



Newton Conservators

E-Bulletin

Tuesday, October 17, 2017

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



Mayoral Candidates Environmental Forum on Saturday!

As you know, Newton is choosing a new mayor in November. The Mayoral Candidates Forum on Environmental Issues with Scott Lennon and Ruthanne Fuller, originally scheduled for Thursday (9/28) at the Newton Free Library, was cancelled due to the passing of candidate Ruthanne Fuller's mother. It has been rescheduled to this coming **Saturday (10/21) at 4:30 pm at Lasell College** - see details below. Also on Saturday is one of our great Newton Conservators Walks programs on salamanders at Cabot Woods with naturalist Brooks Mathewson. And check out our other walks events as well as other local open space events that may be of interest! Did you know that getting out into nature can actually change your brain for the better? Check out this NY Times article - <https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/22/how-nature-changes-the-brain/?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad> - and then get walking out in Newton nature!

Events Calendar

Saturday, October 21, 4:30 pm
The Environmental Forum for Mayoral Candidates
Ruthanne Fuller and Scott Lennon
DeWitt Hall, Lasell College, 80 Maple Street, Auburndale

Hear the two finalists in Newton's mayoral race, Ruthanne Fuller and Scott Lennon, share their visions for addressing local environmental challenges over the next four years. The forum will be moderated by Jon Regosin, Chief of Conservation Science for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who will ask the candidates a series of questions submitted by the program co-sponsors, the Newton Conservators and Green Newton. There will also be time for the candidates to respond to audience questions concerning preservation of open space and the protection of our natural resources. This forum was originally scheduled in September but was rescheduled due to the passing of Ruthanne Fuller's mother. This



program is cosponsored by the Newton Conservators and Green Newton. For more information, contact President@NewtonConservators.org or info@greennewton.org. Attendees are welcome to park in Lasell parking lots P2 and P3 near the building, or on Maple Street in Auburndale. De Witt Hall is in the Winslow Academic Center attached to the Brennan Library. Thanks to Lasell College for allowing use of their facilities.

Saturday, October 21, 11 am
The Wolves of the Forest Floor at Edmands Park (Cabot Woods)
Edmands Park, Blake Street
<http://www.newtonconservators.org/7edmands.htm>
Leader: Brooks Mathewson
Newton Conservators Fall Walk Series

Eastern red-backed salamanders (*Plethodon cinereus*) are the most abundant vertebrates in forests in the northeast United States, accounting for twice the biomass of all breeding birds. As top-level predators of soil invertebrates, red-backs are believed to reduce soil decomposition rates resulting in a decrease in the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere and an increase the amount stored in the soil. Red-backs are increasingly utilized as indicators of forest health for these reasons among others. In this walk, ecologist Brooks Mathewson will discuss the research he has conducted on this species at Edmands Park with the help of the Newton North High School. In addition, we will monitor the cover boards Brooks has set out to study this population as well as search for salamanders under natural cover objects. Meet at the central parking area for Edmands Park on Blake Street. The walk will be approximately 90 minutes. Trip Leaders: Brooks Mathewson, Ecologist (Cell Phone on day of outing 617-851-3513); email: bgmathewson@post.harvard.edu



Tuesday, October 24, 7-9 pm
Rail Trails - featuring Craig Della Penna
Waltham Land Trust Annual Meeting
First Parish Church, 50 Church Street, Waltham, MA

Hear what our neighboring Waltham Land Trust is up to and mingle with other open space supporters. Everyone is invited to Waltham Land Trust's annual meeting to see a **presentation by Craig Della Penna**, an expert on rail trails, who worked in the railroad industry for many years and for Rails-To-Trails Conservancy. Meeting attendees will receive updates on issues the Land Trust is tackling, celebrate the Inge Uhler Environmentalist of the Year, and enjoy some light refreshments with each other. For further info, visit www.walthamlandtrust.org. Free!!



Sunday, October 29, 1 pm
Exploring Future Trail Possibilities in Newton Upper Falls
The Depot at the corner of Oak and Chestnut Streets
Newton Conservators Fall Walk Series

The recent opening of the Upper Falls Greenway provides the opportunity to create a network of trails that extend from Newton Highlands along the Greenway to the Blue Heron Trail on the Charles, and then all the way south to Millennium Park in Boston. Heading north, the network could connect to Hemlock Gorge and on to Newton Lower Falls. Join us for a two-mile hike (with an optional two-mile extension) that will explore this route, including an abandoned railroad bridge across the Charles and two little-known paths along the river. The route is rough in places. Meet at The Depot at the corner of Oak and Chestnut Streets. There is ample on-street parking on Chestnut just east of Oak. Trip Leaders: Dan Brody (Newton Conservators) and Jim Lerner (Friends of the Upper Falls Greenway). Email UpperFallsHike@Newtonconservators.org for more information.



Tuesday October 31 Deadline for Identify This Place Contest and Newton Conservators Grants Application

Identify This Place Contest: High Points Along the Charles - September 2017. Win a free one-year Conservators membership for yourself or a friend. This will be a two-part contest.

Part 1: Take a photo showing the Charles River that you took from a high vantage point above the river in Newton or a neighboring city or town. (Your chance of winning will be improved if your vantage point is at least 100 feet above sea level.) By October 31st, email the photo to contest@newtonconservators.org. Tell us where you took the photo. GPS coordinates or a link to a spot on an online map would be appreciated. Please don't send us any pictures taken from Echo Bridge. It's a lovely view, but too obvious.



Part 2: In the Winter 2018 newsletter, we'll publish the photo we like best, and ask readers to identify the location. We reserve the right to publish other photos in the newsletter or on our website, with a credit line identifying the photographer.

The winner of each part of the contest will receive a one-year new, gift, or renewal membership in the Conservators. Info at http://newtonconservators.org/contest2017_09.htm

Grants Program - The Newton Conservators provides grants to Newton's schools, educational institutions, groups, and institutions for the purpose of fostering its mission. The grants are generally modest in size; requests of between \$250 and \$750 may receive priority, although smaller and larger grants will be given full consideration. They can be made for a single event, a longer-term project, or for multiple year funding. Projects for multiple year funding must be reported upon and resubmitted annually. Applications are reviewed and grants are awarded twice a year, with application deadlines of **October 31** and **February 28**. However, proposals may be submitted at any time, and grants are sometimes awarded before the next regular review cycle begins. Full info nfo at <http://newtonconservators.org/grants.htm>

Saturday, November 4, 9 am - Noon
Burying Grounds Clean Up
East Parish Burying Ground, Centre and Cotton Streets, Newton Centre

Spend the morning helping to care for the East Parish Burying Ground, the largest and oldest of Newton's three historic burying grounds. Help rake leaves, collect rubbish and fallen limbs, and clip shrubs and plants that are encroaching on historic gravestones. Please bring rakes, gloves, or tarps if you have them and wear sturdy shoes. Come for the whole time or as long as you can! Meet at the corner of Centre and Cotton Streets, Newton Centre; park on Cotton Street. This event is sponsored by Historic Newton (www.historicnewton.org). By the way, Historic Newton invites you to enjoy free admission to their museums on Saturday and Sunday (11/4 and 11/5, 10 am - 5 pm) at the Jackson Homestead and Museum, 527 Washington Street AND the Durant-Kenrick House and Grounds, 286 Waverley Avenue.



East Parish Burying Ground, Center and Cotton streets, photograph by Henry Lohr

Sunday, November 5, 2 pm
Newton Aqueducts Hike
Meet at Starbucks near the Waban MBTA station
Newton Conservators Fall Walk Series

Join a five-mile hike through woods, meadows, and fields along the Newton sections of the Sudbury and Cochituate aqueducts. This is a steady but not fast hike. Participants should be in sufficiently good shape to keep up with the group (There are cutoffs for those who wish to shorten the hike). Meet in front of the Starbucks coffee shop near the Waban MBTA station. Trip Leader: Henry Finch (617-964-4488).



Saturday, November 11, 10 am (Note: tentatively scheduled)
The Friends of Hemlock Gorge's Annual Fall Cleanup
Hamilton Place

Volunteers should meet at Hamilton Place between 9:30 and 10 a.m. Parking available at Hamilton Place, the Mills Falls parking lot, and at the Hemlock Gorge parking lot at the intersection of Ellis St. and Rte. 9. Clean-up materials supplied and refreshments provided for all volunteers! Please dress appropriately for the work and weather (rain or shine). Note that this event is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, November 11, 2017. For directions to Hamilton Place please see <http://www.hemlockgorge.org/FHGMeetingPlaceDirections.htm>. Check <http://www.hemlockgorge.org/> for latest info on cleanup date..



Monday, November 20, Time TBD
Bark: Get to Know Your Trees
Lecture by Michael Wojtech - Naturalist

Newton Senior Center, 345 Walnut Street, Newtonville, MA 02460

The traits typically used to describe trees—leaves, twigs, and buds—are often hard to see or seasonally absent. Join Michael for an exploration of bark, which is always visible, in any season. Through his presentation and participatory activities you will hone your perceptive abilities and learn about a system for identifying tree species by their bark. We will also explore why such a variety of bark characteristics exist. Why do some species have smooth bark, while on others it is thick and broken? Why does bark peel? Open to tree enthusiasts at all levels of experience. Michael is the author of the books, **Bark: A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast** and **Drawing Trees and Leaves: Observing and Sketching the Natural World** and will likely have copies for signing. This program is a positive and optimistic way to connect with nature as people are increasingly outside in our parks and looking around them, also as part of Newton's health/walking initiative. As Michael points out, for half the year trees have no leaves (and for the other half, the trees may be too tall to even see the leaves or twigs) - so learning to appreciate and interpret bark will be a great way to enjoy nature more this fall and over the winter months. For more information visit: www.knowyourtrees.com



Newton Conservators Newsletter

The Newton Conservators publishes its newsletter approximately four times a year. It is distributed by mail to the membership and is available online. Extra copies are also available at the Newton Free Library. The newsletter is edited by Ken Mallory, with layout by Suzette Barbier, production by Bonnie Carter, and proofing by Doug Leith.

Here is the link to our Fall Newsletter—chock-full of interesting information:

http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/17_09.pdf and here are links to articles in this issue:

- Newton's Lost Wetlands and Buried Brooks - *Richard Primack*
http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/17_09_creeks.pdf
- Dolan Pond Conservation Area - Hidden Gem of West Newton - Ted Kuklinski
http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/17_09_dolan.pdf
- Along the Greenway - and Beyond! - *Deb Crossley*
http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/17_09_greenway.pdf
- The Risky Lives of Birds - *Pete Gilmore*
http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/17_09_birds.pdf
- Book Review: Half-Earth - E.O. Wilson - *David Backer*
http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/17_09_half_earth.pdf
- President's Message - *Beth Wilkinsom* (see below)
http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/17_09_president.pdf
- Fall Walks Schedule
http://www.newtonconservators.org/newsletters/17_09_walks.pdf



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

FALL ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

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

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Newton's Lost Wetlands and Buried Brooks

By Richard B. Primack, a long-time Newton resident and a biology professor at Boston University

Editor's Note: This article is an expansion of an article originally written in the *Newton TAB*, August 8, 2017.

Until about 120 years ago, Newton was known for its many wet meadows, marshes, and swamps, connected by miles of brooks that emptied into the Charles River. Where did they go? And maybe more importantly, should we bring them back?

Over the past two centuries, as Newton changed from farming to industry, and then to a Boston suburb, developers and town workers filled in most of our wetlands and buried our brooks in underground culverts or put them into aboveground channels. Water was re-directed to power mills, and wetlands became the sites of playgrounds, schools, other public buildings, and homes.

A drainage map from 1892, available on the city website (<http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/39235>), shows Newton situated beside a large bend in the Charles River. At that time, Newton's

extensive wetlands were drained by three brook systems (Cheesecake, South Meadow, and Hammond/Cold Spring/Laundry) that meandered into the Charles.



Modified 1892 drainage map showing the main brooks and associated wetlands, with the current position of some schools and village centers and the Newton Library.

Cheesecake Brook drains northern Newton, starting in Waban and Auburndale, flowing eastward across the Brae Burn Country Club, along Washington Street, past the Horace Mann School, Day Middle School, and Albemarle Field. In the south, South Meadow Brook begins at Lost Pond, and then flows past

Newton South High School and the two middle schools; a second branch begins at Crystal Lake and heads south past Weeks. After the branches meet near Parker Street, the brook heads west toward the Countryside School and then along Needham Street, and enters the Charles at Newton Upper Falls.

Hammond Brook, Cold Spring Brook, and Laundry Brook together form the most

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Visit <http://www.newtonconservators.org/membership.htm> for details on membership options. Did you know that you can register and pay for membership, events, buy a copy of our Almanac or newly revised Trail Guide, or make a donation to the Newton Conservators online? The Trail Guides and Almanac are also available at your local Newton Bookstores. Shop Local!



Mission: *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 in June 1961.

- E-Bulletin Editor Ted Kuklinski, Newton Conservators (dolanpond@aol.com)



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