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## Nature Notes

### Newton Conservators Nature Notes - September 22, 2004

\* 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/>

Welcome to many new receivers of this email news. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject.

Don't miss an outstanding lecture at the library this evening by naturalist and photographer Carole Smith Berney (see details below). We saw her gallery exhibit last year in Watertown and knew that many of you would be interested in seeing her outstanding nature photography taken along the Charles River Pathway. Our new hot off the press Fall walk schedule is included along with information on the Angino Farm, Newton's last farm!

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\* Fall 2004 Lecture - Wednesday, September 22, 7 pm, Library

<[http://www.newtonconservators.org/lectures/lectfall04\\_clip\\_image002.jpg](http://www.newtonconservators.org/lectures/lectfall04_clip_image002.jpg)>

Celebrating the Charles River - A Slideshow and Interactive Evening  
with Naturalist and Photographer Carole Smith Berney

Please join us for a "virtual walk" along the Charles River Upper Greenway Path in Newton and Watertown-a slide presentation focusing on the surprising diversity of the urban landscape presented by Watertown naturalist Carole Smith Berney. Ms. Berney's colorful and entertaining slide show features images of birds, waterfowl, cormorants, cottontail rabbits, great blue herons, turtles, seasonal riverscapes and sunsets, and the people who walk, run, skate, bike, fish and birdwatch along the path. She will also discuss efforts over the last decade to restore the river banks as viable habitat for wildlife and to create a path that enables human enjoyment with minimal impact on the flora and fauna there.

Carole Smith Berney, M.A. is a Watertown naturalist, wildlife photographer, nature educator and member of the Newton Camera Club. Inspired by her many walks on the MDC Charles River Upper Greenway Path in Watertown and Newton, she has documented life along the river in all seasons and weather over several years. Her "portraits" of animals-great blue herons, snapping turtles, cottontail rabbits, wood ducks-help to enhance the community's appreciation of the biodiversity and natural beauty found close to urban settings. She continues to exhibit her work locally, and to present slideshows for diverse audiences: libraries, community groups, assisted living facilities, senior centers, and public and private schools from kindergarten through high school.

Her publications include "Clever Critters," featuring photographs of animal behavior, in a forthcoming issue of Highlights for Children, and Wildflowers Along the Upper Greenway Path, partially funded by the Watertown Cultural Council and the Department of Parks and Recreation (formerly MDC). The Massachusetts Cultural Council has designated the latter publication as an exemplary, "gold star" project for its significance in wedding the arts with community involvement. Her image, "Glowing Mallards," was chosen by the Massachusetts Audubon Society for inclusion in its Important Bird Areas exhibit. Her various slideshows and exhibits have entertained and enlightened many a nature-lover, birder, and wildflower enthusiast.

This lecture is co-sponsored by the Newton Free Library (617-796-1360) and the Newton Conservators, Newton's own organization that promotes the protection and preservation of open space. Carole Smith Berney's lecture is the eighth in the twice yearly Newton Conservators Lecture Series, which features renowned experts in areas related to the open space mission of the Conservators. As part of their educational outreach, the programs are free and open to the public. Some of Carole's photo prints and cards will be available for purchase as well as the Conservators publication Walking Trails in <http://www.newtonconservators.org/buyaguide.htm> Newton's Park and Conservation Lands. For further information on this event, please contact the Conservators coordinator for this event, Ted Kuklinski.

#### Newton Conservators Fall Walk Series - 2004

Each Spring and Fall, the Newton Conservators organizes a series of walks to local open space areas. These walks are led by knowledgeable leaders and are open to the public. They normally last for an hour or two. Sometimes events are even for bicycle or canoe. These walks are a great way to get to know open space areas in Newton. Below is the current walk schedule for the Fall 2004 Walk Series. If you have questions about a walk or are interested in leading such a walk in an area that you know, please contact the walks coordinator, Peter Kastner, for more information.

Sunday, October 3, 2 pm, 2 hrs

Cutler DCR (formerly MDC) Park, Millennium Park /Wells Avenue Charles River

Loop

Starting at Cutler Park, we will explore the park itself and after walking into Boston over the railroad bridge, will enter Millennium Park and complete the tour by way of the Helen Heyn Riverway. These areas have been vastly improved over the past several years and now provide a wide variety of trails, river landings and playing fields. Henry Finch will be the group leader. Part of this walk is on page 54 of the Newton Conservators Walk Guide. Meet at the Cutler Park entrance 1/4 mile south of the Charles River, on Kendrick Street in Needham. Kendrick and Nahanton Streets meet at the Charles River Bridge.

Sunday, October 10, 2 pm, 1 to 1.5 hrs

Albemarle / Charles River / Cheesecake Brook Link / Avery Woods

The Friends of Albemarle will lead a walk through the varied park, playground, and conservation areas in the Albemarle / Cheesecake Brook area. This organization is developing a comprehensive plan for this area and will ask walkers for their ideas on how to plan for this area. The area has a rich mix of active and passive spaces and the goal of the Friends of Albemarle is to develop a balanced plan for this area. Meet at the Gath Pool on Albemarle Road. For more information call Margaret Albright.

Sunday, October 17, 2 pm, 1 hr

Norumbega Park / Islington Road Oval / DCR Park

We will explore the trail system that goes through the remains of the old Norumbega Park, a 13 Acre Park that was rescued from development when the privately owned Norumbega Park closed. We will see a meadow, tall pines and a hemlock grove that opens to a wonderful view of the Charles River as well as the little know DCR park that is hidden behind the Marriott hotel. Meet at the Norumbega Park entrance, near the remains of the sudden garden that located at the Marriott-Norumbega boundary line on Commonwealth Avenue. Call AnnaMarie Abernathy for more information

Sunday, October 24, 2 pm, 2 hrs

West Newton CPA Improvements Tour (Historic, Open Space, Housing, and Recreation)

The walk will begin at the historic 1781 West Parish Burying Ground at River and Cherry Streets in West Newton. Sheila Donahue of the Historic Burying Grounds Committee will provide background on this site, which is undergoing stone restoration and other improvements via CPA. It was recently placed on the State of Massachusetts Register of Historic Sites. From the West Parish Burying Ground, we will walk a short distance to the recently renovated Dolan Pond Conservation Area's Auburndale Avenue entrance. In this hidden treasure of Newton, we will traverse the accessible trails and boardwalk past vernal pools to the CPA acquired Forte' estate. This project will result in a 10% open space addition, the preservation of the 1925 homestead by the Newton Housing Authority, and the creation of two additional Habitat for Humanity housing units. We will return to the starting point via the Webster Park Historic District, containing many fine examples of 1840 Cottage style houses, and across the West Newton Common play field, which is to receive an irrigation system with CPA funds. Contact Ted Kuklinski (dolanpond@aol.com). Park on Cherry Street north of River Street.

\* Save the Farm

Angino Farm is the last remaining farm in Newton and the Newton Conservators put forth a proposal before the CPA Committee to save it. The project has been recommended by the CPA Committee and must go before aldermanic committees and the full board for approval this fall. Ultimately it was desired to save the property in its original farm usage. You can learn more about this project at the Conservators website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/linksfarming.htm> or at the site of the new Farm Group that has formed: <http://www.communityfarm.info/>. The group has been handing out information over the last several weeks at the Newton

Farmer's Market on Tuesdays at Cold Spring Park. Check their website for full information. An excerpt from their website is below:

"We are friends and community members who wish to preserve and work on Newton's last standing Farm. The Angino family farm is being offered to a group of concerned citizens who see the value of maintaining and working a community farm located on Nahanton Street. The Angino estate has entered in provisional agreement to work with the City of Newton, the Committee for Community Preservation, and local residents to see that Newton's last farm is preserved as protected productive open space.

Much like the Stearns <<http://www.stearnsfarmcsa.org/>> Farm in Framingham, MA, we envision a real working farm where community members can work together in Community Supported Agriculture <<http://www.communityfarm.info/csa.html>> to grow a self sustaining source of delicious produce in an eco-friendly farm where school groups and the community could participate in educational programs. We have been talking about inviting the community to buy shares where each family could both work on the farm and enjoy its harvest. We like to see a portion of this food going to local shelters and food pantries."

Many other local communities have such local farms many using the so called CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) model of operation where community members buy shares in the farm. One such nearby farm is the Stearns Farm in Framingham at <http://www.stearnsfarmCSA.org> <<http://www.stearnsfarmcsa.org/>> . To learn more about CSA's check out <http://www.stearnsfarmcsa.org/whatiscsa.htm>.

\* EcoAlert from American P.I.E. - Eat your veggies...grown organically -  
18 August, 2004

A strategy for reducing the environmental impact of our food consumption is to buy organically produced foods. The term organic is a familiar reference for foods produced without the use of manufactured fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, additives, or hormones. Growing numbers of people are choosing

organic products over those produced through conventional agriculture.

Environmentally speaking, here are some reasons why:

- Combined erosion from wind and water exceeds the staggering sum of six billion tons annually. Most conventional farmlands in the U.S. are operating with a mere six to nine inches of topsoil, one-third the amount present in the seventeenth century...Organic agriculture reduces soil erosion due to cover crops and low and no-till practices.

- While 20 percent of our country's land is used to grow crops, 40 percent is devoted to livestock grazing which diminishes the land's ability to support natural wildlife. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, household meat and poultry consumption alone is responsible for about a quarter of the threats to natural ecosystems and wildlife...Organic agriculture is less resource intensive than conventional agriculture.

- Scientists find that Bt corn varieties, bearing pollen containing BT toxin, constitute a threat to the monarch butterfly with possible consequences to other species and soil ecosystems...Organic agriculture respects natural habitats.

- Synthetic chemicals, pesticides and related man-made products, do not efficiently do the job they were created for. In fact, they contribute to the extinction of bird and wildlife species, the contamination of life in aquatic ecosystems, the widespread and often irreversible contamination of groundwater, and the growing resistance of insect, weed and fungus species...Organic agriculture vastly reduces water and air pollution.

There is a choice for the future of agriculture - what Michael Pollan refers to as America's second food chain: organic agriculture. With a 20-percent annual growth rate in the United States since 1989, organic farming - driven by consumer demand - could lead the way toward a healthier environment, improved human health, and...better tasting food.

Consumers sometimes complain about the cost of organics. The price premium is often over 10%, a differential which can be reduced as demand for organically grown food increases. Does your local market offer the choice of organic fruit and vegetables, dairy, meat and poultry products? If not, see the store manager and encourage availability.

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: . EcoAlert subscribe/unsubscribe at their website:

\* Nature Notes

Mosquitoes with the West Nile Virus have been detected recently near Cold Spring Park in Newton, the Mass. Dept. of Public Health announced yesterday. As a result, Health Commissioner David Naperstek is urging people to use extra precautions to avoid insect bites, especially when outdoors in wetland areas. See more details in today's Newton Tab:  
<http://www2.townonline.com/newton/localRegional/view.bg?articleid=88606>

Carol Stapleton of the Parks Department reports seeing an all white sparrow sized bird in the vicinity of Commonwealth Avenue and Exeter in Auburndale recently. Is it a cage bird escapee or some unusual vagrant or leucistic or albino variant? Any reports would be appreciated.

Last week in our garden, we were surprised to see a hummingbird feeding on some late flowers. Keep an eye out for migrating birds over the next several weeks - this is the peak time for southward migration. Speaking of hummingbirds, in July while looking at some flowers in the garden, there appeared to be what looked like a hummingbird in body shape, frequency of



wingbeats, feeding behavior, and even tail shape. Looking it up on the internet, it was a type of Sphinx Moth which does a remarkable imitation of a hummingbird - so much so that they are often called "hummingbird moths".

Over the last few summers, we have let a small patch of milkweed expand and this year it comprised some 60 or 70 plants. These are the only type of plants that Monarch Butterflies will use and it was delightful to see one this summer feeding on them. Alas, we could find no chrysalis this year - but there's always hope for next.

Have you seen the strange holes in the ground in your yard or park. We found a number of them at Wellington Park in West Newton. The holes are fairly big and bordered on one side by a significant area of dug dirt. Apparently these are dug by Cicada Killer Wasps (they kill Cicadas, not people!). These large colorful wasps sting adult Cicadas and bury them with a single wasp egg. The paralyzed cicada serves as food for the growing wasp grub. Find out more info at the What's That Bug website:  
<http://www.whatsthatbug.com/killerwasps.html>

Do you have some interesting sightings or nature experiences that you would like to share? Send them along for publication here.

\* NewTV debuts the "Environmental Program"

The Green Decade Coalition (GDC) and the Newton Conservators are pleased to announce their partnership on the production of a new Environmental Show on the NewTV Blue Channel. The Environmental Show will be broadcast five times a week. Check your listings. The first show in September is presented by the Green Decade Coalition, with host Beverly Droz, GDC President, and guest David DelPorto. The program will provide an overview of High Performance Building Technology as it relates to the construction or renovation of Newton North High School. In October, the Newton Conservators produced show will highlight the topic of Community Supported Agriculture and the

Angino farm, the acquisition of which was recently recommended by the Community Preservation Committee. The Conservators next show in December will focus on Cold Spring Park.

Both organizations are dedicated to highlighting issues important to Newton residents. Learn more about our parks and open spaces, even the secret ones, with the Newton Conservators, and learn to think globally and act locally with the Green Decade Coalition.

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 normally be highlighting a different one of our open spaces. If you are interested, please reply to this email and we will forward your info. To find out more about NewTV visit their website at <http://www.newtv.org/>. They have a great selection of courses in all aspects of video production and editing.

\* Other Events and Programs

Sunday, October 3rd, 2 pm - Lost Pond Nature Hike

Join local resident Marian Lazar and the Friends of Lost Pond to explore the varied habitats, and social and natural history that make the Lost Pond Sanctuary in Brookline so interesting. Meet at the Arlington Rd. entrance (off of Heath St.) in South Brookline.

Sunday, October 3rd from 10 - 5 - Festival in Larz Anderson Park-

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance is looking for volunteers to help staff our table and to provide extra volunteer support for Festival in the Park. This annual event takes place at the Larz Anderson Park behind the Transportation

Museum and features over 60 juried crafters selling ceramics, glass, carvings, photography & textiles; Arts and community groups providing information, demonstrations and activities; and fun for the kids - pony rides, face-painting, balloons and more. There is continuous live entertainment with diverse styles of music and dancing and a variety of foods is available throughout the day. The event is sponsored by the Brookline Council for the Arts and Humanities in cooperation with Brookline GreenSpace Alliance. If you can help us out it would be much appreciated!

Restoring the Urban Environment - a course for watershed citizens -

Six Mondays from October 4th - November 13th, 6:30 pm

By 2010 more than half of the world's population will live in cities, making us an urban species for the first time in history. This fall, join the Charles River Watershed and the Arnold Arboretum for a six-week adult education course to explore the world where most of us spend our time. The course will focus on urban environmental restoration, explored in the context of the Charles River and its watershed, and the Arboretum, a 265 acre living collection of trees, shrubs and vines. Classes meet on Monday from 6:30 - 8:30 PM in the Hunnewell Building at the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain. \$170- for CRWA members, \$200 non members. Call the Charles River Watershed Association at 781-788-0007 for more information. Registration ends September 24th

\* 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 at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/>

<http://www.newtonconservators.org> 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 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 at [www.NewtonConservators.org](http://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](mailto: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 at <<http://www.newtonconservators.org/naturenotes.htm>>

<http://www.newtonconservators.org/naturenotes.htm>. 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.