



Newton Conservators

E-Bulletin

Wednesday, November 8, 2017

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



Lecture on the Watertown Dam Thursday at the Library!

Finally, there is a chill in the air and it is really starting to feel like Fall. Do you clean up your garden in the Fall? Check out this interesting [article](#) from Audubon that suggests going easy on fall yard work to help the birds over the winter. Lazy fall gardening can be a good thing!

Congratulations to our new Mayor elect Ruthanne Fuller and thanks as well to her mayoral opponent Council President Scott Lennon who both have been open space and environmental supporters.

Tomorrow evening (Thursday) is an interesting program on the possibility of removing the Watertown Dam (close to the Nonantum section of Newton). Check out this and other upcoming events below. Calling all birders who might be interested in the annual Newton Christmas Bird Count census likely to be held Sunday, December 17 this year (email dolanpond@aol.com if interested).

Hope to see you out and about in Newton!

Events Calendar

Thursday, November 9, 7-9 pm

Studying the Watertown Dam

Lecture by Elizabeth Cianciola, Charles River Watershed Association

Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library (Homer St)

Elisabeth Cianciola, Aquatic Scientist for the Charles River Watershed Association, will give a talk that will describe the potential benefits and challenges associated with dam removal projects and outline the process that dam owners and river managers use to determine the fate of a dam. The Watertown Dam



(where California and Galen Streets meet) was selected as a priority project by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game's Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) in 2016. A feasibility study that would help the project team determine whether or not dam removal is appropriate for this site is currently being planned. Along the Charles River, dam removal can be a very attractive course of action in cases where they are no longer actively used because it creates a stable and resilient ecosystem that better serves wildlife and the people who live around and use the river.

Saturday, November 11, 10 am
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 as this is still listed as tentatively scheduled.



Sunday, November 12, 1-4 pm
New Bracebridge Path - Invasives Removal
15 Bracebridge Road, Newton Centre (across from Mason-Rice School)

Come join the Newton Conservators on a work afternoon to remove invasive plants (mainly euonymus) from along the brand new Bracebridge Path. Tools will be provided. Please bring your own gloves, although there will be extra pairs available.



Wednesday, November 15, 1:30 to 3 pm
Waltham Walks! Senior Stroll Along the Charles River
Meet in back corner of Stop & Shop lot, 700 Pleasant Street, Watertown

Cross over this beautiful suspension bridge just over the border in Watertown/Newton on a special stroll just for senior citizens. This is a joint walk with the Waltham Land Trust, Waltham Connections for Healthy Aging, and Healthy Waltham. It will be a slow, easy stroll on the paved pathway along the river downstream into Newton and then back upstream into Watertown and Waltham. The trek will end back at Stop & Shop.



Monday, November 20, 7 pm
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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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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