

**Newton Conservators**  
**E-Bulletin**  
*Thursday, December 14, 2023*

... preserving open space and connecting  
people to nature since 1961



## Happy Holidays from Newton Conservators!

This Sunday (12/17), 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. And put the WinterFEST Walk at Cold Spring Park on your calendars for January 28!

The [Winter 2023-2024 issue](#) of the Newton Conservators Newsletter should be in your mailbox if you get our printed edition and is also available now on our website. Check out our [YouTube channel](#) to view our Fall Webinar Series videos.

The challenges of protecting, enhancing and expanding open space in Newton continues. We hope that you will continue to support the Conservators' efforts in these regards by renewing your membership for 2024 or joining us if you are not. Our organization has been around since for 62 years at this point and we continue to strive to do more as an all volunteer organization. Members have received our annual letter by mail but if you haven't seen it, please take a look at what we have accomplished over the past year [HERE](#).



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. 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/>

Our updated volunteer webpage lists current opportunities to help with walks, conservation restrictions, invasive plants, biodiversity, and community events. To volunteer for any of these, or talk to us about sharing skills or interests we haven't already listed, please check out [https://newtonconservators.org/volunteer/!](https://newtonconservators.org/volunteer/)

And finally, we wish all of you a happy holiday season in whatever tradition you honor – we hope it brings you peace, joy, and connection with everyone you love and cherish. Looking forward to sharing our parks and open spaces with you more in 2024!

## Upcoming Events

**Sunday, December 17, 2023 8:00 am**  
**Newton Christmas Bird Count**  
**1 Raeburn Terrace, Newton, MA, 02461**  
<https://newtonconservators.org/events/newton-christmas-bird-count/>

Would you like to be a Citizen Scientist? Do you want to know more about local birds? You can do both by joining the Newton Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 17th! Groups of birders head out in the morning to areas of Newton to count birds on that date and report back. Data are collected from Newton and surrounding towns and compared to numbers from years before. No birding experience is necessary since you will be part of a group with an experienced leader.



The Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 17th this year. If you wish to participate, please email [lianehartnett26@gmail.com](mailto:lianehartnett26@gmail.com). Birders will meet at 1 Raeburn Terrace, Newton Highlands at 8 am and divide into groups and head out to count birds.

For the early birders - who want to count owls - a group will meet at the same address at 5:30 am. If it's raining, the owl count will not take place. The weather currently is looking reasonable.

Some of the areas covered by the groups include:

- Newton South, Kennard, Saw Mill, Houghton Gardens, Hammond Pond and Webster Woods
- Newton Cemetery, City Hall, Edmands Park, Bullough's Pond
- Cold Spring, Mason Rice and Newton Centre Crystal Lake
- Newton Commonwealth Golf Course, Chandler Pond
- Charles River, Calvary Swamp, Avery Woods, Cheesecake Brook (meeting 7 am, Daly Ice Rink)

The National Audubon Society organizes this event, which is described on their website:

<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>

The Newton count is part of the Greater Boston count circle, one of very many across the country and beyond! Expert birder, Peter Alden, recently wrote a nice article, "How a Christmas Bird Count Works", on his [sparkbirding.com](https://www.sparkbirding.com/post/inside-a-christmas-bird-count) website about what happens in a count:

<https://www.sparkbirding.com/post/inside-a-christmas-bird-count>

The most common question people tend to ask 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! We often do see seven swans a swimming or four calling birds but a sighting of a taylor swift would be rare indeed. If you are curious as to what birds were actually seen last year, read Liane Hartnett's account in our Jan 27, 2023 e-Bulletin here:

<https://newtonconservators.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-01-27.pdf>

**Saturday, January 27, 2024**

**Sunday, January 28, 2024 (WinterFEST Walk)**

**3rd Annual Newton WinterFEST**

<https://newtoncommunitypride.org/winterfest/>

Save the date for the 3rd Annual WinterFEST organized by Newton Community Pride. Newton Conservators will again be part of it with a scheduled guided family-friendly winter walk at Cold Spring Park. Last year's was a blast with so many participants, not to mention Olaf (from FROZEN), hot chocolate, dog treats and more! See a short [video](#) of last year's WinterFEST walk on our [YouTube channel](#). The Winter Fest will have lots of other activities as well.



Check out all the Winter FEST events on the Newton Community Pride WinterFEST page after the holidays

at <https://newtoncommunitypride.org/winterfest/>

**Keep up to date on our events on  
our [website](https://newtonconservators.org/events/) at <https://newtonconservators.org/events/>**

## **2023 Fall Webinar Series Videos Now Available on our [YouTube Channel](#)!**

We have been building up a remarkable set of interesting and informative videos since 2020 based on our wonderful Spring and Fall Webinar Series' hosted by Beth Wilkinson. In case you missed some of the webinars the past few months, they are now available on our Newton Conservators YouTube channel. Click the title links or the images below to view the particular webinar. To get to our YouTube channel from our website, click the "Play" button on the menu ribbon.

### **[Using iNaturalist to Improve Your Identification Skills](#)**

**Jon Regosin, Naturalist**

**September 13, 2023**

Are you interested in improving your plant or animal identification skills? Did you ever wonder how many species of plants and animals inhabit Newton's parks and conservation areas? iNaturalist is an incredibly powerful web-based tool for natural history learning and biodiversity tracking. For example, you can take a few pictures of an interesting butterfly on your phone and post them to iNaturalist. iNaturalist can help you identify the butterfly with computer-driven algorithms and crowd-sourced recommendations from a community of experts. You can also query iNaturalist to look for other observations of the butterfly in Newton or any geographic area you are interested in. Jon Regosin provides a tutorial and tips to help you use iNaturalist. Jon is the former Deputy Director



of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and is a returning board member of Newton Conservators, for which he's worked on a variety of projects, including the preservation of Newton Community Farm and Newton Bioblitz.

### [Why We Should Remove the Watertown Dam](#)

**Lisa Kumpf and Robert Kearns**  
**Charles River Watershed Association**  
**September 28, 2023**

Did you know, each spring, thousands of migratory fish return to the Charles River to spawn in the lakes, ponds, and tributaries? Across Massachusetts, there is a growing movement to remove aging, defunct mill dams and restore free-flowing, climate-resilient rivers. There are numerous benefits and considerations to dam removal, including reinstating migratory fish passage, restoring the ecosystem, and protecting downstream communities from catastrophic flooding. Join us for a webinar talking about this extraordinary migration and learn why we should remove the Watertown Dam to restore the ecosystem. Our presenters in this video were Lisa Kumpf and Robert Kearns. Lisa is the River Science and Restoration Program Manager at Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA), where she oversees the water quality monitoring programs. Robert serves as CRWA's Climate Resilience Specialist and works with the team to implement Climate Resilience 101 virtual training sessions for local officials, helps manage the Charles River Climate Compact, and works to further the organization's advocacy and community engagement goals.



### [Springers and Singers: The Art and Science of Observing Orthoptera](#)

**Matt Pelikan, Naturalist**  
**October 18, 2023**

Widespread, plentiful, and in some cases really loud, Orthoptera (grasshoppers, crickets, and katydids) get surprisingly little attention from naturalists. But these insects are everywhere, if often extremely well camouflaged, and anyone can learn to find them and ID them by sight or sound. In this webinar, Matt Pelikan introduces the basics of Orthoptera biology and ecology, discusses their diversity in eastern Massachusetts, and presents a range of tips and tricks for finding and recognizing these interesting insects. The Director of the Martha's Vineyard Atlas of Life project at BiodiversityWorks in Vineyard Haven, Matt, is a lifelong naturalist who has conducted a decade-long survey of the Orthoptera of Martha's Vineyard, documenting more than 50 species on the island.



### [Talking Turkey: Why Are There So Many Turkeys?](#)

**Barbara Bates, Teacher / Naturalist**  
**November 9, 2023**

The native turkeys we currently see in such abundance were extirpated from Massachusetts not so long ago. Their revival is a true success story, unless you've tangled with an aggressive one. Newton Conservator's Barbara Bates explores the habits and natural & cultural history of this interesting bird, including "pecking order" and how it survives so well in our cities. For more than 16 years, Barbara Bates was a teacher naturalist for Mass Audubon's Habitat Education Center & Wildlife Sanctuary in Belmont, MA. She currently serves on the Board of the Newton Conservators. Barbara has retired several times - first from a long career in the high-tech world and more recently from teaching negotiation and conflict resolution as an adjunct faculty member at Northeastern University. She loves all things nature.



## **In Memory of George Mansfield**

We are sad to report the passing of George Mansfield on Tuesday, December 5 at the age of 81. With his long-term interest in open space, George was an Advisor to the Newton Conservators in the 1990s and 2000s. After leaving elected office in 2010, he joined the Conservators Board, and then served as our Vice President for six years from 2011 through 2016, and continued as a Board member to the present day. He served the City of Newton for 26 years (1984-2010) as Newton's Ward 6 Alderman and, among his other roles, was a Chair of the Land Use Committee.

George was a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester and received his master's degree from Cornell University. George placed a high value on conserving open space, habitat, and recreational opportunities, crucial to a healthy community, whether in a large city like Newton or in a rural town like Carlisle, MA, where he worked as the Town Planner for much of his career. There he helped preserve protected open space (now totaling more than 1/3 of that town's land area).



Living in Newton since 1970, his earliest involvement in local affairs was as a founding member and President of the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council. He also served on the Newton Highlands Community Development Corp, which preserved Hyde Center and Brigham House as community facilities. He also worked in partnership with the Mayor and other members of the Board of Aldermen to acquire additional land for public use at Crystal Lake.

George is survived by his wife, Meg, and his daughter, Julia. Memorial Visitation will be held on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 from 4 to 7 pm, at the Burke & Blackington Funeral Home, 1479 Washington St., West Newton. A Memorial Mass will be held on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 10:30 am in Sacred Heart Parish, 1321 Centre St., Newton Centre, followed by an inurnment in the Columbarium at Newton Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Julia C. Mansfield Supplemental Needs Trust, 2409 Highpoint View Ct. #402, Frederick, MD 21702. George's obituary can be found [HERE](#).

Former Alderman, Ken Parker, who served with George for 16 years, remembered him in a recent email: *George was a smart and effective Alderman and a good friend. He was instrumental in protecting the quality of life in our neighborhoods, applying his expertise as a City Planner to his work as a Newton Alderman. He continued his civic involvement after concluding his service as an Alderman through his work with the Newton Conservators. . . We all owe a debt of gratitude to George for his work, kindness, and generosity to our community.*

We will miss George and his wisdom greatly and are grateful for his many years of service to the Newton Conservators!

## News Notes of Interest

### Hammond Pond Reconstruction Begins

A project to reconfigure the roadway on Hammond Pond Parkway and add pedestrian and bike paths is beginning. Here is a description of the project:

<https://newtonconservators.org/hammond-pond-parkway-redesign/>

and an account of the beginning of the work: <https://www.newtonbeacon.org/work-begins-on-hammond-pond-parkway-safety-improvements/>



### Levingston Cove Ribbon Cutting

A large project to [reconstruct Levingston Cove](#) on Crystal Lake was recently completed and a ribbon cutting held. Read about it in our latest newsletter: <https://newtonconservators.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Newsletter-2024-Winter-Levingston-Cove.pdf> and in Fig City News: <https://figcitynews.com/2023/11/ribbon-cutting-marks-completion-of-levingston-cove-shoreline-project-at-crystal-lake/>



### Newton Tree Conservancy - Spring Community Tree Plantings

The [Newton Tree Conservancy](#) is now accepting applications for our Spring 2024 Community Tree Plantings. **The deadline for applications is December 17, 2023.** Planting Day will be the morning of April 27, 2024. That morning, someone from each planting location will be required to be present to help and to resolve questions. Applications received after the deadline will be considered for subsequent plantings. Visit <https://www.newtontreeconservancy.org/plantings> to sign up.

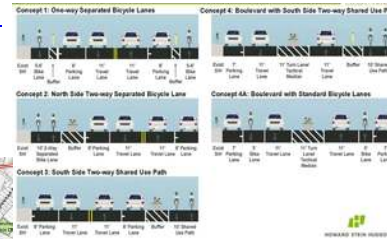


### Washington Street Pilot Project

A pilot project to reconfigure Washington Street was described recently in a public meeting - with four possible options of road configuration: [Washington Street Public Meeting Video](#) **Public feedback on the proposed options is solicited in a survey by December 17:**

<https://figcitynews.com/2023/12/washington-street-pilot-survey-share-your-opinion-by-dec-17/>

The project also includes a proposed off leash area at Walker Park (bumpout next to Mass Pike).



### Dudley Road estate back on the market

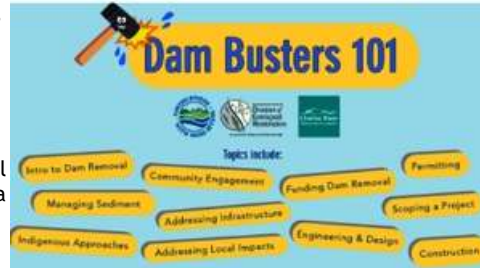


A deal to develop a large property on Dudley Road and also abutting NSHS has fallen through and this large parcel is back on the market. The City reviewed a number of plans from developers and had selected one as preferred. Read about the project here:

<https://figcitynews.com/2023/11/dudley-road-estate-back-on-the-market/>

### Dam Busters 101!

The Massachusetts Rivers Alliance, Massachusetts Department of Ecological Restoration, and Charles River Watershed Association are representing a free monthly webinar series which will give municipal and NGO dam removal project managers the knowledge they need to successfully manage and carry out a dam removal project. Each webinar will feature an expert on a facet of dam removal and allow time for questions and discussion. Participants can attend the whole series or just those webinars that are most relevant to them. they run through Sept. 4, 2024 on the first Wednesday of each month at noon, for 1 hour on Zoom. To sign up go to: <https://www.massriversalliance.org/dambusters101>



### Newton Conservators Newsletter

The Winter 2023-2024 edition of our Newton Conservators is now available on our [website](#).



# NEWSLETTER

Preserving open space and connecting people to nature since 1961

NEWTONCONSERVATORS.ORG • WINTER 2023-2024

## 2023-24 Officers, Directors and Advisors

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## Let the Charles River Run Free: The Case for Removing the Watertown Dam

By Julia Hopkins, *Communication and Outreach Manager* with Lisa Kumpf, *River Science & Restoration Program Manager, Charles River Watershed Association*

**W**atertown Dam is a highly visible site on a nationally iconic river; its existence has long been opposed by Indigenous people, it does not serve a purpose, and its presence negatively impacts the river. Removing the dam, restoring fish passage, and healing the river is a transformative, positive act in a time of great change and uncertainty. Learn more at [crwa.org/dam-removal](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/) and at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/>.

For over 400 years, the Charles River has been altered, controlled, and dammed to bend to the will of industry and profit.



Aerial photo of the Watertown Dam

The river we know today is not free — but instead, is a river radically changed by the long history of human intervention. We dammed its waters to power industry, leaving a legacy of toxic pollution in our wake. We straightened its gentle meanders, buried its tributaries, and hardened its shores, constricting its natural flow. We drained and filled its wetlands to free up more land and let our parking lots sprawl right up to its banks.

Now, we are facing the consequences. Today, our river and all who depend on it suffer from our attempt to control nature — polluted water quality from stormwater runoff, impeded fish passage by aging, defunct dams, invasive species growth, harmful cyanobacteria blooms, and biodiversity loss. Climate change is amplifying these impacts. We took away our river's natural resilience to adapt to the challenges of increased precipitation, stronger storms, drought, and extreme heat — and now all of us, but especially our most vulnerable, are at risk.



Quote from Robert Kearns, *Climate Resilience Specialist*

We are at a critical juncture — the time is now to reverse the antagonistic relationship we've built with the river by setting it free.

### A River Interrupted

Before colonization, the Charles River flowed freely, and Indigenous ancestors relied on its vibrant population of migratory fish for food, water, and cultural survival. Each spring, the Charles River historically welcomed hundreds of thousands of migratory fish from the depths of the ocean to the river's numerous lakes, ponds, and

*Continued on page 2*

This [Winter 2023-2024 Newsletter](#) contains the following interesting features:

- [Let the Charles River Run Free: The Case for Removing the Watertown Dam](#)
- [The Community Way Forward – A Green Connector for Newton and Needham](#)
- [History of Newton Parks, Playgrounds & Recreation: Winter Sports](#)
- [The Brilliant Abyss, book review by Pete Gilmore](#)
- [Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, Levingston Cove, Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture](#)
- [Invasives Update](#)

## PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW YOUR NEWTON CONSERVATORS MEMBERSHIP

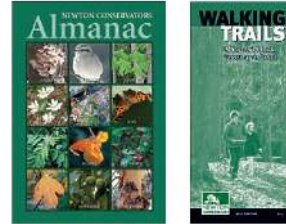


We would be most grateful if you renewed your membership or joined us officially for the first time to support our important open space work! The challenges of protecting, enhancing and expanding open space in Newton continue. We hope that you will continue to support the Conservators efforts in these regards by renewing your membership for 2024 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. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, we also accept donations for a number of affiliated local open space groups. As part of the donation process, you can specify specific funds. This year we call your attention to our special "Trails Fund" in support of additional trails work in Newton. Thanks so much!

Our [Trail Guide](#) and [Nature Almanacs](#) make great holiday presents and are available on our website. The Trail Guide is included as part of your initial membership package.

You can renew or join the Newton Conservators online at <https://newtonconservators.org/membership/>. Donations may be made at our securely via our website at <https://newtonconservators.org/ways-to-give/>.



*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 is committed to fostering a sense of belonging for all people in Newton's open spaces by:*

- *planning and evaluating all of our activities through a diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) lens*
- *continually educating ourselves and our constituents about DEIJ issues*
- *building authentic relationships with regional organizations serving historically marginalized people*
- *working to include previously underrepresented people on our Board and among our members, program participants, and open space visitors*
- *diversifying all with whom we partner and do business.*

- E-Bulletin Editor: Ted Kuklinski, Newton Conservators ([ebulletin@newtonconservators.org](mailto:ebulletin@newtonconservators.org))

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