



Newton's Land Trust



Nature Notes

Newton Conservators Nature Notes - June 28, 2004

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* Welcome

This email newsletter provides information on upcoming nature and environmental related events, exhibits, and information in and around the Newton, Massachusetts area and is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton. Please visit their website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/> [http://www.newtonconservators.org.](http://www.newtonconservators.org/) If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject. Topics in this newsletter include:

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* Save the Farm - Important Angino Farm Hearing Before CPA Committee on Wednesday, June 30

Angino Farm is the last remaining farm in Newton and the Newton Conservators have a proposal before the Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) to save it. This Wednesday, the Newton Conservators, along with the newly formed Newton Community Farm group, will make a presentation of an Addendum to their original Angino Farm Proposal on Wednesday, June 30th, at 7:45pm in Room 209 of Newton City Hall. We pass along this message from Duane Hillis who has been leading the effort by the Conservators to save the farm.

At the last meeting, the CPAC made it clear that they wished to see "active farming" take place on this site with no new construction of homes and wanted the price reduced to \$2,500,000 (from \$3,000,000). All of those tasks have been accomplished, although the final P&S Agreement has not been executed and returned yet, we have been told by the broker that the Angino heirs will accept our offer, at least until the 30th. After that date, it is doubtful that we will be able to keep the family from selling the property to others.

The group that has formed to operate the Newton Community Farm is more than well intentioned with 10 members on the Farm Planning and Advisory Committee, including a member of Green Decade, active community farmers from Dover, Framingham, Natick, Newton, Waltham, Weston, members representing educational interests and also Brian Donahue who helped create Lands Sake in Weston and has written and teaches on the benefits of community farming: *Reclaiming the Commons: Community Farms and Forests in a New England Town* (Yale University Press, 1999).

In addition to the Farming Subcommittee, there is a Historic Preservation Subcommittee that will plan and oversee the preservation of this historic property including creative ways to fund the restoration project through grants and making use of the Historic Tax Credits. The final plan for preservation is underway, but will take time to implement. We have planned for at least one community housing unit in the existing house for the use of the farm manager or other qualified recipients. We can only have one unit in the house, as allowed by right in the SR1 Zone. We may plan for additional community housing units, but that would require zoning modification and the support of our neighbor, the Ledgerbrook Condominium Association, who support the current project.

We are all enthusiastic about the potential of bringing the Community Farm concept to Newton and have already received pledges of support for the farm and subscription reservations to purchase shares in the Newton Community Farm CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). Under the community farming concept known as CSA, subscribers pay an annual lump sum (\$500) and receive a "share" of vegetables weekly, which can be gifted to others if one so chooses, as well as a portion of the surplus food. Shareholders get to know the farm and their neighbors at the weekly pickups, and often lend a hand picking vegetables or weeding.

If you wish to attend next weeks meeting, you should understand that it is not an open meeting where public comments are heard, but just by "filling the room" with supporters, we will encourage the Community Preservation Act Committee to look favorably on our proposal.

If anyone is interested in reserving a share in the Newton Community Farm CSA or would like more information or wants to get involved, they can contact Duane Hillis. We welcome all those interested to join us at The Farm.

* Be a NewTV Star with the "Environmental Program"

The Newton Conservators are teaming up with the Green Decade Coalition 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. We especially need an executive producer to oversee the entire process. In each program, we will be highlighting a different one of our open spaces. If you are interested, please reply to this email or contact Ted Kuklinski at 617-969-6222 or reply to this email. To find out more about NewTV [visit their website](#). They have a great selection of courses in all aspects of video production and editing. Our first show will be in the Fall and we need to be writing and shooting footage soon.

* Some Birding Notes

Rosemarie Mullin reported to us a very unusual bird sighting recently: "I saw a piping plover in front of Linens & Things on Needham Street in Newton at about 8:50 a.m. Thursday, May 27th. It was just walking around in the bushes between the parking lot and the sidewalk directly in front of the store. I don't know how unusual this is, but I certainly was enthralled. I was only about 6 feet away from him as I stood in awe admiring him." Piping plovers are those endangered birds that nest on beaches whose eggs are so easily destroyed that beaches are often cordoned off during nesting season. What a terrific visitor to Newton. Thanks to Rosemarie for sending in this interesting account. Perhaps the plover was looking to upgrade to some better nesting material at Linens & Things?

Every year, we seem to notice next to our driveway the sound of the Pine Warbler, a song somewhat similar to the sewing machine like trill of the Chipping Sparrow, but shorter in length. The driveway is bordered by a nice stand of pines. This particular bird seemed to stay around a lot longer this year – perhaps he has actually found a mate. But since hearing him, I have been alert to this sound and heard it in many other places in Newton this year. Not surprisingly, every time it has come from the direction of some pine trees. Keep your ears peeled for this warbler.

* 76 Webster Park Update

The 1.1 acre property at 76 Webster Park, West Newton was acquired last year through CPA funds. It was the home of Irene Forte¹, who passed away last year at the age of 104 and is directly adjacent to the Dolan Pond Conservation Area. Approximately 2/3 of the property is slated to be added to the Dolan Pond area. The original house will be completely restored by the Newton Housing Authority and will be part of their rental housing stock. In addition, there are plans for two owner occupied units in a single structure to be built by Habitat for Humanity volunteers. Norberto Leon is a volunteer architect who has been working on the design of the Habitat units and the siting of these units on the property.

The design of the Habitat units is an exercise in efficiency and the design nicely echoes the look of the original Forte house with similar rooflines. The Habitat structure was carefully sited to preserve as many of the original trees as possible. A landscape plan has been designed as well. The plan differs from the original proposal in that the Habitat units are separate but it was widely agreed that this was a much better plan and was able to meet zoning requirements much better.

The site plan has undergone several rounds of revision; some of the considerations have been meeting current zoning requirements, setbacks, preserving as many trees as possible, conservation restrictions, and amount of paved driveway. The plans have been presented before various city commissions and a neighborhood meeting to review the plans has been held. A special permit has been applied for and a hearing on this will be held in July. The final plan involves dividing the property into three parcels, one for the original house (NHA), one for the Habitat units, and one for the open space portion. In addition, the project will go before the Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, CPA Committee, and aldermen (due to the change from attached units to separate units, wetlands setback requirements, garage demolition, etc).

This project is really an exercise in cooperation between various non-profits and city agencies and involves a tremendous number of effort on the part of a great number of people. Thanks to all!

* Some Recent Troop 355 Boy Scout Projects

Adam Resnick, of Boy Scout Troop 355 (based at St. Bernard's, West Newton), as part of his Eagle project, organized a work day on Saturday, April 3rd at Dolan Pond Conservation Area. Scouts and parents went to work installing new trail signs and a log bench, putting up new and refurbished wood duck houses, and performing cleanup and trail maintenance. There are engraved wooden signs identifying the four ponds (Dolan, Quinn, Banana, and Irene's Pond) as well as the three main trails (Webster, Cumberland, and Auburndale Paths). Patrick Kallenbach from the same troop did his Eagle project at Norumbega Conservation Area, involving entrance improvements with crushed stone, filling holes, and chipping trailheads. Thanks to the all the scout volunteers who have done so many projects in our open spaces, coordinated by Newton Environmental Planner, Martha Horn.

* All Terrain Wheelchair Now Available at Crystal Lake

The Newton Housing and Community Development Program sponsored a reception and "unveiling" of Newton's CDBG-Funded All-Terrain Wheelchair at Crystal Lake on June 3. So if you visit Crystal Lake check it out. Perhaps some day there might be another chair acquired that could be lent out for wheelchair users to access trails in some of our open space areas that are not currently "accessible".

* Charles River Pathway – Moving Along

There is some major work going on along the Charles River in Newton right under our noses. One of these projects that I have been watching is the missing section of the [Charles River Pathway](#) above Bridge Street to Cheesecake Brook. A beautiful new footbridge and footings have been assembled there awaiting work to swing it into place. In addition new boardwalks are being completed. This is going to be a spectacular section of the Pathway. Dan Driscoll, the visionary behind the Charles River Pathway was kind enough to pass along the following article describing much of the work along various sections of the river.

Expanded Project Description and Justification - Upper Charles River Reservation

by Dan Driscoll, August, 2003

Background: In 1994 the MDC began preparation of a master plan and design for a major section of the Upper Charles River Reservation. The master plan project area travels from Galen Street in Watertown Square to Commonwealth Avenue in Newton and Weston. This area is approximately 5.75 miles in length, over ten miles of river banks.

The primary goal of the master plan is to develop a continuous pedestrian pathway system that links the Upper Charles River Reservation and its surrounding communities (e.g. Watertown, Waltham, Newton, Weston) with the Charles River Basin pathway system in Cambridge and Boston. Implementation of this vision is providing Metropolitan Boston with one of the finest and longest urban river greenway corridors in the country.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 Construction (has been completed): As part of the master plan scope of work MDC's Consultant team prepared final construction documents for three key sections within the master plan area. Two separate federal ISTEAs and matching state funds provided the funding for the construction of these three segments. All three of these sections have been completed and are open to the public. The sections include: Watertown between Galen Street and Bridge Street; Newton - Galen St. to Bridge St.; and Waltham - Farwell St. to Elm St... All three have been a great success story in reconnecting the public to the River and its natural resources.

Phase 3A, 3A-1 & 3B Design and Construction (new Segments): With the completion of nearly four new miles of river corridor greenways along the Upper Charles River Reservation, the MDC is closer than ever to accomplishing the vision and dream of creating continuous public access and green space along most of the MDC's Upper Charles River Reservation. Phase 3A, 3A-1 and 3B include the five critical missing links along this section of the Charles greenway system. Descriptions of these segments follow.

PHASE 3A- Following is a description of 3A and 3A-1. MDC began construction on 3A in the winter, 2003, and anticipates completing the project by late fall, 2004.

3A: Bridge Street in Newton to Farwell Street in Waltham (traveling through Watertown). This segment of the Reservation is the critical missing link needed to provide the desired continuous linear connections. From Bridge Street to Cheesecake Brook in Newton there was an overgrown, somewhat inaccessible stretch of MDC wooded riverbank. The MDC designed a new greenway through these woods, up to Cheesecake Brook. At the Brook a new distinguished footbridge (10 feet wide, and approximately 140 long) will cross over the Charles River connecting to woodland on the opposite bank in Watertown. At this point a new path is being constructed out to Farwell Street in Waltham. To properly honor this beautiful section of river corridor, all pathways will be soft surface (i.e. no asphalt) or boardwalk.

3A-1: This segment will be bid some time in spring, 2004, with construction beginning in fall, 2004. Construction will be complete by winter, 2005. Location of 3A-1: Elm Street to Landry Park in downtown Waltham. This segment, approximately 500 feet in length, will travel from the northeast corner of the Elm Street Bridge to the MDC's Landry Park by the Charles River Museum of Industry. This new path will feature a cantilevered boardwalk off the side of the Museum of Industry Mill, and it will intersect with an existing MDC path in Landry Park and eventually go out to Moody Street in downtown Waltham.

PHASE 3B (three segments). Construction began in August, 2003, and is scheduled to be completed by winter, 2004. Following is a description of the three segments included in 3B.

3B-1. Galen Street in Watertown to new Greenway entrance off California Street. Currently people must travel on a narrow, paved sidewalk to get to a new greenway entrance. The MDC is constructing a new path through an existing MDC park, building a small bridge over a brook, and connecting to an existing greenway. This will provide a much safer, more scenic alternative from Watertown Square along the Charles River. The existing footbridge by Watertown Dam is being fully restored and painted as part of this phase.

3B-2. Woerd Avenue Boat Launch. This is the only formal boat launch in the Charles River Lakes District, and it currently is a rutted dirt lot with a broken up launch and eroding river banks. Full restoration is under way for this area. Plans include a new greenway and restoration of neglected MDC parkland, providing a key link back to Prospect Street in Waltham. In addition, there will be a new double sized motor boat launch, a new canoe launch, restored parking lot, upgraded drainage and extensive plantings.

3B-3. Moody Street Entrance/Connection. A walkway is being developed close to the historic sluiceway by the Moody Street mill. This will improve the views of the water inlet as well as the revamped Moody Street Bridge. A buffer strip planted with shade trees and grass will separate the walk and existing driveway. The new walk will connect with an existing walk leading to a fish ladder and small park. We are providing crosswalk locations and HC curb ramps to make the new walk fully accessible. The sluice will be restored, invasive plants removed, and interpretive elements developed. The MDC's maintenance walk over the Moody Street Dam will be restored and painted. New park entrances will be developed at Moody Street and Prospect Street entry points.

Phases 3A, 3A-1 and 3B combined include some of the most critical greenway links along the Charles River Reservation that DCR will build in this century. Please call Dan Driscoll with any questions or additional information requests (617) 722-5268. Thanks for your interest.

* Along the Charles

While checking out the progress on the new footbridge near Cheesecake Brook, we met a fellow kayaking up the river. His name was Danny Marks and he told us about a website that he runs, <http://www.alongthecharles.com>. It is a wonderful collection of wildlife photos that he has taken along all sections of the Charles River nicely indexed by maps. It is definitely worth checking out.

* Mass Audubon Update

The following is from Mass Audubon. Governor Romney filed recently his veto message of the fiscal year 2005 state operating budget. The Governor vetoed \$108.5 million in line item spending and 161 outside sections. Governor Romney vetoed all funding for the Blue Hills Trailside Museum, and struck out an outside section that would ensure the full amount of voluntary donations to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program is dedicated to endangered species recovery. The Governor accepted the remainder of Mass Audubon's budget priorities.

Line item #2800-9004: Provides \$375,000 for the Blue Hills Trailside Museum, which is a gateway to the Blue Hills State Reservation. Despite the Romney Administration's stated goal of building public-private partnerships to enhance conservation services, Governor Romney has vetoed completely funding for the Museum for the past two years. The educational programs of the Museum, which is owned by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation and managed by Mass Audubon, are often the only source of natural history for many urban youth.

Outside Section 385- Indirect Cost Waiver for the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund: An assessment of administrative overhead charges on the Fund limits the direct benefits of voluntary contributions made toward the program. Outside section 385 of the budget would waive these charges to ensure that our most imperiled species receive the full force of citizen dollars.

The legislature will convene formal sessions to override a selected number of the Governor's vetoes, before formal adjournment in late July. All veto overrides originate in the House; if the House does not bring up a vetoed item for an override, the Governor's decision is sustained. The decision on whether to bring up an override is made by the Speaker of the House, in consultation with the Chairman of the House Committee on Ways & Means and other House leadership members. These decisions will begin on Monday, June 28 and extend through the end of July. While July 31 is the official end of formal sessions for the year, legislators plan to end formal sessions a week earlier on July 23 to allow for attendance at the Democratic National Convention. This gives legislators less than four weeks to override the Governor's vetoes.

* Preventing Aquatic Hitchhikers (from Mass Wildlife News)

Boaters launching their craft into Massachusetts waterways should check to be sure they aren't giving a free ride to invasive aquatic plants or animals. Aquatic invasives can easily be transported between water bodies by boats, motors, trailers, fishing equipment, bait buckets, diving gear and other aquatic recreational equipment. These hitchhikers can wreak havoc in lakes and ponds by choking waterways

through explosive growth, fouling intake and discharge structures, lowering lakefront property values, and possibly harming native fish, plants and insects. Once they are established in a water body, it is nearly impossible to eradicate these invasive organisms.

Boaters and other water users can help prevent the spread of exotic weeds and other pests by 1) hand-removing all materials (plant or animal) from equipment and disposing it far away from the water. Special attention should be paid to the bunks or rollers where the boat is seated on the trailer as well as the trailer hitch. 2) Wash and dry all equipment before reuse. Hose off the boat, diving gear and trailer. 3) Drain and flush the engine cooling system and live wells of boats, bait buckets and the buoyancy control device from diving equipment that's been in contact with a water body. 4) Join the Weed Watchers! Spread the word and learn to identify invasive organisms through training offered by the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation's Lakes and Ponds Program. Receive a Guide to Aquatic Invasive Species and other helpful publications. The Lakes and Ponds program is looking for anglers, lake and pond association members and other water users to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasives. For information on the Weed Watchers Program or for fact sheets, posters and a sign suitable for posting at boat ramps call Michelle Robinson at 617/626-1382 or visit the DCR website .

* Calendar of MassWildlife Events

The [MassWildlife Events Calendar](#) is updated weekly . To receive MassWildlife News electronically, [send an e-mail](#) .

July 17--Whitman's Pond Fishing Festival, Weymouth--Come to the Whitman's Pond and cast a line, and learn about fish in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. Equipment is provided, but if you have your own, bring it along! 10 AM - 3PM. The festival is coordinated by volunteers of MassWildlife's Angler Education and is co-sponsored by the Whitman's Pond Association and Weymouth Youth and Family Services. For more information contact: Lorraine Larrabee .

July 20--Snakes of Massachusetts, Groton--Learn about the various snakes of Massachusetts, how to identify them, and what is being done to protect some of the rare snake species in Massachusetts from Peter Mirick, MassWildlife's magazine editor and herp enthusiast! Sponsored by the Nashua River Watershed Association, the program begins at 7 PM at the River Resource Center 579 Main St, (Rte 119) in Groton.

July 24--Houghton's Pond Family Fishing Festival, Canton - This festival is held in cooperation with DCR's Division of Urban Parks and Recreation Blue Hills Reservation, Decathlon and the North East Bass Association. 10:00- 2:30PM. The festival is open to families and others of all ages. Beginning anglers are especially invited! Equipment is provided, but if you have your own, you may bring it. Learn to cast a hook, identify a fish and much more! For more information contact MassWildlife 508/792-7270x109.

* EcoAlert from American P.I.E. - Earthly Stewardship - 9 June, 2004

The U. S. Senate will soon vote on the Climate Stewardship Act (CSA-S 139). This bill, introduced by Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman, puts a cap on America's global warming pollution and represents a good beginning for addressing what many refer to as a most important global challenge to humanity. American PIE urges EcoAlert readers to tell your senators to take the first step toward curbing fossil fuel emissions; the Union of Concerned Scientists provides an Action Network letter on this matter for your signature <<http://www.ucsusa.org/>> .

Few of us, even in the environmental community, have responded with passion to the scientific consensus that dangerous climatic disruption is here, now. Global warming and climate change are euphemisms, like military phrases such as collateral damage (i.e., destruction of civilian lives and places) and a nuclear exchange. They provide implicit justification for complacency on the issue - and invite superficial sophistry of arguments that global warming will be slight, that its negative effects will be balanced by positive ones, that its effects will be manifested over a long span of time, enabling adaptation for all species.

Current climate research is focusing on the rapid changes accompanying global warming, and time is not on our side. More than a million species could be driven to extinction over the next 50 years, largely due to habitat destruction associated with planetary heating. Studies suggest that a quarter of bird species are already extinct, and that 24 percent of mammals, 25 percent of reptiles and 30 percent of fish species are threatened. As treasured species slip away, more and more of life's resources are absorbed by tough, opportunistic organisms that thrive on instability, adding deadliness to injury.

Underscoring the threat of possible rapid change, suggesting climatic mayhem, are the warming warnings tracing the rise in sea levels and shifting patterns of deep ocean currents. A growing concern is that as fresh water from melting Arctic glaciers flows into the North Atlantic - lowering the current's salinity, its density and tendency to sink - the conveyor belt bringing warm water from the southern Gulf Stream may stop. Predictions indicate that Northern Europe could be cooled in winter by 5 to 10 degrees Centigrade in the course of 10 to 50 years, tipping the region into a deep freeze. The trend in Europe runs counter to that of most of the planet which will incur risk from other forms of climatic disruption caused by chaotic, unpredictable, and ecologically violent weather events.

We cannot fully grasp the losses - natural, human and ecological - that have already resulted from our species historical animosity toward truth. But to mourn these losses, and to acknowledge their needlessness, can renew our efforts to avert all-out climatic mayhem. Urge the support of your senators for the Climate Stewardship Act.

Act today on this EcoAlert, and thank you for your environmental responsibility. This material provided by American P.I.E., Public Information on the Environment, P.O. Box 676, Northfield, MN 55057-0676, Telephone: 1-800-320-APIE(2743); fax 507-645-5724, E-mail:<<mailto:>> . EcoAlert subscribe/unsubscribe at our website,;

* 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.

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 THIRD 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](#) 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 or contacting Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222). 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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