

Newton Conservators Nature Notes

October 23, 2007

Greetings! Tonight is an important meeting of the Community Preservation Committee at City Hall solely devoted to discuss the possible [acquisition by the city of the property at 230 Lake Avenue](#). Public support for this project is important if it is to succeed. **Come out to City Hall this evening at 7:45 in Room 202 to show your support.** The Newton Conservators recently strongly endorsed this acquisition which would provide a continuous stretch of Crystal Lake waterfront from the current bathhouse to Levingston Cove.

Crystal Lake Update

There is a very important CPC MEETING tonight (Tuesday, October 23 at 7:45 PM) in City Hall, Room 202 to discuss [230 Lake Avenue](#) (the only agenda item). Public comment is not scheduled but exceptions have been made, and a demonstration of public support IS important! Not all of the CPC Committee is in favor of this acquisition and a YES vote on this project is not assured.

The public beach at Crystal Lake got a boost last year with the acquisition of the adjacent Hannon property, to expand the heavily-used site. Now an additional adjacent property, the house at 230 Lake Avenue, has been put under agreement for acquisition by the City. If the purchase is made, the city's Crystal Lake site will have tripled in size from its original 3/4 acres (where the existing bathhouse is located) to a full 2 1/4 acres, with a much longer shorefront. The expanded site will increase public access and provide a variety of boating, swimming, and other recreational opportunities.

Speaking at his press conference on September 4, Mayor Cohen announced, "Last weekend we closed another successful summer season at Crystal Lake. If you were among the 906 adults or 663 children who purchased memberships, . . . you would have noticed how the acquisition of 20 Rogers Street has made a world of difference in the Crystal Lake experience. We now have use of our entire beachfront and a natural grassy area that will soon be open for picnics and other passive recreation activities.

"I am very pleased to announce that last week the City took an exciting step closer to enhancing the Crystal Lake experience even more for many generations to come. We were recently informed by the owner of 230 Lake Avenue that she intended to sell her home and property. The City acted quickly by getting the lot and home appraised, and after some brief negotiations, last week our offer in the amount of \$1.95 million was accepted by the owner. . . .

The Newton Conservators board voted last month to support the purchase by the City of Newton of the house at 230 Lake Avenue in Newton Centre with the funding support by the Community Preservation Committee. Acquiring this property would set aside a contiguous section of City owned property from the swimming area to the Levingston Cove. This is a wonderful opportunity to provide for future open space development. Advantages would include additional recreation and open space areas for passive viewing along with possible waterfront recreational activities such as a kayak and canoe launching areas as well as a protected winter ice skating area. Addition of this property would set the stage for an eventual belt of lakefront land that could be used for open space viewing along with more access for lake-based activities.

Keep up with progress at Crystal Lake by keeping an eye on <http://www.betterlake.com>. For example, see an aerial view of the properties in question at <http://www.betterlake.com/?p=44> or even a concept of what it could become at <http://www.betterlake.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/10/crystal-lake-plan.jpg> (by architect Robert Fizek).

Here is more from Robert Fizek of www.betterlake.com, perhaps the staunchest advocate of a better Crystal Lake.

The CPC Board is split on the 230 Lake Ave. acquisition, and needs to see and hear Citizen support to approve and allow the formation of a continuous West Cove open space and park! ATTEND the CPC MEETING- it is ALWAYS significant to have real people. Forward this notice to others who might be interested.

You can SEND SUPPORT MESSAGES to the Community Preservation Committee as well as your local aldermen. However, at this time, they will not be able to be printed out for the meeting this evening but will be part of the record. It is suggested that you print a copy of your email out yourself and bring it to the meeting and provide it to Alice Ingerson there.

The Community Preservation Committee will meet October 23rd, to decide on a proposal for the City to complete its' purchase of 230 Lake Ave. (Contingent upon CPC participation and Aldermen approvals.) This acquisition will allow for the preservation of another 300 feet of natural waterfront landscape and possible reuse of the home located there; and will protect the site from private development. Most importantly- This will provide for a continuous Public open space and West Cove Park for the year-round passive recreation for all of Newton's Citizens!

Supporting attendance at the last CPC meeting was NOT over-whelming, so the message might have been read that there is not interest in acquiring #230 and forming a complete stretch of Park land at the west cove.

This acquisition fits three of the four prescribed uses for CPA funding; And the Commonwealth provides a 100% matching contribution(-pays half the cost). Note: CPA funds can NOT be used for other purposes- like schools and fire stations.

This is a uniquely 'central' location with special natural qualities, used by many in our Community- young and old, near and away... and will become a Park for year 'round enjoyment.

Almost 300 feet more public waterfront -contributing to the Master Plan for an unbroken public pathway and Park frontage that is double the current Levingston Cove; and more than triple that land area!

*Preserve the beautiful Landscape (and perhaps the house?) that has matured there.
If you've ever walked the site you'll understand the wonderful natural features- Cedar grove, shade trees... It's not large in size but its' qualities are great.*

[It may not be immediately clear right now, but when the 20 Rogers house is erased from the area it will be more obvious that this parcel is a key piece of what should be a whole landscape and open space for all of Newton to enjoy.]

Note that: We CAN NOT completely control what plans the next owner may have, or what they may do on this site; (zoning allows over 7000 SF living space plus garage, pool, patios, etc.) We CAN eliminate any future Public/private argument of the kind experienced with 20 Rogers Street.

In the end, I believe the over-arching reason is that it's a "vision thing"... This is the right thing to do... and (fortunately or unfortunately) the Owner is willing to sell to the Community NOW. Circumstances have dictated this to be the occasion (and more than likely the ONLY occasion) to do it. (And the ommonwealth, at this point, is still willing to contribute 'half the cost.)

We would all be sad, and sadly regarded if next year and every year thereafter- we pass by the Lake and say things like:

"...too bad the new owners..."

"...too bad we can't walk along the water to the 'other' Park."

" Wouldn't it have been great if... !!? "

Other CPA Happenings

Alice Ingerson, CPA Planner, reports that the draft fy08 plan and handbook/proposal form are also now online. The fy08 CPA Plan includes a NEW proposal deadline, schedule, and a NEW proposal form. You can get to these documents by clicking on the "Plan and Application" button at the top of the CPC's home page at <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/cpa/default.asp> .

Agendas for the upcoming Oct 23rd and Oct 30th meetings of the Community Preservation Committee are posted online. Go to <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/CPA/> and scroll down to click on the "Meeting Agendas and Minutes" link.

The new Fy08 Deadline for Regular Proposals is December 14, 2007, 4:30 pm. Those pondering submitting an application for a CPA project should consider attending a free workshop. The originally cheduled October 25th (7 pm) workshop has been converted to a 1 pm custom workshop - if you were hoping to come, please contact Alice Ingerson as soon as possible to find out details on where the meeting will be held. Those with project ideas are encouraged to sign up for the November 8 or November 13 workshops, or request a custom one, by contacting Alice Ingerson directly or using the CLICK HERE link at: <http://www.newtonma.gov/Planning/CPAC/plan.htm>. Regular Workshop may be canceled if fewer than 5 people sign up. So sign up early! The proposal form has changed, and proposals will no longer be accepted on the old form. Contact Alice Ingerson, Community Preservation Program Manager, 617.796.1144 .

This has been a busy time for open space preservation. Over the summer, the CPC approved the acquisition of the Wightman property at 30 Wabasso Street adjacent to the Flowed Meadow Conservation Area. Mr Wightman had passed away earlier this year and the city was able to negotiate an acceptable price with his heirs. The Board of Aldermen recently approved the project. See the Newton Tab article by Leslie Friday for details: Bringing down the house, Newton Tab, Oct 17, 2007.

NEWTON - DESPITE A SLIGHT HICCUP IN THE PROCESS, THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN VOTED 19-2 IN FAVOR OF FUNDING THE DEMOLITION AND CLEANUP OF A HOME AT 30 WABASSO ST., WHERE THE CITY PLANS TO EXPAND OPEN SPACE IN THE FLOWED MEADOW CONSERVATION AREA.

THERE HAS ALSO BEEN SOME ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION ON ANOTHER PARCEL ON WARREN STREET NEAR THE WEBSTER CONSERVATION AREA.

Events of Interest

Talk on The Great Marsh exhibition - Mass Audubon's Visual Arts Center Saturday, November 3, 2-4 pm

Take an informal walk with award-winning photographer Dorothy Monnelly and see the landscape through an artist's eyes. Monnelly will discuss the qualities of the landscape, elements of the image, and individual response and connection. No camera or special expertise is necessary. The walk will end with a guided visit to Monnelly's The Great Marsh exhibition. Light refreshments will be served. \$12 Members/ \$16 Nonmembers. Registration required. Mass Audubon is the largest conservation organization in New England, concentrating its efforts on protecting the nature of Massachusetts for people and wildlife. The Visual Arts Center is Mass Audubon's art museum, offering exhibitions and programs that connect people and nature through art. Exhibitions are open Friday-Sunday, 1 -5 p.m. Trails through the 138-acre wildlife sanctuary are open Tuesday-Sunday and Monday holidays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free to Mass Audubon members. Non-member fees are \$4 for adults and \$3 for children and seniors. 963 Washington Street, Canton, MA 02021, phone: 781-821-8853, www.massaudubon.org/visualarts

Mass Audubon Connecting Children and Nature Conference

Saturday, November 3 (morning session)

An Education Conference, with keynote speaker and author Richard Louv: Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, will be held November 3, 2007 / 8:00 am - 3:45 pm at Wheelock College, Boston, MA. "In nature, a child finds freedom, fantasy, and privacy: a place distant from the adult world, a separate peace." - Excerpt from Last Child in the Woods. This is an inspirational and practical day geared towards educators; teachers and school administrators; college and graduate students; social workers; funders; public officials; and parents. This event will address the growing disconnect between children and the outdoors. Connecting Children and Nature promises to provide a thoughtful and provocative day that will lead to a new way of thinking about environmental experiences in the region and demonstrate concrete ways to provide transformative and educational experiences for all children. Cost \$18 (Morning session only, whole day and afternoon is already fully booked).

Cheesecake Brook Greenway Improvement Project Ribbon Cutting Event

Sunday, November 4, 2-4 pm

The West Newton CDBG Advisory Committee and the Newton Planning and Development Department invite you to the Cheesecake Brook Greenway Improvement Project Ribbon Cutting Event. David B. Cohen, Mayor. Join friends and neighbors to celebrate the Community Development Block Grant funded improvements to the Cheesecake Brook Greenway on Sunday, November 4, 2007 from 2-4 pm at the intersection of Eddy Street and Albemarle Road. The event will feature refreshments and live music. For more information, please call 617-796-1122 or TTY 617-796-1089.

Presentation by Carole Smith Berney, Watertown Photographer, Writer, and Nature Educator

Wednesday, November 14, 2007, 7 pm,

Watertown Library, Watertown Savings Bank Auditorium

You are invited to attend this delightful, combination multimedia/narrated show that celebrates, appreciates, and urges us to care for the natural spaces and wildlife in our town. Carole's color photographic images of the Charles River, Mount Auburn Cemetery, and other public parks and private spaces (including gardens, trees, wildflowers, and wildlife that make these their home) will feature some humorous and surprising stories of animal encounters in our densely settled, semi-urban setting. Also celebrated will be local "green" efforts on the part of citizens and organizations to enhance the environmental health of our natural resources.

This event is SPONSORED BY THE WATERTOWN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S, "A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT" GRANTMAKING PROGRAM, Co-Sponsored by Trees for Watertown, Watertown Citizens for Environmental Safety, and East End Neighbors. For more information, e-mail [csberney\(AT\)rcn.com](mailto:csberney(AT)rcn.com). Carole's memorable lecture for the Newton Conservators on Flora and Fauna of the Charles River has been our most popular item on our [online video channel](#).

CRWA Annual Meeting

Monday, November 19, 5:30 pm

The Charles River Watershed Association's Annual Meeting will take place on Monday, November 19th from 5:30 to 9:30pm at the Newton Marriott Hotel. The yearly event is metro Boston's premiere river celebration. Join community advocates, government officials, academics, and river enthusiasts from all 35 towns and cities in the Charles River watershed and learn about CRWA's recent accomplishments at the local, regional and national levels; we will also honor dedicated volunteers, civic leaders, and key players in efforts to clean up the Charles River. Noted river conservationist, author, and photographer Tim Palmer will present the keynote address. Tickets for the Annual Meeting, including a buffet dinner, are \$60 for CRWA members and \$75 for the general public; CRWA volunteers receive a discount. To reserve a space, contact Lorraine Burke at CRWA at 781-788-0007 x231 or [lburke\(AT\)crwa.org](mailto:lburke(AT)crwa.org) or visit www.charlesriver.org/annmeeting.html

Newton History Museum Events

For more information on the following events and the museum visit: <http://www.newtonma.gov/jackson/>

In conjunction with the current exhibition, **Norumbega: Recreation & Romance by the River**, the Newton History Museum is pleased to present several family-oriented programs.

Sunday, October 21, 2-3:30 pm

GREETINGS FROM NORUMBEGA FAMILY PROGRAM

Did you know there was an amusement park right in Newton? Look at real postcards from Norumbega Park and make some of your own. Ages 6 and up with adult. Cost: \$5 per child; includes snack.

Sunday, October 28, 1-4 pm

NORUMBEGA MOVIE DAY

Watch the film, "Remembering Norumbega," bring an image of you or your family visiting Norumbega Park to be scanned into the Museum's collection, and share your memories of the park over light refreshments. Free.

Sunday, November 4, 2-3:30 pm

CANOEING ON THE CHARLES FAMILY PROGRAM

Canoeing on the Charles River was a popular activity at Norumbega Park. Come learn more about the history of this pastime, and make your own mini-canoe to take home. Ages 6 and up with an adult. Cost: \$6 per child, includes snack.

To Register for any of these programs, call the Newton History Museum at 617-796-1450.

Home Grown (Part 1) October's Environmental Show on NewTV's Blue Channel

In case you were not able to attend this past spring's Newton Conservators Annual Dinner, you can still watch the presentation by Greg Maslowe on the October broadcast of the Environmental Show entitle "Home Grown". Newton calls itself the "Garden City." More than anyone in recent years, Greg Maslowe has helped the city live up to its name. Greg is the resident farmer at the Newton Angino Community Farm. Greg performs multiple tasks: raising a family, running the farm, overseeing the army of volunteers who help cultivate the farm's produce, and working as an educator for school groups that visit and learn. Greg is not your ordinary farmer: he is at work on a doctorate at Boston University. He is literate, articulate, and unafraid to get his hands dirty.

Greg was the keynote speaker at the Conservators' annual dinner on May 30. Greg's topic was the backyard garden. He noted that a large space is not required for productive use, but there needs to be judicious use of space, including the choice of trees and shrubs. As an example, why not choose a pear tree that not only blooms but that also produces fruit for human use, instead of a dogwood that may be pretty but, for us, less edible?

Greg showed slides of back yards in Newton that have optimized their growing areas and produce bountiful crops. Many had a grape arbor on a wall or terraced attachment. Greg advocated planting perennials that may serve as food and also a hedge. Greg also showed slides of the Newton Angino Community Farm operation in its first year. Greg made a "play house" for his children from green beans on a matrix structure. The play house served a dual function, with Greg's wife, Jessica, harvesting beans for dinner. Greg grew up in Colorado and told the group that he learned his gardening skills from his mother. The family maintained a mulch pile that was used as fertilizer before planting. Fresh vegetables were available much of the year. Greg's taste for quality produce prompted his choice of a farming career. After completing his doctorate, Greg will continue at the farm. Check out Part 1 of this interesting presentation for the remainder of October on NewTV and Part 2 in December. This episode was filmed, edited, and produced by Newton Conservators volunteer Duane Hillis.

The Environmental Show is a volunteer partnership between Newton Conservators and the Green Decade Coalition 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 at eight times weekly for a month duration on the NewTV Blue channel (Comcast Channel 10, RCN Channel 15): The Environmental Show is currently shown on NewTV's Blue Channel (www.newtv.org) on Monday (3 pm), Tuesday (1:30 am, 11:30 pm), Wednesday (11:30 am), Thursday (12 pm, 4 pm, 7:30 pm), and Saturday (10 am). Newton Conservators shows are hosted by Cris Criscitiello and other members of the Conservators. Shows produced by the Green Decade are hosted by Beverly Droz with guests from a variety of environmental organizations and interests. All of the Newton Conservators' past episodes of the Environmental Show are available on the web via <http://www.newtonconservators.org/environmentalshowontheweb.htm> and may be viewed online at any time.

Volunteer Opportunities for the Habitat for Humanity Project in Newton

Home ownership in Newton is the dream of many families but unfortunately not affordable for all. That dream is about to become a reality however for two families as Newton's first Habitat for Humanity project comes to fruition. Habitat for Humanity is now accepting volunteers to build at their Newton project - a 2-unit condominium at 76 Webster Park (adjacent to the Dolan Pond Conservation Area) in West Newton. To learn more and volunteer please visit the Habitat Greater Boston webpage for the Newton project at <http://www.habitatboston.org>. Local orientation sessions for potential volunteers will take place on October 29 at 7:30 pm at the Elliot Church (474 Centre Street) and on November 19 at 7:30 pm at Our Lady Help of Christians Church (573 Washington Street).

One of the first CPA projects put forth by the Newton Conservators was for the property at 76 Webster Park in West Newton which was owned by Irene Forte, beloved violin teacher who passed away at the age of 104. The City of Newton originally acquired the property at 76 Webster Park with Community Preservation Act funds in a proposal from the Newton Conservators, Newton Conservation Commission, Newton Housing Authority in cooperation with Habitat Greater Boston. The Forte property was divided into three lots, one lot comprising two thirds of the property was designated as open space which will increase the size of the adjacent Dolan Pond Conservation Area by about 10%. The remaining one third contains the Habitat lot as well as the original Forte house which is administered by the Newton Housing Authority and is currently occupied by a lovely and grateful family.

The project at 76 Webster Park will be completed over the next 15-18 months or so and there are many opportunities for volunteering. Habitat is particularly looking for more local folks who might be willing to work on the local organizing committee for this project. If people are interested in joining the Committee to work on the project and do fundraising, they can contact local committee chair Judith Strull (617-965-1244 h, 617-965-1247 office, email [judith\(AT\)jsgpsych.com](mailto:judith(AT)jsgpsych.com)).

Habitat for Humanity Greater Boston was founded in 1987. Since then 55 homes have been built or renovated in the Greater Boston area. Habitat for Humanity homeownership provides secure affordable housing to low-income individuals. Habitat believes that homeownership is a vital step in creating self-esteem in both families and neighborhoods, and is the most basic way to break successive generations of poverty. Families are selected based on their level of need, willingness to partner and accept responsibility, and their ability to pay the mortgage. As with all Habitat projects, the families who will occupy the units will participate heavily in the build along with many community volunteers, completing at least 300 hours of sweat equity and an additional 100 hours of homeowner education classes.

Habitat for Humanity Greater Boston (<http://www.habitatboston.org>) will be continuing an active fundraising campaign for this project. Habitat Greater Boston is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization. Their projects are funded primarily by private donations from individuals, community groups, corporations, charities, foundations, schools, and religious organizations. For further information, please contact

Habitat at (617) 423-2223. Donations for the Newton project may be sent to: Habitat for Humanity - Greater Boston, PO Box 610242, Newton, MA 02461 and made payable to "Habitat for Humanity Greater Boston (put Newton Project in the memo line).

Home ownership in Newton is the dream of many families but unfortunately not affordable for all. That dream is about to become a reality however for two families, the La Rosee's and the Jackson's, as Newton's first Habitat for Humanity project comes to fruition. On September 19 there was a groundbreaking and blessing of the land ceremony for the Habitat for Humanity portion of the 76 Webster Park CPA project.

Natural Newton Nature Blog!

Jon Regosin, who has long been involved with the Newton Conservators and Newton Angino Community Farm, works for Mass Wildlife as well. He has been posting in blog form some of his local nature observations. These give a wonderful insight into the changes of the season from a naturalist's perspective in text and photo. Put this blog in your nature related favorites list: <http://naturalnewton.blogspot.com/>.

Newton Angino Community Farm Notes

Newton Community Farm, Inc. is the non-profit operator of Newton Angino Community Farm. They operate the city-owned farm, the last farm in the City of Newton, for the benefit of the public. Their mission is to preserve and improve this historic open space site for the benefit of the community, to provide local, sustainably grown produce, and to educate the public about sustainable use of land and other natural resources. A portion of the food grown on site is donated to people in need through the Newton Food Pantry. Vegetables are available to the public at the Farm's on-site stand (Tu-Fr 3-7 and Sa 10-2) or at the Friday American Legion Post 440 or Tuesday Cold Spring Park Farmers' Markets (1:30 pm- 6 pm). The season is winding down this week at the farm. Visit the farm's website at www.newtoncommunityfarm.org or the farm itself at 303 Nahanton Street, Newton. Below are some excerpts from the farm newsletter by resident farmer Greg Maslowe.

Its not seeming so much like fall this week, but last Saturday the sun rose over icy fields as we had our first heavy frost. The beans took some damage, but survived. The three varieties of Japanese eggplant aren't faring so well. The cool temperatures also mean that everything is growing much more slowly.

We only have one more week to go in the CSA. The last pick up is scheduled for October 24/25. We still have lots of greens, and we'll have broccoli for the remainder, but I'm not sure if the cauliflower and cabbage, planted late, will be ready by next week. We also have leeks and daikon radishes, though they are rather small as they grew in the heavy shade of one of the maples on Winchester Street.

You've probably already noticed some changes taking place in the field, and these will continue over the next two weeks. As crops finish we'll be mowing them down with our new flail mower (like a chipper that you push ahead of the tractor) then seeding the beds with a cover crop. At this time of year we're seeding winter rye, which loves the cool weather. Cover crops "catch" nutrients that would otherwise leach down beyond the root zone of most plants. They also prevent wind and water erosion. And perhaps most importantly, they provide biomass that, when plowed under in the spring, enriches the soil with decomposing organic matter. A few crops, like collards and kale, will remain in the field all winter. But in the next month the majority of the beds will be mowed and planted for the winter.

I hope you've enjoyed the season. As you drive by the farm and see the rye growing, think about all the great food that we are preparing the way for by taking a little time to feed the soil over the winter.

Greg Maslowe, newtoncommunityfarm(AT)comcast.net, 617-916-9655

EcoAlert from American P.I.E.

Give leaf blowers the boot (10 October, 2007)

According to a French proverb, a person does not like noise unless he or she is making it. Many landscape contractors and homeowners are making plenty of noise this fall season, chasing leaves with their powerful blowers. Routinely using leaf blowers near unconsenting pedestrians and neighboring homes that may be occupied by home workers, day sleepers, children, the ill or disabled, these noisemakers are pleasing no one but themselves. In the process they are contributing to the considerable effects of noise and air pollution, causing distress to humans, neighborhood wildlife and landscapes, too. It's time to give leaf blowers the boot.

The trouble began somewhere in the 19th century when Japanese gardeners started using a hand-held bellows to remove leaves and twigs from moss-covered soil. Not content with this gentle on the land approach, Japanese engineers in the 1970s modernized the hand-operated blower by attaching a hose and a powerful motor. Quick to capitalize on yet another fossil-fuel powered implement for the American gardener, a number of manufacturers introduced gas blowers to consumers in the United States. It now is a ubiquitous gardening tool.

Leaf blowers are usually powered by a two-stroke engine or an electric motor. Four stroke engines have been introduced to partially address air pollution concerns. Whatever the power source, there are fundamental issues. These include adverse health effects ranging from hearing loss to cardiovascular affects; noise causes stress and the body reacts with increased adrenaline, changes in the heart rate and elevated blood pressure. Noise pollution can disrupt sleep, impair learning, increase anxiety and foster antisocial behavior. The use of leaf blowers also consumes nonrenewable fossil fuels; two-stroke engine fuel, a gasoline-oil mixture, is particularly polluting and toxic. Another cost of blowers is that they often deprive plants of life-giving mulch as organic material becomes airborne, sometimes ending up in city streets.

California has led the way in blowing away leaf blowers. There are currently twenty California cities that have banned leaf blowers, these municipalities especially targeting gasoline powered equipment. Another eighty California communities have ordinances restricting either usage or noise level or both. Los Angeles maintains a hotline for people to report leaf blower violations.

In 1972, when blowers were few and far between, Congress enacted a Noise Control Act to help promote an environment free from harmful noise. Today, leaves are flying and concerned citizens are taking local action to curb the use of leaf blowers and reduce their decibel levels. People and all of Earth's creatures are entitled to live in an environment free from excessive, offensive - and unnecessary - noise. Advocate for brooms and rakes...give leaf blowers the boot. Act today on this EcoAlert, and thank you for your environmental responsibility.

a feature from American P.I.E., Public Information on the Environment, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization
P.O. Box 676, Northfield, MN 55057-0676, Telephone: 1-800-320-APIE(2743); fax 507-645-5724, E-mail:
... and more opinion on this topic from a recent *Boston Globe* editorial:

Boston Globe - October 11, 2007 - Leaf-blowers: Jet Skis of the backyard

Leaf blowers are noxious noise and air polluters that communities have every right to restrict. Newton first considered a ban on all gas-powered blowers but is now leaning toward a seasonal ban on both gas and electric models. Barring just gas models doesn't make sense if it means landscape contractors bring in diesel-powered generators to run electric blowers. The Newton measure would be targeted at summer use of the whining engines to clean up grass clippings or dirt on lawns and sidewalks. Both noise and air pollution are particularly severe in summer, when windows are open. But a full-year ban should also be considered if that's what it takes to get the lawn-care industry to come up with less-polluting ways to do what rakes and brooms once did perfectly well.

Open Spaces

With leaves turning gorgeous colors, autumn is the perfect season to get out and explore the natural areas of Newton! The city is filled with open spaces, some large enough to achieve a feeling of solitude and others small enough to traverse in a few minutes, yet still take time to smell the flowers or observe wildlife.

Conservation areas, such as Norumbega, Dolan Pond, Flowed Meadow, and the huge Webster Conservation Area (surrounding Hammond Pond Parkway) are administered by the Newton Conservation Commission with oversight by Newton's Environmental Planner, Anne Phelps.

Our parklands, such as Nahanton Park on the south side of Newton, Cold Spring Park (Newton's "Central Park"), or Edmands Park (known as Cabot Woods), which have many of the same woodsy, open space characteristics of our conservation areas, are under the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Commission, with oversight by the Newton Parks and Recreation Department (Commissioner Fran Towle). Newton has its own "great pond" (Crystal Lake) with a swimming beach, and a working farm (Newton Angino Community Farm).

The state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is responsible for magnificent resources such as the Charles River Pathway, Hemlock Gorge and Hammond Pond, and other wonderful parks just over the line in adjacent municipalities, such as Millennium Park in West Roxbury and Cutler Park in Needham.

These open spaces fill a vital role for our wildlife inhabitants, providing necessary food, water, and shelter, and help to preserve a rich biodiversity of plants, wildflowers, trees, reptiles, birds, mammals, butterflies, bees, and insects. They serve as wildlife corridors and help absorb and purify our groundwater. They provide oases of coolness and respite from the city streets. The areas serve many recreational purposes - such as biking along the river paths, cross-country skiing in Cold Spring Park, soccer fields and basketball courts, a canoe launch at Nahanton - and more passive pursuits such as birding, nature study, dog walking, and just providing a place to relax.

For over 45 years, the Newton Conservators (www.newtonconservators.org) has advocated for Newton's open space, encouraging citizens to get out and enjoy these areas by offering a walk series each spring and fall, usually on Sunday afternoons. Upcoming outings include visits to the 32-acre Kennard Park and exploration of South Meadow Brook (Oct 7, 2 pm), Norumbega Park and environs near the Newton Marriott, (Oct 14, 2 pm), a mountain bike tour of the Aqueduct Trail through Newton, Needham, and Wellesley (Oct 21, Noon), and a leisurely Charles River Pathway bike trip (Oct 28, 2 pm). See Events in the TAB calendar or www.newtonconservators.org/walks.htm.

The Conservators publish "Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands", available at local bookstores and on their website, containing detailed trail maps of 27 conservation areas in Newton, showing parks, ponds, gardens, trails, canoe launches, natural areas, rock climbing, scenic views, handicapped access, geological features, and bird-watching areas. Interactive maps are available at www.newtonconservators.org/parks.htm, with photos, driving directions, natural history and historical information---a perfect companion for "getting out there" into the wild open spaces of Newton.

- Ted Kuklinski (from the October Environmental Page - Newton Tab)

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.

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) 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 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.