



# Newton Conservators E-Bulletin Friday, December 16, 2022

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



## Happy Holidays!

After a fairly mild fall, winter seems to have come to Newton finally with our first minor snowfall recently. In line with the coming snowy weather, we have one final webinar in our current series (January 12, 2023) on animal tracks with board member naturalist Barbara Bates. In case you missed them, the previous three fall webinars are now available on our YouTube video channel which can now be easily accessed on the main menu strip of our website.



On Sunday (12/18), is the the annual census of birds in Newton as part of the annual Greater Boston Christmas Bird Count. Read all about it below and we would be happy to have you join in if you are so inclined in helping find seven swans a swimming or possibly four calling birds.

The Winter 2022-2023 issue of the Newton Conservators Newsletter has been recently mailed and is also available on our website.



And we would be most grateful if you renewed your membership or joined us officially for the first time to support our important open space work! The challenges of protecting, enhancing and expanding open space in Newton continue. We hope that you will continue to support the Conservators efforts in these regards by renewing your membership for 2023 or joining us if you are not. Perhaps consider renewing at a higher level, adding a new donation, or purchasing a gift membership for someone else who is passionate about open space. This year we call your attention to our special "Trails Fund" in support of additional trails work in Newton.

If you received our membership mailing, you can join or renew by mailing the membership card back in the provided envelope or you can visit our "Ways to Give" page to join, renew, or donate online at <https://newtonconservators.org/ways-to-give/>

By the way, our Trail Guide or Almanac make great holiday presents for your nature and outdoor loving friends.. You can order them online (or find a local retailers) at our website at

- Trail Guide:

<https://newtonconservators.org/buy-a-trail-guide/>

- Almanac:

<https://newtonconservators.org/newton-conservators-almanac/>



We wish you the best of holidays and hope you enjoy some of them out and about in the wilds of Newton!

## Upcoming Events

**Sunday, December 18, 2022 8 am**

**[Newton Christmas Bird Count](#)**

**1 Raeburn Terrace, Newton Highlands, MA 02461**



This year's annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in Newton takes place Sunday, December 18 starting around 8 am. After all, the early birder gets the birds counted! This is the 123rd year of the CBC and helps to measure changes in population of our avian species (and perhaps more global trends such as climate change). Perhaps you have heard that North America has lost more than 1 in 4 birds in the last 50 years. How do we know? Partially from the annual Christmas Bird Count!

In Newton, birders will meet at 8 am at 1 Raeburn Terrace in Newton Highlands (Raeburn is off Hillside which is off Walnut). Thanks very much to Liane Hartnett for once again hosting the CBC. At 8 am, groups will be heading off to various open spaces throughout the city to count all the birds that they see.

Beginners are welcome to accompany some of the more experienced birders (bring binoculars and dress warmly). Please bring a pair of binoculars if you own some. Each group will be led by an experienced birder, so if you are new to birding, this is a chance to learn. We meet unless there is a bad snow storm. Groups usually stay out around 2-3 hours, but if you need to leave early, that's fine.



Most of the counting is done in the morning. You are welcome to join the counting even for a short time if you like. Tallies are made by afternoon and consolidated with tallies from other areas within a 15 mile Greater Boston count circle.

Any early birds who want to try to see some owls can meet at Liane's house at 5 Am and there will be two groups going to spots in Newton where we have found owls in the past. We cannot guarantee owls, and if it is raining or snowing, we won't go. Owls like to stay in their holes and trees during storms!

If you are interested in joining the count this year, please fill out a google form to indicate your interest [HERE](#) or email Liane Hartnett at [lianehartnett26@gmail.com](mailto:lianehartnett26@gmail.com) . Please provide her with your name, email, phone number (cell preferred). See more info on the event page on our website at [Newton Christmas Bird Count](#)

The most common question about the bird count is "how do you know you don't count the same bird twice?" Well you can't know for certain but we try our best! And who knows if we'll find seven swans a swimming or even a partridge in a pear tree.

**Thursday. January 12, 2023, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm**  
**[Reading the Stories Told by Animal Tracks and Signs](#)**

**Presenter: Barbara Bates**

**Newton Conservators Webinar Series**

**Register: <https://bit.ly/3pneHPC>**



Many animals are secretive, avoiding people and finding food at night. Snow and mud provide a canvas for these animals' tracks and enable us to see who has been out and, often, what they were doing. Join Newton Conservators' Barbara Bates to learn what tracks and animal signs you can find in Newton's open spaces as well as in your own back yard. Barbara is a teacher, naturalist and Newton Conservators' board member. Note that this webinar is on THURSDAY, not Wednesday as is the case with most of our webinars!



## Newton Conservators Social Media

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#). Our expansive and informative website is [www.newtonconservators.org](http://www.newtonconservators.org). You can easily access these Social Media accounts by simply clicking on the appropriate icons on our website's main menu strip.

Note that we have recently added a video icon (Play Button) which will take you to our YouTube Channel. We also have an organized table of contents page for our YouTube channel which can be found at <https://newtonconservators.org/videos/>



You can subscribe to this eBulletin by sending an email to [ebulletin@newtonconservators.org](mailto:ebulletin@newtonconservators.org) or unsubscribe by clicking the unsubscribe line at the end of this email. Hoping to see you out and about soon in Newton's open spaces!

## Fall Webinar Videos Now Available

### Newton's (Buried) Streams

Now you see them . . . Now you don't!

Jennifer Steel - Newton's Environmental Planner

You Tube Video: <https://youtu.be/TLLI3oYw4u0>



Newton was once dotted with wetlands and crisscrossed by streams flowing to the Charles River. But one doesn't see many streams, marshes, or wooded wetlands nowadays. Where did they go? Where does our rainfall go now? Jennifer Steel shares her recent exploration of Newton's "buried" streams. She is the Chief Environmental Planner for the City of Newton, MA. Part of her professional responsibility is implementing the State Wetlands Protection Act and Regulations and protecting the few, precious, "natural" streams and wetlands that remain in Newton.



This presentation, "Newton's (Buried Streams - Now you see them . . . Now you don't", was originally presented as part of Newton Conservators 2022 Fall Webinar Series on Wednesday, September 14, 2022 and is now available on our [YouTube Channel](#) at <https://youtu.be/TLLI3oYw4u0>

### Darkness in Distress - Light Pollution

Presenter: Kelly Beatty (Sky & Telescope Magazine)

Newton Conservators Webinar Series

YouTube Video: [https://youtu.be/\\_E1y6Kki1T0](https://youtu.be/_E1y6Kki1T0)



Light pollution, simply put, is any unnecessary or excessive outdoor illumination. Sadly, it's become a pervasive and ugly consequence of modern 24/7 society. Light pollution robs us of the night sky's beauty, negatively affects the ecosystem, and creates an in-your-face waste of energy. But a new mindset and new technology are poised to slow — and perhaps reverse — this bane of modern life. Learn how you can safely light up your home, business, and community without wasting energy, disturbing your neighbors, or creating an unhealthy environment for humans and wildlife.



Kelly Beatty has been explaining the science and wonder of astronomy to the public since 1974, when he joined the staff of Cambridge-based Sky & Telescope magazine. An award-winning writer and communicator, he holds a Bachelors degree from the California Institute of Technology and a Master's degree in science journalism from Boston University. Kelly has been active in efforts to reduce light pollution for more than 30 years.

This presentation, "Darkness in Distress - Light Pollution", was originally presented as part of Newton Conservators 2022 Fall Webinar Series on Wednesday, November 2, 2022 and is now available on our [YouTube Channel](#) at [https://youtu.be/\\_E1y6Kki1T0](https://youtu.be/_E1y6Kki1T0)

## What is a Native Plant Ordinance

### ... and How You Can Get One

**Presenters: Renée Scott & David Falk  
(Green & Open Somerville)**

**Newton Conservators Webinar Series**

**YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/p3oGhIOAzCE>**



Renée Scott and David Falk, both founders of Green & Open Somerville in 2014, walk you through why native plants are important and how they advocated for and helped author Somerville's Native Planting Ordinance. They will answer questions about the ordinance specifically and native plants in general. Renée grew up in rural Vermont and has a degree in Environmental Planning and just completed a Master in Public Policy degree from Tufts University. David grew up in Brooklyn. He started with the Audubon Society in Vermont and now works at the Native Plant Trust as a horticulturist.



This presentation, "What is a Native Plant Ordinance and How You Can Get One", was originally presented as part of Newton Conservators 2022 Fall Webinar Series on Wednesday, November 16, 2022 and is now available on our [YouTube Channel](#) at <https://youtu.be/p3oGhIOAzCE>

## Public Lands Preservation Act Signed into Law!

Newton Conservators has been a supporter and advocate of the Public Lands Preservation Act along with many other conservation minded organizations and finally it has become law!



On November 17, 2022, Governor Charlie Baker signed into law An Act preserving open space in the Commonwealth (H.5381), also known as the Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA), thus ending a more than two decade effort to codify a policy of "no net loss" of public land.

This bill will provide clarity and transparency to ensure No Net Loss of conservation land by:

- *Codifying into law an existing administrative process that requires replacement of public parks and conservation land that are converted to a different use.*
- *Providing transparency and accountability in the limited cases when cash payments are allowed in lieu of contemporaneously designating replacement land to be conserved.*
- *Requiring that any cash payments be expended on comparable replacement land within 3 years.*



One of Newton's own Representatives, Ruth Balsler, was the bill sponsor and said "I have worked for the entire 24 years I have served in the legislature on this bill because I love the outdoors and cherish our protected land. .... Ensuring that the intent of Article 97 of the state constitution is achieved has been worth the time and effort."

- [https://massland.org/sites/default/files/files/plpa\\_signed\\_press\\_statement-nov18-2022.pdf](https://massland.org/sites/default/files/files/plpa_signed_press_statement-nov18-2022.pdf)
- <https://www.wbur.org/news/2022/11/18/baker-law-conservation-land-massachusetts-preservation>
- [https://figcitynews.com/2022/11/public-lands-preservation-act-signed-into-law/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=public-lands-preservation-act-signed-into-law](https://figcitynews.com/2022/11/public-lands-preservation-act-signed-into-law/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=public-lands-preservation-act-signed-into-law)

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## Parks, Recreation & Culture Notes

- The Parks, Recreation & Culture department is thrilled to begin construction of Improvements to Louise Levingston Cove at Crystal Lake recently. <https://newtonconservators.org/levingston-cove-reconstruction/>
- The Spears Park Community Gardens project was recently approved by the Parks, Recreation & Culture Commission.
- Progress continues on the Marty Sender Path. See our [newsletter article](#).
- A new Gath Pool design will be discussed on Monday, December 19, 7pm via Zoom.
- Read about these and other Parks, Recreation Culture projects on their web page [HERE](#) under **individual tabs**.



## 15 Acre Newton Site Opportunity on Dudley Road

A large property between Dudley Road and the Newton South Campus has become available with the possibility of some open space as well as housing and school usage. The city solicited interest from possible partner developers and is reviewing them currently. You can read about this [HERE](#) in Fig City News which has links to relevant documents. There is a Boston Globe article with information [HERE](#).

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## Newton Conservators Newsletter

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## Levingston Cove: Improving Recreational Offerings, Enhancing Wildlife Habitat

By Luis Perez Demorizi, Director of Parks & Open Space, Parks, Recreation & Culture Department, City of Newton

Levingston Cove is one of a few public parks along the shores of Crystal Lake. The crescent-shaped, linear park covers roughly one-half of an acre. It sits at the intersection of Lake Avenue and Lakewood Road and spans north a few hundred feet to the intersection of Lake Avenue and Berwick Road in Newton Highlands. To the east, the park is bounded by Crystal Lake (which is a Great Pond under the jurisdiction of the state), and it rises to Lake Avenue on the west.



Existing conditions aerial photograph

Though small, Levingston Cove is bustling with passive and active recreation. The park also serves as habitat for a variety of wildlife. Blue herons, cormorants, painted turtles, and many other animals supported by the lake can be seen from its shoreline. People enjoy fishing from the fishing wall, and taking in the scenic views. The park also provides opportunities for sitting, nature study, sunbathing, picnicking, and walking.

The existing landscape at Levingston Cove is grassy, bare, and severely damaged by compaction and erosion. The park is home

to many mature trees, including several oaks and an iconic American Elm. The shrub buffer at the shoreline is sparse. Some invasive plant species have been identified at the park,

including glossy buckthorn and purple loosestrife. Circulation through the park occurs along a y-shaped network of pathways that run north-south with portions of the pathway running behind a large concrete retaining wall dating back to the 1930s. The wall does not adequately support the recreational fishing it is most popularly known for. The park pathways and entrances also are not clearly defined, which encourages users to create new access points at will. The current pathways are often muddy from the adjacent eroding landscape and failing retaining walls.

As a result of its popularity, topography, undefined circulation, and limited public open space around the lake, Levingston Cove has suffered significant degradation and can no longer sustain use. Previous attempts to address erosion are failing; recreational fishing space is narrow; and the barren landscape falls far short of its potential. In short, ecological

*Continued on page 2*

The [Winter 2022-2023 edition of our Newton Conservators Newsletter](#) should be in the mail for those who subscribe to the print edition. It is also available online [HERE](#) and contains the following interesting articles and features:

- [Levingston Cove: Improving Recreational Offerings, Enhancing Wildlife Habitat - \(Luis Perez Demorizi\)](#)
- [A Celebration of Monarch Butterflies in Newton \(Ted Kuklinski\)](#)
- [Marty Sender Trail and Riverside Greenway Updates \(Ted Chapman\)](#)
- [Final Fall/Winter Webinar](#)
- [Winter Invasives Update](#)

## PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW YOUR NEWTON CONSERVATORS 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 securely via our website at <https://newtonconservators.org/ways-to-give/>. 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 specific funds. 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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