



Newton's Land Trust



Nature Notes

Newton Conservators Nature Notes - May 31, 2004

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* Wednesday, June 2 - Newton Conservators Annual Meeting and Dinner

The Newton Conservators Annual Meeting will be held this Wednesday, June 2, 2004. The Annual Meeting is being held for the first time this year at American Legion Post 440, 295 California Street, Nonantum, 02495. A social hour with a cash bar will begin at 6:15 PM and a sit-down dinner will be served at 7:00 PM. The program will begin at 8:00 PM. A brief business meeting and presentation of awards will occur during dinner to allow our speakers to start as close to 8:00 PM as possible so we don't run too late on a weekday evening. You can even take a stroll ahead of time along the adjacent Charles River Pathway and take in the evening sounds of the resident warblers and vireos. Displays about some of the recent Conservators projects will be shown around the hall (e.g. Kessler Woods, Webster Park).

Members of the Conservators should have received an invitation to this event in the mail with a reply card but, if you haven't, it's still not too late to make a reservation for this fine event. Others are welcome to attend as well. If you wish to attend please contact Duane Hillis by Tuesday, June 1

(as early as possible). Payment can be made at the door; checks should be made payable to the Newton Conservators. Tickets are \$25 per person and dinner will be a sitdown style. If you reserve a spot, please specify if you want the vegetarian entree.

The following awards are to be presented by the Newton Conservators at the dinner:

** Environmentalist of the Year: Mayor David Cohen

2003 was a banner year in Newton for preserving open space. Of the many projects that were either started or completed, there is one that stands out in terms of its significance to the community, the complexity and challenge of the process, and the high stakes nature of the effort. The acquisition of Kessler Woods occurred for two reasons: availability of CPA funds and the single-minded determination and creative leadership of Mayor David Cohen.

For these reasons, the Newton Conservators will present its Environmentalist of the Year Award to David Cohen at its Annual Meeting this year. Though he relied on his staff and a committee of community leaders and advocates to help guide the deal, Mayor Cohen played a pivotal role at key junctures in the process. The first occurred early on when NStar set a February date for responding to its auction, effectively ruling out a bid from the city. Cohen got the Attorney General to extend the auction timetable to June. Then he shaped the proposal to partner with a developer and negotiated the terms of the deal. He obtained community, CPC and Board of Aldermen approval for the plan, and when the auction was extended to a second round, the Mayor put together the winning bid. This marked the first time in the state's history that a municipality has successfully partnered with a developer to prevail in the sale by auction of a major parcel of land.

In selecting the Mayor for this award, we recognize as well his impeccable record on environmental issues over the years. But it is for his stunning success against all odds in the acquisition of Kessler Woods that the Conservators Board of Directors honors David Cohen as the 2004 Environmentalist of the Year.

** Charles Johnson Maynard Award: Stephanie Bacon

Hammond Pond is one of Newton 's most beautiful ponds and is a significant natural resource. It is very visible, as it lies directly adjacent to the parking lots of commercial developments along Route 9, where most of us have shopped at one time or another. Water quality in Hammond Pond has been in decline for decades. It took the dedication of neighbor Stephanie Bacon, who is a Conservator and a past member of our Board of Directors, to bring about a change.

In 1995, Stephanie began studying Hammond Pond. Through her efforts and the efforts of the Hammond Pond Task Force, we learned that water quality problems at the pond stem an overload of nutrients from Route 9 and parking lot runoff, oil and grease, and the by-products of geese and other birds. A cure was needed to preserve Hammond Pond.

The planned cure is a filtration system to be installed at the edge of the pond where it receives runoff from the parking lots. Filtration beds will provide a bioengineering solution so that the water entering the pond will be far cleaner than the water it receives today. Funding and cooperation from the adjacent property owners and various civic and government groups have been secured. Stephanie Bacon spearheaded this effort. She did this out of a love for this place, and for that we all benefit. This important reclamation project would not have gone forward without Stephanie. She has made a difference.

The Charles Maynard Award is given each year to recognize achievement in biodiversity, habitat reclamation, and natural resource protection. The Board of Directors of the Newton Conservators is pleased to honor Stephanie Bacon as the 2004 recipient of this Award.

** Directors Awards:

*** "Walking Trails" Map Guide Team - Some of Newton 's richest habitat is hidden away in open spaces that are off the beaten path. Some of us take years to find them. Three Conservators-last year's President, Lucy Caldwell Stair, former Board member Judy Hepburn, and Pat Robinson-teamed up to create a booklet to bring us to these places and guide us by trail maps into the heart of them. Judy made the maps, Lucy wrote the text, and Pat laid out the design in a brochure that can be put out on a coffee table or stuffed into a hiker's pocket. To say that this guide is high-quality is to understate it by a long shot. The guide is [available through the Conservators](#) or at local bookstores. For this highly successful effort, the Conservators are pleased to honor Lucy Caldwell-



Stair, Judy Hepburn, and Pat Robinson with a Directors' Award.

*** Retired Science Coordinator Maxine Rosenberg - Maxine Rosenberg was science coordinator for the Newton Public Schools when the Newton Conservators initiated their successful grant program. Maxine saw the benefit of having outside funding to assist teachers and students in environmental education and helped promote the program to science teachers. Her support continued for almost a decade and as a result, the Conservators have funded numerous projects, including butterfly gardens, community gardens, garden classrooms, science days, and water quality projects. Maxine was tireless in her support of this effort to provide unique educational opportunities for Newton students. It is a pleasure to recognize her years of dedicated service to the environmental education of our kids.

*** Retired Animal Control Officer Lucille Riddle - It may not always be apparent, but there is a rich diversity of wildlife in our city. That means the potential for occasional conflict between the interests of animals, like coyotes, deer and fox, and residents. Newton Animal Control Officer Lucille Riddle recently retired after 25 years in the service of Newton. It was her job to manage the city's wild animals found in our open spaces. When someone spotted an unfamiliar creature, it was probably Lucille who responded to their inquiry. She is a true animal lover and spends a lot of her spare time with organizations like SPIN (Stray Pets in Need), where she is Vice President and performs foster care for pets. Anyone who has met her in the field can attest to her devotion to her work with animals and it is that quality that we recognize with this award.

** Featured Speakers - Renata von Tscharnier and Karl Haglund of the Charles River Conservancy

Special guests Renata von Tscharnier, founder of the Charles River Conservancy, and Karl Haglund, author of "Inventing the Charles River," are the keynote speakers. Renata von Tscharnier is president and founder of the Charles River Conservancy. A Newton resident, she is an architect and urban planner who has written books on cityscapes and urban art. Karl Haglund is a senior planner for the state Department of Recreation and Conservation (formerly Metropolitan District Commission). He has a long had an interest in urban design and the history of the Charles River Basin. Our speakers collaborated on the book, "Inventing the Charles River," published by MIT Press in 2002. The book was written by Haglund with a foreword by von Tscharnier.

The Charles River Basin, extending nine miles upstream from the harbor, has been called Boston's Central Park. Yet few realize that this apparently natural landscape is a totally fabricated public space. Two hundred years ago the Charles was a tidal river, edged by hundreds of acres of salt marshes and mudflats. Haglund and von Tscharnier will describe how, before the creation of the basin could begin, the river first had to be imagined as a single public space. The new esplanades along the river changed the way Bostonians perceived their city. And the basin, with its expansive views of Boston and Cambridge, became an iconic image of the metropolitan area.

The book focuses on the precarious balance between transportation planning and public stewardship. Long before the esplanades were created, great stretches of the river were devoted to industrial enterprises and transportation-millponds, bridges, landfills, and a complex network of road and railway bridges. In 1929, Boston's first major highway controversy erupted when a four-lane road was proposed as part of a new esplanade. At twenty year intervals, three riverfront road disputes followed, successively more complex and contentious, culminating in the lawsuits over "Scheme Z," the Big Dig's plan for eighteen lanes of highway ramps and bridges over the river. The presentation will include photographs, maps, and drawings that illustrate past and future visions for the Charles and document the river's place in Boston's history.

* Newton Conservators Spring 2004 Walk Schedule

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 and normally last for an hour or two. These walks are a great way to get to know open space areas in Newton. For more information call Peter Kastner or go to [the walks page](#). Below is the remaining walk schedule for Spring 2004. In case of bad weather, check with the leader.

Sunday, June 6, 2004, 2:00 pm - Charles River Lakes District Canoe Trip

The canoe trip through the Charles River Lakes District, a mixture of residential, commercial and wetlands, starts from the Charles River Canoe 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 opposite the canoe service. Rental canoes and kayaks are available or bring your own (and required life jackets) and put in from the parking lot. The trip leader is Bill Hagar.

Sunday, June 13, 2004, 2:00 pm - MDC Charles River Pathway (Watertown/Newton)

In the cool of the late afternoon, alewives migrate up and over the Watertown Dam, pursued by stalking night herons. We will go along the Watertown section of the new Charles River Pathway to Bridge Street. From there we will view the progress on the new "missing link" section of the pathway up to Cheesecake Brook and the new footbridge across the Charles. We will return to the start via the Newton side. The trip distance is approximately 3 miles. Park at the public parking lot off Pleasant St., Watertown, adjacent to the Sasaki Landscape Office sign and meet at the stone pillars on Galen Street. Bring binoculars if you have them. Trip leader is Ted Kuklinski.

Sunday, June 20, 2004, 2:00 pm - Lakes District Walk

Come on a walking tour of Ware's Cove--Waltham Watch Building--Mount Feake Cemetery--Brandeis--Duck Feeding Area--Charles River Canoe Service--Norumbega Park--Lyons Field. Meet at parking lot at Ware's Cove.. The walk will last about 3 hours. Wear comfortable walking shoes. The leader is Peter Kastner. Call ahead in case of poor weather.

* Other Happenings

** Newton History Museum First Ever On-line Exhibition:
Images from an Era - When the River was Newton's Playground

The Museum's first ever [on-line exhibition](#) draws from its collection of images: picture postcards of the Charles River and riverbank landmarks. Postcards were a nationwide fad in the years before World War I. Newton residents and visitors sent postcards by the millions -- and Newton had lots of visitors, drawn by the recreational resources of the river. They came with picnic baskets to wander the parks and preserves newly created by the Metropolitan Parks Commission, to wonder at Echo Bridge, to marvel at the menagerie at Norumbega Park, and to go canoeing on the Charles.

** Sunday, June 6th, 2 pm - Boneless Wonders of the Natural World

We pass this event along from the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance: If you were about an inch long, had no bones, and wanted to live outdoors in nature, where could you go? What would you eat, how would you stay safe, and who else would be part of your community? We'll hunt for insects and other invertebrates at the D.Blakely Hoar Sanctuary and learn about the lifestyles of the small and obscure.

Suitable for adults and children. Wear comfortable walking shoes. This field trip is free of charge and sponsored by Brookline GreenSpace Alliance.

**** Thursday, June 10 - Will O'Brien Memorial Bench Dedication**

A bench and plantings will be installed at the site of the accident on Commonwealth and Morton streets in memory of Will O'Brien, a 19-year-old Newton boy who died in a bicycle accident on Commonwealth Avenue on Thursday, June 10, 2003. The dedication ceremony will be held on June 6 at 12:30 p.m. Will was the grandson of active Conservators, Frank and Deb Howard and shared their love of nature.

**** Saturday, June 12 - Newton Pride's 2004 Annual Garden Tour**

Newton Pride's annual Garden Tour will take place on Saturday, June 12 from 10 am to 4 pm. Check out the brochure on this great event . It even includes a visit again to the garden railway that was so popular last year.

*** Be a NewTV Star**

The Newton Conservators are teaming up with the Green Decade to produce "The Environmental Show", a series of 12 half hour programs for NewTV which will air starting in September. The Conservators will be producing 6 of the shows. We are looking for all kinds of talent - announcers, writers, producers, camera people, editors, etc. to help with our shows. In each program, we will be highlighting a different one of our open spaces. To find out more about NewTV visit www.newtv.org . They have a great selection of courses in all aspects of video production and editing. Our first show may be in October and we are writing and preparing to shoot footage soon.

*** Eco Alert - The perfect home landscape (14 April, 2004)**

What makes for the perfect - that is, environmentally perfect - home landscape?

The answer can come from a noted landscape architect of the twentieth century, A. E. Bye. He was recognized for his poetic minimalist work, his use of native plant materials, and his reliance upon listening to the land for answers. His design work was so harmonious that people found difficulty in discerning what had been done by Nature and what had been done by man. By listening, he created landscapes suited to the land.

A similar approach comes from the twentieth century work of May Theilgaard Watts, a naturalist and ecologist at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Illinois. In 1957, she authored a book entitled Reading the Landscape. It's a book about biodiversity written before this term had gained a foothold. It's a book about the mutual relations between organisms and their environment, about offering respect for the land, its water, and all its resident creatures.

For May Theilgaard Watts, a contemporary of Aldo Leopold, there was good reading to be found on the land, first-hand reading, involving no words or symbols. The records are made by sun and shade, by wind and rain, by time, by animals. The records are written in forests, in fence-rows, in bogs, in playgrounds, in prairies, in our own backyards. We only need to read. Careful reading leads to good garden and landscape planning...and to environmental stewardship.

Much of the 90-plus million acres of developed land in the United States is in the care of homeowners. There's good listening and good reading - plus an opportunity for conservation and habitat protection - in the backyards of America. There's good reading, too, in a free 28-page Backyard Conservation booklet available by calling 1-888-LANDCARE(526-3227). The booklet is the result of work conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the National Association of Conservation Districts, and the Wildlife Habitat Council.

The booklet can help teach you to listen and to read your own backyard. It outlines 10 conservation practices backyard conservationists can put to work on their own property and in their neighborhoods. Subjects include tree planting, composting, mulching, wildlife habitat, wetlands, ponds, water conservation, terracing, nutrients for the soil, and dealing with pests. Valuable background information and tips are included.

The perfect home landscape is close at hand. We only need to listen for it and to read it.

Act today on this EcoAlert, and thank you for your environmental responsibility. This was provided by 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: .

*** Mass Wildlife News**

A very informative free email newsletter is available from Mass Wildlife. To receive MassWildlife News electronically, send an e-mail to

Join-MassWildlife.news@listserv.mass.gov. Don't forget to check out [their website](#). A sampling of information from the latest MassWildlifeNews is given below:

YOUNG WILDLIFE BELONGS IN THE WILD

The arrival of spring and summer means the arrival of newborn and just-hatched wildlife. These youngsters soon venture into the world on shaky legs or fragile wings and are discovered by people living and working nearby. Every year, the lives of many young wild creatures are upset by people who take baby wildlife from the wild in a mistaken attempt to save them.

These well-meant acts of kindness tend to have the opposite result. Instead of being left to learn their place in the world, young wildlife removed from the wild are denied important natural learning experiences which help them survive on their own. Most people quickly find that they can't really care for young wildlife, and many of the animals soon die in the hands of well-meaning people. Young wildlife that does survive human care have missed experiences that teach them to fend for themselves. If these animals are released back into the wild, their chances of survival are reduced. Often, the care given to young wildlife results in some attachment to humans and the animals may return to places where people live, only to be attacked by domestic animals or hit by cars. Some animals become nuisances and people have even been injured by once-tamed wildlife.

These problems can be avoided if everyone follows one simple rule when coming upon young wildlife: If You Care, Leave Them There! It may be difficult to do, but this is a real act of kindness. "In spring, we receive many calls about young wildlife with no adult in sight," says MassWildlife Biologist Marion Larson. "The young are quite safe when left alone because their color patterns and lack of scent help them remain undetected. Generally the parent will visit their young a few times a day, to avoid leaving traces that attract predators. Baby birds found on the ground may be safely picked up and placed in a nearby bush or tree. Parent birds are not disturbed by human scent." Larson recommends people avoid nest and den areas of young wildlife and restrain all pets.

Leave fawns (young deer) where they are found. Fawns are usually quite safe when left alone because their color pattern and lack of scent help them remain undetected until the parent returns. Unlike deer, newborn moose calves remain in close proximity to their mother who, in contrast to a white-tailed doe, will actively defend her calf against danger. An adult cow moose, weighing 600+ pounds will chase, kick and stomp a potential predator, people included.

It is illegal to possess most wildlife in Massachusetts. Only when young wildlife are found injured or with their dead mother may the young be assisted, but must be delivered immediately to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Due to the difficulty in care there are no rehabilitators licensed to care for fawns. Information on young wildlife and rehabilitators has also been posted at www.masswildlife.org <<http://www.masswildlife.org>> and is also provided at MassWildlife offices. For more information, contact your local MassWildlife District office or Westborough Field Headquarters.

GO WILD WITH MASSACHUSETTS WILDLIFE MAGAZINE

Looking for behind-the-scenes glimpses of Massachusetts' wildlife and the outdoors? Add Massachusetts Wildlife magazine to your personal library. This magazine is the Commonwealth's only all-wildlife publication. A two year subscription costs just \$10 and delivers eight full color issues packed with articles and photos on the environment, conservation, fishing, hunting, natural history and just about everything relating to wildlife and the outdoors in Massachusetts. Informative articles by MassWildlife staff and other writers as well as stunning photography by MassWildlife photographer Bill Byrne are found from cover to cover. "Massachusetts Wildlife magazine has been in production since 1956 and serves as a useful reference for teachers, school students, librarians, sportsmen and women as well as other conservation minded people," said Peter Mirick, Massachusetts Wildlife magazine editor. "We get letters and calls from people looking for information about a particular topic, outdoor skill or animal and we are often able to provide them with a past magazine article." Story titles from the past five years are also posted on the MassWildlife website.

Mirick noted he is always looking for stories, anecdotes and other pieces for the magazine. Aspiring writers, students involved in research, naturalists and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts with a story to tell about their experiences are encouraged to contact Mirick with their ideas. "Our readers range from age eight to eighty. Some of them are avid outdoor enthusiasts, others want to learn more about the critters that live in their neighborhood."

The next Massachusetts Wildlife magazine is due out in early July and will feature stories on whale watching, fireflies, eelways and accessible wildlife viewing opportunities. Recent articles included: limnology for anglers, backyard wildlife habitat, fly tying, wildlife diseases, hemlock wooly adelgids, book reviews and the ever popular "Correspondents" page where readers share a short story, comment on past articles or send images of a plant or animal to identify.

Subscribing to the magazine is easy. Internet surfers can visit the Publications area of the MassWildlife website (www.mass.gov/masswildlife), fill out a form and be billed at a later date. Those who call or visit any MassWildlife office may leave their name, address and a check or cash for the subscription or ask to be billed later. For more information, contact Peter Mirick, Magazine Editor at 508/792-7270 x107.

COUNTING TURKEYS

Sportsmen and women, birders, landowners and other outdoor enthusiasts are encouraged to assist MassWildlife to count turkey families this summer. MassWildlife conducts an annual wild turkey brood survey from June through August. "The brood survey serves as a long term index on reproduction," explains Jim Cardoza, MassWildlife's Turkey Project Leader. "It helps us determine the overall productivity and allows us to compare rates of reproduction over a long period of time." Cardoza also pointed out that citizen involvement in this survey is a cost-effective means of gathering useful data, and he encourages all interested people to participate. A <http://www.mass.gov/eea/land-use-habitats/dfwpdf/dfw_turkey_brood_survey.pdf> turkey brood survey form has been posted in the Wildlife area of MassWildlife's website (www.masswildlife.org). Information needed includes date, town, number of hens seen and number of poults (young turkeys) and their relative size compared to the hens. Multiple sightings of the same brood should also be noted. The last day of the survey period is August 31. Contact Jim Cardoza, 508/792-7270 x124.

Calendar of MassWildlife Events-The MassWildlife Events Calendar is updated weekly on <<http://www.masswildlife.org>> www.masswildlife.org

June 5 & 6--FREE FISHING WEEKEND! No fishing license needed during these two days! If you don't know how to fish, consider attending a MassWildlife Angler Education Clinic or Fishing Festival. Check out the MassWildlife Calendar for fishing events held throughout the year.

June 5--Wilmington Family Fishing Festival, Wilmington--An event designed to introduce curious or beginning anglers of all ages who have an interest in learning about fishing. On the shores of Silver Lake, cast a line, learn about fish in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. 9 AM - 1PM The festival is coordinated by volunteers of MassWildlife's Angler Education and is co-sponsored by the Wilmington Parks and Recreation Department. For more information contact: Debbie at 978/658-4270.

June 9--Coyotes in Massachusetts, Groton--Join Chrissie Henner, furbearer biologist for the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, as she shares her experiences and knowledge about coyotes. 7:00 PM. Hosted by the Nashua River Watershed Association office at 592 Main Street (Rte 119). Contact NRWA at 978/448-0299

* About the Newton Conservators

This email newsletter is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, a local organization 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 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, 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".

The Board of Directors of the Newton Conservators meets monthly usually on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm (usually at City Hall). Members are welcome to attend. If you wish to attend you can contact the organization Secretary to confirm the date, time, location, and agenda.

* Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands

The 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 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 www.NewtonConservators.org or by mailing a check to The Newton Conservators, P.O. Box 590011, Newton Center, MA 02459. Sales benefit The Newton Conservators, 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.

* About Newton Conservators Nature Notes

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 dolanpond@aol.com. 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](#). 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.

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