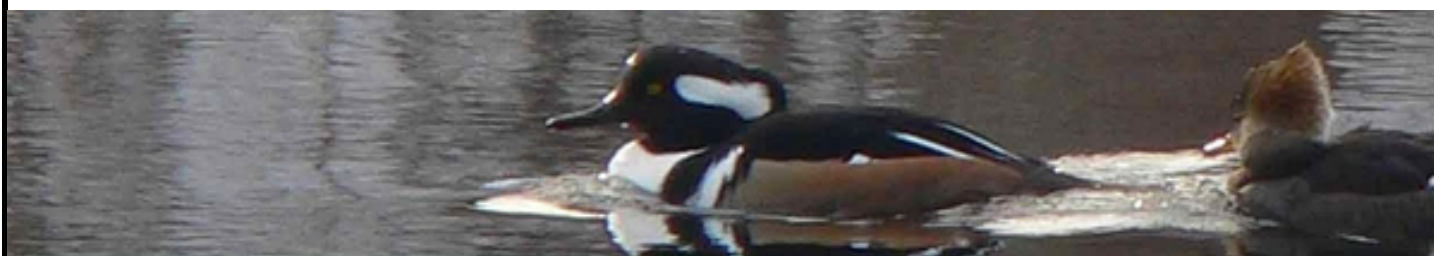




## Newton Conservators E-Bulletin

Wednesday, January 1, 2020

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



### Happy New Year - 2020!



It's the first day of the year and of a new decade as well! The Newton Conservators have had a very active 2019 and you can read about our activities the past year in our [membership renewal letter](#) which many of you have received in the mail. Webster Woods is finally protected! We would be most grateful if you renewed your [membership](#), joined us officially for the first time, or made a donation to support our important open space work! We wish you

a most Happy New Year and a new decade with lots of opportunities to enjoy open space out and about in the [wilds of Newton](#)!

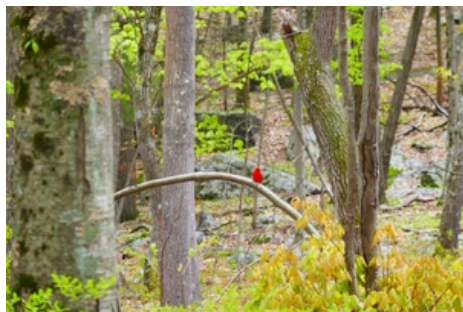
We would love to have you become more involved in the work of the Newton Conservators - we have lots of needs - organizing walks, helping with our invasive pulls and other public events, writing for our newsletter, helping maintain our database, social media and publicity, and many more opportunities to utilize your talent for open space! If you are interested, please contact us at [president@newtonconservators.org](mailto:president@newtonconservators.org).

### Great News: Webster Woods Saved!

This Holiday season open space advocates in Newton received a terrific present - after the required 20 day waiting period, the City had taken possession of Webster Woods - returning it to the open space usage originally intended by donor Edwin Webster!

On December 24, 2019, the City of Newton [filed legal papers](#) at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds to take ownership of 17 acres of Webster Woods, as authorized by [a unanimous vote of the City Council](#) on December 2nd. The land will become part of the city's [Webster Conservation Area](#).





Boston College has the right to go to court to challenge the \$15.2 million price approved by the City Council, but the land now belongs to the City of Newton. The Newton Conservators will hold [a conservation restriction](#) on the land, to assure that it will be preserved in perpetuity. Boston College will retain ownership of the developed portion of the property it purchased in 2016, including the buildings, the main parking lot, and the rear parking lot that is now used as a salt storage facility.

See our page at <https://newtonconservators.org/webster-woods-taking-filed/> or read details in the Newton Patch: <https://patch.com/massachusetts/newton/webster-woods-now-belongs-city-newton-conservators>. If you have not seen it yet, you really should check out our most recent [Newton Conservators Newsletter](#) devoted to Webster Woods.

## Newton Christmas Bird Count - 2019

This year's annual **Christmas Bird Count (CBC)** in Newton took place on **December 15th** this year with participation by about 15 hardy birders including some welcome new faces. This was the **120th year of the CBC** which helps to measure changes in population of our avian species and perhaps more global trends such as climate change.



Thanks to Lianne Hartnet who again hosted the early bird gathering at her home with muffins and hot refreshments. This year four teams in Newton headed off at 7 am to various open spaces throughout the city to count all the birds that they could find. The weather was milder than many years with no precipitation but the higher morning winds kept the birds a little more elusive and the birders were glad that they dressed warmly. The Newton count was part of a larger

Greater Boston Count circle and, late in the afternoon, Lianne and Pete Gilmore reported our results at a gathering at the Habitat sanctuary in Belmont with all the other greater Boston birding groups.

Locally in Newton, we were happy to identify 42 different species of birds consisting of 1048 individual birds. The most common question of course is "how do you know you don't count the same bird twice?" Birders make the best effort to count what they can and not count twice, and at other times with huge flocks some guesstimation must be done. We see a lot of common birds and a few unusual finds but it is amazing to see how many types of birds can be found in December in Newton. Overall, Boston count tallied 110 species - due to more varied habitat for such species as shorebirds. Below is the table for the birding count for the Newton portion on December 15, 2019 with a listing of the species with the number counted:



Canada Goose	145	Blue Jay	32
Mute Swan	1	American Crow	14
American Black Duck	3	Black-Capped Chickadee	53
Mallard	163	Tufted Titmouse	34
Bufflehead	13	White Breasted Nuthatch	33
Hooded Merganser	15	Carolina Wren	2
Common Merganser	14	Winter Wren	1
Wild Turkey	11	Golden-crowned Kinglet	2

Great Blue Heron	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Coopers Hawk	1	Hermit Thrush	1
Red-tailed Hawk	9	American Robin	104
Ring-Billed Gull	10	Northern Mockingbird	1
Herring Gull	7	European Starling	46
Rock Pigeon	10	Song Sparrow	17
Mourning Dove	29	White-throated Sparrow	11
Eastern Screech Owl	3	Dark-eyed Junco	67
Great Horned Owl	2	Northern Cardinal	16
Red-bellied Woodpecker	12	House Finch	13
Downy Woodpecker	18	American Goldfinch	33
Hairy Woodpecker	5	Cedar Waxwing	1
Northern Flicker	5	House Sparrow	89

If this type of activity seems of interest, then consider joining us next year (contact Pete Gilmore([petegilmore79@gmail.com](mailto:petegilmore79@gmail.com)), counting birds in your own backyard in the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) (Feb 14-17), or join us on some of our spring bird walks! If you can't wait til spring, try the Duck Walk below along the Charles River on January 18.

## Events

**Thursday, January 16. 7 - 9 pm**

**NewCAL Community Meeting**

**[Newton Education Center - 100 Walnut Street](#)**

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/newcal-community-meeting-jan2020/>



The City of Newton will be holding a community meeting in Room 111 of the Education Center to discuss the proposed Newton Center For Active Living, or NewCAL. Information about the meeting and the project is available on the [NewCAL website](#). Here you can find information on the project, minutes and video of previous meetings, etc. Community meetings are opportunities for residents to hear directly from, and speak to, the project team. Read [the Newton Conservators position](#) on the siting of NewCAL.

**Saturday, January 18, 10 am - 10:30 am**

**WLT Annual Duck Walk**

**[Shaw's Back Parking Lot - 130 River St, Waltham](#)**

**[Info online](#)**



falling.

Join the [Waltham Land Trust](#) for their annual walk along the paved (not plowed) Charles River trails to Moody Street and back in search of hooded and common mergansers, ring-necks, golden eyes, ruddy ducks, and other waterfowl visiting from the north. Bring cameras, binoculars, and [this sheet of birds](#) that might be observed. Dress for the weather and be prepared to stand around, possibly in snow--wear layers and warm/waterproof shoes or boots. Bring hiking sticks/ice cleats if desired. Postponed in very cold temperatures or if heavy precipitation is



**Thursday, January 30, 7-9 pm**

**Newton History Series: A Century of Parks & Recreation in Newton**

**Lecture by Michael Clarke sponsored by Historic Newton**

**Newton Free Library**

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/a-century-of-parks-and-recreation-in-newton/>

The movement was led in part by Newton's Mayor, Edwin O. Childs, and Ernst Hermann, the first and longest-serving Superintendent of Playgrounds. Period photographs will illustrate the talk. Because of its relative affluence, citizen activism, and self-promotion as a desirable place to live, Newton was a foremost player in the parks, playground and organized sports movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Mike Clarke's talk traces the



interaction of these national and international movements with Newton's improvement societies, playground, recreation and parks commissions. Clarke is a director of the Newton Conservators, an alternate member of the Newton Parks and Recreation Commission, and retired BC Professor. Co-sponsored by [Historic Newton](#), the Newton Free Library, and Newton Conservators.

**Friday, February 14 - Monday, February 17**

**Great Backyard Bird Count**

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/join-the-great-backyard-bird-count-2/>

Bird watchers of all ages count birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are. Details can be found on [the Great Backyard Bird Count website](#).



**New Trails Fund - Lawrence and Lillian Solomon Foundation Grant!**

As you may know, Newton Conservators has been part of the Riverside Greenway Working Group to develop a Riverside Trail System along the Charles River from Lyons Field in Auburndale to the Riverside MBTA Station. As such one of our partners has been the [Lawrence and Lillian Solomon Foundation](#). More recently we have also been exploring some possible rehabilitation trail work on the Marty Sender Trail in Auburndale from Lyons Field to Forest Grove in Waltham. Trail projects often have some short term funding needs which might require longer term funding sources.

In light of this, we are pleased to announce a new seed grant of \$20,000 from the [Lawrence and Lillian Solomon Foundation](#) for a new Trails Fund managed by the Newton Conservators. This funding is to support continued planning, design, construction and




THE LAWRENCE & LILLIAN  
SOLOMON FOUNDATION

stewardship of Newton's expanding greenway network. This is part of the Solomon Foundation's "A Greener Greater Boston" (AGGB) initiative, a program in partnership with the the Barr Foundation. We invite additional contributions to this new fund to enable important trails work in the next decade.

**Newton Conservators Newsletter - Webster Woods Issue!**

Our most recent newsletter was devoted to the topic of **Webster Woods** with two outstanding articles. This and past issues can be found online at <https://newtonconservators.org/newsletters/>.



**NEWTON  
CONSERVATORS**

WINTER ISSUE

# NEWSLETTER

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

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NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • WINTER 2019-2020

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## A Letter from Edwin S. Webster



*Based on historical documents, Newton Conservators' director Dan Brody has created a narrative that Edwin S. Webster, the original owner of Webster Woods, might have composed at this moment when the future of much of the woods is about to be decided. A version of the letter, with references, larger maps, and additional photos and maps, can be found online at [newtonconservators.org/webster-letter](https://newtonconservators.org/webster-letter).*

**To the members of the Newton City Council:**



My name is Edwin S. Webster. I have a unique perspective for you to consider as you evaluate Mayor Fuller's proposal to take by eminent domain 17 acres of the woods that are named after my family.


I was born in 1867. My friend Charles Stone and I founded Stone & Webster in 1889. What began as a small engineering consulting firm quickly grew to a large enterprise that built streetcar systems, power plants, and office buildings throughout the world.

By 1895, our success made it possible for my wife, Jane, and me to build a 20-room country house on Hammond Street in Newton. I have resided in (or, you may say, haunted) the house ever since.

Hammond Street, and the nearby pond, were named for Thomas Hammond, who farmed much of the nearby land in the 17th century. By the time we moved to this part of Newton, farmland had mostly been replaced by forest, and the land was fragmented among a half dozen owners. Much of the land was owned by my friend, U. S. Circuit Court Judge John Lowell. John and his children built several stately houses on their land on the east side of the pond.

Jane and I were attracted to the area by this description in the 1889 *King's Handbook of Newton*:

"So broad and sequestered and unfrequented is this lovely forest that no sounds of prosaic human life invade its cloisters, and nothing disturbs the saunterer's reflections but the low songs of the birds, or the scampering of an occasional gray squirrel over the dry leaves."



*Continued on page 2*

## Newton CPA Program Staff Opening

Newton's Community Preservation Program is seeking a new full-time staff manager, to start in January 2020 when current program manager **Alice Ingerson** will retire. Click [here](#) to read or download the detailed job description and application instructions. Apply from the Job Opportunities page under Human Resources on the City website. Visit <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/planning/cpa/default.asp#2019-staff-opening>



In other City personnel related topics, long time Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, **Bob DeRubeis**, is retiring in January. Bob has done a great job with the department overseeing a vast amount of our open space park land. We sincerely thank him and wish him well in retirement. He leaves big shoes to fill!

And special congratulations go to **Jennifer Steel**, Newton's Environmental Planner, who was recently named City Employee of the Year! Jennifer oversees our Conservation Areas, the other big portion of Newton's open spaces (now to include Webster Woods). Jennifer, Bob, and Alice have all been terrific to work with.

## PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



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 renew or join the Newton Conservators online at <https://newtonconservators.org/renewal-2020/>. A link to our annual members' renewal letter outlining last year's activities can also be found at the above link.

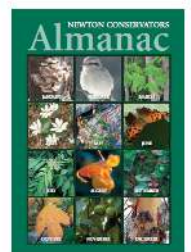
Donations may be made at our secure link <https://newtonconservators.123signup.com/donation/21167>. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, we also accept donations for a number of affiliated local open space groups including Friends of Webster Woods, Friends of Cold Spring Park, the Riverside Trails Working Group and others. As part of the donation process, you can specify a group in the "Comments" section of the form. Thanks so much!

## Membership & Publications!



Did you know that you can Join the Newton Conservators online. And consider a gift membership for a conservation-minded friend. New members get a trail guide as well!

Visit <https://newtonconservators.org/membership/> for details on membership options. Did you know that you can register and pay for membership, events, [buy a copy of our Almanac or newly revised Trail Guide](#), or make a donation to the Newton Conservators online? The Trail Guides and Almanac are also available at your local Newton Bookstores. Shop Local!



**Mission:** *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.*

- E-Bulletin Editor & President Ted Kuklinski, Newton Conservators ([ebulletin@newtonconservators.org](mailto:ebulletin@newtonconservators.org))

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