



**NEWTON
CONSERVATORS**

SPRING ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

Preserving open space and connecting people to nature since 1961

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The Charles River Greenway at 30

By Richard B. Primack (a lifelong Newton resident and professor at Boston University)

The Upper Charles River Reservation, one of Newton's open-space gems, is

home to the Charles River Greenway, beloved and heavily used by pedestrians, joggers, dog walkers, and bicyclists, as well as fishers, bird watchers, and people seeking the tranquility of nature. The Greenway, opened to the public around 1992 and completed in 2004, is now around 30 years old!

The Greenway, also sometimes called the Pathway, runs along both sides of the river



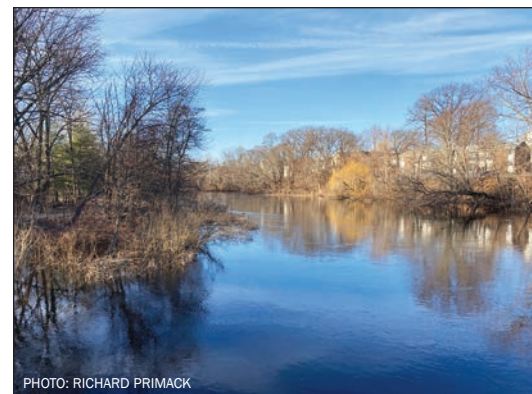
Stone dust trail along the Greenway

from Galen Street in Watertown through Newton to Moody Street in Waltham and then on to Commonwealth Avenue in Newton and Weston. Its paths are wide and well-maintained, built with a combination of asphalt and stabilized stone dust or with elevated boardwalks

where the terrain is steep or wet. From the Greenway, the Charles River is almost always visible, with frequent overlooks and footbridges that cross the river.

In some places, the Greenway feels wild, where it enters stands of red and silver maples. Elsewhere the Greenway feels more urban as it

passes parking lots, warehouses, industrial companies, private homes, and apartment buildings.



The Charles River flows through the Greenway

The Greenway is so much a part of the fabric of Newton, Watertown, and Waltham that it

Continued on page 2



Asphalt trail along the Greenway

Reservation, local residences and businesses had extended their activities down to the river, often erecting fences, building parking lots, and storing materials that blocked public access.

Starting in 1991, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), led by an energetic park planner and project manager named Dan Driscoll, began the process of reasserting state control over the river margin and building the Charles River Greenway so that people could enjoy the beauty of the Charles. The DCR faced a huge challenge with almost 100 residential and business encroachments along the river's edge in Watertown, Newton, and Waltham.

Greenway goals and design

The DCR had three major goals in pursuing this project. First, they wanted to restore the natural environment to provide a home for native plant and animal life. Second, they wanted to provide public access to the river along a connected series of paths. Third, they wanted to reconnect the public to the Charles River ecosystem.

With passionate persuasion and the underlying argument that abutters were trespassing on public land, Driscoll



Housing next to walking paths

convinced residents and businesses to remove their fences, parking lots, and other structures. This opened the area so that DCR could build paths and restore natural areas on public land along the river. To promote natural diversity and provide wildlife habitat, the agency minimized site disturbance during construction. They left native vegetation in place and restored sites that had been degraded by development and other human activities. Restoration included extensive planting of native tree species like river birch, red maple, white pine, and native shrubs like bayberry,

winterberry, and viburnum. The DCR even deliberately left a section of riverbank on the Waltham side to be path-free and wild.

To keep maintenance costs down and enhance sustainability, DCR used long-lasting, sturdy materials, such as stone



Different bridges cross the Charles River along the Greenway, like the one above.

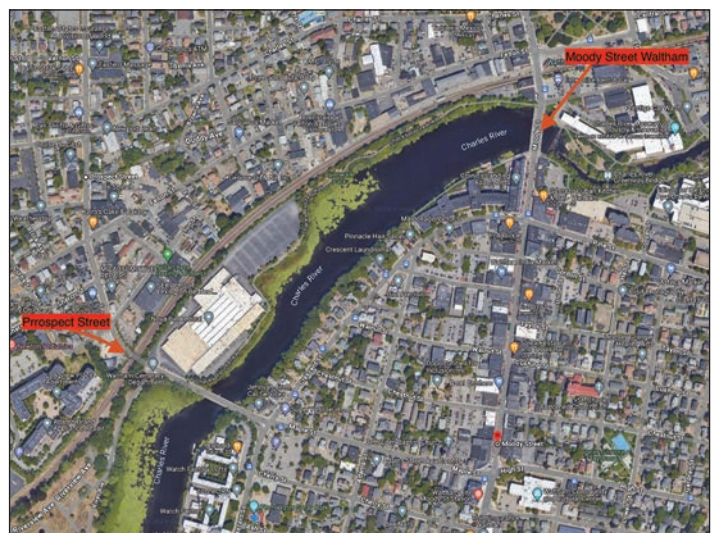
signs and solidly built boardwalks, overlooks, and bridges. The state doesn't plow snow from paths in winter, which saves money and relieves the pathways and boardwalks from the beating that plows can mete out. The lack of plowing also allows people to enjoy cross-

country skiing and snowshoeing on Greenway paths for a few weeks each winter.

The Greenway today

By any reasonable measure, the Greenway has achieved its goals. The infrastructure is in surprisingly good shape and well-maintained. The paths are about 10 feet wide, and the stone-dust paths dry quickly after storms. The boardwalks are in excellent shape, with no sign of rotten or out-of-place boards.

This coming year, the DCR will restore Riverwalk Park in Waltham between Moody Street and Prospect Street, including riverbank stabilization, native plantings, a canoe portage, and repairs to the existing asphalt path.



A view of part of the Greenway showing Prospect Street (arrow left) and Moody Street (arrow right) Google Maps

During a recent walk, I found very little trash or dumping, except for a few discarded Christmas trees near an apartment building. It was evident that maintenance crews had cut and removed large branches and tree trunks that had fallen across paths after recent storms. The river had overflowed its banks, but the well-designed paths remained dry just above the reach of the water.

Much of the park is natural, filled with maples, willows, and alder trees. Some field areas are being converted to wildflower meadows and pollinator gardens. In spring, it is easy to imagine these river forests and fields filled with migratory birds, butterflies, bumble bees, and other wildlife.

On a cold winter afternoon, the park was filled with people of all ages representing our diverse communities. People were enjoying the fresh air and the natural beauty of the river.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (DCR)

How people use the park.

Businesses have also embraced the park. During the Greenway's 30 years, more than 750 units of housing have been built along it in Newton, Waltham, and Watertown. More than 200 additional units are under construction. Developers know that proximity to the Greenway is a selling point, and the housing enhances the tax base of local governments. Businesses also contribute to park maintenance and improvements, including mowing and planting shrubs and trees.

The DCR is encouraging developers of future apartments to include space for retail stores and restaurants, particularly with outdoor seating. Cronin's Landing and its Margaritas Mexican Restaurant abutting the Greenway along Moody Street in Waltham provide an example of what the DCR would like to see elsewhere along the river.



Cronin's Landing apartments

and extend this cooperation to other local environmental organizations, schools, and scouting groups. These groups could volunteer to help maintain or improve natural areas and infrastructure, such as boardwalks, benches and picnic areas, and could provide educational programs, nature



PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK

An example of a Greenway boardwalk

studies, and fundraising. The Earth Day clean-up in the Greenway is already successful, but the public could contribute much more. Stormwater from developed areas can pollute the river and adjacent wetlands with sediments, mineral nutrients, toxic chemicals, and even sewage. DCR and abutting communities have already been making stormwater management upgrades, such as building bioengineered detention basins next to parking lots, establishing green roofs, changing to porous pavement in parking lots, and improving catch basins. New developments in the watershed should follow this example.



PHOTO: RICHARD PRIMACK

Invasive plants like these are now targets of removal and replacement with native plants.

What could be better?

Even with the park in such great shape, there are under-utilized opportunities. For example, the DCR could strengthen its existing ties to the Newton Conservators

and extend this cooperation to other local environmental organizations, schools, and scouting groups. These groups could volunteer to help maintain or improve natural areas and infrastructure, such as boardwalks, benches and picnic areas, and could provide educational programs, nature studies, and fundraising. The Earth Day clean-up in the Greenway is already successful, but the public could contribute much more.

Stormwater from developed areas can pollute the river and adjacent wetlands with sediments, mineral nutrients, toxic chemicals, and even sewage. DCR and abutting communities have already been making stormwater management upgrades, such as building bioengineered detention basins next to parking lots, establishing green roofs, changing to porous pavement in parking lots, and improving catch basins. New developments in the watershed should follow this example. Infestations of non-native invasive species are choking out native plants at many Greenway locations, including extensive stands of Japanese knotweed and dense tangles of multiflora rose, bittersweet vines, and other non-native shrubs. Newton Conservators has already cooperated

Continued on page 4



Blue Heron Bridge

with the DCR to control invasive plants in the vicinity of the Blue Heron Bridge. DCR and local community organizations could expand these efforts to reduce and control these nuisance plants over a larger area of the park.

The Charles River Greenway is already a gem in Newton. After 30 years, it is hard to imagine Newton without it. Opportunities for increasing volunteer participation, public education, and resource stewardship highlight ways that we can continue to strengthen the ties between the Greenway and our community over the next 30 years. ♦

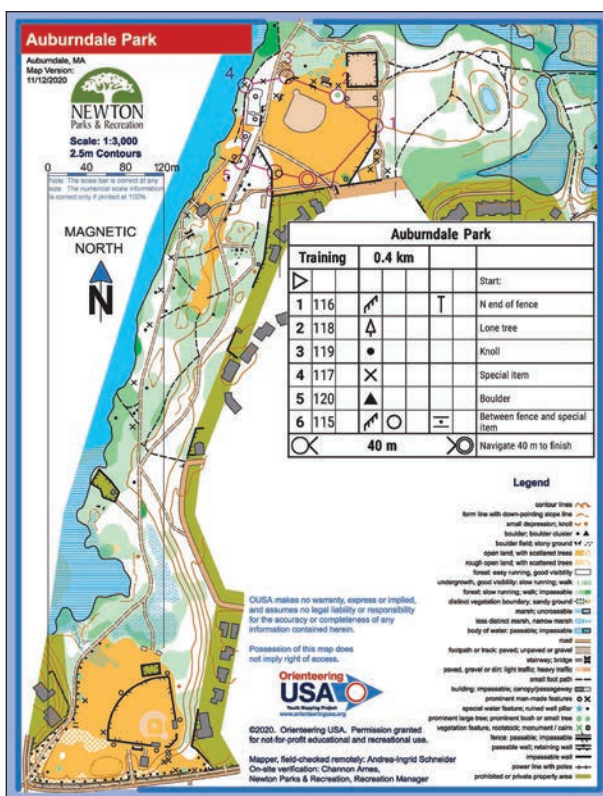
Find Yourself in Orienteering

By Channon Ames, Recreation Manager, Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture Department

Editor's note: The Conservators' directors believe it is important that those engaged in orienteering should be careful not to tramp through ecologically sensitive locations/habitats such as the "edges of ponds and streams" or into "deep woods," where it could (however unintentionally) transport the seeds or roots of invasive species into areas where those species have not already taken hold. See Jennifer Steel's article in the Fall 2023 Conservators' newsletter to learn about the need to stick to marked trails on Newton's public lands.

Orienteering began in the late 1800s in Sweden as a military exercise crossing unknown land with the aid of a map and compass. Since then, it has become a worldwide sport with national and international competitions. Participants use a detailed map to find their way from point to point, determining the best and fastest route through a pre-determined course. Being able to accurately read and follow the map aids the user in making decisions that will help to improve their overall finishing time. All maps follow an international standard, making orienteering easy to learn and participate in around the world.

While orienteering can be a competitive sport, there are also benefits for the non-competitive orienteer that help improve map reading skills while exploring the great outdoors. For the casual orienteer, orienteering is like a hike and scavenger



hunt mixed into one. Participants go at their own pace, use the map to make decisions, and plan a route to find orienteering controls. The controls are usually located on or near interesting landform features like knolls, boulders, cliffs, depressions, edges of ponds or streams, and special items, creating an exciting adventure in the woods. In more advanced courses, the controls are placed deeper in the woods making map reading and compass use a necessary skill.

Orienteering isn't just about maps, though; it can be a lifelong journey that you participate in by yourself or with family and friends. Children as young as five or six and adults well into their 80s have enjoyed the benefits of orienteering. Orienteering allows you to experience nature, exercise,

keep your mind sharp, challenge yourself, and become a better you. Learn to appreciate the natural world and all



PHOTO: CHANNON AMES

Interesting landform feature

There are five permanent orienteering courses in the City of Newton. In 2020 and 2021 Newton Parks and Recreation worked with Orienteering USA's Youth



PHOTO: CHANNON AMES

Learning about Orienteering

Mapping Program and local Eagle Scouts to create maps and install orienteering courses in several city parks. The courses in Newton are designed as beginner courses to help new orienteers develop their skills. QR codes at each control give park facts, history, and information about orienteering.

The five courses in Newton include:

- 1. Auburndale Park** — A great place to start to become familiar with reading a map and following trails to find the control markers. Practice “thumbing” the map (following along with your finger) and associating its symbols with what you see in real life.
- 2. Cold Spring Park** — Practice deciding which is the better route to take. To do so, you can also try pace “counting” (counting the number of paces it takes you to go a specific distance).
- 3. Kennard Park** — Focus on landform features like streams, boulders, earth banks, etc., and start to learn what the control description symbol is for different features.
- 4. Nahanton Park** — Use and develop compass skills to find the next control more accurately.
- 5. Edmonds Park** — Plan the best route through more focused navigation and map reading.

its beauty. Gain confidence and be proud of yourself when you make a plan that successfully leads you to the next control. Realize that it is okay to make mistakes, learn from them and re-adjust to improve for next time. Develop coping skills if you make a wrong turn and lose your way. No matter at what age you start, orienteering will lead to a lifetime of fun.



PHOTO: CHANNON AMES

Orienteering QR Code

in the greater Boston area; Cambridge Sports Union is based in Boston; Up North Orienteers is based in southern New Hampshire; Western Connecticut Orienteering Club is based in southwestern Connecticut; and the state of



PHOTO: CHANNON AMES

Exploring the woods

Maps for each course are available on the Newton Parks and Recreation website at <http://bit.ly/3Su4lgz>. This site also provides information about beginner training that is available through Newton Parks and Recreation to help develop orienteering skills.

If you like orienteering, there are many more adventures available in the New England area that will get you out and exploring city and state parks. Several local orienteering clubs run events throughout the year. New England Orienteering Club is based in Massachusetts

New York has several clubs. Most of these clubs offer beginner through advanced level courses that have a competitive aspect, but they also welcome the non-competitive orienteers who like to participate for fun. You can find out more on the Orienteering USA website at <https://orienteeringusa.org/events/clubs/> ♦

See you in the woods!

Saturday, April 6 at 10 am & 10:45 am Introduction to Orienteering Clinics at Auburndale Park

Join Newton Conservators and Newton Parks, Recreation & Culture for one of our two free family friendly introductory orienteering clinics. Orienteering is like a hike and scavenger hunt mixed into one. Participants will learn to use a detailed map to navigate through the trails at Auburndale Park looking for specific orienteering controls.

Details and Sign up: <https://bit.ly/42Ncznd>

Clinic leader: Channon Ames (comes@newtoma.gov)

WinterFEST in Cold Spring Park

By Amelia Gantt

In partnership with Friends of Cold Spring Park and Newton Community Pride, Newton Conservators hosted a successful 3rd annual WinterFEST walk at Cold Spring Park. After a meet and greet with Olaf (from *Frozen*, the animated film) and sipping hot chocolate (Dunkin' Donuts), children and adults joined a free guided walk that traced the park's outer The Life Trail loop.



Children and adults gather at the entrance to Cold Spring Park.



Olaf gets a hug from a fan.

Conservators, or Alan Noguee, President of Friends of Cold Spring Park.

Bates spoke with a mouthpiece microphone, and when she did, children gathered around her raising their hands in excitement before she asked a question. Her short lessons were a mix of fun facts about the ecology of the park and conservation notes, like how to identify native plant species. Her goal, and the goal of these community walks, is to inspire that sense of wonder about nature that could lead to conservation. "People protect the things they love," Bates said.

We don't have to look far from our backdoor to find exciting plants and animals. Cold Spring Park is just a three-minute drive from Newton Centre, and many small natural curiosities can be found right outside your door. On the trail, Bates stopped to pick up a gnawed pinecone core from a squirrel that had peeled the scales to eat the two seeds inside each scale. "Because it's so clean, Barbara notes, "I would say this was a chipmunk, a red squirrel, or a mouse, not a grey squirrel, which would have torn everything off."

made clear by the many gasps of surprise and 'wows' from the crowd throughout the 1.5-mile loop.

As she continued, we look closely at the ground, to the leaves and needles falling onto our path, and there are explanations for everything, even the dark bumps living upon a stick picked up by a participant from the moist soil. "They may be galls caused either by an insect or a fungus. It's the tree's defense to grow around it and encase it." Even parents learned new things,



Children gaze at a gnawed pinecone along a trail in Cold Spring Park.

Conservation is a theme throughout. Farther on our walk, we encountered chicken wire circling young plants. In an effort of ecological restoration, Cold Spring Park recently planted native trees and plant species throughout the park, like the native silky dogwood whose new twigs are dark red.

Who would have known one can see owls in the park? As we encounter a floodplain at one of the entrances to the park, Barbara tells us that this is a great place for owls to hunt mice. "There are rodents running back and forth here, and it used to be pretty reliable to see a barred owl watching and waiting. You might see the owl, and it would fly off, and you wouldn't hear a sound, not even a whisper, because their wings are so silent."

More questions. Why do female mallards have a brown head and males have green? What is the difference between a marsh and a swamp? How can we identify white pines? What are those little mushrooms poking out of the stump of that tree, and do they turn the stump into soil?

The trail boasts new amenities like plaques with QR code links to the new orienteering course along the trail. Although bordered by homes in some places, the Life Trail is well-maintained by stone dust paths, easy for a short walk or a long adventure. Taking advantage of our nearby outdoor areas draws us closer to nature and, as Bates suggests, closer to conservation. The message of this walk is clear — be curious, look more closely, and protect those things you love. ♦

Enjoy Nature... with Webinars from Newton Conservators

Join us for our Spring Webinar Series online from March through May.

Each program will begin at 7 pm and last approximately one hour. You may register for the programs using the links below or by going to the event listing at newtonconservators.org. You will receive an email confirmation after you have registered.



Cedar Waxwing

Thursday, March 14 ... Creating Landscapes for Bird Diversity

Our landscapes have a tremendous impact on bird diversity, and with so many native bird populations in steep decline, understanding their needs is more important than ever. With her urban garden as a case study, Claudia Thompson will explore the essential principles for creating avian-friendly landscapes for a wide variety of land bird species — from song birds to owls, woodpeckers, and more. Native plants provide the foundation with healthy flora-fauna relationships that are essential for food and habitat. Also important is the structure of the landscape so that it offers varied canopy layers, protective cover, and water. Finally, she will consider the pros and cons of our human interactions with birds, using birdfeeders and nest boxes, and through the design of our built environment. Every landscape matters, and each of us can make a difference!

Ms. Thompson founded Grow Native Massachusetts in 2010 and served as the organization's President and Executive Director through its first decade. Her work as a landscape ecologist is also deeply informed by her personal experience over three decades, transforming her relatively small urban garden into rich habitat where she documented more than 80 species of birds. Her lifelong career in the environmental sector has included other notable roles, serving as Director of Education for the Appalachian Mountain Club, Director of Drumlin Farm for Mass Audubon, and on the board of the New England Wild Flower Society. This webinar is cosponsored by Friends of Cold Spring Park, Green Newton, and Newton Tree Conservancy.

Sign up: <https://bit.ly/49wvQM8>



Eastern Coyote

Thursday, April 11 ... Coexisting with Coyotes in Suburban Communities

Eastern coyotes are found in nearly every town and city in Massachusetts, and they can thrive close to humans in a variety of habitats. Join this webinar to learn about eastern coyote biology, how coyotes use suburban areas, and how communities like Newton can take effective steps to coexist with coyotes. This talk will be presented by Mass Wildlife's Black Bear and Furbearer Biologist Dave Wattles, PhD.

Dave has been studying and working with large mammals in Massachusetts since 2006, when he began collaring and studying moose for his graduate work at UMass Amherst. He has 15 years of experience conducting black bear research and has been the Black Bear and Furbearer Biologist with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (Mass Wildlife) since 2016.

Sign up: <https://bit.ly/4bAcKqc>



Sarah Evans

Thursday, May 23 ... Pesticides and Children's Health: How Can We Protect Our Community?

Sarah Evans, Assistant Professor of Environmental Medicine and Public Health at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, will share the latest science on how pesticides impact health, children's unique vulnerability, and steps that families can take to reduce pesticide exposures.

Sarah Evans, PhD, MPH, obtained her doctorate in neuroscience from Weill Cornell Medical College and her master's degree in public health from Mount Sinai, where she also completed a three-year fellowship in Environmental Pediatrics. Her research focuses on how early life environmental exposures shape the brain and behavior. Dr. Evans is committed to translating research to action to promote safer practices and policies that protect families from toxic chemicals.

Sign up: <https://bit.ly/3wduVlc>

WALKS SCHEDULE SPRING 2024

www.newtonconservators.org

Please note: Walks meet at different times. Some trips are weather dependent. Please call or email trip leader if in doubt.

Sunday, April 14 is Vernal Pool BioBlitz at Nahanton Park

SEE PAGE 10.

Sunday, April 21 from 2 - 3:30 pm



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

NEWTON AQUEDUCTS HIKE

Join a five-mile hike through woods, meadows, and fields along the Newton sections of the Sudbury and Cochituate aqueducts. This is a steady but not fast hike. Participants should be in sufficiently good shape to keep

up with the group. (There are cutoffs for those who wish to shorten the hike). Meet in front of the Starbucks coffee shop near the Waban MBTA station.

Trip Leader: Henry Finch (617-964-4488)

Sunday, May 4 from 8 - 10 am

BIRDING AT COLD SPRING PARK



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Participants will meet near the turnaround at the end of the left side of the Beacon Street parking area. This is an easy walk on flat woodland trails. We will look for resident birds as well as spring migrants. Beginners and children are welcome.

Trip Leader: Pete Gilmore (petegilmore79@gmail.com)

Sunday, May 5 is NewtonSERVES!

SEE PAGE 10.

Thursday, May 9 is Newton Conservators Annual Dinner Meeting

SEE PAGE 10.

Sunday, May 12 from 8 - 10:30 am

MOTHER'S DAY BIRD WALK AT NAHANTON PARK: COSPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF NAHANTON PARK

Nahanton Park offers a mix of woodlands, wetlands, edge habitat, and meadows along the Charles River, making it one of the best birding spots in Newton for migrants as well as resident species. Meet at the Nahanton Street entrance next to the river. Parking is available inside the park. Bring binoculars



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are welcome. Waterproof shoes are recommended. The walk will be canceled in steady rain.

Trip Leaders: Alison Leary (617-821-5619) and Haynes Miller (617-413-2419)

Saturday, June 1 from 10-11:30 am

SPRING RAMBLE THROUGH WEBSTER WOODS



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Join Barbara Bates from Newton Conservators for an easy 1.5-mile ramble in Webster Woods to see what's in bloom and what's "cooking" in the vernal pool Bare Pond. We will follow the "Red" trail to Bare Pond, pick up the Green trail to Cake Rock, Gooch's

Cave, the dell along Thompsonville Brook, and return via the "Red" trail past Cat Pond.

The trail can be rocky and muddy in places, and there are one or two steep places. Bring insect repellent and dress accordingly. No pets allowed. Rain cancels the walk. If in doubt, email Barbara before 9:30 am on the date of the walk.

Trip Leader: Barbara Bates (B.L.Bates@rcn.com)

Sunday, June 9 from 10 - 12 noon

EXPLORING HEMLOCK GORGE: COSPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS OF HEMLOCK GORGE



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Join us for a tour of this gem of a park, "hidden" at the intersection of routes 9 and 95, once a Sunday destination for thousands of Boston city dwellers and designed by Charles Eliot of the Olmsted design firm. We will visit the historic Echo

Bridge, talk some history and geology, and enjoy the stunning topography and views. The walk includes some steep slopes and uneven terrain. Meet at the Hamilton Place entrance/lot off Central Avenue (on the Needham side of the Charles River). If there is steady rain, the walk will be canceled.

Trip Leaders: John Mordes MD, president of Friends of Hemlock Gorge (617-888-4488) and Katherine Howard of Newton Conservators (617-721-2571)



Graphic courtesy of vecteezy.com

..... Invasives Team Update



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Black Swallow-wort



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Japanese Knotweed



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Garlic Mustard



PHOTO: KATHERINE HOWARD

Multiflora Rose



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Tree of Heaven



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY

Glossy Buckthorn

The Newton Conservators' Invasives Team conducts invasive plant removal sessions throughout much of the year. We work in many of Newton's parks and conservation areas. The City of Newton and the state (Department of Conservation and Recreation) support us administratively and with debris removal.

Invasive non-native plants take over large areas quickly and disrupt the local ecosystems and food chains of plants, insects, birds, and other animals, harming biodiversity. Human activity caused this problem, and our intervention is needed to prevent the invasives from taking over. Our efforts make room for threatened native species, and we also add new native plantings in selected areas.

You can help by joining our efforts, or just by learning to identify the plants in your own yard and favorite areas. Newton Conservators' website section on invasive plants includes photos and tips for identification and management: <https://newtonconservators.org/invasive-plants/>

Our season starts in late winter with removal of bittersweet vines (which girdle and take down trees), buckthorn (which forms thickets and shades out natives), and large shrubs like multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, and burning bush. By late April, it's time for garlic mustard, the easiest of all the invasives to control. On NewtonSERVES day, Sunday May 5, there will be at least three garlic mustard work sessions. In the summer we work to keep black swallow-wort (fatal to monarch butterflies) out of our parks, and we work to dig, cut, and generally discourage Japanese knotweed.

The open spaces we work in include Cold Spring Park, Hemlock Gorge, Quinobequin Road, Houghton Garden, Heartbreak Hill Park, Dolan Pond, Blue Heron Bridge, Webster Woods, Sawmill Brook, Upper Falls Greenway, Riverside Park, Pony Truss Trail, Hammond Pond, Crystal Lake, Nahanton Park, and Woodcock Meadow. We also work in the three Conservators-owned properties: Dexter Road, Awtrey Dell, and Ordway Park.

You are welcome to join in these efforts. The sessions will be published as Events on our website; and if you would like to receive notices and updates about our plans, you can get on our invasives email group list by emailing Invasives@newtonconservators.org. There is no obligation, and you can come to as many or as few of the sessions as you like. Thank you! ♦

✍ Katherine Howard

MISSION **Newton Conservators, Inc.**

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 was formed as a not-for-profit organization 63 years ago in June 1961.

The Newton Conservators' Newsletter® is published four times each year by the Newton Conservators, Inc., in June, September, December, and March. Deadlines for these issues are the second Friday of the month before the issue is published.

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

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Thanks to the following contributors to this edition of the newsletter: Channon Ames, Amelia Gantt, Katherine Howard, Richard Primack, Jon Regosin, and Beth Wilkinson.

Vernal Pool BioBlitz, Nahanton Park

Sunday April 14, 3-4:30 PM



PHOTO: KEN MALLORY
An example of a different spring pool, Bare Pond in Webster Woods.

Vernal pools are small wetlands that are important habitats for a great diversity of amphibians, aquatic insects, and other invertebrates. Join us as we explore a vernal pool in Nahanton Park

and document what we see in iNaturalist. Bring calf boots if you have them, but waterproof boots will not be needed. At the beginning of the event, we will provide a basic tutorial on the use of iNaturalist, a useful smartphone app for documenting plants and animals and improving your identification skills. Although we can't predict what we'll see, we may encounter frog or salamander eggs and might hear calling spring peepers or American toads. Meet at the main parking lot, 455 Nahanton, Street, Newton. Please check the Newton Conservators' events web page if we are forced to cancel due to heavy rain. For questions, email Trip Leader Jonathan Regosin: jonathan.regosin@gmail.com. ♦

Save the Date! — NewtonSERVES is Sunday, May 5.

Morning: Cold Spring Park Invasives, Nahanton Park Woodcock Meadow Invasives, Dolan Pond Invasives.

Afternoon: Houghton Garden Invasives. **Registration starts March 18 at:**

<https://newtonma.gov/government/parks-recreation-culture/newton-serves>

Save the Date!

Newton Conservators' Annual Dinner Meeting

Thursday May 9, 2024



Ladyslippers

For this year's annual meeting, we will return to Post 440 on California Street in Nonantum. The event will start with a social hour at 6 pm, followed by a sit-down dinner at 7 pm, to be followed by a brief business meeting, awards ceremony and our featured presentation, **Can Pollinator Gardens and Conservation Lands Work Together to Increase Biodiversity in Our Community** by **Michael Piantedosi, Director of Conservation for Native Plant Trust.**

Michael will talk to us about the different (and overlapping) benefits of both cultivated pollinator gardens and natural, wild open space. In recent years, environmentalists have planted pollinator gardens throughout our region in order to support threatened bees and butterflies. That work is critical but not sufficient. In addition, we all must continue to support our forests and wild meadows, which are home to a greater diversity of native plants.

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 graduated from 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 one-third 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. A Memorial Mass was held on Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at the Burke & Blackington Funeral Home, 1479 Washington Street, West Newton, 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 at <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/bostonglobe/name/george-mansfield-obituary?id=53778737>.

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!

— Ted Kuklinski

In Remembrance of Bart Hague



We are sad to report the passing of A. Bartlett (Bart) Hague (1923–2023) last December. Bart was Newton Conservators' president from 1982 through 1984, a board member before and after that period, and an advisor since leaving the Boston area.

Bart's tenure as president was an active period in land conservation in Newton. The Conservators worked closely with Newton Parks and Recreation Department and Combined Jewish Philanthropies in developing what was once known as Novitiate Park into our treasured Nahanton Park. He worked closely with the Kennard Family in expanding Kennard Park. Bart also encouraged working with neighboring communities to create open-space connections across borders. He was instrumental with others in preserving open space and public access to the city-acquired Newton Commonwealth Golf Course. As an active hiker, he worked on developing Newton's trail system and open-space plan for wider distribution of our early trail and open-space map.

A Mainer at heart and graduate of Yale and the University of Michigan, he was an active environmentalist wherever he lived. We are fortunate that he chose Newton as home when he arrived in the Boston area in 1967 to work at the new regional office of the EPA where he worked on improvements in wastewater treatment and investment in the Deer Island treatment plant. Over his four decades of public service, he also worked on the Clean Water Act and the National Trails System.

Following his retirement from the EPA in 1996, Bart devoted himself to environmental issues in Maine and helped form the Maine Lakes (lakes.me) organization, a consortium of smaller lake associations, where he served as president. His family also placed 475 acres in a conservation easement in protection of the headwaters of Sebago Lake. Married for 61 years, he is survived by his wife, Mary Ann Connor Hague, son Art, daughters Beth and Mary, and three grandchildren. Bart had a life well lived in service to the environment, and we are grateful for his time with the Newton Conservators.

Bart's obituary can be found at: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/bostonglobe/name/a-hague-obituary?id=54034539>

— Ted Kuklinski



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IN THE SPRING ISSUE:

The Charles River Greenway at 30	1
Find Yourself in Orienteering	4
WinterFEST in Cold Spring Park	6
Spring Webinars Series	7
Spring Walks Schedule	8
Invasives Team Update.	9
Vernal Pool Bioblitz, Nahanton Park	10
Annual Dinner Meeting - Save the Date!	10
Newton Serves.	10
In Memory of George Mansfield.	11
In Remembrance of Bart Hague	11



Yellow-breasted Chat
photo by Haynes Miller

Go Green! ...and all the other colors of the rainbow. You can view this newsletter at newtonconservators.org/newsletters. To elect not to receive a paper copy of the newsletter, email us at membership@newtonconservators.org.