



Newton's Land Trust



Newton Parks and
Conservation Lands

Nearby Parks

Walks

Land Protection

News

Events

Grants

About Us

Membership

Support Our Work

Donate

Guides and Books

Newsletter

Artists Look at Nature

Links

Search this Site

Contact Us

Follow Us  

Current Nature Notes

Newton Conservators Nature Notes - October 2, 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/> <http://www.newtonconservators.org>. Welcome to many new readers of this free email newsletter. If you wish to be removed from this email list, simply reply with "remove" in the message or subject.

In this issue:

* Newton Conservators Fall Walk Series – 2004

* Report on Newton Conservators Fall 2004 Lecture

* Turning a leaf - EcoAlert from American P.I.E

* Grants

* Nature Notes

* Other Events and Programs

* Save the Farm

* NewTV debuts the “Environmental Program”

* About the Newton Conservators

* Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands

* About Newton Conservators Nature Notes

Newton Conservators Fall Walk Series – 2004

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 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. Find the current walk schedule online at

<<http://www.newtonconservators.org/walks04fall.htm>>

<http://www.newtonconservators.org/walks04fall.htm>. When the weather is questionable, check with the designated walk leader.

One person we ran into recently was using the Conservators trail guide in an interesting manner. He had the admirable goal of visiting all 27 of the areas detailed in the Trail Guide. It's kind of like the folks who climb all the 4000 foot peaks up in the White Mountains – only a lot easier and it takes a lot less gas. To help you get started, check out the following guided walks!

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. This loop includes parts of Walks 23, 24, 25, and 26 in the Conservators Trail 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 (formerly MDC) 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. See Walk 1 in the Conservators Trail Guide.

Sunday, October 24, 2 pm, 1.5 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 (Walk 4 in the guide). 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.

* Report on Newton Conservators Fall 2004 Lecture

Our recent Fall Lecture at the Library was held on September 22 featuring Watertown photographer and naturalist Carole Smith Berney in a presentation titled Celebrating the Charles River. She gave those present 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. 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 discussed 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.

This was an outstanding and timely lecture. Carole has done most of her photography in the section of the Charles above Watertown Square to about Cheesecake Brook. She incorporated a some of MDC planner, Dan Driscoll's, before and after shots but mostly it was a wonderful tour of flora and fauna she photographed with much patience. Thanks to Beth Purcell of the Newton Free Library for her help in arranging the lecture. It was our first lecture utilizing the library's new digital projector in combination with traditional slides. The lecture was very timely in highlighting the wonderful Charles River Pathway and MDC visionary Dan Driscoll, which was featured so well in last Sunday's Boston Globe West Section (9/26/04, Going with the Flow, Key Planner Draws on Love of Nature).

If you missed attending, you may eventually get a chance to see the lecture on NewTV. Duane Hillis and Frank Howard of the Conservators NewTV team arrived early to do our first ever NewTV taping of a lecture with two cameras and even a special mike setup to record audience members' questions. This could be the basis for a special show on the lecture (ala Green Decade lecture series) or as material in the new Wild Newton Environmental series.

Inspired by her many walks on the MDC Charles River Upper Greenway Path in Watertown and Newton, Carole Smithe Berney 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. She has notecards and some framed prints based on her outstanding photographs. If you are interested in having these or having her give a presentation, please contact Carole at 91 Standish Rd, Watertown, MA 02472.

* Turning a leaf - EcoAlert from American P.I.E. (9/1/04)

Deep tree roots do a fine job of retrieving trace elements deep in the subsoil; for deciduous trees, the roots then give these minerals to the leaves for temporary storage. At season's end, leaves are returned to the soil but not before enabling brilliant foliage which will soon spread across much of the United States.

American PIE urges people to learn to appreciate leaves for their nutritive qualities as well as for their aesthetic ones. Well over half of solid waste is organic material suitable for composting, and ten percent is leaves and lawn clippings from our gardens. During the autumn season, bags of leaves are needlessly making their way to local landfills and incinerators, representing one of the worst kinds of conspicuous waste.

As nature's colorful gifts fall to the ground, consider turning leaves into a long-term investment for your property - and the health of the environment. Leaves can be turned to mulch, a valuable asset for the home landscape and gardens. Mulch helps control weeds, enables soil to hold onto valuable nutrients, permits plant roots to penetrate deeper and conserves moisture in soil by thwarting the effects of rain and snow. Using mulch also protects soil from erosion and runoff caused by heavy rain.

In the winter, the combined effects of freezing, thawing and refreezing can disturb the soil in a garden. This same process can damage plants and shrubs. A layer of mulch over the soil acts as an insulator and reduces the danger to plants from the freeze-thaw cycle. While decomposing, mulch releases beneficial plant nutrients and improves the soil's composition. Leaves - turned to mulch - accomplish this at no financial cost to homeowners.

Turning leaves to mulch works best when they are ground up or permitted to partially rot. Decayed leaves are called leaf mold. The chemical makeup of leaf mold is the closest thing in nature to pure humus. Leaves, unless chopped up, tend to decompose quite slowly. If collected annually, however, a huge pile of leaves becomes a rich and continuing source of mulch for distribution on gardens, shrubs and trees, even for top-dressing lawns. Simply dig to the bottom of the leaf pile where decomposition has done its job. Oak or beech leaves, if used exclusively, will make a slightly acidic mulch, good for broad leaf evergreens and blueberries. If you choose not to use leaves for mulch this fall, consider adding them to the compost heap.

Mixed with other ingredients, leaves will decompose more quickly and build your inventory of compost.

This fall, turn a leaf to good use in your landscape.

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: <http://>,

* Grants

Applications for FY 2005 CPA (Community Preservation Act Funds are due on October 15, 2004. <http://www.newtonma.gov/Planning/CPAC/index.htm>

The Newton Conservators provides grants to Newton's schools, educational institutions, groups, and institutions for the purpose of fostering its mission <<http://www.newtonconservators.org/aboutus.htm>> . The grants are generally modest in size; requests of between \$250 and \$750 may receive priority, although smaller and larger grants will be given full consideration. They can be made for a single event, a longer-term project, or for multiple year funding. The upcoming deadline for grant applications is October 31. See details on this program at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/grants.htm>.

The Massachusetts Environmental Trust has an Unrestricted General Grants Program. Visit www.massenvironmentaltrust.org for more details. Their deadline for applications is November 1. Detailed grant information can be found at <http://www.agmconnect.org/massenvironmentaltrust/images/FY04-06%20Unrestricted%20RFR.pdf>

* 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. 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 <http://www.newtonma.gov/Health/wnv-092004.pdf> for details. A West Nile Virus Public Health Fact Sheet is available at <http://www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/factsheets/fswnv.doc>.

The white bird reported recently by Parks & Rec Commissioner Fran Towle and Carol Stapleton near Commonwealth Ave and Exeter in Auburndale has apparently been around since last March according to a neighborhood resident. It may be an albino House Sparrow and is often seen with other house sparrows on lawns and around shrubbery near that intersection. It is certainly an interesting sight to behold.

Ian Reid, reported that last Saturday (about 9am), he saw a 1st-year mourning warbler at Dolan Pond. It was just by the east side of the boardwalk at Banana Pond, hopping around low in the bushes and on the ground.

Cris Criscitiello reports that there were good numbers of sparrows last weekend at Nahanton Park near the gardens with swamp, Lincoln's, song, chipping, and savannah sparrows in evidence.

One phenomenon that I have noticed is never having seen a chipmunk on the northern side of the city (say, north of the Mass Pike). They are commonly seen on the south side. Can anyone contradict this observation?

Early last July, I was very surprised to find fireflies (most likely Pennsylvania Fireflies – black and red) present at Dolan Pond Conservation Area (near Banana Pond). Coming from Philadelphia where they were a common phenomenon on any lawn (even in the city), it was surprising not to have seen them in Newton. Are there any other places in Newton where they may exist? Or do we use too much pesticide on our lawns here in Newton?

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

* 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.

Monday, October 4, 7:30 pm, Ecological and Human Health:

Communicating the Importance of Greenspace to the Health of Your Community with Betsy Stubblefield, ScM, Associate Director, Urban Ecology Institute –

The importance of greenspace to the health of the community is not a new idea; community builders such as Frederick Law Olmsted manifested this idea decades ago in his numerous city parks that are now central features in cities like San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. However,

public health researchers, environmentalists and community activists have only recently begun to investigate the pathways through which urban greenspaces directly and indirectly impact human health. In this presentation we will explore the ways that greenspace impacts known environmental health issues, and learn how to communicate new ideas on how greenspace builds social cohesion and lowers overall morbidity and mortality in a community. This event will take place in the Community Room of the Public Safety Building, 350 Washington St. in Brookline Village, across from the public library and is sponsored by Brookline GreenSpace Alliance.

Wild Weston, Wellesley, & Waltham Walks

There are groups in other neighboring towns that also sponsor walks and open space related events. Among these are the Weston Trails and Forest Association, <http://www.westonforesttrail.org/calendar/>, the Wellesley Trails Committee, <http://www.ci.wellesley.ma.us/nrc/trails/walk.htm> and the Waltham Land Trust, <http://www.walthamlandtrust.org/calendar.html>. Please check out their websites for more info to help you get into the local outdoors.

* 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 Farm <<http://www.stearnsfarmcsa.org/>> 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>

* NewTV debuts the “Environmental Program”

The Green Decade Coalition (<http://greendecade.org>) and the Newton Conservators are joining forces 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 was presented by the Green Decade Coalition, with host Beverly Droz, GDC President, and guest David DelPorto. The program provides 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. 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. The Conservators are especially interested in folks who may have experience in video editing, in particular with Final Cut Pro.

* 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 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 at <<http://www.newtonconservators.org/naturenotes.htm>>
<http://www.newtonconservators.org/naturenotes.htm>. You are welcome to submit any items for this sporadic 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.

[Send us an email](#)

[Top of Page](#)

Copyright © 2003-2018 Newton Conservators, Inc.