



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

FALL ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

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

NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • FALL 2021



NEWTON CONSERVATORS

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60th Anniversary of Newton Conservators

Newton Conservators has turned 60! Since its establishment in 1961, the organization has worked to fulfill its mission of “the protection and preservation of natural areas... for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of Newton for scientific study, education, and recreation.”

Over time, that mission has broadened to encompass new issues and to be concerned with conservation beyond the borders of our city.

In the past year, the board created a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) committee and has been working to re-examine the structure of the board and its activities. More information about that process will be forthcoming. The board also has endorsed statewide issues such as the Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA) to strengthen protection of open space in Massachusetts, and it also supported Massachusetts Green Budget amendments.

As we plan for the future of Newton Conservators, let's also visit the past and celebrate the many accomplishments of our organization over the past 60 years.

The Beginning

After World War II, returning veterans and their families had trouble finding affordable homes in Newton. The city reacted creatively to this shortage by taking a large tract of land in Oak Hill by eminent domain and building affordable homes there. As the decade progressed, shopping centers and industrial and office buildings, as well as more homes and apartment buildings, were built across the city. Boston College, which had been a six-building complex, expanded rapidly. The Metropolitan District Commission (now



In the 1950s, the Metropolitan District Commission had begun selling some of the woodlands, near Hammond Pond for development of parking for the new Chestnut Hill Shopping Center.

DCR) sold off some of its woodlands near Hammond Pond for development, as did the privately-owned Norumbega Park. The Mass Pike Boston Extension took over homes in West Newton and a number of Newton's villages. By 1960, Newton citizens began to discuss the importance of preserving open space as the city continued to develop.

A small group of people from across the city met to discuss what could be done, and together the following people and others formed the Newton Conservators, which was incorporated in 1961.

- Allard M. Valentine, president of the Auburndale Cooperative Bank, and Murray I. Rothman, rabbi of Temple Shalom, were concerned about plans first for a racetrack and then for high rise buildings proposed for Norumbega Park.

- Jack M. Roberts and Helen A. Heyn, both members of the Oak Hill District

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Improvement Association, had seen most of the farm and woodland of their village disappear.

- Dr. Richard Lennihan, Jr. found Edmands Park in Newtonville badly neglected and fast becoming a convenient local dump.
- Deborah Howard, involved in ornithology research for the Massachusetts Audubon Society, worried that wildlife habitats would soon be decimated in Newton.

In the early 1960s, the new organization became involved in discussions of the reuse of the privately owned Norumbega Amusement Park on the Charles River.

By the middle of the decade, it became clear that Newton needed a Conservation Commission, which was created with the support of Newton Conservators in 1966. Since then, Newton Conservators has worked closely with this city commission to preserve Newton's remaining open spaces. To this end, the city has accepted bequests of land, taken land by eminent domain, and purchased land outright for parks and conservation areas. In 1968, the Conservators assisted the city in creating the Webster Conservation Area, Newton's largest conservation area.

To make environmental education available to Newton's junior high and high school students, Newton Conservators helped to establish the summer Environmental Science Program in 1967 as a joint project with the Newton Public Schools and the Conservation Commission. The program celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2017 (with David Backer as its leader) and continues to thrive and grow. Newton Conservators contributes scholarship funds to the program annually.



Students attending one of the sessions for the Environmental Science Programs.

“The Newton Conservators has played a major role in keeping the Environmental Science Program running for over 50 years! The Conservators’ financial support for scholarships has enabled families to give their students the chance to get outdoors, learn about science, and make friends year after year.

Many students and leaders have gone on to careers with an environmental focus and have written about the strong influence that the program had on their lives.

Today, students and leaders are still hiking, bicycling, and canoeing all over Newton, and back-packing up Mt. Washington. These experiences are developing the next generation of environmentalists.”

– David Backer

The 1970s

In the early 1970s, Newton Conservators was fortunate to receive a gift of land and funds from Priscilla Ordway. This established Ordway Park in Newton Center.



Ordway Park was bequeathed to Newton Conservators by Priscilla Ordway in 1971.

In 1973, the Board of Aldermen requested that the Conservation Commission study the remaining open land in the city and establish priorities for possible acquisition. The Conservators' Open Space Committee made an independent survey, and the close agreement between the findings of the

two studies strengthened the arguments for a program of land acquisition by the city in subsequent years.

In 1975–6, after years of petitions, challenges, and public hearings, Newton Conservators, working together with Auburndale neighborhood organizations, persuaded the city to purchase more than half of the former Norumbega Amusement Park as Norumbega Park. The rest of the land was developed as a hotel by the Marriott Corporation. The Conservators lobbied successfully to protect the shoreline and to set limits on the hotel's size, both then and



Graphic showing the early history of Norumbega park. 1971.



Norumbega park today.

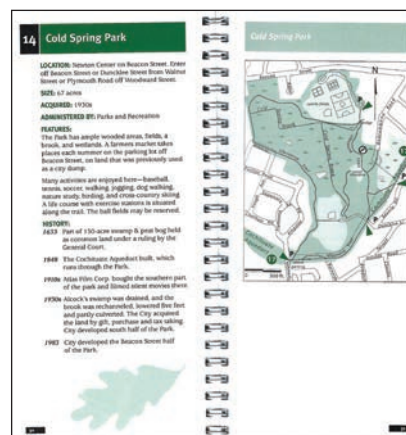
in subsequent years when the Marriott proposed further development.

Throughout the 1970s, Newton Conservators was instrumental in creating other key conservation areas in the city including Kennard Conservation Area, Houghton Garden, Dolan Pond Conservation Area, and Sawmill Brook Conservation Area.

Some of the leaders who made this early conservation work happen were AnnaMaria Abernathy, Sarah Barnett, John Bliss, Thelma Fleishman, Bart Hague, Helen

Heyn, Jean Husher, Peter Kastner and, a little later on the scene, Lisle Baker.

The 1980s and 1990s



A sample page from the current walking trails booklet.

In 2003, Judy Hepburn, Pat Robinson, and Lucy Caldwell-Stair produced the current book form, *Walking Trails*, and updated it again in 2013. A new edition is now in the works.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Newton Conservators assisted in creating the Flowed Meadow Conservation Area and helped to develop Nahanton Park. In addition, Newton Conservators was a key player in the redevelopment of the park and playing fields at the former Weeks School.

Continuing with our environmental education efforts and to foster open-space conservation and study, the Conservators established a grants program in 1992 to provide funding for conservation-related projects to Newton teachers, community groups, and other organizations.

The Early 2000s

Newton Conservators played a leading role in several major open space acquisitions by the city in the early years of the 21st century. Many of our recent successes have come through funding from the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which Newton voters adopted in 2000. Our advocacy and public education programs (led by Jim Broderick) were integral to winning voter approval of the CPA in Newton.

In 2003, we assisted the city in using CPA funds to buy a tract of land adjacent to Dolan Pond Conservation Area and to partner with Habitat for Humanity to build several units of affordable housing on and next to the already-developed portion of the land. Current president Ted Kuklinski helped to guide that project.

“Newton Conservators has been an important in the preservation and improvement of Newton’s open spaces since I first joined the City Council in 1980. In Ward Seven alone the Conservators have supported acquiring the 71-acre Newton Commonwealth Golf Course on Kenrick Street, small additions to the Webster Conservation area on Elgin Street as well as the Houghton Garden on Suffolk Road, a conservation restriction on the landscape next to the historic Durant Kenrick Homestead on Waverley Avenue, the Waban Hill Reservoir on Ward Street, and most recently, the almost 18 acres of the Webster Woods near Hammond Pond Parkway. Newton’s open spaces are much better because of their efforts.”

– Lisle Baker

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Newton Community farm from the air.

Advocacy by the Conservators from 2003 through 2006 was critical in persuading the city to partner with a developer to save a large portion of Kessler Woods.

Newton's last farm was saved from development in 2004 when the Newton Board of Aldermen approved the proposal by the Conservators to use CPA funds to buy the former Angino Farm and to reopen it as Newton Community Farm. Newton Conservators—under the leadership of Doug Dickson, Duane Hillis, Eric Reenstierna, Jon Regosin and others—played a critical role in saving the farm, including negotiating the purchase from the Angino estate.

“One of the most popular CPA acquisitions was Angino Farm — where the Conservators boldly took the lead with a CPA proposal and educating the city and public about the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model. Passage of this project was a nail biter with a truly last-minute phone negotiation by the Conservators with the seller during the final board vote discussion. It yielded a price concession just enough to win over one of the aldermen on the fence and provide the needed majority vote for passage. Today we look back at the immense success of the Newton Community Farm and enjoy its bountiful crop of fresh produce!”

– Ted Kuklinski

The Past 10 Years

The past decade started with Newton Conservators' 50th anniversary in 2011. In 2012, we were delighted to celebrate that milestone by having noted naturalist Doug Tallamy address our annual meeting.

Although Newton Conservators works to protect land primarily through advocacy, we also function as a land trust and have assumed legal responsibility to help protect some of the open spaces owned by the City of Newton by holding a conservation restriction on them; this requires us to monitor those properties every year. Newton Conservators currently holds a legal conservation restriction on eight parcels for the City of Newton:

- Crystal Lake Conservation Restriction (area along shoreline path near 230 Lake Ave.)
- Elgin Street Conservation Area (adjacent to Webster Conservation area at end of Elgin St.)
- Newton Commonwealth Golf Course
- Newton Community Farm (Angino Farm)
- 20 Rogers Street at Crystal Lake (adjacent to the Crystal Lake Bath House)
- 30 Wabasso Street (adjacent to Purgatory Cove)
- Webster Park (adjacent to Dolan Pond)
- Waban Hill Reservoir-Heartbreak Hill Park

In 2012, Newton Conservators took on its first and, so far, only conservation restriction on a private property at 15 Bracebridge Road: a beautiful wooded 2-1/2-acre lot then owned by Andrée and Richard Wilson across from Mason-Rice School. The public-access path through the lot continues to be used by many, who also enjoy the native plant landscaping established by the Wilsons' son André.

In addition, Newton Conservators owns three small pocket parks: Ordway Park, Dexter Woods, and Awtrey Dell, all legally restricted to conservation purposes.

The Newton Conservators' website was created by Mike Clarke in 2001. Dan Brody managed the site for many years, carrying out major revisions in 2003 and 2019. Dan made the website an invaluable resource for Newton Conservators, the city, and others. It contains information on all Newton's open spaces and their histories, links from QR codes that are posted in all of Newton's conservation areas, and so much more.

The Newton Conservators' newsletter has been increasingly important for sharing the organization's work with members and the community at large. In recent years, it has been ably produced by editor Ken Mallory and designer Suzette Barbier.

“Congratulations to the Newton Conservators on our 60th anniversary! From my home in New Hampshire’s White Mountains, I follow you and was thrilled with the protection of Webster Woods — so critical as a wildlife corridor in a heavily developed area. I was President for the 50th anniversary, when we were working to protect the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course and the Wilson property. All the accomplishments over 60 years have helped to protect healthy habitats for plants and wildlife — so critical in mitigating the effects of climate change, protecting species, and providing places for humans to enjoy the natural world. Awesome works, and kudos to everyone involved all these years!”

– Jane Sender

Starting in 2015, Newton Conservators was instrumental in working with the City of Newton to preserve the portion of Webster Woods that was owned by Boston College and at risk of being developed. Newton Conservators’ involvement in the effort was led by Beth Wilkinson, who was the chair of the Mayor’s Webster Woods Advisory Panel, and Dan Brody, who was a member of the Community Preservation Committee. At the end of 2019, the city (guided by Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, Councilor Lisle Baker, former City Solicitor Ouida Young, Chief Environmental Planner Jennifer Steel, and Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Yeo) took the land by eminent domain.



The land purchased by the city is outlined in blue. The land retained by Boston College is at the right. City and state conservation areas are at top and bottom.

Starting in 2015, Newton Conservators began a collaboration with the Riverside Trails Committee, the Solomon Foundation, the Mass Department of Conservation

and Recreation, Bike Newton, and the Conservation Commission to expand the network of trails along the Charles that is now known as the Riverside Greenway. Work on the historic Pony Truss Trail was completed in the fall of 2020, and the official ribbon cutting took place in June of 2021 (see article by Ted Chapman elsewhere in the newsletter). Work on further trail expansion continues.

Over the past ten years, our Invasives Team, led by Katherine Howard, has worked to foster a healthier and more biodiverse environment in Newton’s parks and conservation areas by consistent and diligent invasives removal efforts, and by educating the public on this issue. In 2019, Katherine wrote a guide for the Conservators’ website (<https://newtonconservators.org/invasive-plants/>) to help everyone to recognize invasive plants in our community.



Pollinator demonstration garden at Newton City Hall.

Knowing that it’s also important to replace invasive plants with pollinator-friendly native plants, Beth Wilkinson and Mark Feldhusen created a Pollinator Toolkit on the website (<https://newtonconservators.org/pollinator-toolkit/>) in the summer of 2021 and joined with the Newton Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department and the new Pollinator Working Group to plant a pollinator demonstration garden at City Hall.

Thank you!

The Board of Newton Conservators feels proud of all that our organization has accomplished since 1961 and thanks all our members who support its work, and everyone who has been involved with its many projects over the past 60 years.

We look forward to new projects with you as we continue to set and meet new goals. ♦

By Beth Wilkinson, AnnaMaria Abernathy, and Katherine Howard—with thanks to Conservators’ historian Dan Brody and the other contributors to the website over the years

President's Message

2021 is a certainly a very special year for the Newton Conservators — our 60th anniversary! Earlier this summer, we seemed to be on the road to recovery from the Covid crisis and were venturing out again seeing friends and family face-to-face rather than on a Zoom screen. We had planned a wonderful annual dinner meeting for this momentous occasion to celebrate. But, alas, the Delta variant seems to have put yet another delay into our return to normalcy!

Indeed, we will have our annual meeting and election on Wednesday, October 27, at 7 pm, but virtually once again. This year's meeting will look back at our past 60 years through the recollections of some of our past and present members. We have a proud legacy of open-space accomplishments, which are outlined in our lead article this month by Beth Wilkinson, AnnaMaria Abernathy, and Katherine Howard.

By the time you read this, the awards from 2020 announced last year may finally have been presented in person to our deserving recipients in an outdoor ceremony held near the new pollinator garden at City Hall. And given continued Covid recovery progress, we do hope for a return to our in-person annual dinner meeting next spring on Wednesday, May 4, 2022.

With Covid, we were forced to convert our previous spring and fall walk series into a webinar series that was very successful and well attended. As you can see in this issue, this fall we again have a great lineup of informative webinar events. But wait there's more — we have restarted our outdoor walk series as well, also listed in this issue!

Much of the beauty and reputation of our Garden City can be attributed to our wonderful parks, conservation areas, and other open spaces — which we often take for granted. You might be surprised to learn that many of our most beloved spaces were additions in the past 60 years, in part through the considerable efforts of the Newton Conservators. We owe a debt of gratitude to the early Conservators who realized the value of open space to our overall well-being — something rediscovered by so many during the current pandemic. We appreciate your support of the Conservators to help continue our work over future decades taking advantage of available open space opportunities and with a focus on the care and access for existing open space.

The Riverside Greenway is one of our important long-term projects, and we were delighted at the official opening of its first component, the Pony Truss Trail, earlier this year. Read all about this new resource in the article by Ted Chapman, project manager of the Riverside Greenway Working Group, of which we are members. Our invasive plant removal projects, the new pollinator garden at City Hall, and new pollinator related “Story Walks” in our open spaces reflects our continued concern for habitat protection and appreciation.

It has been a great privilege to serve as president of this organization, so it is with a bit of sadness to let you know that this is my 10th and last *president's* message. After taking over from Beth Wilkinson at our May 2019 Annual Meeting, little did we know what an unusual period for the Conservators this would be. Many thanks to our hard-working board, advisors, and volunteers for keeping us active in this difficult time. After the excitement of the Webster Woods acquisition that fall, the world changed as the pandemic gripped all aspects of our lives — but with a silver lining of increased appreciation of nature and usage of our open spaces. Hope to see you soon out and about in the wilds of Newton!

All the best,

Ted Kuklinski

Ted Kuklinski
President, Newton Conservators

Pony Truss Trail

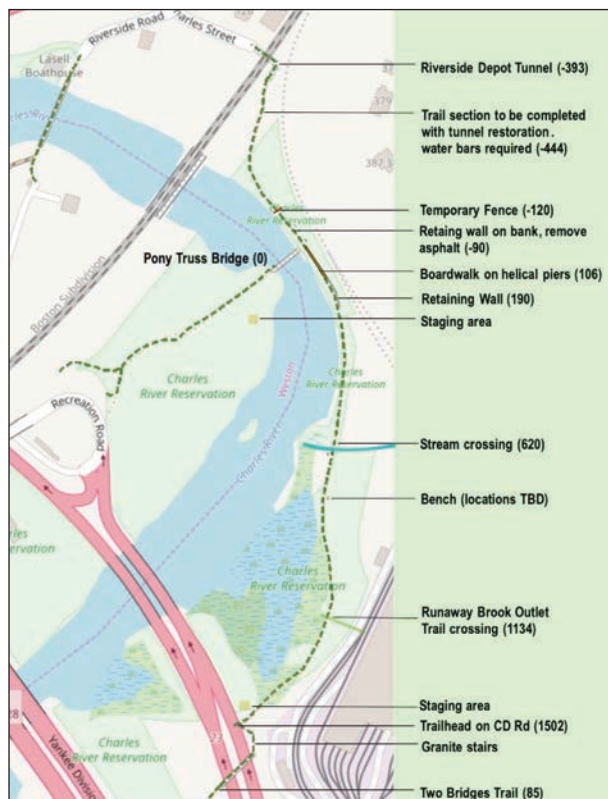
By Ted Chapman, Riverside Greenway Working Group, Project Manager

Four years of hard work by the Riverside Greenway Working Group reached the first tangible manifestation this spring with the opening of the 2000-foot-long Pony Truss Trail along the south side of the Charles River adjacent to the Riverside MBTA station. This trail is the first installment of the Riverside Greenway — three miles of accessible and recreational trails along the banks of the Charles between Lyons Field in Auburndale and the Trestle Bridge connecting the villages of Newton Lower Falls and Wellesley Lower Falls. This project was made possible with support from the Newton Conservators and funding from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) — Recreational Trails Program and the Solomon Foundation.

The entire length of the Pony Truss Trail lies within the 100-foot wetland buffer of the Charles River, providing beautiful views of the river, the vegetated shorelines, and the historic infrastructure crossing the river. The trail has been used since the mid-1800s to provide access from the Riverside Depot to the recreational opportunities along the Charles River. They include the Riverside Recreation Area in Weston, now Riverside Park, across the Pony Truss Bridge, and boathouses on the Newton side of the Charles. The trail is paralleled above by what was the Lower Falls Branch of the Boston-Albany Railroad, now a spur line connecting the Framingham MBTA Commuter Rail line to the Riverside MBTA station. This track created steep grades with high erosive potential. Over time, parts of the trail became impassable.



This ribbon cutting ceremony on June 17, 2021 celebrates the opening of the Pony Truss trail with the DCR Commissioner Jim Montgomery, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, Representative Kay Kahn, Herb Nolan of the Solomon Foundation, and Ted Chapman.



Schematic showing the Pony Truss bridge.

The Restoration

For most of its length, the trail is a grade rolling with elevation changes in the range of plus or minus 10 feet, which required only routine measures to restore an adequate crown to the tread. But there were several challenging areas:

- For 210 feet upstream from the Pony Truss Bridge, the trail was narrow, and the slope of the bank was steep enough that conventional trail restorations would be unstable and environmentally damaging. The restoration team from Conservation Works and Terramor elected to replace the existing tread with an 85-foot-long boardwalk supported by helical pilings. From 106 to 210 feet upstream, retaining walls/cribbing support the downslope.
- Just downstream of Pony Truss Bridge and the existing wood retaining structure, significant riverbank erosion was restored with large stones, matching those on the downstream side of the bridge abutment. This erosion was partly due to this trail section being previously paved with asphalt, which was broken up and covered with base-pack graded for proper drainage.
- At the outflow of the Runaway Brook as it emerges from its course under the Riverside MBTA Station, the trail needed to be routed over the top of the outflow pipe. This required retaining walls to prevent erosion and two sets of overlapping granite stairs to negotiate the grade change. The City of Newton DPW donated granite for these structures recycled from the old Newton North High School.
- At the junction with the Connector-Distributor (CD)

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Road (next to the onramp from Grove Street to 95/turnpike), a spur to the Two Bridges Trail begins to the left, rising steeply uphill to reach the bridge's abutment 30-feet above. A planned set of overlapping granite stairs at this site had to be postponed due to the parcel's complex ownership, permits could not be prepared in time.

As part of the restoration, several species of native plants were installed in the most disturbed areas to create beauty and diversity, and prevent erosion. New plantings included *Ilex verticillata* (winterberry holly), *Itea virginica* (Virginia sweetspire), *Comptonia peregrina* (sweet fern), *Lindera bezoin* (Northern spicebush), *Nyssa sylvatica* (blackgum, tupelo), *Leucothoe fontanaesians* (dog hobble, fetterbush), *Viburnum nudum* (Possumhaw viburnum). These new plantings complement the rich existing native flora: majestic *Quercus*



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

A selection of granite stairs along the Pony Truss Trail.

rubra (red oak), *Pinus strobus* (white pine), *Juglans nigra* (black walnut), *Carya glabra* (pignut hickory), *Carya ovata* (shagbark hickory), sapling *Castanea dentata* (American chestnut), *Clethra alnifolia* (sweet pepper bush), *Viburnum acerfolium* (maple leaf viburnum), *Vaccinium angustifolium* (low bush blueberry), *Monotropa uniflora* (Indian pipe) and wildflowers including *Aureolaria pedicularia* (fernleaf false foxglove), *Hibiscus moscheutos* (swamp rose mallow), and *Chimaphila maculata* (striped

wintergreen). Management of moderate populations of invasive species including *Ailanthus* (tree of heaven), Japanese knotweed, barberry, oriental bittersweet, common and glossy buckthorn, burning bush, and garlic mustard was begun under the leadership of Katherine Howard.

The Pony Truss Trail provides a less than moderately easy hike — bike ride in its current condition. A loop begins at Riverside Park in Weston, across the Pony Truss Bridge, upstream in the trail to the CD road, turning right to return to Riverside Park over the Charles River on the sidewalk of the CD road. The path is not ADA compliant and requires negotiating several sets of rustic stairs. A wayfinding sign at the CD Road and an informational kiosk on the bridge will help orient and guide you. The sign at the bridge provides several historical highlights and images. To walk, park at Riverside Park in Weston, which is best accessed from Newton Lower Falls from Concord Street to Park Road in Weston and Recreation Road on the north side of the Leo J. Martin Golf Course.



PHOTO: TED CHAPMAN

One section of the Pony Truss trail leads from the Pony Truss Bridge toward its exit below the Riverside MBTA terminal.

As components of the Riverside Greenway are gradually built over the next five years, the west-end of the trail will merge with a new shared-use path constructed in association with the Riverside Station Development along the CD road from Grove Street to Riverside Park and extending to the Lasell Boathouse Bridge, which is scheduled to be replaced in 2022. In addition to the rustic granite stairs at the CD road junction, an ADA-accessible ramp will be constructed from the shared-use path to the Two Bridges Trail, which will connect to Wellesley on a shared-use way through the Leo J. Martin Golf Course or the street grid in Lower Falls.



PHOTO: TED KUKLINSKI

Indian pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*)

The Pony Truss Trail downstream from the bridge will be connected to the DCR's Lasell Boathouse Park either by a restored Riverside Depot Tunnel or possibly a trail and boardwalk,

both routes going under the Framingham commuter rail line. A footpath from the DCR park will connect to Pigeon Hill. A 'neighborhood way' on Charles, Auburn, and Bourne Streets will reach the new multi-use Commonwealth Avenue Carriageway between Lyons Field, the DCR Boathouse parking area, and Norumbega Road in Weston.

Mark Development's \$3 million commitment will fund these future upgrades in conjunction with the Riverside Development, the Mass DCR, and the City of Newton with funding from the Community Preservation Fund and Mass DOT. A list of walks and a link for more details about the Riverside Greenway projects, including a slide show and drone video from the 2018 presentation at the Newton Library, can be found on the Newton Conservators' website: <https://newtonconservators.org/property/riverside-greenway/> ♦

Support the Newton Conservators through your IRA

Individuals 70½ and older can make a tax-free gift to the Newton Conservators directly from their IRA. Please consider a gift to the Conservators from your 2021 IRA distributions. The benefits to you include the reduction in income subject to tax, even if you don't itemize, and the amount donated counts toward the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). The benefits to the Conservators are immense and allow for us to continue to help preserve open space in Newton. Ask your IRA holder for a simple transfer letter or form. The Newton Conservators is a recognized 501(c)(3) organization.

— Thank you.

Newton Conservators, P.O. Box 590011, Newton, MA 02459

Invasive Pulls

Invasive plant removal sessions will continue this fall; we will focus on black swallow-wort, bittersweet, and Japanese knotweed. If you would like to be included on the Invasives Team email list to receive notices of our schedule, or have questions or suggestions, please contact Katherine Howard at: invasives@newtonconservators.org or 617-721-2571.



Black Swallow-wort

Your individual efforts are also important. Yes, it's relaxing and therapeutic to spend an hour pulling invasives, — but in the case of black swallow-wort you can also feel heroic. Removing the masses of seed pods, which will otherwise disperse yet more seeds to the wind, will prevent Newton's infestation from becoming even worse. Black swallow-wort is a vine with glossy blue-green opposite leaves and 2" seed pods that hang down like pea pods. At this point in the season the goal is to remove as many seed pods as possible. Put the pods in your trash, not into yard waste. For more information, see the new invasives section of our website, found under Resources: <https://newtonconservators.org/black-swallow-wort/>

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 60 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: Beth Wilkinson, AnnaMaria Abernathy, Katherine Howard and Ted Chapman.

WALKS SCHEDULE FALL 2021

www.newtonconservators.org

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

Saturday, Sept. 25 from 10-11:00 am

KIDS DISCOVERY AT DOLAN PARK



Join Barbara Bates, Newton Conservators' board member and teacher naturalist at Mass Audubon, to explore the animals and plants in the Dolan Pond conservation area and play nature-themed games. Open to children 5 and 6 years old accompanied by an adult. Registration limited to 8 children. Sign up online at <https://bit.ly/3tiyIbu>. A wait list will be available if registration is filled. Meeting location and directions will be mailed to all registrants before the walk.

Trip Leader: Barbara Bates, B.L.Bates@rcn.com.

Saturday, Sept. 25 at 11:00 am

HOUGHTON GARDEN FERN WALK

This garden remains from the Houghton Estate and is now part of the Webster Conservation Area complex near Hammond Pond that runs from Route 9 north beyond the MBTA Riverside line. The garden, only lightly managed now, retains a variety of flowering plants and a diversity of ferns. We will see more than a dozen fern species and one clubmoss. Park on Suffolk Road (off Hammond Street) and meet near the gate at Woodman Road. Be prepared for insects and some poison ivy. Bring any native fern you would like Don to identify.

Trip Leader: Don Lubin, 617-254-8464.

Sunday, Oct. 3 from 1-2:30 pm

KIDS EXPLORATION BY THE CHARLES RIVER

Join Barbara Bates, Newton Conservators' Board member and teacher naturalist at Mass Audubon, to explore the various habitats around Riverside Park next to the Charles River and play nature-themed games. Open to children 7 and 8 years old accompanied by an adult. Registration limited to 8 children. Sign up online at <https://bit.ly/3DV9gxx>. A wait list will be available if registration is filled. Meeting location and directions will be mailed to all registrants before the walk.

Trip Leader: Barbara Bates, B.L.Bates@rcn.com.

Saturday, Oct. 9 from 10-11:30 am

CHARLES RIVER PATHWAY WALK

Join the Newton Conservators and Waltham Land Trust for an easy, one-way 2-mile walk on the Charles River Pathway.

We'll discuss historic and natural points of interest along the way, starting in Newton's Lyons Field, going through Auburndale Park and into Forest Grove in Waltham, over the new Woerd Ave bridge, past the boat launch and Waltham Watch Factory, and along the Riverwalk to Waltham's vibrant Moody Street. There participants can pick up produce and snacks at the Waltham Farmers' Market, stroll a closed-to-traffic Moody Street, and grab lunch al fresco on "Restaurant Row". Meet at Lyons Park, Commonwealth Ave at Islington Road, Auburndale 02466

Trip Leaders: Sonja Wadman & Ted Chapman, 781-893-3355 X101.

Saturday, Oct. 16 from 10-11:30 am

WALKING WEBSTER WOODS

Join Barbara Bates, Newton Conservators' Board member, in navigating the more common trails in Webster Woods while admiring fall foliage and learning about how leaves turn color. Includes visits to the vernal pool (Bare Pond) and Gooch's Cave. Registration limited to 25. Sign up online at <https://bit.ly/3jNYpNZ>. A wait list will be available if registration is filled. Meeting location and directions will be mailed to all registrants before the walk. Adults and families welcome!

Trip Leader: Barbara Bates, B.L.Bates@rcn.com.

Saturday, Oct. 23 from 8-11:00 am

BIRDING AT COLD SPRING PARK

Participants will meet near the turnaround at the end of the left side of the Beacon Street parking area. This is an easy walk on flat woodland trails. We will look for resident birds as well as fall migrants. The latter may include warblers, thrushes and vireos. We saw a Philadelphia Vireo on this walk two years ago. Beginners and children are welcome.

Trip Leader: Pete Gilmore, petegilmore79@gmail.com.

Sunday, Oct. 24 at 2:00 pm

NEWTON AQUEDUCTS HIKE

Join a five-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.

Enjoy Nature... with webinars from Newton Conservators

Join us for our online fall webinar series in October and November.

Each program will begin at 7 PM and last approximately one hour. Please register in advance for each webinar since registrations will close at 3 PM on the day of the event. You may register for the programs using the links below or by going to the event listing at NewtonConservators.org. You will receive an email confirmation after you have registered.



Barred Owl on the wing

Wednesday, October 6 ... The Lives of Native Owls

Owls are an exciting group of birds for many reasons: their amazing predatory adaptations, their nocturnal habits, their folklore, and the legends that surround them. Join Newton Conservators' board member Barbara Bates to learn more about our local owls, their adaptations and nesting habits, where to look for them, and how they manage to survive in our western suburbs. We will focus on four species: the Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Screech Owl, and Saw-whet Owl. Presented by Barbara Bates, teacher, naturalist and Newton Conservators' board member.

Sign up: <https://bit.ly/3k2iOh8>

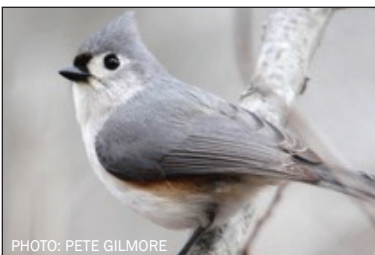


Bombus fervidus on a Purple Giant Hyssop

Wednesday, October 13 ... More than just the buzz: Using ecological data to restore native pollination systems (and why it matters)

Join Dr. Robert J. Gegear to learn what you can do to maximize biodiversity in your own backyard by creating pollination systems that are at risk of local extinction. He will also discuss his Beecology Citizen Science Project, highlighting recent examples of how communities from across Massachusetts have used his native plant list to successfully restore pollination systems in areas with high levels of human disturbance, including parks, golf courses, old fields with invasives/non-natives, agricultural areas, conservation lands, and school campuses.

Dr. Robert J. Gegear is a professor in the Department of Biology at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. He has been studying the neuroecology and conservation of plant-pollinator systems for over 25 years. Dr. Gegear is the founder of the Beecology Project, a citizen science project that uses eco-technology to protect and restore plant-pollinator systems native to New England. Co-sponsored by Newton Conservators, Friends of Cold Spring Park, Green Newton, and Mothers Out Front Newton. **Sign up:** <https://bit.ly/3y1AwGH>



Tufted Titmouse

Wednesday, October 20 ... Meet the birds who spend the winter in Cold Spring Park

We are blessed with a variety of interesting and colorful birds in Newton. Each fall our resident birds must ready themselves to survive the coming winter. Join Pete Gilmore as he presents slides of 20 different resident bird species with background information provided about each species. Different groups of birds have different strategies for surviving the winter months. We will spend about five minutes on each avian friend, building empathy and connection with a natural world that is in peril. Presented by Pete Gilmore, who serves on the boards of Newton Conservators and the Brookline Bird Club. **Sign up:** <https://bit.ly/3iXGsfu>



Eastern Red-backed Salamander

Wednesday, November 10 ... The Wolves of the Forest Floor: The Eastern Red-backed Salamander

Eastern red-backed salamanders are important indicators of forest health. They are abundant, sensitive to environmental change, permanent forest residents, and play an important role in ecosystem function and carbon storage as predators of soil invertebrates. In this talk, Brooks Mathewson, ecologist, educator, and photographer, will discuss his work and share images of these fascinating amphibians.

Brooks' research has been published in peer-reviewed journals and his photography has appeared in textbooks, magazines, and newspapers and has been exhibited widely including at the National Science Foundation. Brooks has studied amphibians in both rural and urban forests over the past 15 years. **Sign up:** <https://bit.ly/3j6j27T>



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NEWSLETTER

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

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Connecticut 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