

NEWTON CONSERVATORS SPRING WALKS/ACTIVITIES SERIES 2009

Please note that some walks/activities meet at different times. Some are weather dependent; please call trip leader if in doubt.

Saturday May 2 at 2:00pm

Nahanton Park and Newton Angino Community Farm: What was here before?

This area has always been “open space”, and it has had diverse uses before becoming today’s City Park, private community center, and city owned farm. We start at Nahanton Park, where we will find the foundation of the city poor farm and look at old photos and maps. Then we walk through the hemlock grove (a conservation restriction area) to the Working Boys’ Home, where we’ll hear an account of a homeless boy who grew up there in the 1940s. Next we go to the site of a 1950s anti-aircraft artillery gun and find out about its cold war function. At Angino Farm, we’ll see new crops, beehives, and an experimental orchard and hear about the farm’s operations. Tour is a one mile loop, for up to 15 people. To reserve a place and get meeting location, email tours@newtoncommunityfarm.org. Trip Leader is Lucy Caldwell-Stair

Saturday May 9th 10:00 am-Noon.

Knotweed Pull at Hammond Pond with Eric Olson (617-872-9928)

Knotweed pull with Brandeis ecologist Eric Olson. Eric reports: “The kids in Newton’s Environmental Science Program did a fantastic job helping me take on this new site last summer, pulling up 8’ tall stems and their root masses. This year we will deal with the scores of small shoots that will be sprouting from the root pieces left in the soil last year. I also need help planting in shade-tolerant native plants to hold the soil. This is a well-drained shady site, so we’ll try the common wood aster, *Aster divaricatus* and blue-stemmed goldenrod, *Solidago caesia*, that I have raised from seed obtained on the Brandeis campus. We will also find time for some general botanizing and shoreline exploring along the Pond.”

Meet at the small parking lot at the southwest corner of Hammond Pond between General Cinemas and the Hammond Pond Parkway.

Sunday, May 10th at 7:30 am

Mother’s Day Bird Walk at Nahanton Park

Nahanton Park offers a mix of woodlands, wetlands and meadows along the Charles River, making it a good place to observe a variety of migratory songbirds, as well as resident species. Last year’s highlights included a flock of bobolinks, a pair of eastern bluebirds, an orchard oriole, rose breasted grosbeaks, vireos, warblers and brown thrashers.

Enter the park at the Nahanton street entrance next to the river. Parking is available inside the park. Bring binoculars if you have them. Beginners as well as experienced birders are

welcome. The walk is weather dependent. Trip Leaders: Molly Edmonds, Haynes Miller (617-599-4541)

Saturday May 16th

Newton Garden Market and Tree Conservancy Table at City Hall 10:00am-5:00pm.

The Newton Tree Conservancy is a non-profit organization formed for the purpose of raising money for the preservation and planting of trees in Newton.

Sunday May 17th at 8:00am

Bird Walk at Cold Spring Park

This 67 acre parcel has ample wooded areas, open fields, a brook and wetlands. It is one of the places in Newton where you may hear the Great Horned Owl calling to its mate. The park is a good spot to observe red tailed, coopers and sharp shinned hawks, as well as a variety of migratory songbirds. Wood ducks nest in the wooded ponds, and recently a Eurasian Teal has been spotted feeding with a group of Mallards.

Enter the park at the Beacon Street entrance. Turn left and go to the far end of the parking lot to meet group. Heavy rain will cancel the walk.

Trip leader is Pete Gilmore (617-969-1513)

Sunday May 17th Anguino Farm Seedling Sale 10:00am-Noon

Monday May 18th Tree Program at the Newton Free Library 7:00pm

Saturday May 23

Saw Mill Park Garlic Mustard Pull 10:00am-Noon

Garlic Mustard, a native of Europe that probably came here as a garden herb, has now invaded our backyards, parks, forests and conservation areas. It is high up on the federal/state official list of Plant Invaders threatening our environment. It will quickly cover vast areas, and low light forested areas, shading out other plants, chemically altering the soil to inhibit germination of competitor seeds, and altering the habitat for native insects such as butterflies. But in areas where it is just starting to invade, it only takes a small amount of effort to be rid of it. It is a biennial very easily identified and pulled when the second year plants are flowering in May/June. If not pulled, each plant will scatter hundreds to thousands of seeds later in the season that will become first year plants the next year and also remain as viable seeds for several more years. It is easy and fun to get it out! In case of poison ivy wear long pants and garden gloves.

Biodegradable trash bags will be provided, as the plants must be disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at Parking lot on Vine Street. Trip Leader Katherine Howard (617-527-1796)

Sunday May 24 at 2:00pm
Newton Aqueducts Hike

This is a very popular 4-6 mile hike through woods, meadows and fields along the Newton sections of the Sudbury and Cochituate aqueducts. Parts of the paths traverse close to backyards, so hikers do need to be respectful of private property. This is a steady, but not fast hike. Participants should be in sufficiently good shape to keep up with the group. See the loop map. (There are cutoffs for those who wish to shorten the hike).

Meet in front of the Starbucks coffee shop near the Waban MBTA station at 2:00pm. Trip leader is Henry Finch (617-964-4488).

Wednesday May 27 Newton Conservators Annual Dinner at the Nonantum Post 440 on California Street. Check your mail for invitations.

Saturday May 30th 10-00am to Noon
Garlic Mustard and Knotweed Pull at Dolan Pond, followed by optional general exploring with Eric Olson until 1:00pm.

Meet at Dolan Pond conservation area in W. Newton. Street Parking is available near the four entrances at Auburndale Avenue, Webster Park, Stratford and Cumberland. This is an exciting year for garlic mustard pulling at Dolan because plant pull crews pulled every flowering stem last year before these had a chance to set seed. Crews also removed nearly every knotweed stem. Since garlic mustard is a biennial we will get all the second year plants this year and that might do it, we will have nearly eradicated this soil-damaging invasive from this gem of a pocket park. In contrast the knotweed takes years to suppress, but each year it gets easier. We will mix in some general nature study so bring binoculars and hand lenses for observing birds, bugs, flowers, and a good variety of pond life. Trip Leader is Eric Olson (617-872-9928)

Saturday May 30 at 2:00pm
Webster Woods Conservation Area

Join us for a leisurely walk through the largest conservation area in Newton. Explore miles of trails through second growth woods with noted rock outcroppings of Roxbury Puddingstone, brooks, ponds, wetlands, overgrown farmland, and an historic woodland garden. Trip highlights include Webster Brook and Webster Vale - one of the few brooks that go to the Charles where the headwaters can be seen; a great area for marsh marigolds and salamanders. Gooch's Caves - a large rock formation with numerous small caves. (Climbing in and through the caves is optional.) Bare Pond - one of the few remaining vernal pools in Newton.

Meet at the end of Warren Street (parking in a parks and Recreation open field at the end of Warren Street). Warren Street intersects with Langley Road near Newton Centre. Trip Leader is Octo Barnett (617-969-6988).

Sunday May 31st 2:00pm-4:00pm

Garlic Mustard Pull at Cold Spring Park with Katherine Howard.

"Garlic Mustard, a native of Europe that probably came here as a garden herb, has now invaded our backyards, parks, forests and conservation areas. It is high up on the federal/state official list of Plant Invaders threatening our environment. It will quickly cover vast areas, and low light forested areas, shading out other plants, chemically altering the soil to inhibit germination of competitor seeds, and altering the habitat for native insects such as butterflies. But in areas where it is just starting to invade, it only takes a small amount of effort to be rid of it. It is a biennial very easily identified and pulled when the second year plants are flowering in May/June. If not pulled, each plant will scatter hundreds to thousands of seeds later in the season that will become first year plants the next year and also remain as viable seeds for several more years. It is easy and fun to get it out! Cold Spring Park is one area becoming infested. We will spend a couple hours pulling along the Cochituate aqueduct walk, staying in upland areas away from wetlands. In case of poison ivy wear long pants and garden gloves. Biodegradable trash bags will be provided; the plants must be disposed of as trash, not as yard waste. Meet at the Duncklee Rd. entrance, at the Newton Highlands side of the park.

Trip leader is Katherine Howard (617-527-1796).

Saturday June 6th 10:00am-Noon.

Garlic Mustard Pull with Eric Olsen at Blue Heron Bridge

See above description of Garlic Mustard. Eric reports: "This is the second year working along the Charles River Greenway at this bridge site, helping the Trustees of the Reservations with their stewardship of the floodplain forest. The focus will be on garlic mustard, and as mentioned above, at least two years of work are needed to eradicate this soil-damaging invasive. We will again mix in some general nature study so bring binoculars and an insect net and hand lens if you have them".

Trip leader is Eric Olson (617-872-9928)

Park at the Pleasant Street Super Stop N Shop parking lot in Watertown at the corner furthest from the store. This spot is directly in front of you as you enter the parking lot from Pleasant Street. There is a path entrance there. Turn left and follow path to the bridge.

Sunday June 7 at 2:00pm

Charles River Canoe Trip

Join us for an afternoon paddling along the Charles River, leisurely enjoying the wildlife and river views.

Meet at the Charles River Canoe & Kayak (www.paddleboston/newton.com) rental dock at 2401 Commonwealth Avenue (Rt. 30) near the Newton Marriott Hotel at 2:00pm. There is a parking lot (off Norumbega Road) across the river from the rental dock where you can park your car, and then walk back across the bridge. If you have your own canoe or kayak you can put it in the water from this parking lot. Dress appropriately. A hat, sunscreen, drinks and snacks are recommended to bring along. Thunderstorms will cancel the trip.

Trip leader is Bill Hagar (617-964-2644).

Sunday June 14 from 1:00 to 3:00pm
Fern Walk at Blue Heron Trail South of Nahanton

There is a lush conservation area south of Nahanton Park. We will follow a loop trail, and you can learn to identify about a dozen ferns. We will see a large patch of wild Ostrich Fern and a horsetail.

The Conservators' Land Management Committee has been systematically surveying the city's open spaces to document the existing biodiversity. In terms of ferns and related plants (pteridophytes), we have found 28 species and hybrids. Some occur infrequently and are difficult to get to and some are very subtle to distinguish. We will provide an introduction to some that are quite common and easy to recognize with a little practice.

Wear long pants and sensible shoes.

Meet at the parking lot right off Nahanton Road at 1:00pm, just before (east of) the bridge over the Charles River.

Trip Leader is Don Lubin (617-254-8464)

Sunday June 21 at 2:00pm
Cutler/Millennium Park Hike

Starting at Cutler Park, we will explore Cutler Park and Millennium Park and will complete the tour by the way of the Wells Avenue Charles River Pathway. These areas have been improved for recreation over the last several years and now provide a wide variety of trails, river landings and playing fields. This approximately 5.5 mile hike will be steady but not fast, and participants should be in sufficiently good shape to keep up with the group. Hiking boots or heavy all weather shoes are recommended.

Meet at the Cutler Park entrance, a quarter mile south of the Charles River Bridge on Kendrick Street in Needham, at 2:00pm.

Trip Leader is Henry Finch (617-964-4488).