



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

SPRING ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

Newton's land trust working to preserve open space since 1961

WWW.NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • SPRING 2019

2019 Officers and Directors

Beth Wilkinson, *President*

Chris Hepburn,
Vice President

AnnaMaria Abernathy,
Secretary

Katherine Howard,
Treasurer

David Backer

Peter Barrer

Barbara Bates

Dan Brody

Mat Calabro

Bonnie Carter

Michael Clarke

Margaret Doris

Henry Finch

Robert Fizek

Ellen Gibson-Kennedy

Maurice Gilmore

Daniel Green

William Hagar

Ted Kuklinski

Ken Mallory

George Mansfield

Nyssa Patten

Larry Smith

Advisors

Margaret Albright

Lisle Baker

John Bliss

Lee Breckenridge

Lalor Burdick

Lucy Caldwell-Stair

Michael Collora

Douglas Dickson

Ann Dorfman

Bart Hague

Judith Hepburn

Alison Leary

William Leitch

Don Lubin

Brooks Mathewson

Eric Olson

Anne Pearson

Richard Primack

Eric Reenstierna

Jon Regosin

Patricia Robinson

Jane Sender

William Shaevel

Willis Wang

Bruce Wenning

Brian Yates

Beavers: Urban Wildlife Extraordinaire

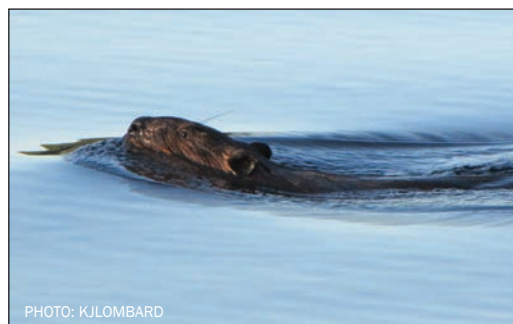
Beavers are big — no, *really* big. The North American beaver, *Castor Canadensis*, is the second largest rodent in the world — the capybara in South America is the largest. How big? Visualize a large golden retriever: an adult beaver is three to four feet from nose to tail tip and can weigh in at 60 pounds or more.¹ Everything about *Castor Canadensis* is so big and so interesting that Newton Conservators is presenting the beaver profile in two installments. This first covers the beaver's anatomy, adaptations, and life cycle. The second, in our summer newsletter, will explore the profound ecological effects this keystone species has on our landscape.

Most people assume a beaver is smaller than it really is and often mistake muskrats for beavers. A muskrat, running six to seven pounds, is about the size of a beaver's head.



This beaver hut near the entrance to Cutler Park and Kendrick Pond may not be currently active.

Take a look at the picture of the beaver swimming, and you'll see how easy it is to assume a beaver is small — all one usually sees is its head. Newton Animal Control officers tell me that the calls they get from residents about beavers in their backyard are all really muskrats. But are there any beavers



A beaver swimming with only head showing doesn't show how big beavers really are.

in Newton for you to observe? Yes, you can see lodges on Kendrick Pond in Cutler Park and on the Charles River by Quinobequin Road. However, to watch them you'll have to be out from dusk to dawn, when beavers are active.



Freshly beaver-felled tree.

What you are more likely to see is the signs of beavers: their teeth marks on trees and branches. As lumberjacks of the

animal kingdom, beavers' teeth are big — they need to be to gnaw through trees. According to South Dakota's Division of Wildlife, a beaver can gnaw down a five-inch diameter willow in three minutes². Can a beaver get splinters? Yes, according to web sources, but I could find no authoritative information about this. I theorize that because a beaver gnaws *living* wood, which is softer and wet, *across* the grain horizontally to the ground, it would be harder for them to encounter splinters.

I recall seeing the orange teeth of a rodent, a gopher, for the first time as a child and thinking, "Eew, that animal has serious dental hygiene issues." Not true! All rodents and especially beavers have orange enamel covering the front of their incisors to add strength to the teeth — the color comes from

Continued on page 2



Life-sized beaver skull replica.

molars by a large gap — this allows the beaver to suck in its cheeks to block water while it is gnawing bark or carrying branches underwater. If an accident should break or misalign an incisor, the beaver is in serious trouble: its teeth grow continuously and must be worn down or they will grow so far as to render the animal unable to eat and penetrate any opposing flesh.

Beavers eat a wide variety of green plants, both land and aquatic. They readily graze on poison ivy, ferns, and water-lily, going so far as “...rolling up a lily pad, burrito-style, for easier munching.”³ However, when winter arrives and greenery is scarce, beavers resort to eating the cambium, the inner bark layer, of trees. Their favorites are aspen, cottonwood, and willow⁴ and also alder, maple, birch, and poplar.^{5,6} Their heavy molars can grind the bark efficiently. They also have a hugely diverse microbiome in their guts that enables them to extract nutrients from this woody material. And finally, they practice coprophagy, eating their feces, to make sure they get every last bit of nutrient possible.



A beaver's large back feet propel it through water.

are large, about seven inches long, webbed affairs that propel the animal powerfully through the water while the broad flat tail works as a rudder. The front feet are smaller, about four inches long, and make a beaver look remarkably human when you see them waddling upright while carrying sticks, mud, and stones to some building project. These front paws also make beavers look like squirrels when eating the aquatic greens they so love.

iron. As the incisors wear down from use, the iron-enhanced front enamel wears more slowly than the softer dentine on the back of the incisors, forming a sharp chisel edge. The beaver's upper and lower incisors are separated from its

molars by a large gap — this allows the beaver to suck in its cheeks to block water while it is gnawing bark or carrying branches underwater. If an accident should break or misalign an incisor, the beaver is in serious trouble: its teeth grow continuously and must be worn down or they will grow so far as to render the animal unable to eat and penetrate any opposing flesh.

Beavers are graceful swimmers superbly adapted for their aquatic life. They can stay submerged for 15 to 25 minutes^{7,8} while swimming, and they can close their ears and noses while underwater. Beavers' back feet

Beavers' back feet



A beaver's front paws look remarkably human as it munches aquatic vegetation.

but is mostly fat. (Apparently, broiled beaver tail makes excellent eating for us humans — something like the fatty marrow in osso buco.)⁹ The beaver's tail serves a multitude of purposes: a brace to hold the beaver upright while gnawing trees, a fat reserve to tap in lean winters, a heat dissipating device in the heat of summer, and an alarm signal. When a beaver senses danger, it slaps its flat tail down on the water with great force making a gunshot loud whack.



The tail and fur are on full display as this beaver tries to escape over a stone wall — and it's an urban myth that they use their tails to plaster mud on their lodges.



Beavers can use their tails to slap the water and sound alarm.

How does a beaver sense danger? Beavers have an extraordinary sense of smell and very good hearing. Their eyesight, though, is notoriously poor, making me wonder how they manage to navigate between their lodges and their

underwater food caches while under winter ice. A beaver's sense of smell and hearing helps it patrol for its predators — black bears, mountain lions, coyotes, and wolves.¹⁰ Beavers prefer to escape predators by diving into the water but can use their teeth to good effect if caught on land. A man in Belarus was killed by the beaver which severed his femoral artery when he tried to wrestle it into position for a selfie.¹¹

Beavers are active year-round; they do not hibernate. They are able to stay warm while staying so wet because of their remarkable fur. Beavers have two kinds of fur — their longer guard hairs and their shorter underfur. Beaver underfur is extremely thick — “a stamp-sized patch of beaver skin is



PHOTO: KJLOMBARD

A beaver's guard hairs extend well beyond its dense underfur.

carpeted with up to 126,000 individual hairs — more than the average human has on her entire head,”¹² and the hairs are barbed so they interlock like Velcro to keep water out and the animal warm and dry.¹³

This marvelous interlocking fur, so sought-after by hatters in London, can be blamed for quite a bit of our nation's history as noted by historian Don Berry: “Many men died, a continent was explored, an indigenous race degraded and its culture crushed ... all because beaver fur, with its tiny barbs, felted up better than any other.”¹⁴

Beavers spend significant time grooming their fur to keep it waterproof and warm. They sit on their flat tail, exposing an anal gland so they can reach its castoreum oil. They spread



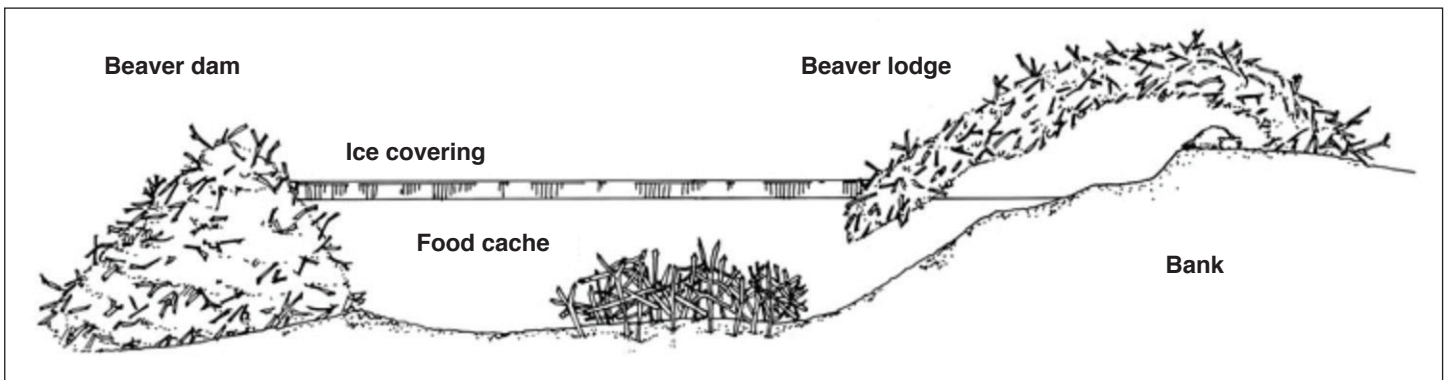
PHOTO: DALE MONETTE

A food cache is visible to the right of this lodge.

single beaver needs about 20–30 ounces of bark every two days, approximately the amount from a one to three-inch diameter tree *and* its branches.¹ Often their food cache is so large it is visible above the water line.

Beavers will also tunnel underwater directly into a stream bank as far as 20 feet before excavating an above-water cave for themselves.¹⁶ Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife illustrates¹⁷ a typical bank lodge as shown in the drawing below:

Beaver lodges are also nurseries. Beavers are monogamous. An adult pair will mate in winter and produce four to five kits inside their lodge in May or June. The newborn kits weigh about one-pound and have fur, front-teeth and open



A typical bank lodge is shown in this Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife illustration.

this oil over their fur to help waterproof it, combing the oil in while untangling strands with a special split claw on their hind foot.¹⁵

Beavers also stay warm in winter by retreating to the lodges they build. The lodges look like simple piles of sticks, but beavers pile mud, sticks, and logs in a thick shell that predators find hard to penetrate. The lodge has a below-water entrance, and the shell has enough vents to allow fresh air inside. The interior is small and dark, above the water line with a floor lined in bark shreds or grasses to absorb moisture, and just big enough for a single beaver clan. However, the lodge is considerably warmer inside than out — usually above freezing inside when it is sub-zero outside.

Sometimes beavers build these lodges at the banks of a pond or river, sometimes far out in the pond. They cache sticks near their lodge as an underwater winter food source, sticking them in the mud to prevent them from freezing. A

eyes. “... within a week they are skilled swimmers although, if tired, they may be carried on the mother's back.”¹⁸ Kits are weaned by two months. The kits stay with the parents until the end of their second year. A lodge, then, may contain the adult pair, the newborn kits, and the “teenagers” from the previous year. It can get pretty crowded in there!

Yes, beavers are here to stay in Newton. However, as they multiply and try to establish new ponds, they may become less enjoyable for some. The Newton Conservators' next installment on the beaver will delve into the beaver as keystone species and engineer extraordinaire, exploring its dam-building, ecological significance, and its conflicts with that other engineer — humans. ♦

— Barbara Bates

Note: Footnote references in this article can be found on NewtonConservators.org/newsletters

President's Message

Happy (almost) Spring!

February and March have been planning time for the Newton Conservators. As you will see, we have a full line-up of Spring Walks and Invasive Plant Pulls. We hope to see you at some of them . . .



We also will have our three usual projects for Newton Serves Day on Sunday, April 28: Cold Spring Park, Dolan Pond, and Blue Heron Bridge. You can sign up starting on April 1: <http://www.newtoncommunitypride.org/NewtonSERVES.html>

The Newton Conservators annual meeting will be on Wednesday, May 8, at American Legion Post 440 at 295 California Street. Our speaker will be the knowledgeable and dynamic John Maguranis, who is the Animal Control Officer in Belmont and the Massachusetts representative of Project Coyote. He will speak about "Living with Coyotes." Invitations will be sent, and reservations can be made soon; in the meantime, please save Wednesday, May 8, on your calendar!



In mid-February a team of members, experienced in removing invasive plants from the city's open spaces, met to talk about our ongoing approach to the problem. We brainstormed several interesting ideas. City Councilor Andreae Downs suggested a potluck to try recipes made from knotweed and garlic mustard. Yum!

This issue features board member Barbara Bates, who follows her first popular article about Canada Geese with a look at beavers, and new (to us) author and member of the Conservators' invasives-control team Mark Hooker has written an article on invasive plants found in Newton's open spaces. We welcome their articles.

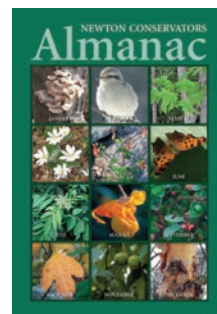
As always, we'd love to hear from you: president@NewtonConservators.org.

Beth Wilkinson

Spring's coming. Step outside!

Shop online at www.newtonconservators.org/books.htm to purchase Newton Conservators' publications. Almanac is \$19.95 + shipping, and the Trail Guide is \$8.95 + shipping.

- Members receive a discount from these prices when purchasing online.



What to Know about Invasive Plant Removal

By Mark Hooker, Newton Conservators' member and avid invasives fighter

Sometimes I wish I could go back the ten or so years to before my obsession with invasive plants began. I used to be able to enjoy natural areas and think they were, more or less, “as they should be.” But at some point around 2008, I became more like a proofreader who sees only typos, subconsciously scanning open spaces for “creeper vines.”

At first, my objections were primarily aesthetic, but I gradually learned more about the plants and the damage that they do: how garlic mustard effectively poisons the soil against competing species, how black swallow-wort attracts monarch butterflies, but does not allow their caterpillars to survive, and how porcelainberry and Asian bittersweet strangle plants and trees and create a canopy that smothers and kills native host plants. These effects are terrible in their own right, but also have ripple effects that destabilize the whole ecosystem and food chain.

Indeed, at times it seems that invasive plants are an unstoppable force that will, before long, envelop every natural area and bury them alive. However, there is good news as well: serious progress has been made in a number of Newton's open spaces, and the persistent efforts of Conservators, commercial and residential abutters, and other good citizens can have material progress with many natural habitats, to the benefit of native species and human visitors alike.

In this article I'd like to highlight two such areas, the Upper Falls Greenway and Cold Spring Park.

As described in a recent Conservators' newsletter article (Summer 2017), the Upper Falls Greenway has progressed from an abandoned rail line that was used as a dump and



Benjamin Mills Park in Wellesley with porcelainberry and bittersweet on the left, creating a canopy over maple and beech trees.



Porcelainberry Closeup

completely overgrown with Asian bittersweet, porcelainberry, garlic mustard, and Japanese knotweed (among other invasives) in 2011 to a maintained, more than mile-long gravel path, that is heavily used and enjoyed by dog walkers, joggers, Needham Street employees, and various other neighbors. The bittersweet and porcelainberry have been cut back to a small fraction of their original dominance, although continued efforts are required to bring the garlic mustard and knotweed under control.

Cold Spring Park has a wide range of habitat, from swamps and vernal pools that are largely free of people to playing fields and a dog park that support sizable human use. As of a couple of years ago, the park was heavily infested with the usual suspects — bittersweet, porcelainberry, garlic mustard, knotweed, and buckthorn. Again,

concerted efforts both freelance and organized (principally Conservators' pull sessions led by Katherine Howard and Eric Olson's buckthorn demonstration project) have dramatically reduced the invasives.

The Conservators organizes invasive removal sessions at several sites each year, and is actively looking for help. For those interested in group or individual efforts, here are a few helpful notes and suggestions. First, it often takes several

Continued on page 6



PHOTO: MARK HOOKER

Bittersweet vines

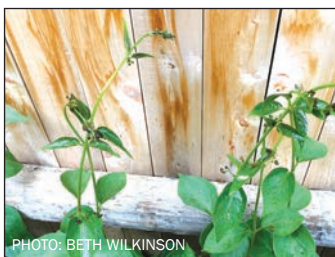


PHOTO: BETH WILKINSON

Black Swallow-wort



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA CREATIVE COMMONS

Garlic Mustard



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Eric Olson with a Tree of Heaven

years of repeated efforts, in part because of natural cycles like the flowering of garlic mustard, and the general tenacity of the plants in regeneration. However, multi-year efforts absolutely work, and the Greenway and Cold Spring Park as well as other areas demonstrate the effectiveness of persistence.

Second, there are important seasonal factors. Garlic mustard has a window of vulnerability; it must be pulled in the spring after the ground softens and the plant has regrown, but before the flowers open and seeds are scattered. Similarly,

knotweed and swallow-wort must be removed when the ground is soft because they spread through roots, and it is important to remove swallow-wort before its seed pods open in the late summer. By contrast, late fall and winter are opportune times to cut porcelainberry and bittersweet vines since the poison ivy that often surrounds them has died back enough to allow better access. (Young vines may be pulled out of the ground with roots, but mature porcelainberry and bittersweet can have trunks six inches or thicker with roots nearly impossible to remove). ♦



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN TODAY!

YES, count me in! I want to be a nature steward and help Newton Conservators protect and preserve the natural areas in our community.

Please renew/accept my tax-deductible membership at the level checked below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Directors' Circle *NEW! | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Individual Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Donor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Sustaining Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution \$_____ |

**Want to make an even bigger impact?
Help us support these conservation areas:**

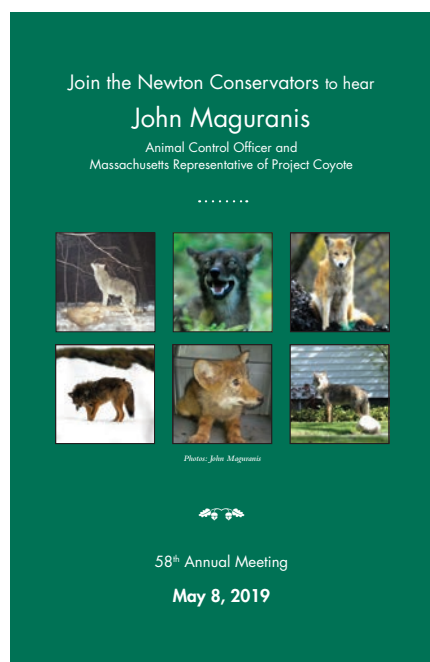
Woodcock Meadow \$_____
Ordway Endowment Fund \$_____
Land Stewardship Areas (Dexter Rd., Bracebridge Rd.)
\$_____

*Contributors at this level receive a copy of the Newton Conservators Almanac. All new members receive Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands.

NAME _____ EMAIL _____
ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

☐ I would like to volunteer!
Please email me.

Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc. and send to P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459, or visit NewtonConservators.org/membership.htm to renew/join online. Consider including Newton Conservators in your estate planning. Contact us at president@NewtonConservators.org.



Please join us for the Newton Conservators' Annual Meeting and Dinner on Wednesday, May 8



Members will receive invitations in the mail.

You can make your reservations online
at www.NewtonConservators.org.

Do You Use Amazon for Purchases for your Home or Business?

As explained in past newsletters, Amazon Smile is a program through which Amazon donates 0.5% of most purchases (yes, \$5 of every \$1000) to a nonprofit (501c3) organization of your choice (the Newton Conservators, we hope!).

How does one use Amazon Smile? Instead of going to Amazon.com, you go to Smile.amazon.com. On your first visit, you will be asked to choose a nonprofit organization to receive the bonus donation. Enter "Newton Conservators," and you are ready to go. The rest of your shopping proceeds exactly the same as if you had logged in to Amazon.com initially.

Even with relatively few members using the program so far, the rewards have grown. For the first quarter we participated in 2014, we received \$22.32. In 2018, we received \$171.04 and it has grown to \$100 per quarter.

If you have any further questions about the program, check the FAQ page: <http://smile.amazon.com/about>.

MISSION

Newton Conservators, Inc.

The Newton Conservators promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open space for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters.

A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land, buildings and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, educational, recreational, literary and other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare of the people of our community.

The Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 58 years ago in June 1961.

The Newton Conservators' Newsletter® is published four times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc., in June, September, December, and March. Deadlines for these issues are the second Friday of the month before the issue is published.

We welcome material related to our mission from any source. Send proposed articles or letters by email in MS Word or rich text format to bethwilkinson@mac.com. Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Editor: | Ken Mallory | 617-965-1908 |
| Design/Layout: | Suzette Barbier | 617-244-0266 |
| Production: | Bonnie Carter | 617-969-0686 |

Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the Newsletter: Barbara Bates, Beth Wilkinson, Mark Hooker and Katherine Howard.

Newton Conservators Invasive Plant Sessions Spring 2019

Newton Conservators sponsors walks and also fights invasive plant species to promote the native habitat at our parks and conservation areas. Call the leader if in doubt about the weather. Check newtonconservators.org for the separate Walks calendar and for updates to this schedule.

Sunday, April 21, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Buckthorn demonstration project, Cold Spring Park.

We will continue the work, started two years ago in collaboration with horticulturalist Bruce Wenning and ecology professor Eric Olson, to save the red maple swamp, believed to be one of the oldest forested areas in Newton. The maple and oak swamp is in danger of dying out due to its understory being shaded out by invasive nonnative buckthorn. We will maintain and expand the buckthorn-free demonstration areas to allow the forest to survive. *Leaders are Bruce Wenning, 617-962-0646, Alan Noguee, 617-564-1664 and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.*

Sunday, April 28, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Garlic Mustard Pull at Dolan Pond (NewtonSERVES Project). 76 Webster Park, Newton, MA 02465
www.newtonconservators.org/5dolan.htm

Meet at Webster Park (a street off Webster Street) entrance of the Dolan Pond Conservation Area. (Park there or at the other entrances at Stratford Road and Cumberland Road.) Come help us eradicate this soil-damaging invasive garlic mustard from this gem of a pocket park. We also continue to control the Japanese Knotweed; every year it gets easier. We will also do some nature study, so bring binoculars for observing birds and other creatures that make this vernal pool area home. Wear long pants and garden gloves. *Leader is Ted Kuklinski, 617-332-7753.*

Sunday, April 28, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull (NewtonSERVES Project). 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461
www.newtonconservators.org/14coldspring.htm

The park is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, buckthorn, and other species. We will keep the Cochituate Aqueduct walk under control after previous years' pulls, and work on the meadow and Beacon Street parking lot areas. Wear long pants and garden gloves. The invasive plant material will be properly disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Enter at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and go to the far end of the parking lot (circle) to meet group. *Leaders are Alan Noguee, 617-564-1664 and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.*

Sunday, April 28, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Invasives Pull at Blue Heron Bridge (NewtonSERVES Project) near Super Stop & Shop, 700 Pleasant St., Watertown, MA 02472
www.newtonconservators.org/4charlesmoody.htm

We will work along the Charles River Greenway at this bridge site, and will do nature study as time allows. Wear long pants and sleeves, sturdy shoes and garden gloves. Park at the Watertown Super Stop & Shop (700 Pleasant St.) at the corner farthest from the store. There is a path entrance: turn left to the Blue Heron Bridge. Or, park at Albemarle Rd. or Nevada St. a block away

from the river. *Leaders are Ron Joseph and Anndy Dannenberg, 617-694-9674.*

Sunday, May 5, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Invasives Pull at Sawmill Brook Conservation Area. Opposite 120 Vine St., Newton, MA 02467
www.newtonconservators.org/26sawmill.htm

Sawmill Brook Park is a lovely, long, natural trail connecting Newton to West Roxbury. It has garlic mustard and black swallow-wort infestations at its entrances and along Lagrange St. and Wayne Road borders. We will work at each entrance and along Lagrange and Wayne, and patrol previously worked areas. Wear long pants and garden gloves. The invasive plant material will be properly disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the Vine Street entrance. *Leaders are Francesco DiTullio and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.*

Sunday, May 12, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Invasives Pull at Blue Heron Bridge #2 (repeat visit). Near Super Stop & Shop, 700 Pleasant St., Watertown, MA 02472
www.newtonconservators.org/4charlesmoody.htm

We continue to work along the Charles River Greenway at this bridge site, and will do nature study as time allows. Wear long pants and sleeves, and sturdy shoes and garden gloves. Bring digging tools and clippers if you can. Park at the Watertown Super Stop & Shop (700 Pleasant St.) at the corner furthest from the store. There is a path entrance: turn left to the Blue Heron Bridge. Or park at Albemarle Rd. or Nevada St., a block away from the river. *Leader is Eric Olson, 617-872-9928.*

Saturday, May 18, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull #2 (repeat visit). 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461
www.newtonconservators.org/14coldspring.htm

Cold Spring Park is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, and other species. We will spend a few hours keeping the Cochituate Aqueduct walk under control after previous years' pulls, and work on the meadow and Beacon Street parking lot areas. Wear long pants and garden gloves. The invasive plant material will be properly disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and meet at the far end of the parking lot (circle). *Leaders are Nyssa Patten, 617-763-7194, Alan Noguee, 617-564-1664 and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.*

Sunday, May 19, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Nahanton Park Invasives Pull. Near 507 Winchester Street, Newton, MA 02461
www.newtonconservators.org/30nahanton.htm

Many native habitats, including the grassland Woodcock Meadow, home to threatened American Woodcock, and open

Continued on next page

woodland habitats, are threatened by invasive plants. They out-compete native plants, reduce biodiversity and negatively impact birdlife. Nahanton Park has invasions of black swallow-wort, multi-flora rose, Tree of Heaven, buckthorn, garlic mustard, and black locust. Join us to improve the beauty and diversity of this special park (and help the American woodcock) by spending a few hours cutting back/removing these invasive species. Sturdy shoes, long pants, long sleeves and work gloves recommended. Meet in the large parking lot off Winchester Street. **Leaders are Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571 and Suzette Barbier.**

Sunday, May 26, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Japanese Knotweed Pull at Hammond Pond. Near 309 Hammond Pond Parkway, Newton, MA 02467
www.newtonconservators.org/18webster.htm

Japanese Knotweed is a bamboo-like invader from Asia that can create dense 8' tall single-species stands. It is a tough adversary, not because it's spiny or strong or even particularly hard to pull. But any small root fragments left behind spring back to life the following year. Scientists seek biological control agents, but until they find some, we are stuck controlling the plant by hand. Persistence pays with this species, and eradication is possible, but it takes several years to truly finish the job. Bring pitchforks, garden spades, and hand pruners, if you have them. Meet at small parking lot off Hammond Pond Parkway at Route 9 adjacent to pond at "The Street" mall. **Leader is Eric Olson, 617-872-9928.**

Saturday, June 1, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Houghton Garden/Webster Invasives Pull. Opposite 210 Suffolk Rd., Newton, MA 02467
www.newtonconservators.org/19houghton.htm

We are tackling garlic mustard and black swallow-wort near the entrance of Houghton Garden where it borders the T Track crossing to Webster Woods. Help keep these invaders out of Houghton Garden! Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided; the City will dispose properly as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the entrance to the garden/T crossing. **Leader is Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, June 2, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Cold Spring Park Invasive Plant Educational Walk. 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461
www.newtonconservators.org/14coldspring.htm

Join horticulturist Bruce Wenning for training in identifying the invasive species that are found in this park as well as in everybody's yards! Learn the traits of invasive species, how and why they are so successful and hurt the native ecosystems, and how you can identify and control them in your own yards and neighborhoods. Wear long pants and closed shoes. Repeat session is on June 9. **Leader is Bruce Wenning, 617-962-0646.**

Sunday, June 2, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull #3 (repeat visit). 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461
www.newtonconservators.org/14coldspring.htm

Cold Spring Park is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, and other species. We will spend a few hours checking the Cochituate Aqueduct walk, to keep it under control after

previous years' pulls, and work on the meadow and parking lot areas. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided; the City will properly dispose as trash, not as yard waste. Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and go to the far end of the parking lot (circle) to meet group. **Leader is Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, June 9, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Cold Spring Park Invasive Plant Educational Walk. 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461
www.newtonconservators.org/14coldspring.htm

Join horticulturist Bruce Wenning for training in identifying the invasive species that are found in this park as well as in everybody's yards! Learn the traits of invasive species, how and why they are so successful and hurt the native ecosystems, and how you can identify and control them in your own yards and neighborhoods. Wear long pants and closed shoes. (The same walk is offered June 2.) **Leader is Bruce Wenning, 617-962-0646.**

Sunday, June 9, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Charles River Quinobequin/Hemlock Gorge Invasives Pull. Near 2 Ellis St., Newton, MA 02464
www.newtonconservators.org/21hemlock.htm

We will control garlic mustard, knotweed, and black swallow-wort infestations inside beautiful Hemlock Gorge Park, and the adjoining walking trail along the Charles River at Quinobequin Rd. Help keep the invaders out of these beautiful parks! Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided; the City will properly dispose as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the parking lot at corner of Quinobequin Rd. and Ellis St. at Rt. 9 intersection. **Leaders are Jerry Reilly and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, June 16, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Charles River Quinobequin/Hemlock Gorge Invasives Pull (repeat visit). Near 2 Ellis St., Newton, MA 02464
www.newtonconservators.org/21hemlock.htm

We will continue our control of garlic mustard, knotweed, and black swallow-wort infestations inside beautiful Hemlock Gorge Park and the adjoining lovely walking trail along the Charles River at Quinobequin Road. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided; the City will properly dispose as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the parking lot at corner of Quinobequin Rd. and Ellis St. at Rt. 9 intersection. **Leaders are Jerry Reilly and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, June 23, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Knotweed Pull at Dolan Pond. 76 Webster Park, Newton, MA 02465
www.newtonconservators.org/5dolan.htm

Meet at Webster Park (a street off Webster Street) entrance of the Dolan Pond Conservation Area. (Park there or at the other entrances at Stratford Road and Cumberland Road.) We will work to control knotweed along the path through the Conservators C/R (Conservation Restriction) area of this gem of a pocket park. Bring shovels and clippers and wear long pants and garden gloves. **Leader is Ted Kuklinski, 617-332-7753.**

► To learn more about Plant Invaders, go to page 11 and view pictures and descriptions of the most common invasives.

WALKS SCHEDULE SPRING 2019

www.newtonconservators.org

Please note: Walks meet at different times. Some trips are weather dependent. Please call trip leader if in doubt.

Saturday, April 6 at 1:00 pm

(Rain or Shine)

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF VERNAL POOLS: FOREST AND VERNAL POOL EXPLORATION AT WEBSTER WOODS



Join us in Webster Woods, Newton's largest conservation area, as we walk the woods and explore the large vernal pool found there. Vernal pools, because of periods of drying, do not support breeding populations of fish. Many organisms have evolved to use

these temporary wetlands, where they are not eaten by fish. Join us as we search for obligate vernal pool species, including fairy shrimp, spotted salamanders, and wood frogs. The amphibians are the stars of the show, but you will also watch for mammal tracks and learn about trees and other forest plants. Sampling equipment will be provided; bring hand lenses if you have them. We will walk even in the rain, so dress accordingly.

Meet at the end of Warren Street on the western edge of Webster Conservation Area. **Trip Leader: Eric Olson, 617-872-9928 on April 6.**

Sunday, April 14 at 1:00 pm

(Rain or Shine)

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF VERNAL POOLS: FOREST AND VERNAL POOL EXPLORATION AT WEBSTER WOODS

This popular walk/activity is being repeated from April 6 (see description from that date).

Trip Leader: Jon Regosin, 774-364-2443.

Sunday, April 28 at 2:00 pm

TAKE A REAL HIKE IN NEWTON: DISCOVER THE NEWTON AQUEDUCTS

A 5-mile hike through woods, meadows and fields along the Newton sections of the Sudbury and Cochituate aqueducts. This is a steady but not fast hike. Participants should be in sufficiently good shape to keep up with the group. (There are cutoffs for those who wish to shorten the hike.) Meet in front of the Starbucks coffee shop near the Waban MBTA station.

Trip Leader: Henry Finch, 617-964-4488.

Saturday, May 4 at 8:00 am

(Rain Date: May 21)

BIRD WALK AT COLD SPRING PARK

This 67-acre parcel has ample wooded areas, open fields, a brook and wetlands. It is one of the places in Newton where you may hear the call of the Great Horned Owl and observe spectacular songbirds like the Rose Breasted Grosbeak and the Indigo Bunting. Also frequently found at the park are many favorite migrants such as the Red Eyed Vireo, the Wood Thrush, and a variety of wood warblers.

Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome.

Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left, and go to the far end of the parking lot to meet group.

Trip Leader: Pete Gilmore, 617-969-1513.

Sunday, May 12 at 8:00 am

NAHANTON PARK MOTHER'S DAY BIRD WALK



Nahanton Park offers a mix of woodlands, wetlands, edge habitat and meadows along the Charles River, making it one of the best birding spots in Newton for both migratory and resident songbirds. Mother's Day occurs during the peak of the spring migration, so we will look for

a variety of brilliantly colored tropical birds on their way to breeding grounds further north. Also expect newly arrived resident warblers, vireos, tanagers, orioles, swallows, and wrens.

Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Waterproof walking shoes are recommended. Walk will be cancelled in steady rain. Co-sponsored by the Newton Conservators and the Friends of Nahanton Park.

Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance next to the river. Parking is available inside the park.

Trip Leaders: Alison Leary, 617-821-5619 and Haynes Miller, 617-413-2419.

Saturday, May 18 at 8:00 am

(Rain date: May 19)

BIRD WALK ALONG CHARLES RIVER PATHWAY

Please join Alison Leary for a neighborhood bird walk along

Continued on next page



the Charles River Path to enjoy the sights and sounds of the river including new spring migrants. Length: About 3 miles at an easy pace. We will look for seasonal migrants as we stroll the Charles River path along the Newton/Watertown line. I expect to find

several species of warblers, including yellow, northern parula, yellow rumped and palms. Also, northern orioles, warbling vireos, cardinals, goldfinches and wrens.

Bring binoculars if you have them. In the event of steady rain, we will rechedule for Sunday. Meeting place: Path entrance at Chapel and California Street.

Trip Leader: Alison Leary, 617-821-5619

Sunday, June 2 from 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

COLD SPRING PARK INVASIVE PLANT EDUCATIONAL WALK

Join horticulturalist Bruce Wenning for training in identifying the invasive species that are found in this park as well as in everybody's yards! Learn the traits of invasive species, how and why they are so successful and hurt the native ecosystems, and how you can identify and control them in your yards and neighborhoods. Wear long pants and closed shoes.

Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and go to the far end of the parking lot (circle) to meet group. Repeat session on June 9.

Trip Leader: Bruce Wenning, 617-962-0646.

Sunday, June 9 from 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

COLD SPRING PARK INVASIVE PLANT EDUCATIONAL WALK

Join horticulturalist Bruce Wenning for training in identifying the invasive species that are found in this park as well as in everybody's yards! Learn the traits of invasive species, how

and why they are so successful and hurt the native ecosystems, and how you can identify and control them in your yards and neighborhoods. Wear long pants and closed shoes.

Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and go to the far end of the parking lot (circle) to meet group. The same walk is offered on June 2.

Trip Leader: Bruce Wenning, 617-962-0646.

Saturday, June 22 from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm (Rain Date: June 23)

FERNS OF WEBSTER CONSERVATION AREA

The Webster and Cohen Conservation areas and the DCR Reservation form a large wooded expanse that stretches from the shopping malls of Route 9 almost to Newton Centre. The woods extend on both sides of Hammond Pond Parkway and both sides of the MBTA Riverside tracks and are home to 20 kinds of ferns and related plants. We will visit the southeast corner near Hammond Pond and see about a dozen or more kinds of ferns.



Wear long pants to protect against poison ivy and bugs. If you have a hand lens, bring it. Bring any native fern you would like me to identify.

Park and meet near the woods behind The Street Shopping Center (near Davio's Restaurant), between the pond and Hammond Pond Parkway.

Trip Leader: Don Lubin, 617-254-8464, don@nefern.info, <http://nefern.info>

PHOTOS ON PREVIOUS PAGE: VERNAL POOL WALK: DAN BRODY, AMERICAN REDSTART: HAYNES MILLER, PHOTOS THIS PAGE: PALM WARBLER: HAYNES MILLER, FERN: DAN BRODY

About the Plant Invaders



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Garlic Mustard arrived from Europe as a medicinal and garden herb, and is now an invader of our backyards, parks, forests, and conservation areas. It quickly covers vast areas and low-light forested areas, shades out other plants, chemically alters the soil to inhibit germination of competitor seeds, and alters habitat for native insects such as butterflies. It is easy to manage by pulling when the second-year plants are flowering in April/May. If not, each plant will scatter hundreds to thousands of seeds that will become first-year plants the next year, or remain as viable seeds for several more years. The plants must be disposed of as trash, not as yard waste.



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Japanese Knotweed is a bamboo-like invader from Asia that can create dense 8' tall single-species stands. It is a tough adversary, because any small root fragments left behind spring back to life the following year. Scientists seek biological control agents, but until then we must control by hand. Persistence pays with this species, and eradication is possible, but it takes several years to truly finish the job.



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Buckthorn is another non-native shrub that is proliferating in forested areas (see Cold Spring Park), covering the understory and preventing native forests from re-seeding.

Our sessions also tackle black swallow-wort, multi-flora rose, tree of heaven, oriental bittersweet, and black locust.



NEWTON CONSERVATORS, INC.
P.O. Box 590011
Newton Centre, MA 02459

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Newton, MA 02459
Permit No. 55629



NEWSLETTER

Newton's land trust working to preserve open space since 1961

WWW.NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • SPRING 2019



ILLUSTRATION: SUZETTE BARBIER



IN THE SPRING ISSUE:

| | |
|---|----|
| Beavers: Urban Wildlife Extraordinaire | 1 |
| President's Message. | 4 |
| What to Know about Invasive Plant Removal | 5 |
| Annual Meeting. | 7 |
| Invasive Plant Sessions. | 8 |
| Spring Walks. | 10 |



Common Yellowthroat Male
photo by Haynes Miller

Go Green! ...and all the other colors of the rainbow. You can view this newsletter at <http://bit.ly/2rXvnit>. To elect not to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, update your membership profile at www.newtonconservators.org