

Newton Conservators Nature Notes

Friday, March 9, 2007

Greetings! Don't miss a great lecture on **Animal Tracking** at the Library on Monday evening - 7 pm. Crystal Lake is in the news a lot and the CPC gave its approval for acquisition of 20 Rogers Street. Check out the nature walks organized by the Newton Angino Community Farm. Get a preview of the upcoming Conservators Spring Walk series commencing in May. All this and a lot more nature and open space news!

This bulletin is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton and it also serves as the organization's means of sending out time sensitive information. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org>. Welcome to the many new readers of this free email newsletter. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject. (Note: email addresses mentioned in this newsletter substitute (AT) for @ to foil spammers).

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The 2007 Newton Conservators Spring Lecture Tracking: The Art of Seeing Lecture Slideshow with Nick and Valerie Wisniewski Monday, March 12, 2007, 7 pm Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library

Have you ever see paw prints in the snow or mud and wondered just what creatures formed these interesting patterns? Learn to know if you have been visited by a raccoon, deer, fox, coyote, or even a fisher recently. The Newton Conservators (www.newtonconservators.org) and the Newton Free Library (www.ci.newton.ma.us/Library/) host a presentation by Nick and Valerie Wisniewski, cofounders and directors of the Walnut Hill Tracking and Nature Center (www.walnuthilltracking.com) in Orange, MA. They bring a lifetime of nature exploration and many years of animal tracking experience to the public through their presentations and outdoor field programs. Their passion for the wild world will transform your view of the forest and the life within.

This slide show and lecture will bring the viewer into the forest to experience the beauty and bounty of nature through the fascinating world of animal tracking. The presentation will explore the environments where animals live and introduce the viewer to tracking as a new way of seeing the wild world. The lost art of reading animal tracks and sign is one of the best routes for nature exploration, and can help us become aware of our relationship to the web of life around us. This

program is suited for the general public, nature enthusiasts, or outdoor professionals interested in wild animals and their habitats.

Nick and Valerie Wisniewski are experts on animal tracks and sign. They were both long-term students and apprentices of Paul Rezendes, master tracker and author of the seminal book, *Tracking and the Art of Seeing*, whose tracking school they have taken over after his retirement.

Nick's on-going tracking projects include animal surveys for wildlife sanctuaries, and a multi-year effort to document Mountain Lion track and sign in southern New England. A life-long naturalist, he became fascinated by tracking in 1984 after encountering fresh Wolf scat and tracks while on an extended solo trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area in Minnesota. His passion is using animal tracking as a unifying method for nature study and for exploration of issues surrounding human nature and the roots of conflict.

Valerie Camp Wisniewski began her life-long study of nature accompanying her father in the forests of Arkansas. She has taught outdoor skills to youth and adults for twenty-five years and keeps a link with her native heritage as a board member and teacher at the Eastern American Indian Cultural Center. Valerie encourages the spirit of inquiry and exploration through her primitive, experiential, teaching method.

This free Newton Conservators Lecture Series event takes place on Monday, March 12, 7 pm, at the Druker Auditorium at the Newton Free Library, 330 Homer Street in Newton Centre. Copies of *Tracking and the Art of Seeing* will be available at the lecture.

Crystal Lake News

The Community Preservation Committee consider Mayor Cohen's application for CPA funds at their meeting on Wednesday March 7th. The Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to allocate the bonding of \$2.3 million for the purchase of 20 Rogers St.- as Recreation space. Mayor Cohen presented the reasoning behind eminent domain as the fairest and preferred method for the acquisition. Several Aldermen spoke in support, and it is now incumbent upon the approval of at least 2/3 of the Board to gain purchase, Title, and immediate Community use of the land. A public process will also be established to more comprehensively plan for the future.

In the March edition of the City's monthly online newsletter, the Newton Community Report, there is an article about the mayor's intention to use eminent domain to acquire 20 Rogers Street. You can check out the full story online at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Exec/NCR/mar2007/crystal-lake.html>. Check out www.betterlake.com for ongoing news on Crystal Lake.

A statement in support of the acquisition by the Ward 4 aldermen (Crystal Lake's ward) is at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/crystalpurchasealdermenletter.htm>

Please feel free to contact your aldermen or the mayor to let them know how you feel on this important open space acquisition. A summary of Board of Aldermen contact info is available online at <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/2006-2007BOA-contact-info.pdf>.

Volunteers for Trees

Newton's Urban Tree Commission (UTC) needs volunteers. The UTC is a City commission charged with assisting the City's Forestry department to accomplish forestry goals and advising on tree policy. The group meets once a month. They need members, and also need volunteers who can work on projects, whether or not they wish to attend the meetings. Examples of projects could include writing tree articles for the Tab or for newsletters; helping with the UTC's Citizen Pruner program; researching how the City DPW can protect trees when doing sewer work (*i.e.*, the latest advances such as tunneling equipment); coordinating pruning policies with utility and cable companies; coordinating with utility undergrounding efforts; helping to get our Newton Tree Conservancy fundraising effort started; or other tree projects volunteers may be interested in. The Citizen Pruners will be having their first training class on March 19 this year.

Through all these efforts they strive to protect and promote the urban forest in Newton. If you are interested in helping the UTC, or would like more information, you are welcome to attend a meeting (currently held on the third Friday of each month from 7:45 am - 9 am in City Hall Room 202).

The Environmental Show on NewTV and online at the Newton Conservators Channel

The Environmental Show on [NewTV](#) is a volunteer educational partnership between the Newton Conservators and the [Green Decade Coalition](#), with each organization presenting in alternate months. Learn more about your parks and open spaces with the Newton Conservators and learn to think globally and act locally with the Green Decade Coalition. Newton Conservators shows are hosted by Cris Criscitiello and other members of the Conservators. Shows produced by the Green Decade are hosted by Beverly Droz with guests from a variety of environmental organizations and interests. Show times on [NewTV](#) Blue Channel (Channel 10 on Comcast and Channel 15 on RCN): Mon at 3 pm, Tue at 1:30 am, 11:30 pm, Wed at 11:30 am, Thu at Noon, 4pm, 7:30 pm, and Sat at 10 am.

March's Environmental Show, produced by the Green Decade Coalition is entitled: "**Preventing Health Problems through Good Nutrition**". In this show, Dr. Jill Stein discusses the benefits of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids in maintaining a healthy body through good nutrition. Key points include the ratio of Omega-3 to Omega-6 in diets and tips on where to find these important nutrients in the foods we eat.

The Newton Conservators produced **Newton's Nature Survey of Open Spaces** was premiered in February, 2007 on NewTV. In case you missed it, it (and all our other Environmental Show episodes) are available for viewing anytime online. See the latest offering online at <http://www.brightcove.com/title.jsp?title=464024872&channel=291742875>. Here's a description of the program:

People use their open spaces and parks in varied ways. Some go there for exercise, others to find a sunny spot for a picnic or a chat with friends, but many people, young and old, go to study nature. They're interested in identifying the various, trees, shrubs, wildflowers, mushrooms, etc. as well as any living creatures they encounter, and they enjoy following changes in the vegetation and wildlife through the seasons.. In 1995, Conservation officials in the City of Newton, Mass. hired a professional naturalist to perform an extensive survey of all life-forms existing in its major open areas and public parks. Ten years later, members of one of the city's major environmental

groups, the Newton Conservators, decided to undertake a similar study to find what changes had occurred in these same urban wild areas. This film shows how their group, with its members skilled in various fields of natural history, made the rounds each season of all the city's conservation areas and parks to find out how things stood after a decade had passed.. Their search for what's new, what's missing, and what's crowding out the native species in these places might be of interest to environmentalists in other cities around the nation.

Newton Angino Community Farm News (courtesy of the *Newton Farmer* newsletter)

News from Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager

After a very busy first growing season, I wish I could say that things were quiet around the farm. We've just been through a February deep freeze, but things are happening at the farm nonetheless. For 2007 we are expanding our active growing area by almost 50%. This requires a great deal of planning and the farm committee has been hard at work getting ready. In addition to more vegetables, we'll also be planting fruit trees and shrubs in permaculture beds surrounding the field. These beds will be examples of the rich harvest available from multi-storied plantings: strawberries on the ground; blueberries in the shrub layer; and pears in the trees. We're also working on a design for the Winchester Street entrance, which will include a welcome sign, an information kiosk, and signage for the farm stand. Next to the Winchester Street entrance will also be a compost area where we hope to generate all the fertilizer we need to ensure bountiful crops and healthy soil. Soil health is the key to agricultural sustainability, so it is fitting to have our composting operation in such a prominent site. Let's all cross our fingers and hope that this spring is drier than last so that we can be off and running as soon as possible. I know that I, for one, can't wait for fresh peas and arugula!

Farm Public Meeting and Feedback Session Tuesday, March 27, 7-8:30 pm, Newton Free Library

The Farm wants your input!! Save the date of March 27. The Farm's board has begun a strategic planning process to set the Farm's goals and strategies for the next five years. In addition to clarifying the mission and five year vision, they are researching what their constituencies need and what other similar groups are doing. They expect to complete by June a plan with specific goals and strategies regarding food production and sales, education programs, building renovations, finances, etc, . . . you get the idea. They are planning a public meeting and feedback session on Tuesday, March 27 from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at the main branch of the Newton Public Library. Please save the date to be part of the Farm's planning for the future.

Signs of Spring Nature Walks

Newton Angino Community Farm is part of an ecologically diverse mosaic of open space, not duplicated elsewhere in the city. A number of species, including the american woodcock, eastern ribbon snake, blue-spotted salamander, and eastern newt occur at few, if any other locations in Newton. From the farm, one could hike for several miles through largely uninterrupted open space associated with the Charles River in Newton, Needham, and West Roxbury. Please join in on a series of nature walks as they explore the area surrounding the farm this spring.

Flight of the Woodcock in Nahanton Park Sunday, March 25, 6:45 pm

With the decline of agriculture, and associated wet meadows, old fields, and thickets, the american woodcock has become less common in Massachusetts. In most years, small numbers of woodcock breed in Nahanton park. At dusk in early spring, these birds can be observed doing

dramatic flight displays as part of their mating ritual. If we are lucky, after a short walk to the park, we will observe this flight display. I have also observed deer and great-horned owls at dusk in Nahanton Park. Location: Meet at the Winchester Street entrance to Newton Community Farm. This event is weather dependent!

Vernal Pool Explorations **Sunday, April 22, 9:45 am**

We will meet at the farm, walk along the Charles River Path and explore several vernal pools. Vernal pools, or small ponds lacking fish, provide important breeding habitat for a number of amphibians, and support a unique and diverse array of invertebrates such as fairy shrimp and predaceous diving beetles. We will dip net in some pools and are likely to observe spotted salamander egg masses. Note: This excursion includes a fairly lengthy walk along the Charles River. We can arrange to meet people at Saw Mill Brook Parkway who would like to skip the longer hike, but participate in the vernal pool investigations. Location: Meet at the Winchester Street entrance to Newton Community Farm. Weather Dependent!

CSA Shares - Community Supported Agriculture.

Newton Community Farm, Inc. is the non-profit operator of Newton Angino Community Farm. They operate the city-owned farm, the last farm in the City of Newton, for the benefit of the public. Their mission is to preserve and improve this historic open space site for the benefit of the community, to provide local, sustainably grown produce, and to educate the public about sustainable use of land and other natural resources. A portion of the food grown on site is donated to people in need through the Newton Food Pantry.

The public is invited to contribute to the financial viability of Newton's community farm by pre-purchasing a CSA share. Enrollment for this year has been ongoing and there may be few shares (\$525, 12 hour) and half shares (\$275, 6 hours, pick up on alternate weeks) still available for the farm this year. Information is at the Farm website at <http://www.newtoncommunityfarm.org/>. CSA participants receive tender and delicious vegetables grown on the farm -- including salad makings, tomatoes, greens, peas, beans, summer squash and more -- throughout the 20-week CSA season from June 13th to late October. In addition, CSA members volunteer a certain number of hours.

Certain items such as potatoes and winter squash, which require more space than our modest site allows, are purchased from partner farms. CSA members share in the bounty of the farm, and also in the work and the risk. With one year of production behind us, we have confidence that we will meet our production goals, but growing vegetables always involves some uncertainty. Regular Shares: A regular share costs \$525 and is sized to provide sufficient produce for a family of four. Starting June 13, shareholders come to the farm once a week to pick up vegetables. The CSA season lasts about 20 weeks, ending in October. Shares include many PYO (pick your own) items such as beans, cherry tomatoes, greens, herbs, and peas.

Alternate Week Shares: Last year some people found a regular share was too large, so this year we're offering the option of an Alternate Week share at a cost of \$275. Participants pick up produce *every other week* throughout the season, beginning either June 13 or June 20. Alternate Week Shareholders are assigned an alternate-week schedule on a first-come, first-served basis. Half the Alternate Week Shares will be assigned to each week.

Vegetables will also be available to the public at the Farm's on-site stand or at the Friday American Legion Post 440 or Tuesday Cold Spring Park Farmers' Markets.

Some Upcoming Events

An Inconvenient Truth
Saturday, March 10, 1:00 PM - Free
Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium

Even if you've already seen Al Gore's film — and especially if you haven't — join the Green Decade Coalition for this special showing! Professor Eric Olson, Brandeis University and Chair of the Green Decade's Energy Committee, will lead the discussion afterwards. Many people who have seen "An Inconvenient Truth" believe that Gore's film does a good job describing the science and the politics surrounding this issue, but is less effective at describing solutions. Dr. Olson will briefly describe ways of tackling global warming that can form a basis for individual and political next-step actions, and will encourage audience commentary on both the film and possible solutions. Special Guest: Mayor David Cohen.

CRWA Brown Bag Lunch
Tuesday, March 13

This month's Charles River Watershed Association's Brown Bag Lunch will feature guest speaker Mark Smith, of The Nature Conservancy. His presentation, *Streamflow Protection in the Eastern U.S.*, will highlight state efforts to develop stream flow protection policies and programs, including the work of various states that are developing water quantity standards, how stakeholders groups are engaged in this process, and the different methods that are being used to protect streamflow. If you'd like to join us, please RSVP by replying to this email or calling 781-788-0007 x200. Visit the CRWA website at www.crwa.org

11th Annual Alternatives to Pesticides Month (GreenCAP)

March has been proclaimed the [11th Annual Alternatives to Pesticides Month](#) by Mayor David Cohen. GDC's [GreenCAP](#) Committee for Alternatives to Pesticides will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Rachel Carson, founder of the environmental movement. GreenCAP's activities will include a display about Rachel Carson at the Newton Free Library, next to the circulation desk. [The New England Mobile Book Fair](#) also joins the celebration with a 30% discount on books by and about Rachel Carson throughout the month.

Energy Conservation Contests for Students and Households
Deadline: March 15, 2007

Two great opportunities for students AND households to create awareness of need for energy efficient products and the reduction of Newton's energy consumption! The contests are sponsored by the Green Decade, the [Newton Schools Foundation](#) and [GreenEnergyNewton](#), with prizes provided by [NSTAR](#) and [Whole Foods Market](#). Click here for details and rules: <http://www.greendecade.org/energycontest.html>

Student Essay Contest: "Protect the Climate – Start at Home" - Deadline: March 15. Open to all elementary, middle school and high school students who live or go to school in Newton. Purpose: to increase awareness of the issue among Newton residents and to encourage them to choose more energy efficient products and to waste less. Prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and four distinction prize winners at each school level. **Household Contest:**

While the students are working on their conservation essays, it is your turn to do the actual conserving! Win a \$200 gift certificate from Whole Foods Market by reducing your electric and/or heating bill by the greatest percentage of any Newton household by the April 15 deadline.

MWRA 26th Annual Poster & Writing Contest
Deadline: March 16, 2007

Encourage your student to enter the MWRA's annual poster and writing contest! The poster contest is open to all Massachusetts students in grades K-8 who attend school in one of the MWRA's service communities; the writing contest is open to grades 3-12. Go the [MWRA website](#) for contest topics, rules, details and to see previous winners' posters & essays!

Urban Ark Seminar and Tour: A model of Green Living
Saturday, March 24, 10 am - Noon

A higher quality of life at a lower cost of living—what could be better? David Del Porto and his wife, Elva, have spent 25 years turning this vision into a reality. Today, their Newton Centre home is a model of sustainable design. You'll tour their "Urban Ark," and discover how they've integrated space heat, food production, air purification, and wastewater treatment within an amazing two-story greenhouse. They'll share the successes and failures of their quest for green living, and show you how to invest your time and money to get the most benefit from the least effort. And with rising fuel and water prices and dwindling resources, there's no time like the present to learn methods that can provide environmental and economic security for you and your family. Directions to the meeting point will be provided to registrants; proceeds will go to The Green Decade Coalition. \$20; \$15 for Students & Green Decade members. David & Elva Del Porto, Instructors.

Benefit Concert for the CRWA at First Parish of Watertown
Saturday, March 24, 8 pm

First Parish of Watertown is holding a *concert to benefit CRWA* on Saturday, March 24 at 8pm. The concert will feature *Jaded Mandolin Bluegrass Band*, and tickets are \$15 for adults, \$9 for students, or \$32 for families, with proceeds to CRWA. First Parish is located at 35 Church Street, Watertown, MA 02472.

Environmental Speaker Series - Green Decade Coalition
Rebuilding Democracy for a Healthy Tomorrow
Dr. Jill Stein, MD
Monday, March 26, 7:00 PM - Newton Free Library

Our health is intimately connected to the quality of our environment, and the quality of our environment is fundamentally dependent on the quality of our democracy. Health and environmental advocate Jill Stein, MD, will talk about steps you can take to reduce environmental threats to healthy development and aging. And she'll explain how together we can create the most important safeguard of all -- a revitalized democracy. Dr. Stein is a physician, a citizen/scientist, a musician and a celebrated health and environmental advocate. She was the 2006 Green Party Candidate for Secretary of State and 2002

candidate for Governor. She is also the founder of the Massachusetts Coalition for Healthy Communities, a non-profit organization that helps inform and empower citizens to build towards healthy communities, sustainable prosperity, and real democracy. Her talk will explain the intimate connection between human health, behavior and the quality of our environment. She will discuss what citizens and elected officials need to do to promote health and long term sustainability.

Geese Egg Addling Training Workshop
Monday, March 26th, 6:30 to 7:30 PM,
MSPCA, Animal Care and Adoption Center Education Room, 350 South Huntington Ave.

Join David Feld, Founder of GeesePeace, for a workshop on humanely limiting the explosive growth of the invasive Canadian Geese population. For more information, visit <http://www.mspca.org/site/PageServer?pagename=CanadaGeese&JServSessionIdr001=gmi57iuc1.app2b> or www.geesepeace.org.

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance Bus Tour - Innovative Small Urban Open Spaces Outside Brookline
Sunday, April 1st, 10:00 AM,
Marriott in Coolidge Corner, 40 Webster Street

Please join Brookline GreenSpace Alliance for a tour of innovative small urban open spaces outside of Brookline's borders. There is a \$10 fee for this special trip. Please pre-register as space is limited. Be sure to visit our website, www.brooklinegreenspace.org, to view other Brookline GreenSpace events and news.

8th Annual Earth Day Charles River Cleanup
Saturday, April 21, 2007 (Rain Date April 29) 9 am - Noon

Organize a group to pick up trash and clean the riverbanks! Work with your friends or co-workers, meet your neighbors, and celebrate your community. Groups will be working in Bellingham, Norfolk, Dover, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Cambridge, Boston and everywhere in between! You will be provided with cleanup supplies, refreshments, and instructions on when, where, and how you can help. The Annual Earth Day Charles River Cleanup is organized by a collaborative of groups interested in environmental and river issues: In order to efficiently organize over 1,200 volunteers representing more than 100 organizations who help clean up along the river and the watershed's streams and ponds, we have divided the watershed and towns into six 'regions', each supervised by a regional coordinator. For more info visit the CRWA website at www.crwa.org or call the Charles River Cleanup general information line at 781-788-0007 x 303.

Green Decade Environmental Speaker Series:
Global Citizenship - Ed Wilson, President & CEO of Earthwatch Institute
Monday, April 23, 7:00 PM
Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium

What does it mean to be a Global Citizen? With current global trends, how does one

become engaged to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment? Ed Wilson, President & CEO of Earthwatch Institute, will speak about the mission of Earthwatch Institute and its efforts to create global citizens. Earthwatch Institute is an international non-profit organization that brings science to life for people concerned about the Earth's future. Founded in 1971, Earthwatch supports scientific field research by offering volunteers the opportunity to join research teams around the world. This unique model is creating a systematic change in how the public views science and its role in environmental sustainability. Today, Earthwatch recruits close to 4,000 volunteers every year to collect field data in the areas of rainforest ecology, wildlife conservation, marine science, archaeology, and more. Through this process, Earthwatch educates, inspires, and involves a diversity of people, who actively contribute to conserving our planet.

Newton Conservators Spring Walk Series

It's never too early to think about spring. Even in early March. In fact, what better time? The Conservators are planning for spring. Come May and June, the Conservators offer seven "walks," which range from a hike on the Aqueduct Trail to a tour of Crystal Lake and a canoe trip on the Charles. The cost is free. Trips are led by experienced guides who know what to look for along the way. The Conservators invite everyone - young, old, member or not. Bring a kayak. Wear your hiking shoes. Come with us to find the wild side of our city.

Conservators' President Bill Hagar leads a canoe trip on the Charles River's lakes region on June 10. Bill is a professor of biology at UMass Boston and knows the river's twists, turns, and hidden pockets from years of guiding this trip. Cris Criscitiello, an experienced birder, leads a bird walk at Nahanton Park on Mother's Day, a good date to view the spring bird migration along the Charles. Octo Barnett leads the season's first walk, in the Webster Woods off the Hammond Pond Parkway. Bare Pond, a vernal pool, should be full in spring. Webster Woods is used by groups for orienteering and rock climbing. Octo will share his knowledge of the compass and GIS.

Peter Kastner leads a tour of the Newton Cemetery on Walnut Street behind the library. The walk is scheduled for Memorial Day, a date that Peter finds appropriate, in light of the fact that many Civil War veterans are buried here. Two mid-1800s trends in cemeteries are in evidence at the Newton Cemetery, says Peter: whereas earlier cemeteries were placed in small, forgotten corners of churchyards, Newton Cemetery and others memorialized the war dead in a prominent way as an "outpouring of national grief" and at the same time served as beautiful open spaces, with plantings and walking trails. Don Lubin of the New England Wildflower Society leads a tour of Cold Spring Park, to find and identify ferns. Lucy Caldwell-Stair leads a tour of Crystal Lake on Father's Day. Lucy is familiar with the pond's history. The tour will view the Hannon property, which the City hopes to acquire to expand the Crystal Lake public beach site. Henry Finch will lead a popular walk along the aqueducts, starting in Waban. Henry spearheads the Conservators' effort to make the aqueducts more accessible to the public.

If you have questions about a walk or are interested in leading such a walk in an area that you know, please contact the walks coordinator. You can find a printable walks list in PDF format at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/events/walkspring07.pdf>

Webster Woods: Use of compass and GPS in map reading
Sunday, May 6, 2007, 2-4 pm

Webster Woods is the woodland on both sides of Hammond Pond Parkway just north of Route 9. We will visit the woodland on the west side of the Parkway, which has over four miles of paths, with ponds, streams, wetlands, a variety of trees and plants, and large outcroppings of Roxbury Puddingstone (most notably Gooch's Cave and Cake Rock - used for rock climbing practice). In the center of the woods is Bare Pond, which is a vernal pond (one of the few in Newton), where we will discuss what is characteristic of a vernal pond and how one is certified. Thompsonville Brook runs through the western edge of the woods and is the only known headwaters of a stream in Newton. You can see remnants of stone walls left over from centuries ago when the land was used for farming. We will discuss the use of the area by the New ENgland Orienteering Club and the characteristics of this sport. Octo Barnett will lead a walk though the woods and discuss the use of the compass and GPS to find locations on a map. Meet at the end of Warren Street (take Langley Road or Beacon Street to Glen Avenue to Warren Street) - there is ample parking.

Nahanton Park - Spring Bird Walk
Sunday, May 13, 2007--Mothers' Day, 8-10 am

The mix of woodlands, wetlands and meadows adjacent to the Charles River makes Nahanton Park a wonderful place to see the spring bird migration. Enter the park at the Winchester Street entrance in order to reach the upper parking area located a short way down the road on the left opposite an open field. This entrance is off Winchester Street between the Charles River Country Club golf course and the Jewish Community Center. Please gather at the upper parking area at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as established enthusiasts are welcome! Walk dependent upon weather! This is also part of the Newton Angino Community Farm walk series.

Civil War Tour: Memorial Day Tour of Newton Cemetery
Sunday, May 27, 2007--Memorial Day weekend, 2 pm

The Newton Cemetery, created in the 19th century, after the naturalistic style pioneered by Mt Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, holds Newton's monuments to the Civil War as well as the final resting place for many of the city's civil war veterans. Newton Cemetery is beautifully landscaped and is a wonderful open space treasure. Peter Kastner will lead this tour honoring the city's contribution to the Civil War and the history of the cemetery and view the variety of specimen trees that have been planted there. Meet by the administrative building just inside the main entrance on Walnut Street.

Walking Tour of the Aqueduct Trail
Sunday, June 3, 2007, 2-4 pm

If hiking is more your speed than biking, Henry Finch will lead a walking tour of parts of the Sudbury and Cochituate Aqueducts that go through Newton. This walk introduces residents to this wonderful resource. As with the biking tour held in previous years, you will travel near backyards and we ask that you respect the privacy of homeowners. Meet in front of the Starbucks near the Waban MBTA Station.

Ferns in Cold Spring Park
Saturday, June 9th, Noon-2 pm

This large park where the aqueducts meet is a good compromise between an accessible park with developed trails and a wild conservation area with interesting native plants. We will see nearly a dozen different ferns and one horsetail, and discuss how to identify each one. Bring a hand lens if you have one. The Land Management Committee has been systematically surveying the open spaces in Newton to document the existing biodiversity. In terms of ferns and related plants (pteridophytes), we have found 28 species and hybrids. Some occur infrequently and are very difficult to get to, and some are very subtle to distinguish. We will provide an introduction to some that are quite common and rather easily recognized with a little practice. The walk will be led by Don Lubin, who leads field trips for the New England Wild Flower Society. Visit his website at <http://nefern.info>. We will try to limit the crowd to 15 people; to reserve a place, email donlubin(AT)comcast.net. Meet at the Plymouth Road entrance in the southwest corner of the Cold Spring Park. You should be able to park on Plymouth Rd. between Cochituate Rd. and Kingston Rd.

Charles River Lakes District Canoe Trip Sunday, June 10, 2007, 2-4 pm

The canoe trip through the Charles River Lakes District, a mixture of residential, commercial and wetlands, starts from the Charles River Cano Service on Commonwealth Avenue. The trip goes past Norumbega Park, Fox Island, Auburndale Park, Weirs Cove, the Waltham Watch building, Mount Feake Cemetery, Purgatory Cove and stops (we trust) just short of the Moody Street dam. The river and surrounding wetlands are well populated with ducks, geese, blue herons and the occasional hawk or egret, so you might want to bring your binoculars. Park across the river from the canoe service. Rental canoes and kayaks are available, or bring you own (and required life jackets) and put in from the parking lot. The trip leader is Bill Hagar.

Crystal Lake Walk Sunday, June 17, 2007--Fathers Day, 2-4 pm

Crystal Lake has had several names. Its colonial name was Wiswall's Pond. The lake was used for ice harvesting in the 19th century, as were Bullough's Pond and Chandler Pond. Ice dealers who sold the ice for refrigeration renamed it Crystal Lake to sound appealing to customers. The Crystal Lake area is home to a significant number of historical residences and is Newton's only opportunity for swimming in a natural body of water. Crystal Lake is a "great pond" (a pond that's larger than ten acres). It is state-owned. This walk is co-sponsored with the Newton History Museum. Lucy Caldwell-Stair will lead the walk around Crystal Lake. The walk will start on Rogers Street at the front of the bathhouse.

The Envi Sci Program: Where does the Science Come From?

The Environmental Science Program is a summer program for Newton junior high and high school students. David Backer is the Executive Director. The Conservators are one of the program's sponsors.

One of the great things about the Environmental Science Program is that student leaders develop the program's science workshops and teach them in the field to the students. This is a long-standing tradition that has worked well for 40 years: teaching and learning about science - on the spot, in the environment, student to student.

The Environmental Science Program is a unique program for teenagers that began as a Ford

Foundation Project in 1967. "Envi Sci" combines enjoying the wilderness with learning about the science of the environment in daily outdoor activities. The program centers around the idea that students learn best about their surroundings when taught by other students. Each year the leaders, who are all former students from the program, go through training to educate participants while they are hiking or biking or canoeing.

What makes the leader training period interesting is that it is totally organized and managed by the student leaders themselves.

It starts when the leaders, working with the college-age Director and Student Director, select students from the summer just ended to become the new first-year leaders. These new leaders join the older leaders in regular meetings from January through June, during which they train to be leaders and help plan the science workshops.

The leaders propose and discuss topics for workshops to be covered in the coming summer. Some are taken from a list of topics taught almost every year, such as weather or ecology. Others are created by a leader who expresses an interest in a new topic.

A look at a typical calendar for the Program gives a good impression of the range of science workshops. There are botany walks in the forested areas of Newton and a "wild edibles" workshop that highlights local plants that can be eaten or cooked. There is a bicycle trip on the "geology loop" route that gives students a look at various rock strata in road cuts and exposed hillsides. There is also an early morning birdwalk that takes students into the field when the birds are becoming active.

The 12-mile canoe trip on the Charles River includes water-sampling to determine pH, salinity, turbidity, and other qualities. One year the program discovered an industrial pollution problem, which the City was able to correct.

There are also a night-time astronomy session and a study trip to the salt marshes and tidal pools of coastal Maine. During the "mountain sequence" trips, students can see the difference between real and false blueberries at the Blue Hills Reservation and learn about the false treeline on Mt. Monadnock, created by a human-made fire that was set to stop coyotes from killing livestock.

Some of the workshops are leaders' "Own Designs", which are trips designed around a leader's own interest, at a location related to the special subject. Examples include a trip to the Frederick Law Olmsted Museum in Brookline and an orienteering class on how to interpret contour lines and trail markings on a topographic map.

The program ends with an exhilarating three-day backpacking trip up the highest peak in the Northeast, Mount Washington. Along the trail, leaders explain the specialized adaptations that plants and shrubs have made to the harsh weather conditions in the White Mountains. They teach why care is needed to avoid long-term damage to ground cover when hiking in the alpine zones above a certain altitude.

A recent second-year leader said that one of the things he enjoyed about the program is that "... every day is different; you go to different places and learn different things, and just have a great time."

Another student who went on to be a leader for four years talked about how "amazing" it was to hear so much about the environment from the other leaders, and that "I would say that's what I remember most about the environment ... it hadn't come from school, but from these people who knew so much."

Leaders eventually leave the program for college and jobs. Some have gone on to study oceanography, forestry, conservation, and other environmentally focused careers. But even students who do not become leaders still get a first-hand appreciation of the wilderness and the

science behind the interactions between natural and human-made forces. Many students come back year after year to enjoy the experience again.

Anyone interested in learning more about the "Envi Sci" Program can go to the website, www.newtonenvisci.org. You can also see a video about the EnviSci program at <http://www.brightcove.com/title.jsp?title=296765408> which was produced with the Newton Conservators as part of its Environmental Show series. You can also send email to [contact\(AT\)newtonenvisci.org](mailto:contact(AT)newtonenvisci.org). Registration for the summer of 2007 has already begun, so interested families should sign up now!

- David S. Backer, Program Director (from the Newton Conservators Newsletter - Spring 2007)

Land Acquisition Criteria

A community needs a land trust to accept gifts of open space from property owners who have served as good stewards of their land and want to see it preserved in its natural state. The gifts the Conservators have accepted in recent years have all provided important protection, including land on the fringe of the Webster Conservation Area at Newton Centre, land on Dexter Road near Laundry Brook, and a parcel at the headwaters of the Hyde Brook. Each has important features as habitat and open space. One may lead to other gifts that will piece together protection for a larger area at Hyde Brook, to keep the entire hollow in its natural state.

The Internal Revenue Service has made an issue of other kinds of gifts, those that are serve primarily as tax shelters and that preserve little of natural value. Bogus "land trusts" have been established that do little other than to accept such gifts.

To separate the gifts of value from others, it is important that a land trust establish criteria. Board member Larry Burdick has taken the lead, to assure that the Conservators' criteria for land acquisition are consistent with those of the Land Trust Alliance, a national umbrella organization for land trusts. Criteria have been adopted by the Board and are available for review at the Conservators' Web site.

Criteria in Newton differ from those in more rural locations where the focus is on large tracts. Burdick notes that it is important that the Conservators' criteria allow for gifts of small parcels and "pocket parks," which are among the types open space acquisitions that the Community Preservation Committee seeks to fund, as well.

- Eric Reenstierna (from the Newton Conservators Newsletter - Spring 2007)

Cycle Paths in Newton

Newton has many miles of paths open to the public. Most are more suitable for pedestrians than cyclists but several miles of the Charles River Bikeway are in Newton, and the carriage road along Commonwealth Avenue is popular with cyclists and joggers. Except for the Bikeway, which was built and is managed by the Commonwealth, these trails are not marked. The best source of information on Newton's paths is the Newton Conservators' Web site.

Newton has a Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force to advise the Board of Aldermen on bicycle and pedestrian issues, and the Conservators actively promote paths. The benefits of paths are many: for the individual, healthy exercise and fresh air; for those who continue to drive, less congestion; and for the environment, less air pollution and a small reduction in CO₂.

Cycling is allowed on all roads in Massachusetts except for limited access highways, but many people are afraid of cycling on roads which are shared with fast moving automobile traffic and are even more afraid for their children. The ideal cycle path is separate from the auto travel lanes and the exhaust smoke that goes with them.

What is probably the most used bicycle path in Greater Boston is the Minuteman Trail in Cambridge, Arlington, Lexington and Bedford, which follows a disused railroad right of way and, apart from road crossings, is quite separated from roads. The main problem with the Minuteman is overuse at weekends and holidays. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and parents pushing baby carriages share the path.

Bicycle and pedestrian paths have several uses:

- * Utilitarian - riding or walking to school, to the library, to work;
- * Exercise - mostly by local residents;
- * Tourism

The Minuteman, at least in some sections, attracts all three kinds of users. It is a commuter bicycle route, it is an alternative to the highway, and it also attracts a significant number of touring cyclists from out of state, providing a pleasant way to visit several major historic sites.

Newton's paths may not see the same volume of use. But the Charles River Bikeway certainly attracts cyclists from outside the immediate area and has the potential to become part of a regional bicycle path network.

The Commonwealth Avenue carriage road provides a valuable east-west route from Brookline to Route 128. The carriage road is also used by automobiles but can be shared with cyclists and joggers because cars are infrequent, are slow moving, and travel only one way. Where a main road is wide enough, a bicycle path can be marked off to the right of the travel lane. The difficulties of this method include illegal parking, sections of road that are narrow, and intersections where the right hand lane become the right hand turn lane. These problems can be overcome by construction, but construction is expensive and sometimes controversial. Despite these problems, some neighboring towns have created bicycle paths using this method. We would be interested to hear from readers who have used marked lanes.

What is the future for bicycle and pedestrian paths in Newton? The easiest and lowest cost action is to mark existing paths at points of entry and provide guidance where existing streets are used as a part of the path.

Other ideas:

- * to identify likely destinations for bicyclists - schools, subway stops, etc.
- * to try to find routes to these destinations using less traveled roads that avoid heavily used thoroughfares
- * to mark off a bicycle lanes on roads which are wide enough to allow this (The City has already done this on Nahanton Street.)
- * to improve the surface of some portions of the Aqueduct Paths so that they are more easily used by bicyclists
- * to determine if the preferred routes of any proposed regional bike or pedestrian paths might pass through Newton and to facilitate these paths.

- Gil Wooley (from the Newton Conservators Newsletter - Spring 2007)

Newton Conservators Notes

The **Newton Conservators Newsletter** is the official publication of the Newton Conservators and may be found online at

<http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletter.htm>. The latest newsletter is available

online in PDF format at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/feb07.pdf>. We have some plans in the new year for combining our paper based Newton Conservators Newsletter with this email based Nature Notes. Members may have the option to receive the Newsletter just in email form - saving trees in the process. There will likely be four issues that will be available in mailed paper form for those who prefer. In between issues may be available just in email form. In this and the following issue we incorporate some of the articles found in the Newton Conservators newsletter. Material in this newsletter is primarily compiled from other sources and newsletters.

The **Newton Conservators' Annual Dinner** is scheduled for **May 30** at **American Legion Post 440** in Nonantum, adjacent to the Charles River Pathway. Thanks to Alderman Salvucci for again securing the Post's excellent dinner and meeting hall for us, as he has in recent years.

The Newton Conservators have an active **Land Management Group** led by Landscape Designer, Beth Schroeder. Each week, usually on Tuesdays, the group had visited one of our open space areas to catalog the flowers, plants, animals, and other creatures that are found there. If you are experienced and knowledgeable in the areas of nature related identification, please let us know if you would like to assist next season in this long term effort to catalog the biodiversity in Newton. The results from the past year's efforts have recently been catalogued into a summary spreadsheet which will provide a very helpful record of Newton's biodiversity. See the description of this groups work in the latest Newton Conservators newsletter.

The **Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands** map guide put out by the Newton Conservators is a great resource for those who would like to explore Newton's open space. It is a 56-page guide containing detailed trail maps of 27 conservation areas in Newton, featuring parks, ponds, gardens, trails, canoe launches, nature guides, rock climbing, scenic views, handicapped access, geological features, and bird watching areas. The guide also contains photos, driving directions, interesting historical details, and an overall map of showing the locations of the 27 natural. Many more folks have been observed out in our conservation areas with their trail guide in hand;

It is available by web, mail and also at Newtonville Books and New England Mobile Book Fair. Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands may be purchased for \$7.95 online at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/buyaguide.htm> or by mailing a check payable to The Newton Conservators, Inc. to The Newton Conservators, P.O. Box 590011, Newton Center, MA 02459. It makes a great gift for your outdoors and nature loving friends.

The Newton Conservators are starting to consider the next edition of this great guide, partly due to additional open spaces and features added in Newton due to such things as the adoption of the CPA! If you have any corrections that you think should be included please send them to The Newton Conservators, P.O. Box 590011, Newton Center, MA 02459.

The Newton Conservators are a nonprofit citizen advocacy organization which actively

promotes the acquisition, creation, and preservation of natural open spaces for the people of Newton. Since its formation in the late 1950's, The Newton Conservators has been instrumental in safeguarding more than 200 acres of open space in Newton, creating several major public parks, and enacting ground-breaking environmental ordinances with respect to the protection and preservation of trees, wetlands and clean air, and the conservation of energy. that promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, park lands, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open spaces for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of the City of Newton, Massachusetts for scientific study, education, and recreation. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, recreational, educational, literary, and the other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare in the City of Newton. Please visit our website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org> .

If you would like to join the Newton Conservators, please send your name, address, phone and email address (if you wish email alerts) to The Newton Conservators, Inc., P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459. Membership Options are the following: Individual \$25, Family Member \$35, Sustaining Member \$50, Donor \$75, Patron \$100. Membership is tax deductible. Your membership includes the Newton Conservators Newsletter and emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities. You will also receive by mail a copy of the new Newton Conservators open space map book, "Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands".

If you would like to be more directly kept apprised of future nature related events, walks, lectures, and exhibits, you are invited to join the Newton Conservators sponsored "Newton Conservators Nature Notes" email list by sending an email request to [emaillist\(AT\)newtonconservators.org](mailto:emaillist(AT)newtonconservators.org) . Newton Conservators Nature Notes is automatically sent to members of the Newton Conservators who provide their email addresses as one of their membership benefits. Newton Conservators Nature Notes may be found online at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/naturenotes.htm>. You are welcome to submit any items for this sporadic newsletter via email to the same address. Please feel free to forward our newsletter to others you feel might be interested in the information contained herein.