on the work and also offered to donate his time to supervise a volunteer cleanup day on the property this fall or next spring, whenever the poison ivy on the property has died back enough so that we can work without fear of an allergic reaction.

In the previous year, we worked on Ordway Park, the half-acre park in Newton Centre that was willed to the Conservators by Priscilla Ordway. Again with Nate's help, we cut back rotting tree limbs, removed Norway maple seedlings, and spent a morning working with our volunteers and neighbors to do general pruning and to put new woodchips on the path through the property that's enjoyed by many neighbors.

Next on our list is Awtrey Dell, the half-acre property in Newtonville that was donated by the Awtrey family and that's home to Hyde Brook. We are at work to install signage and to talk with Pam and Tony Awtrey about what needs to be done on the property.

The donors (and the neighbors at Ordway Park) set up funds to help pay for the care of the properties, but ongoing upkeep through the years requires the work of many volunteers and soon costs more money than the funds that were provided.

Over the coming months, we will turn to you, our members, for volunteer help. We also hope that when renewing your membership at year end, you will consider making an extra donation for the continuing maintenance of these sites.

*Beth Wilkinson*



# Invasive Plant Removal

The Newton Conservators hold (oversee) the CRs (conservation restrictions) on many of the city's conservation areas. Our conservation restriction monitoring responsibility requires us to assess each site and to have a plan to maintain it. Invasives removal or management is a consistent theme in these reports and recommendations. Our efforts, which started in the early 2000s, have continued and expanded into new areas; however, we have not yet adequately addressed how to accomplish that. It appears that a combination of volunteer effort, youth education, and hiring people to help, may be what is needed.

The battle to control invasives continues the efforts of Eric Olson and Ted Kuklinski that focused over many years on Dolan Pond, Hammond Pond/ Webster Conservation Area, and Charles River/ Blue Heron Bridge. We added Sawmill Brook Conservation Area, Cold Spring Park, Houghton Garden, Nahanton Park, Quinobequin Road, and Hemlock Gorge, with some other areas being maintained by local Friends groups.



*Eric Olson*

On the research front, Eric Olson is collaborating on an experiment using herbicide injection on Japanese knotweed – report to follow. Meanwhile, manual control is our best approach. We continue to utilize the Newton Serves event, Tab and Globe calendar listing, to recruit more volunteers for our invasives pulls. The sessions have been successful, although as always there is more to do and more help is needed.



*Japanese Knotweed*

We have had success in recruiting volunteers and engaging the support of Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops for the day of Newton Serves and limited success for other

days. Boston Volunteers, who have helped in the past, were diminished this past year because after the Marathon bombings, they focused on volunteer efforts in the city. A



*Black Swallowwort*

goal for this winter is to do better advance planning with the local scout troops so we are part of their plans next season. A good omen is the upcoming Sunday October 5th event of a Girl Scout walk, through Blue Heron and Charles River walkway, led by Eric Olson and other Conservators, which will include introduction to native and invasives species and some pulling along the way.

Reasons for the problems with getting enough volunteer help include everyone being too busy, everyone getting older, the Garlic Mustard season coinciding with busy spring activities, the physical requirements of bending and picking being too difficult for people, and the possibility of ticks and poison ivy presenting additional challenges.

Despite these issues, we have had fun and amazingly successful sessions, staffed by stalwart and loyal invasives crusaders (thank you, wonderful people!). In addition, it appears that more people are keeping their own favorite areas maintained on their own, outside of our scheduled sessions. These activities have provided opportunity to



*Duane Hillis, Larry Smith and Kevin Mallory*

commune with nature. I saw a pileated woodpecker in Cold Spring Park, a Great Horned Owl on the Quinobequin trail, hawks and opossums, and walking through our pine-needled trails feels to me like summer vacation. ■

***Your participation on our invasives task force this winter would be***

***most welcome. Feel free to contact me at: [howard\\_Katherine@hotmail.com](mailto:howard_Katherine@hotmail.com).***

*— Katherine Howard*

PHOTOS: SUZETTE BARBIER, JAPANESE KNOTWEED: WIKIPEDIA.ORG

# Evergreen Ferns

By Don Lubin

Looking for ferns is primarily a summer sport. Most of them emerge in April or May and become prominent in May and June. They suffer some damage as the season progresses, from insects or deer or drought or mishaps. Some species continue to add new fronds throughout the growing season, but even if they maintain themselves, they may become lost among the jungly growth of late July and August. Then in the fall they fade, especially after the first hard frost, and turn brown and crumble along with falling leaves and most other plants.

But club-mosses and some ferns become easier to see as Autumn progresses. Like the gymnosperm trees – pines and hemlock and spruce – the following ferns keep their green through the winter.



*Polypodium apalachianum*

does it little harm. Once the vascular channels have frozen they do not function again, and the old fronds benefit the plant only as mulch, keeping weeds at bay.

Polypody, the little fern communities atop shady cliffs and boulders, remain through winter and much of the following season, when new lighter green fronds stick up between the old in the spring.

Two of our Wood ferns, *Dryopteris marginalis* and *D. intermedia*, are quite evergreen, and *D. carthusiana* slowly yellows through early winter. Their common names are Marginal, Evergreen, and Spinulose Wood ferns. Wood ferns have the interesting habit of hybridizing amongst themselves, especially the less abundant Crested Wood fern. The best time to find these species and hybrids is after the background has turned brown and shriveled. Whether their spores and spore cases are normal or aborted is a clue to their identity.

Grape ferns, a branch of the genus *Botrychium*, are evergreen, or in the case of Cut-leaf Grape fern turn bronze in late fall and remain through the winter. They can seem to appear magically when the obscuring undergrowth fades.



*Dryopteris marginalis*

Newton does not have many of these though – you might have to look in the Blue Hills.

Sensitive and Ostrich ferns are dimorphic; they have fertile spore-bearing fronds that look quite different than the normal sterile ones. Their persistent fertile fronds remain erect through the winter, to scatter their spores in early spring. That makes them easy to spot in several inches of snow. Sensitive fern is rather common in wet areas with light.



*Spore-bearing Fronds*

Club-mosses are related to ferns, bearing little green needles for leaves and looking rather like baby evergreen trees. They persist through the winter, and even for several years after they have stopped growing.

Some of my most productive fern hunts have occurred in December, until the first heavy snow. ■



# Autumn Migration

By Pete Gilmore

As you read this issue of the Newton Conservators' Newsletter, millions of songbirds are in the midst of journeys that would terrify humans. They are navigating thousands of miles, often traveling from North America to South America.

They have a particular sort of intelligence that enables this behavior. They use multiple clues to guide them including the stars, the sun, the earth's magnetic field and the local geography they pass over, such as shorelines. They learn the North Star as a point around which other stars rotate and use the field of stars in that area to navigate.

When one system, for example the stars, fails them due to cloudiness, they fall back on another system. Nothing, of course, can save a big flock of migrating birds that's out over the water when a sudden, violent storm arrives.

The journey varies widely, depending on the species.

The Bar-tailed Godwit, a large sandpiper, nests in Alaska and flies nonstop for nine days to New Zealand for the winter. We know this from microelectronic tracking devices attached to the birds. Flying this far without food or sleep seems physically impossible. It certainly is fraught with danger, yet the species is a success, in evolutionary terms.

On our own coast, the Blackpoll Warbler, a small wood warbler that passes through Newton on its way south every fall, takes off from eastern North America. They fly non-stop to northern South America, a journey of about 2,000 miles on average, in three or more days. These birds fatten up to around  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an ounce before they take off and lose about  $\frac{1}{7}$  of an ounce in the flight. This is a tiny bundle of muscle, fat and navigational intelligence. A percentage of these birds come down on islands like Bermuda en route. Some Blackpoll Warblers do migrate down the eastern seaboard before launching out across the water to South America.

Throughout September and October, our parks are visited by lots of little wood warblers like these Blackpoll Warblers.

All of them are migrating south. There are about 25 different species that you can reasonably expect to find in Newton's parks each fall. It takes binoculars to really see these diminutive folks. If you are lucky, one may show up low and close to you and be a "naked eye bird."



*Blackpoll Warbler*

You can see in the picture of the Blackpoll Warbler that these birds are fairly nondescript, but if you manage to see the legs, they are the only little warblers with light-colored legs. They are often one of the later migrants to pass through Newton in the fall.

Switching back to shorebirds, in early August Dan Brody came across a Spotted Sandpiper feeding along the shoreline at Crystal Lake. This bird had finished breeding and was on

its way south. Spotted Sandpipers breed in Massachusetts. They like fresh water habitats like river banks and lake shores. You may see them along the banks of the Charles River. During migration they will travel at least as far as the Gulf coast in our southern states. Many Spotted Sandpipers leave North America entirely for the winter, spending that season in South America. Some birds winter as far south as Paraguay and Peru.



*Solitary Sandpiper*

There are other sandpipers that frequent fresh water habitats and can be seen during migration in Newton. In addition to the Spotted Sandpiper, there are the larger Solitary

Sandpipers and very small Least Sandpipers.

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The final photo shows a sign of the migratory departure of our summer birds: it is the skillfully woven nest of a Baltimore Oriole. This pair nest near Cold Spring Park, using the same tree again and again, but they build a nest anew each year.



Oriole Nest

It is now empty and will not be used again. This pair, together with their fledged young, have already departed from Newton, heading south. The orioles spend their winters in Central and South America, with some birds wintering in south Florida.

The nest is a marvel of craftsmanship, a secure sack that keeps predators

from the eggs and young while the parents search for food to nourish their family. It is amazing to watch the female oriole as she twists long strands of grass and small vines to secure the nest to branches and twigs. She then continues to weave these materials into the main body of the nest. This year, she added a human donation of blue ribbon. The nests in our area are out near the ends of branches so the squirrels can't get at the eggs.

As our summer nesters leave us, soon the birds who nested far to our north begin to arrive. They travel less spectacular distances since they remain on our continent. A good way to see the birds coming here for the winter is to set up a bird feeder and to keep it stocked with food. You should get the pretty White-throated Sparrows, our resident cardinals, Carolina Wrens, goldfinches and Mourning Doves as well as House Sparrows. The Dark-eyed Juncos will be showing up in early November in Newton. Some of these birds actually nest in the Berkshires and prefer the feel of a more northern place. This environment is provided by the altitude in the western part of our state. Our cardinals, Blue Jays and crows are year-round residents.

This summer we had a new corvid bird in our area, the Common Raven. Pairs are now nesting in Waltham, West Roxbury and on the science building at Wellesley College.

They were seen around Cold Spring Park this spring, and were in Newton Highlands this summer. Since these birds usually are permanent residents at our latitude, look for them as you walk around our neighborhoods. They are larger than crows and have a curved shape to the end of their tails, whereas crows have a square end to their tails. Even more distinctive is their croaking vocalization which really catches your attention if you are listening.



Common Raven

Because Common Ravens were killed by humans until recently, they learned to stay away from our species. They started to move into our suburbs in the last few years and found that not only do we no longer shoot them, but we throw food like French fries and Big Macs around on the ground. Expect to see and hear more Common Ravens as the years go by and the litter continues.

There is a beautiful new book that describes the intense and short life of a gifted young woman who documented the nests and eggs of the birds of Ohio in 1879. These birds are about the same as our birds in Massachusetts. The book is *America's Other Audubon*, authored by Joy M. Kiser and published by Princeton University Press.

The young woman in question, Genevieve Jones, would surely advise you to walk around in Newton's open areas and to listen, look and smell the wonderful world we live in. If you don't share her passion for the different architectures of nests, there are many other experiences in nature that can soothe your agitated soul. ■

• **Lanny McDowell's photos can be found at:**  
[www.lannymcdowellart.com](http://www.lannymcdowellart.com)

• **George McLean's photos can be found on facebook**



# Old Gardens and Overwhelmed Gardeners



PHOTO: BETH SCHROEDER

*The results of loving care – and some professional help*

**I**s your garden is getting old? Your shrubs may be overgrown; the lawn may have bare spots and crab grass; and the perennial beds and borders may be overrun by aggressive plants. More interesting plants you put in years ago may be long gone. It's all well and good to say the garden has naturalized, but it may not please you like it used to.

The other half of the question is: How much work do you want to do in the garden these days? Maybe your back or knees aren't up to the task anymore, or there just isn't enough time in the day. What should you do? Perhaps you still like to go to the garden center and pick up a cute new plant once in a while, but when you get back home, there is no room in the garden. Mowing, raking, weeding and pruning have become a bit much.

It may be time to interview a few lawn or garden service providers to decide what level of service would help you keep your garden up to snuff. You can find service providers in Google, check Yelp for reviews and ask your friends and neighbors if they like the providers they've hired. There are several levels of garden help to consider.

One helpful service is lawn maintenance. The most common are "mow and blow" crews that park on your street, bring out machines, and raise the decibel level in the neighborhood. They run big mowers over your lawn and blow away everything that isn't firmly rooted into the ground. They may put additives such as fertilizers and pesticides onto your lawn. Some additives may not be good for the environment or the health of your family and neighbors. And we've all heard the message that excessive additives like phosphorus run off lawns and damage our waterways. But some lawn service companies will test your soil and only use organic soil amendments as needed. If you are concerned about the products a lawn service uses and how they apply them, be sure to ask lots of questions before hiring the company.

Lawn services can dethatch, aerate, re-contour, top dress with topsoil, over-seed, fertilize and, of course, mow your lawn. They can advise you on the proper watering needed to maintain a newly seeded lawn. Very shady areas may need to be seeded every year with annual grass seeds. Newly seeded lawns need 20 minutes of water a day early in the morning and then additionally, in sunny areas, another 15 minutes of

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Fall arrives in a Newton garden

water later in the day. Lawn services may be able to install an irrigation system if you desire or point you in the right direction to hire an irrigation specialist. The recommended way to fight crab grass is to seed in new grass. If you have areas where grass just will not flourish, it may be better to put in stepping stones or groundcover instead. Keep your grass healthy by mowing 3 to 3½ inches high and keeping your mower blades sharp.

Flower beds and borders can be simplified over time, perhaps by having fewer species and consolidating your existing perennials into groups of three, five or seven plants. I love the idea of letting the garden reseed itself, but it needs to be sorted out occasionally, either by you or by a professional gardener.

If you have a naturalized area in your garden, you may want it to have it ‘manicured.’ I read this term recently and love the concept that a suburban property with a naturalized area can be manicured and not end up looking like an abandoned property. Naturalized areas may need organic soil amendments, mulch, plant removal (invasive species love neglected areas), proper pruning, and removal of overgrown and damaged shrubs and trees. Garden services also may recommend adding new perennials, shrubs and smaller understory trees to establish an attractive mini-woods. You may want to have a naturalized woodland border surrounding your property’s edges, with more formal perennial beds in sunnier interior sections of your property.

If you consider hiring help for your garden, start by writing a detailed list of all the tasks for your garden each year. Then speak to potential service providers over the telephone or e-mail them your list. If they appeal to you, make an appointment to discuss your needs in person at your property. You could end up using more than one provider. One service might mow, take care of your lawn and do the spring and fall clean-up; a second service may tend your perennial gardens, shrubs and trees. Each provider could come on a regularly scheduled basis so you know things will be taken care of. In between their visits you can do your own gardening – just the things you enjoy and have the time and energy to do. ■

✍️ Beth Schroeder

### 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 53 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](mailto:bethwilkinson@mac.com). Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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# WALKS SCHEDULE • AUTUMN 2014

www.newtonconservators.org



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

## Sunday, September 28 at 1:00 PM

### CANOE TRIP AT NAHANTON PARK

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 against the current 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 canoe/kayak rental stand that is 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 with different patterns of wildlife overlapping the background tree line and marsh views. The trip from Nahanton Canoe/Kayak dock towards Millennium Park goes through several bends in the river where canoes and kayaks glide silently through the isolated wilderness areas of Massachusetts. You will slowly paddle upstream towards the park whilst passing by numerous wonders of nature. The fall is an especially good time to view the massive numbers of turtles along the shore along with other wildlife that have successfully been born to this unique stretch of water. There are numerous fish in this part of the Charles, including pickerel, bass and carp. Pickerel and bass when they are larger are piscivores and have other fish in their diet, but carp even as adults are primarily bottom feeders. You can see the tails of carp out of the water while their head is poking through the mud looking for food. 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, and the large Dedham Ditch and then stop for lunch on Cow Island. The trip back will be similar except we will have the current helping to carry canoeists and kayakers back. It is an interesting trip for adults and children that usually is completed within three hours.

**Trip Leaders: Bill & Dottie Hagar (617-964-2644)**

## Sunday, October 5 at 8:00 AM

### FALL BIRD WALK AT NAHANTON PARK

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 resident species. 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 the Newton Conservators. Trip cancelled in steady rain but ok if light rain or drizzle. If in doubt call Trip Leader, Haynes Miller. Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance next to the river. Parking is available inside the park.

**Trip Leader: Haynes Miller (617-413-2419)**

## Saturday, October 18 at 8:00 AM (Rain Date October 19)

### FALL BIRD WALK AT COLD SPRING PARK

Fall is an excellent time to look for birds. We'll explore the various habitats at Cold Spring that are available inside the park. Park at the Beacon Street parking lot and meet at circle. 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 October 19. If in doubt, call.

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

## Sunday, October 26 at 2:00 PM

### WEBSTER CONSERVATION AREA: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRACKS

The MBTA Green Line bisects the large open space made up of the city's Webster Conservation Area and the DCR's Hammond Pond Reservation. Most park visitors stay on the south side of the tracks unless they're visiting Houghton Garden in the northeast corner. This 2.5-mile walk explores the parklands on the north side of the tracks, including the former "deer park" and a rock outcrop offering distant views. The area was described in an 1889 guidebook as including "walls of conglomerate rock, as tall and straight as castle-bastions, crowning the hill-tops, and menaced by storming-parties of trees, whose green banners have been planted in the crevices far up their mighty steep." The walk will begin at Hammond Pond, where we'll consider DCR's imminent construction of a floating walkway. Meet at the DCR parking lot behind The Street – Chestnut Hill, off Route 9: <http://goo.gl/maps/ASM35>.

**Trip Leader: Dan Brody (617-332-5418)**

PHOTOS : SUZETTE BARBIER, WEBSTER PARK: OCTO BARNETT





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# NEWSLETTER

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

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**Blue Dasher, ID by Haynes Miller**  
*Photo by Suzette Barbier*

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