

# Newton Conservators Nature Notes

*Sunday, November 5, 2006*

Greetings! This email newsletter provides information on upcoming nature and environmental related events, exhibits, and information in and around the Newton, Massachusetts area. Have you ever taken a swim in **Crystal Lake**, enjoyed a walk along its shores, or paddled its waters? There is an important Community meeting on **Monday evening (Nov. 6, 6:30 pm)** at the Newton Free Library concerning recent developments at Crystal Lake. You are urged to attend! Read all about it in this issue. And don't forget to vote on Tuesday, November 7!

This newsletter is sponsored by the Newton Conservators, the local open space organization in Newton and it also serves as the organization's means of sending out time sensitive information. Welcome to the 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. (Note: email addresses mentioned in this newsletter substitute (AT) for @ to foil spammers).

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## Crystal Lake Community Meeting Monday, November 6, 6:30 pm Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library

Newton has one "Great Pond". Crystal Lake, located in the heart of the City, is a tranquil and inspiring presence for the surrounding neighborhoods and provides both passive and active recreation for the entire community.

A Crystal Lake community meeting has been scheduled for Monday, November 6, at 6:30 p.m. in the Druker Auditorium, Newton Free Library to discuss the current site conditions and "future needs and possibilities" for Crystal Lake, including the possible acquisition of the abutting property at 20 Rogers Street. The meeting is being called by the city and the official contact is the mayoral spokesperson, Jeremy Solomon (617-796-1100).

Recently, the City of Newton was presented with a unique opportunity to expand public access to Crystal Lake. The Hannon family, which owns the property at 20 Rogers Street which is adjacent to the current Crystal Lake swimming area and bathhouse, has recently decided to relocate to Maine and has given the city the first option to purchase the property. A figure of \$4.5M has been mentioned and the city had a deadline to send a letter to express interest. The Parks and Recreation Commission, in earlier meetings, took the position that the property was worth acquiring if possible. The mayor's office currently has the ball in terms of negotiating with Mr. Hannon.

It is anticipated that, if a purchase were done, it would occur with Newton's CPA (Community Preservation Act) funds (derived from a 1% property tax surcharge and matched by state funds). Such an acquisition should be clearly an appropriate use of such funds which can be used for open space, recreation, historic preservation, or community housing purposes. Any CPA acquisition is subject to thorough review by the CPC, Aldermanic committees, and the full Board of Aldermen

The relationship between property owner, Pat Hannon, and the city has been a contentious one over the last several years. The decision by the owner came about quite surprisingly and was reported early last month first by Connie Paige in *Globe West* ( [https://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2006/10/15/owner\\_tires\\_of\\_lake\\_dispute/](https://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2006/10/15/owner_tires_of_lake_dispute/) ) and then also by Christopher Loh in the *Newton Tab* . There had been disagreements about many varied issues at Crystal Lake - who and where people can swim, snowmobiling on the lake, the maintenance of the wall at the beach area, water quality and the use of the aerator, dock, parking lot runoff, etc.

Year-round public access at Crystal Lake is confined to two locations: Cronin's Cove at the East side of the Lake in Newton Centre, and Louise Levingston Cove at the west in the village of Newton Highlands. Cronin's Cove, in summer, has a small dock where canoes and kayaks can be launched. Levingston Cove was renovated a few years ago with new benches and an accessible path.

In addition to these, there is a single public swimming facility at the south-west "corner" of the Lake, adjacent to the MBTA Green Line right-of-way. This area, which had once served also boating and skating recreation, now remains open for swimming use approximately three months in the summer, but is otherwise dormant for the balance of the year.

The city's property at 16 Rogers Street, known as the Gil Champagne Bathhouse and swimming area, is owned by the City of Newton and is administered and maintained by the Parks & Recreation Department. The upper part of the site is almost entirely paved over, and slopes rather steeply from Rogers Street to the lake. The upper half is occupied by parking for autos, bikes, and park vehicles. The remainder is occupied by a combination of structures that comprise the Gil Champagne Bathhouse, and a small sandy 'beach' area. Beneficial though it is to have a public swimming facility at the lake, it would be fair to admit that this venue is far from ideal in size, configuration, topography, access, capacity, and physical condition.

Crystal Lake is covered in the Newton Conservators open space guide (<http://www.newtonconservators.org/11crystal.htm>) and it is described on the website as follows:

*People come here to swim, fish, and boat. The bathhouse is open during the summer. Shoreline path and sidewalks allow for walks along three sides of the lake. Because Crystal Lake is a "great pond" (a pond that's larger than ten acres), it is state owned. Crystal Lake has had several names. Its colonial name was Wiswall's Pond. The lake was used for ice harvesting in the 19th century, as was Bullough's Pond and Chandler Pond. Ice dealers who sold the ice for refrigeration renamed it Crystal Lake to sound appealing to customers.*

*In 1863, the seawall and gas lights at Cronin's Cove were erected. In the 1880's the lake was named Baptist Pond because First Baptist Church of Newton used the lake for baptisms. Two small parcels were acquired, one donated by Moses and Emeline Crane. In 2006, The Newton Parks and Recreation Commission voted to recommend that the city use [CPA funds](#) to acquire the property at [20 Rogers Street](#) to expand the Crystal Lake swimming area.*

An organization, called Better Lake, had been formed by architect Robert Fizek. They have a website at <http://www.betterlake.com> where the group takes the position:

*Crystal Lake is an incredible resource to all Newton residents, and we, a group of concerned citizens need to come together to keep Crystal Lake open, safe, and seek to secure and improve this precious Community asset for the future. This page is a source of information about how you can get involved. Let the Mayor, and The Board of Aldermen know how you feel! Join us!*

The group has an online petition <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/betterlake/> which calls for "the City of Newton to apply all possible means to acquire the adjacent (uninhabited) property at 20 Rogers Street- to restrict further private development, and to secure it for the perpetual protection, use, and enjoyment of the Citizens of Newton as the first step toward a truly viable and renewed Crystal Lake swimming facility and park.

In some material from the the Better Lake group, they point out the following constraints of the existing city bathhouse site:

- Open space and beach areas are far from adequate for comfortable circulation and provide minimal areas for passive recreation uses.
- Site topography makes handicapped and impaired persons' access to the facility difficult for both vehicles and users independently coming to the facility.
- Parking is inefficiently configured, and exceeds the recommended minimum cross-slope for automobile parking areas.
- The excessively sloping topography causes storm water runoff from the parking lot to rush unchecked toward (and into) the bathhouse building at the front and side doors.
- The site is susceptible to erosion wherever not paved to resist it, and washes beach sand into the Lake.
- Parking lot water flows to the lake side without filtration.
- There is practically no natural vegetation on the site.

The property at 20 Rogers Street has a land area of almost 45,000 SF, and has been unoccupied for four years. Currently there is a small garage, and an uninhabitable house facing Rogers Street. A single width driveway enters from the street near the intersection with Lake Avenue, and continues behind the house to the garage. The remainder of the site is a gently sloping grassy yard with many mature trees and shrubs

Some of the goals of this acquisition outlined by the "Better Lake" group are:

- Maximize recreational opportunities for all ages
- Improve accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists
- Protect the site from private development and destruction of existing mature trees- many of which already provide shade and visual 'enclosure' of the swimming area
- Provide the area needed for a future reconfiguration and renovation of the facility that would resolve drainage, access, and parking problems
- Decrease crowding and illegal usage of other waterside parks by providing a more inviting and accommodating park and swimming venue at this location
- Help make the site more flexible for special activities and events
- Provide more seating throughout the park

Mr. Fizek has come up with a concept plan for what a new Crystal Lake swimming area might look like if the adjacent property were acquired which can be seen on their website: <http://betterlake.com/fizekplan.jpg>. He had also spoken before the Newton Conservators Board in September and the board had voted to support the efforts of the Parks and Recreation Commission in regard to acquiring the property.

If you have any interest at all in this opportunity for improvement at Crystal Lake, please attend the meeting at the Newton Free Library at 6:30 pm (the Druker Auditorium is just inside the door from the parking area to the left). It is a truism but city officials are more prone to act if they realize that there are citizens who care!

In the interest of getting additional views out on this topic we include this written piece received yesterday from Alderman Ken Parker in relation to the Crystal Lake opportunity:

## **Newton Should Acquire Crystal Lake Beachfront Property**

*by Alderman Ken Parker*

## **Introduction**

*Newton currently has an opportunity to acquire a large piece of beachfront property on Crystal Lake, right next to the public swimming area on Roger St. But if we must act quickly or the property will be sold on the private market. Newton residents who want to support this effort should come to a public meeting at the Newton Free Library Druker Auditorium on Monday, November 6 at 6:30 PM.*

## **Background**

*A little more than two years ago, my parents asked me whether the City could buy the uninhabited house next to the public swimming area Crystal Lake. They had noticed the empty house on a walk that afternoon and suggested that it might be a great use of Community Preservation Act funds. Coincidentally, another Newton resident, Robert Fizek, called me with a similar suggestion within a matter of days.*

*As the lead sponsor of the proposal to bring the Community Preservation Act to Newton, I was excited by this chance to acquire a property that would serve both as an open space preservation and a recreational use of CPA funds. . . and that would benefit many Newton residents directly.*

*I immediately contacted my Ward 6 Colleagues on the Board of Aldermen, George Mansfield and Vicki Danberg, who agreed that acquiring this property would be a great use of CPA funds. We then began a series of meetings to discuss the possibility of acquiring the property. We wanted to learn whether CPA funds could be used to make an offer to the property's owner and whether other City officials were interested in pursuing the possibility. We met with then-Chief Administrative Officer Mike Rourke and with City Solicitor Dan Funk.*

*We learned that we were faced with a chicken-and-egg problem: it would be hard to get a CPA appropriation to make an offer without an expressed willingness on the part of the property's owner to sell the parcel, but we were unlikely to get such a declaration of willingness to sell without being able to demonstrate a credible way to pay for the property. Also, the property's owner was involved in disputes with the Administration on a number of other issues, making it difficult to reach out to him.*

*This problem was finally addressed with the help of Alderman Paul Coletti, who bridged the communication gap and provided City officials with information on the willingness of the property's owner to sell the parcel. In fact, not only was he willing to sell, but he would be willing to offer an exclusive negotiating period if the City would send him a letter of interest within two weeks. That letter was sent on October 23 (well within the two-week time frame).*

*Meanwhile, Mr. Fizek took the initiative to organize a grass-roots effort in support of the City acquiring the parcel. His group has posted extensive information on the subject at their web site, <http://www.betterlake.com>.*

## **Current Status**

*Now that the City has expressed interest in acquiring the property, both the property's owner and the City need to have appraisals of the property done, so that a purchase price may be determined. The City is currently working on a plan to fund its appraisal. The Mayor has asked the Community Preservation Committee to fund the appraisal out of its administrative budget, but there has been some resistance to that idea. It would be ideal if one or more private groups, such as the Newton Conservators, would step up and offer the funding. There are many precedents for such public-private partnerships, including the acquisition of Angino Farm, for which the appraisals were paid for by the Conservators.*

*All of the issues and challenges associated with the potential acquisition of this property will be discussed at Monday's public meeting. I hope to see you at the Newton Library on Monday, November 6 at 6:30 PM. Please email me at [ken\(AT\)kenparker.org](mailto:ken(AT)kenparker.org) if you would like to discuss this issue. Hopefully, we will be able to make use of CPA funds to expand the public beach at Crystal Lake and to create a beautiful new park on the water.*

## **Newton Conservators Fall Lecture Invasive Alien Plant Update - A Newton Perspective A Lecture / Slideshow with Naturalist Peter Alden Thursday, November 30, 2006, 7 pm, Newton Free Library**

The City of Newton is under attack from alien invaders. They have come from far away and are taking over our back yards, parks, and conservation areas. Slowly and quietly they are creeping into our public open spaces, disrupting the natural balance of nature and crowding out our native plants. Some of them, like purple loosestrife, are quite pretty but take over our wetlands; others like Japanese knotweed grow tall extremely fast while spreading farther afield underground; still others are even sold at garden stores to unsuspecting customers.

Well known author, lecturer and naturalist Peter Alden, from Concord, MA, will present a lecture and slideshow with a stunning display of the twenty worst invasive alien plants in the Newton area. You will come away from the presentation with the knowledge of how to recognize these plants and what some of the control options are. You will find out what is happening at the state level and in the legislature in how to deal with severe menace to our city's biodiversity. The lecturer will also conduct an instant village by village poll of attendees to try to assess where in Newton these invasives pose the most threat. He has in preparation a new "Field Guide to the Invasive Plants of New England and the Northeast".

Peter Alden, was the inaugural speaker in Conservators lecture series (now celebrating its 5th anniversary). Alden, a renowned birder and entertaining and informative speaker, has led over 250 ecotours to over a hundred countries on all seven continents and lectured all over the world for travel and museum organizations. In his work for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, he

spearheaded the first ever statewide Biodiversity Days, in which citizen naturalists in over 80 Massachusetts towns went out into the field to do a species census. This provided a valuable and interesting snapshot of common and unusual species present both here in Newton and across the state of Massachusetts.

He is the author of over a dozen nature field guides including the groundbreaking "[National Audubon Society Field Guide to New England](#)" (Knopf, 1998). This book is an easy to use field guide for identifying 1,000 of our region's wildflowers, trees, mushrooms, mosses, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, butterflies, mammals and much more. Other regional field guides in the series cover California, Florida, the Mid-Atlantic States, the Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain States, and the Southwestern States. For younger naturalists, along with Roger Tory Peterson, he produced the Peterson First Guide to Mammals of North America and coloring books for both birds and mammals. Other of his books include "The National Audubon Society Field Guide to African Wildlife" (1995) and "Finding Birds Around the World" (1982). Signed copies of his field guide will be available before and after the lecture.

This free Newton Conservators Lecture Series event, cosponsored by the Newton Free Library, takes place on Thursday, November 30, 7 pm, at the Druker Auditorium at the Newton Free Library. For more information, contact Ted Kuklinski, [dolanpond\(AT\)aol.com](mailto:dolanpond(AT)aol.com), or visit [www.newtonconservators.org/lectures.htm](http://www.newtonconservators.org/lectures.htm).

## News from Newton Angino Community Farm

We pass along some news from Newton Angino Community Farm (NACF) concerning some of the happenings and progress at the farm. Visit the farm's website at [www.newtoncommunityfarm.org](http://www.newtoncommunityfarm.org) for more information.

The Newton Angino Community Farm Harvest Festival was held on a gorgeous fall afternoon on Sunday, Oct. 22 with about 300 folks in attendance. Check out the very nice article in the Newton Tab about the farm and the Harvest Festival by Candy Koslow, "Angino Farm springs to life," Newton Tab, Wednesday, October 25

Donations to the Farm -- There is a need to raise the funds needed to insure that the farm will live up to its full potential. For example, we need to raise funds for a part-time educator to join our staff so that we can expand our educational offerings. Most exciting, we need to raise funds to stabilize and then transform the historic barn into a community center where programs on environmental issues— both global and local, will be run year-round for people of all ages. Programs might range from sessions on global warming to sessions on how to garden with native plants, compost, or install a home solar hot water heater. We also envision a summer camp and a variety of other children's programming. In our vision, the building itself will model sustainable practices, from solar panels to a composting toilet while maintaining its historic character. We hope to partner with the Conservators, Green Decade, the City, and others, on this long-term goal of making major capital improvements to the barn. Donations to the farm are greatly appreciated (and are now tax-deductible!). Please make checks payable to Newton Community Farm and send them to NCF, 303 Nahanton Street, Newton, MA 02459. -- *Jon Regosin*

The regular monthly meeting of the Newton Farm Commission (the city commission overseeing the farm) is held on the first Thursday of the month beginning at 7:00 p.m. in Room 209 unless otherwise noted. Additional meetings may be held as necessary throughout the year.

### News from Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager

***I am writing this month with a mixture of excitement and sadness: excitement at having made it through this first season and sadness that things are coming to an end for the year. This year has been full of challenges at the farm, but I have thoroughly enjoyed myself and I hope that all of you have enjoyed your time here as well.***

***I would like to conclude my series on our produce by talking a bit about what we grow. I would like to address two issues: 1) the types of vegetables I grow; and 2) the particular varieties I grow. When making my crop plan I try to balance a number of factors. I want to have a range of vegetables available spring, summer, and fall. So I need to pick things that grow well in each of these seasons. I want to grow the vegetables I think people will want (though this requires an ongoing process of farmer education about local preferences). I want to balance this with a desire to introduce people to new vegetables. And finally, sometimes I just want to grow something because I am fascinated by it or think it is too beautiful not to have on the farm. Coordinating all these factors into a list of vegetables people will want to eat is part of what makes winter fun for farmers!***

***The issue of varieties is probably even more central to why our produce does not always look like what you are used to seeing in the grocery stores. Most of the varieties sold in groceries stores were selected because they produce uniform shapes and colors; they are tough and can handle the abuse encountered in 1,500 miles of transporting; and they can be picked very underripe (since it takes a week or two to get them that 1,500 miles). I do not have these limitations. I typically pick my produce a day or two before I***

*sell it, and it travels less than 5 miles. Thus, in the deep dark months of winter, I can make my selections based on taste, texture, beauty. I pick varieties that I hope are going to make you love vegetables. Sometimes this means your tomatoes might be ugly, or your eggplant is not the shape and color you are used to. But my hope and belief is that it also means that you will be treated to a sensory and culinary extravaganza all season long. Bon appetit.*

**Greg Maslowe**

[newtoncommunityfarm\(AT\)comcast.net](mailto:newtoncommunityfarm(AT)comcast.net)

Greg also passes on this note about the remaining produce for sale at the Farm:

*Just wanted to let you know that we still have some produce for sale at the farm stand. The stand is open Tuesdays from 3-6, and Friday and Saturday mornings from 10-1. And if you happen to be driving by at some other time, you can stop in and see if we have anything. So, what do we still have? Here's a list: Broccoli and cauliflower (lots of Broccoli, not much cauliflower), Kale and collards, Spinach, Chard (not too much, the deer have been munching like crazy!), Beets, Carrots, Onions, Broccoli Raab, Shelling beans, Potatoes, Winter squash, Pie pumpkins.*

## November's Environmental Show

**It's Time to Insulate Your Home with Help From the Kyoto Project!**

The November Environmental Show will be of interest to anyone owning a charming but drafty older home. Host Beverly Droz welcomes Green Decade Kyoto Project Committee Chair Paul Eldrenkamp, committee members Fred Gordon and Michele Davis. The purpose of the Kyoto Project is to inspire people to insulate their homes, help them save money and receive rebates when they do so, and finally to provide quality control of the insulation project to make sure it will save you the most energy. Those who participate in the project will receive a blower door and infrared camera test at a substantial discount (tests are done after the insulation work is complete and these tests unveil any gaps in the insulation job). The Kyoto Coordinator, Michele Davis, will help you through any/all of the steps!

**Be sure to catch this episode of the Environmental Show running repeatedly through the month of November. This educational show is a volunteer partnership between the Green Decade and the [Newton Conservators](#) with each organization presenting on alternate months. Learn to think globally and act locally with the Green Decade Coalition and learn more about your parks with the Conservators!** The Environmental Show is broadcast on the [NewTV Blue](#) channel (Comcast Chan. 10, RCN Chan. 15): Mondays 3:00 p.m., Tuesdays 1:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m., Wednesdays 11:30 a.m., Thursdays: 12:00, 4:00 and 7:30 p.m., Saturdays: 10:00 a.m. More information about the November program is available at <https://greennewton.org>.

## Events of Interest

**Mark your calendar for the Charles River Watershed Association's (CRWA) Annual Meeting on November 15, 2006, from 5:30-9:30pm at the Newton Marriott Hotel.** Popular speaker and environmental author Bill McKibben is the featured speaker at this year's Annual Meeting. In 1989 McKibben published *The End of Nature*, regarded as the first book for a general audience about climate change, which has been printed in more than 20 languages and serialized in the *New Yorker*. In his most recent book, *Wandering Home*, McKibben offers insights about the environment while he describes the changing demography and economic base in rural America. This summer, McKibben helped lead a five-day walk across Vermont to demand action on global warming, one of the largest demonstrations on climate change to date in the U.S. **The first fifty people to make a reservation will receive a free copy of McKibben's book, *Wandering Home*, so reserve you space early by contacting Kevin Hudson at [khudson\(AT\)crwa.org](mailto:khudson(AT)crwa.org) or calling 781-788-0007 x231.** The CRWA looks forward to celebrating the accomplishments and future strategies of CRWA and honoring dedicated volunteers and important civic leaders.

**Emerald Necklace Conservancy's 2006 Annual Meeting - Wednesday, November 15th, 6:00 - 8:00 PM Annual Meeting & Cocktail Reception), Longwood Towers, Ballroom, Brookline (across from Longwood MBTA stop and The Riverway, Emerald Necklace).** The guest speaker will be Peter Harnik, Director, Center for City Park Excellence, Trust for Public Land (Washington, DC) who will talk about his latest study on the importance of parks/greenspace, especially in urban environments, and his findings from across the nation. His speech is titled, *"From the Necklace to the Neighborhoods: How Much Value Does Boston Get from its Parks."*

**November 15, 6 PM - Writing the Life of Jane Goodall - Harvard Museum of Natural History.** Lecture and book signing by Dale Peterson. Jane Goodall is world-renowned for breaking the code that defines the personal and social world of humankind's closest living relatives - chimpanzees. Dale Peterson, author of the first full biography of Dr. Jane Goodall (*Jane Goodall: The Woman Who Redefined Man*), will speak about the world's most famous woman scientist--and of the special pleasures and perils of writing the life of a living person whose accomplishments are far from over.

**America's Greatest 19th-Century Landfill Project - Thursday, November 16, 7:30 pm.**

Free. Newton History Museum. The filling of Boston's Back Bay during the last half of the 19th century remains the largest residential and commercial landfill project ever carried out in the United States. Authors William A. Newman and Wilfred E. Holton reveal the geology, personalities, and politics involved in dumping millions of tons of sand and gravel into a former tidal marsh. If you didn't come

on our Needham St. walk (or even if you did), come find out what all this has to do with Newton! Copies of the book will be available for sale and signing by the authors.

**East Parish Burying Ground Community Cleanup - Saturday, November 18, 9 am to noon.** At Cotton and Centre Sts. Help this historic landscape look cared-for and welcoming. Park on Cotton St. Bring gloves and a rake, and wear clothes appropriate for weeding, raking, and sweeping.

**Hall's Pond Fall Community Work Day Sunday - November 19, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm,** Please join the Friends of Hall's Pond for their annual Fall Community Work Day, co-sponsored by the Brookline Conservation Commission. Volunteers can help remove trash, leaves, and invasive plants, and by preparing the formal garden for the winter. Gloves, tools, supplies, and refreshments are provided. For more information, please contact the Brookline Conservation Commission at 617-730-2088.

Mass Highway and Chestnut Hill Village Alliance present **Landscaping Plans for Route 9.**

**Wednesday, November 29, 7 pm,** Municipal Service Center, 870 Hammond Street

Join members of the Chestnut Hill Village Alliance and representatives of Mass. Highway Operations for a presentation of preliminary concepts for landscape designs to improve Chestnut Hill Village along Route 9 from Hammond Street to Hammond Pond Parkway. There will also be an update on developments along Route 9 and Hammond Pond Parkway.

**December 6, 6 pm - Friend or Foe? The Complex Relationships of Caterpillars and Ants. Lecture by Naomi Pierce - Harvard Museum of Natural History. (In conjunction with the HMNH's new exhibition, Arthropods: Creatures that Rule.)** Ants are famous for their sociality, building elaborate nests and exhibiting complex behaviors in caring for and defending their colonies. But why would some ants become caretakers to larvae of certain butterfly species? Naomi Pierce, Hessel Professor of Biology and Curator of Lepidoptera at Harvard, will examine the fascinating symbiosis between ants and blue butterflies -- a dynamic that reveals valuable information about evolution, biodiversity and conservation of endangered species. She will describe how this work has recently led to an exciting reevaluation of a hypothesis proposed by a previous curator of Lepidoptera at Harvard, Vladimir Nabokov. Those interested in the avian world in Newton should mark their calendars for Sunday, December 17th to participate in the 107th annual Christmas Bird Count sponsored by the [National Audubon Society](#) and the [Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology](#). The Christmas Bird Count is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society. It is an early-winter bird census, where volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally—all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day. All individual CBC's are conducted in the period from 14 December to 5 January (inclusive dates) each season, and each count is conducted in one calendar day. Thirty-four count circles are located entirely or partly within Massachusetts. For more information and to see last year's results, visit the Audubon website <http://www.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>. Locally in Newton, the count is coordinated by Cris Criscitiello. Please reply to this email if you are interested in participating in the Newton count. Watch for further info in the next issue.

#### Notes of Interest

The Newton History Museum at The Jackson Homestead (527 Washington Street) always has interesting programs. As part of their community commitment, they are happy to send you this listing of program highlights, events, and invitations each month. You may register for programs by telephone at 617-796-1450. For more details about any of our programs, please visit our website at [www.newtonhistorymuseum.org](http://www.newtonhistorymuseum.org).

You can visit the Mass Wildlife website at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/land-use-habitats/>.

Subscribe to MassWildlife News, a free electronic monthly newsletter updating you on research, events, new laws and other agency activities. All you need to do is send an email to: [Join-MassWildlife.news\(AT\)listserv.state.ma.us](mailto:Join-MassWildlife.news(AT)listserv.state.ma.us)

Check out Nature Events in nearby communities and organizations by checking out the Links page of the Newton Conservators website at <http://www.newtonconservators.org/links.htm>.

Check out Brookline at <http://www.brooklinegreenspace.org/>, Weston at

<http://www.westonforesttrail.org/>, Waltham at <http://www.walthamlandtrust.org/index.html>,

Wellesley at <http://www.wellesleyconservationcouncil.org/> and Watertown at

<http://www.watertowncitizens.org/>

New brochures of Brookline's Sanctuaries are now available from the Brookline Conservation Commission. These beautiful brochures show the natural and social history of the Hall's Pond, Lost Pond and D.Blakely Hoar Sanctuaries, including trail maps and information about the plant and animal life you are likely to see. To receive copies visit the Parks and Open Space Division on the 4th Floor of Brookline Town Hall, or call 617-730-2088 or check

<http://www.brooklinegreenspace.org>

. Mass Audubon has a wonderful new section on their website devoted to butterflies in Massachusetts and a Butterfly Atlas: <http://massaudubon.org/butterflyatlas/>. *"Butterflies occupy a happy spot in the human psyche. Only our most exuberant songbirds are as closely identified with the warm, colorful passion of summer. We tend to think of butterflies—quite rightly—as inhabitants of sunny meadows filled with wildflowers. But butterflies live in a broad spectrum of habitats including forests, heathlands, bogs, swamps, even salt marshes—anywhere, in fact, where their caterpillar food plants and sources of nectars for adults are found. In addition to their aesthetic appeal, butterflies are among nature's most fascinating creatures. Did you know that 103 species of butterflies occur regularly in Massachusetts and another 27 species have been recorded as rare vagrants or have become extinct in the state?"*

### Newton Conservators Notes

The Newton Conservators Fall Walk Series, just concluded last Sunday, was a great success with explorations of our open space by foot, canoe, and bicycle. One member wrote this week, "I just want to mention to you that the walk last Sunday in Cutler Park was just wonderful. I look forward to more walks."

The Newton Conservators Newsletter is the official publication of the Newton Conservators. The latest issue should be in the mail and if you are a Newton Conservators member should be receiving it in the near future. The Newton Conservators have an active Land Management Group led by Landscape Designer, Beth Schroeder. Each week, usually on Tuesdays, the group had visited one of our open space areas to catalog the flowers, plants, animals, and other creatures that are found there. If you are experienced and knowledgeable in the areas of nature related identification, please let us know if you would like to assist next season in this long term effort to catalog the biodiversity in Newton. The results from the past year's efforts have recently been catalogued into a summary spreadsheet which will provide a very helpful record of Newton's biodiversity.

The Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands 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 a 56-page guide containing detailed trail maps of 27 conservation areas in Newton, featuring parks, ponds, gardens, trails, canoe launches, nature guides, rock climbing, scenic views, handicapped access, geological features, and bird watching areas. The guide also contains photos, driving directions, interesting historical details, and an overall map of showing the locations of the 27 natural. Many more folks have been observed out in our conservation areas with their trail guide in hand;. 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 <http://www.newtonconservators.org/buyaguide.htm> or by mailing a check payable to The Newton Conservators, Inc. to The Newton Conservators, P.O. Box 590011, Newton Center, MA 02459. It makes a great gift for your outdoors and nature loving friends. The Newton Conservators are starting to consider the next edition of this great guide, partly due to additional open spaces and features added in Newton due to such things as the adoption of the CPA! If you have any corrections that you think should be included please send them to The Newton Conservators, P.O. Box 590011, Newton Center, MA 02459.

The Newton Conservators are 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. 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> 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, Inc., 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". 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 [emaillist\(AT\)newtonconservators.org](mailto:emaillist(AT)newtonconservators.org). 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>. 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.