

# The Newton Conservators

62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting

**May 24, 2023**

Featuring Norman Smith,  
Raptor Specialist, Mass Audubon

## Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls

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*Photo provided by Norman Smith*



## Keynote Presentation

# Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls

*Norman Smith, Raptor Specialist, Mass Audubon*



*Snowy Owl*

Since 1981, Norman Smith has spent countless days and nights, in every imaginable weather condition, observing, capturing, banding and relocating snowy owls at Logan International Airport. Data has been collected on roosting, hunting and behavior while on their wintering grounds. Since 2000, satellite transmitters have been attached to owls to learn more about their movements. Find out what has been learned to date, what questions remain and how this project developed to include research on saw-whet owls.



*Saw-whet Owl*

**Norman Smith is a self-taught naturalist** who has worked for Massachusetts Audubon since 1974. He recently retired as Director of Blue Hills Trailside Museum and Norman Smith Environmental Education Center in Milton, Massachusetts, where he had worked for over 50 years, and has taken on a part-time role to continue his research on raptors.

Norman has studied birds of prey for over 45 years, including rehabilitating the injured and successfully fostering over 1,000 orphaned hawk and owl chicks into adoptive nests. His ongoing long-term projects include trapping and banding migrating hawks and owls in the Blue Hills Reservation, banding nestling hawks and owls, and doing research on snowy owls and other raptors wintering at Boston's Logan International Airport. He has also traveled to Alaska to study snowy owls in their native tundra habitat. His research work has been published in *National Geographic*, *National Wildlife*, *Ranger Rick*, *Yankee*, *Massachusetts Wildlife*, *Bird Observer*, *Birding*, *Sanctuary*, *Geo*, *Nature*, *Grolier Encyclopedia*, *Owls of the Northern Hemisphere* and *Owls of the World*.

His mission is to use the information gathered from his research to stimulate a passion in everyone he meets to help us better understand, appreciate and care for this world in which we live.





# Newton Conservators, Inc.

Annual Meeting and Dinner

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

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**5:00 PM**

*Social Gathering  
with Hors d'oeuvres and Cash Bar*

**6:30 PM**

*Dinner, Business Meeting,  
Awards Ceremony and General Program*

**Keynote Speaker**

**Norman Smith,  
Raptor Specialist, Mass Audubon**





## 2023 Awards

### *Environmentalist of the Year Award*

**Marcia Cooper**

**President, Green Newton**

*For her enthusiasm and devotion to a sustainable world for future generations. For thoughtfully inspiring Newton students to join and lead local environmental actions. For consistently building Green Newton as a widely trusted source for guidance to green the home and fight the climate crisis.*

### *Directors' Awards*

**Luis Perez Demorizi**

**Director of Parks and Open Space, City of Newton**

*For his impressive effectiveness in making tangible improvements to Newton's parks and open spaces. For his skilled management of multiple projects, from design through construction, his assistance to the Conservators' monitoring of conservation restrictions, and helping the community reimagine how open space can function better for the public.*

**Ruth Balser**

**State Representative, Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

*For her continuing advocacy for open space in the Commonwealth and support of the mission of Newton Conservators. For her persistent co-sponsorship and success in the Massachusetts Public Lands Preservation Act, which was signed into law on November 17, 2022.*

**Philip Saunders, Jr.**

**(posthumously, accepted by Elizabeth Saunders)**

**Organizer, Public Lands Protection Act**

*For twenty-five years of enthusiastic and tireless support that led to the passage of the Massachusetts Public Lands Preservation Act in November of 2022. For educating and organizing people throughout the Commonwealth to work with him to pass that legislation.*





## Presidents' Message

We welcome you to our first outdoor Annual Meeting in the history of the Newton Conservators. It is inspiring to be here to celebrate with all of you, both long-term members and new supporters. We relish the fresh air and open-space environment provided for this event by the Mount Ida Campus in Newton of the University of Massachusetts Amherst. We acknowledge that this land was and is the homeland of the Massachusetts people and hope to live up to their example by sustaining healthy, resilient ecosystems into the future, with your support!

Preserving and maintaining open space is still our major priority in this, our 61st year. We hope to connect all Newton residents to nature and to welcome visitors from elsewhere. As the Covid crisis recedes, we can now come together more often to enjoy all types of indoor and outdoor activities.

As an all-volunteer organization, Newton Conservators relies on many individuals and on partnerships with other organizations to help protect the environment and allow all to enjoy nature's beauty. We work closely with the City of Newton by holding Conservation Restrictions (CRs) on many city-owned parcels of land. Our volunteer teams conduct yearly monitoring visits and report back to the relevant city department about current conditions and recommendations for maintenance or enforcement.

We have a "jam-packed" schedule of nearly a hundred activities this year, including webinars, walks, invasive pulls, and village days. From the fall of 2022 through the spring of 2023, we offered eight free webinars on wide range of topics, including light pollution, native plant ordinances, Newton's street trees and buried streams, identifying animals by their winter tracks, invasive "jumping worms," and Newton's geological history. We first began offering webinars in the fall of 2020 because of the Covid crisis, but we have continued them because of the strong attendance and interest. Most are available as video recordings on our YouTube channel, for those who could not attend the original presentations.

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Our walks and birding activities attract participants of all ages, with six recent walks targeted specifically for children. We have led recent walks in most areas of Newton, including Dolan Pond, Houghton Garden, Nahanton Park, Cold Spring Park, Webster Woods, and along the Charles River and the Aqueducts.

Our guide to *Walking Trails in Newton's Parks and Conservation Areas* is widely used by people searching for new and interesting places to explore outdoors. We are now planning a new, updated version of this treasure, using maps aligned with Newton's computerized Geographic Information System.

Our website, [newtonconservators.org](http://newtonconservators.org), has many trail guide updates along with background and historical information on local open spaces. Other sections on our website include a handy reference tool for identifying invasive plants and a Pollinator Toolkit that suggests native plants to help our gardens support butterflies and bees. Other sections provide information on upcoming activities and copies of our newsletter, which continues to provide quality informative articles by experts on environmental topics. Recent articles have covered gardening for biodiversity, the invasive spotted lanternfly, the changing forest of Webster Woods, spring ponds, diversity and social justice issues in land conservation, and the redesign and rehabilitation of Hammond Pond Parkway and of Levingston Cove at Crystal Lake.

Our Grants Committee recently supported several important projects. We have continued our scholarship support for the popular Environmental Science Program for teens. We assisted the Newton Community Farm in purchasing a "smart cart" for moving plants and produce around the farm. Funds also were allocated to a "Spring Container Gardening" program at the Newton Housing Authority's Horace Mann complex, with assistance from Newton Neighbors and the Newton Community Farm. This project will involve a diverse group of individuals and groups in growing both produce and flowers and includes gardening lectures by Community Farm personnel. Previous grants supported the development of pollinator-friendly gardens across many areas of Newton. More and more native plantings are appearing on the Newton landscape.





We participate in the city's Trails Committee and have also contributed necessary matching funds that have allowed work to proceed on the Marty Sender Trail at Auburndale Cover and at Riverside. We expect to continue this role on future trail projects.

Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) team continues its mission of making our open spaces and organization open and welcoming to all. The DEIJ team continues to learn from and share experiences with like-minded organizations such as the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition.

We thank our volunteer Board members and Advisors for the many hours they invest in our mission of educating individuals and organizations to preserve and protect our open spaces. This includes spending time in meetings, planning activities, reviewing grant proposals, and supporting trail improvement.

After serving as our co-presidents for the past two years, Chris Hepburn and Bill Hagar will be moving on to other activities in the coming year — a couple of older academics ready to turn over the leadership mantle. We will, however, remain active members of the board.

We end with the words of Rachel Carson:

**“Those who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth, are never alone or weary of life.”**

**“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.”**

*Bill Hagar Chris Hepburn*



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Lalor and Patricia Burdick**



Lucy Caldwell-Stair

***"I go to nature to be soothed  
and healed, and to have  
my senses put in order"***

— John Burroughs

With gratitude for the work of the Newton Conservators,  
from your friends at The Village Bank



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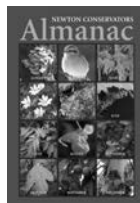
The Crystal Lake Conservancy supports and  
thanks the Newton Conservators for their  
protection and preservation of natural areas.

**Please considering joining us.**  
[www.CrystalLakeConservancy.org](http://www.CrystalLakeConservancy.org)

## **It's Spring. Get outdoors!**

*Purchase Newton Conservators publications  
by clicking on "Resources" at  
<https://newtonconservators.org/>. Almanac  
is \$19.95 + shipping, and the Trail Guide is  
\$8.95 + shipping.*

- Members receive a discount from these  
prices when purchasing online.



*Thanks very much to our friends for their  
generous and continuing support!*

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Joining the  
Conservators?**

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## Officers, Directors & Advisors 2023-24

### Officers

Alice Ingerson, *President*  
Nyssa Patten, *Vice President*  
Michael Clarke, *Secretary*  
Katherine Howard, *Treasurer*  
Bill Hagar, *Past Co-President*  
Chris Hepburn, *Past Co-President*

### Board of Directors

David Backer  
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Samantha Corbin  
Margaret Doris  
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Maurice Gilmore  
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Lisle Baker  
Lee Breckenridge  
Lalor Burdick  
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Jon Regosin  
Patricia Robinson  
Jane Sender  
William Shaevel  
Diane Tillotson  
Willis Wang  
Bruce Wenning

*Former President and long-term Advisor John Bliss passed in February 2023. We are grateful for John's many years of leadership and service to the Conservators.*

