



NEWTON
CONSERVATORS

SPRING ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

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

NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • SPRING 2020

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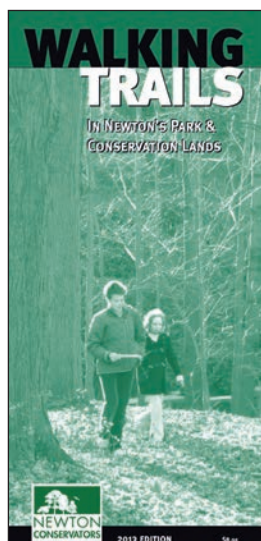
Willis Wang

Bruce Wenning

Are the Private Golf Courses in Newton Protected as Open Space?

By Ellen Katz and Jay Werb

Editor's Note: Driving through Newton and seeing the expanses of the golf courses in the city, one might be under the impression that Newton has ample open space. However, the city has very limited control over these privately-owned open spaces.



The Newton Conservators' *Walking Trails* guide covers roughly 600 acres of open space owned by, or held in trust for, the public within the borders of The Garden City. Cold Spring Park, for example, covers 67 acres. The guide also notes 120 acres of public golf courses, and another 100 acres owned by the Newton Cemetery & Arboretum.

Another 548 acres of open space is privately owned and managed by Newton's three country clubs. Charles River Country Club (219 acres), Brae Burn Country Club (196 acres), and Woodland Golf Club (133 acres) are zoned for single-family residences, mostly as SR1 and SR2. For a century or more, these institutions have kept their open space intact while most of the surrounding privately-owned land was developed over the generations. Today, in a world of million-dollar teardowns on quarter-acre lots, how can we continue to protect this open space from development if a country club wants to sell some or all of its land? How can we protect the public benefits of undeveloped or open land that include ground water recharge, wildlife habitat, flood prevention, outdoor recreation, aesthetics, and reduced burden on municipal resources such as sewer, police, and schools? Part of the answer lies in the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 61, designed to encourage landowners to keep their land as open space.

Initially created in the 1970s, and amended in 2006, Chapter 61 promotes conservation of farmland, forest, and open space including golf courses. Prior to Chapter 61, rising property values were forcing many landowners to sell their land because of an increasing tax burden. Under Chapter 61, a landowner commits to maintain a property in agricultural, forest, or recreational use for a period of time. Participation is voluntary. To



Google Earth image of Woodland Golf Course to the left and Brae Burn to the right.

Continued on page 2

enroll, the landowner must submit a written application for classification, and then reapply annually. The town or city then establishes a local property tax assessment based on “current use value” rather than “development value,” and

normally undertaken in a stadium, gymnasium, or similar structure.

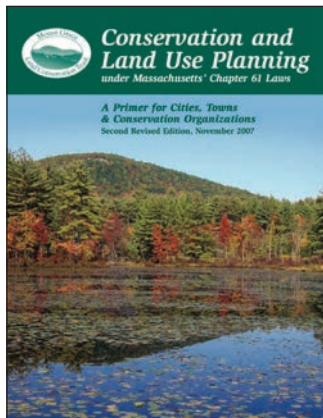
All of these variants of Chapter 61 are “current use tax programs.” Enrolled property is assessed based on current use, which can be a fraction of the property’s fully developed value. If not enrolled in a Chapter 61 program, property is assessed at commercial value (under Chapter 59).

In Newton, Chapter 61B applies to Newton’s three country clubs and their combined 548 acres of open space. Under Chapter 61B, country club land is assessed at its “recreational use value,” which cannot exceed 25% of its fair market value. Based on that assessment, the land is taxed at the commercial rate. In addition, country club buildings, which are not covered by Chapter 61B, are assessed on their actual value and taxed at the commercial rate. Other structures such as driveways, pro shops, pools, golf cart storage sheds, and tennis courts are also taxed at the full commercial rate.



Graphic of areas requiring drainage in 1892 showing area where Woodland Golf Course would be built to the left and the Brae Burn Golf Club to the right. See <http://www.newtonma.gov/civica3/filebank/documents/39235>

in exchange is granted right of first refusal to purchase the property if the land is converted to a use not covered by Chapter 61.



Chapter 61 is divided into three sections: Chapter 61, Chapter 61A, and Chapter 61B. Chapter 61, the Forestland Act, applies to properties of contiguous forestland of ten acres or more. Over 60% (3.1 million acres) of Massachusetts is forested, and 79% of those forests are privately owned. Chapter 61A, the Farmland Assessment Act, is for at least five acres of land that is used

primarily for agriculture or horticulture.

Chapter 61B, the Recreational Land Act, promotes conservation of open space and recreational land. Eligible properties have five or more acres of land that is retained as “substantially natural, wild or open condition” or “recreational use” or “in a managed forest condition” or “pastured condition.” The land must be (1) open to the public or members of a non-profit organization and (2) used for one of the following purposes: hiking, camping, nature study and observation, boating, golfing, non-commercial youth soccer, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, skiing, swimming, picnicking, private non-commercial flying, including hang gliding, archery, target shooting, and commercial horseback riding and equine boarding. Land may not be used for horse racing, dog racing, or any sport



Brae Burn clubhouse in winter.

In exchange for granting a tax abatement, the City gets the right of first refusal (ROFR) when owners decide to sell their land to a

developer or develop the land themselves. The City has 120 days to its exercise its ROFR option. The City may assign its ROFR to a non-profit conservation organization or to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which is not uncommon as a 120-day deadline draws near. While ROFR does not prevent the land from being developed, it does provide the City with an opportunity to affect the nature of the sale and subsequent development.

If the City does not exercise its ROFR, and the land is developed, five years of “roll-back” taxes must be paid to the City. The 61B roll-back tax is the difference between taxes paid in the last five years under the program compared to what would have been paid had the land had been taxed at fair market value, plus 5% simple interest. (For properties enrolled in the program for fewer than five years, a conveyance tax may apply instead.)

Massachusetts Chapter 61 programs not only temporarily protect open space. These programs can have economic benefits as well. Development incurs costs for the



Google Maps aerial of Woodland Golf Course

municipality for services such as schools, roads, and sewers. When a Chapter 61 property is privately developed, costs to the City may approach or even exceed the cost of purchasing the property for conservation. The City may also have municipal uses for the property, such as a school or a senior center.

Someday, if one of Newton's country clubs decides to sell some or all of its land, the City's right of first refusal could provide an opportunity for Newton to acquire some of New England's most valuable real estate under reasonable terms. In the meantime, Chapter 61B tax abatements allow Newton's country clubs to continue their responsible stewardship of these beautiful expanses of Newton's open space, as they have for over a century.

Note: Sources and tables for this article can be found on NewtonConservators.org/newsletters. ♦



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 | <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 \$_____ Trail Fund \$_____
 Ordway Endowment Fund \$_____
 Land Stewardship Areas (Dexter Rd., Bracebridge Rd.)
 \$_____

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/ to renew/join online. Consider including Newton Conservators in your estate planning. Contact us at 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 59 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 articles@newtonconservators.org. Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

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Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the Newsletter: Ellen Katz & Jay Werb, Richard Primack, Ted Kuklinski, Beth Wilkinson, and Katherine Howard.

Golf Course Article: Tables and Sources

Description	<p>Chapter 61B Open Space – recreational land Incentivizes conservation of recreational land by reducing tax burden.</p>
Eligibility requirements	<p>Minimum of five acres. The land must retained in a substantially natural, wild, open, pastured, managed forest or landscaped condition, or used for an approved recreational purpose.</p>
Defined use	<p>Land retained in a substantially natural, wild or open condition or in a landscaped condition in such manner as to allow to a significant extent the preservation of wildlife and other natural resources OR Land to be used for certain permitted recreational purposes such as golf and open to the public or members of a non-profit organization.</p> <p>The recreational use must not materially interfere with the environmental benefits of the land.</p>
Buildings and other structures	<p>Any clubhouse, driveway, pool, storage shed, tennis court or other buildings are considered structures not part of the golf courses open space. Land associated with these structures is assessed at full value and not given the exemption.</p>
Enrollment and renewal process	<p>To enroll, the landowner must submit a written application to the Assessing Department of the city by October 1 for classification during the next fiscal year. For example, the application must be submitted by October 1, 2019, to be eligible for the July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 fiscal year.</p> <p>The landowner must then reapply annually to the Assessing Department by October 1.</p>
Property tax	<p>Property taxes are based on the property's use for open space or recreation.</p> <p>The reduction is at least 75% of what the Chapter 59 tax assessment would be, based on the fair market value of the property.</p>

Lien	Once the classification is approved, the municipality records a lien on the property at the Registry of Deeds. This tax lien and notice informs all potential purchasers that the property is subject to the provisions of Chapter 61B.
Notice to city	<p>A landowner who has properly classified in Chapter 61B must notify the Mayor and City Council, as well as the Assessing Department, Planning Department, and Conservation Commission, by certified mail, when all or a portion of the land is being sold for, or converted to, a disqualifying use. The requirement of the landowner extends for one year after not being taxed under the program.</p> <p>This notice by the landowner triggers the 120-day option period, during which the city has the right of first refusal to meet a bona fide offer to purchase the land, or, in case of a conversion of use by the landowner, to pay fair market value for the property. In both cases, the city may elect to assign its right to a qualified organization or agency. (This may be useful if more time is needed to arrange financing.)</p> <p>Note: a landowner who is not changing the use of the land, but is simply withdrawing from the program at the end of, or at any time within, the one year period in Chapter 61B, triggers neither a requirement of notification, nor a right of first refusal.</p>
Change of use withdrawal and failure to reapply	<p>Any land valued, assessed and taxed under the provisions of Chapter 61B, if sold for another use or changed to another use not consistent with any of the Chapter 61 programs, is subject to a Conveyance Tax or a Roll-Back Tax.</p> <p>The landowner will only pay the higher of the two tax penalties, not both. Roll-Back Taxes will apply when the amount of those taxes exceeds the amount, if any, imposed under the Conveyance Tax section for Chapter 61B. In the same way, when Roll-Back Taxes do exceed the amount imposed for the Conveyance Tax penalty, then the land is not subject to the Conveyance Tax.</p>
Change of use of part of the property	If a change of use occurs on a portion of the land under Chapter 61B, and that change is not to a land use covered

	by any Chapter 61 programs, then only that portion of the land where the change of use occurred will be subject to Roll-Back Taxes or Conveyance Taxes.
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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 wending 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

Ted Kuklinski
President, Newton Conservators



PHOTO: SAM JAFFE

Eight-spotted Forester caterpillar

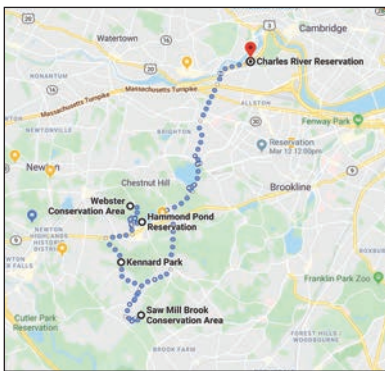
Old Stone Walls Tell of Newton's Agricultural History

Richard B. Primack is a long-time Newton resident and a biology professor at Boston University.

Editor's Note: This article is an expansion of an article originally written in the *Newton TAB*. Also, see Professor Primack's walk scheduled for March 28th in the listing of walks at the end of this newsletter.

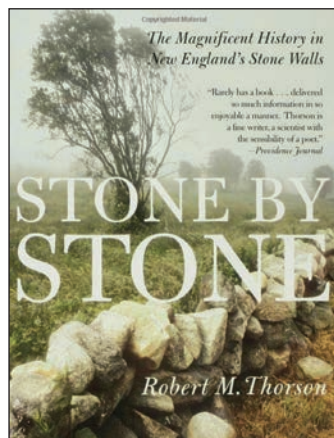


Stone wall in Kennard Park



Google Maps shows various stone wall locations in this article.

in the Saw Mill Brook Conservation Area off Vine Street, and in the Charles River Reservation starting at the ends of Wiswall Road and Saw Mill Brook Parkway. They reflect a time during the 1700s and 1800s when much of the town's land was used for farming, growing cereal, vegetable crops, and fruit for local residents and people in Boston, and for keeping domestic animals, such as cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs.



According to Robert Thorson, author of *Stone by Stone*, a book about New England's old stone walls, "the original property boundaries were likely wooden fences, with stones placed under and along the fences as farmers worked their fields." Only in the early 19th century, when wood started to become scarce, did farmers begin to use the stones to build

boundary walls. Soon after, in the years before and after the Civil War in the 1860s, farmers began to abandon their fields as better farmlands opened up in the Midwest, and Newton returned to forest.

In Newton, our stone walls are mostly about two feet high and straight. They often precisely follow boundaries shown on old city maps. One exception is in the Saw Mill Brook area, where a stone wall curves along an old track paralleling a swamp. Another exception is a stone wall that runs along the Brandeis Road fence opposite Newton South High School, paralleling what was previously a wetland. In our parks, straight old stone walls stop when they are about to cross swamps, streams, and other wetlands; although a stone wall does run through Bare Pond, a large vernal pool in the Webster Woods. Stone walls also do not run up and down steep slopes, presumably because the walls would be too unstable.



A neatly stacked stone wall takes a right angle turn in the Kennard Park. Note the stone post which marks the border between Newton and Brookline.

Newton's stone walls were built by hand with the materials at hand, sometimes with the help of oxen. In Kennard Park, angular stones are carefully stacked 2, 3 or 4 stones high to a consistent height and width, giving them a classic stone wall appearance.

In the Saw Mill Brook area, some walls consist of piles of large roundish rocks placed in irregular lines. In the Webster and Hammond Woods and the Charles River Reservation, large stones,

Continued on page 6

some weighing more than a thousand pounds, are arranged in straight lines. Such large stones were almost certainly set in place with teams of oxen and experienced farm workers.

Little mysteries



PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK

Massive stones form a wall, one at a time, in the Webster Woods.

It is fun to guess at what the stone walls might tell us about the past. Halfway along the main stone wall in Kennard Park sits a four-sided enclosure about 100 feet on a side, following the contours of the sloping ground and with a 40-foot gap. Perhaps this was a corral for domestic animals such as sheep, with a gate to close the gap.

In the Charles River Reservation, a wall makes a right-angle turn at a raised rectangular, flattened surface

about 25 feet wide and 100 feet long. On one side, the stone wall acts a retaining wall to keep the filled in soil in place. Was this the site of a corral or barn? The raised structure also marks the end of an old earthen wall, roughly 6 feet high and 20 feet wide at the base, that runs for several hundred yards through a swamp and ends near of the corner of Saw Mill Brook Parkway and Walsh Road. Was this a dam for a mill pond? Another earthen dam, probably for a mill pond, sits along Saw Mill Brook near Temple Beth Avodah, just above what was probably the old saw mill site.

Directly across Brandeis Road from Newton South High School and just into the woods is a precisely leveled section of ground, about 100 feet on a side next to a stone wall. The structure is carefully flattened and lacks enclosing walls, so it was probably not a corral. Two hundred years ago, was it a garden plot?

And why are there are no stone walls in other parks? Was Cold Spring Park too swampy? Did Edmands Park lack stones big enough to make walls?

Other stone walls

There are some old non-agricultural stone walls in Newton, such as border walls along Dudley Road, Cypress Street, and Jackson Street, and retaining walls in Hemlock Gorge and the East Parish Cemetery on Center Street. Newton also has many more recent stone walls, built after the Civil War as Newton changed from an agricultural economy to



PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK

Old stone walls border a house along Jackson Street.

an industrial and then a suburban community. These more modern walls are built with cement and relatively uniform, cut stones.

For example, the walls

along Beacon Street just west of Hammond Pond Parkway are too neat to be agricultural walls. Very tall stone walls start at the end of Bow Road and run between Ridge Avenue and Cypress Street, but these walls are not old; they are over 4 feet tall and made of rocks, such as white quartz, not found locally and with sharp angles, suggesting the rocks were broken by people.

Next steps



PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK

An irregular wall formed from piles of more rounded stones along Saw Mill Brook.

Many of Newton's stone walls, such as those in the Hammond/Webster Woods, are missing from Newton Conservators maps. Others, such as walls in the Saw

Mill Brook Conservation Area and Kennard Park, have been partially mapped. These old stone walls add to the enjoyment of walks in these parks and should be highlighted on maps.

The Newton Conservators could join with the Newton Historical Society and other groups to survey the stone walls in Newton's parks and add them to city maps. Interested volunteers and high school environmental clubs could help.

This project could be expanded in several ways as time and resources allow. Surveys and maps could include old stone walls that occur on undeveloped parcels of land, small forest fragments, and along the borders of residences, businesses,



PHOTO: MARGARET MALLORY

Hemlock Gorge, site of old retaining walls.

and historical roads. The project could later add old retaining walls, such as are found in Hemlock Gorge in Newton Upper Falls and in the cemetery on Centre Street. And it could include old stone buildings, particularly where the structures

are off main roads, such as the ruined stone structures on Moody Street, off Route 9.

Maps of old stone walls could be supplemented with descriptions of their features and the structures they likely supported, such as old corrals, gardens, and mill ponds. Descriptions of the walls could be informed by historical documents that describe Newton's past land use.

Although much of Newton's history has been obliterated as the town has developed, the old stone walls offer an opportunity to remember and learn about Newton's agricultural past. When walking in the woods, it is worthwhile to observe and appreciate them and to contemplate the mysteries they hint at. ♦

Sam Jaffe, Conservators' Annual Meeting Dinner Speaker

May 6, 2020



Sam Jaffe with Cecropia Moth

At the Newton Conservators' annual meeting on May 6, 2020, Sam Jaffe, Director of The Caterpillar Lab, will present a talk called "Caterpillars: The Whole Story." He will explore backyard pollinators, plants, parasitoids, and the many caterpillars that are positioned at the center of it all. He will also discuss his work growing the Caterpillar Lab from its roots in Newton's Cold Spring Park to its present-day region-wide activity and influence. To tell the story, Sam will bring a variety of caterpillars found during this season, microscopes, and other insect-related excitement! His perspective on natural history study and appreciation just might make you reconsider an herbivore's place in our world and our town.

Sam is a New England based naturalist, photographer, and educator who has been working with native insects since a very early age. He grew up in Newton chasing birds, mucking through ponds, and turning over leaves. For the last 12 years he has been photographing and filming caterpillars to promote these special creatures to the public. In 2013, he founded The Caterpillar Lab (thecaterpillarlab.org), a non-profit educational outreach organization in Marlborough, NH, and he now travels across the country working with museums, nature centers, schools, and individual teachers, helping native insects find their place in our everyday lives. When he is not behind the camera or tending his zoo of caterpillars, you can invariably find Sam up to his waist in vegetation.



PHOTO: SAM JAFFE



PHOTO: SAM JAFFE

Yellow-necked Caterpillar (left) and Red-humped Caterpillar (right)

Newton Conservators Invasive Plant Sessions Spring 2020

Newton Conservators 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 updates to this schedule.

Sunday, April 26, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Garlic Mustard Pull at Dolan Pond Conservation Area (NewtonSERVES Project). 76 Webster Park, Newton, MA 02465

www.newtonconservators.org/property/dolan-pond/

Meet at Webster Park entrance – park there or at the Stratford Rd. or Cumberland Rd. entrances. Come help eradicate soil-damaging invasive garlic mustard from this gem of a pocket park. We may also do some general cleanup and possible trail work. You may also see some interesting migrating birds and vernal pool creatures. Wear long pants and garden gloves. **Leader is Ted Kuklinski, 617-332-7753.**

Sunday, April 26, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull (NewtonSERVES Project). 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461

www.newtonconservators.org/property/cold-spring-park/

The park is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, buckthorn, and other species. We will keep the aqueduct walk clear after previous years' pulls, continue work on the meadow and Beacon St. parking areas, and check on the Buckthorn Demonstration area in the red maple forest. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Meet at the circle at left end of parking lot at Beacon St. entrance. Co-sponsored by Friends of Cold Spring Park. **Leaders are Alan Noguee, 617-564-1664, and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, April 26, 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/property/charles-path-bridge-street/

We will work along the Charles River Greenway at this bridge site, and will do nature study as time allows. Wear long pants/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, Anndy Dannenberg, 617-694-9674, and Eric Olson, 617-872-9928.**

Sunday, April 26, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Invasives Pull at Houghton Garden/Webster Woods (NewtonSERVES Project) opposite 210 Suffolk Rd., Newton, MA 02467

www.newtonconservators.org/property/houghton-garden/

We will remove the garlic mustard near the entrance of Houghton Garden where it borders the T Track crossing to Webster Woods. Help keep these invaders out of Houghton Garden and Webster Woods! Wear long pants and garden gloves.

Meet at the entrance to the garden/T crossing. **Leaders are Sally Baker, Michele Hanss, and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, May 3, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Invasives Pull at Saw Mill Brook Conservation Area opposite 120 Vine St., Newton, MA 02467

www.newtonconservators.org/property/sawmill-brook/

Saw Mill Brook is a lovely, long trail connecting Newton to West Roxbury. We will work on the garlic mustard at the Vine St. entrance and along Lagrange St. and Wayne Road borders. We can also explore the beautiful new trail recently forged in the adjoining Kessler Conservation Area. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Meet at the Vine Street entrance. **Leaders are Francesco DiTullio and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, May 10, 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/property/charles-path-bridge-street/

We will work along the Charles River Greenway at this bridge site, and will do nature study as time allows. Wear long pants/sleeves, sturdy shoes and garden gloves. Bring digging tools and clippers if you can. Park at Super Stop & Shop 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. **Leader is Eric Olson, 617-872-9928.**

Saturday, May 16, 9:30 noon – 12:00 noon

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull #2 (repeat visit). 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461

www.newtonconservators.org/property/cold-spring-park/

The park is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, buckthorn, and other species. We will keep the aqueduct walk clear after previous years' pulls, continue work on the meadow and Beacon St. parking areas, and check the Buckthorn Demonstration area in the red maple forest. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Meet at the circle at left end of parking lot at Beacon St. entrance. Co-sponsored by Friends of Cold Spring Park. **Leaders are Nyssa Patten, 617-763-7194, Alan Noguee, 617-564-1664, and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, May 17, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Nahanton Park/Woodcock Meadow Invasives Pull near 455 Nahanton Street, Newton, MA 02459

www.newtonconservators.org/property/nahanton-park/

Much of Nahanton Park, including its grassland Woodcock Meadow (home to the threatened American Woodcock), is being invaded by non-native plants. They out-compete native plants, reduce biodiversity, and negatively impact birdlife. Nahanton Park invaders include garlic mustard, black swallow-

Continued on next page

wort, multi-flora rose, Tree of Heaven, buckthorn, and black locust. Help improve the beauty and diversity of this special park (and help the American Woodcock) by removing/cutting back these invasive species. Sturdy shoes, long pants, long sleeves and work gloves recommended. Meet at the Woodcock Meadow entrance from the Upper Lot off Nahanton St. (near the Canoe rental). Co-sponsored by Friends of Nahanton Park. **Leaders are Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571 and Suzette Barbier.**

Saturday, May 30, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Houghton Garden/Webster Woods Invasives Pull opposite 210 Suffolk Rd., Newton, MA 02467

www.newtonconservators.org/property/houghton-garden/

We will tackle 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, May 31, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Japanese Knotweed Pull at Hammond Pond near 309 Hammond Pond Parkway, Newton, MA 02467

www.newtonconservators.org/property/webster-woods/

Japanese knotweed creates dense 8' tall bamboo-like stands; it is a tough adversary because any small root fragment left behind springs back to life the following year. Scientists seek biological control agents, but until then we must control the plant by hand. 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. **Leaders are Anndy Dannenberg and Eric Olson, 617-872-9928.**

Sunday, June 7, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Cold Spring Park Invasive Plant Educational Walk. 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461

www.newtonconservators.org/property/cold-spring-park/

Join horticulturist Bruce Wenning and learn to identify the invasive species found in this park and in everybody's yards! Learn the traits of invasive species, how and why they are so successful and hurt the native ecosystems, and how to control them in your yards and neighborhoods. Wear long pants and closed shoes. Meet at the circle at left end of parking lot at Beacon St. entrance. **Leader is Bruce Wenning, 617-962-0646.**

Sunday, June 7, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull #3 (repeat visit). 1200 Beacon Street, Newton, MA 02461

www.newtonconservators.org/property/cold-spring-park/

The park is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, buckthorn, and other species. We will keep the aqueduct clear after previous years' pulls, continue work on the meadow and Beacon St. parking areas, and check the Buckthorn Demonstration area in the red maple forest. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided. Enter CSP at Beacon St. entrance. Turn left and go to circle at far end of the parking lot (circle). **Leader is Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**

Saturday, June 13, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Charles River Quinobequin/Hemlock Gorge Invasives Pull. near 2 Ellis St., Newton, MA 02464

www.newtonconservators.org/property/hemlock-gorge/

We will control garlic mustard, knotweed, and black swallow-wort infestations inside beautiful Hemlock Gorge Park, and the adjoining walking trail along the Charles at Quinobequin Rd. Help keep the invaders out of these beautiful parks! Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided. 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 14, 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/property/hemlock-gorge/

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 Rd. Wear long pants and garden gloves. Trash bags will be provided. 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.**

Saturday, June 20, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Knotweed Pull at Dolan Pond (NewtonSERVES Project). 76 Webster Park, Newton, MA 02465

www.newtonconservators.org/property/dolan-pond/

Meet at Webster Park entrance; park there or at Stratford Rd. or Cumberland Rd. entrances. 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.**

Sunday, July 12, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Black Swallow-wort Pull at Cold Spring Park.

BSW, yet another threat to monarch butterflies, has appeared at just one spot, and we need to nip it in the bud! Co-sponsored by Friends of Cold Spring Park. **See website or call leader Katherine Howard for details, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, July 19, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Black Swallow-wort Pull at Crystal Lake.

A small group has started giving the small pocket park along Center St. some love — removing bittersweet and pulling BSW (a threat to monarch butterflies). There is a beautiful park underneath! **See website or call Katherine Howard for details, 617-721-2571.**

Sunday, July 26, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Black Swallow-wort Pull at Hemlock Gorge.

Let's keep BSW, a threat to monarch butterflies, out of our breathtaking Hemlock Gorge! **See website or call Katherine Howard for details, 617-721-2571.**

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

WALKS SCHEDULE SPRING 2020

www.newtonconservators.org

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

Sunday, March 15 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, March 28 at 1:00 pm

STONE WALLS OF SAW MILL BROOK PARK CONSERVATION AREA



Stone walls are a feature of the New England landscape that reveal stories of Newton's agricultural past. Join BU professor Richard Primack to explore the varied stone walls of Saw Mill Brook Conservation Area. An added bonus will be a visit to the old mill dam and site

of the sawmill.

Meet at the Vine Street entrance; extra parking is available on Wayne Street.

Trip Leader: Richard Primack, 857-636-8378.

Sunday, April 5 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 5.

Saturday, April 11 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 5 (see description from that date).

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

Sunday, May 3 at 7:30 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 orioles, vireos, cardinals, goldfinches, and wrens.

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 10 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

Continued on next page

breeding grounds farther 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 16 at 8:00 am

(Rain date: May 17)

BIRD WALK ALONG CHARLES RIVER PATHWAY



Please join Alison Leary for a neighborhood bird walk along the Charles River Path to enjoy the sights and sounds of the river, including new spring migrants. We will look for seasonal migrants as we stroll the Charles River path along the Newton/Watertown line.

We expect to find several species of warblers, including Yellow, Northern Parula, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Palms. Length: About 3 miles at an easy pace.

Bring binoculars if you have them. In the event of steady rain, we will reschedule for Sunday.

Meeting place: Path entrance at Chapel and California Street.

Trip Leader: *Alison Leary, 617-821-5619*

Saturday, June 6 from 12:00 - 2:30 pm

(Rain Date: June 7)

WEST WEBSTER WOODS FERN WALK



The Hammond Pond/Webster Woods complex is the largest conservation area in Newton, and one of the most biodiverse. We will visit the western portion, a little southeast of Newton Centre, and see a dozen fern species and perhaps a club-moss or a lady slipper in bloom. It's not very hilly, but we may go off-trail a bit. Wear long pants and repellent. Bring any fern you would like to identify.

Meet at the end of Warren St. From Beacon, take Glen Ave. south, then first left onto Warren.

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

Sunday, June 7 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.

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

PHOTOS ON PREVIOUS PAGE: SAW MILL BROOK PARK: KEN MALLORY. VERNAL POOL WALK: DAN BRODY, AMERICAN REDSTART: HAYNES MILLER, PHOTOS THIS PAGE: PALM WARBLER: HAYNES MILLER, FERN: DAN BRODY

About the Plant Invaders



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.



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.



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.



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Lawrence's Warbler
photo by Haynes Miller

Go Green! ...and all the other colors of the rainbow. You can view this newsletter at newtonconservators.org/newsletters. To elect not to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, update your membership profile at newtonconservators.org/membership