



NEWTON  
CONSERVATORS

SUMMER ISSUE

# NEWSLETTER

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

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## Webster Woods: A Natural Place of Memories and Discoveries

*Richard B. Primack, Professor of Biology at Boston University and a lifelong Newton resident*

**Editor's Note:** This article is an expansion of an article originally written in the *Newton TAB*, April 4, 2019.

**"Nature will bear the closest inspection. She invites us to lay our eye level with her smallest leaf, and take an insect view of its plain." Henry David Thoreau**

I have walked and explored the Webster Woods and the larger Hammond Woods for over 60 years. At 114 acres, this landscape of forests, wetlands, and rock outcrops is the largest natural area in Newton. They are my favorite natural gardens in Newton, providing opportunities in all seasons for recreation, relaxation, and new experiences for myself, my children, friends, students, and neighbors. I still explore these woods almost every day and continue to make new discoveries.



*Richard Primack examines marigold plant*

I hope that residents and the city continue to protect these woods so that future generations of Newton families can create their own memories and discoveries.

My favorite place in the woods is Bare Pond, which is a vernal pool next to the rear



*Eric Olson explains pond life in Webster Woods vernal pool*

parking lot of the Boston College property on the Newton Center side of Hammond Pond Parkway. In early spring, the pond is alive with calling frogs and toads, and newly arrived migratory birds searching for insects at the pond edges. It even has a built-in bench — a puddingstone rock shelf above one side of the pond, which is perfect for relaxing and talking with friends. In late spring and summer, I lean over the shore of the pond to study tiny crustaceans chugging through the water and water beetles darting about. If I am very lucky, I see the aquatic larvae of spotted salamanders.

When our children were small, they waded enthusiastically in the pond. In fall, the fringing border of black gums, red maples, and highbush blueberries along the pond

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*Bare Pond in Winter*

turn brilliant colors of red and orange. In winter, the pond freezes and becomes an enchanted woodland skating rink, perfect for my favorite ice activity — to run and slide standing up as far as I can.

Just above Bare Pond to the west is a dry, rocky ridge covered with stunted oak trees, only 20 to 30 feet tall, interspersed with large boulders, lying where they were dropped 15,000 years ago. On the north side of the ridge is a cliff with small black birches growing from rock crevices as wild bonsai trees.

A natural seepage of water flows across one vertical rock face and freezes during the winter; in late winter and early spring, melting water seeps below the 10-foot-high transparent ice sheet, creating rippling patterns in constant motion.



*Webster Woods boulder*

Another favorite spot is the Vale, a valley between the eastern extensions of Madoc, Elgin, and Warren streets, which are all good entry points into the woods. The Vale is a self-contained ecosystem, with a surprisingly intact community of wildflowers, shrubs and trees, and a small winding stream. The shrubs in the bottom of the Vale provide a succession of flowers: spicebush in spring, coast pepperbush in summer, and witch hazel in fall. The Vale also has the largest sassafras tree I have seen in Newton, plus numerous beech trees and yellow birches.



*Salamander Rock in Webster Woods*

the cold weather of autumn, whenever I tilt Salamander

Growing up, I spent many hours reading and thinking next to the stream, watching the water flow by. Along the valley path is a flat rock about 18 inches square, that I call Salamander Rock. From the first warm days of spring until the cold weather of autumn, whenever I tilt Salamander



*Lady Slipper Orchid*

bloodroot that my students and I planted 24 years ago as an experiment in wildflower restoration ecology. Their large, eight-petaled white flowers make a striking display for one week in April each year. We planted seven other wildflower species throughout the woods, but they have since died out.

A third favorite spot is the wet, low-lying section of the dirt road that runs westward and downhill from the parking lot on the Boston College property towards the Vale and Newton Center. The combination of partial sun, moisture, and slight disturbance makes this a hot spot for biological activity. This is the one place I have seen the rattlesnake plaintain, a small orchid, as well as Indian cucumber root and club moss.



*Boston University grad student Lucy Zipf collecting twigs of oak and high bush blueberry for studies of bud dormancy in winter.*

challenge my children and students to pick up a handful and see if they can hit a tree or a metal sign; opportunities to throw rocks are not so frequent for modern kids.

Even after so many years, I keep making new discoveries. Just last summer, I discovered an abundance of a delicious mushroom popping up in a narrow, curved, 150-yard long band. Is this the remnant of some ancient giant fairy ring?

Rock, there is almost always a redback salamander underneath. One time, lifting the rock, I surprised a small ringneck snake, and another time I uncovered a yellow spotted salamander, which looked gigantic compared to the small redbacks.

At the upper end of the Vale, along the extension of Madoc Street, is a large and growing population of native

Last summer, my family members noticed an aggregation of peculiar flightless black beetles on the leaves of ground vegetation here. After some detective work, we discovered that these were a kind of blister beetle known as oil beetles because they exude a highly toxic chemical from their joints when disturbed. This spot is also notable for the abundance of gravelly rocks of various sizes on the road. Sometimes I



And this past autumn, on the cliffs above Hammond Pond, I found a large hanging puddingstone rock suspended two feet above the ground, where thousands of years ago it had become pinned between two rock faces, frozen mid-fall.

These woods are full of memories and discoveries. It was here I learned to adventure as a child in Newton's largest forest. As a teenager and young adult, I learned how to identify plants and spent endless afternoons hanging out with friends. Later I brought my children and students here to learn about nature and have fun. As a professional

botanist, I studied the reproductive biology of lady's slipper orchids, the restoration of rare wildflower populations, the sex expression of red maple trees, and impacts of climate change on the leafing out times of trees — all in these woods.

The Webster Woods is a special place for me, and also for my family, friends, and students. Many other Newton families and residents have similar ties to these woods. We are lucky to have them, and we need to protect them. ♦

## Adventures in Monarchy

Many years ago, we got some wildflower seed packs and started a garden in our front yard in place of grass. One year we noticed a new plant in the far corner of the yard. When it flowered later, we learned that this plant was common milkweed. Over a few years it spread farther and farther with our encouragement until we had a sizeable stand of it throughout the lawn surrounding our modest flower garden.

Milkweed is aptly named due to its milky sap when a stem or leaf is cut. On the other hand, the “weed” in its name might be a factor in its unnecessary removal; it has pretty and fragrant pink flowers in June and July, which are very attractive to bees and other pollinators. Two other types of milkweed are also commonly found in New England — swamp milkweed, which has pretty pink flowers and narrower leaves, and butterfly weed, with attractive orange flowers.

Monarch butterflies lay their eggs only on milkweed, and their population is being threatened by loss of milkweed habitat and the use of pesticides. And in our experience over recent years, sightings of monarchs were fewer and fewer, some seasons only resulting in two or three sightings.



*Male Monarch on asters, note dark spots on the wing.*



*Milkweed in garden*

We went on a quest in our garden to find Monarch eggs. The eggs are very small white ovoids, standing up like tiny footballs on end, usually just one per leaf. On common milkweed, they prefer the undersides of the more tender leaves on younger plants or the newer leaves at the tops of taller plants. A magnifier can be very helpful in distinguishing the eggs from little leaking milk-like sap drops. If a Monarch is landing on a milkweed leaf, grabbing onto the top and putting its posterior underneath, it is likely a female laying an egg. In their lifetime, female Monarchs may lay 300–400 eggs; sadly, only a very small percentage survive from their many predators such as ants, spiders or flies.

Early on, I was able to identify and tag the leaves that had eggs, but in most cases checking them out later, the eggs had disappeared due to predators. We learned a simple method of increasing the survival odds is to simply pick the leaf and keep it in a small transparent sealed container lined with a moist paper towel. The egg can hatch in this small “nursery,” which can be kept indoors at a comfortable temperature. When the eggs hatch, the tiny caterpillar will eat its shell and begin chewing a small area of the leaf, leaving a crescent shaped hole at first, and generating tiny poppy seed-like

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PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI  
*Newly hatched egg and tiny caterpillar*



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI  
*Juvenile caterpillar with frass*

frass — a polite word for caterpillar poop.

In the nursery, caterpillars can grow quite large if supplied with fresh milkweed leaves, and if the paper towels catching the frass are changed occasionally. The leaves stay fresh because of the moisture, and the caterpillars grow at an amazing rate, sometimes doubling in size in a day. On a trip last summer to Acadia, we happened to visit the beautiful Charlotte Rhoads Butterfly Garden in Southwest Harbor, Maine, where a helpful volunteer gardener showed us how they raised monarch butterflies. They would simply cut off milkweed stalks that they found with either eggs or caterpillars and put the stalks in water containers, where aluminum foil around the stalks would prevent the caterpillars from drowning. Gallon or half-gallon milk jugs can serve nicely and are heavy enough not to tip over. Small caterpillars raised in the nursery can be transferred to the stalks as well.



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI  
*Butterfly cage*

The vases and stalks were put inside vertical fine mesh containers that had zippered sides. Such “butterfly cages” are readily available on the internet or at nature stores at a very modest cost. As they grow larger, caterpillars can enjoy eating the leaves on the milkweed stalks until they get to be about two inches in length. They then seem to go on an eating spree preparing for a long sleep. In a

mesh cage, they stop eating and climb to the top where they eventually hang vertically by attaching their tail to the ceiling and forming a “J” shape overnight.

The next morning “magic” happens as the caterpillar straightens out a bit and begins some movement. The caterpillar’s skin splits open at the head, and as it wriggles, the skin splits further and rolls up toward the tail, revealing what looks like



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI  
*J shape before chrysalis formation*

a fat, greenish yellow larva inside. It spins and shakes until the skin drops off completely, spins a bit more, and then compresses vertically and becomes what looks like a smooth-skinned green hanging bean, the chrysalis only about an inch in length. Close examination shows a series of beautiful iridescent gold specks near the top.

For the next one to two weeks, the metamorphosis continues until the outer skin becomes a little transparent and even



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI  
*Chrysalis*

portions of the wing structure become slightly visible. Usually in the morning, over a period of a couple of minutes, the butterfly will emerge starting near the bottom of the chrysalis. The legs emerge followed by the main body. In an amazing “transformer-like” process, the wings unfold and are pumped up by fluid in the thorax, expanding the butterfly to a size much larger than the seemingly tiny chrysalis.

Periodically, it will open its wings and close them again — the process of drying them. “Wow — look at me!” it may be thinking. In the next hour, it may take its first tentative steps away from its former chrysalis shell, continuing to fan its wings. After about two to three hours, the Monarch should

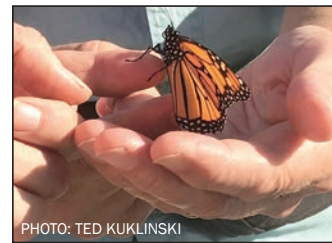


PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI  
*Monarch in hand prior to release*

be ready to experience flight for the first time. The butterfly will readily climb onto your finger and can be taken outside the cage. It may climb onto a flower and or simply take off skyward, free at last to fly and to explore its new world as a butterfly.

At least in our garden, the last of the eggs hatched around the end of August. By the end of September, these caterpillars had turned to butterflies — but very special ones. During the rest of the season, the butterflies live only a few weeks, during which they will mate, and more eggs will be produced. But the last brood of the season is different, and these do not mate but instead feed voraciously to prepare for their remarkable migratory journey south. They go all the way to Mexico if they are fortunate — where they will stay over the winter and breed in the spring and head north. It will take several generations in a kind of relay race for their progeny to make it back up north to New England.

The key to all this fun is a good supply of native milkweed. It’s so exciting to see this cycle in action, especially for budding young naturalists. Plant some milkweed and give it a try! ♦

✿ Ted Kuklinski

# President's Message

**A**s I write this on a beautiful sunny day (seemingly a rare occasion this spring), a migrating Northern Parula Warbler is singing its buzzy but rising optimistic song nearby, and it makes me glad to live in Newton, the Garden City!



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

*Conservator board meeting at the Waban Library*

We had our annual Newton Conservators' dinner meeting last week with over 100 attendees, and it made me proud to belong to an organization with such great members devoted to open space. Congratulations to our deserving awardees this year, Eric Olson, Don Lubin, Maria Rose, and the Friends of Kennard Park (represented by Carolyn Kraft, Larry Burdick, Michelle Cusick, Dorothea Buckler and Pam Ward). Newton Conservators was delighted to recognize their dedication. And what an enlightening talk we had from

Jonathan Way, who stepped in on short notice when our original speaker had the flu, on his studies of the eastern coyote (or more properly coywolf as he pointed out). If you missed it, check out the video of Jon's talk soon to be on our website.

This annual meeting also represented a time of transition. Beth Wilkinson has led our organization skillfully and enthusiastically as president for the past FIVE years — a very long period in Conservator time! She has chaired and guided over a huge number of board and committee meetings, attended countless more city and other organization meetings on our behalf, and is currently chair of the Mayor's Webster Woods Advisory Panel. She has dutifully written and answered thousands of emails and letters and likely as many phone calls, even cheerfully redirecting many mistaken inquiries, e.g. permission to have a wedding in one of the parks listed in our trail guide.

Over Beth's tenure, the Newton Conservators' organization has put on hundreds of events — bird walks, hikes, canoe tours, lectures, farmers' market tables, and countless invasive removal projects. However, she will continue to play a critical role on our executive committee in her new position of "Past President," and we will benefit from her experience and skills in navigating open space issues. In short, she has been a gem to us and was honored at the annual dinner with a hearty round of applause and a beautiful sweet fern and hydrangea for her garden and flowers for her table in appreciation of her service.

We are also blessed with an extremely hard working executive committee, a talented board of directors, and an outstanding board of advisors, who all continue to bring their varied skills to bear in service to our mission. If you are reading this, you are probably a good friend of open space, and we need your help! We would love to have you take an active role and use your skills as a volunteer in some way — lead a walk, write an article, remove invasives at your local park, help us publicize our many events, promote us at a farmers' market table, help us monitor conservation restrictions, and many more. See our website for opportunities to help. Please tell your friends about the Conservators. It's always a puzzle how an organization that has been around almost 60 years and does such important work can still be so unfamiliar to some Newtonians. We are grateful for your support and membership in the Newton Conservators as we forge ahead in the coming year!

All the best,

*Ted Kuklinski*

Ted Kuklinski  
President, Newton Conservators



# The 2019 Newton Conservators' Annual Meeting



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

*Beth Wilkinson addresses the 2019 annual meeting*

How best to welcome a stranger — especially when you're also struggling to say goodbye to old friends — topped the agenda at the 58th annual dinner meeting of the Newton Conservators.

When the Conservators gathered May 8 at Post 440, they mourned the passing of several long-time Conservators and friends, acknowledged the changing roles of a number of Conservator directors and advisors, and picked up some pointers on how best to welcome that new guy in town — the Eastern Coyote.

But first they got a hopeful glimpse of the future — even if it is sometimes rooted in the past. The Conservators, committed to educating residents of Newton about the importance of open space, fund projects and programs that further that goal. During the cocktail hour, The Friends of the Newton Cemetery made a poster presentation on their pollinator planting project, funded in part by the Conservators. The new garden will provide an environment for the bees to pollinate and the public to learn the importance of sustaining the bee population. The Conservators are longtime supporters of Newton's Environmental Science Program, as well as providing classroom and individual student grants. Some of the grant recipients were on hand to talk about their work. Two of the students received a special treat: an anonymous long-time Conservator, who has moved out of state, gifted the students with tickets to the dinner.

Anticipating receiving guidance on achieving peaceful coyote coexistence, attendees were concerned when illness forced featured speaker, John Maguranis, Animal Control Officer and Massachusetts representative of Project Coyote, to cancel at the last minute. But they were not disappointed when Dr. Jonathan G. Way, founder of Eastern Coyote/Coywolf Research and nationally renowned carnivore



*John Way*

biologist, stepped in to introduce the new guy in the neighborhood.

While most of us are only now making acquaintance with coyotes, they've been in Newton for at least 20 years. "The coyote's job is to avoid people; which is why human confrontations are amazingly low," said Dr. Way. "I see an incredibly adaptable and family-oriented animal that is personable, social, sentient, and an important member of the ecological community. Coyotes help clear neighborhoods of all sorts of undesirables like mice, rats, voles."



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

*Jonathan Wall presents slides at the Newton Conservator annual meeting.*

And the occasional small dog or cat, which is what has many local residents concerned. At times the concern seems disproportionate — the widely-circulated image of a coyote trotting the streets of Auburndale, a yellow cat clasped firmly in its jowls, still

haunts a year and a half later, while concerns for a six-year old who had to undergo rabies vaccination after being attacked by a raccoon at his Newton Highland home last July had all but vanished by the time school started in the fall — but it does seem that many residents see the coyote as more foe than friend.

But is that fear reasonable? According to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, from 1998 to 2018 only 10 incidents of a coyote attacking a person were reported



*Coywolf Closeup*

(an 11th incident occurred this past March, when a teenage girl was nipped by a coyote who darted up onto her backyard deck.) Way contrasts that with the estimated 4.5 million dog bites that occur annually in the United States.

Just last year alone, 36 people, age 91 to five days old, died from dog attacks. Almost all of these were “family” dogs.

Every year thousands of Massachusetts residents seek medical attention for dog bites, some of them serious enough to require hospitalization or plastic surgery. In May, a Rehoboth teen was tragically attacked and killed by a pack of dogs. The dogs were owned by a Dighton trainer, and the teen regularly helped care for them.

Nearly all of the very few Massachusetts coyote attacks are attributable to either coyote rabies or to a person inadvertently coming too close to a coyote den. Coyotes, who are very territorial, will also sometimes ignore a person in order to engage with a large dog that they perceive as invading their turf.



*Coywolf*

Coyotes are recent arrivals in eastern North America, colonizing the habitat over the last century after native wolves were killed off and forests cleared. Way, who has been collaborating with

Dr. Brad White’s genetic research team at Trent University in Ontario to map coyote DNA, actually prefers the name coywolf, as the creature prowling our backyards is actually a hybridization of the native eastern wolf, western coyote, gray wolf and dog.

“We are still trying to sort through this “canid soup,” Way explained, adding that he believes the eastern coyote should be classified as its own species because all of the samples from the Northeast grouped more closely to each other than to western coyotes or wolves.

The coywolf strategizes like a wolf, he notes, lives and hunts near humans like a coyote, and has a reduced fear of humans, like a dog. The hybrid “coywolf” is heavier than

pure coyotes, with longer legs, a larger jaw, smaller ears, and a bushier tail. While Western coyotes are gray or tan colored, coyowolves’ coats vary greatly, with colors similar to their Western cousins, as well as red as a red fox, blonde, or even black.

Massachusetts is the third most densely populated state in the country, losing 40 acres of land a day to development. As habitat decreases, human and wildlife interactions

increase. Coyotes are drawn to neighborhoods due to human encroachment of coyote habitat and for food and water, which is generally easily available in urban and suburban areas. But as Way’s tracking research has demonstrated, the resident coyotes do not tolerate other coyotes in their territory, so it is impossible for an area to become “infested” with coyotes.

Like “tomaytoes” and “tomahtoes,” coyotes/coyowolves are here to stay.



*Suburban Howls by John Way*

How can we be good neighbors?

Omnivorous, coyotes are opportunistic hunters. Keep cats indoors. Keep small dogs leashed, and resist the late night or early morning temptation to open the door and let them out alone to “do their business.” Fences are not an absolute deterrent; coyotes can dig under or climb over them.

Do not feed coyotes, purposefully or inadvertently. Coyotes don’t need handouts from self-proclaimed coyote whisperers. Don’t leave pet food and water out in the open, and feed your pets indoors. If you have a bird feeder, clean up any seed spilled underneath. Coyotes will venture into your yard in search of the small rodents feasting on it.

Keep your garbage cans secured, compost bins covered and your grills cleaned. Make sure crawl spaces under porches and decks are inaccessible. Consider installing motion-sensitive lighting around your house.

Keep the calendar in mind. Coyotes are normally shy and elusive, but during mating season (typically January and February), they become territorial and may attack dogs of any size. Likewise when the pups are born in the spring, parents may become quite protective of the den. Come late summer, pups from the spring litters are given freedom to explore their surroundings by the parents; like human toddlers they’re quite curious and have been known to

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follow people and/or stand and stare at walkers. Unless rabid, a bold or aggressive coyote can be driven off by shouting, banging pots together, bright lights or other displays of human dominance.

### Conservator Recognitions and Awards

Education is the key to peaceful human/coyote existence, and some day we may even be talking about a shared Good Neighbor Award. But as is traditional at the annual dinner meeting, this year the Conservators made awards in three categories to people or groups who have advanced the cause of open space conservation in Newton:

► Two Directors Awards were given. The first celebrates the Board of Friends of Kennard Park.



PHOTO: HENRY FINCH  
*The Directors' award is presented to the Board of Friends of Kennard Park; Carolyn Kraft, Larry Burdick, Dorothea Buckler, Michelle Cusick, and Pam Ward by Conservators' board member Peter Barrer.*

The Directors' award is presented to the Board of Friends of Kennard Park; Carolyn Kraft, Larry Burdick, Dorothea Buckler, Michelle Cusick, and Pam Ward by Conservator board member Peter Barrer.

"These people have brought new life to the Park,"

Director Peter J. Barrer explained appreciatively. "They have demonstrated that nature and art complement each other — a kind of magic. They have been removing invasives from the park, and have placed native plants. They are making a meadow of native plantings."

But their efforts don't stop there. "They have opened up the park to the wider community, welcoming people by holding events. The park has hosted sculpture, dance, and a speakers series at the Kennard House," Barrer continued. A fall speakers series, an Art Trail, and a labyrinth garden for contemplation and mindfulness are all in the works.

While Mr. Rogers promised you will never go down the drain, it's City Environmental Engineer Maria Rose who's charged with making sure nothing else unwanted finds its way into Newton's storm drains. In presenting Rose with a Directors' award, Conservators' President Beth Wilkinson cited not only her dedication but her knowledge and enthusiasm as she works to improve Newton's drainage infrastructure to manage storm water. As a direct result of Rose's efforts to not only investigate and eliminate illicit



PHOTO: HENRY FINCH  
*Maria Rose and Beth Wilkinson after Maria receives a Directors' award.*

connections to the storm drainage system, but to educate the public about the need to protect the watershed, the water quality of Newton's river, streams, lake and ponds have been not only maintained but also improved.

► The 2019 Newton Conservators' Charles Johnson Maynard award was given to Don Lubin for his efforts to discover and identify ferns in conservation areas throughout New England, his strong commitment to promoting biodiversity, and for the decades he has spent sharing his knowledge of ferns with all of us.



PHOTO: HENRY FINCH  
*Conservators' Vice President Chris Hepburn presents the Charles Johnson Maynard award to Don Lubin.*

Charles Johnson Maynard was a well-known naturalist, ornithologist, author and publisher who was born and lived in Newton from 1845 until his death in 1929.

"I think it is fair to say that today no one follows in this naturalist's footsteps

better than Don Lubin," said Conservators' Vice President Chris Hepburn in presenting the award. "Don's knowledge of and love for ferns is remarkable and his enthusiasm for showing them to others is truly infectious."

Don leads trips and workshops not only for the Newton Conservators but many other groups, including the NE Wildflower Society. He's contributed dozens of samples of uncommon New England ferns to herbaria including the Asa Gray Herbarium at Harvard, worked on biodiversity surveys throughout eastern Massachusetts, and hosts a website ([nefern.info](http://nefern.info)) on New England Ferns called "Ferns et al. of New England."

► The 2019 Environmentalist of the Year Award went to one who might fairly be called first among many. "In Newton, there are a lot of people who are actively working to preserve and protect the environment, so the Conservators have the good fortune of being able to choose from a substantial group," acknowledged David Backer. "But even in that good company, Eric Olson stands out for the



work he is constantly doing here in Newton and in the larger world.”

Eric Olson was recognized not simply for his devotion to the environment, the City of Newton, and the Newton Conservators, but for his work to further the science of ecology and his belief that education will help to save the



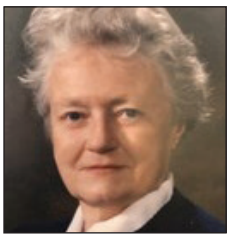
*Eric Olson, Environmentalist of the year.*

environment. A professor, advocate and international activist, Olson insists that our actions be guided by best practices and sound science. He works tirelessly to encourage the growth of native plants and the creatures they support.

“I know about Eric’s contributions from personal experience because he has worked for many years with the Environmental Science Program of Newton that I run,” Backer explained. “His

explanations are clear and fun, and his enthusiasm is always a boost for the students and leaders who clear out hundreds of square feet of Japanese Knotweed every summer.”

2018 saw the passing of several Conservators and Friends, whose passing only served to remind us of the indelible marks they’ve left behind.



*Jean Moore Husher*

Jean Moore Husher was involved with the Conservators for the better part of half a century, serving as president from 1988-1990, vice president, board member, and advisor. A draftsman and illustrator, Jean created the first Conservators logo in the early 1960s. She was chairwoman of the Newton2000 History Committee,

writing a history of land development in Newton. As part of the Commonwealth Avenue Task Force, she shared the 1996 Environmentalist of the Year Award for the successful design for the renovation of Commonwealth Avenue as a linear park.



*Peter Kastner*

Peter Kastner was an inspirational and influential force for preservation and management of open space in Newton for over three decades, during which he served as vice-president before becoming president of the Newton Conservators from 1994 to 1996. For many years he coordinated

the Conservators’ walk programs, chaired the nominating committee, and served on the annual audit committee. In 2014 he was named Environmentalist of the Year in recognition more than 30 years of vigilance, tireless service, and advocacy protecting Newton’s environment, leading the Conservators, and representing them on the Parks and Recreation Commission.



*Frank Howard*

Frank A. Howard sat on the Conservators’ Board of Directors for 13 years. Frank’s wife Deborah also served her time on the board. Frank used to say the family involvement was almost predestined. The couple bought their “first and only” home in West Newton from the Lennihans.

Dick Lennihan had witnessed the neglect of Edmonds Park, as it became a trash dumping ground. In 1961 Lennihan and other residents across the City concerned about uncontrolled development banded together to form the Newton Conservators’ Incorporated (N.C.I.).

Frank also served on the board of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation. In 2006 he received The Charles Johnson Maynard Award for his efforts to help develop a disease-resistant strain of the American Chestnut and to bring together specialists in an attempt to pollinate an old chestnut tree in Newton that managed to survive the blight.



*Brian Yates*

Former Newton City Councilor Brian Yates was the Founder, President, and guiding spirit of the Friends of Hemlock Gorge, transforming a decayed and degraded eyesore into one of the area’s most treasured open space and recreational area. A long time friend of and advisor to the Conservators, he was a strong advocate

on the City Council for the environmental aims of the Conservators and for various historic preservation initiatives including Local Historic Districts (LHD) Conservation Districts.

2018 was a year of persistence, collaboration and outreach for the Conservators. In delivering her final President’s report, Beth Wilkinson noted that the Conservators continue to actively work to preserve Webster Woods, with three Conservators board members and three advisors serving on the Webster Woods Advisory Panel.

In addition to monitoring the existing six Conservation Restrictions (CRs) the Conservators hold on City properties, the Conservators continued to support the City

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in monitoring and placing conservation restrictions on open space. Board members are working with the City's Law Department and the Community Preservation Committee on new CRs for properties on Rogers Street at Crystal Lake and Wabasso Street. Work on CRs for Nahanton Park and Kessler Woods are in various stages of development.



*Beth Wilkinson,  
president from  
2014-2019*

The Conservators' small but mighty invasive plant removal team of dedicated volunteers continued its relentless pursuit of the unwelcome invaders across the City. "This spring alone," Wilkinson reported, "we scheduled 17 invasive removal sessions!"

Routine maintenance on all Conservators' properties continued, with soil testing and an expert from the New England Wild Flower

Society retained to help in developing a plan for improving the health of Dexter Road property in Newtonville.

The Conservators teamed up with new Riverside Greenway Working Group to develop a plan for a trail network to close the gap between the Blue Heron Trail at Lyons Park



*Past president Beth Wilkinson and new president Ted Kuklinski at the Conservators' annual meeting*

in Auburndale and the Riverside MBTA station and beyond. "We also were pleased to support the formation of the Friends of Cold Springs Park," Wilkinson said "and collaborated with staff and volunteers with the Charles River Watershed Association on invasive species control."

And finally the new website went live. Webmaster Dan Brody worked with Scott Lewis of Trailwebsites.com to modernize the site, to make it work better on smartphones and tablets, and to add a

host of new features. "You will find it more user friendly," Wilkinson promised, "and a convenient place to find the latest open space news; events and walks to attend; maps and info for our open spaces; past newsletters, bulletins, and videos; and many helpful search features."

Taking the President's gavel from Beth Wilkinson is long-time board member Ted Kuklinski. Since joining the board in the late 1990s, Ted, a self-taught naturalist, started the Conservators' Lecture Series, created the Conservators' e-Bulletin, and served as video producer, walk leader and vice president. Kuklinski, is a member of Newton's Off-Leash Area Working Group and a steward of Dolan Pond Conservation Area and citizen liaison for Wellington Park in West Newton. He holds a BSEE from



*New Conservator  
president Ted Kuklinski*

Drexel University and MS and PhD from MIT in electrical engineering and computer science, and has had a career in tech startups. In his spare time — if his new role of president gives him any — he enjoys birding, playing harmonica and ukulele with several groups, and is an avid volleyball player.

Guide and guard: The essence of the Conservators' Mission Statement distilled into just two words! Never has there been a Conservators' president who so deftly held a lantern in one hand while wielding a sword in the other as Beth Wilkinson. And she has been such a generous advocate, sharing her time and knowledge with other citizens groups, educators and City officials that she has inspired solid alliances when demanding accountability from public and private entities.

Beth Wilkinson joined the Conservators' board in 2011 and served as president from 2014 until 2019. She steps down now, but not away. The Conservators are fortunate that Wilkinson will remain board member, her acumen and tenacity still visible in the public face of the Conservators. ♦

— Margaret Doris

## 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.**

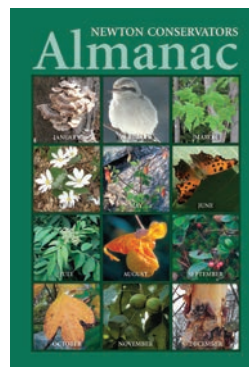
If you have any further questions about the program, check the FAQ page: <http://smile.amazon.com/about>.



## Summer's here! Get outdoors.

Shop online at [newtonconservators.org/publications/](http://newtonconservators.org/publications/) 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.



## 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 <b>*NEW!</b> | <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/](http://newtonconservators.org/membership/) to renew/join online. Consider including Newton Conservators in your estate planning. Contact us at [president@NewtonConservators.org](mailto:president@NewtonConservators.org).

### 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](mailto: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

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

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# NEWSLETTER

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

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**White-throated Sparrow**  
*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 [newtonconservators.org/membership](http://newtonconservators.org/membership)