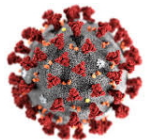


Annual Dinner Postponed to the Fall Spring Walk Series Canceled through June Group Invasive Pulls Canceled through mid-June



We are sad to report that Newton Conservators has postponed the [Newton Conservators Annual Dinner](#), canceled our [Spring Walk Series](#) entirely, and canceled our group [Invasive Removal Sessions](#) through mid-June, in response to the threat of the COVID-19 virus and out of concern for the health of our members and friends.

Our [Annual Dinner Meeting](#), which was to be held on **Wednesday, May 3** at Post 440, has been postponed until the fall, with a tentative new date of **Wednesday, October 21**, and will still be at Post 440. We regret having to delay our annual awards ceremony and the interesting talk by Sam Jaffe of the [Caterpillar Lab](#). Sam writes in his latest newsletter: “Many programs and events may have been canceled, but **SPRING IS NOT CANCELED**. The natural world is alive, beautiful, and full of caterpillary wonder and more.”



Our entire [Spring Walk Series](#), which included a total of nine free events from March through June, has been cancelled since it would be difficult to do the individual events with effective social distancing. We regret not being able to provide these events which included a hike and bird walks, and exploration of stone walls, vernal pool, and local ferns in a variety of our open spaces including the newly acquired

Webster Woods.

[NewtonSERVES](#) on Sunday, April 26, has been canceled by the city. Four of our invasive sessions were scheduled for that day and will not be held. Currently, all of our [Group Invasive Removal Sessions](#) through mid-June are officially cancelled. Invasive plants however will still be growing rapidly through during this crisis period. For example, garlic mustard shows up in mid to late April, and it is important to pull any of the second-year seed bearing plants that appear lest we lose gains made in past years. It is important to be able to correctly recognize target invasive plants for





removal. Some of our experienced team members may be doing individual removal work at previously scheduled or alternate times. If you are interested in working on invasives removal and have questions about what to do, feel free to contact our invasives coordinator Katherine Howard at katherineh998@gmail.com. This is a great and useful activity to help fill some down time during the crisis.

Our web [Events](#) page will update the status of any of our original spring or summer scheduled events. We realize that the event cancellations will be disappointing to many, but the situation with COVID-19, and restrictions due to it, calls for such measures for the health of everyone. We will continue to review the situation in order to make decisions about any future scheduled events.

Newton's Open Spaces

Newton's parks and conservations areas offer some valuable respite from being inside under the COVID-19 threat. Newton Conservators offers some of the best resources for getting out and about in Newton and nearby our extensive website and its [list of parks and conservation areas](#). We have trail maps, history, photos, and background information on Newton's open spaces available on our website.



If you visit one of our open spaces, you can also look for our QR barcode stickers which will take you to our website map! Be sure to check out some very interesting Newton places that you may not know existed. See the special half price deal on our trail guide below!

Aside from Newton, there are many other great places to visit and you can find links to them on our website at <https://newtonconservators.org/nearby-parks/> by category (e.g. state parks) and list them sorted by distance from Newton. We also list suggested nearby walking, canoeing, and biking routes on our website at <https://newtonconservators.org/trips/>.

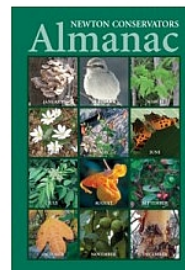
Trail Guide and Almanac Half Price Limited Time Special !



For many years, our guide, [Walking Trails in Newton's Park & Conservation Lands](#), has been the go-to reference to our local open spaces. It's a handy "fit-in-your-pocket" book that will point you to places all around the Newton area to explore and its 70-pages contain detailed descriptions and trail maps of 34 parks and conservation areas, featuring ponds, gardens, trails, canoe launches, nature guides, rock climbing, scenic views, handicapped access, geological features, and bird watching areas. The guide also contains photos, driving directions, interesting historical details, and an overall map of showing the locations of the 34 natural areas.

For a limited time, due to the increased interest in exploring our open spaces, we are offering this great guide for half price! Normally sold for \$8.95 + \$2.00 shipping, right now it is available for only \$4.50 (shipping included) if you order online at <https://newtonconservators.123signup.com/event/details/vjddf> or by mail. For mail orders, send check to Newton Conservators, PO Box 590011, Newton, MA 02459 with the word "Trail Guide" on the "memo" line. Make sure your address is included on the check.

But wait, there's more! Our companion book, Newton Conservators Almanac is also at half price during this special sale. This helpful volume (<https://newtonconservators.org/newton-conservators-almanac/>) provides a colorful guide to what flora and fauna you might expect to encounter throughout each month in Newton. Normally \$19.95 + \$2.00 shipping, for now the special price is only \$11.25 (shipping included). You can order online at



<https://newtonconservators.123signup.com/event/registration/nxxvh> or by mailing a check with "Almanac" in the memo line to the same address as above.

Using Our Open Spaces Safely



Thus far, we have been fortunate in Newton that we have not had as severe restrictions on use of our open spaces as many other communities. Even open space entities such as Mass Audubon and Trustees of Reservations have been forced to close properties (for periods) due to concerns of overcrowding or people not following social distancing. Some communities are even considering one-way sidewalks (and it may come to that here on some of our high usage trails).

We have heard reports of non-related household folks gathering in groups, inappropriate bike usage on walking trails in conservation areas, heavy traffic creating new footpaths in sensitive areas, etc. Please be considerate to others and to the land! Communal safety is most important and if guidelines are not followed, it may make it necessary for Newton to impose stricter regulation on open space usage!

- *If you use our open spaces, please be sure to maintain the suggested "social distancing" and keep at least 6 feet apart.*
- *Avoid congregating in groups.*
- *On narrow trails or boardwalks please give others wide leeway or wait to the side until others pass with sufficient distance.*
- *If parking is full or you see that a given area is crowded, please try a different area or come back at a less crowded time. Try out some of our lesser known open space areas!*

- Remember that bicycles are not permitted on trails in our conservation areas!
- If you have a dog, please keep on a leash and avoid interactions of your dog with other parties (and of course please clean up after your pet).
- On our sport fields or courts, there should be no pickup games. Many court areas have been closed off and basketball hoops have been blocked. Please respect these restrictions.
- Please do not use or let your children use playground play areas with play equipment such as swings and slides. Playgrounds in Newton have been posted - please respect the signs and don't try to circumvent any entrance closures.
- If you have children, don't let them interact directly with other children you meet out and about.
- It has been recommended to wear some sort of face mask when out and about. This can be important when in close proximity to others. Coverings can be even improvised from available materials if you don't have access to formal masks. <https://www.mass.gov/news/advisory-regarding-face-coverings-and-cloth-masks>
- If you are sick or exhibiting symptoms, please stay home and do not use parks or trails.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after you have been out in public places.

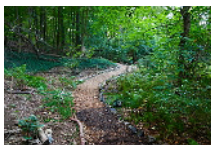


The health of all citizens depends on adherence to a few simple guidelines when we are out and about. A recent letter to the Boston Globe lamented that at least some folks in Newton seemed to ignore other people they passed when out walking. There is no rule against smiling or waving at others! Even while wearing a mask, you can smile with your eyebrows. Greeting each other is natural and we are all in this together.

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 your own or with your immediate household members for the time being.

President's Message

How the world has changed in only a few short weeks due to COVID-19! So many things we have taken for granted are now unavailable - library, concerts, movies, school, church, restaurants, shopping, and so much more. But hopefully it has raised awareness of the value of our open space in our lives - we still have parks!



More people than ever seem to be out enjoying our open spaces and paying attention to social distancing. They are walking, running, and biking - perhaps in some part to counteract all the snacking that is going on as a result of being home so much! It has been encouraging to meet families out on the trails (at a social distance) who are now broadening their open space experience with new locations to explore. And especially since many tell me they have been using our Newton Conservators website or trail guide to find these new locations.

With all the fear, uncertainty and illness brought about by the virus, there have been some positives as well. Have you noticed the air is cleaner with so much less traffic locally and on the major roadways that traverse and border Newton?



With that comes a much quieter sonic environment due to the lessened traffic din. When is the last time you noticed an airplane overhead? All the better to smell the flowers and hear the birds as spring washes over us like an unstoppable tide with its increasing green to brown ratio.



Outdoor activity has always been an outlet in stressful situations. It's hard to resist the call on these sunny days and sometimes even on the rainy ones! April showers do bring May flowers but they also bring out the April ones as well! And the colors are hard to miss. It seems the crocuses gave way to the forsythia and daffodils, the pretty ground flowers sprouting randomly in lawns, the flowering trees and now azaleas.

Try taking a picture from the same vantage point every day or two and you will be amazed how the green creeps up on you. The maple buds are out and even a few bumblebees have emerged. My own routine has been to visit Dolan Pond in the early morning, which has been transitioning from near freezing to light jacket weather on more recent days.

The aural symphony changes every day with new birds arriving for the season or migrating further north. Warblers are the small gems of the spring migration. - the first warbler of the season is always a day for me to celebrate and that finally came last Saturday with the appearance of a Pine Warbler singing its trilling song along Irene's Bluff trail at Dolan Pond.



It was followed the next day by a Palm Warbler with its cute little chestnut colored cap and wagging tail. And not surprisingly, a Yellow-rumped Warbler (formerly known as the more pleasant sounding Myrtle Warbler) gave itself away with its "dry" chip note and its flycatcher-like behavior of flitting out and back to a branch to catch bugs on the fly. Also new was the persistent cry of the aptly named "Phoebe" with its raspy "fee-bee" call from a treetop. Other pleasant

moments were spent following around a Hermit Thrush through the brush - not yet singing its melodious summer song. Right now, it's easy to tick off ten species of birds with a few minutes of listening and twenty with a little more persistence.



Aside from the usual Canada Goose pair and local Mallards, Dolan Pond has been blessed by a number of Green Winged Teal - beautiful ducks a bit smaller and shyer than Mallards - and soon the real showboats of the bird world, the Wood Ducks, will arrive with a squeal of delight call that these vernal pools were saved. On sunny days, the Painted Turtles congregate on a floating log. Before long the trill song of the American Toad will be heard as well.

It is so much easier to spot birds now with the minimal foliage. Morning is best when our feathered friends are most vocal and active. Get to know the most common bird sounds (e.g. Robin, Cardinal, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, Mourning Dove, etc.) and then you will be able to focus on finding the less familiar sounding migrating birds as they show up in full force over the next month. And you can find a lot of these birds in your own back yard!

"Watched the birds fight over a worm. The Cardinals lead the Blue Jays 3-1." - from a recent quarantine joke.

Anyway, that's how I've been coping in this COVID era. I'd love to hear your stories of how nature and open space have helped you and what activities you have pursued out and about. We would welcome your stories, musings, poetry, photos, and art by sending them to president@newtonconservators.org. We may feature them in an upcoming e-Bulletin, our Newton Conservators newsletter, or on our website to help inspire others. Below are some recent examples!



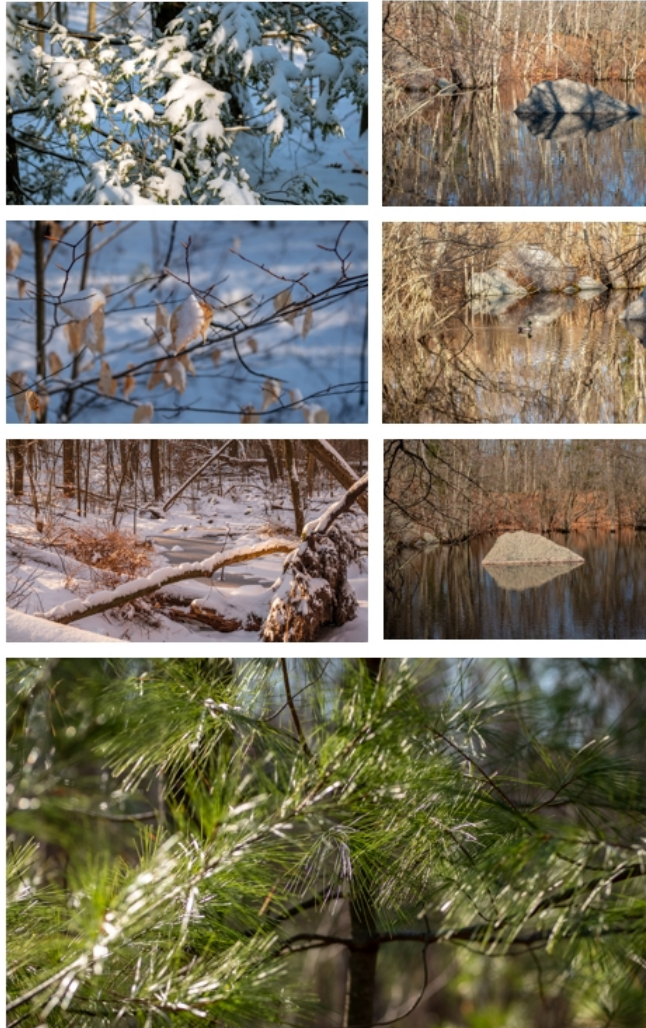
Be well, be safe, and be kind!

- Ted Kuklinski

Inspiration in COVID Times

Photography

John Chadis is a Newton photographer and printer and provided these photos inspired by Newton's Webster Woods winter/early spring 202. He relates the following on his [artist page](#) on our website: "The Webster Woods have been a part of our family life for close to forty years. Our children grew up walking and wandering these woods through all seasons. These images support and affirm the beauty and majesty of the natural world that we hold in trust for the generations to come." John can be reached at john@chadis.net.



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Poetry

April is National Poetry Month and we are grateful to be able to share this poem by Newton resident Robert Hsiung inspired by a walk in Webster Woods with his wife.

A DAY OF GLOBAL PANDEMIC -- A WALK IN THE WEBSTER WOODS

by Robert Y.C. Hsiung

It rained all day yesterday,
dark cloud covering the earth
like a cold wet blanket --

chilling news of 14,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases,
US surpassing other nations...
Today, the sun is out,
cold air biting our faces --
news of 240,000 forecasted deaths,
even with social distancing ...
as we take our solitary walk
in the Webster Woods.

Among fallen branches, decaying trunks, rotten leaves,
rusty dust, gray mush, dark puddles,
death is lurking...

Bare branches for our staffs,
exhausted, breathless, lost in the winding paths,
we come to face a giant ominous rock,
split -- a narrow gap in between...
The sun beckons on the other side --
its warmth caressing our faces,
green moss coaxing underfoot,
hidden buds waving overhead...
We walk through the narrow gap,
hands touching rock's rugged walls,
as though brushing the cold faces
of fear and death...

I can't tell you how good it feels!
Such an outrageous gift of being alive! Such a reminder
of life eternal!

Kindness Stones

Visitors to Dolan Pond Conservation Area have been recently delighted to find colorful painted stones along its paths, on tree stumps, and on top of signs. They seem to change locations and have brought smiles and conveyed inspiration to passers-by.



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.

Please note that our [Schedule of Invasive Pulls \(since modified\)](#), and [Spring Walk Schedule \(since canceled\)](#), and [President's Message](#) are also included. Check our online website Events listing for the latest information.



NEWSLETTER

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

NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • SPRING 2020

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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 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

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



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!

NOTE: Limited Time HALF PRICE Sale on our two publications!

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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