

Annual Meeting 2023

The Newton Conservators 62nd Annual Meeting

May 24, 2023

Featuring Norman Smith, Raptor Specialist, Mass Audubon Snowy Owls to Saw-whet Owls

Newton Conservators' outgoing Co-President Chris Hepburn welcomed the audience to the Conservators' first outdoor annual meeting and called on the Conservators' incoming president Alice Ingerson to offer a land acknowledgement. Alice spoke about the work of the board's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Committee over the last several years and quoted some important points made at the Conservators' 2022 annual meeting on Zoom by our guest speakers, Massachusetts Tribal Elder Elizabeth Solomon and Massachusetts Sagamore Faries Gray. Elizabeth asked us to think about how we can be in a "reciprocal relationship" with nature, "neither using it as a resource nor seeing it as something static to protect." She urged us to see this relationship as what she called a "continuous flowing" in which "we give to nature as frequently and as much as we can take from nature." Faries reminded us that human beings have become "a problem that is not sustainable," and that "we all need to work together to fix the problem, regardless of where on the planet our ancestors are from." We're hoping that the Newton Conservators can help to build truly reciprocal relationships between culture and people, no matter where our ancestors are from.



*Newton Mayor
Ruthanne Fuller*

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller also spoke about the concerns of the Massachusetts and other native peoples. She then recognized the Newton officials who were present at the Conservators' banquet despite the wind and rain. Mayor Fuller described Green Newton President Marcia Cooper, recipient of the Environmentalist of the Year Award, as "the epitome of somebody that does this important work by creating communities

who work with her." She called directors' award winner Luis Perez Demorizi, the city's Director of Parks and Open Space within the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department, "extraordinary in his knowledge, his emotional intelligence and his belief in conservation, and recreation and doing it in the right balance." She commended State Representative

Ruth Balsler for her long record of open space advocacy, and Phillip Saunders, Jr, organizing on behalf of the Public Lands Protection Act as a permanent, lasting legacy across the Commonwealth. Finally, Mayor Fuller thanked Newton Conservators' co-presidents Chris Hepburn and Bill Hagar for their leadership of the past few years.

Nominating Committee



*Nominating committee chair
Pete Gilmore*

Nominating committee chair Pete Gilmore presented the slate of officers and directors for the coming year, and it was voted on and elected by the membership. Alice Ingerson was elected as the new Conservators' president with Nyssa Patten as vice president, replacing past co-presidents Chris Hepburn and Bill Hagar who will remain on the board. Michael Clarke continues as secretary and Katherine Howard as treasurer. The board of directors will consist of David Backer, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Samantha Corbin, Margaret Doris, Henry Finch, Maurice Gilmore, Daniel Green, Ted Kuklinski, Ken Mallory, George Mansfield, Larry Smith, and Beth Wilkinson.

2023 Newton Conservators' Awards



*Green Newton President
Marcia Cooper*

Environmentalist of the Year Award

The Environmentalist of the Year Award, first presented in 1981, goes to the individual or group that has made the greatest contribution to the protection of Newton's environment. The award this year went to Marcia Cooper, President, Green Newton, for her enthusiasm and devotion to a sustainable world for future generations, for

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thoughtfully inspiring Newton students to join and lead local environmental actions, and for consistently building Green Newton as a widely trusted source for guidance to green the home and fight the climate crisis.

Directors' Awards



PHOTO: HENRY FINCH
Luis Perez Demorizi

Three Directors' Awards were presented. These are given to individuals who have made significant contributions to the preservation of open space in Newton. The first went to 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. He was also recognized for his skilled management of multiple projects, from design through construction, for his assistance with the Conservators' monitoring of conservation restrictions, and for helping the community reimagine how open space can function better for the public.



PHOTO: HENRY FINCH
Ruth Balsler (left) and Alice Ingerson (right)

The second Directors' Award went to Ruth Balsler, State Representative, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, for her continuing advocacy for open space in the Commonwealth and support of the mission of Newton Conservators. She was also recognized for her persistent co-sponsorship and ultimate success in the Massachusetts Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA), which was signed into law on November 17, 2022. For more than two decades, Representative Balsler worked for the adoption of the PLPA, to reinforce Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution, which mandates no net loss of publicly-owned parklands without a two-thirds vote of the Legislature.



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
Philip Saunders' daughter Elizabeth, his wife Lucy, and daughter Cathy with Alice Ingerson

The final Directors' Award went posthumously to Philip Saunders, Jr., Organizer, Public Lands Protection Act. For more than twenty-five years, Philip Saunders, Jr., was an enthusiastic and tireless advocate for the PLPA, which would codify as law the state's "No Net Loss" policy for public lands. He and Representative Balsler worked as a team to accomplish that goal.

Phil educated and organized open-space activists in many communities to help pass the legislation. He wrote what he called "Cliffs Notes" about the law and shared that knowledge with everyone who would listen. Sadly, Phil did not live to see this policy enacted into law, but he was active in promoting it until the final months of his life. Phil's daughter Elizabeth, his wife Lucy, and daughter Cathy were present to accept the award.

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

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Annual Meeting Keynote speaker Norman Smith



PHOTO: COURTESY NORMAN SMITH

After the business meeting and awards, Norman Smith, Raptor Specialist from Mass Audubon, presented a captivating slideshow of the work he has done over the years observing, capturing,



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Norman Smith introduces a Great Horned owllet at the 2023 Newton Conservators' Annual meeting.

banding, and relocating Snowy Owls at Logan International Airport. He described how his work with children who think out of the box shattered some longstanding beliefs about the lives of owls, and informed practices around the world on how to protect and manage these magnificent creatures. He showed how this project developed in an unusual way to include research on Saw-whet Owls. His slides, sense of humor, and depth of knowledge were remarkable. He ended the evening with a live and

moving presentation of an orphaned seven-week-old Great Horned owllet. ♦