

Annual Meeting 2025

Newton Conservators' 64th annual meeting at the American Legion Post 44 in Newton began when Newton Conservators' president Alice Ingerson welcomed everyone including the sponsors and then gave a reading called "Nature and Community," a new tradition we use to introduce our monthly board meetings and webinars. In that address she observed, "Newton Conservators is grateful for the beauty and sustenance that the land provides for humans and the other creatures with whom we share this earth."



Alice Ingerson

"Our goals to preserve open space and to connect people to nature require challenging the ways in which land conservation has historically excluded some peoples from protected land."

"Newton Conservators commits to acknowledging this exclusionary history and to building active partnerships with groups who have been hurt by that history,

starting but not ending with Indigenous peoples such as the Massachusetts.

As Aldo Leopold wrote, 'When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect'."

Thank you to our generous sponsors!

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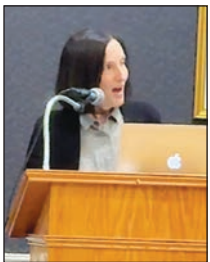
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Mayor Ruthanne Fuller



Mayor Ruthanne Fuller

Alice Ingerson then recognized Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, thanking the mayor for her help saving Webster Woods, supporting the City's parks and conservation departments and staff, and her collaboration with community and non-profit groups like Newton Conservators. In Mayor Fuller's remarks she acknowledged the city councilors in

the room and in turn praised the leaders of Newton Birding, winners of the Charles Johnson Maynard Award, turned special attention to the evening's keynote speaker Greg Maslowe and his team from Newton Community Farm, and cited the extraordinary contributions of the city's senior planner Jennifer Steel.

Outgoing President's Message

At this evening's annual meeting our president Alice Ingerson, who has for five years capably served our organization as president and vice president, noted the following in her parting remarks: "Newton Conservators is an all-volunteer organization founded in 1961. To deliver our programs, which are free to the public, we depend on membership dues, on donations, and above all on our volunteers. You do not need to be an expert naturalist or ecologist to help! To learn more about our volunteer opportunities, contact us at volunteers@newtonconservators.org."

"Newton Conservators' best-known programs focus on Newton's public lands. We offer guided walks and BioBlitzes, where volunteers help to document Newton's biodiversity. We also monitor conservation restrictions on nine City-owned open spaces acquired with Community Preservation Act Funds."

"Yet we also know that nature does not recognize property lines. So increasingly our programs also cross the boundaries between public and private land. This is especially true for the two sides of land stewardship: our efforts to control invasive plants, led by incoming President Katherine Howard, and our support for native plants and pollinators, including our Pollinator Toolkit and sponsorship of Pollinator Garden Tours."

"In tonight's keynote presentation, Greg Maslowe challenged us to reconsider not only the distinction between public and private land, but also the distinction between protected land and land in active human use. Historically, conservation has often protected land mostly from people who make a living directly on the land. This exclusion started with Indigenous people but was expanded to foragers, fishers, farmers, and loggers of all cultural backgrounds."

"Yet restricting protected land in places like Newton to only recreational uses such as hiking and nature study implies using other land — mostly far from Newton — to grow the food we eat, the fibers we wear, and wood to build the homes we live in. This implication raises two questions that are fundamental for the future of land conservation: Should our stewardship of protected land continue to look mostly

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inward, focused mostly on excluding activities and people allowed on other kinds of land? Or should we also look outward, seeing protected land partly as a laboratory for learning to interact sustainably with other kinds of land?"

Nominating Committee



Pete Gilmore

Board member Pete Gilmore presented Newton Conservators' slate of officers and directors for the coming year. Katherine Howard has replaced Alice Ingerson as president joined again by Nyssa Patten as vice president and Michael Clarke as secretary. This year we also welcomed co-treasurers David Backer and Larry Smith replacing Katherine, the previous treasurer.

The board of directors will now consist of Peter Barrer, Barbara Bates, Alicia Bowman, Dan Brody, Henry Finch, Maurice (Pete) Gilmore, David Green, Bill Hagar, Chris Hepburn, Susan Lyon, Ken Mallory, Jon Regosin, and Beth Wilkinson.

New President Katherine Howard



Katherine Howard

Incoming president Katherine Howard has been Treasurer for 25 years and is ready to try something new. She thanked outgoing president Alice Ingerson for her service, including getting us through Covid, running the memorable outdoor annual meeting at Mount Ida, modernizing our processes and systems, helping us understand

our mission in a new way and our DEIJ approach, and very importantly, organizing us in so many ways. Alice's expertise in city government, CPA, and land use issues at the local, state, and federal levels will be hard to replace. An olive wood pen made by Mike Clarke was presented to Alice as a parting gift.

Katherine acknowledged two very sad changes to our advisor community, with the passing of Eric Reenstierna, long time board member and advisor, and Don Lubin, advisor, co-author of our Almanac, and fern walk leader. They will be sorely missed. An article about Eric's life and work with Newton Conservators is included separately in this newsletter as is an article about Don Lubin.

Katherine thanked departing board members. Kim Devore, who energized our community events in her monarch queen persona, will become an advisor. Samantha Corbin,

who was both walks and volunteer coordinator, and set up important processes to engage and manage volunteers, for which we are very grateful. Also leaving the board to become advisors are two long serving board members, Ted Kuklinski and Bonnie Carter. They received special certificates of appreciation for their accomplishments, which are noted below.

Certificates of Appreciation

Ted Kuklinski



Ted Kuklinski

We thank Ted for his invaluable service as a Newton Conservators' board member for over 25 years and his strong leadership as president from 2019 to 2021; for connecting the public to the Conservators' work through his e-bulletin, walks, videos, and video editing of webinars; for serving as Newton's Monarch

King by arranging the Monarch Festival at Wellington Park, educating youngsters at community events; for collaborating to bring us the Pollinator Working Group annual tours, and modeling for us a front yard pollinator garden; for being an active member of the Newton Off Leash Area Working Group and helping to create and manage Newton's off-leash recreation areas, for leading the Charles River-North Newton section of the Christmas Bird Count for more than twenty years; for being a dedicated steward for Dolan Pond Conservation Area and sharing its beauty with the public and for serving on the board of Wellington Park; and for his leadership in the city's acquisition of 76 Webster Park, keeping two-thirds of the site as open space and creating affordable housing in the original house and two new Habitat for Humanity homes.

Bonnie Carter



Ted Kuklinski with
Bonnie Carter

We appreciate Bonnie for 37 years of service as an active Newton Conservators' board member; for serving as vice president from 1993 to 1995; for serving as newsletter editor and producer from 1988 to 1998; for years of making the get-togethers held at her home to prepare Conservators' mailings, occasions of joyous camaraderie; for being our resident expert on Post Office rules for our mailings; for her assistance at our public facing events, fairs and village days; for continuing to serve Newton Conservators as an advisor.

Bonnie was also passionately active in the League of Women Voters of Newton and had served as president of that organization. Bonnie is really one of the unsung heroes of Newton Conservators working behind the scenes.

Charles Johnson Maynard Award to Newton's Bird Leaders



Left to right, Pete Gilmore, Liane Hartnett, and Alison Leary (Haynes Miller absent)

The Charles Johnson Maynard Award is presented annually to recognize efforts to improve biodiversity, habitat reclamation, and natural resource protection. Charles Johnson Maynard was a naturalist and ornithologist born in Newton in 1845 and died in 1929 and

lived close to Cheesecake Brook at 459 Crafts Street. He published over 25 books including *A Field Ornithology of The Birds of Eastern North America* and *The Warblers of New England*. He might even be considered the Roger Tory Peterson or David Sibley of his day.

Thus it seems quite appropriate that our Charles Johnson Maynard Award this year is presented to a number of our outstanding "Leaders of Newton Birding," Pete Gilmore, Liane Hartnett, Alison Leary, and Haynes Miller for their long-term dedication to organizing and leading engaging bird walks, for their valuable participation in citizen science endeavors, and for generously sharing their expertise to foster the appreciation and understanding of birds in and around Newton.

Pete Gilmore, a retired math professor from Northeastern, has been on our board for decades, as well as served on the board of the Brookline Bird Club. Liane Hartnett is an experienced birder and organizes the annual Newton Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which she took over from the late great Cris Criscitiello who lived across the street from her on Raeburn Terrace.

Alison Leary is one of our City Councilors in Newton, but you may not have known about her birding expertise, especially her leadership of our annual Mothers' Day Bird Walk.

Haynes Miller, an emeritus Professor of Mathematics at MIT, is also an expert birder and walk leader, is very prolific recording his findings on e-Bird, and often contributes photos to this newsletter.

Environmentalist of the Year



From left to right Laura Bishop, Barbara Seal, Linda Chafets, Michael Spalding (Co-President), Paul Holt (Co-President), Peter Barrer

of Newton's environment." This year's award is really "Environmentalist of the Past Two Decades," not just one year. This year the award goes to the Newton Community Farm Board, represented by Paul Holt and Michael Spalding, Co-Presidents. The award recognizes the farm for growing an institution that provides sustainable food, offers learning opportunities for children and adults, and encourages sustainable home gardening; for supporting staff devoted to sustainable food production and community engagement; for leading successful efforts to renew and expand the buildings and infrastructure that the farm needs to thrive, including solar panels that provide most of the farm's electricity.

Annual Meeting Keynote Talk Speaker Greg Maslowe



Jon Regosin

After the business meeting and awards, Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager, Newton Community Farm, gave a talk entitled "Can Farming Save Open Spaces? A Very Old Debate." In his introduction to this talk, Conservators' board member Jon Regosin noted the role of Newton Conservators in helping save Newton Community Farm. As a Newton Conservator and founding President of Newton Community Farm, Jon stressed

the word "community" in the title of the 'farm': "It serves the community. It provides locally grown produce to the community. It donates food to community members in need. It serves children and youth in our community through writing programming. It builds community around sustainable farming, sustainable farming and land use, and helps people connect to the land."

It also took a broad community effort to save and transform Newton's last working farm. "Let's talk about city government. Without the city and the Community Preservation Fund in particular, we wouldn't have been

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able to save the farm, So, city government was essential to saving the farm. So this brings us to our second element of community strong. We need strong community organizations. So into the story comes Newton Conservators. And Newton Conservators was engaged with the landowners, the Angino family, both before and after the property came on the market.”

Jon then described the third important component: dedicated individuals — unaffiliated ones, as well as those in the community organizations and in city government. For example, in developing the farm business plan for the CPC, the interplay between these individuals and the organizations and government showed “how community actually works.”

The rest is history. As aldermen and city councilors got on board, this new nonprofit for the farm came into being. “When Greg was hired 20 years ago, none of us knew how things would turn out—he agreed to work for a brand-new non-profit on a rather small farm property. The Newton community has been truly blessed that Greg decided to make the farm and Newton his home for these 20 years... he has contributed so much in his role as farm manager. So on this 20th anniversary of Newton Community Farm, let’s take a moment to celebrate the farm and to celebrate our community’s success in saving, but not just saving, saving and transforming Newton’s last working farm.”

Greg Maslowe Profile



Greg Maslowe

Greg came to farming through his graduate work in environmental and agricultural ethics. Greg loves talking with people, young and old, about where their food comes from and how their answers and choices impact other life/lives. He feels fortunate to have found a way of life that allows him to be outside most of the time: a vocation that means he’s in the dirt, come rain or shine, throughout the growing season, participating in creating a better world; and time during the off-season to explore the mountains on skis, leading backcountry trips in the Green and White

mountains for the Boston Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. He is on the board of directors of the Urban Farming Institute and on the planning committee for Eastern Massachusetts Collaborative Alliance for Farmer Training.

Annual Meeting Keynote-Can Farming Save Open Spaces? A Very Old Debate

Greg spoke about two of his favorite community farms, one in Lincoln, Massachusetts and the other in Fort Collins, Colorado, as models for “how farming, open space, and conservation can all work together to address some of the societal challenges we are all facing.” He rejected two extreme arguments that were prominent in the history of conservation—for using all public lands to meet the public’s economic needs or for setting land aside strictly as wilderness. As a third option, he advocated for using public lands that are suited for agriculture to reduce food insecurity, increase food sovereignty (by growing in each region more of the food consumed in that region), provide farmers with access to land, preserve agriculture as cultural heritage, and reduce the negative impacts of global warming.

In his closing, Greg observed “I want to just turn back to Newton Community Farm, since part of I think why I was invited here tonight was to help celebrate the 20th anniversary of the farm. These are some of the ways that we have utilized the 2.25 acres of open space that was turned over to us 20 years ago. We grow more than 45,000 pounds of produce every single year, of which \$16,000 is donated to the Newton food pantry. Every year, we provide 28,000 organically grown flower and vegetable seedlings to the community to support home gardeners. This is really the key to the idea of food sovereignty is just getting able to grow their own food. Again, we have a high school intern program that has been running for the entire 20 years, and one of the most amazing things to me is having students who come back 20 years later, and it was really the ability to work on the farm that touched them deeply and shaped their whole life.”

For a video recording of Greg’s full talk, go to Newton Conservators’ YouTube channel at bit.ly/4mXyZvG

🌿 Ken Mallory

