



Wood Turtle

landscape associated with active farming and have become rarer as forests have succeeded fields, even in rural parts of the state. Note that Massachusetts public record law contains an exemption for rare species information, and the NHESP does not release detailed site-

specific information about the locations of rare species due to risk of poaching for the pet trade or other harm.

Conservation Successes

Over the course of my career, I have had the opportunity to work directly with colleagues to protect and restore

the habitat of many rare species, such as Bog Turtles in the Berkshires and Barrens Buckmoths in Plymouth. Although there are many challenges remaining, there have been many noteworthy successes: the establishment of a robust population of sandplain gerardia (a plant) in Crane Wildlife Management Area on Cape Cod, and the recent recolonization of the Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area by the Frosted Elfin Butterfly in response to habitat restoration and increases in the population of its wild lupine host plant. Although the NHESP receives some state general fund support, the program remains dependent on grants and donations to carry out its efforts — and much work remains to be done! You can help support endangered species conservation in Massachusetts by supporting the NHESP. ♦

— Jon Regosin

Annual Meeting 2024

Newton Conservators’ president Alice Ingerson began the Newton Conservators’ 63rd annual meeting at the American Legion Post 44 in Newton by welcoming everyone, including the sponsors, and turning



Nyssa Patten

the podium over to Newton Conservators’ vice president Nyssa Patten for a land acknowledgement. Land acknowledgements have become a tradition since the board’s creation of a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Committee several years ago. “We are meeting on land that the Massachusetts people have lived with and cared for over thousands of years,” Nyssa said. “We recognize that the Massachusetts never ceded this land to the ancestors of the people who now claim to own it. At our 2022 annual meeting,

Massachusetts Tribal Elder Elizabeth Solomon 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 a ‘continuous flowing,’ in which ‘we give to nature as frequently and as much as we take from nature.’ We hope to build truly reciprocal relationships with nature and people of all backgrounds, including those who have been displaced or excluded from the open spaces for which we advocate.”

Although Mayor Ruthanne Fuller could not be present because of a School Committee budget meeting, Jennifer Steel, Newton’s chief environmental planner, delivered the mayor’s comments with the following observations.



Jennifer Steel

“What an amazing group of conservationists, environmentalists, advocates, and all around do-gooders from President Alice Ingerson, Vice President Nyssa Patten, and the entire all-volunteer team at the Newton Conservators. Thank you for your more than 60 years of strong advocacy and action to preserve and protect our open spaces here in Newton; you teach us how to better understand and appreciate the wonderful natural world around us

with walks, webinars, and programs. You roll your sleeves up and get your hands dirty organizing invasive pulls and conservation land cleanups. I’m thrilled that you’re recognizing tonight the new community pollinator projects as the Environmentalist of the Year. This effort is teaching us all how to transform our properties and habitats to nourish our native insects, birds, and other wildlife. The original demonstration pollinator garden that you planted at City Hall back in 2021 has brought us and our native bee populations joy ever since. And thanks, as well to our students from EcoPledge at Boston College for leaning

Continued on page 4

in to promote sustainability in the BC community and to helping to support our open spaces along the way. My congratulations and gratitude to all of you who are doing the work to make our city and, indeed, our world a better place to live. Thank you.”

Nominating Committee

Bill Hagar, the Newton Conservators’ former president and former co-president presented the Newton Conservators’ slate of officers and directors for the coming year. These include Alice Ingerson as president, Nyssa Patten as vice president, Michael Clarke as secretary, Katherine Howard as treasurer, and Bill Hagar and Chris Hepburn as former co-presidents. The board of directors will consist of David Backer, Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Alicia Bowman, Dan Brody, Bonnie Carter, Samantha Corbin, Kim Devore, Henry Finch, Maurice Gilmore, Daniel Green, Ted Kuklinski, Ken Mallory, Larry Smith, and Beth Wilkinson.

Margaret Doris



Past president Ted Kuklinski announced the retirement of Margaret Doris from the Newton Conservators’ board of directors. Margaret is a writer and bioethicist with a PhD from Boston University and has lived in Newton

for over 30 years. Margaret will continue to serve Newton Conservators as a member of the advisory board. She graciously accepted her award, thanking the Conservators for the work it does.

Alice Ingerson President’s Message



Alice Ingerson

Newton Conservators’ work of “connecting people to nature” aims to embody the land ethic formulated by Aldo Leopold, who wrote that we abuse land because “we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” Though Leopold’s *Sand County Almanac* was published in 1949, his words resonate strongly with those of Massachusetts Elder Elizabeth Solomon at our 2022 annual meeting, which we quoted earlier tonight. In the spirit of both of these conservation “elders,” Newton Conservators has expanded its traditional

focus on public land to address issues that also arise on private land and aims to make nature in Newton equally accessible to all people, regardless of how much or how little land they officially “own.” On Newton’s public lands, we continue offering free walks and supporting trail and other public access enhancements. We also hold and monitor conservation restrictions (CRs) on city land. If you’d like to join one of our annual monitoring visits, please get in touch! Our “BioBlitz” biological survey events and invasives pulls on public sites teach skills that participants can also apply in their own yards. The recent Pollinator Garden Tour we cosponsored focused on public sites but also encouraged visits to nearby private gardens. Many of our webinars have focused on supporting native plants or co-existing with wildlife in yards and neighborhoods as well as parks. We value our continuing partnerships with Newton’s many park “friends” groups such as the Crystal Lake Conservancy with city staff. We have long funded scholarships for teens to the summer Environmental Science Program, now run by Newton’s Parks, Recreation & Culture Department. But we are also eager to form new partnerships. In 2023 we gave our first-ever grant to the Newton Housing Authority. We recently updated our policies for volunteers, including those under age 18, and clarified processes for our small grants program. If you know nature lovers of any age who’d like to give of their time or whose special projects could use a little extra financial support, please encourage them to contact us.

2023 Newton Conservators’ Awards

Environmentalist of the Year



Alicia Bowman, Beth Wilkinson, Mark Feldhusen, Nyssa Patten, Andreae Downs, Ann Dorfman, Alan Noguee, and Ted Kuklinski

The Environmentalist of the Year Award, which goes to the individual or group to make the greatest contribution to the protection of Newton’s environment, was first presented in 1980. This year’s award went to the Newton Community Pollinator Project for promoting plantings that support native pollinators through public education initiatives, such as the online pollinator toolkit, demonstration gardens, the pollinator garden tour, and a winter sewing workshop. Former City Councilor Alicia Bowman was the founder of the project.

Director’s Award

This award is presented annually to individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to the preservation of open space in Newton. The award this year



Katherine Howard, Lauren Dadekian, Camilo Olaya-Pineda, Maddie Cook, and Kendrick Sears

recognizes the Boston College Student Group EcoPledge for continually engaging the Boston College community in environmental sustainability matters and for years of volunteerism in caring for Newton's open spaces. As Newton Conservator treasurer Katherine Howard noted,

the award is being presented for the very impressive work of the coalition to engage and educate the Boston College community, which is about 20,000 people, in matters of sustainability and the environment. EcoPledge draws from all class years, and it has several very busy committees, activism, volunteer outreach, and events. In Newton, we've really felt the benefit and the work of these committees through activism in Webster Woods, as well as the cleanups and invasives work that they do in our parks.

Annual Meeting Keynote Talk Speaker Michael Piantedosi

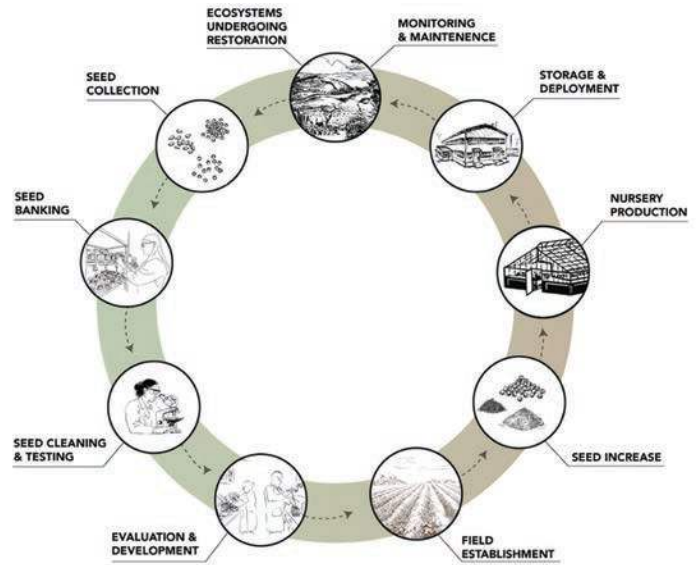


Michael Piantedosi

After the business meeting and awards, Michael Piantedosi, Director of Conservation at Native Plant Trust, gave a talk entitled "Seeds of Change: Promoting Plant Biodiversity in Our Community." In her introduction to this talk, Conservators' board member Beth Wilkinson noted that Michael began his career in plant biology as a researcher in cyanobacteria and freshwater plant communities at the

University of New Hampshire, where he received a degree in Plant Biology & Environmental Conservation.

He then worked in regional herbaria, in soil analysis & biogeochemistry laboratories, as horticulturalist at Museum of Science - Boston, and as a researcher in native plant horticulture with Woodman Horticultural Experiment Farm before joining the Conservation Department of Native Plant Trust in 2014 as manager of the New England Plant Conservation Program (NEPCoP), a volunteer consortium of professional botanists and ecologists who monitor rare and endangered plant populations and provide critical data to Natural Heritage bureaus in each New England state. He also managed Native Plant Trust's regional seed bank of threatened and endangered species and the use of seed in habitat restoration. In 2019, he became the Director of



Seed banking and field establishment process. Graphic courtesy of Michael Piantedosi

Conservation at Native Plant Trust.

Michael's talk covered broad initiatives that are moving through conservation. He said he had seen a lot of change in how folks interact with native plants all the way up to understanding about pollinators and habitat restoration and climate change. His talk, however, was about collecting and banking seeds and how seeds are crucial to preserving and propagating plant biodiversity. You can view his talk on the Conservators' YouTube channel bit.ly/3yNTYwD. ♦

Ken Mallory

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

SPONSORS

- Nahanton Paddler — Platinum Sponsor*
Lucy Caldwell-Stair
- Dolan Pond Nester — Gold Sponsor*
Lalor and Patricia Burdick
Paddle Boston
The Village Bank
- Crystal Lake Swimmer — Silver Sponsor*
Crystal Lake Conservancy
- Newton Community Farm Harvester — Friend of Newton Conservators*
Fulfilled Goods LLC
2Life Communities, Opus-Newton