



News from Crystal Lake Conservancy

Spring 2015

The Crystal Lake Conservancy is dedicated to preserving and protecting Crystal Lake for the benefit of the public by promoting and supporting the enjoyment of the lake and the lake's unique natural beauty.

Come Join Us for An Afternoon of Fun on Crystal Lake!!

"PADDLES AND PETALS"

Sunday, May 31, 2015

1:00pm-4:00pm

20 Rogers Street, Newton Highlands, MA

Support Crystal Lake Conservancy's efforts to keep Crystal Lake healthy

\$10 donation per canoe/kayak/paddleboard

Refreshments, Picture Coloring, and Flowers for home planting

**Sponsors: *Late July Organics, Way Better Snacks, Wegmans, Whole Foods
The Village Bank***

Enjoy a lovely canoe or kayak ride on Crystal Lake on a fresh spring day!

The Crystal Lake Conservancy and the Newton Parks and Recreation Department invite you to join us for a Sunday afternoon of activities on Crystal Lake. Participants may sign up for half hour slots between 1-4:00pm to enjoy the pleasures of canoeing/kayaking/paddle boarding. A lifeguard will be on duty and all participants will be required to wear life jackets and sign a waiver. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult while on the water. In addition all can enjoy refreshments, coloring lake related images, and bringing home a flower!!

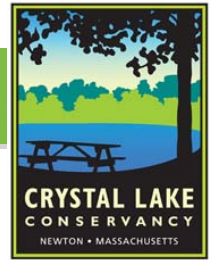
Learn about the Conservancy's ongoing testing and watershed activities to protect Crystal Lake!!

Visit our website at www.CrystalLakeConservancy.org or call Janice Bourque at 617-967-0797.

Volunteers are needed to help that day! Go to our website to volunteer or go directly to

VolunteerSpot: <http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/5887801060110>

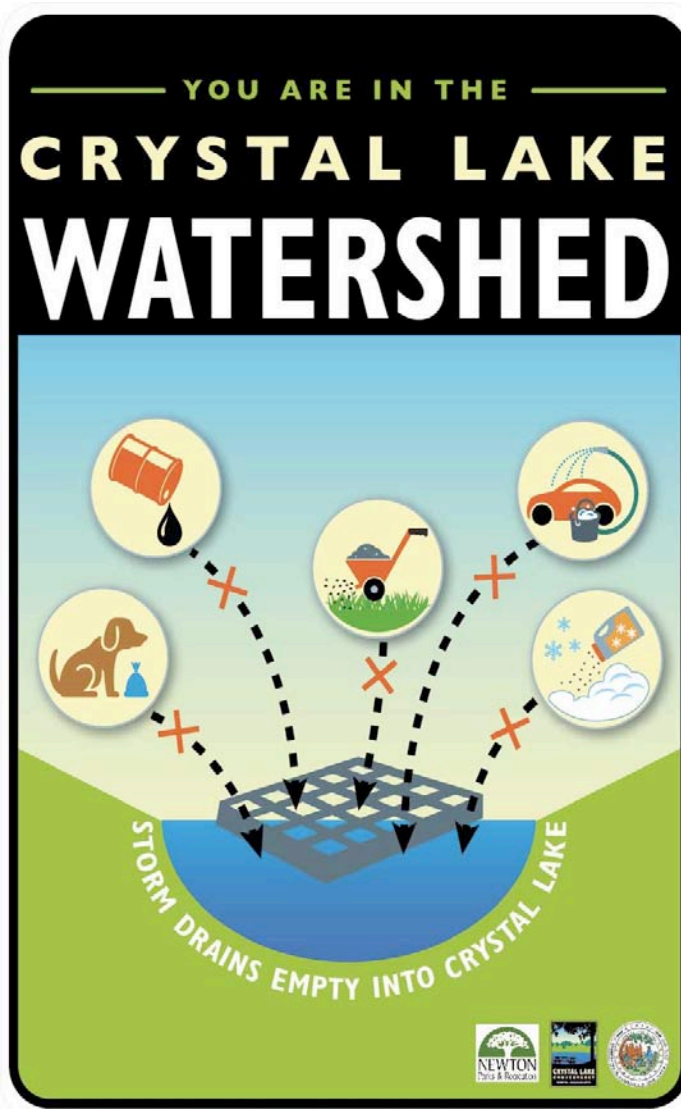
To learn more about the Crystal Lake Conservancy, visit our website at www.CrystalLakeConservancy.org



Reminders on Keeping Crystal Lake Healthy for the Summer

Your household is in the Crystal Lake Watershed area. What does that mean? All the runoff from homes in the watershed including lawn treatments, (chemical or manure), car washing detergents, and household chemicals are washed down the street into the City catch basins (storm drains). Contents in the catch basins then drain into Crystal Lake via seven different outfall areas. The sign below is a reminder to both residents and visitors what NOT to put in the storm drains. **IF YOU HAVE A SIGN ON YOUR STREET - YOU ARE IN THE CRYSTAL LAKE WATERSHED!**

WHAT YOU DO EVERY DAY ON OR AROUND YOUR PROPERTY WILL IMPACT CRYSTAL LAKE!



Storm Drains

No dog waste, no oil, no fertilizer, no car washing detergent and no road salt should find its way into the storm drains.

State Law- NO Phosphorus in Lawn Fertilizers!

Massachusetts prohibits the use of phosphorus in lawn fertilizers since January 2014. Phosphorus in fertilizers contributes to algae blooms in rivers, streams, lakes and ponds and has impacted Crystal Lake directly from storm runoff from surrounding watershed properties. Phosphorus is only permitted if a new lawn is being established. **Lawn care companies and property owners must ensure that no fertilizers containing phosphorus are being used.** Fines and penalties may be issued for those selling or using inappropriate fertilizers. "Organic" does NOT imply there is no phosphorus. **Please check the labels and products used by your landscapers as some may still have products containing phosphorus!**

Newton Highlands Village Day

Please visit our booth and take a chance with our rubber duck contest!

Sunday, June 14, 2015

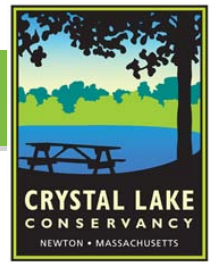
Lincoln St, Newton Highlands

Village Center

12 noon - 4pm.

Come learn more about the Conservancy's efforts. Pick up a copy of our newsletter, provide your email so we can keep you informed, and you can find out how to become involved, become a member or sign up to volunteer! Find that unique gift of note cards, a mug, water bottle, pin, poster, or T-shirt.

Help us stay green AND save paper and printing costs—sign up for our electronic newsletter by going to our website at www.CrystalLakeConservancy.org



The Bold Red-winged Blackbirds of Crystal Lake

By Beth Wilkinson



Some people look for the first crocus as a sure sign of spring. Not me. I listen for “Conk-a-ree, Conk-a-ree,” the unmistakable calls of the first red-winged blackbirds to return to my yard. Usually, the males arrive by the beginning of March, and the females follow within days.

Although there have not been many detailed studies, it’s thought that our Massachusetts red-winged blackbirds spend their winters within 800 miles of here, either on the coastal shores from New Jersey south or in the Midwest states in flocks of up to several million birds. They return north to breed and spend the summer months in smaller flocks.

Unlike our year-round blue jays and chickadees, red-winged blackbirds are not monogamous. (Even cardinals are monogamous throughout each breeding season—although they often change mates each season.) Male red-winged blackbirds are polygynous, sometimes having up to 15 mates.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the males must spend over a quarter of their daylight time in defense of their territories. The red-and-yellow shoulder patches are most visible on the most aggressive males; the less confident males will hide their patches under other feathers. The boldest males will challenge larger birds, even hawks, which venture into their territories. As a male tends his territory, he wants to be noticed, so he often sits atop a high perch, frequently on a cattail in swampy land.

The coloring of female birds is much more subtle, a mottled brown with pale breasts that are marked with brown streaks. Sometimes, a female has a white eyebrow. They can be mistaken for sparrows, but they are a couple inches larger. They are one of the most abundant species in North America. Almost every lake and wetland area has at least one pair of red-winged blackbirds, and they sometimes expand their territory into nearby lands. Thus, it’s not surprising that we see them in our Crystal Lake neighborhoods.

The citizen-scientist survey known as the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas 2 revealed that although red-winged blackbirds still were found in 96% of the survey’s areas in Massachusetts, there has been a decline in their abundance in the state and in Eastern United States in general, possibly because of losses of wetland habitat. That decline led Mass Audubon to recommend that the species should be studied further.

This summer, look for the nests of our red-winged blackbirds hidden low in the grasses around Crystal Lake—almost at the surface of the water. If you see one, please let us know. You can try to capture the sight in a photo, but beware the aggressive parents, who will be defending the nest. (Approaching too closely will make them feel unnecessarily threatened.)

Happy birding!

Help us stay green AND save paper and printing costs—sign up for our electronic newsletter by going to our website at www.CrystalLakeConservancy.org



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The Environmental Science Program still has openings for campers this summer!

Register or get more information at <http://www.newtonenvisci.org>

Contact: David S. Backer
Executive Director
Environmental Science Program
of Newton
contact@newtonenvisci.org

"Envi Sci" is a unique month-long outdoor program for teenagers providing students the chance to enjoy the wilderness while learning about the science of the environment.

Highlights of the program include hikes in Massachusetts and New Hampshire to the Blue Hills and Mount Monadnock, bicycle trips, a 12-mile canoe trip on the Charles River, and an expedition through the salt marshes of the North shore near Gloucester. The program ends with an exhilarating three-day backpacking trip up the highest peak in the Northeast, Mount Washington.

The program centers on the idea that students learn best about their surroundings when taught by other students in the specific environment. Leaders design and develop the science workshops to teach the students during daily hiking or biking trips. Workshops cover topics such as geology, botany, ecology, water cycle, pollution issues, and conservation.

Each year there is an environmental cleanup project in which participants get hands-on involvement with improving an environmental site.

The program began as a Ford Foundation Project in 1967 headed by a Newton science teacher, and has continued for many years as part of the Newton Conservation Commission. "Envi Sci" takes about 35 students who will be going into grades 7 through 10. New students are encouraged to return and become leaders in subsequent years, continuing the thread of responsibility for care and teaching about the environment.

The Program meets at Bowen School in Newton Centre, from Monday June 29 through Thursday July 30th. Tuition is \$1,295 for the whole month.