



Newton Conservators E-Bulletin

Monday, March 16, 2020

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



Dear Newton Conservators and Friends,

In response to the threat of the COVID-19 virus and out of concern for the health of our members, **Newton Conservators has canceled our Spring Walks and Events at least through Saturday, April 11.** We will continue to review the situation in order to make a decision about events scheduled for later in the Spring, including our invasive pulls and Annual Dinner Meeting. There is a substantial chance that many of those listed may be canceled or rescheduled for later in the year.

We realize that these event cancellations will be disappointment to many of our members and subscribers, but the situation with COVID-19 and restrictions due to it have multiplied with each passing day.

Many of you may have recently received our Spring 2020 Newsletter which included a full listing of our scheduled invasive pulls and walk events. Please note the latest changes which are listed below for your convenience. Our most recent Spring 2020 newsletter is also now available on our website at <https://newtonconservators.org/newsletters/>.

Newton, the Garden City, fortunately has a great number of open spaces which can provide relief. And it's easy to maintain the suggested "social distancing". Spending time outdoors in our parks and open spaces can be a pleasant, relaxing, fun, and educational break - just the change of pace we need from the constant worry inducing news stream. This is especially true at this time of year when we transition from winter to spring and world around us transforms from brown to green while the air is replete with the spring songs of our resident and migrating birds. What an opportunity to stop and smell the flowers - at least the crocuses and daffodils that are starting to pop out!

We should take advantage of the fact that this is not truly a "shelter in place" event yet. There are so many other places to explore that folks may have heard of but never visited such as Webster Woods, Hemlock Gorge, Dolan Pond, Houghton Garden, Sawmill Brook, or Kennard Park, and be delighted to discover.

Check out our Trail Guide or the "Get Outside" tab on our website <https://newtonconservators.org/parks-and-conservation-lands/> and

discover some new special places!

For local information on the COVID-19 situation, please consult [the City of Newton's COVID-19 web page](#). Please take seriously the measures which are recommended for the safety and health of everyone.

Be safe, be well, be kind and be content on doing some nature exploring on our own or with our family for now.

Sincerely,

Ted Kuklinski
President, Newton Conservators

Events through early May

(those Canceled and those still scheduled at this time)

CANCELED

Wednesday, March 18, 7-8:30 pm

Woodcock Walk at Nahanton Park

Brookline Bird Club Event

Nahanton Park Nature Center, 471 Nahanton Street, Newton

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/woodcock-walk-at-nahanton-park-brookline-bird-club/>

Join the Brookline Bird Club at sunset to hopefully hear and see the amazing mating sky dance of the American Woodcock. Activity should begin around 7:15 p.m. and last for about an hour. Call trip leader if there's rain or snow cover. Very little walking required, flashlight recommended, no dogs. Walk leader: Pete Gilmore, 617-969-1513. Make sure to check the status of this non Newton Conservators walk at the BBC website noted above. **NOTE: Woodcocks have recently been spotted in the "Woodcock Meadow" at Nahanton Park this season!**



CANCELED

Saturday, March 28, 1-4 pm

Stone Wall of Sawmill Brook Conservation Area

Newton Conservators Spring Walk Series

Sawmill Brook Conservation area, 93 Vine Street - Chestnut Hill

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/stone-walls-of-saw-mill-brook-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. Meet at the Vine Street entrance; extra parking is available on Wayne Street. Trip Leader: Richard Primack, 857-636-

8378.

CANCELED**Saturday, April 5, 1-4 pm****The Hidden Life of a Vernal Pool:****Forest and Vernal Pool Exploration at Webster Woods****Newton Conservators Spring Walk Series****Webster Woods Entrance near 56 Warren Street,****Newton****<https://newtonconservators.org/events/the-hidden-life-of-a-vernal-pool-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.

**CANCELED****Saturday, April 5, 1-4 pm****The Hidden Life of a Vernal Pool:****Forest and Vernal Pool Exploration at Webster Woods****Newton Conservators Spring Walk Series****Webster Woods Entrance near 56 Warren Street, Newton****<https://newtonconservators.org/events/the-hidden-life-of-a-vernal-pool-forest-and-vernal-pool-exploration-at-webster-woods-2/>**

This popular walk/activity is being repeated from April 5. 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: Jon Regosin, 774-364-2443.



Sunday, April 26, 9:30 am - Noon

Cold Spring Park Invasives Pull

NewtonSERVES - Newton Conservators Invasives Pull

Cold Spring Park, 1200 Beacon Street

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/cold-spring-park-invasives-pull-4/>

Check status: <https://newtoncommunitypride.org/event/newtonservices-2/>

This is an official [NewtonSERVES](#) project. Note that this event depends on the City of Newton's status of NewtonSERVES. Registration opens April 1 at the NewtonSERVES website. [Cold Spring Park](#) is being invaded by garlic mustard, knotweed, buckthorn, and other species. We will keep the Cochituate Aqueduct walk under control after previous years' pulls, continue work on the meadow and Beacon Street parking lot areas, and check on the Buckthorn demonstration area in the red maple forest. Wear long pants and garden gloves. The invasive plant material will be properly disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Cosponsored by Friends of Cold Spring Park. Meet at the circle at left end of parking lot at Beacon Street entrance. Leaders are Alan Noguee, 617-564-1664 and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.



Sunday, April 26, 9:30 am - Noon

Garlic Mustard Pull at Dolan Pond

NewtonSERVES - Newton Conservators Invasives Pull

Dolan Pond Conservation Area - near 76 Webster Park, West Newton

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/garlic-mustard-pull-at-dolan-pond-2/>

Check status: <https://newtoncommunitypride.org/event/newtonservices-2/>

This is an official [NewtonSERVES](#) project. Registration opens April 1 at the NewtonSERVES website. Come help us eradicate this soil-damaging invasive garlic mustard from [this gem of a pocket park](#). We also continue to control the Japanese Knotweed; every year it gets easier. 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, 1-3 pm

Invasives Pull at Blue Heron Bridge

NewtonSERVES - Newton Conservators Invasives Pull

Entrance near 40 Albemarle Road

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/invasives-pull-at-blue-heron-bridge-3/>

Check status: <https://newtoncommunitypride.org/event/newtonservices-2/>

This is an official [NewtonSERVES](#) project. Registration opens April 1 at the NewtonSERVES website. We will work along the [Charles River Greenway](#) at this bridge site, and will do nature study as time allows. Wear long pants and

sleeves, sturdy shoes and garden gloves. **Leaders are Ron Joseph, Anndy Dannenberg, 617-694-9674, and Eric Olson, 617-872-9928**



Sunday, April 26, 1-3 pm

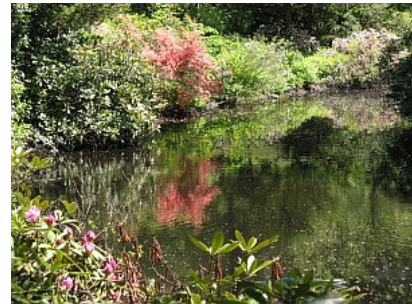
**Invasives Pull at Houghton Garden / Webster Woods
NewtonSERVES Project**

Houghton Garden - near 210 Suffolk Road, Chestnut Hill

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/invasives-pull-at-blue-heron-bridge-3/>

Check status: <https://newtoncommunitypride.org/event/newtonserves-2/>

A [NewtonSERVES](#) project (registration opens April 1 at the NewtonSERVES website) 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 beautiful Houghton Garden and Webster Woods! Wear long pants tucked into socks, closed shoes, 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. **Leaders are Sally Baker, Michele Hanss, and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.**



Sunday, May 3, 7:30 am-10:30 am

Bird Walk at Cold Spring Park

Newton Conservators Spring Walk Series

Cold Spring Park Beacon Street Trailhead, 1200 Beacon St, Newton

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/bird-walk-at-cold-spring-park-2/>

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 3, 9:30 am - Noon

Invasives Pull at Sawmill Brook

Sawmill Brook Conservation Area

Newton Conservators Invasive Pull Series

93 Vine Street - Chestnut Hill

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/invasives-pull-at-sawmill-brook/>

[Sawmill Brook Conservation Area](#) is a lovely, long, natural trail connecting Newton to West Roxbury. We will work on the Garlic Mustard at the Vine St. entrance and along Wayne Rd. and Lagrange St. borders. We can also explore the beautiful new trail recently forged in the adjoining Kessler Conservation Area. Wear long pants and garden gloves. The invasive plant material will be properly disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the Vine St. entrance. Leaders are Francesco DiTullio and Katherine Howard, 617-721-2571.

Wednesday, May 6, 6-9 pm

Newton Conservators Annual Dinner Meeting

American Legion Post 440

295 California Street - Newtonville

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/2020-annual-dinner-meeting/>

The 59th annual dinner meeting of the Newton Conservators will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2020. At 6 pm will be a social hour followed by dinner at 7 pm where we will have our annual short election/business meeting and award ceremony honoring activists for Webster Woods and Cold Spring Park as well as a number of recently retired city personnel who have been important to our open space efforts.



At 8 pm, 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.

Conservators members will receive an invitation and registration form in the mail. Anyone can register for the dinner online. Stay tuned for more details! In addition, please be aware that due to the Covid-19 threat there is a chance that our annual meeting may be postponed to a later time in the year.

Sunday, May 10, 8-10 am

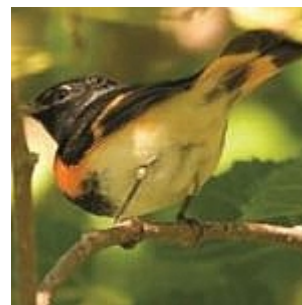
Nahanton Park Mother's Day Bird Walk

Newton Conservators Spring Walk Series

Nahanton Park - Nahanton Street Entrance, 471 Nahanton Street

<https://newtonconservators.org/events/nahanton-park-mothers-day-bird-walk-2/>

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 breeding grounds further 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. Water-proof walking shoes are recommended. The 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.



Newton Conservators Newsletter

Our recent newsletter is at <https://newtonconservators.org/newsletters/>.

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, "[Old Stone Walls Tell of Newton's Agricultural History](#)," renowned BU Professor Richard Primack delves into the agricultural history of the stone walls found wending through Newton's forest land.

Our [Schedule of Invasive Pulls](#), [Spring Walk Schedule](#), and [President's](#)

[Message](#) are also included.



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

SPRING ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

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

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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 SR.1 and SR.2. 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

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

In case you missed our renewal letter last December, 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.

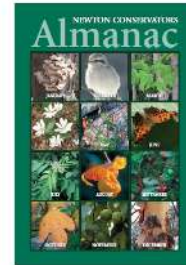
Donations may be made at our secure link <https://newtonconservators.123signup.com/donation/21167>. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, we also accept donations for a number of affiliated local open space groups including Friends of Webster Woods, Friends of Cold Spring Park, the Riverside Trails Working Group, a Trails Fund, 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)

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