

the Newton Conservators NEWSLETTER

WINTER ISSUE

FEBRUARY 1991

NEWTON URBAN TREE TASK FORCE NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Mayor Mann has appointed a NEWTON URBAN TREE TASK FORCE to address the growing concern and need for ongoing care and preservation of our street trees. This group will determine the needs of our urban trees and will recommend and implement ways to protect them. They will develop guidelines for tree preservation, fertilization, structural pruning, removal when necessary, therapeutic treatment, and off-street replacement. They will develop and recommend appropriate municipal ordinances.

To accomplish these goals, a Street Tree Survey is essential. In order to know what exists in our "warehouse", varieties, sizes and condition of our trees need to be identified. For such a huge community effort, one of the first in the nation, hundreds of volunteers are needed. This is a community activity which can include all the members of the family, including children. Each volunteer will be trained by qualified instructors to recognize common street trees. Classes, to be held at Nahanton Park and Newton City Hall in early spring, will be taught by representatives from the Arnold Arboretum and the Laidlaw Corporation. The actual Street Tree Survey will begin in May. Volunteer teams will be assigned a section map to record all street trees within a particular area. They will note variety, caliper, height and condition. Each tree will be assigned a number. Such valuable data will be incorporated into a citywide computerized record for management purposes.

The form below should be completed as soon as possible as plans for the training sessions need to be arranged in the near future.

(Editor's note: Contributors to this article include Liz Cody, Leo Levi and Mayor T.D. Mann.)

Return to: Newton Urban Tree Task Force
Mayor's Office
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02159

____ Yes, I want to participate in Newton's
Street Tree Survey

Name _____

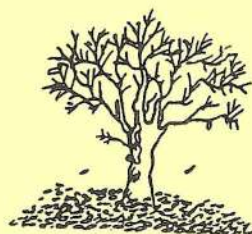
Address _____

Telephone: Day _____ Evening _____

A two hour training session will be offered. I
prefer attending a training session:

Daytime _____ Evenings _____

Weekdays _____ Weekends _____



MAP PROJECT

by Peter Kastner

In 1981, the Newton Conservators designed, produced, and distributed a map of the City of Newton which includes maps of the public open spaces in the city. Since then, the City has acquired additional land, some park trails have changed, and residents have become more interested in walking trails, including following the aqueduct system.

The MAP has been the most visible of the activities of the Newton Conservators, and the 25-cent document has been a constant best seller at the spring and harvest fairs. It has introduced many new, as well as long-term, residents to our parks and open spaces.

The original MAP was completed with the assistance of the Newton Conservation Commission and the invaluable assistance of their Executive Secretary, Helen Heyn.

The MAP, now 10 years old, is being revised by Jean Husher, Past President of the Newton Conservators, who has been updating the information to prepare the revised MAP. The basic plan of the MAP will remain the same, though the revised version will incorporate several new walking trails that have been developed since the original MAP was published 10 years ago. The work is now 90% complete and interested members are requested to contact Peter Kastner (244-6094) if they wish to help with the final fact checking before the new MAP is printed.

The Conservators Newsletter appears three or four times a year.

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LASELL COLLEGE UPDATE

by Peter Kastner

This past year the Newton Board of Aldermen voted down the request from Lasell College for a special permit and zone change to build a life care center on the campus, knowing that the college, as an educational institution, had the option to follow other uses of the site with limited public review.

President Thomas Dewitt recently indicated that Lasell is planning to move ahead with an educational project for the esker site this spring or summer, but that the college will not discuss its exact nature until the final selection is made by the college board of trustees.

BULLOUGH'S POND UPDATE

by Betsy Leitch

Following the splendid mowing and brush removal efforts of the city employees, hard working volunteers showing up for the Fall Clean-Up were able to make real progress in clearing around three sides of the Pond. It is remarkable how much larger and more attractive the Pond appears.

There has been some delay in the time-line for designing the dredging and restoration of the Pond. But we remain optimistic that the bond funding will proceed in the new fiscal year (July 1, 1991) and work will commence during this calendar year. The three storm events of this past year clearly demonstrated the pond's inability to function in flood control and the need for the water retention capacity to be re-established.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION BUDGET WOES

by Peter Kastner

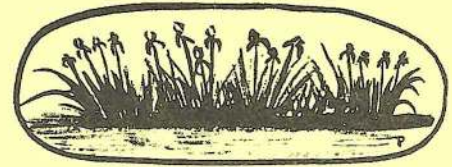
The proposed FY 92 budget would cut out city support for the Newton Conservation Commission by over 40%, from this year's budget of \$55,000 to approximately \$31,600. The current city budget plan limits each city department to a 3.55% increase, causing the contraction of services due to built-in increased costs. Eugene Bober, Director of the Planning and Development Department, proposed balancing his budget by cutting 43% of the Conservation Commission's budget, and having the rest of his department maintain current services, except for the loss of one half-time clerical position.

The loss of 43% of the Conservation Commission's budget would mean an elimination of 50% of conservation land maintenance, a 40% reduction in staff support (currently a less than full-time consulting position), and the elimination of the Planning Department's historical preservation program. In addition to enforcing wetlands protection legislation, maintaining of conservation lands, and planning conservation projects for the city, the Conservation Commission cooperates with local, state and federal conservation organizations.

Last year private citizens donated several thousand dollars to the Conservation Commission for maintenance of conservation lands in order to supplement the city funds that had been cut. At the December 13th meeting of the Conservation Commission, Eugene Bober stated his hope that, in the coming year, private citizens might again be motivated to raise funds to supplement work of the Commission. He pointed out that private citizens would be less likely to raise funds to replace clerical staff in the Planning Department. At this same meeting, the Newton Conservators noted that a reduction of funds would further alienate citizens, making them more reluctant to support a city that does not provide such civic services.

Conservation Commission Chairman Dennis Ditelberg has stated that the Planning Department should rework its budget so that the Conservation Commission does not absorb a disproportionate loss. On the other hand, Eugene Bober has stated that the Conservation Commission and land maintenance are lower priorities for his department and that he does not believe that it would be desirable to spread the cuts over the entire department.

The final budget will be reviewed by the Board of Aldermen this spring.



NO MORE NIBBLES!

by Thelma Fleishman

Member, Newton Conservation Commission

Once again the need for instant parking in Newton Centre Square is putting public open space to risk. Various city agencies are currently examining plans to provide additional public parking spaces on the north side of Lyman Street. This would entail acquiring a strip of the Sudbury Aqueduct reservation from the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. The number of spaces this would create and the size of the acquisition vary from plan to plan.

The proposal may, of course, come to nothing, but it needs to be watched. The aqueduct pathways are an interesting part of Newton's open space inventory and should not be subjected to even the slightest nibble!

(Editor's note: The north side of Lyman Street consists of a fairly steep hill.)

NAHANTON PARK PHOTO CONTEST

by Bonnie Carter

The Friends of Nahanton Park have announced a monthly photo contest for the next twelve months. The contest sponsor, Newtonville Camera, will be acting as the sole judge and providing the prizes. Photos are to be taken in the park of activities, scenery, or nature subjects. All amateur photographers wishing to submit photos can send or take them to: Friends of Nahanton Park, c/o Dept. of Parks and Recreation, 70 Crescent St., Auburndale, MA 02166 or Paul Roberts, Newtonville Camera, 249 Walnut St., Newtonville, MA 02160.

Entries can be in color or black and white in any size (35mm up to 11x14) or slides. Contestants must indicate name, address, phone number and date the photo was taken. The negative must be available for one year. The first deadline for entries is February 1st.

There will be a contest deadline on the first of every month. Each month's winning photo will be printed in the Newton Graphic or the News Tribune and the Tab. The winning photo will be enlarged, mounted and displayed and the winner may keep the mounted picture. Next year, there will be an exhibit of all 12 winning photos and the selection of the Grand Prize Winner. The photos will also be used to make a commemorative poster.

"This is an opportunity for amateur photographers to use their skills. We also hope to gain recognition for the park and to encourage use of the park", stated Duane Hillis, President of the Friends of Nahanton Park.

The Park is comprised of 55 acres of fields and woodland in the south of Newton near the Needham border. It has one entrance on Winchester St. and two entrances on Nahanton St. near the Charles River. There is a small building called the "Nature Center" overlooking the Charles River and the canoe launching area. The park also has paths for walking and cross-country skiing, as well as playing fields for soccer, the community gardens, and a dirt bike track open on Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm, April through November.

Nahanton Park is part of the farm owned by the Kenrick family from 1658 until 1871, when it was purchased by the Archdiocese of Boston. The Working Boys Home was built in the 1890s, and when this closed, the property was taken over by the Xaverian Brothers and used as a novitiate. In the 1970s, the Xaverian Brothers sold much of the property to the Combined Jewish Philanthropies and the City of Newton retained the lower acreage along the Charles River. Through the combined efforts of the Conservation Commission, the Newton Conservators, the Newton Parks and Recreation Department, the Board of Aldermen, Friends of Nahanton Park, the Metropolitan District Commission and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, this land has been preserved - with all its natural beauty - for everyone to enjoy forever.

For further information, please contact:

Bonnie Carter: 969-0686

Duane Hillis: 237-6677

Judy Dore: 552-7120 or 332-2686

WILDLIFE REGISTRY PROJECT

by Paula Chasan

The Friends of Nahanton Park is sponsoring a Wildlife Registry Project to document and map all wildlife, both plant and animal, in the diverse habitats of this 55-acre park adjacent to the Charles River and bordered by a golf course and the Jewish Community Center. Natural areas and ecosystems include the Charles River, marshes, fields, a pond, oak woods and evergreen growth.

It is hoped that local people will help the project by submitting sightings and records of observations of wildlife as many unusual birds and other wildlife have been reported. A survey of wild plants is scheduled for this spring.

You can call me at 965-2752 to join the Nahanton Park Wildlife Registry Project, and to share your observations, sightings, and interest in this special natural area.

The Friends of Hemlock Gorge have been meeting regularly for more than a year. Jim Wright supplied us with a list of activities and achievements some of which follow:

- ** We had our second Barbeque in June at the Meadow.
- ** We have the beginning of a library on the history of Hemlock Gorge.
- ** The Needham Boy Scout Troop #2 picked up trash on Clean-Up Day. The remaining volunteers were free to do trail maintenance.
- ** Lee Fisher took care of the litter on Echo Bridge all year. He did a great job!
- ** We are lobbying for the postponed fish ladder project in the Gorge.
- ** We are continuing to monitor the NWRA's various plans for reconstruction of Echo Bridge."

Several members of the Friends of Hemlock Gorge are committed to restoring the stone structure (the so-called Nail Factory) which is badly deteriorated. (This building is close to the exit ramp on the eastbound side of Route 9.) The old roof has been removed, the masonry repaired, a new roof has been put in place, and the windows bricked in. This will prevent further deterioration while plans are being formulated and funding is sought for proper restoration.

With much help from the Cooperating Association for New England Parks, Inc. and financial backing from the MDC, the FHG have received a \$750 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The money will go toward developing a feasibility study for the restoration and reuse of the Ellis Stone Building/Nail Factory. An architect has been hired to draw up plans showing how it could be restored. The plans will be used in applying for grants. The FHG have applied for Massachusetts and National Preservation status for the Nail Factory.

Considering the 40% cut in the MDC's budget, the loss of programs, loss of park manager presence, and maintenance cuts, the FHG accomplished much of the past year. They plan to have more hands-on activities in the Gorge during 1991. All are welcome to join them at their next meeting at the Emerson Community Center on Pettee Street in Newton Upper Falls on February 7th.

The Friends of Hemlock Gorge may be contacted at:
Friends of Hemlock Gorge Reservation
c/o Hemlock Gorge
900 Washington Street, Wellesley, MA 02181
or by telephoning Rob MacArthur at Elm Bank Reservation at 239-0659 or 727-4138.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL - A NEW YEAR MUST!

by Bill Leitch

Make renewal of you Conservators membership a New Year's resolution! The Newton Conservators' mission is preservation of open space, advancement of other environmental causes, and education. There's no less need for continued preservation efforts in these tough times, and our advocacy becomes even more important in view of the fact that all levels of government are cutting environmental budgets, making the continued monitoring of policymakers and legislators even more important.

SEND YOUR CHECK IN TODAY!

The Newton Conservators, Inc., is a non-profit, volunteer, citizens' organization founded in 1961 for the purpose of protecting Newton's natural resources.

The Newton Conservators welcomes new members to continue the efforts to protect and improve Newton's open lands, and to maintain and enhance the quality of Newton's environment.

I would like to renew my membership in the Newton Conservators _____

I would like to join the Newton Conservators _____

Enclosed find my check for the membership category indicated below:

____Member \$10.00

____Sustaining Member \$25.00

____Family \$15.00

____Patron \$100.00

____Additional Contribution:_____

Name_____ Phone_____

Address_____

(street)

(village)

(zip)

Please make checks payable to Newton Conservators, Inc.

Please send this form and membership dues to: Membership Chairman, Newton Conservators,

P.O. Box 11

Newton Centre, MA 02159

Dues and contributions are tax-deductible.



Newton Conservators, Inc.

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Newton Centre, MA 02159

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