



## Newton Conservators E-Bulletin Thursday, December 31, 2020

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

### Goodbye 2020 and Wishes for a Happier New Year!

In this past pandemic year of 2020, you have probably gotten to appreciate our wonderful open spaces even more! As we count down to 2021, perhaps consider a year end donation to the Conservators to support our mission of acquiring protecting and preserving open space in Newton. Read below how you could help us still in this year! Also included below is our annual President's Report which details how your donations have been used in the past year along with our latest newsletter.



Newton Conservators wishes you and your family a happy and healthy New Year and we hope to see you out and about in our open spaces this coming year!

### Help our mission of protecting and preserving open space in Newton!

We hope you will continue to support our advocacy, education, and work for our open spaces. There are many ways to give back, including renewing or gifting a membership, adding an extra donation, or sharing our work with friends.

Perhaps consider joining the Newton Conservators (or renewing at a higher level if you are already a member), or purchasing a gift membership for someone else who is passionate about open space. You can renew or join the Newton Conservators online to help us to continue this important work in 2021, our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year! You may join by contributing as little as \$35 a year, but larger contributions are gratefully appreciated!

Newton Conservators is a 501c(3) charitable organization, and all membership contributions and other donations are tax deductible as provided by law, as no goods or services are provided in exchange for your gift. Did you know the recent CARES Act Expands Tax Deductions for Charitable Giving?

- If you do not itemize deductions, you may nonetheless take an "above-the-line" deduction for up to \$300 in cash gifts you make in 2020 to the Newton Conservators.
- If you do itemize, you may deduct up to the entire amount of your adjusted gross income (AGI) for cash gifts you make in 2020, without reference to the 60 percent limitation that would otherwise apply.

Click [HERE](#) to read more about the CARES Act and charitable giving.

Click [HERE](#) to make your 2020 charitable gift to the Newton Conservators.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Newton Conservators or to renew your membership.

Your membership includes a subscription to the printed or online [Newton Conservators Newsletter](#) and optional emails and invitations to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities. You will also receive a copy of the [Newton Conservators Walking Trails in Newton's Park and Conservation Lands](#), a handy guide to the trails and conservation and open space recreation opportunities in Newton.

### President's Report - 2020

**Dear Newton Conservators & Friends,**

Your memberships, donations, and volunteer support helped accomplish a great deal this past year...



**The Year 2020** has certainly not been the year we expected! The importance of our open space mission became clearer than ever. With the Covid situation, outdoor activities in our wonderful open spaces have been the saving refuge for so many – with much increased use of our parks and exploring, walking, hiking, and biking activity. Our work has continued, albeit in modified form, with many of our normally public activities such as walks, lectures, and even our annual meeting, held virtually. We worked especially hard this year adapting to the new reality and continued our programs as much as possible. We have a recently formed “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” team dedicated to the continuing goal of making our open spaces and organization open and welcoming to all.

**Riverside Greenway.** A major focus this coming year is the exciting Riverside Greenway trail system along the Charles River. We are partners in the Riverside Greenway Working Group (RGWG) on a number of key projects, in particular the recently restored beautiful Pony Truss Trail and planning for the Pigeon Hill section of the trail, both accessing grants from DCR. Also notable is the recent planning for major reconfiguration of the Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway for pedestrian and bicycle use. A grant from the Lawrence and Lillian Solomon Foundation seeded a new “Trails Fund” which has been instrumental in covering the cash flow needs of these projects. Notably, Mark Development has agreed to provide funding of around \$3M towards design and building portions of the Riverside Greenway near the new Riverside project.



**Webster Woods.** Last year at this time, Newton Conservators was working diligently towards the acquisition of the open space portion of the Webster Woods parcel owned by Boston College, which came to fruition with the City’s acquisition of the property via eminent domain funded by Community Preservation Funds. Newton Conservators will hold the Conservation Restriction on this important parcel. So many more people have now discovered this amazing property with its sprawling woods, numerous trails, vernal pool, and even a cave! New access points and trail markings will help explorers navigate the area. At our recent virtual Annual Meeting, we awarded the prestigious Environmentalists of the Year Award to the Webster Woods team which included Mayor Fuller, other city officials and staff, the Mayor’s Special Committee (chaired by our then-president Beth Wilkinson), and Friends of Webster Woods. We are proud that a number of our board members and advisors were key players in the process.

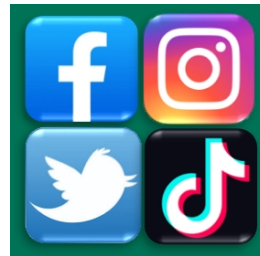
**Invasive Plant Removal Efforts.** One of the primary threats to our open spaces and their biodiversity is the prevalence of invasive non-native plants. By limiting their spread, we achieve greater biodiversity and improve the health of critical open space and the wildlife that lives in it. With the Covid situation, our planned Spring schedule of 18 public invasive removal events throughout the city was unfortunately canceled. Bolstered with added trained volunteers, our Invasives Team, with the City’s encouragement, still managed to stem invasives and work on native plantings at numerous locations with appropriate precautions.



**Walks and Webinars.** We were disappointed to cancel our extensive Spring Walk Series in March due to Covid. But, in place of our usual Fall Walk Series, we pivoted to our first ever Fall Webinar Series, drawing on some of our popular walk leaders to give virtual presentations on butterflies, birds, invasives, ponds, ferns, importance in balancing the ecological world. Attendance has been high with much positive feedback and we are making these webinars available as an educational resource on our YouTube channel ([tinyurl.com/videoconservators](https://tinyurl.com/videoconservators)) for those who could not attend the original. We are excited to continue connecting virtually in addition to walks!



**Education and Outreach.** Particularly during the early months of the pandemic, many new users found their way to the [NewtonConservators.org](http://NewtonConservators.org) website, as well as to our published Trail Guide, in search of new



and interesting places to explore outdoors. Work on a new revised Trail Guide is underway to update existing maps and add new open spaces! A new major reference section on invasives, and their recognition and removal, was added to our website to help educate volunteers and others. Our printed quarterly newsletter continues to teem with quality informative articles by local experts and is available on our website as well. The e-Bulletin and email alerts helped keep members and friends up to date on the latest events and developments. Social media has taken on great importance in informing and educating people about our open space, and we have added Twitter and Tik Tok to our Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram presence.



**Supporting the City in preserving open space.** We have forged cooperative relationships with city personnel in our Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department, Planning Department, and the Conservation Commission. Newton Conservators helped create the new Open Space and Recreation Plan guiding the City through 2027. Conservation Restrictions (CRs) are an important tool in protecting our open spaces

from encroachment and dumping. Newton Conservators currently holds CRs on eight city-owned properties and other properties. Additional CRs on Kessler Woods and Webster Woods and plans for others are in process with the City Law Department. Our volunteer teams conduct yearly monitoring visits and provide the reports to the relevant city agency about current conditions and recommendations for maintenance or enforcement. We will miss working with Bob DeRubeis (Parks Director), Alice Ingerson (CPA Planning), and Ouida Young (Law Dept.), who all retired and were honored with our Directors' Awards this year.

**Support of Local Friends Groups.** We've continued our work with the Friends of Cold Spring Park (FoCSP) on invasive removal and meadow restoration, and served as fiscal sponsor to the new group, which has now received its own 501(c)(3) non-profit designation. We awarded founder Alan Noguee our Charles Johnson Maynard Award for his leadership on FoCSP, which has already accomplished much trail restoration.



We also worked closely with the Conservation Commission and the Chestnut Hill Association in support of hydro-raking at Houghton Garden, vegetation clearing along the stream, and the construction of new accessible paths in this beautiful open space gem.

**Work on our open space properties.** We have been implementing a planting plan at our Dexter Woods hillside property in Newtonville, to remove invasive species, stabilize the slope, and improve the habitat with new native plants. This fall, we have worked on-site and online with nearby Newton North High School teachers and students on educational programs related to the importance of identifying invasive plants and fostering native plantings.



**Your Support is Important.** We hope you will continue to support our advocacy, education, and efforts for our open spaces. As 2020 draws to a close, we would be 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 (a Trail Guide comes free with a new membership). Help us to continue this important work in 2021, our 60th Anniversary year! You can renew or join



the Newton Conservators online at:  
[www.newtonconservators.org/membership.htm](http://www.newtonconservators.org/membership.htm).

With much appreciation,

Ted Kuklinski  
 President, Newton Conservators

## Newton Conservators Newsletter

Find our newly released Winter 2020-2021 Newsletter online at  
<https://newtonconservators.org/newsletters> which contains the following interesting and informative articles:

- [Full Edition](#)
- [Arriving at the Whole Story](#)
- [2020 Annual Meeting](#)
- [History of Newton's Parks, Playgrounds and Recreation - the Prequel](#)
- [Thank you, AnnaMaria Abernathy](#)
- [President's Message](#)
- [Birding Along the Charles River in the Winter of COVID-19](#)



**NEWTON  
CONSERVATORS**  
WINTER ISSUE

# NEWSLETTER

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

NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • WINTER 2020-2021

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## Arriving at the Whole Story





ALL PHOTOS THIS ARTICLE: SAM JAFFE

Left to right: *Cecropia* Giant Silk Moth, *Hyalophora cecropia*, found on butternut, Boston MA.  
*Elm Sphinx*, *Cratichneumon* anytus: Mimus of dried elm leaves, found at Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Harvard MA.  
*Albert's Sphinx*, *Sphinxodes albionis*: False-eye and grape-patterns, found in Newton, MA on fox grape.

**M**y name is Sam Jaffe, and I founded The Caterpillar Lab — an educational outreach, art, and science non-profit organization that uses native caterpillars and their stories to engage and inspire the public with their own, local, and ecologically important creatures. The Caterpillar Lab is a fluid thing, constantly changing as we learn from our audiences and our creatures alike. I would like to share with you a little about how my work, my perspectives, and The Caterpillar Lab's goals have shifted over the years and present a short piece that demonstrates how we now understand our caterpillars and how we hope to challenge our audiences to see the natural world in a new way.

Twelve years ago, my work was only caterpillars. But much has changed over the last decade. When I started photographing and educating with these charismatic insects, my attention was squarely focused on the caterpillar as an object, a moment in time, something beautiful, curious, and unexpected. My images of caterpillars, which highlighted their impressive camouflage,

bright warning colors, or strange inflatable tails and false eye-spots drew people in, sparked interest and imagination. But today, caterpillars represent so much more to me. From working so closely with these insects for so long, from rearing over five hundred species and countless thousands of individuals, and from bringing them to meet audiences every spring, summer, and fall, the world of caterpillars has exploded in size.

A caterpillar is indeed beautiful and inspiring on its own; I will never tire of them as individual characters that deserve our attention just for being... awesome! But a caterpillar also represents something much bigger, and much more meaningful. At the Lab, we have seen caterpillars grow, shed, pupate, and emerge as adults, we have gathered a seemingly endless variety of host plants to supply for our specialist feeders, and we have witnessed time and time again as parasitoid wasps and flies have fed on our caterpillars internally, emerged, and moved through their own cycles of growth and reproduction.

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## Mother Nature in Newton

Check out Newton Conservator's Advisor Richard Primack's latest Newton Tab article, [Newton nature enthusiasts flock to local parks to see wildlife](#) which details a few of the interesting wildlife experiences in Newton during these pandemic times. It covers the story of interesting wildlife in Newton as well as other stories and photos (e.g. a Barred Owl and a Pileated Woodpecker in Webster Woods) about Newton wildlife. Check out the



interesting [Video](#) about the American Eel found at Dolan Pond Conservation area by a Great Blue Heron which is on our YouTube channel!

*"Wildlife enthusiasts in Newton have reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic by staying local and turning up unusual sightings.*

*Officer Juan Garcia, the seasonal animal officer with the Newton Police, handles calls about wildlife problems in the city, mostly involving coyotes, foxes, deer and raccoons.*

*"The call volume has increased this year as people are spending more time at home and walking in the woods." he said. ...."*

### PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



We would be very grateful for your continued support by joining Newton Conservators or 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 Houghton Garden, the Riverside Trails Working Group, 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!

*Mission: The Newton Conservators promotes the protection and preservation of natural areas, including parks, playgrounds, forests and streams, which are open or may be converted to open space for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton. It further aims to disseminate information about these and other environmental matters. A primary goal is to foster the acquisition of land, buildings and other facilities to be used for the encouragement of scientific, educational, recreational, literary and other public pursuits that will promote good citizenship and the general welfare of the people of our community.*

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

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