

President's Message

Hoping that 2020 is going well for you so far! We are so grateful to our newsletter contributors who consistently provide such high quality and informative articles. Our cover story by Ellen Katz and Jay Werb addresses the question “Are the private golf courses in Newton protected as open space?” Do you wonder what would happen to such land were one of these golf courses to cease operation or shrink to a smaller size? This article examines this topic explaining the tax advantages golf courses enjoy due to their open space commitments.

In another featured story, renowned BU Professor Richard Primack delves into the agricultural history of the stone walls found winding through Newton’s forest land, including at Newton’s Saw Mill Brook Reservation where he will be leading a walk on Saturday, March 28.

It’s not too early to look forward to warmer weather and our usual great lineup of spring walks and activities with local expert leaders, in addition to our very full schedule of invasive removal events all around the city.

Our Spring Walk Series kicks off on March 15 with a vigorous hike along the Newton sections of the Cochituate and Sudbury Aqueducts. In our newly acquired Webster Woods, we have not one but two vernal pool walks focusing on Bare Pond, not to mention a later fern walk. And of course, birders will want to catch our three bird walks at Cold Spring Park, Nahanton Park (Mother’s Day), and the Charles River Pathway.

We hope you will consider volunteering at our invasive removal sessions this coming season. Persistence in fighting non-native species such as garlic mustard, knotweed, buckthorn, swallow-wort, and others pays off in more biodiverse open space areas. Sessions begin with four on NewtonSERVES day, Sunday, April 26th, and many others continuing into late July!

In February we bade a fond farewell to two City of Newton personnel who have been so important to our open space efforts in Newton – Bob DeRubeis, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation, and Culture, and Alice Ingerson, Community Preservation Program Manager. We wish them the best in their retirement.

And please put Wednesday, May 6, on your calendar for our Newton Conservators Annual Meeting at American Legion Post 440 where we can celebrate some of the great open space accomplishments in Webster Woods and Cold Spring Park this past year. Newton-born Sam Jaffe, Director of the Caterpillar Lab in Marlborough, NH, will be our guest speaker with a fascinating and colorful talk that explores backyard pollinators, plants, and the many caterpillars that are positioned at the center of it all.

We would love to have you become more active in the Newton Conservators with our many volunteer opportunities. Hoping to see you out and about in the wilds of Newton!

Ted Kuklinski

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President, Newton Conservators



PHOTO: SAM JAFFE

Eight-spotted Forester caterpillar