



Working to preserve the character of Newton for 42 years!

the Newton Conservators

NEWSLETTER

Summer Issue

www.newtonconservators.org

June/July/August 2002

Keith Morgan Speaks at Annual Meeting

Describes Charles Eliot's role in Early Development of the Metropolitan Park System

REP. KAY KHAN PUTS FOCUS ON CURRENT ISSUES

The Newton Conservators were privileged to hear Keith Morgan, Professor of Art History at Boston University, describe the brief life of Charles Eliot and his impact on the landscape of eastern Massachusetts and, by extension, the park systems of major cities around the world. Professor Morgan is an expert on Charles Eliot, having written a number of books and articles on his life and work, including a fifty-page introductory essay to the recent republication of a 1902 biography, filling in gaps left by the original author and adding a new perspective on Charles Eliot's contributions to landscape architecture and park planning worldwide. He has also written extensively about the work of noted landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Charles Platt.

Charles Eliot is credited with three major accomplishments in his 38 years: founding of The Trustees of Reservations (whose executive director was our speaker at last year's meeting), creating the discipline of regional planning and laying the groundwork for Boston's Metropolitan Park System. In this latter capacity, Eliot helped conceive a framework for the system and was instrumental in the acquisition of the Middlesex Fells, the Blue Hills Reservation, our own Hemlock Gorge and other major parcels of open space in the Boston area.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As Presented at the Annual Meeting

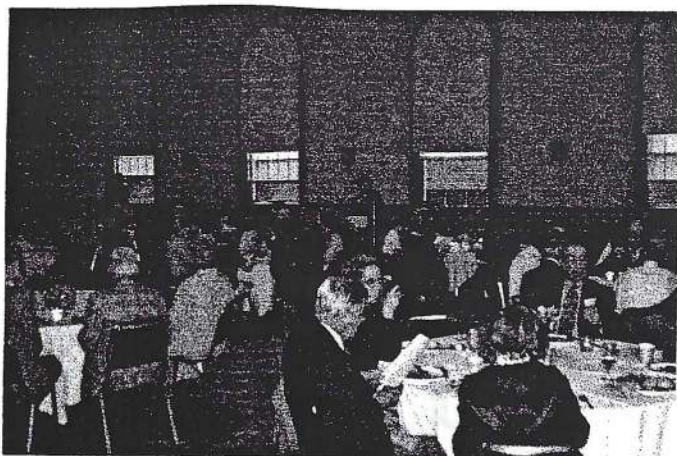
By Lucy Caldwell-Stair

In the next 5 minutes, I am going to talk about the highlights of this year and where we are headed in the year to come.

As you know, our mission is to preserve, educate, advocate, promote, find and fund open space. In each of these areas, we have made good progress this year.

1. Our greatest achievement was in our goal of funding. Working through the Newton Community Preservation Alliance, numerous Conservators worked for over a year to get the CPA put on the ballot and then we campaigned vigorously to educate and encourage our neighbors to vote "yes." Newton Conservators contributed \$2,500 to pay for a flyer that was sent to every voting household in Newton. In an election so close, every single task made a difference. You'll hear more about our CPA work later in the evening.
2. In our goal of educating, we sponsored two well-attended talks at the Newton Library

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*Lucy Caldwell-Stair delivering the annual President's Report
(Photo courtesy of Frank Howard)*

(President's Report, continued from page 1)

organized by Ted Kuklinski and the program committee. Dan Perlman gave a wonderful slide show and talk about the history and biology of Cold Spring Park. In the spring, Professor James Skehan of Boston College spoke about his new book "Roadside Geology of Massachusetts" to an audience of over 100 people. In other educational endeavors, Doug Dickson has been writing informative articles in the Newton TAB about environmental aspects of West Nile virus. In fact, we have been contributing regularly to the Newton TAB environmental page this year. As for our educational grants, this year Bill Hagar and others on the grants committee made grants to the summer Environmental Science Program and to Burr School for a "garden classroom," an outdoor classroom with its own curriculum.

3. In our goal of enjoying our parks, trails, and woods, we continued our program of Fall and Spring walks, under the capable hands of Judy Hepburn. After many years of organizing these walks, Judy would like to turn this pleasant job over to another member. Anyone interested, please see Judy. Another project Judy is working on is revising our popular map guide. You can see her detailed maps, which will include areas adjacent to Newton, such as Cutler Pond and Lost Pond, at the table at the back. We plan to distribute the guide at local bookstores and outdoors stores. Anyone who would like to work on the distribution, please see me.
4. In our goal of preserving Newton's green spaces, we have pledged grant money to

augment a promising grant from the state EPA to restore Hammond Pond. This is a new kind of grant for us, one that leverages our funds. To help us better understand what we're preserving, we again sponsored Newton Biodiversity Days, featuring eight nature related events held over a three-day period last June. Both adults and school children spread out all over the city to do species counts. In Houghton Garden alone, a group ticked off some 35 species of birds and in Nahanton Park another group found a dozen types of butterflies.

5. In our goal of advocating, we continue to make our views known about LaSalle College expansion and about the loss of trees at Andover Newton. We have pressed the Mayor about assigning two areas to the Conservation Commission—Flowed Meadow and the surplus Wells Avenue parcel along the Charles River.
6. In our goal of promoting the Newton Conservators, I gave presentations to the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition annual conference and to a group at Newton Highlands Congregational Church. To commemorate our 40th anniversary, Doug Dickson and others are working with the Jackson Homestead to mount a photo exhibit displaying our history.
7. In our goal of increasing the amount of parkland and open space of special quality, we have prepared ourselves this year to act as an active land trust. Under the leadership of Eric Reenstierna, the land trust committee has been planning its approach and making initial inquiries. We have been advised by experts from the Trust for Public Land and local land conservation attorneys.

Now, where are we headed? First, we will continue to promote the value of preserving biodiversity. We know that not only are open spaces beautiful and healthy for our state of mind, but they are also vital for preserving the balance of nature. To recognize this interest, we are creating a new award, the Charles Johnson Maynard Award. We will give our first Maynard Award tonight to Rep. Kay Khan for her work in obtaining funds for removal of invasive water chestnuts from the Lakes District of the Charles River and for introduction of

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predatory beetles for control of the wooly adelgid at Hemlock Gorge.

Second, we must support the newly formed CPA committee as it makes its decisions about acquisitions. Eric Reenstierna and Doug Dickson are serving on the committee and they will be key links in expressing our interests.

Third, our land trust work will gear up. We will approach people in Newton who own choice underdeveloped parcels, however small, and we will let them know that they can preserve their land and personally benefit through using a land trust.

In conclusion, with these worthwhile goals, I look forward to another good year for the Newton Conservators.

Lucy Caldwell-Stair

Don't Miss the New Jackson Homestead Exhibit
WALKS AND TALKS WITH NATURE:
CHARLES MAYNARD

Newton's Naturalist
Through Spring 2003

(Keith Morgan, continued from page 1)

Eliot studied horticulture at Harvard, where his father was president. After graduation, he joined the firm of renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, leaving after a couple of years to study the gardens of Europe. Eliot studied the practice of open space preservation in England and Germany and became fascinated with the layout of European public parks, botanical gardens, and city streets. When he returned to Boston in 1886, it was with a new understanding of the importance of open space to people in urban areas. Eliot came to believe that people needed access to natural areas to provide an escape from the crowded conditions and pressures of city life.

He conceived the idea of the first regional system of public open space in the United States with his friend Sylvester Baxter, a journalist with an interest in urban planning. In 1892, they proposed the creation of a Metropolitan Park System. The following year, the Massachusetts legislature established the Metropolitan Park Commission of which Eliot and Baxter were both members. Eliot immediately set out to design a park system, based

on the planning theories of America's first generation of landscape architects, including Olmsted, H.W.S. Cleveland and Robert Morris Copeland.

The plan for the Metropolitan Park System took the natural features of the Boston landscape into account. The beaches, rivers, and harbor islands to the east and the hills and upland forests to the west formed a ring that would become the backbone of the system. Acquisitions commenced with Beaver Brook in Waltham and continued with the Middlesex Fells in Lynn and the Blue Hills Reservation in Quincy. Beachfront property was taken by eminent domain, starting in Revere. River frontage was set aside for public use, starting with the Charles, and continuing with the Neponset and Mystic Rivers, which were intended to provide a link with the three woodland reservations. Eliot envisioned a series of parkways and roads to provide easy access to the inland reservations along with a system of bridges and ferries connecting the Harbor islands to complete a park system loop.

The cost of these initial acquisitions, totaling more than 7,000 acres, was \$10 million and constituted the activity of the Commission in its first ten years. Eliot fell ill with spinal meningitis and died in 1897, just five years after beginning his advocacy and work to preserve large sections of open space for the benefit of the people of Boston. Today he is recognized for his foresight in protecting these areas from development and for creating a model for multi-jurisdictional park systems that has been emulated the world over.

Professor Morgan has taught art history at Boston University since 1980. His interests range from nineteenth and twentieth century European and American architectural history to landscape history and preservation studies. He earned his PhD in Art History from Brown University and studied American architectural and garden history at the Winterthur program at the University of Delaware.

Joining Professor Morgan in this presentation was Newton Representative Kay Khan, who talked about the current issues involving MDC management of the Metro Park System. Two years ago, Rep. Khan organized the Metropolitan Park legislative caucus to focus attention on MDC issues. These include severe budget cutbacks, poor management of these historic properties and a recent trend toward converting some MDC open spaces to other uses. Building on

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(Keith Morgan, continued from page 3)

Professor Morgan's presentation, she described present-day threats to the Park System and what she and others are doing to turn the tide.

Rep. Khan cited the creation of a plan ten years ago that outlined the steps needed to restore the system to its former glory. Unfortunately the plan has lain dormant and budgets have been consistently cut. An effort has been made recently to carve up the MDC and to give sections to other state departments to manage. Attempts to transfer jurisdiction of the MDC parkways to the Mass Highway Department have so far failed, but concern continues that such a move, if it were to succeed, would spell an end to these stretches of linear parks as we have come to know and appreciate them. Breaking up the system would lose the comprehensive management needed to preserve, restore and add to the heritage of parks that Charles Eliot envisioned and created for our and future generations. Rep. Khan concluded that a new administration is needed to provide focus for this effort, noting the inattention and neglect of recent administrations. She and others are working toward listing of the Metropolitan Park System on the National Historic Register, which will give it a new level of protection and make it eligible for new funding sources.

Doug Dickson

Three Awards Presented at Annual Meeting

The Environmentalist of the Year Award, presented annually by the Newton Conservators to an individual or group who has made an extraordinary contribution toward improving Newton's environment, was presented this year to the Newton Community Preservation Alliance. This coalition of advocacy groups and individuals worked for more than a year to gain passage of the CPA in Newton. This achievement will generate more than \$3 million a year over the next several years for the acquisition of open space, preservation of historic structures, creation of affordable housing and development of recreation facilities in our community.

Accepting the award for the Alliance was Jim Broderick, who served as chairman of the group. He acknowledged the individual contributions of many who served in key roles over the year-long effort. Attending the meeting to help celebrate the award were representatives of many of the groups who made up the

The Newton Conservators Newsletter© is published five times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc. Issues usually appear in February, April, June, September and November. Deadlines for these issues are the fifth of each month in which an issue is scheduled to be published.

We welcome material related to our mission from any source. Send proposed articles by email in MS Word or rich text format to dgdickson@rcn.com. Digitized photographs, maps and diagrams are also welcome.

Editor: Doug Dickson 617-969-8661
Production: Bonnie Carter 617-969-0686

Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the Newsletter: Doug Dickson, Martha Horn, Ted Kuklinski, Lucy Caldwell-Stair. Thanks also to Douglas Leith for his excellent proofreading services.

Alliance, including the League of Women Voters/Newton, UCHAN (United Citizens for Housing Affordability in Newton), Green Decade Coalition/Newton, various historic preservation groups and, of course, the Newton Conservators.

At the Annual Meeting, the Conservators also recognized the generous gift of a conservation restriction to the city on property adjacent to the Webster Conservation Area. A Directors' Award was presented to Alex and Ginny Wilmerding, the owners of the property.

A new award was inaugurated this year in honor of the legacy of Newton's own Charles Johnson Maynard, a nineteenth century ornithologist and naturalist, whose work was well-known nationally and who was a lifelong resident of West Newton. The Maynard Award is being created to recognize contributions in biodiversity, habitat reclamation and natural resource protection in the city's parks and open spaces. The first such award was given this year to Rep. Kay Khan for her work in getting state funding for harvesting of water chestnuts in the Lakes District of the Charles River and for the introduction of hybrid predatory beetles to control damage by the wooly adelgid in Hemlock Gorge.

Doug Dickson

**Look for the exhibit about the
NEWTON CONSERVATORS
In recognition of our 40th Anniversary
When you visit the
JACKSON HOMESTEAD
Coming this summer!
Through August 2002**



PHOTOS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

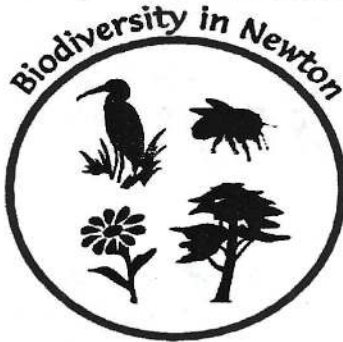
- Top left:** Alex and Ginny Wilmerding receive their Directors' Award from Lucy Caldwell-Stair
- Top right:** Jim Broderick, accepting the Environmentalist of the Year Award on behalf of the Newton Community Preservation Alliance, is congratulated by Lucy Caldwell-Stair
- Bottom left:** Rep. Kay Khan accepts the new Charles Johnson Maynard Award from Doug Dickson
- Bottom right:** Our first speaker for the evening, Professor Keith Morgan of Boston University

(Photos courtesy of Frank Howard)

Where the Wild Things Are at Cold Spring Park

Report on Newton Biodiversity Day – June 2, 2002

Sunday morning started out cool, gray, and rainy. However, shortly before the 8:30 am starting time for the Biodiversity Bird Walk, the rain had finally let up. Rendezvousing at the lesser-known Duncklee Street entrance to Cold Spring Park, Cris Criscitiello, who has birded Cold Spring Park for over 35 years, and young local naturalist Sam Jaffe, were soon joined by about a dozen birding enthusiasts. Binoculars in hand, they took off down the path in search of the avian wildlife in this 67 acre “Central Park” of Newton, replete with a variety of creature habitats.



In early June, many of the trees were filled with leaves, making it even more important to listen carefully. Branching off the main path, the birders were hot on the trail of a Chestnut-sided Warbler singing “see see see see

Miss Beech’er”. Circumnavigating the loop path, the early birder group was able to tick off some 32 species including Red-tailed Hawk, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore Oriole, and Red-bellied Woodpecker.

This walk provided only a small sampling of the birds that inhabit or pass through Cold Spring Park. Sam Jaffe, observing there since last November, had recorded over 100 bird species, including such uncommon species as Pileated Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, a remarkable sighting of a Black Vulture and mammals such as White-tailed Deer, Coyote, and Fisher.

At 10 am, while the birders were still out on the trail, Dan Perlman, biology professor at Brandeis and colleague of biodiversity guru E.O. Wilson at Harvard, was readying trays and magnifiers for a reprise of his popular “Creatures of the Forest Floor” program. Dan demonstrated how, by shaking out fallen leaves, the remaining dirt contains a host of fascinating creatures, including centipedes, millipedes, sow bugs, snails, springtails,

worms and nematodes. Kids and adults sifted through the dirt on the trays and put the creatures under magnifiers.

Most fascinating was the tiny but fierce pseudoscorpion – whose pincers looked like miniature lobster claws. There was even one unknown mystery creature, kind of a flattened football-shaped critter that propelled itself like a worm. Dan also gave the group a short history of Cold Spring Park, a summary of his Newton Conservators Fall lecture on this gem of the Newton park system.

Richard Primack, a professor at BU and botany expert, led the group just a short distance up the hill where he had noted a beautiful Pink Lady Slipper in full bloom along the trail. He gave a summary of the life cycle of this particular plant, and a tour of its interesting features such as its entrance that invites bees to enter but not exit and its pollen scraping mechanism. Noteworthy was that it doesn’t transplant well from the wild since it apparently has a symbiotic relationship with a fungus, without which it fails to thrive. He gave the group a little background on the Wildflower Planting Initiative of a few years ago and noted that many of the planted native wildflowers are indeed thriving around Newton.

One of the purposes of Biodiversity Day was to familiarize citizens with the variety of life that inhabit Newton. Perhaps most fascinating at Newton Biodiversity Day was Sam Jaffe’s mounted Beetle collection, which brought ooh’s and ahh’s from those gathered around the table where he showed it. These had been collected primarily at Cold Spring Park and varied from the tiny to the huge, each carefully pinned and labeled with collection location, date, and species. One may be surprised to learn that Beetle order (*Coleoptera*) has as many species as the entire plant kingdom.

Around 11:30 am, our “All Species Hunt” commenced. With the able assistance of the plant-knowledgeable Mary Loew and Mass. Audubon interpreter Jane Zanichkowsky, Sam Jaffe led our group off into the wilds of Cold Spring Park. Anne Pearson, one of our newest Conservators board members, acted as scribe, recording the names of all the species that could be identified. This year we were also happy to be joined by Chris Noonan, the regional coordinator for Massachusetts Biodiversity

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(Biodiversity Days, continued from page 5)

Days. The group divided up our field guide library (primarily borrowed from the Newton Free Library) among the participants, each person taking responsibility for a particular category – ferns, wildflowers, butterflies, weeds, shrubs, trees, mushrooms, etc. This was a great opportunity for the participants to learn from one another. Younger members were, of course, a bit more adept at catching toads and spotting snakes and insects.



Photo courtesy of Dan Perlman

At one point, Sam led the group off on a small and narrow secret side trail – one did not dare stray far from the path given the readily identifiable Poison Ivy bordering it. Soon we were in the deep dark woods, crossing makeshift bridges through the muddy areas, seemingly far from civilization. All in all, well over a hundred species were identified during Newton Biodiversity Day. These results will be entered into a database maintained by the state and accessible online. Cold Spring Park is under the auspices of the Parks and Recreation Department and unlike most of our conservation areas, naturalist studies of species had not been undertaken. One of the disturbing findings was the extent to which some invasive plants are making inroads into our natural areas, thus crowding out the native plants.

If you would like to be kept apprised more directly of future nature-related events, walks, lectures, and exhibits, you are invited to join the Conservators sponsored "Newton Nature Notes" email list by sending an email request to dolanpond@aol.com or contacting Ted Kuklinski (617-969-6222). Perhaps you know a local open space quite well and would relish the opportunity to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with others? Why not consider leading a walk there in our Fall (or Spring) walk series? Please contact Peter Kastner (617-244-6094, cpkastner@rcn.com).

Ted Kuklinski

MISSION Newton Conservators, Inc.

The Newton Conservators promote 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.

The Newton Conservators was formed as a not-for-profit organization 40 years ago in June 1961.

Brief Updates

News of interest from various sources

Community Preservation Committee Schedules Public Hearings

Newton's Community Preservation Committee continues its preparation for reviewing and selecting proposals to recommend for funding to the Board of Aldermen. A decision process and guidelines have been drafted, as have committee procedures. Four subcommittees have been formed to help manage the committee's business. These subcommittees will focus on plan preparation, proposal review, communications and project oversight.

An initial hearing was scheduled for June 13 to obtain community input about the proposed decision process and guidelines. In addition, the committee is looking to hear ideas and objectives for expenditure of CPA funds. A second hearing will be held in the Fall (September 19) to get community reaction to the first annual Community Preservation Plan, scheduled to be finalized and released in late September.

Beginning in July, the CPC will accept formal proposals for use of CPA funds. That's when the first installment of funds from the 1% real estate tax surcharge becomes available. A little more than \$1.5 million will be matched in mid-October from state funds, creating a total of \$3 million available for CPA projects the first year. These funds may be

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(Brief Updates, continued from page 6)

carried over into successive years if the CPC and the Board of Aldermen determine that future projects or other factors justify such an approach.

Look for information about CPC activities on the city's web site at www.ci.newton.ma.us. You can contact any member of the CPC if you have questions or suggestions or write to the committee at communitypreservation@ci.newton.ma.us.

Doug Dickson

Update on The Terraces

As of this writing, The Terraces is still working to obtain a tree removal permit from the city. A tree survey submitted by the developers first showed that more than 600 trees protected under the Tree Preservation Ordinance would be lost to this development. When the developers proposed that they be allowed to pay a fraction of the cost of replacing these trees, the Tree Warden denied the application under the terms of the ordinance.

The developers then ordered a new survey and concluded that only 300 trees technically qualified as protected trees. Not surprisingly, this number corresponded to the credit the developers get for replanting trees onsite and would not require payment of any additional money to the city in compensation for lost trees. To achieve this result, the developers proposed their own interpretation of ordinance language.

In an effort to create a standard for use by all to whom the ordinance applies, the Urban Tree Commission developed a set of guidelines that take into account the fundamental intent of the ordinance and discussions during its development and passage by the Board of Aldermen. These definitions have been passed along to the developers and a new application is pending based on these guidelines. Meanwhile, work cannot commence on the project until this matter is resolved.

Doug Dickson

Green Decade Coalition to Hold Annual Meeting Monday June 17

The Green Decade Coalition will hold a kick-off of Newton's Kyoto Program at its Annual Meeting on Monday evening, June 17. A panel will discuss methods for residents to use in reducing energy consumption and global greenhouse gas emissions. They will also discuss resource availability and

benefits for residents and the environment. The panel will consist of CHRIS GRANDA, Senior Energy Consultant, Vemont Energy Investment Corporation, BARNEY FREIBERG-DALE, Newton's Kyoto Program Chair, and PETER CLEARY, Kyoto Program Coordinator.

Leadership Awards will be presented to Newton's Household Hazardous Waste Committee: John Floyd, Mike Greengart, Arno Heyn, George Martins, Miles Smith, Leonard Wolfe and Nancy Wrenn and to Gil Woolley, who has been active in the Sierra Club in many ways since 1973 and who currently serves as Conservation Chair of the Massachusetts Chapter.

The event will be held in Druker Auditorium in the Newton Free Library, 330 Homer Street beginning at 6:45 pm with tea and desserts, the panel discussion at 7:00 pm, presentation of awards at 8:00 pm and a brief business meeting at 8:30 pm. It is free and open to the public.

Beverly Droz

Waltham Land Trust Holds Fundraiser Wednesday June 26

The Waltham Land Trust will present the former President of the Mass Audubon Society, Jerry Bertrand, who will speak on Urban Open Space and Wildlife Conservation. He will speak at the UMass Field Extension Station Auditorium at 240 Beaver Street, Waltham beginning at 7:30 pm on June 26. From 6:30 to 7:00 pm there will be a "Walking Tour of the Historic Grounds" and from 7:00 to 7:30 pm there will be a reception with dessert and coffee. This event is a fundraiser for the WLT's Land Preservation Fund. For more information, contact Marc Rudnick at marc@inspectorhomes.com.

Marc Rudnick

Two Scout Projects Completed

Two Boy Scout projects were completed in Newton conservation areas this spring. Alex Morse re-worked the parking lot, made and installed two log benches, relocated the sign and cleaned up trash and debris at the Charles River Pathway Conservation Area at Williams Street. Adam Federschneider made two sign kiosks for Norumbega, one at each entrance. We had wonderful assistance from DPW and Parks & Recreation for both projects.

Martha Horn

EVENTS CALENDAR

Wednesday, June 26, 7:30 PM
Room 202, Newton City Hall
Newton Conservators Board Meeting

Wednesday, July 24, 7:30 PM
Room 203, Newton City Hall
Newton Conservators Board Meeting

NO Newton Conservators Board Meeting in August

Do We Have Your Correct Email Address?

If your email address has changed recently or if you would like to be added to our Email Alert list, please send your address to Jason Glasgow, Membership Chair, at glasgow@world.std.com.



If your mailing label is marked in pink, your membership has expired. Please renew today!



*Celebrating our
40th anniversary*

Newton Conservators Membership Form

PO Box 590011, Newton Centre, MA 02459 • 617-969-8661 • www.newtonconservators.org

- ☐ YES, I'd like to start/renew my one-year membership with the Newton Conservators to help preserve open space in Newton. I'll receive informative newsletters and emails and be invited to participate in guided tours of local conservation areas, lectures, and other programs and activities.
- ☐ I'd like to make an additional tax-deductible contribution to support the work of the Newton Conservators: \$ _____

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

- | | |
|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual member | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family member | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining member | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donor | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$100 |

All amounts are tax deductible

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June/July/August 2002 Newsletter



the Newton Conservators **NEWSLETTER**

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