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Working to preserve open space in Newton since 1961 !

The Newton Conservators e-News

November 14, 2008

www.newtonconservators.org

Welcome

Welcome to this issue of the Newton Conservators e-Newsletter. It is a digest of news from here and there for folks who are interested in outdoor nature oriented and environmental activities around Newton. This issue has a lot of events and other news notes! In our next issue, it is likely we will be transitioning to an emailing service and you will see this news in a different format.. If you no longer wish to receive our e-News, please let us know by replying with a "remove" note in the subject or text.

Events

Saturday, November 15, 2008, 10 am to 12 Noon
Fall Clean-up at the East Parish Burying Ground (at Centre and Cotton Streets)

Wouldn't you know it... the weather forecast isn't great (rain showers), but there is hope to squeeze in an hour or two for this event. The event is "on" rain or shine -- with rain being light drizzle or spotty showers. If you're available and are up for it, I will be there with gloves, clippers, tarps, and other equipment. (If you have gloves, tarps, and/or clippers, please bring them.) Our main task will to collect rubbish that may have blown onto the grounds, to collect fallen limbs and other plant debris, and to clip any shrubs or plants that may be encroaching upon the gravestones and tombs. We'll also want to pay special attention to the perimeter--the fences along Centre and Cotton Streets. We may rake some of the leaves, if it's not too wet. This event is sponsored by the Newton History Museum Old Burying Grounds Committee. For further info contact Harry Lohr, harrylohr@verizon.net.

Sunday, November 16, 2008, 1 – 4 pm
Habitat Newton Thanksgiving Celebration – 76 Webster Park, West Newton

Habitat for Humanity invites you to see the progress they have made on the 76 Webster Park project, a project initiated by the Newton Conservators. Please join Habitat for Humanity staff and volunteers as we give thanks to the many groups and individuals who have contributed to the construction of Newton's first Habitat home – and see the progress your support has made possible!



Habitat for Humanity (www.habitatboston.org) is opening the doors on the 2-family duplex that volunteers are building at 76 Webster Park in West Newton. On Sunday, November 16, there will be an Open House from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the building site to celebrate the progress made over the past year and to thank the community for their generosity in supporting Newton's first Habitat project. Come meet the two prospective homeowner families, Habitat Greater Boston officials, hear about the energy-saving features of the building, and tour the attractive and affordable homes made possible through the commitment of hundreds of volunteers. Children are welcome!

The building is now approximately two-thirds complete with most of the interior work and landscaping work still to finish. Completion is anticipated in the spring. Volunteers are still welcome! The Habitat build project location is in the rear lot of 76 Webster Park, West Newton MA 02465, a street off Webster Street in West Newton, a few blocks west of Cherry Street. You can find detailed directions to the site from all directions and by bus and train at the Habitat website at <http://www.habitatboston.org/directions.html>. Please stop in Sunday afternoon!

Wednesday, November 19, 2008, (7 pm) Open Space and Recreation - CPC Public Hearing on Future Funding Priorities

On Wednesday, November 19, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Cafeteria (basement), the Community Preservation Committee will hold its final fall 2008 public hearing on potential new funding priorities, this time for open space and recreation land. Please attend and share your suggestions or comments about how Newton should spend its Community Preservation Funds. This will be an open public hearing where you could make suggestions on open space and recreation projects. If you can't attend in person, feel free to email your suggestions to Community Preservation Program Planner, Alice Ingerson at aingerson@newtonma.gov, 617-796-1144. You could also fill out a survey on the CPA program at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=sum5em9WVjZl_2bilkG5pbgw_3d_3d. A calendar of CPA related meetings, etc. is available at www.ci.newton.ma.us/cpa/committee/NewtonCP-calendar.pdf.



It is worthy of note that Newton has been in the forefront of controversy on what qualifies for CPA spending, particularly in the recreation area. In a recent Globe West, there was an article on the issue: http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2008/11/12/with_tighter_limits_on_funds_some_parks_take_a_hard_fall/?page=full. There is some legislation proposed to amend the CPA law, a description of which can be found at http://www.communitypreservation.org/enews/Summary_HB4820.htm.

Wednesday, November 19, 2008 Charles River Watershed Association Annual Meeting / Awards Dinner

The CRWA welcomes all their friends and supporters from the 35 towns and cities in the watershed to join us at this annual event! The environmental leadership of the following 2008 awardees will be honored:

Robert Varney of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Representative Frank Smizik, John Thomas of Beals & Thomas, CRWA volunteer Susan Redlich, Larry Smith of Charles River Canoe and Kayak (and Newton Conservators Board Member!), and Jim Healy of Boston Duck Tours.

The featured speaker for the evening will be Dr. Sarah Slaughter of MIT, presenting on Designing Sustainable and Resilient Communities. The event will take place on Wednesday, November 19th at 5:30pm at the Newton Marriott Hotel at our Annual Meeting! Tickets, including a buffet dinner, are \$65 for CRWA members. To purchase tickets or for more information, contact Leigh at 781-788-0007 x231 or lheffernan@crwa.org, or visit www.crwa.org.

Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008, 7pm Newton Preservation Awards

The First Annual Newton Preservations Awards ceremony will be held on Thursday, November 20, at 7:30 p.m., at the Boston College Alumni House, 825 Centre Street. The awards ceremony will begin at 7:00 p.m. The Newton History Museum and Historical Society, in collaboration with the Newton Historical Commission, will be celebrating the architectural diversity of Newton with the First Annual Newton Preservation Awards. These awards will recognize projects, which feature the preservation of Newton's historic buildings and landscapes and promote awareness of Newton's historic fabric. Contact Brian Lever at 617-796-1129 or email: blever@newtonma.gov

Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008, 7pm Cash in the Trash - - Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium

Why do Newton citizens throw away \$5M per year? How can we avoid this waste? "Cash in the Trash" will explore this issue and help Newton citizens understand how to reduce the production of solid waste and save the city money. Speakers include: Brooke Nashe, Branch Chief, Municipal Waste Reduction, Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection, Tom Daley, Newton's new Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, Brooke Lipsitt, former president of the Board of Aldermen, who will moderate the Q & A period at the end of the evening. Organized by the Environmental Issues Committee of the League of Women Voters of Newton, this forum is also sponsored by the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce, the Green Decade, the Newton TAB, Newton Solid Waste Commission, Newton For Fiscal Responsibility (NFFR) and the Newton Free Library Free!

Saturday, November 22, 7:30 p.m. EnviroJam – Concert for the Environment - Rock to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint! Newton North High School, Little Theater

EnviroJAM is a musical event sponsored by the Environmental Club of Newton North High School, featuring acts by students and teachers. All proceeds will be donated to an environmental organization. Donations from the January 2008 concert and matching contributions from Mass Energy and others raised over \$5,000 for solar panels on Newton schools. The Green Decade will be there with information, representatives and possibly the Magic Energy Bike. This event is CARBON NEUTRAL. NNHS is at 360 Lowell Ave., Newton MA 02460, 617-559-6400. Check www.greendecade.org for ticket info.

Sunday, November 23, 10 am – 1 pm Green Fair and Trade Show – Temple Beth Avodah

Join the Green Decade and 20 other non-profits and vendors of green products and services at this "going green" event! Come to shop, nosh and play -- enjoy local and organic food and kids activities, and a free raffle every 30 minutes! More information: visit www.bethavodah.org/com_greencommittee.shtml. Temple Beth Avodah is at 45 Puddingstone Lane, Newton Centre, (617) 527-0045.

Sunday, November 23, 2008, 2 pm Cutler / Millennium Park Hike – Newton Conservators Walk Series

Starting at Cutler Park, we will explore Cutler Park and Millennium Park and will complete the tour by way of the Wells Avenue Charles River Pathway. These areas have been improved for recreation over the last several years

and now provide a wide variety of trails, river landings and playing fields. This approximately 5.5 mile hike will be steady but not fast, and participants should be in sufficiently good shape to keep up with the group. Hiking boots or heavy all weather shoes are recommended.

Meet at the Cutler Park entrance, a quarter mile south of the Charles River Bridge on Kendrick Street in Needham, at 2:00 pm. Trip leader is Henry Finch (617-964-4488).



Each Spring and Fall, the Newton Conservators organize a series of walks to local open space areas. These walks are led by knowledgeable leaders and are free and open to the public. They normally last for an hour or two. These walks are a great way to get to know open space areas in Newton. Please call the trip leader if the weather is in doubt. The current walk schedule can be found online at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/walks.htm>. This is our last walk of the fall season.

Monday, December 1, 2008, 7 pm **Bike Newton – A Network of Greenways for Boston with Peter Furth** **Newton Free Library**

Bike Newton's next meeting will be Mon. Dec 1st, 7pm at the Newton Library. Peter Furth (Northeastern Univ) will speak on "A Network of Greenways for Boston". The guest speaker, Peter G. Furth, Ph.D., is a Professor of Civil & Environmental Engineering at Northeastern University, and a member of the Brookline Transportation Board and its Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Many people would like to bicycle more for work and for pleasure, but are hindered by the lack of safe, traffic-free routes to ride along. Boston has some lovely greenways along rivers, the sea, and rail corridors, and with the addition of some key links, Boston's greenways will form a network that will connect six times as many origin-destination pairs as the current set of greenways. This would multiply the potential for utilitarian cycling and making Boston a world-class hub for recreational cycling. Connections to be highlighted include "HarborRide" linking the Charlestown Bridge to Fort Point Channel; several missing links along the Emerald Necklace, including paths along the Arborway, crosstown links between the Fens and the South Boston and Dorchester beaches, and other areas. Free to the public

Co-sponsored by GDC's [Bike Newton](#), the [Bicycle Pedestrian Task Force](#) and the Newton Free Library

Bike Newton is now officially a project of the Transportation Committee of Green Decade Coalition/Newton, the city's environmental organization. Bike Newton has a number of promotional items which may be ordered from Lois at (617) 527-1237 or loislevin@comcast.net: free Bike Newton business cards, - long-sleeve safety yellow wick-away Bike Newton logo t-shirts - \$25. See photo at bikenewton.org/home page, and Bike Newton bicycle 'bumper' stickers - \$1.00 (available soon). Check out the results of Molly Schaeffer's Bike Newton online survey at <http://bikenewton.org> (Latest news). You can find information at <http://www.bikeleague.org/news/100708faq.php> about the Bicycle Commuter Benefits Act, part of the financial bailout package that will help bicycle commuters obtain reimbursement for their investments in equipment, bicycle maintenance and offsets for saving fossil fuels.

Friday, December 5, 2008 Community Preservation Proposal Deadline

As previously announced, this year the deadline for all funding proposals is December 5. The form and instructions, are online from www.ci.newton.ma.us/cpa; click on the Guidelines & Forms button at the top of the page, then scroll down for links. If you plan to submit a proposal and have not already done so, please contact Alice Ingerson ASAP at 617-796-1144 or email: aingerson@newtonma.gov.

Sunday, December 14, 2008 Newton Christmas Bird Count

Those interested in the avian world in Newton should mark their calendars for Sunday, **December 14th** to participate in the **109th annual Christmas Bird Count** sponsored by the [National Audubon Society](#) and the [Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology](#). The Christmas Bird Count is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society. It is an early-winter bird census, where volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally—all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day. Thirty-four count circles are located entirely or partly within Massachusetts.

In Newton, the Newton Conservators help organize the count and send out teams - all levels of birders welcome. Please contact Cris Criscitiello if interested in participating this year in the Newton effort. You would be astonished at what birds are seen. The full count group will assemble at 2 Raeburn Terrace (Newton Highlands) starting at 7:00 am. There is usually an "early bird" group that goes out at 4 am to search for owls. Any birds seen during the count are recorded as to the species and the number of individuals. The amount of hours and distance traveled by count participants are also recorded (which helps to normalize results to the effort expended). Changes in numbers of our most common birds over the years help to spot environmental trends. Over the history of the count in Newton, over 90 species have been tabulated.

About five teams fan out all over Newton to count as many birds of all types as they can especially in conservation, park, and cemetery areas. Any woody areas near water are usually quite productive. Larger open space areas are the focus in the morning, with smaller pocket areas and residential neighborhoods checked later in the day as time permits. For the early risers, the owling group could get great looks at screech owls and occasionally Great Horned and Barred Owls. Representative members from the teams gather back at the meeting place in the afternoon to pool the results from Newton. It's always exciting to hear what the other groups have found, especially any rare or unusual sightings. Later, our local results are taken over to Mass Audubon's Habitat in Belmont where other town coordinators gather to pool the data for the entire Boston count circle. Consider that this same process is done all over the country in roughly the same time period, and it helps to get a handle on the bigger environmental picture.

Experienced and non-experienced birders are welcome. Newcomers will be paired with an experienced group. Even if you would like to participate for only a few hours, you are welcome. It should be noted that the count occurs rain, shine, or snow. There is a participation fee of \$5 which goes to National Audubon to help tabulate the data. Participants receive a comprehensive report from them on the national count results. For more information, please contact Cris Criscitiello at mgriscisci@massmed.org if you are interested in participating.

November 2008 Environmental Show: Zero Waste with Lynne Pledger

November's Environmental Show, produced by the Green Decade Coalition, features host Beverly Droz with guest Lynne Pledger, of the Sierra Club Zero Waste Committee. Extraction, manufacturing, marketing, and finally disposal by incineration or land-filling: how long can this linear system continue without having us all buried in garbage, drinking contaminated water, and breathing toxic air? This program will be aired as Newton is considering a new trash hauling contract and the state a new solid waste policy, one that could include a repeal of the present moratorium on new incinerator construction

The [Environment Show](#) is broadcast on the [NewTV Blue](#) channel (Comcast Chan. 10, RCN Chan. 15, Verizon Chan. 34): Mondays 3:00 p.m., Tuesdays 1:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m., Wednesdays: 11:30 a.m., Thursdays:

12:00, 4:00 and 7:30 p.m., Saturdays: 10:00 a.m.

Videos of previous Environment Show programs are available for viewing online at <http://greendecade.org/environmentTV.htmlDecade> . This monthly show is produced alternatively by the Green Decade and the Newton Conservators. Note: BrightCove has been our video hosting service (www.brightcove.tv) for the Newton Conservators Environmental Show but due to their dropping of free hosting service, we will likely be moving to a different host service. Stay tuned.

Heritage Landscape Inventory

A draft version of the CPA-funded Heritage Landscape Inventory has been posted on the web for review review and comment. The inventory was developed from information obtained at the four community meetings where consultants worked with participants such as yourself to identify landscapes important to Newton's history, character and quality of life. The inventory is the first step in developing a "reconnaissance report," which will be modeled after those developed through the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program.

The next step is for the consultants to conduct fieldwork for those landscapes listed as priorities and to develop recommendations for their preservation. Once finalized, the report will help plan and guide landscape preservation in the city. We encourage you to look at the inventory and let us know if there are landscapes that you think are important that have not yet been identified and to send your comments via email to Amy Yuhasz, Community Development Program Manager (City of Newton), 617-796-1122, ayuhasz@newtonma.gov..

The draft inventory is available at (scroll down to the project news section at the bottom of the page to the November 6 posting): <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/CPA/projects/landsc-inventory/landscap-inv.htm>.

Newton Tree Conservancy

The Newton Tree Conservancy (www.newtontreeconservancy.org) is a new, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, formed for the purpose of raising money for the preservation and planting of trees in Newton. It was born out of the recognition that the city is not in a position to cover all the costs necessary to maintain our urban forest - the trees along our streets and in our parks and other public areas, and that in order to continue to enjoy the economic and environmental benefits of these trees, we must take action to develop initiatives that will supplement what can be supported through the city's budget.

The goal is to promote the health of Newton's trees through (1) Funding for planting and care of new trees, as well as preservation pruning and tree maintenance in a way that will supplement - not replace - city funding, (2) Educational programs to build public awareness of the value of trees and the risks of not properly caring for and replacing trees along streets and in parks and other public places, and to help people know how to keep their own trees healthy, (3) Training programs and volunteer opportunities to give citizens an opportunity to participate in tree maintenance and planting .



Check out some pictures from the recent Kickoff event at

<http://www.newtontreeconservancy.org/newsevents/fallkickoff.html>. Consider joining the Newton Tree Conservancy as well as the Newton Conservators. Membership information can be found at <http://www.newtontreeconservancy.org/getinvolved/index.html>.

Newton Community Farm Notes

By Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager

(from the Newton Angino Community Farm Newsletter)
www.newtoncommunityfarm.org

The growing season is over and most of our beds are put to rest. We still have a few crops left in the field—late season broccoli, cauliflower and lettuce, and various greens that will remain over the entire winter (collards, kale and arugula). Tom and I were also able to get growing benches built for one side of the greenhouse, so we have an experimental planting of lettuce and mesclun mix going. We're interested to see how late we're able to harvest in the protection of the greenhouse. What will we do with what's left? The farm stand will remain open on Saturdays for the first few weeks in November, there are a few restaurants that want to buy from us, and we're working with a group of business students at Olin College who have started a company delivering local food to people's homes.

This was a hard year for tomatoes. We got about half the yield we were expecting due to wet conditions and the inevitable disease that brings. On the other hand, however, we met our goals for getting the entire farm into production, with many beds producing two or even three cash crops this season. And produce sales exceeded our already high expectations. So I guess we can't be too upset about the tomatoes—every year there's probably going to be something to complain about due to weather.

As I think back on our 2008 growing season the thing I am most excited by was the incredible growth of community support for the farm. We were able to fund the first phase of our barn renovation entirely with privately raised funds (!), our fall festival brought upwards of 1,000 people to the farm (many of whom had never been here before), and our educational programs are beginning to blossom. In addition to all these highlights, there is another that really stands out—we witnessed an incredible desire for people to come and support the farm with their backs and their hands. We had about eight high school and college-age students spend their entire summer vacations volunteering at the farm (some for up to 8-hours a day, 5 days a week), and many others who spent portions of their summer here. We had many regular adult volunteers, some from the CSA, but many just people who had heard about the farm and wanted to come and learn by participating in our daily activities. Our open volunteer times (Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings) were always well attended.

I've been asked a number of times lately what it means that we are a "community" farm. There are many elements that make us a community farm, but I believe the essence is that our relationship with the community is one of both giving and receiving. We give people a place to learn about growing food, and a place to work together at a common task and towards a common goal. People work with others who are younger, older, or the same age. It is this sense of community that brings volunteers back time and again—not just the pleasure of doing back breaking work under a blazing sun for no money, but the chance to get to know a little more about each other while you're working toward a common good. What does the farm receive? We receive the labor we need to make the farm run. And perhaps more importantly, we receive the good will of a community that keeps us going through all the hard work and challenges. Hearing people express their happiness at seeing the farm operating again; hearing people recognize the value of having a place like this in their city—these are the kinds of things that energize me and make this great endeavor successful.

What makes this a community farm? We work together with people from all over Newton and beyond for the enrichment of ourselves, our community, and our world.

Fall Cleanup or What To Do with All Those Leaves?

By Ted Chapman

(from the Newton Angino Community Farm Newsletter)
www.newtoncommunityfarm.org

Newton is full of trees and the leaves in our yards provide a wonderful opportunity to build organic matter and harvest free fertilizer. The basis of organic gardening is building healthy soil. This means adding matter to the soil that feeds microorganisms, which in turn provide the nutrients required for healthy plant growth and disease

resistance. Organic matter applied to the surface of the soil as mulch in the autumn protects plants from the vagaries of temperature change. Mulch keeps the soils warmer into the cold weather allowing for root growth that is essential for abundant foliage and flowering during the growing season. It also limits the heaving that occurs with spring freezing and thaws.

So what can you do with all those leaves? Try composting them. One method is the three-bin system (Gardeners Supply 3-Bin Composting System - Item #35-989) which effectively changes leaves into mulch. Leaves are piled up in bin 1 with other garden waste. When well watered, these materials will heat up, and start the breaking down over the winter. Turned into bin 2 in the spring and bin 3 a year from now, those leaves will become ripe compost.

Another method is sheet composting: putting the leaves directly on vegetable garden beds and then turning them in the spring. Ideally, the leaves can be shredded using a lawn mower, mowing the grass and leaves directly into the lawn mower bag and emptying them onto your garden, rather than putting them into plastic bags for the city to collect. Chopping up the leaves speeds the decomposition process: "smaller rots faster".

If your home gardens include perennial beds, trees and shrubs, shredded leaves are ideal mulch. Applying 2-3 inches of shredded materials after weeding, transplanting and planting bulbs, does everything we talked about above and avoids the need for buying mulch next year. The leaf cover blocks sunlight and prevents the germination of latent weed seeds in the soil. The only caution is to limit leaf applications to no more than one inch over newly planted perennials and directly against the trunks of trees. Leaf mold (partially composted leaves) is an attractive mulch and by the next fall has been almost completely broken down by soil organisms.

If you have a large yard and mowing and raking leaves seem arduous, there are leaf vacuum/shedders (Troy-Built CSV 206 or Yard-Man 24A-203C701) that will reduce leaf volume by 90%, allowing the easy harvest of this fall's bounty. You might even ask your neighbors if you can harvest theirs! Newton Community Farm offers courses on composting, building your own 3-bin system, and other gardening techniques. If these suggestions don't work for you, and you don't use herbicides or pesticides, you can bag your leaves in paper and deliver them to the farm for us to compost.

State Budget Cuts in Environmental Programs

(excerpted from Mass Audubon;s Beacon Hill Weekly Roundup)

Mass Audubon has joined with our conservation partners in a [letter](#) urging the administration that no additional cuts be made to the environmental programs if another round of state budget cuts becomes necessary. The environmental agencies were 1.1% of the state budget in Fiscal Year 2001 - \$245.1 million - dropped to a low of 0.67% in 2005 and only reached 0.8% in 2009. Post cuts, the environmental agencies, with the merger of energy and environmental agencies now include energy programs, are \$233.7 million. That is \$11.4 million less than in 2001, even though the responsibilities of the agencies have greatly expanded.

Our priorities that were hardest hit were Trailside Museum and the Riverways Program. Riverways is a small program within the Department of Fish and Game which supports volunteer efforts and provides unique aquatic habitat restoration expertise to agencies and cities and towns across the Commonwealth. Their budget was cut 30%, but as the cuts must be taken for the remainder of the fiscal year, it is an effective cut of 46%. Riverways leverages on average three dollars of federal and other funds for every dollar of General Fund monies they receive. If any program reflects the administration's commitment to partnerships and citizen engagement, it is the Riverways Program. Last week we urged you to let your voice be heard by logging onto [Governor Patrick's website](#) and registering your support for Riverways. Over 160 people have left messages for Governor Patrick thus far - if more than 250 register Riverways will become one of the Governor's Top 10 Issues. If you have not done so already, please do!

Since 1974, Mass Audubon has managed the publicly owned [Blue Hills Trailside Museum](#) as the gateway to the Blue Hills State Reservation. The mission of Blue Hills Trailside Museum is to promote awareness, appreciation, and active concern for the nature of Massachusetts among people of all ages and to provide enjoyable, affordable environmental education by drawing upon the natural resources of the Blue Hills Reservation and beyond. The Museum's environmental education programs reach over ninety-nine communities annually, and are often the only source of natural history for many urban youth. Over 200,000 people visit the Museum each year.

Trailside's budget was cut \$300,000 out of \$425,000, leaving the visitor center with \$125,000 for the remainder of this fiscal year. Mass Audubon is working with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to find a way for

Trailside's good work to continue.

Avoid Invasive Plants for Holiday Decorating

(excerpted from Mass Wildlife News)

*As part of the upcoming holiday season, many people are using plant material to decorate their houses or businesses. MassWildlife highly recommends that people avoid using certain invasive exotic plants such as Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) in holiday decorations. Though these plants are attractive, it is best to refrain from using them. Birds eat and carry away the fruits from wreaths and garlands and the digested but still-viable seeds sprout where deposited. These exotic, invasive plants create severe environmental damage invading open fields, forests, wetlands, meadows, and backyards, crowding out native plants. Bittersweet can even kill mature trees through strangling. Both plants are extremely difficult to control -- when cut off, the remaining plant segment in the ground will resprout. It is illegal to import or sell bittersweet and multiflora rose in any form (plants or prunings) in the state of Massachusetts.*

Backyard gardeners, nursery staff, landscapers and conservationists can learn more about invasive plants from MassWildlife's Guide To Invasive Plants authored by MassWildlife's former State Botanist Paul Somers, Rachel Kramer and Karen Lombard of The Nature Conservancy and Bill Brumback of the New England Wild Flower Society. In the Guide, each invasive plant description includes a photograph, the plant's regulatory status, key identification characteristics, habitats where the plant is likely to be found, type of threat the plant poses to native species and habitats, and its current distribution and place of origin. Similar plant species are also briefly described to aid in plant identification. The guide includes definitions of three categories of invasiveness, brief explanations of how invasive plants are introduced and spread, why invasives are a problem, how to learn more about controlling invasive plants, and the Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources' regulations regarding their importation, sale and propagation. Useful invasive plant websites are also referenced. The Guide is \$5 a copy. To purchase a guide from MassWildlife, stop in the Westborough office during business hours or send a request to Invasive Plant Guide, MassWildlife Headquarters, NHESP, 1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westborough, MA, 01581 and include a check payable to: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Fund. Credit cards are not accepted. For more about invasive plants, go to: www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/conservation/invasives/invasive_plant_info.htm.

Looking for a wildlife-related gift for the outdoors or wildlife enthusiast on your holiday list? The following experiences and items are available for both youth and adults. A two year subscription to Massachusetts Wildlife magazine (\$10) delivers eight full color issues of the Commonwealth's best wildlife publication. For the budding conservationist try a copy of Critters of Massachusetts book (\$5). "Critters" is a perfect gift for the curious youngster or the beginning adult naturalist with an interest in backyard wildlife and beyond. For the more advanced naturalist, Field Guide to Dragonflies and Damselflies (\$20) or A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools (\$12) might be just the ticket. In-depth descriptions and detailed photographs help the reader identify and learn more about these creatures. The gardener in your life will find the Massachusetts Guide to Invasive Plants (\$5) filled with useful information and images of invasive plants to avoid. Is there a turtle enthusiast among your friends or family? They may enjoy an Introduction to the Threatened Turtles of Massachusetts, a video available from MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program for \$5. The Massachusetts Wildlife Viewing Guide (\$5) listing 67 sites across the state where a variety of wildlife can be seen is a perfect gift for the outdoor explorer or a visitor to the state. To order any of the above publications, click the [Publications](#) button at www.mass.gov/masswildlife or contact MassWildlife by phone at 508/389-6300.

Newton At Home Survey

Newton at Home is a new organization exploring interest among Newton residents in "aging in place." Its mission is to enable Newton residents to age at home comfortably, safely, independently, and with peace of mind through a membership-based organization that offers access to comprehensive practical services and fosters social support and a sense of community.

Many communities around the country have recently formed similar organizations to meet residents' desire to help one another remain in their own homes as they get older, even if they can no longer carry out some tasks independently.

Although you may not yet have thought about whether you plan to remain in your Newton home in the long term, we would very much appreciate your taking 10 minutes or so to complete the following survey so that we can better determine the level of potential interest in this idea.

If you are a Newton resident over the age of 60, please read on and consider filling out this survey. If you have access to the Internet, it would help Newton at Home enormously if you would complete the survey online at www.newtonathome.org. This will greatly facilitate the process of compiling and analyzing the results. Please complete one survey for your entire household. All responses are anonymous. For further information about Newton at Home, email info@newtonathome.org.

EcoAlert from American P.I.E. The Green Hour (November 12, 2008)

The National Wildlife Federation is prompting people to sign a petition asking the U.S. Surgeon General to endorse a Green Hour for all Americans <<http://tinyurl.com/5ucgg7>>. The Green Hour, a daily hour spent outside in unstructured play and interaction with Nature, promotes a connection to the environment and, in turn, fosters an ethic respecting Mother Earth. Research demonstrates that ecologicistic and moralistic attitudes toward the environment correlate strongly with observing Nature on television, talking about the environment, and reading about the environment. These findings come as no surprise at a time when knowledge and experience of the natural world is derived principally from multimedia and the mall.

Watching TV and shopping rank one and two as America's leisure activities of choice. The amount of time that children spend outdoors has declined by 50 percent over the last two decades. Rather than heading out for wild places, even in their own backyards, children experience the wild via television, educational films, mall exhibits and computers. Learning about Nature can be accomplished without ever touching feet on the soil of Earth. The National Wildlife Federation notes that children spend 44.5 hours a week looking at some type of electronic screen. Little wonder that childhood obesity has become an alarming health issue. As America's chief health educator, the Surgeon General is in a position to urge action and begin educating people about the health benefits of getting outdoors, if only for the daily Green Hour.

Television, specifically, has become our eye into the wonders of Nature. The natural world, however, is often represented as artifice - an advertisement that takes you to Nature either in vocabulary or image - or as Nature apart from the human species - videos that collapse wildlife scenes into unreal portrayals, hardly ever peopled, hardly ever urban, often focusing on remote corners of the globe. What's missed is the fact that people, too, belong to natural, biotic communities. We have an ancient biological heritage; natural and human communities are inextricably bound together and their health, above all, depends upon our recognition of that fact. The Green Hour can serve as a reminder. Sign the National Wildlife Federation petition <<http://tinyurl.com/5ucgg7>>.

As long as Nature remains out there as a vague construct, there can be no fully rooted commitment to preserving it. Instead, we will continue on a path of destruction which relies increasingly on prosthetic devices, products of our biological genius, to keep ourselves and the biosphere alive. We have already severely tested Earth's fragility, and now we should step gently into the wild, if only for an hour.

Act today on this EcoAlert, and thank you for your environmental responsibility. 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

The Newton Conservators Newton's Land Trust and Open Space Organization

The Newton Conservators promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open space for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land, buildings and other facilities to

be used for the encouragement of scientific, educational, recreational, literary and other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare of the people of our community. The Newton Conservators organization was formed as a not-for-profit organization 47 years ago in June 1961.

The following are the officers and Board of Directors for 2008-2009:

Beth Schroeder, *President*
Jane Sender, *Vice President*
AnnaMaria Abernathy, *Secretary*
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**If you haven't done so already, now is the time to renew or join the
Conservators.
And consider a tax-deductible gift to support our work!**

Newton Conservators Membership Form

PO Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459 • www.newtonconservators.org

*Celebrating 47 years
of open space advocacy
in Newton*

YES, I'd like to start/renew my one-year membership with the Newton Conservators to help preserve open space in Newton. I'll receive informative newsletters and emails and be invited to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities.

I'd like to make an additional tax-deductible contribution to support the work of the Newton Conservators: \$_____

Please do not share my name and address with other groups.

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

Individual member	\$25
Family member	\$35
Sustaining member	\$50
Donor	\$75
Patron	\$100

All amounts are tax deductible

NAME _____

STREET _____

VILLAGE _____ **ZIP** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Make checks payable to **Newton Conservators, Inc.**

**Please renew today.
And consider a tax-deductible gift to support our work!**

What is the Newton Conservators e-News?

The printed edition of the Newton Conservators Newsletter (published about 4 times a year) is sent by mail/email to the membership of the Newton Conservators. PDF copies are available: <http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletter.htm>. This Newton Conservators e-News supplements the newsletter and replaces our previous Newton Conservators Nature Notes. If you no longer wish to receive this email newsletter, please let us know by replying to this email. We welcome articles and news notes that might be of interest to our readers. If you have any suggestions, email Ted Kuklinski (e-News editor) at dolanpond@aol.com or calling 617-763-3470.

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