



# NEWTON CONSERVATORS

December 6, 2019

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Dear Newton Conservator,

**Your membership and donations helped accomplish a great deal this past year...**

**Webster Woods.** Newton Conservators has worked diligently towards the acquisition of the 17.4 acre open space portion of the Webster Woods parcel owned by Boston College. Board members and advisors have been members of city committees working towards saving this important parcel, which binds together City of Newton and DCR open space. We have collaborated with the Friends of Webster Woods in strong advocacy and information campaigns to educate the public about this wonderful urban forest and have gotten people out in the woods via a series of walks. A CPA proposal by Mayor Fuller and the Conservation Commission, recommended for funding by the Community Preservation Commission, was recently unanimously approved by the City Council. Newton Conservators will be holding a Conservation Restriction on the property when acquisition is complete.



**Riverside Trails.** The proposed Riverside Trail System along the Charles is another exciting open space development. A library event early this year showed great public support for this visionary trail system along the Charles River from Lyons Field in Auburndale to the Riverside MBTA station, Newton Lower Falls, and beyond. We are partners in the Riverside Trail Working Group (a coalition with the Lawrence and Lillian Solomon Foundation, Bike Newton, and residents of Newton Lower Falls and Auburndale).

**Cold Spring Park.** We've been pleased to work with the Friends of Cold Spring Park in raising awareness of this central park of Newton, cosponsoring lectures about the park and organizing many invasive removal and educational sessions there. The Conservators, as a 501(c)(3) organization, has acted as a fiscal sponsor for Friends of Cold Spring Park (as well as Friends of Webster Woods and the Riverside Trails Working Group), accepting tax deductible contributions for their activities and needs.



**Invasive Plant Removal Efforts.** One of the primary threats to our open spaces and their biodiversity is the prevalence of invasive plants such as buckthorn, garlic mustard, knotweed, black swallow-wort and others. The Conservators' team of dedicated volunteers held over twenty invasives removal sessions at Cold Spring Park, Dolan Pond, Nahanton Park, Houghton Garden, Hammond Pond, Crystal Lake, Sawmill Brook, Bracebridge Road, Hemlock Gorge, and along the Charles at Quinobequin Road and the Blue Heron Bridge! By limiting

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invasive plants in those areas, we achieve greater biodiversity and improve the health of critical open space and the wildlife that lives in it.

**Supporting the City in preserving open space.** Conservation Restrictions (CRs) are an important tool in protecting our open spaces from encroachment and dumping. Newton Conservators currently holds CRs on six city owned properties — Commonwealth Golf Course, Crystal Lake, Newton Community Farm, Waban Hill Reservoir, Webster Park (Dolan Pond), and Elgin Street (part of Webster Woods) — as well as on a private property on Bracebridge Road. Our teams conduct yearly monitoring visits and supply reports to the relevant city agency about current conditions and recommendations for maintenance or enforcement. This year we worked with the City’s Law Department and the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) on submitting new CRs to the state for properties on Rogers Street at Crystal Lake, Wabasso Street, and for Kessler Woods. We continue to work creating a CR for Nahanton Park, which currently has no long-term protection.



**Work on our properties.** Our Dexter Woods hillside park in Newtonville required extensive attention this year. After neighborhood meetings and consultation with tree experts, we concluded that many of the trees on the property were unhealthy and could potentially cause damage if they fell. We removed a number of trees at risk due to the slope and soil conditions, performed soil testing and hired a consultant from Native Plant Trust. Using the information, we will be working to create a new planting plan to beautify and stabilize the property with native shrub wildlife habitat. Our Ordway Park is located in a residential neighborhood on Grant Street and requires regular sidewalk snow removal, leaf raking, and tree and path maintenance in addition to regular invasive plant control.

**Education and Outreach.** We are committed to sharing our work and educating residents of Newton about the importance of open space. Our extensive newtonconservators.org website received a complete overhaul and redesign this past spring. It has become the “go to” source for the most complete text, mapping, and pictorial information on the major open spaces in Newton. Our printed quarterly newsletter is better than ever with quality informative articles by local experts. Our timely e-Bulletin and email alerts keep members and friends up to date on the latest developments and events, including open space related events from groups such as Green Newton, Historic Newton, Bike Newton, Newton Cemetery, CRWA, and others.



**Connections.** This past year we have put together over twenty free outdoor events via our spring and fall walks, hikes, and paddle events covering birding, nature studies, geology, history, and more. We have sponsored or cosponsored a half dozen lecture programs. We have had informational tables at a number of local village days, the Community Farm festival, the Harvest Festival/Green Expo, and high school events, not to mention our presence at Farmers’ Markets in Cold Spring Park and Elm Street — where we held Monarch butterfly workshops for the first time. Through our annual grants program in 2019, we supported the city’s Environmental Science Program and helped fund a beautiful bee pollinator garden at the Newton Cemetery. We have made exciting connections with local high school teachers and student environmental groups at both the high school and college level.

**Membership Renewal.** As 2019 draws to a close, we would be very grateful for your continued support by renewing your membership. Perhaps consider renewing at a higher level, adding an extra donation, or purchasing a gift membership for someone else who is passionate about open space.

**You can join the Conservators online at [www.newtonconservators.org/membership.htm](http://www.newtonconservators.org/membership.htm).**

With much appreciation,

*Ted Kuklinski*

Ted Kuklinski, *President*  
Newton Conservators