

Newton Conservators Nature Notes

Thursday, April 12, 2007

Greetings! Spring has sprung but it still seems a bit chilly. But warmer days are inevitably coming soon and with them the return of the birds and bugs. Tonight there is a film presentation at West Newton Cinema and a Nature photo reception opening at Watertown Library. This Saturday is "Step it Up" National Day of Climate Action. Get a preview of the upcoming Conservators Spring Walk series commencing in May. Check out a new "Natural Newton" nature blog from Jon Regosin. 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).

Upcoming Events

Everything's Cool - from the Sundance Film Festival

Thursday, April 12 at 7 pm, West Newton Cinema, 1296 Washington St. (West Newton Square)

A special presentation of "[Everything's Cool](#)," the documentary about the chasm between the scientific understanding of global warming and political action. Journalist Ross Gelbspan, one of the film's stars, will answer questions from the audience following the screening. Advance tickets: \$9 (adults), \$7 (seniors/children); at door: \$10, \$8. Proceeds to benefit a new online environmental journalism project of Green Decade Coalition/Newton.

Animal Reflection: Holding a Mirror Up to Nature

Photos of Carole Smith Berney

Opening Reception: April 12, 6:30-8:30 pm, Watertown Library

Carole Smith Berney, Watertown naturalist and photographer has a new exhibit of color photographs on display at the Watertown Free Public Library in the second floor gallery this month through April 29th. The Library is at 123 Main Street, Watertown, just a little west of Watertown Square. There will be a reception on Thursday evening, April 12 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm with light refreshments. For library hours one can call 617-972-6431. If you have been to her lecture on the Charles River or viewed the "Flora and Fauna of the Charles River" episode of the Environmental Show, you know how wonderfully expressive her photographs are. Catch the exhibit this month if you can!

"Step It Up 2007" National Day of Climate Action

Saturday, April 14

"Step It Up 2007" National Day of Climate Action, supported by Bill McKibben, with many local events. You can even canoe or kayak to their Waltham event! Visit their website for details at www.stepitup2007.org.

Newton tells Congress “Cut Carbon by 80% by 2050!” on Saturday, April 14 at 10 am, Newton Community Services Center (NCSC). Join this national event here in Newton (sponsored locally by Green Decade) to show our concern about Climate Change. There will be a gathering of Newton groups, holding signs calling on Congress to act now on measures to slow global warming. Photos will be broadcast by web and TV from hundreds of cities & towns across the country. Visit www.stepitup2007.org to see how many cities and towns are committed today. NCSC is at 492 Waltham Street, West Newton (off Washington St. in W. Newton Square)

The Student Environmental Action committee at Brandeis is coordinating a StepItUp2007 community event in Waltham as part of the National Day of Climate Action. Communities all around the country are holding rallies to tell Congress to take action and “Cut Carbon 80% by 2050.” We welcome your organization to attend our rally on the Waltham Common at the intersection of Moody and Main St. at 12:00 pm. Visit <http://walthamlandtrust.org/earth-day/step-it-up-national-day-of-climate-action>.

The Watertown Citizens for Environmental Safety sponsor an "Environmental Vigil" in Watertown Square from 11 am-12 noon:. Bring a sign or banner and stand up for the planet. For more information: www.watertowncitizens.org. At 3 pm there will be a slide show and educational forum featuring Dan Grossman, Watertown native and writer/reporter, who will speak about global warming using Greenland as a case study. This will be held at the Watertown Public Library, 123 Main Street, Watertown.

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. To volunteer, visit www.charlesriver.org/cleanup.html or call the Charles River Cleanup general information line at 781-788-0007 x 303.

Register donation coupons available at all ten Whole Foods Markets in the Charles River watershed to support the Earth Day Charles River Cleanup and CRWA (Charles River Watershed Association). Please shop at Whole Foods and make a donation to CRWA through this special opportunity, and encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same – it is as easy as tearing off a coupon and adding it to your shopping order! Look for CRWA representatives at Whole Foods during the month distributing literature and talking to shoppers about CRWA.

City of Waltham Earth Day Celebration
Sunday, April 22, 10am-4pm

City of Waltham is having an Earth Day Celebration, with CRWA as co-organizer, 10am-4pm at 240 and 265 Beaver St which are the Cedar Hill Girl Scout Reservation and the UMass Agricultural Field Station. For more information, visit www.walthamlandtrust.org/earthday.

The day includes a wide variety of activities for all ages including this brief selection from the many programs going on that day: **Animal Adventures**, a hands-on educational experience with furry and scaly animals, their care and enjoyment. **Pond Life and One Thing You Can Do to Take Care of It**. Come to learn about backyard care and how that impacts the pond/wetlands environment. **Community Farms Outreach**. Enjoy a guided walk on the farm, plant seeds and take some with you, participate in children activities such as worm composting "meet the worms" activity, a scavenger hunt, and craft activities.

Waltham Recreation Department. Pick up maps and educational material about the City's wooded trails and parks! Educational and fun children activities.

Vernal Pool Explorations
Newton Angino Community Farm = Signs of Spring Nature Walk
Sunday, April 22, 9:45 am

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.

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. Contact Jon Regosin to arrange this. Location: Meet at the Winchester Street entrance to Newton Community Farm. Weather Dependent!

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.

The Green Decade will be holding a raffle to raise funds for their expanding programs. Top prizes include a bicycle from Harris Cyclery in West Newton and a \$300 gift certificate from Whole Foods. Tickets are \$10 or 3 for \$20. Purchase tickets and find the complete list of environmentally friendly prizes on-line starting April 20th and at Green Decade Coalition booths at up-coming citywide events.

Energy Conservation Contest Awards Wednesday, April 25, 5:30 pm,

Join Mayor David Cohen and the Green Decade in recognizing our environmentally active Newton students who submitted essays for energy conservation in Newton! "Protect the Climate – Start At Home" is this year's theme for Newton students at the elementary, middle school and high school level. Prizes will be awarded to the winners at the ceremony. Friends, family and environmentalists welcome! For more information on the contest, visit [Newton Student Contest](#) on our website. Co-sponsored by the Green Decade, [Newton Schools Foundation](#) and [GreenEnergyNewton](#). prizes provided by [NSTAR](#) and [Whole Foods Market](#). The awards will take place at the First Unitarian Society of Newton (FUSN), Parish Hall, 1326 Washington St, West Newton.

Seventh Annual NewtonServes Day of Community Service Sunday, April 29, 9 am-4pm (Rain or shine)

Registration: Newton City Hall [NewtonSERVES](#) is a day of community service bringing together volunteers of all ages to complete tasks that benefit over 40 non-profit agencies and the City of Newton. Join as an individual, a family or a group to work on projects throughout the city, such as cleaning up parks, planting gardens, building and painting school bookshelves and helping our senior citizens. The closing celebration "Ice Cream Sundaes on Sunday" is a wonderful way to finish the day. All-day and half-day projects available. View the list of this year's projects and sign up on-line at www.ci.newton.ma.us/newtonservices. Photos from previous NewtonSERVES events are also available on the site.

Cleanups have already been organized at the following parks. You can register online at the following links.

- * Albemarle Cove http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/newtonservices/register_open.asp?ID=4
- * Cold Springs Park http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/newtonservices/register_open.asp?ID=12
- * Edmands Park/Cabot Woods
http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/newtonservices/register_open.asp?ID=15
- * Norumbega Park http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/newtonservices/register_open.asp?ID=36
- * Newton Center http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/newtonservices/register_open.asp?ID=25
- * Richardson Field http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/newtonservices/register_open.asp?ID=41
- * Weeks Field http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/newtonservices/register_open.asp?ID=45
- * Wellington Park http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/newtonservices/register_open.asp?ID=46

Swap Til You Drop

April 29, Recycling Center, Rumford Ave.

To celebrate Earth Day (April 22), the Division of Environmental Affairs is hosting a month of earth-friendly activities. Sign up on WasteNotNewton.com to become a member of Newton's on-line reusable materials exchange. Get a great deal on [rain barrels](#) this month, and join us on April 29 for "Swap til You Drop" day at the Recycling Depot on Rumford Avenue! Additional information: 617-796-1000 (DPW Customer Service).

25th Annual Run of the Charles Canoe and Kayak Race Sunday, April 29

Come paddle, cheer, or volunteer at the largest canoe and kayak race in North America! Be sure to enter our special raffle to win a brand new canoe or kayak – you can buy tickets online or at the race! For more information visit www.charlesriver.org/rotc/rotc.html

CRWA water and science theme park at Herter Park, part of the Cambridge Science Festival, 10am-3:30pm. CRWA is transforming Herter Park into a festive theme park which celebrates and educates about life in the Charles River and in its watershed. Everyone is invited to view exhibitions, board a riverboat for an Eco Boat trip, experiment with a watershed model and celebrate the introduction of 1.5 million juvenile American Shad into the Charles River. For more information, visit <http://www.crwa.org/events/2007/sciencefest.html>

Watertown River Symposium: An Afternoon About the Charles Tuesday, May 1, 3-6pm at Watertown High School

Watertown River Symposium: An Afternoon About the Charles with local schools and CRWA sharing water quality monitoring results and observations with the public and environmental organizations.

DCR Park Serves Day

Saturday, May 12.

If you visit or walk your dog in any of the DCR parks in Newton - Along the Charles River, Cutler Park on the Needham line, Hammond Pond Reservation, Hemlock Gorge Reservation, then maybe you would consider helping organize a park cleanup or activity under the DCR PARK SERVE DAY on Saturday, MAY 12. For more information, or to register a cleanup event, contact Margie Lynch at Margie.Lynch@state.ma.us, Director of Partnerships, MA DCR, Ph: 617-626-1315.

Newton Conservators Annual Dinner Meeting Wednesday, May 30, 6 pm

The Newton Conservators' Annual Dinner is scheduled for May 30 at American Legion Post 440 in Nonantum, adjacent to the Charles River Pathway. Come see posters of some of the Conservators sponsored projects. The annual Environmentalist of the Year award, Charles Maynard Award, and several Director's awards will be presented. Our speaker this year will be Greg Maslowe, who has performed miracles in the first year of operation of the Newton Community Angino Farm. Thanks to Alderman Salvucci for again securing the Post's excellent dinner and meeting hall for us, as he has in recent years.

Partners in Parks Event

June 9, 2007 9:00 am -. 5:00 pm, Worcester Technical High School

Join park advocates, state agency personnel and dozens of supporting organizations to celebrate and further invest in Massachusetts' public lands in a statewide working session. Who Should Attend? Everyone who wants to see the Commonwealth's forests and parks achieve their potential as wonderful places to work, play and be restored. For more information and to register, visit:

<http://www.conservationandrecreationcampaign.org/>.

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! Call ahead - 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.

Invasive Alien Plant Update - A Newton Perspective The Environmental Show on NewTV's Blue Channel - April

The City of Newton is under attack from alien invaders. They have come from far away and are taking over our back yards, parks, and conservation areas. Slowly and quietly they are creeping into our public open spaces, disrupting the natural balance of nature and crowding out our native plants.

April's Environmental Show features Part 1 of "Newton's Alien Plant Invasion", and is based on last November's lecture (<http://www.newtonconservators.org/lectures/lectfall06.htm>) at the Newton Free Library by well known author and naturalist Peter Alden of Concord, MA. In Part 1, Peter lays out the problem of invasives. Many of the worst offenders come from Asia where the climate and conditions are similar to here. The only problem is that these plants here have no natural controls and many spread almost uncontrollably. In Part 1, he touches on some of the twenty worst offenders in the Newton area and will follow up in Part 2 (to be aired in June) with the rest. You will come away from the presentation with the knowledge of how to recognize these plants and what some of the control options are. In addition you will learn what is happening at the state level and in the legislature in how to deal with severe menace to our city's biodiversity. Peter Alden is outspoken and highly entertaining. Don't miss this engaging lecture / slide presentation on NewTV this month.

In his work for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Peter Alden spearheaded the first ever statewide Biodiversity Days, in which citizen naturalists in over 80 Massachusetts towns went out into the field to do a species census. This provided a valuable and interesting snapshot of common and unusual species present both here in Newton and across the state of Massachusetts. He is the author of over a dozen nature field guides including the groundbreaking "National Audubon Society Field Guide to New England" (Knopf, 1998), and has in preparation a new "Field Guide to the Invasive Plants of New England and the Northeast".

The Environmental Show is a volunteer partnership between Newton Conservators and the Green Decade Coalition with each organization presenting on alternate months. Learn to think globally and act locally with the Green Decade Coalition and learn more about your parks with the Conservators! The Environmental Show is broadcast at eight times weekly for a month duration on the NewTV Blue channel (Comcast Channel 10, RCN Channel 15): The Environmental Show is currently shown on NewTV's Blue Channel (www.newtv.org) on Monday (3 pm), Tuesday (1:30 am, 11:30 pm), Wednesday (11:30 am), Thursday (12 pm, 4 pm, 7:30 pm), and Saturday (10 am). 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.

All of the Newton Conservators' past episodes of the Environmental Show are available on the web via <http://www.newtonconservators.org/environmentalshowontheweb.htm> and may be viewed online at any time.

Natural Newton Nature Blog!

Jon Regosin, who has long been involved with the Newton Conservators and Newton Angino Community Farm, works for Mass Wildlife as well. Recently, he has started posting in blog form some of his local nature observations. These give a wonderful insight into the changes of the season from a naturalist's perspective in text and photo. Put this blog in your nature related favorites list: <http://naturalnewton.blogspot.com/>. Here is a recent excerpt.

4/7/07 - Heard [Wood Frogs calling](#) in Cold Spring Park. It was very cold and they weren't calling much. Although abundant throughout Massachusetts, the Wood Frog is extremely rare in Newton, apparently only breeding in Cold Spring Park (see upcoming article on Newton vernal pools). Interestingly, in my experience, Wood Frogs seem to be less likely than spotted salamanders to persist in urban forest fragments-- even when suitable breeding pools are present. This could be for a number of reasons: (1) Wood frogs need forested wetlands (often with streams) for feeding, vernal pools for breeding, and forested uplands for overwintering. Spotted salamanders just need forested uplands and vernal pools. With past ditching of streams and wetland filling, there aren't that many smaller forest fragments with all three habitat types; (2) Spotted Salamanders are longer lived-- populations of this species are less likely to go locally extinct as a result of stochastic processes (e.g. a few bad breeding years in a row).

Turtle Info Available from Mass Wildlife

With spring just around the corner, turtle enthusiasts can now acquire several new turtle related items produced by MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and other conservation partners. Posters and a DVD focusing on Massachusetts native terrestrial and freshwater aquatic turtles (not including sea turtles) are now available from the agency.

Educators, conservation commissioners, environmental organizations and consulting firms will find "Turtles of Massachusetts" and "Hatchling Turtles of Massachusetts" posters valuable tools aiding the identifying physical and habitat characteristics of adult and juvenile turtles. "Turtles of Massachusetts" includes images of 10 native adult turtles, with views of the carapace (upper shell), the plastron (lower shell) and a hatchling turtle. Information about each turtle's population status, size, identifying field marks, description of habitat and distribution in the state are also provided. A paragraph on assisting turtles across roads is also included. "Hatchling Turtles of Massachusetts" illustrates 10 native turtle hatchling images with carapace and plastron views, egg clutch size, season of hatchling emergence, physical description, population status and the range of these turtles in Massachusetts. Threats to hatchling turtles are also briefly described.

These posters were a collaborative effort supported by MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, the Vernal Pool Association, and the University of Massachusetts/Boston Electronic Field Guide supported by the National Science Foundation.

The turtle DVD, "An Introduction to The Turtles of Massachusetts; Why They Need Our Help!" is 12 minutes in length. It features information about rare turtles including interviews of a variety of turtle experts, major threats to turtles and ways in which people can help turtles. "People of all ages and walks of life have had experiences with turtles and are fascinated with these animals," said Lori Erb, Turtle Conservation Biologist with MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. "Our purpose was to promote greater public awareness about the status and

threats to native turtles and also to provide useful information for those people who want to assist turtles.” Erb noted that the DVD was produced by college students enrolled in Boston University’s Center for Digital Imaging Arts. “It was a great learning experience for the students—not only about the production process, but also the challenges of filming in a variety of environments. We’re grateful for their efforts.”

Turtle posters are free and can be picked up at the MassWildlife Field Headquarters in Westborough and MassWildlife District offices in Acton, Bourne, W. Boylston, Belchertown and Pittsfield. The DVD is also available in those offices. Cost for the DVD is \$5 but is free for educators. Visit Mass Wildlife online at www.mass.gov/masswildlife or subscribe to their newsletter by sending an email to Join-MassWildlife.news@listserv.state.ma.us. Their Westboro Filed Headquarters has a new phone number (508-389-6300).

Tax Season: The Season to Support Endangered Wildlife

Since 1983, Massachusetts tax filers have been able to donate to MassWildlife's Endangered Species Fund while filing their state income tax (Line 32). When you contribute to the fund, you help to protect and restore rare and endangered animals, plants, and their habitats. Your past donations have helped conserve and restore in the Commonwealth populations of the Bald Eagle, Hessel's Hairstreak butterfly, the Northern redbelly Cooter, and the beautiful Eastern Silvery Aster. Donations to the Fund may also be made year round by sending a check made out: Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund and sent to: MassWildlife Field HQ, NHESP, 1 Rabbit Hill Rd Westborough MA 01581 Check the Natural Heritage area of MassWildlife's website; www.mass.gov/masswildlife to learn more about the work that your donations support.

Volunteers for Trees

Newton's Urban Tree Commission (UTC) needs your help! They are looking for volunteers. The UTC is a City commission that assists the City Forestry department in accomplishing forestry goals, and advises on tree policy for the City. The group meets once a month. We need members, and we 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 tunnelling 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. Through all these efforts we 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). Thank you!

**Deadwood Dependent
EcoAlert from American P.I.E.**

A trip to your local nursery testifies to the retail dollar value of trees. Trees can be costly...absurdly so it sometimes seems since in the wild of Nature, trees are freely given. The question of value is important to buyers when they visit a nursery to make a purchase. Establishing value also can become important after a fire, hurricane, or severe storm has damaged or blown over a tree; a property owner may want to know the cost of replacing a treasured tree or figure out the amount of depreciation to his or her property or the impact on overall property valuation.

Determining the monetary value of trees is an interesting subject. According to Donald Wyman, author of Wyman's Gardening Encyclopedia and former horticulturist at Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, there are multiple tree valuation systems...and they can yield widely divergent results. A standing 13-inch red maple, for example, was once judged by professional arborists using nine different valuation systems - the tree came out valued at anywhere from \$115 to 489.

In evaluating trees, however, no established method properly accounts for how trees can reduce environmental problems. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, ameliorating the monetary and human costs of planetary heating. Properly planted, trees and shrubs can dramatically reduce the costs of air-conditioning electricity. Trees provide food and habitat for myriad birds and creatures large and small. Perhaps most neglected is the value of trees in their afterlife...disparagingly called deadwood.

The American obsession for neat yards and gardens leaves no room for deadwood. Backyards are routinely cleared, first of deadwood, then senescent trees. Often obliterated are the snags, upright stumps or trunks of a tree that provides habitat for a broad range of wildlife, from beetle larvae (and the birds such as woodpeckers that feed on them) to small mammals. At least 85 North American birds are cavity-nesters; and nest holes excavated by woodpeckers provide homes in later years to animals that can't excavate for themselves: chickadees, tree swallows, bluebirds, bats, flying squirrels. Besides birds, 30 mammals and 13 reptiles and amphibians use snags as well. These creatures may prefer a backyard snag over an elaborate birdhouse.

In forests, deadwood - as it decomposes - provides nutrition for the next century. In America's backyards, deadwood hosts an important complement of the ecological web of life to which we, too, belong. Save deadwood...we depend on it.

Act today on this EcoAlert, and thank you for your environmental responsibility. These EcoAlerts are courtesy of American P.I.E. (Public Information on the Environment), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, P.O. Box 676, Northfield, MN 55057-0676, Telephone: 1-800-320-APIE(2743); fax 507-645-5724, E-mail: Info@AmericanPIE.org

Step it up...this Saturday - EcoAlert from American P.I.E.

Scientists have been sounding an alarm on planetary heating for several decades. Warming warnings heated up in February with release of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) Fourth Assessment Report. That report characterized global warming as human-caused and irreversible, but it carried limited specifics on the precise effects of warming and the ability of humans to adapt to it. A followup IPCC report emerged during the first week in April, a report which speaks specifically to the bleak consequences of global heating and stirs us to Step it Up...this Saturday, April 14th.

Step it Up is a national movement, prompted by the vision of environmentalist Bill McKibben, when tens of thousands of Americans will gather all across the country at local demonstrations petitioning for action on planetary heating. Calls for action are taking place in each of the 50 states. The mission is to impress upon Congress the need to cut carbon emissions 80% by 2050. Find and join a demonstration nearest to you; visit <<http://stepitup2007.org>>. While further warming of the planet is inevitable, the impact can be moderated by societal changes. Take time to demonstrate for those changes.

The April IPCC report provides compelling reasons to Step it Up, for example:

- The poorest of the poor in the world, including poor people even in prosperous societies, are going to be the hardest hit. Global heating will increase hunger, floods and water shortages.
- The number of environmental refugees will escalate. Human-induced climate change is at least partially responsible for millions of refugees in the world today.
- About 20 to 30 percent of plant and animal species assessed by IPCC are likely to be at increased risk of extinction.
- The resilience of ecosystems is likely to be exceeded this century by an unprecedented combination of climate change, associated disturbances like rising seas and other planetary challenges such as pollution and over-exploitation of resources, the IPCC report finds.

The IPCC assessment, moreover, confirms that catastrophic effects of the warming climate are already in motion, leaving little doubt that it is time to...Step it Up.

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Newton Angino Community Farm Notes

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. Vegetables will 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.

Crystal Lake News

Check out www.betterlake.com for ongoing news on Crystal Lake including the recent successful passage by the CPC and aldermanic CPA and Finance Committees for the acquisition of 20 Rogers Street. The measure will be going to the full board of aldermen in the near future.

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 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.

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> or contact us at the address below.

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 sporadical 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.