Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Summer 2021

It Takes a Village to Plant Shrubs

By Adrienne Landry and Seth Anderson



Seth Anderson and Adrienne Landry paused for a photo while planting three fragrant sumac bushes

During last summer/fall, it took the better part of four months, working 3-5 hours per week, to eradicate a four-foot 'hedge' of invasive tangled bittersweet and multi-flora rose, covered with Japanese honeysuckle vine to reach the bare earth. With a large area of the bed bare, we got permission from the Parks and Recreation Commission to plant three Fragrant Sumac Gro-Low.

On Saturday, May 8th, we cleared out some of the remaining overgrowth from last year, in one of the middle flower beds, and prepared to plant three new Fragrant Sumac Gro-Low shrubs. There was plenty of digging and turning the soil to remove various root systems, much of them from previous bittersweet and other growth. Elliott Davis helped us during much of the morning as we planned the locations, dug, turned the soil, and tilled the new spots.

Fragrant Sumac Gro-Low is a native plant that grows 2-3 feet tall and spreads to 6-8 feet wide. These shrubs allow good visibility of the pond and also promote the use of more native, non-invasive, plants.

On the FSPP Saturday, May 15th Workday, we planted the three shrubs and added compost and mulch to each spot. It was a beautiful warm, sunny morning for doing the work, and we had plenty of help from Linda Clarke. The shrubs were beautifully set and watered by the end of the Workday. Next, we figured out an informal watering schedule to make sure the roots take hold. We hope they thrive!

Gibbs Green Team in Spy Pond Park

By Rachel Oliveri, Arlington Public Schools Sustainability Coordinator

The Gibbs Green Team is a group of sixth graders at the Gibbs School who care deeply about the environment and create climate change presentations for their peers, plant and care for their school garden, and initiate waste reduction projects. One of the team's favorite activities this year was cleaning up litter around Spy Pond Park. They were concerned about all the plastic waste they observed at the water's edge, especially knowing that it would end up in the pond and affect the wildlife living there. The team is glad they had the opportunity to do their part in protecting one of Arlington's most treasured open spaces.

Editor's note: Thanks to Rachel Oliveri and the Gibbs Green Team for their independent effort to keep Spy Pond Park looking beautiful!



Gibbs Green Team used tools to reach and collect litter at the water's edge and throughout Spy Pond Park on a Wednesday in June

Arlington, MA Invasives "ArMI" Army

By Elaine Crowder



Lally Stowell, Beautification Committee, makes her way past volunteers with our cart filled with tools and bags for natural debris and invasive plant removal

I'm collaborating with three other interested Arlingtonians. If we are going to increase native species diversity in town and support our pollinators, we must first reduce the burgeoning growth of invasive species: garlic mustard, blackswallowwort, oriental bittersweet, and Japanese knotweed being the prime non-tree offenders in Arlington now.

This tool supports multiple levels of involvement from simply observing/sharing/dealing with one's own back yard to helping to remove invasive growth in the parks and public spaces.

Please do sign up with iNaturalist and join this tracking project. Any picture you take of invasive growth in Arlington will automatically be added:

https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/arlington-ma-invasives-armi-army

Project Description: Ever feel demoralized by all those invasive plants, like you can't possibly make a dent? Join the ArMI and feel part of a group of like-minded people! This project is intended to help identify invasive species in Arlington's parks & open spaces, and to coordinate efforts to combat them. Help at

any level: your own backyard, block, neighborhood, or in nearby parks and conservation areas. Simply snap a pic & ID, or go the next step and snap and remove, with before and after shots. Remember, removed invasive plants must be black-plastic bagged and put with garbage for incineration, not composted. Get "Invasive Weeds" stickers at the Arlington DPW.

The list of local targets was created using the Mass. Audubon website: https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/nature-wild-life/invasive-plants?gclid=Cj0KCQjwzYGGBhCTARIsAHdMTQxIPNK-EUbKuRWWnBSGc0QC_RxpX1B-1O1eiaIzDkE-AEiJLnQOXpHsaAkq0EALw_wcB

NOTE: This list does not include every MA invasive species. If you spot a MA invasive not on this Arlington-specific list, please contact the admins to recommend adding it. The icon map is from https://www.mapsonline.net/arlingtonma/openspace.html

Getting started with iNaturalist

The iNaturalist tool records and maps the location of invasive species for removal. It helps you learn what invasive plants look like too.

- iNaturalist is a wildlife observation website with a strong community
- It has apps on Android and iOS for you to record observations
- The app identifies birds, animals, flowers, trees, INVASIVES! and more

Here is info on how to get the mobile app and view/manage your account on the iNaturalist website. The mobile app is best for making, identifying, and uploading observations. You can access via the web on your computer too, which lets you send messages to others who are observing in Arlington and add more things to your observations.

Make an account two ways:

Get the iNaturalist Mobile App: iNaturalist is available as a free download on the App Store and Google Play

- iPhone Go to App Store on your phone or https://apps.apple.com/us/app/inaturalist/id421397028
- Android https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org. inaturalist.android

Sign up via the web: Go to www.inaturalist.org and make an account

There's even a way to sign kids up: https://www.inaturalist.org/user_parents/new

Descriptive article:

iNaturalist Is the App Every Wildlife Observer Needs https://gadgets.ndtv.com/culture/reviews/inaturalist-app-review-1847204

Getting Started: https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started

FSPP 2021 Volunteer Job Opportunities

We hope you'll consider helping the Friends of Spy Pond Park by assuming one of these positions available to you. We'll offer supportive guidance to take up and complete the rewarding tasks required for each position. We require a commitment of at least one year. You'll be providing service to the 136 current FSPP contributors and the hundreds of visitors to our park each year. We need immediate assistance, so please spread the word to those you know that we're looking for two people to fill these roles and join our friendly, supportive community. Interested parties, please contact fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org or call Karen L. Grossman, FSPP President, at 781-646-5990 at your earliest convenience.

Communications and Outreach Co-Chair

 Attend Town events and festivals, collect Liability Waivers and sign in people on Workdays, whenever possible, distribute information at the FSPP booth to familiarize citizens with the Friends of Spy Pond Park and Spy Pond, discuss their needs and benefits with passers-by, sell t-shirts, distribute Spy and Spy Pond stickers and brochures and accept memberships.

- Assist in designing a FSPP display board for use at the above events and arrange for display at the Robbins Library.
- Solicit articles for the newsletters from knowledgeable and willing friends and neighbors of Spy Pond Park approximately three weeks before the deadline announced at a prior FSPP meeting, send collected information to the President for editing, and distribute and maintain a supply of newsletters at the Arlington libraries.

In addition, since the previous Newsletter, we are also seeking to fill the position of:

Recording Secretary

- Take the minutes at Board Meetings and Annual Meeting using the agenda as a guide and forward them to the President as a Word document a.s.a.p. after the meetings,
- Manage non-profit mailing status and facilitate actual solicitation mailings for the Treasurer.

Editor's note: Many thanks to Sally Hempstead and Marshall McCloskey for serving in the above positions for so many years. We will be eternally grateful for their friendship and service to the Friends of Spy Pond Park in so many ways.

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Summer is here and, happily, we are preparing for a glorious summer with Fun Day occurring as it has in the past on September 25! We've sponsored some great Workdays in Spy Pond Park with many high school volunteers participating for community service credits, joining regular members of the Friends of Spy Pond Park. Thanks to guidance from the Beautification Team and others. So many park visitors have appreciated the results of their hard work! Perhaps, you'll even join us to help on one or more of the remaining Workdays. On a Wednesday in July, some of the FSPP will be joining a worker for the contractor for the Town, Parterre, to observe and participate in some maintenance of the new plantings along the shoreline.

Thanks to those who have sent in contributions, responding to our annual solicitation efforts via snail mail and online. If you haven't sent us your dues/donations to date, I hope this serves as a reminder for you to do so, if possible, to support what we do. We appreciate whatever you can do to help enhance the beauty of Spy Pond Park and Spy Pond in Arlington.

Warm regards to all,

Karen L. Grossman

President

Friends of Spy Pond Park

Memories and Thanks to Uta Marion Low and "DP," Doris Powell

By Karen L. Grossman

It is with a heavy heart that I report on the passing of two FSPP members who we were fortunate enough to grace our ranks. The first member, Uta Marion Low, penned an interesting article for the FSPP Fall 2011 Newsletter that detailed her love of nature: https://friendsofspypondpark.org/NewsLetters/FSPP_newsletter_fall_11.pdf.

If you read it, you will discover her storytelling ability and varied background described in beautiful prose. What she left out was her frequent joy in swimming from her Spy Pond Condominium to Elizabeth Island! Uta would attend FSPP meetings and sit with me doing outreach under the canopy during some of our Workdays, adding her enthusiasm for the park's beautification.

The second, "DP" (Doris) Powell, lived on Pleasant Street, Arlington across from Eva Balazs and shared the life depicted in Eva's *Spy Pond Stories*. Later in DP's life, she moved to Palmer Street, closer to the Spy Pond Park entrance on Pond Lane. She walked to the park from her home to participate in our Workdays pulling invasive plants, planting new ones and admiring our progress. Her cheerful optimism and input as a long-time Arlington resident were always a welcome addition to our regular meetings. Uta and DP's many friends and family will miss them both with sincere fondness, but we will smile with thanks for the wonderful memories of the parts of their long lives with us that remain.

Spy Pond Through the Centuries: Episode 2

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

What was happening around Spy Pond in the 1700s?

Before the Revolutionary War started, the colonist militias practiced near Spy Pond.

On April 19, 1775, when the Redcoats were retreating from Lexington and Concord, six of them threw their muskets into Spy Pond and surrendered to old Mother Batherick as she gathered dandelions to brew into a drink.

Her granddaughter recalled being bundled into a cart with other local children very early that fateful morning and wheeled down to the shore of Spy Pond, where they were safely hidden, but they could watch the British soldiers march on the road. When they returned home that night, their house had been sacked by the Redcoats.

2021 FSPP Work & Fun Days

By Lally Stowell, Beautification Committee

The FSPP monthly Saturday Work Days will continue through October. We encourage all who enjoy Spy Pond Park to come and join our efforts to maintain and preserve this unique spot for the many families and visitors who come from all over throughout the year. We need your help pulling weeds and invasive plants, removing fallen branches, clearing the beaches and playground, and picking up trash. Our Work Days are scheduled for two hours, but any amount of time is greatly appreciated. A lot can be accomplished, even in a short amount of time. This is an opportunity to meet and work side by side with others who love the park and enjoy helping to keep it looking beautiful. It is also an opportunity to learn more about native and invasive plants.

For each monthly Work Day, members of the Beautification Committee will be available to assign tasks, work together with volunteers, answer questions and welcome suggestions. All workers must sign a waiver form (parents must sign for under-18s). We have a limited supply of tools so If you have rakes, gloves and/or clippers, they would be greatly appreciated. Please bring water, too.

Below is a list of Work and Fun Days for 2021. They will be held on the Saturday mornings listed below. The hours in Sept. and Oct. are 9-11 a.m.; in July and August 8-10 a.m. We encourage you to come as often as possible for whatever length of time you can give. We also hope you will encourage your friends, family, members of your community groups and colleagues at work to participate. High school students can earn community service credits. We look forward to having many eager volunteers work with us this year. For more information, contact Lally Stowell; lallystow@icloud.com.

2021 Work Day Schedule

July 10, 8-10 a.m. (rain date July 11, 1-3 p.m.)

Aug. 14, 8-10 a.m. (rain date Aug. 15, 1-3 p.m.)

Sept. 11, 9-11 a.m. (rain date Sept.12, 1-3 p.m.)

Oct. 16, 9-11 a.m. (rain date Oct. 17, 1-3 p.m.)

Sept 25 Fun Day 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (rain date Sept 26 1-4 p.m.) Fun Day involves children's activities in Spy Pond Park; It is not a scheduled Work Day

Liability waivers are required for all participants in the above Work Days. If you are volunteering to work please let us know via the email on our website, download the waiver form from the FSPP website, clearly fill it out completely, sign it (parental signature for under 18 yrs.), send a scan or photo of it to the volunteer email link on the FSPP website: fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org by 6 p.m. the Friday before the scheduled Work Day.



On July 12 Belmont High School volunteers joined in to groom the cobblestones at the SPP path juncture with the walk-down steps to the pond



FSPP members William Stalcup and Julie McBride work with Adrienne Landry to eliminate invasive plants from the upper planting beds

Fun Day in Spy Pond Park September 25 10 am-1pm (Rain date Sunday 9/26 1-4)

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

If there's one thing more wonderful than summer in the park, it's *children* in the summer in the park!

Would you like to help with kids' activities on FSPP's annual Fun Day, September 25, 10-1? (Rain date 9/26 1-4)

Do you like to...

- Paint faces?
- · Help kids do nature crafts or science experiments?
- Send families off on scavenger hunts?
- Give out prizes?
- Keep tiny toddlers company as they color nature scenes?
- Take photographs of people having fun?

If so, please get in touch with Fun Day coordinator Betsy Leondar-Wright, betsy@classmatters.org, 781-648-0630.

We also need set-up and clean-up volunteers, and publicity people to spread the word about Fun Day to networks of parents and kids.

If you're a member of a band that plays family-friendly music, we'd love to have you play.

Hope to hear from you, and to enjoy Fun Day with you!



Rabbit and turtle before they began their race one morning in Spy Pond Park. Who's going to win this time? Will the rabbit learn the lesson from the past that slow and steady wins the race?

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings

Sunday, July 11, 2021 7:00 p.m. on Zoom

Sunday, Sept. 12, 2021 7:00 p.m. Location TBA

RSVP (optional) to 781-646-5990 email fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

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: Open

Recording Secretary: Open
Membership Secretary: Daniel Jalkut

VP. 6 Communication (617) 276-6672

VPs for Communication & Outreach:

Jamie Ciocco jamcio@gmail.com

Open
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(781) 646-1705
(774) 253-6325

Publicity Committee: Open
Beautification Committee:

Adrienne Landry (339) 368-0315
Lally Stowell (781) 777-2759
Web Developer: Julie McBride julmcbride@gmail.com
Chair for Outreach/Park Events:

Betsy Leondar-Wright (781) 648-0630
Fundraising Chair: Open

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Ram Subramanian ramkumar@gmail.com

Photographer's Assistant: Open Post-processing: Mark Sandman

Newsletter contributions and general comments can be sent to fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

Friends of Spy Pond Park

http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org

P.O. Box 1051

Arlington, MA 02474-0021



Volunteers on our May Workday cleaned up and groomed Spy Pond Park



Park beautification is the goal of all volunteers who come to help on our Workdays