



NEWTON
CONSERVATORS

SPRING ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

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

NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • SPRING 2023

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In Praise of Spring Ponds

Over 60 years ago I read *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau, and I can still recall his descriptions of ponds. He claimed a pond is: "... a landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is Earth's eye, looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature."

Every time I see reflections in Bare Pond in Webster Woods, I think of an eye reflecting the world back at me.

When the first thaws unlock winter's grip, I look for the first hints of spring in the wetlands and at pond edges: willow branches turning yellow green long before other trees



Skunk cabbage spathe in Cold Spring Park April 2021

and the emerging yellow-streaked, purplish spathes of skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*).



Bare Pond inlet reflections in March 2022

Before its green leaves emerge, look for the skunk cabbage's well-camouflaged spathe — a claw-like structure containing the flowers on a spadix that looks like a tiny pineapple. These spathes sometimes push up through snow in February because the plant's giant, leek-like

root generates enough heat to warm the air around it to over 60 degrees. That heat helps the funky smell of the flowers attract the carrion-loving insects that pollinate the plant. By May one can barely see the claw-like spathes because the huge green leaves of the plant overshadow everything.

By March the vernal witch-hazel at the northwest corner of Bulloughs Pond has a beautiful patch of brilliant orange flowers.



Vernal witch-hazel blooms in March

Our native witch-hazel blooms yellow in the fall. Witch-hazel flowers have an amazing ability to survive cold by curling their petals into a ball to reduce water loss.

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...In Praise of Spring Ponds continued from page 1

Later in March, ponds and wetlands become veritable cauldrons of reemerging animal life. On the first relatively “warm” rainy night in March called “Big Night,” the yellow spotted salamanders and a wide variety of frogs from the uplands move down to the waters of Bare Pond, the vernal pool in Webster Woods, to mate. Some years there are multiple nights of migration. Vernal pools are special temporary ponds, and they provide these animals with protected breeding habitat. Because these pools dry up, no fish can live there.



A yellow spotted salamander leaving a rock crevice at Bare Pond on Big Night March 28, 2021

By the end of March, egg masses of both wood frogs and yellow spotted salamanders can be seen attached to shrub



Yellow spotted salamander egg mass at Bare Pond in late March 2021

and another case of jelly around the entire mass of eggs.



Wood frog egg mass at Bare Pond late March 2021

The adult wood frogs live the rest of the year in the upland leaf litter surrounding Bare Pond feeding on invertebrates.

branches in the shallower water by the edge of Bare Pond. The eggs are positioned close to the water surface to help the sun warm them and spur their development. The salamander egg masses have a jelly-like coating around each egg

Wood frog eggs, by contrast, lack the jelly-like coating for the eggs mass but still have a coating for each small black egg. Wood frogs will emerge as tadpoles and leave the pool as adult frogs in about six to 12 weeks depending on the temperature.

The yellow spotted salamanders take longer to develop — six to eight weeks simply to hatch and up to 16 weeks to mature into an adult large enough to be capable of surviving on land. This means the pool must sustain water until mid to late July. Sadly, for the 2022 breeding season at Bare Pond, Massachusetts experienced a severe drought, and the eggs of the yellow spotted salamander never hatched as documented at left. Luckily, yellow spotted salamanders can live up to 25 years, so there will be at least a few more opportunities for the remaining adults to reproduce at Bare Pond.

American toads mature a bit faster than the wood frogs and the salamanders. Dolan Pond is “toad heaven.” Visit in early spring and you will hear the beautiful trilling of the

American Toad — for the longest time I thought they were birds not toads! Visit later in May and you will encounter vast numbers of their tiny black tadpoles in Quinn and Dolan Ponds.



Children love to watch the abundant American Toad tadpoles at Quinn Pond in May

American toads lay their eggs in the shallows in long gelatinous spirals, one egg wide. The eggs develop into tadpoles in as little as three to seven days if it's

warm. The toadlets are mature enough to leave the water in another six to eight weeks. These toad tadpoles provide food for an amazing number of other animals including mallard ducks! I once saw a pair of mallards crisscross a tiny three-foot puddle at Dolan slurping up toad tadpoles like noodles.



Mallard ducklings feeding with mother on Quinn Pond in late May 2022

While walking east from Dolan Pond to Quinn Pond, look for five-toed tracks like little hands on the boardwalk. Raccoons, tired from foraging

for crayfish and other critters in the mud, often climb up and use the boardwalk for easier travel. When you arrive at Quinn Pond, watch for ducklings in late spring. Mallard ducks often breed there, and sometimes wood ducks use the nests boxes at both Quinn and Dolan to raise their babies.

One of my favorite ponds is in the Newton Cemetery & Arboretum. The very first pond in the string of ponds there was originally named Crystal Lake. It was, and still is, fed by Cold Spring Brook. The cemetery created three other ponds along the brook at the west of this first pond. Reflections in all these ponds on calm spring days when ornamental trees and shrubs are in bloom are stunning. But be careful to note the pond *bottom* while admiring the spring leaf-out, and you may see snapping turtle tracks in the silt there.



Large snapping turtle foraging at the 1st pond in the Newton Cemetery and Arboretum

Large snapping turtles mate in these cemetery ponds and then lay their eggs in nests on the Cemetery grounds. Hatchling survival rates are very low — less than half — and many nests are raided by predators before they can hatch, up to 90% in some studies. By August/September, if you are lucky, you may encounter hatchlings trudging across



The hatchling snappers we collected in September 2021 were barely an inch wide.

the lawns to the ponds. On September 2, 2021, staff member Pam Kelly alerted me to such a hatching. Pam's summer helpers, Katalan Stoddard & Allison

Shoebottom, helped round up 26 snapping turtle hatchlings and move them to three of the ponds before the lawn mowing started and before predators could eat them. I often wonder how many of those hatchlings survived the bull frog population in those ponds. I have yet to see a young snapper basking in those ponds.



A male Baltimore Oriole feeds its young at Newton Cemetery.

The trees around the cemetery ponds are perfect nesting habitat for Baltimore Orioles. The striking orange and black males sing beautiful, liquid songs during the spring mating season. You will have to look carefully to find their woven nests hanging

precariously from drooping branch tips high in deciduous trees by the ponds. By June it takes both parents to adequately feed their growing young all the caterpillars and other insects they need.

In contrast to the natural settings of Bare, Dolan, and the Cemetery ponds, Crystal Lake in Newton Centre is surrounded closely by housing. It is our largest pond ("29 acres of rain fed surface water" according to Newton's Open Space Plan) and the deepest — 31 feet deep at its deepest point. Still, Crystal Lake can provide many options for relaxation and renewal beside swimming. Levingston Cove on the southwest and Cronin's Cove on the north provide wonderful places to court one's soul, watch clouds and the weather, and spy on wildlife. A great blue heron routinely fishes the shallows at the northern edge of Levingston Cove, and at dawn/dusk you can sometimes catch a muskrat foraging there or on the eastern side of the lake.

The beauty of spring ponds certainly breaks the back of winter for me. It's not simply the beauty of their reflections that sooth my soul, but the burgeoning new life, seemingly immune to all we humans do to spoil it. I hope you will visit some of Newton's ponds and experience their restorative nature for yourselves.

You can learn more about all these ponds, accessing history, pictures, and trail maps on our Newton Conservators' website: www.newtonconservators.org ♦

— Barbara Bates

Preserving At-risk Wildlife and Biodiversity Through Gardening — Welcome to the Cold Spring Park Pollinator Garden

By Alan Noguee, Board President, Friends of Cold Spring Park



Newly established pollinator garden in Cold Spring Park

As a Newton Conservators' member, you probably know the gloomy biodiversity news: big declines in birds, insects, and many other animals and plants, with one million species — one-quarter of the known total count — on a path to extinction.

But let's talk solutions, including one we can all participate in (in addition to protecting open space in Newton!). Many of us may also belong to wildlife organizations that often do campaigns to protect at-risk charismatic species, like polar bears or pandas or snow leopards or wolves, etc. Great!

But what if there were creatures right in our back yards that

- used to be very common but have only recently become very rare,
- are among the most important group of animals enabling the plants in our local environment to reproduce,
- help form the foundation of the food web that provides for birds, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, and the larger mammals that feed on them,
- have a local scientist studying changes in their populations and the plants they need to eat, and training citizen scientists like us to assist with his research,

- need beautiful plants that anyone can grow,
- and that have people across Massachusetts participating in a project to save them?



Newly established pollinator garden at the entrance to Cold Spring Park



Bombus fervidus

Meet *Bombus fervidus*, the golden northern bumble bee, and *Bombus vagans*, the half-black bumble bee, and the plants they love. Meet the ten species of butterflies at risk that rely on those plants. And meet Dr. Robert Gegear, the UMass Dartmouth

professor working to keep them from becoming locally extinct.

We have already lost two of 11 bumblebee species in Massachusetts in the last few decades. In addition to *B. fervidus* and *B. vagans*, another species, *B. terricola*, the yellow

banded bumblebee, which inhabits higher elevations in Western Massachusetts, is also at risk.



Bombus vagans,

at-risk bees and butterflies. (They will also support more generalist pollinators, too.) It was planted by Eagle Scout DoBi Wollaber and Troop 209 and Friends of Cold Spring Park volunteers, with funding raised by DoBi and from Friends of Cold Spring Park, Green Newton, and Newton Conservators.



Volunteers helping plant the pollinator garden in Cold Spring Park

The garden will take a few years to get established and fill in. The species we planted include three native grasses, several shrubs (meadowsweet, Carolina rose, shrubby St. John's wort, and prairie willow, which is coming in spring), and many perennials. Two redbud trees were previously planted by the city in what is now the pollinator garden. All together, these species will provide the at-risk bees and butterflies with flowers in bloom throughout the season from early spring to late fall.

You can find the specific list of plants at the Cold Spring garden, along with links to descriptions, pictures, and where they can be procured, as well as much more about the garden on new web pages at coldspringpark.org. These pages also include links to Dr. Gegear's research and his plant lists: <https://coldspringpark.org/pollinator-garden-plant-list-and-design/>. In the summer, we'll be explaining the garden to Farmers Market visitors and offering a brochure or leaflet. Eventually,

we hope to give away seeds and instructions how to plant them, perhaps setting up a "Little Seed Library" with seeds from the garden.

Some of the plants are familiar and common, like wild geraniums and violets. Others, like downy and hairy wood mint, are rare and endangered in Massachusetts. Many are hard to find at big box stores or even local nurseries. But a growing number of nurseries are starting to supply them, and with increasing demand, even more will surely follow. One new (woman-owned) nursery, Bluestem Natives in Norwell, specializes in carrying these hard-to-find pollinator critical plants.

We hope that you will be inspired by the Cold Spring Park garden to grow some of the same plants, or others on Dr. Gegear's list, in your own yards. Also inspirational is the new pollinator demonstration garden at Newton City Hall, installed with a grant from Newton Conservators, and a toolkit of plant lists and resources on the Conservators' website: <https://newtonconservators.org/pollinator-toolkit/>

Some towns, like Lincoln, have developed an entire action plan to create connected corridors of these plants in open spaces and yards across the entire town. Others have native plant groups that are also planting and promoting Dr. Gegear's plants in the towns in the Mystic-Charles Pollinator Pathways Group, including Cambridge, Somerville, Watertown, Belmont, Waltham, and more. Newton Conservators' board member Samantha Corbin is running a program for the Metrowest Pollinator Task Force selling kits of plants from Dr. Gegear's list throughout the Metrowest region (sorry, that region doesn't include Newton).

Of course, like most native plants, those in the Cold Spring garden also help retain stormwater and carbon in their deep roots, don't need additional fertilizers or pesticides or



Redbud blooms

mowing, need less water, and store more carbon than most familiar non-native garden plants after they are established.

You can learn about the science behind Dr. Gegear's research in this webinar the Conservators sponsored last year <https://youtu.be/Xs60YDw-8FQ>

Let's help beautify Newton, save at-risk species, and make our city more climate resilient by incorporating new native plants in our yards! ♦

Enjoy Nature... with Webinars from Newton Conservators

Join us for our Spring Webinar Series online from April through June.

Each program will begin at 7 pm and last approximately one hour. 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.



Rock cliff in Newton-Webster Conservation Area

Wednesday, April 19 ... The Stories the Rocks Tell: An Introduction to the Geological History of Newton and Eastern Massachusetts

Newton's rocks are like ancient scrolls for those who can interpret them, telling fascinating stories of continental collisions, high mountains forming, explosive volcanic eruptions, and evidence of ancient glaciers. Chris Hepburn will tell us a bit about how to read the geological record of the rocks in and around Newton and their exciting history, including their journey, via plate tectonic movements, from where they originated near the South Pole almost 600 million years ago.

Chris has a Ph.D. in Geology from Harvard and is Professor Emeritus at Boston College. He has spent over 50 years studying the rocks of New England and the northern Appalachians and has authored and co-authored dozens of articles on them in scientific journals. He has led numerous geological field excursions for professionals, students, and the Conservators to the outcrops in Newton. Chris is currently co-president of the Conservators.

Sign up: <https://bit.ly/3Zc7qC9>



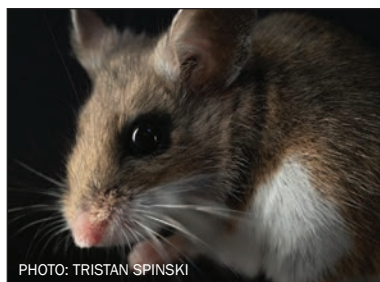
Danehy Park Miyawaki Forest planted by Biodiversity for a Livable Climate

Wednesday, May 10 ... Rewilding our Communities for Climate Resilience

What holds some 500 species, sequesters 500 pounds of CO₂/year, is 10°F cooler than its surroundings, soaks up lots of rainwater, and is created by children and their elders in spaces no bigger than a tennis court? A “mini-forest” planted using the Miyawaki Method, of course! After a couple of years of as-needed weeding and watering, these nascent forests form a canopy and — like any other healthy ecosystem — become self-sufficient. We'll discuss what a mini-forest is, what it can do for your neighborhood, how to plant one, and why people all over the world are organizing their communities to plant mini-forests in the small spaces around where they live and work.

Hannah Lewis is the author of *Mini-Forest Revolution: Using the Miyawaki Method to Rapidly Rewild the World*, published in June 2022 by Chelsea Green; a French translation of the book was released in January 2023 by Editions Eyrolles in France. Hannah has an MS in Sustainable Agriculture and Sociology from Iowa State University and a BA in Environmental Studies from Middlebury College. She lives in Minneapolis, where she works for the non-profit Renewing the Countryside to build sustainable local and regional food systems and plant mini-forests.

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



Deer mouse from a study site at the University of Maine

Wednesday, June 7 ... How Small Mammal Personalities May Shape Forests Under Changing Climates

Plant species are expected to respond to warming temperatures and changes in precipitation in the face of climate change by shifting ranges to higher latitudes and elevations. Oaks are one such species, but unlike wind-dispersed species, will depend upon animals (such as squirrels, mice, and voles) to disperse their large seeds into their new habitable range. Many factors can influence this plant-animal relationship, including individual behavior. Ivy Yen will share her research, which investigates how the small mammal personalities (whether they are shy or bold) differentially select and cache seeds to influence future forest regeneration. She will explain that it takes a range of personalities to maintain forests.

Ivy Yen is a doctoral student in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology at the University of Maine in the lab of wildlife ecologist Alessio Mortelliti, who is based at the University of Trieste. Her research focuses on the consequences of individual behavioral variation while using small mammals as a model system.

Sign up: <https://bit.ly/3KsFEx9>



PHOTO: HEATHER MCCARGO

Fritillary on swamp milkweed

Thursday, June 15 ... Gardening for Habitat

Gardens are habitats, but the degree to which they support local wildlife depends on how we plant and manage them. Our plant choices determine who visits, stays, or passes by as creatures look for food, shelter, to nest and lay eggs. When and how we decide to clean up leaves or cut plants back affects life cycles of salamanders, bees, birds, moths, and butterflies. Emily Baisden will explain how to create habitat in the garden year-round while balancing your workload and garden aesthetics.

Prior to joining Wild Seed Project in 2022, Emily served as Entomologist and Educator at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens. She has an extensive background in native horticulture and environmental education, and focuses largely on using native plants to support food webs and biodiversity. She holds a BS in Environmental Science from the University of New England and an MS in Entomology from the University of Delaware. She lives in Brunswick, Maine, where she spends most of her time adventuring with her partner and their dog, and establishing wildlife habitat in her yard.

Sign up: <https://bit.ly/3Zfnao5>

Save the Date! — Newton Conservators' First-Ever Outdoor Annual Dinner Meeting Wednesday May 24, 2023

We will hold our Annual Meeting at the Mount Ida Campus of UMass Amherst. We will meet under a tent for a buffet dinner, a short business meeting with elections and awards, and a keynote speaker. Access starts at 5 PM.



Norman Smith preparing to release a snowy owl while children inspect the owl.

Our speaker this year is Norman Smith, Raptor Specialist from Mass Audubon. Mr. Smith will present his work (which started in 1981) observing, capturing, banding, and relocating Snowy Owls at Logan International Airport and how this project developed in an unusual way to include research on Saw-whet Owls. His slides, sense of humor, and depth of knowledge are remarkable.

Save the Date! — NewtonSERVES is Sunday May 7.

We will host 4 events: Nahanton Park Trail Maintenance, Cold Spring Park Invasives, Dolan Pond Invasives, and Houghton Garden Invasives. Registration starts March 15 at:

<https://newtonma.gov/government/parks-recreation-culture/newton-serves>

WALKS SCHEDULE SPRING 2023

www.newtonconservators.org

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

Sunday, April 2 at 2 pm

AQUEDUCT 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)

Saturday, April 8 from 10-11:30 am

KIDS - NOTICING COLD SPRING PARK



Join us to explore how early spring affects Cold Spring Park. We will let what catches participants' eyes guide our walk! Early flowers and plants will be making themselves visible this time of year. Together, we will explore the trails along the swamp, woods, and meadow

in Cold Spring Park. Open to children five through nine years old accompanied by an adult. Registration limited to 10 children. A wait list will be available if registration is filled. Meeting location and directions will be mailed to all registrants before the walk.

Trip Leaders: Barbara Bates (B.L.Bates@rcn.com) and Sam Corbin, naturalists

Sunday, April 23 from 2 - 4 pm

SIGNS OF SPRING IN THE WEBSTER WOODS: WILDFLOWERS, TREES LEAFING OUT, MIGRATORY BIRDS, AND SUNFISH.



Come and observe the first signs of spring in the Webster Woods with Richard Primack, life-long Newton resident and professor of plant ecology at BU. The walk will also include the Hammond Canal, the Hemlock Grove, and a "hanging rock." Meet at the kiosk on the edge of the parking lot at Hammond Pond where the trail enters the woods.

Trip Leader: Richard Primack (primack@bu.edu)

Saturday, April 29 from 10-11:30 am

KIDS - DISCOVERING HAMMOND POND

Did you know there is a large pond next to Webster Woods?

Join us to explore a location new to our children's program! We will investigate this area together as we work on scientific questioning, observation skills, and learning about our surroundings. Open to children five through nine years old accompanied by an adult. Registration limited to 10 children. 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) and Sam Corbin, naturalists

Saturday, May 6 from 10:30-12 pm

NOTICING NATURE IN WEBSTER WOODS: A WALK FOR ALL AGES

On this "noticing" walk, we encourage our senses — when we see, hear, smell, and touch — to guide our exploration of Webster Woods. It's a time of emerging flowers both beautiful (lady slippers) and smelly (skunk cabbage) and of spring frog sounds. There are also rock crevices where yellow spotted salamanders might lurk, or green moss or lichen might grow. We will discuss nature we notice. This walk is about 1.5 miles and will cover a few steep and rocky places. Open to adults and children over five years old. Meet in the parking lot on the west side of Hammond Parkway by the Clothes Drop Off behind the Shops at Chestnut Hill (NOT the parking lot by the Container Store near The Street).

Trip Leaders: Barbara Bates (B.L.Bates@rcn.com) and Sam Corbin, naturalists

Sunday, May 7 is NewtonSERVES!

SEE PAGE 7.

Saturday, May 13 from 7:30-9:30 am

SPRING BIRDING AT DOLAN POND



Explore Dolan Pond Conservation Area for newly arrived colorful residents, as well as migrating warblers, thrushes, vireos and more. This area is home to a number of vernal pools which provide habitat for ducks, herons, turtles, frogs, and toads. This will be an easy walk over accessible paths and boardwalk. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet near 76 Webster Park and park around the circle (HP parking available). Beginners and children welcome.

Trip Leaders: Ian Buzby, Mike Hanley, and Ted Kuklinski (tkuklinski@aol.com)

Sunday, May 14 from 8-10:30 am

MOTHER'S DAY BIRD WALK AT NAHANTON PARK: COSPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF NAHANTON PARK



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Nahanton Park offers a mix of woodlands, wetlands, edge habitat, and meadows along the Charles River, making it one of the best birding spots in Newton for migrants as well as resident species. Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance next to the river.

Parking is available inside the park. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Waterproof shoes are recommended. The walk will be canceled in steady rain.

Trip Leaders: Alison Leary (617-821-5619) and Haynes Miller (617-413-2419)

Saturday, May 20 from 10-11:30 am

KIDS - EXPLORING DOLAN POND



PHOTO: MARGARET MALLORY

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 five through nine years old accompanied by

an adult. Registration limited to eight children. 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, May 20 from 1-2 pm

A STROLL THROUGH COLD SPRING PARK: COSPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF COLD SPRING PARK

Tour Cold Spring Park, a natural gem in the heart of Newton, and explore some of its natural and unnatural wonders,

mysteries, threats, and possibilities with Friends of Cold Spring Park founder and president Alan Noguee. See how its seven different habitats create a wildlife haven, why its ability to continue supporting wildlife is at risk, and what we can do about it.

Trip Leader: Alan Noguee (friendsofcoldspringpark@gmail.com)

Sunday, May 21 from 8-10 am

BIRDING AT COLD SPRING PARK



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

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, June 11 from 10-12 pm

EXPLORING HEMLOCK GORGE: COSPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS OF HEMLOCK GORGE



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Join us for a tour of this gem of a park, "hidden" at the intersection of routes 9 and 95, once a Sunday destination for thousands of Boston city dwellers and designed by Charles Eliot of the Olmsted design firm. We will visit the historic Echo

Bridge, talk some history and geology, and enjoy the stunning topography and views. The walk includes some steep slopes and uneven terrain. Meet at the Hamilton Place entrance/lot off Central Avenue (on the Needham side of the Charles River). In the event of steady rain, the rain date is Sunday June 25, 10-12.

Trip Leaders: John Mordes MD, president of Friends of Hemlock Gorge (617-888-4488) and Katherine Howard of Newton Conservators (617-721-2571)



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN TODAY!

YES, count me in! I want to be a nature steward and help Newton Conservators protect and preserve the natural areas in our community.

Please renew/accept my tax-deductible membership at the level checked below:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Directors' Circle | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Individual Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Donor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Sustaining Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution \$_____ |

**Want to make an even bigger impact?
Help us support these special funds:**

Woodcock Meadow \$_____ Trails Fund \$_____
Ordway Endowment Fund \$_____
Land Stewardship Areas \$_____ Other \$_____

☐ I would like to volunteer!

Memberships run for the calendar year. All new members receive *Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Lands*.

NAME _____ EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc. and send to P.O. Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459, or visit <https://newtonconservators.org/membership/> to renew or join online. Consider including Newton Conservators in your estate planning. Contact us at president@NewtonConservators.org.

☐ **Yes, I agree to receive emails from the Conservators!**

I'd like the quarterly newsletter...

☐ via US mail ☐ via email ☐ Both



🌿 Remembering John Bliss 🌿



John Bliss, former president of the Newton Conservators, died of complications from Parkinson's disease on February 1, 2023. A man who lived his values each day, he leaves behind a light carbon footprint and legacy of deep community impact in Newton, where he lived for 55 years.

John's daily routine reflected his environmental commitment. He recycled, rode his bicycle to work, shopped with canvas grocery bags, and installed LED lightbulbs a generation before these practices were common.

John was passionate about protecting green space in Newton and creating safe roads for cyclists and pedestrians. Soon after moving to Newton in 1968, he became a member of the Newton Conservators.

In the early 1970s, John joined the Open Space Committee, which researched and wrote the Open Space Plan that identified all existing open space in Newton and prioritized which properties were most important to save.

As part of the research John and his wife Tamara and other committee members walked the property then known as The Novitiate Land, a large property that abutted the Charles River, Nahanton Street, Winchester Street, and the Winchester Street Recreation Area, where residents could rent space to grow vegetables and flowers. The Archdiocese of Boston owned the land, which had one large building that had once been a home for novices and later became an orphanage. The land was the largest undeveloped parcel of land in Newton that abutted the Charles River. John was struck by the beauty of the property that included a forest of trees, two large meadows, a small pond, and access to the Charles River. The final report identified the Novitiate land as the most important property to keep open and ideally become a city-owned park.

Around 1980, the Archdiocese decided to try to sell the Novitiate land to a developer to build 250 condos. As president of the Conservators, John led the campaign to pressure the city to buy the property and turn it into a park.

While the city was interested in acquiring the land along the river, it did not want to buy the entire property because the old building with the iconic tower was in the middle of the property. The city had no use for the building, and it would be expensive to tear down.

Fortunately, the Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) wanted to buy part of the property to create a Jewish Community Center. John worked with Norman Leventhal from the CJP and others to draw the boundary between the land which would become the Jewish Community Center and the land the city would acquire, which became Nahanton Park. The city was able to combine the newly acquired property with the Winchester Recreation Area. They also were able to put a soccer field on the property. As president of the Newton Conservators, he spearheaded the city's acquisition of the last large parcel of open space on the Charles River in Newton to create the 57-acre Nahanton Park.

Because of John's involvement, his family identified the Newton Conservators as a recipient of memorial gifts. We all – birders, boaters, bee-keepers, gardeners, soccer players, and naturalists — can be grateful for John's foresight and skill in having the City of Newton acquire Nahanton Park.

🌿 Tamara Bliss and Bonnie Carter

Get Involved with the Conservators - Volunteers Needed

The Newton Conservators needs member volunteers to help with various events such as staffing tables at Newton's Village Days, the Harvest Fest, and others. These are fun events that give participants an opportunity to work with board members to learn more about Conservators' activities and to meet and distribute information about them to your neighbors. If you are willing to volunteer for a couple of hours at such events, it would be most appreciated. Please send an email to: president@newtonconservators.org and someone will contact you. Additional volunteer opportunities are listed on our website.

Thank you.

..... Invasives Team Update



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
Black Swallow-wort



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
Japanese Knotweed

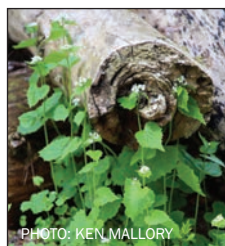


PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
Garlic Mustard



PHOTO: KATHERINE HOWARD
Multiflora Rose



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
Tree of Heaven

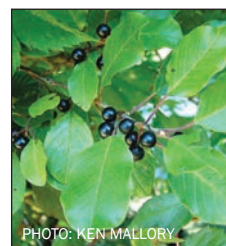


PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
Glossy Buckthorn

The Newton Conservators' Invasives Team conducts invasive plant removal sessions throughout much of the year. We work in many of Newton's parks and conservation areas. The City of Newton and the state (Department of Conservation and Recreation) support us administratively and with debris removal.

Invasive non-native plants take over large areas quickly and disrupt the local ecosystems and food chains of plants, insects, birds, and other animals, harming biodiversity. Human activity caused this problem, and our intervention is needed to prevent the invasives from taking over. Our efforts make room for threatened native species, and we also add new native plantings in selected areas.

You can help by joining our efforts, or just by learning to identify the plants in your own yard and favorite areas. Newton Conservators' website section on invasive plants includes photos and tips for identification and management: <https://newtonconservators.org/invasive-plants/>

Our season starts in late winter with removal of bittersweet vines (which girdle and take down trees), buckthorn (which forms thickets and shades out natives), and large shrubs like multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, and burning bush. By late April, it's time for garlic mustard, the easiest of all the invasives to control. On NewtonSERVES day, Sunday May 7, there will be at least three garlic mustard work sessions. In the summer we work to keep black swallow-wort (fatal to monarch butterflies) out of our parks, and we work to dig, cut, and generally discourage Japanese knotweed.

The open spaces we work in include Cold Spring Park, Hemlock Gorge, Quinobequin Road, Houghton Garden, Heartbreak Hill Park, Dolan Pond, Blue Heron Bridge, Webster Woods, Sawmill Brook, Upper Falls Greenway, Riverside Park, Pony Truss Trail, Hammond Pond, Crystal Lake, Nahanton Park, and Woodcock Meadow. We also work in the three Conservators-owned properties: Dexter Road, Awtrey Dell, and Ordway Park.

You are welcome to join in these efforts. The sessions will be published as Events on our website; and if you would like to receive notices and updates about our plans, you can get on our invasives email group list by emailing Invasives@newtonconservators.org. There is no obligation, and you can come to as many or as few of the sessions as you like.

Thank you! ♦

🌿 Katherine Howard

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.

Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 62 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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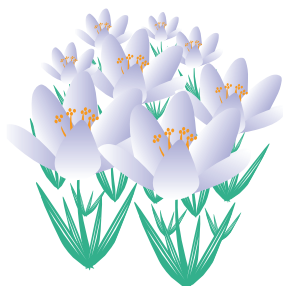
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NEWSLETTER

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

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Lincoln Sparrow
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, email us at membership@newtonconservators.org.