

# Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

## Summer 2018

### Advocating with Art: the Little-Known History of Spy Pond Park's Renovation

By Anne Ellinger



Spy Pond Park Players gathered in front of the giant Spirit of Spy Pond

of Spy Pond Park knew that our primary goal was to get the Town to fund a major park renovation.

My husband Christopher and I have always loved the way participatory arts can raise issues and bring people together. This passion was shared by my long-time friend, Betsy Leondar-Wright (then FSPP President) and her wife, Gail Leondar-Wright, an experienced theater director, cabaret singer and writer of clever song parodies.

Betsy, who has a knack for finding out what people are good at and drawing them in, discovered that FSPP's membership was full of talent. Together, we created a play about caring for the pond, including a 10-foot tall puppet as the Spirit of Spy Pond.

Creative writers, Drew Tenholz and MaryAnn Marcinkiewicz, wrote the script; I created original music; Gail directed; story-teller Ellen Robertson played the villain, Slime (the force of eutrophication), in an unforgettably dramatic way; the late, great Enid Caldwell stood behind the puppet and voiced the Spirit of Spy Pond; and a whole host of members and neighbors played roles, including Deb and Peter Bermudes, Christopher Ellinger, and Jeff and Christine Thielman, who are all big hams.

We performed the play at Town Day before the fireworks, during Spy Pond Fun Day, and at many other times over about five years. Audiences small and large, children and adults, discovered that the pond needed their help, learned to not feed the geese and were artistically invited to get involved in FSPP.

*(Continued on page 4)*

When you see the park today, it's hard to imagine how run down it looked in the late 1990s and early 00's: the grass worn to nubbins and covered with goose poop, few plantings, no stone outcroppings, the path worn away.

Back then, those of us in the newly-revived Friends

### Matignon High School's Day of Service

By Greg Salvucci



PHOTO BY GREG SALVUCCI

Matignon High School students volunteered once again to help clean up Spy Pond Park on their Day of Service

On Wednesday, May 30, 14 students and 3 faculty members from Matignon High School visited Spy Pond Park as part of their annual All School Day of Service. The school is located nearby in North Cambridge and counts many Arlington residents as current students and alumni. Throughout the day, nearly 400 members of the Matignon community performed service at 16 different sites across the Greater Boston area.

At Spy Pond Park, the Matignon volunteers were directed by Lally Stowell, FSPP Beautification Committee, to help with several maintenance projects that were concentrated near the Linwood Street section of the park. These projects included watering the two new trees that were recently planted on the hillside, weeding the spaces around cobblestones, clearing weeds and debris from alongside the fence, and clearing leaves and muck that had built up on Linwood Beach.

The students and faculty from Matignon are thrilled to have played a small role in the ongoing care of Spy Pond Park and look forward to visiting and volunteering in the years to come!



PHOTO BY GREG SALVUCCI

There was a lot of natural debris at the water's edge that the Matignon students cleared away

# Goodbye Boys and Girls Club Mural

By Adria Arch, Chair Arlington Public Art

PHOTO BY ADRIA ARCH



The mural on the side of the Arlington Boys and Girls Club will be de-installed the week of June 18, five and a half years after its placement in November of 2012. The mural is digitally printed on vinyl mesh and was designed to be temporary. After five harsh New England winters, the banner is fading and beginning to sag and tear. Although we've enjoyed having it there, it is time to remove it before it descends into worse shape.

Arlington Public Art's very first major project, the Spy Pond mural, was installed in the fall of 2012. The mural features artwork by four Arlington High School students. The images were chosen from a pool of some 90 submissions, and was facilitated by Dave Ardito, head of visual arts at AHS.

Arlington Flag and Banner printed and installed the banner, and the same company will be removing the banner sometime during the week of June 18. There are currently no plans to replace the banner which cost approximately \$8000. All the funds were donated. The banner also inspired me to create APA's annual fundraiser, "Chairful Where You Sit", in order to more rapidly raise the money necessary to pay for it. The exhibit, featuring reinvented "orphan" chairs painted and decorated by creative community members, took place this year during Feast of the East in ArtBeat's windows in Capitol Square, Saturday June 16.

Since the inception of APA in 2010, we have grown by leaps and bounds. The group of volunteers is now a subcommittee of the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture (ACAC), the umbrella organization that seeks to advocate for and leverage funding for the arts in Town.



Jordawn Moses      Joboda Kachi      Lydia Genard      Claire Stevens-Luneau

All four Boys and Girls Club murals with names of Arlington High Schoolers who created the components

# Cub Scout Pack 313 did the Job!

By Lally Stowell, FSPP Beautification Committee

A group of cub scouts and their fathers returned this year for a second time on May 19th to help maintain Spy Pond Park. Organized by Curtis Puncher, a den leader of Cub Scout Pack 313, the group watered two newly-planted trees with 20 buckets of water that they carefully carried from Spy Pond to the trees. They also dug up grass and weeds from spaces between the cobblestones, allowing visitors to see the beautiful stones that line the path through the park. We thank them for their hard work and hope they will return again next year.



PHOTO BY CURTIS PUNCHER

Curtis Puncher, Cub Scout Den #313, and their fathers listened closely to Lally Stowell's instructions about watering the new trees on the Minuteman Trail embankment adjacent to Spy Pond Park.

# Emerald Tree Borer Presentation Notes

By Colin Blair for FSPP

On June 5th Arlington's Tree Committee hosted a presentation by Javin Martin, a representative from the MA Agriculture Department about the threat of an emerald-colored borer to ash trees (the EAB) with about 50 people in attendance.

Some background:

- The EAB is native to Asia, and was first spotted in USA in SE Michigan in July 2002
- Only infects ASH trees, of all varieties, and eventually kills them after dieback
- Likely came in pallets or wood products in the late 90's
- Now found in 33 states, including VT & ME just in the past year
- First seen in MA in the Berkshires in Aug 2012, now in many towns near Arlington, including Waltham this year.



Emerald ash borer

Here is a link to the slides presented at that meeting:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OZRCYYSaUSXBgFPouMeV Np19X3RBbCgl/view?usp=sharing>

Likely, Arlington will see the EAB infect our ash trees very soon. Information on the EABs and what the infestation can look like was shown and is available at [www.emeraldashborer.info](http://www.emeraldashborer.info). Treatment needs be done by an experienced arborist and can take 2-3 years, but many ash trees will probably need to be cut down. Luckily, the Town is in the process of building an inventory of all trees on public land/streets; we can ID all the public ash (about 950 trees, nearly 10% of all on public land). To play with the tree-map, go to <https://arlingtontrees.org/> and on the lower left find a list of OUR OBJECTIVES and click on the last item with the words VIEW MAP. One can search by address, select species (like ASH only), scale in & out—very powerful.

As for Spy Pond Park, the full inventory does show many different trees along the pond's edge. But it only shows 2-3 ash to my aged eyes: one right by the Pond Lane underpass of the bike path, and another at Linwood Circle. So, perhaps the park is not at major risk. But we must remember that only PUBLIC trees are identified here. It could be that many private lands near the park have ash trees. We should all be on the lookout for this insect in Arlington and report any sightings to the DPW's Tree Warden, Tim Lecuivre: [tlecuire@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:tlecuire@town.arlington.ma.us). You can protect against and treat your ash trees with this infestation with injections, if it is noticed early enough.

## President's Letter

Hi Friends,

It's hard to believe it, but it's been 25 years since the Town of Arlington announced plans to upgrade Spy Pond Park and the first idea of creating a Friends group came into the minds of residents nearby. After that, five years later in 1998, the group was incorporated as a nonprofit organization. To mark these milestones in our history, I've asked officers from the past to submit their memories for this newsletter. I think you'll find their stories to be interesting testimony to the dedication of those involved in the evolution of Spy Pond Park.

Yes, summer is here and warmer weather, too. We've gotten off to a good start cleaning up and beautifying Spy Pond Park with volunteers from Boston University alumni, the Cub Scouts, Matignon High School, VolunteerMatch.org and Giveback-time.org. Thanks to Lally Stowell, FSPP Beautification Committee, for organizing the Work Days and a service activity for the fourth grade Hardy School students' field trip into Spy Pond Park. We were happy to see the children enjoying and learning at the six stations led by volunteers. Special appreciation for Stewart Ikeda's idea of holding this event in the park, Cedrine Bell's expertise and the teachers and parents who came to make this a successful event.

On another topic, we have a team in Arlington pursuing the mission of keeping the park looking great. We're grateful that the Department of Public Works has repaired the benches and tables in the park. The Conservation Commission is certain to inform us that the plants and trees in the planting beds help hold the shoreline. The black fence was erected to create a barrier protecting the flora and fauna in the planting beds. We hope that people will stick to the constructed walk-down paths and steps that give access to the water. Walking through the planting beds or climbing the trees disturbs and has damaged the natural growth that is meant to secure the shoreline and fight erosion. We hope park visitors will appreciate and treat with respect equipment that our tax dollars provide for everyone's recreational enjoyment in the beautiful, natural Spy Pond Park environment.

There will be an educational component of the Spy Pond Edge Protection and Erosion Control Project next year that will emphasize the goals of the project and encourage abutters to enact some of the project's principles on their properties. We appreciate input the public offered for the project's Working Group and the contractor's design and look forward to the changes along the Spy Pond Park shoreline in 2019.

Betsy Leondar-Wright, FSPP Activities Chair, has begun planning for this year's Fun Day that will take place on September 22 10am-1pm. Mark your calendars now and we hope to see many of you in the park; let her know if you'd like to come to help us out, too. In the meantime, enjoy the park and please respond to our May solicitation effort. Your financial support and volunteerism is key to making us a viable organization.

Regards,



Karen L. Grossman

President

Friends of Spy Pond Park

## Little-Known History of SPP

*(Continued from page 1)*

Inspired by the play's success, we then pulled together the Spy Pond Chorus. Gail and Betsy wrote and sang show tune parodies - love songs to Spy Pond, comedy songs about park deterioration, songs that pleaded for funding for the renovation. (See below for one funny duet.) Many experienced choir-singers joined in, including Karen Grossman and Lally Stowell.

Each year we would invite Town of Arlington officials (Selectmen, Parks and Recreation Commission members, Conservation Commission members, etc.) for a tour of the park, so they could see its terrible deteriorated state - extreme erosion, broken benches, algae-covered water, etc. And during several years' tours, we performed for them, either the play or a set of songs.

Did these performances help get the park restored? Maybe, maybe not. A sign: one year during the park tour, while we were singing, we saw one town official nudge another and make eye contact, as if to say, "These people are insane on the subject of this park. If they'll go to all this trouble to write and rehearse so many song parodies, clearly, they will never give up until the park is renovated. We'd better bump Spy Pond Park up on the list of funding priorities!" Or so we imagined.

In any case, the performances lifted our spirits, raised public awareness, and pulled us together as a group who shared a purpose and a lot of laughs. And at the 2006 post-renovation celebration, we sang a new parody written for the occasion, the triumphant "They All Laughed." (See next page.)

*Editor's Note: Anne Ellinger and her husband, Christopher, continue their arts passion by running Arlington's dramatic improv group, True Story Theater.*

## A Child Playing in Spy Pond Park: 25 Years of Memories

By Betsy Leondar-Wright, FSPP Past President, Secretary and current Park Activities Chair

Micah Ellinger was an unusual toddler. Anything he saw, he wanted to climb and explore. Now, at 27, he's a professional circus acrobat, so in retrospect it's not surprising how mobile and adventurous he was at ages 2 and 3.

As his mother's best friend, I frequently walked around Linwood Street with him, and it was hard to decide when to stop him and when to let him go. Was it okay for him to climb down into a neighbor's basement window well? To sit astride a picket fence? To push inside a hedge to find the hidey-hole inside? I would apologize to people for trespassing, but most smiled to see this super-curious tiny boy exploring their property.

But in Spy Pond Park back then, we had to rein him in for his own safety. To the left of Linwood Beach, where the beauti-

ful stone steps are now, a barrier made of old railroad ties had rusted metal spikes sticking out into the air. Some of the wood was rotten and would collapse under pressure. This deterioration led to huge splinters, and to holes open to the water, at least twice Micah's height below. This barrier was, of course, irresistible to Micah - something taller than himself with handholds and unusual textures! Trying to keep him away from that very dangerous hazard made me long for one of those child-leashes.

Micah loved to splash in the water, as kids do today. But in the water were rusted metal spikes sticking up, remnants of the old ice-house piers. With no fences to block human foot traffic, the eroded, pitted shoreline collected garbage, including fishing hooks, needles and broken bottles. There were a couple benches and picnic tables, but all had broken sections with sharp splinters sticking out. Other kids could be persuaded to play in the tot lot, but Micah longed to get his hands and feet on everything in the park, and we couldn't let him.

In the late 1990s, Micah's mother, Anne Ellinger, made a vow that before her son turned 18, she would turn the park into a safe place for children to play. She was an experienced community organizer, and she and her husband Christopher already had several successful collaborative projects under their belts. But, at first it seemed that no one else was motivated enough to get the park repaired. The old Friends of Spy Pond Park group, which had gotten the tot lot developed, had become inactive. The first meetings of the new FSPP had only 4 or 5 people including the Ellingers, me and Margie Brown. But with Anne and then Christopher as the first two presidents, the group grew, incorporated, fund-raised and worked with town officials to plan a major park renovation.

When the renovated park opened in 2006, Micah was 15 and skilled at parkour, an acrobatic way of traversing a public space by engaging with everything in the built environment. As I watched him vaulting over decorative boulders, doing flips on the backs of sturdy benches and running along strong stone walls, I remembered the ugly, hazardous park of his toddler years, and I felt heartfelt appreciation for his mother's vow.

## Friends of Spy Pond Park Memories

By Jeff Thielman, FSPP Past President

I joined the Friends of Spy Pond Park in the spring of 2001, shortly after moving to Arlington. I ran for Town Meeting and at the time lived in the precinct that bordered Spy Pond. I met Betsy and Gail Leondar-Wright, helped out with a park clean-up and got to know a great group of people that included Gail, Betsy, Karen Grossman, John Gearin, Enid Caldwell, Rafe Ezekial, Bill Eykamp, and many others. It was a fun group. One of my fondest memories was participating in the Spy Pond Play, and I really enjoyed working with the whole group to get funding from the Town to improve the park, renovated in 2005-2006. The Friends of Spy Pond Park was my first foray into civic life in Arlington, and my wife and I made some great friends by being part of the group.

## Spy Pond Lament

*Original "Adelaide's Lament" from Guys and Dolls, by Frank Loesser  
Parody lyrics by Gail and Betsy Leondar-Wright*

(spoken) It says here:

The average park renovation  
should last at least 20 years  
but due to some heavy usage may react,  
With marked deterioration  
Difficult to endure,  
Affecting the trees, the banks, and the dirt hard-packed

In other words,

Just from waiting around for the Town's million dollar hit,  
A nice park can turn into a pit.  
You can mow it wherever the last of the little grass blades lurk,  
You can try to progress on cleaning the mess  
But it just won't work.  
If erosion is eating the banks up, and making the water murk,  
A nice park can turn into a pit.

(spoken) It says here:

That park deterioration  
with no effort to abate  
Shows a destructive tendency. See Note.

(spoken) Tendency see note?

Oh, "see note!"

Adds to eutrophication  
and the anaerobic state  
Involving the fish, the arsenic, the weeds, and boats.

In other words, just from erosion that's due to feet that will  
sometimes stomp,  
A park can turn a pond to a swamp.  
You can sponsor a clean-up day, keep doing that same old biz,  
But the clean-up will never solve what the actual trouble is.  
If we can't even stop the vandal who thinks all the signs are his,  
A nice park could turn into a pit.

And furthermore,

Just from dogs and geese and thousands of feet that pound,  
A park can turn into hard ground.

When the spring comes to Spy Pond,  
And it's bulb-blooming time,  
The grass is a pale green carpet  
And the view's sublime,  
Then the geese eat all the grass up for the fourteenth time,  
A nice park can turn into a pit,  
A zit,  
A desert of grit,  
All weedy  
And all seedy  
All covered with goose... excrement!  
From a delay in town investment  
and park users that don't ever quit,  
A nice park can turn into a big, bad pit!

## They All Laughed

*Original by Frank Sinatra, parody lyrics by Gail Leondar-Wright  
as sung at the Spy Pond Park re-opening, 2006*

The odds were a hundred to one against us  
The world thought the park was too trashed to save  
But words from town nay-sayers never upset us  
Oh, we were not a bit concerned  
For from history we had learned  
How many, many times the world had turned

[Chorus] They all laughed at Christopher Columbus  
When he said the world was round.  
They all laughed when Edison recorded sound.

They all laughed at Wilbur and his brother  
When they said that man could fly.  
They told Marconi wireless was a phoney.  
It's the same old try.

They laughed at Friends and our dreams  
Said it would take at least ten years  
But see how our team  
Now deserves some great big cheers  
They all said we'd never stop erosion  
They laughed at us and how!  
But ho, ho, ho!  
Who's got the last laugh now?

They all said we'd have to block the shoreline  
Keep us from the water's edge  
They all said we'd have to build a six-foot hedge  
They all said we'd have to pave the green space  
Build a great big parking lot  
Trash Linwood Circle  
That'll make it work. Still,  
We cried "I think not"

They all said we'd never get the money  
They thought we'd just lose the grant  
The all said the selectmen would just say we can't.  
They all said we'd fall right off the budget  
Fail to proceed from the plan  
Lose at Town Meeting  
Funding would be fleeting  
Didn't think we can.

They laughed at Friends' long-term view  
Said we were reaching for the moon  
But oh you came through  
Now they have to change their tune

They all said we'd never have a new park  
Darlings, let's take a bow  
For ho, ho, ho! Who's got a new park  
Hee, hee, hee! This is our true park  
Ha, ha, ha! Who's got a new park now?

## Field Day at Spy Pond Park Excerpt

By Cathie Desjardins, Arlington's Poet Laureate

At the Tree Station, Mr. Ellis is telling fourth-graders that even though most towns in America have an Elm Street and a Chestnut Street, those trees are gone now. These kids may never see them. The kids, joshing and jostling all day, go quiet now.

He points them to a newly-planted Red Oak, preteen slender. At its base, a Tregator, shiny green plastic cone with a sign: *Please fill this bag once a week. The water will drip slowly to my roots. Thanks! I really appreciate it*

*and will return the favor someday.*

Their task, Mr. Ellis says, is to top up the bag with the buckets on the ground and return them in under a minute twenty-five, racing against time. Kids pass the buckets hand to hand, careful

not to slop. Time is running out: they begin humming the Jeopardy theme, tossing buckets back in a flurry. Stop the clock, A minute eight, a new record. They've beaten time and won. For now, so has this slender branching tree.

## Friends of Spy Pond Park Reminiscences

By Eric Anderson, FSPP Founder

Having moved from Washington, D.C. to what was then the Spy Pond apartments in 1971, I knew the "old" Spy Pond Park. There was a very narrow asphalt path by the bushes which ran alongside what was then a railroad. Nobody used it; they walked across the grass. There was a playground with a jungle gym made of metal pipes, and a slide, probably of metal, also. There was a ladder, hung between two posts, for use in rescuing anyone who had fallen through the ice. The current parking lot, bumpy and consisting only of dirt, was a frequent hang-out for motorcyclists, "bikers" who sat on the wall and were noisy sometimes 'til late into the night.

On March 10, 1992, the Town's Park and Recreation Commission called a meeting to announce the "revitalization" of Spy Pond Park between Linwood St. and the Boys and Girls Club. The public was invited, especially those who lived on the east side

of Spy Pond. The proposed plan included "adding fishing areas, a canoe launching area, two new playgrounds, additional picnic facilities, and community gardens." The plan also proposed a parking lot on the grassy area at the foot of Linwood St. and closing Pond Lane at the underpass, creating two dead-end streets.

At the end of the meeting, those interested in volunteering to help with the plan were asked to stay. Three of us did: Len Kuhn and Polly Welch who lived on Avon Place, and I. Subsequently, we formed the Friends of Spy Pond Park with Len as President, Polly, Vice-President, and I, Treasurer.

Two weeks later we sent out a letter to the "east side" neighbors and we were on our way! I don't recall how many meetings were held, but I do remember that Kevin Greeley of the Board of Selectmen, then a resident in building #34 of the Spy Pond Apartments (now Condominium), attended at least one. As a result of the meetings, the neighbors protested the Linwood St. parking lot, did not want community gardens, and requested only one playground in favor of keeping more green space. They all were eliminated from the plan and Pond Lane remains a two-way street.

I could go on as to how impressive the "revitalization" is, but you can see for yourself.

## Current Spy Pond and Park Projects

By Lela Shepherd, Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent

Presentations were made on November 14, 2017 and December 7, 2017 to gain public feedback on the 30% design concept for the Spy Pond Edge Protection and Erosion Control Project. The final design presentation was held on April 11, 2018. In the coming months we will be working on gaining permits for the proposed work and hiring a contractor to start work on the shoreline stabilization improvements, new plantings, and educational signage. The work is scheduled to begin in April of 2019 and to be completed in the Fall of 2019. Improvements made in Spy Pond Park will be timed to avoid peak use months.

Offshoot projects for an ADA-compliant permeable resurfacing of the park trail and for an accessible pier/dock near the Pond Lane boat ramp are currently ongoing and seeking funding. The Department of Planning and Community Development has secured \$94,000 from a Community Development Block Grant and is waiting on the remaining costs to be covered through a Recreational Trails Grant with the MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation. The Pier design is near completion and was funded through the larger project CPA funds. The Arlington/Belmont Crew Team is partnering with the Town to raise funds for construction of the final design.

# Hardy School Visits Spy Pond Park (SPP)

By Karen L. Grossman, FSPP President



PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN

Charlotte Bell and Terry Holt led an engaging lesson with a food web activity regarding Pond area wildlife

Sixty Hardy School 4<sup>th</sup> grade students took a wonderful field trip into Spy Pond Park on June 6, 11:45 am-2:15 pm. There were six stations that each group of 10 students visited. Thanks to the following volunteers who created interactive presentations:

- Charlotte Bell-presentation of the animals native to the area, predators and prey,
- Cedrine Bell, parent and science teacher for home schooled students and event organizer-identification of plants, invasive and native to the area,
- John Ellis, Arlington Tree Committee- watering the new trees on the Minuteman Trail embankment adjacent to SPP,
- Lally Stowell, FSPP Beautification Committee-community service project of removing weeds and grass growing between the cobblestones lining the path through the park,
- Bill Eykamp, scientist, Mystic River Watershed Association water quality monitor and FSPP member- water quality testing techniques, and
- Rachel Oliveri/Annie Sedoc, Department of Public Works-storm water and sewage treatment, courtesy of Charlotte Milan.

Thanks to Stewart Ikeda, Hardy School PTO, for his vision in planning, coordinating, and bringing this event to fruition. We hope the school will incorporate this event in their schedule next year!

We appreciated that a few students wrote handwritten notes to the FSPP relating their memories of the “field trip.”

## Excerpts from Comments

By Anika B., Oscar, Daniel L., Liam Zimmer, and Tahli

Thank you for providing such a fun, amazing and interesting Field Trip for the 4<sup>th</sup> Graders at Hardy. I enjoyed it so much! I wish it had lasted longer. Learning about the environment was a memory I will never forget. My favorite activities were the one with the animals, and the yarn, and, the one with the grass in between the coble stone's. I like we need Lots of Kinds of trees. I also enjoyed the food web and learned a lot. I learned that rat poison can kill hawks because the hawk eats the poisoned rat. I loved learning about all of the cool and interesting facts you prepared. Now I know how to help out at the park and try to keep the world green!

## Spy Pond Canoe, Kayak and Paddle Board Rentals

Go to Arlington Recreation's website to find out about how to enjoy being out on Spy Pond even though you don't own a vehicle for doing so:

[http://arlingtonrec.com/info/activities/program\\_details.aspx?ProgramID=29303](http://arlingtonrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=29303)



The Arlington Recreation Department is pleased to offer boat rentals at Spy Pond for the spring/summer 2018 season.

Hourly rentals are planned for Saturday and Sunday from 12noon to 6:00pm at Spy Pond Park, Pond Lane. **The last rental goes out at 5pm.** The season runs from Saturday, June 16 thru

Sunday, August 19. We offer kayaks, double kayaks, canoes and paddle boards. All participants must wear life jackets (provided).

**2018 Season runs Saturday, June 16 through Sunday, August 19.**

## General Information

- All participants must wear life jackets.
- Rentals are located next to the Spy Pond Park boat ramp.
- Parking is available in the parking lot or on-street on Mass Ave.
- Boat rental rates are \$20/hour for all boats.
- For further information, contact Arlington Recreation at 781-316-3880.
- First come, first serve. Prepay and/or reservations not available.

# Planting Trees Near Spy Pond Park

**Karen L. Grossman comments on a letter from Adrienne Landry**

The idea of planting two trees along the bike path near Spy Pond Park came to Adrienne Landry around two years ago, when an area between the bike path and the park was cleared away. Adrienne thought at that time someone should plant a few native trees there instead of waiting for it to fill up with weeds and invasive plants. Well, it did just that - it filled up with weeds and invasive plants!

After mentioning this to me, I told her the Arlington Tree Committee had some free trees and that she should contact them. I also told her the Hardy School parents wanted an environmental project in which they could take part. So, Adrienne's idea grew into a community project and off it went! It took a while to get it going, but after assuring the Tree Committee they could get enough people to water the trees once a week through the season, they made a plan and the trees were planted. However, there was a glitch, the trees actually cost \$60.00 each. They went ahead and bought the trees anyway.

It was a long shot, but Adrienne thought to ask the Julie O'Connor, Chair of the Calvary Church Missions Committee to help with the purchase of the trees. The Committee agreed to pay for the trees and all the parties involved thank them very much: Friends of Spy Pond Park, the Hardy School PTO, the Arlington Tree Committee and neighborhood activists Adrienne Landry and Johnny Lapham. It was and continues to be a real community effort.

I especially want to thank Adrienne for her vision coordinating this project. Working on her own for years, she has, also, put much energy into eliminating invasive plants that would take over and choke out natural foliage along the stretch of the Minuteman Trail adjacent to Spy Pond Park. As Adrienne continues to stabilize natural growth there, hopefully there will be less invasive growth that spreads into the park's planting beds at the water's edge. We are grateful for Adrienne's time, effort and community service.

## Volunteers Needed to Maintain the SPP Rain Garden!

By Emily Snyder



PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN

**Rachel Oliveri, Arlington's Sustainability Coordinator, and Annie Sedoc, intern, stressed the value of rain gardens for filtration before storm water reaches ponds or rivers**

In 2011 a group of dedicated Arlington environmental activists received a grant to establish a local educational rain garden, defined as "a garden with depressions and plants suited to be wet some of the time." Site consideration led to choosing the location near Spy Pond Park's tot lot. While Arlington is now home to several rain gardens, the one in Spy Pond Park Rain was the Town's first.

Designed by local landscape designer, Sally Naish of Light & Shade Gardening, the garden was planted by volunteers with help from the Town's Dept. of Public Works, and a variety of drought-tolerant plants native to New England were planted. At first the rain garden was maintained by the Arlington Garden Club, and for the last 2 years, it has been tended by FSPP members, as it continues to be a welcome addition to Spy Pond Park.

We're seeking a few more weeders, waterers and planters - would that be you? It's a good way to meet other gardeners, learn more about the importance of native plants in our environment and enjoy being in this beautiful space. Upkeep requires about 1 - 2 hours/month. No previous experience required!

If you are interested in volunteering or learning more, please contact me at [ells.ells@verizon.net](mailto:ells.ells@verizon.net) (and please CC [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org)). We will set a work session for late June, and I will provide an orientation and maintenance history. I look forward to seeing you in the garden.

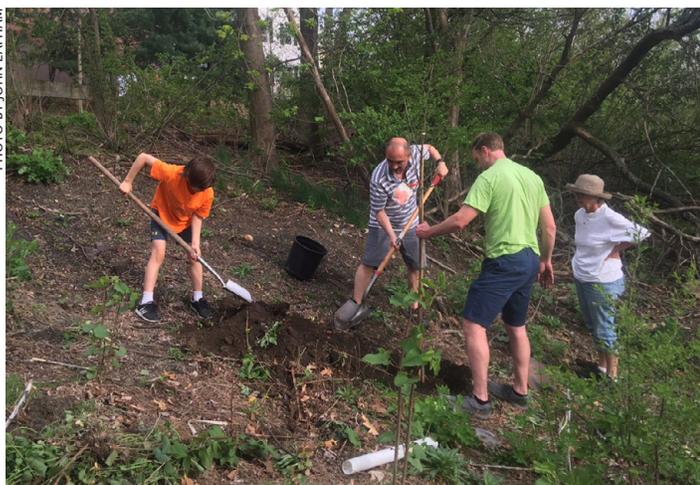


PHOTO BY JOHN LAPHAM

(l-r) Ronan and Stewart Ikeda from the Hardy School, John Ellis, Arlington Tree Committee (holding tree in place), Adrienne Landry observing, Johnny Lapham taking the photo, and Lally Stowell, FSPP Beautification Committee were involved in a community project adjacent to Spy Pond Park financed by the Calvary Church located at the corner of Linwood Street and Mass. Ave.

# Bird Walk in Spy Pond Park

By John Sharp

On Saturday, April 14, it was quite nice sunny weather for our bird walk, only getting colder and overcast later in the day. Four or five people joined me for part or all of the walk, and a list of birds we saw is below. (X indicates I did not record a count). Sorry I did not capture people's names, but I do recall that Kurt Fischer knew birds quite well and was first to point out our best bird, the first of 3 ruby-crowned kinglets that we saw. I captured a few bird photos for your enjoyment.

Spy Pond, Middlesex, Massachusetts, US

Apr 14, 2018 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Protocol: Traveling

0.2 mile(s)

Comments: Walk for Friends of Spy Pond Park. 60F and sunny.

19 species



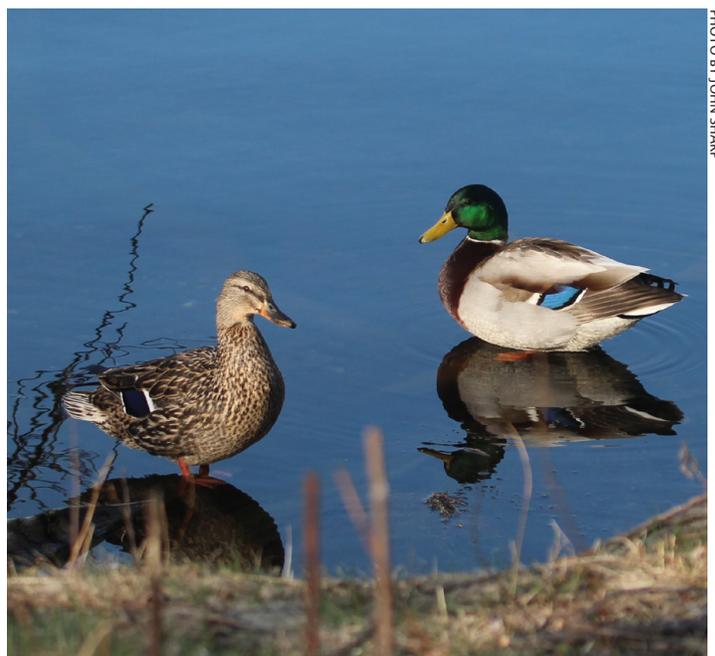
Red-winged blackbird male

PHOTO BY JOHN SHARP



Northern mockingbird

PHOTO BY JOHN SHARP



Mallard male and female

PHOTO BY JOHN SHARP



Common grackle

PHOTO BY JOHN SHARP

- Canada Goose X
- Mallard X
- Bufflehead 2
- Double-crested Cormorant 4
- Red-tailed Hawk 1
- Northern Flicker 3 calling
- Blue Jay X
- Tree Swallow 2
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet 3
- American Robin X
- Northern Mockingbird 2
- European Starling 2
- Savannah Sparrow 3
- Song Sparrow 4
- Northern Cardinal 1 heard
- Red-winged Blackbird X
- Common Grackle X
- American Goldfinch 3
- House Sparrow X

View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44630243>

This report was generated automatically by eBird v3 (<http://ebird.org>)



Double-crested cormorants

PHOTO BY JOHN SHARP

## Friends of Spy Pond Park next meeting

at

**Karen Grossman's  
Sunday, August 12, 2018  
at 7:00 p.m.  
32 Hamilton Road #402**

RSVP (optional) to 781-646-5990  
email [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org)

Park on Linwood Street off Mass. Ave. or on Lakehill off  
Lake St. at the far end of the complex.

## To join Friends of Spy Pond Park...

Send your annual dues (\$15 individual, \$25 household, \$5 low-income) to:  
FSPP, P.O. Box 1051, Arlington, MA 02474-0021  
For more information, call a Friends officer.

President: Karen L. Grossman	(781) 646-5990
General Vice-President: Open	
Treasurer: Joanie Walls	(703) 881-1109
Recording Secretary: Marshall McCloskey	(617) 548-9877
Membership Secretary: Daniel Jalkut	(617) 276-6672
VPs for Communication & Outreach:	
Sally Hempstead	(860) 944-1370
Jamie Ciocco	<a href="mailto:jamcio@gmail.com">jamcio@gmail.com</a>
Outreach Committee:	
Marshall McCloskey	(617) 548-9877
Anne Ellinger	(781) 646-1705
Chair for Publicity: Elaine Crowder	(781) 648-1927
Beautification Committee:	
Bithika Khargbaria	(520) 548-9022
Marshall McCloskey	(617) 548-9877
Gail McCormick	(781) 646-0614
Richard Norcross	(781) 641-2404
Lally Stowell	(781) 777-2759
Beverly Williams	(781) 316-1536
Web Committee:	
Fred Moses	<a href="mailto:fred@fmoses.com">fred@fmoses.com</a>
Chair for Outreach/Park Events:	
Betsy Leonard-Wright	(781) 648-0630
Fundraising Chair: Open	
Photographers and Videographers:	
Fred Moses	<a href="mailto:fred@fmoses.com">fred@fmoses.com</a>
Ram Subramanian	<a href="mailto:ramkumar@gmail.com">ramkumar@gmail.com</a>

Newsletter contributions and general comments can be sent to  
[fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org)

Friends of Spy Pond Park • <http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org> • P.O. Box 1051 • Arlington, MA 02474-0021

## Remaining 2018 FSPP Work and Fun Days

June 23, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. (rain date June 24, 1- 4 p.m.)

July 21, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. (rain date July 22, 1 - 4 p.m.)

Aug. 18, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. (rain date Aug 19, 1- 4 p.m.)

Sept. 29, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. (rain date Sept 30, 1- 4 p.m.)

Oct. 20, 10 a.m. - 1p.m. (rain date Oct 21, 1- 4 p.m.)

Sept. 22, **Fun Day** 10 -1 p.m. (rain date Sept 10 1-4 p.m.)

**Fun Day** involves children's activities in Spy Pond Park; it is not a scheduled work day. Lots of volunteers are still needed to make this festival happen. If you want to help, please email [betsy@classmatters.org](mailto:betsy@classmatters.org) a.s.a.p.

*Liability waivers are required for all volunteers in the Work and Fun Day activities. If you are working, please download the form from the FSPP website, fill it out and bring it with you. Children below 18 years of age must have parental signature to participate in Spy Pond Park activities sponsored by the Friends of Spy Pond Park.*



Bill Eykamp, FSPP's "STEM Guy", provided a hands-on demonstration addressing Spy Pond's water clarity and quality

PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN