

# Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

## Fall/Winter 2021

### Fun Day Celebrates Natural Environment of Spy Pond

By Betsy Leondar-Wright (originally published October 7 in the Arlington Advocate)

More than 450 children and adults gathered in Spy Pond Park on Saturday, September 25, for the 19th Annual Fun Day hosted by the Friends of Spy Pond Park.

PHOTO BY SHOKO KUBO



Koki Kubo watched as his hardy bark boat floated in the gentle breeze off North Beach in Spy Pond Park onto Spy Pond towards Elizabeth Island on Fun Day

With help from forty volunteers, participants made birch-bark boats and launched them in the pond, made leaf-print cards, made dragonfly and butterfly twirlies, caught bugs, looked at live turtles, got their faces or arms painted, won nature-themed prizes for completing puzzles and scavenger hunts about caring for the park and pond, dressed up as eagles and fed each other fish in a “nest” (a kiddie pool), and made origami fish. Toddlers colored, looked for leaves and chased bubbles. And adults learned more about the Friends of Spy Pond Park and the Arlington Land Trust. Additional photos are on the last page of this newsletter.

Four bands entertained the festivalgoers with lively music: Coffee to Cocktails, Aunt Mimi, the Mystic Brass Ensemble Players, and the Lokensgard Blechbaser Ensemble Brass Band. As the weather was warm and sunny, many people stayed in the park listening to the music long after participating in the nature activities.

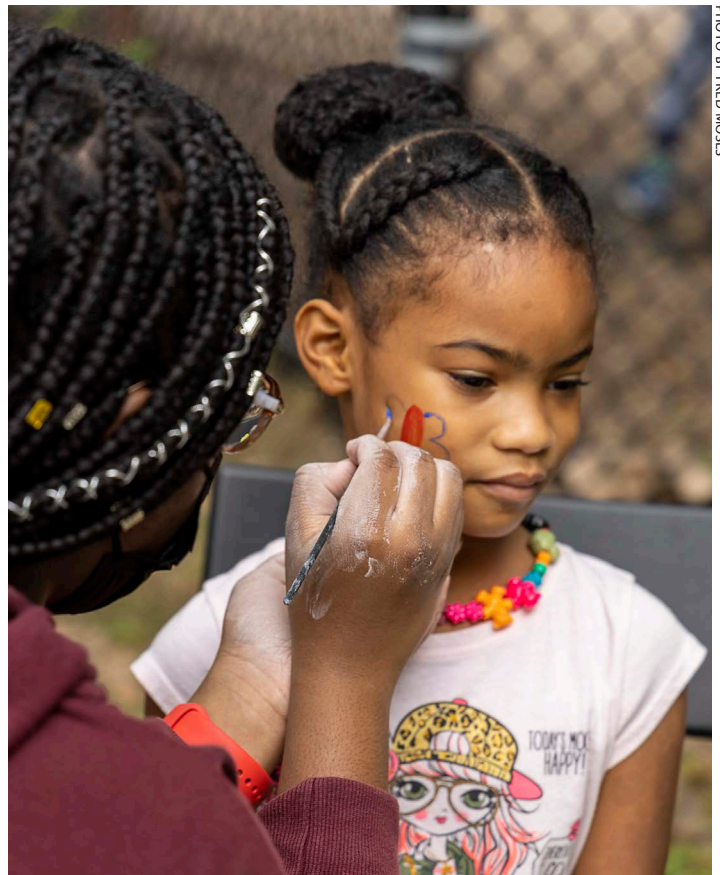
The Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP) has organized Fun Day in the park every year since 2001, except for 2020.



Jenny Babon (l), FSPP volunteer, guided many children through the myriad of activities from which to choose

FSPP, a membership organization with more than 139 households, also sponsors monthly Workdays in Spy Pond Park April-October. More information is available on the website, [friendsofspypondpark.org](http://friendsofspypondpark.org), or by emailing FSPP president Karen Grossman at [fssp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fssp@friendsofspypondpark.org).

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES



Shanna Hazel sat still while high school volunteer, Jenny Venant, fashioned a butterfly on her cheek



# Remembering Two More Friends of Spy Pond Park

By Karen L. Grossman, President, FSPP



Eva Balazs (1 on keyboard) and the New, New Orleans Jazz Band entertained park visitors, Fall 2010

In the summer issue, I mentioned two women who were near and dear to the Friends of Spy Pond Park, “dp” Doris Powell and Uta Marion Low. This month I’m writing about two more who have passed away. The first is the accomplished Eva Balazs, the well-known, admired author of *Spy Pond Stories*, often quoted in past newsletters by our VP of Communications and Outreach at the time, Eric Berger. Not only did Eva share her wonderful, historic stories of Spy Pond and family life in her books, but she blessed us with her talents at the keyboard with her New, New Orleans Jazz Band at Numerous Fun Days in SPP. Arlington residents also may remember Eva who, as a psychiatrist, demonstrated her knowledge and listening skills in groups she led at the Arlington Senior Center, talking with interested parties who shared the ups and downs of growing older. Eva moved to live near her daughter, Marianne, in Maryland in recent years and passed away a couple of years ago.

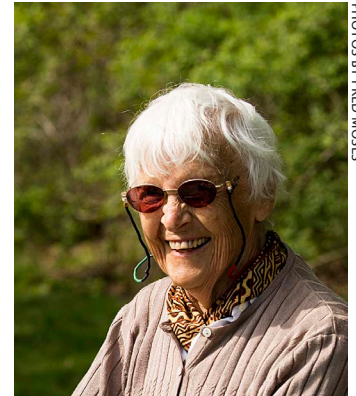
The second, a remarkable woman, of whose passing I became aware this week, is our beloved Elizabeth Karpati, a longtime Arlington resident, an immigrant from Hungary, as was Eva Balazs. Elizabeth also had moved from Arlington to live near her sister, and was celebrated by the Town then for her dedicated involvement with the environment. She was a member of many town-wide efforts: Vision 2020 and the Reservoir Committee, as well as in the Friends of Spy Pond Park as Recording Secretary, on the Beautification Committee. She authored 21 beautiful, detailed articles for our newsletter about the natural flora and fauna of the area, along with invasive species. The FSPP awarded her with our Good Citizen’s award and Citation in March 2016 before she left the area.

We will fondly remember both of the above remarkable, generous, intelligent women and feel fortunate they shared their wonderful spirit of life with us, as they spent most of their lives in Arlington.

*Editor’s note: Please see the flyer for the celebration of the lives of Eva Balazs and “dp” that you may be interested in attending on October 23.*



Elizabeth Karpati



“dp” Doris Powell

## Join us to celebrate the remarkable lives of Eva and dp



Eva K. Balazs

November 16, 1922–March 27, 2019

dp Powell (aka Doris)

March 19, 1924–March 24, 2020

**Saturday, October 23, 2021**

**2:00 pm New New Orleans Jazz Band**

**2:15 pm Memorial**

Everyone is requested to wear a mask

First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church  
630 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA

Please spread the word among your Arlington and Spy Pond friends and neighbors.  
All are welcome.

RSVP to [mermaidpamela44@gmail.com](mailto:mermaidpamela44@gmail.com) or [mariannebalazs@yahoo.com](mailto:mariannebalazs@yahoo.com)  
Pamela Powell: 781-646-6708 Marianne Balazs: 201-965-7302

# Volunteer Opportunities

## Bulk Mailing Coordinator:

Manage nonprofit mailing status, payment of fees, and organize and facilitate dues/donation solicitation mailings in May and November.

## Recording Secretary:

Take the minutes at Board Meetings and Annual Meeting using the agenda and Zoom recording as a guide and forward them to the President as a Word document a.s.a.p. after the meetings.

**Publicity Committee:** Post on Twitter and Instagram.

## President's Letter

Dear Friends,

As the trees begin to change color around Spy Pond Park (SPP), I look back with pleasure on all that has transpired since I wrote to you over the summer. Our Workdays have been so productive in eliminating invasive plants due to the record numbers of volunteers who have stepped up to help regular Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP) members. A special thank you goes out, also, to Lally Stowell and Adrienne Landry who have guided and trained the students, adults, and children to carry out the necessary jobs in and around the park, the planting beds, and the playground area. Please view all the great additions Julie McBride has posted on the FSPP website photo gallery: <https://friendsofspypondpark.org/album/2020%20Park%20Photos/index.html>

We are in communication with Joe Connelly and the Park and Recreation Commissioners regarding various needs and concerns for SPP. We would like to maintain Parterre's involvement. (They are the helpful and knowledgeable consultant who installed new plants, mostly on the lower part of the planting beds, for the Conservation Commission's Edge Protection and Erosion Control Project). FSPP has gotten approval for additional work. We want to curb erosion and replace native plants on the upper side of the planting beds, too, where we have removed invasive plants. Finally, we want to replace the temporary fencing that protected the planting beds and other areas during the project. Care and financial investment are necessary to maintain the shoreline. That will benefit the long-term interests of Arlington residents and park visitors.

As many of you happily experienced, Fun Day 2021 surpassed expectations in terms of number of attendees and activities. We are grateful to the many people who became FSPP members, businesses who donated prizes and materials, and those who gave their time to and energy to entertain the children and parents for three hours. Most of all, Betsy Leondar-Wright deserves our accolades for providing a great service once again to the Town of Arlington and beyond, by coordinating this wonderful event. I venture to say, a good time was had by all!

I welcome some new additions to the Friends of Spy Pond Park officers and committees who all responded to our outreach to volunteermatch.org. Sarah Zadova has assumed the role of Treasurer taking care of finances, Lauren Bonilla is our new VP for Communications and Outreach with help from new committee member Susan Corey, and Rita Yun who transcribed FSPP meeting minutes as our Recording Secretary, but gave me her resignation recently due to her demanding schedule. You can read more about them in their biosketches on our website: <https://friendsofspypondpark.org/officers.html>. Thanks to them all for devoting their time and energy to the FSPP. Please consider filling our open positions, joining Susan Corey on the Communications and Outreach Committee as our Mailing Coordinator, becoming our Recording Secretary, or joining our Publicity Committee.

Please join me in celebrating the lives of Eva Balazs and dp Powell about whom I wrote on page 4 of our Summer Newsletter: [https://friendsofspypondpark.org/NewsLetters/FSPP\\_newsletter\\_Summer\\_2021.pdf](https://friendsofspypondpark.org/NewsLetters/FSPP_newsletter_Summer_2021.pdf) by responding to one of the links on the flyer included in this newsletter.

Please watch for our end of year solicitation that should be reaching you in November with an announcement of our Annual Meeting, details TBD.

Best wishes,



Karen L. Grossman

President

Friends of Spy Pond Park



# Thank you Volunteers!

By Lally Stowell, Beautification Committee Coordinator

A huge thank you to all who volunteered during our monthly Saturday Workdays this past spring, summer and fall. Spy Pond Park would not be the beautiful, welcoming place it is without your many hours of work, enthusiasm, and commitment to the community. Some of you participated on your own, some with family and friends, and some with a group from your school, community, or workplace. Some of you have come many times each season. Some of you came for the first time and will, we hope, return next season. Together, you removed invasive plants, collected trash and recyclables, cleared storm drains, raked the playground, dug trenches, and removed tall grasses from the front and back of the fences bordering the planting beds. You cleared weeds and grasses from between the beautiful cobblestones that line the main path. You removed fallen branches, cleaned Linwood Beach, and trimmed the hedges at Linwood Circle so that visitors always have a clear view of our spectacular Pond. Many of you contributed in your own ways by offering valuable advice and suggestions, collecting trash as you walk through the park, encouraging other individuals and organizations to participate, becoming members, and renewing your memberships that make it possible for us to purchase new tools and supplies. All of your contributions, we appreciate greatly.

We would like to give special thanks to the groups who worked so diligently with us this season, several of whom have participated for many years. Arlington High School's Do Something Club worked hard digging trenches and weeding between the cobblestones. People Making a Difference® did a great job trimming the hedges at Linwood Circle, as they have done so well for several years. Zhen Ren Chuan's martial arts group energetically trimmed or dug out invasive plants and bushes. Their valuable work helped us prepare for planting new native plants. We welcomed Arlington High School's Honor Society volunteers who enthusiastically continued with these many important tasks on our last Workday.

Again, many thanks to all of you who participated in our Workdays. We hope you will continue to visit Spy Pond Park over the winter months and return to help us nurture spring plants and flowers during our monthly Workdays next year April through October.

## A Summary of Work Done in the Planting Beds at Spy Pond Park in 2021

By Adrienne Landry, Beautification Committee

This year's Beautification Team consists of Lally Stowell (Coordinator), Sharon Green, Adrienne Landry and Julie McBride with specialized help from Lisa Reynolds, Seth Anderson, Bill Stalcup and Linda Clark.

Workdays consist of Committee members and volunteers who sign up through various on-line sources organized by Karen L. Grossman. Each month, Lally and Committee members meet on the Wednesday prior to the Workday to decide on what projects are to be done. We write up notes, including what is to be done in each bed, how many people are needed and what tools they will need.

There are ongoing tasks such as weeding between the cobblestones, digging a trench along the fence to keep the grasses from growing into the beds, and trimming some of the larger plants so people can see the Pond.

Because of the new plantings in the shoreline last year, we were not allowed to enter the beds, except one that was terribly overrun with invasive plants. By the Fall, we cleared much of that bed down to the ground. Then, in the Spring of 2020, we planted three native shrubs, Fragrant Sumac Gro-low, in the newly cleared area.

For the most part, we have focused on eradicating invasive plants, separating debris from good plants for compost and debris from the invasive plants for incineration. And—most importantly—replacing the invasive plants with native plants. Another goal is transplanting some of the more prolific native plants to areas needing them.

PHOTO BY SANDRA ORELL



Charles DeVirgilio and students from Zhen Ren Chuan Martial Arts worked hard to dig up the deep roots from within the walled-in area to the right of the boat ramp to make way for native plants



It is certain that if there is open soil, invasive plants will find their way in. A productive cycle of eradication, preparing the ground for planting, and planting new plants is evolving. Our last Workday in October will see us planting 7 yarrow and one wintergreen red sprite, bringing the total new native plants to 11. Because of all the work done on the September Workday, the beds are ready for planting.

We will continue the eradication/planting cycle over the next few years.

The volunteers have worked very hard this year. Although too many to mention here, we are grateful to each of them. Here is a photo of Phillip McLaine, who along with his son, Oslin, finished clearing off the square planting plot at the bottom of the Boat ramp. It was roughly 30% cleared when he took over. Look at the result!!

PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE LANDRY



**Day 1: 100% full of invasive plants**



**Day 2: about 30% cleared**



**Day 3: completely cleared away by Philip and Oslin McLaine**

## Volunteering in Spy Pond Park

By Karen Yoda

This summer, my family and I went to Spy Pond Park to clean it up. Spy Pond Park is a place that is important to us because both my sisters and I grew up playing on the structures and watching the swans that came by. It was our favorite place through preschool and elementary years. We still visit the park to go on walks and admire the scenery. As a kid, I didn't know about the work that was put into making the park as beautiful as it is.

At the park, all five of us were assigned jobs by the supervisor. My job was to sort through the piles of invasive plants the others had pulled out. I looked through each plant making sure there were no roots or seeds before putting it in the compost. The roots and seeds were put in trash bags because they could grow into new plants in the compost. I had help from other volunteers who taught me how to find the seeds. I learned the importance of pulling out the invasive species while keeping enough native plants. That ensures that the landscape isn't bare and keeps the soil from eroding and falling into the water. The experience was fun and rewarding; I learned new skills and felt accomplished. You, too, might consider participating in the Friends of Spy Pond Park's remaining October Workday or joining us next year.

## Working in Spy Pond Park is Often a Family Affair

By Jenny Babon



PHOTO BY JENNY BABON

**Amo and Yoda families enjoyed an ice cream treat courtesy of Zhen Ren Chuan Martial Arts**

Long-time volunteer and past FSPP Co-Chair of Beautification, Doris Birmingham, has done many Spy Pond Park Workdays through the years. On our July Workday she worked together with her grandson, Sam Jellineck to improve the visibility of the park nameplate at Linwood Circle by clearing invasive weeds and trimming the bushes. Neighbors Amo and Yoda families are also work day regulars. Four-year old Kai Amo, his sister, Hana, and their friend, Hana Yoda, collected trash on the North Beach and the adjacent tot lot. Kanon Yoda, worked alongside her classmates from Ottoson Middle School, sisters Sophia and Celia Sullivan. First time volunteers Evelyn Tawney and Zoe Shen from Belmont Chenery Middle School came with their parents and were tasked to clear out the weeds between the cobblestones that line the park path. "It's our first time to volunteer and we love it," remarked Evelyn.



PHOTO BY JENNY BABON

**Evelyn Tawney and Zoe Shen clearing out the weeds between the cobblestones that line the park path**



# The case for less poison...

By Elaine Crowder - Sept. 20, 2021

First there were 2 happy eaglets viewed on July 4:  
<https://inaturalist-open-data.s3.amazonaws.com/photos/142396702/large.jpeg?1625939812>

Then there was one photographed on August 15:  
<https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/92567095>

If Arlingtonians need a reason not to use rat poison, look no further than the cemetery. Mated eagles up-scaled a hawk's nest atop the tallest pine around, laid two eggs, **fed two hatchlings**, and raised them to fledglings ... when they fly and hunt. Come July, one began staggering. By late-July it was dead. Tufts Wildlife Clinic determined the cause: second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs).

MA-endangered **bald eagles** are beginning to nest in Arlington again. But we are not offering a home safe from the dangers of secondary poisoning.

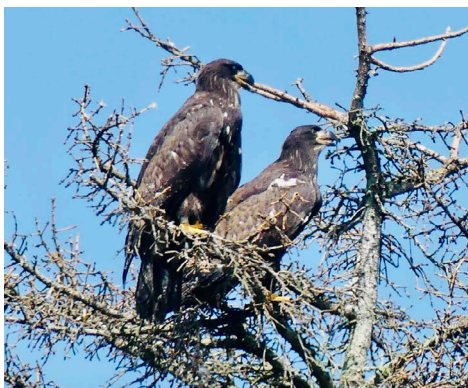
How did poison lace our eaglets' meals? Although fish are the mainstay, eagles do grab small mammals. Poisoning our rodents poisons all that eat them.

Importantly, Jim Feeney, Deputy Town Manager, confirms that Arlington applies no rodenticides at the cemetery itself. So it's on us, the good folk of Arlington in the homes and businesses surrounding the cemetery and throughout town where eagles hunt..

SGARs deliver more toxicity with one feeding than first generation poisons (Warfarin) and remain in rodents longer, making them more toxic to predators.

There are **alternatives** to poisoned bait for rodent control. Plugging entry holes in buildings and removing daily access to food are key. Rats live near sources of daily meals.

- Secure waste and stored food in gnaw-proof cans
- Wait until trash day to throw food waste in dumpsters



Two eaglets in their nest at Mt. Auburn Cemetery

- Don't throw food in backyard compost; instead use secure town bins or curbside services
- Stop feeding birds
- Use **non-poisonous control** e.g., snap traps, rat birth control, dry ice in burrows



Audrey, Anupan, and Eliza cut out and colored in their eagle's wings for their costumes, preparing to act out the story about the eaglets at Spy Pond Park Fun Day

If secondary poisoning concerns you, please contact the Select Board and ask your town meeting members to support upcoming Warrant Articles aimed at reducing rodenticide use in Arlington (sponsored by TMM Elaine Crowder, Pct. 19).

Let's not go from "one" to "NONE."

Write to: All Select Board members (<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/town-governance/boards-and-committees/select-board> ; Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager ([achapdelaine@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:achapdelaine@town.arlington.ma.us)); Natasha Waden, Director of Public Health ([NWaden@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:NWaden@town.arlington.ma.us)); James Feeney, Deputy Manager ([jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:jfeeney@town.arlington.ma.us))

Link1: *Arlington's sibling eaglets*, July 4, 2021, iNaturalist observation #86439148, Photo Credit: rebpearl <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/86439148>

Link 2: *Surviving eaglet*, August 15, 2021, iNaturalist observation #92567095, Photo Credit: Liz Shields <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/92567095>

Link 3: *Bald Eagle parent carrying fish to nest at cemetery*, Arlington, Aug 15, 2021, iNaturalist observation # 92566893, Photo Credit: Liz Shields <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/92566893>

Link 4: *Eagles in the Mystic River Watershed*, Jan. 18. 2020. Mystic River Watershed Association website (MyWRA) <https://mysticriver.org/news/2020/1/16/eagles-in-the-mystic-lakesbl-maid25543-2>

Link 5: Poster: *Got Rats? Tips to prevent them without poison*, Raptors are the Solution website: [https://www.raptorsarethesolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RodentControlPoster\\_GotRats\\_HomePrint.jpg](https://www.raptorsarethesolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RodentControlPoster_GotRats_HomePrint.jpg)

Link 6: What to do about rats (non-poisonous control solutions), Raptors are the Solution website: <https://www.raptorsarethesolution.org/preferred-pest-control-products/>

# Legislation vs. Rodenticides

By Laura Kiesel

I am part of the statewide coalition working to get legislation passed by Rep Hawkins that would rein in the use of anti-coagulant rodenticides.

These rodenticides are responsible for the death of local wildlife species, particularly birds of prey. More recently AR poisons were found to be responsible for the death of a Bald Eagle in Waltham who was related to the Bald Eagles nesting in Arlington Center; Ruby the Red-Tailed Hawk of Fresh Pond fame also succumbed to rodent poisons. These poisons have also killed local cats and endanger other household pets and young children. For more information on this issue, you can read these pieces I wrote in the Boston DIG and Boston Globe:

<https://digboston.com/special-feature-more-potent-than-rodents/>

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/04/23/metro/should-massachusetts-ban-use-poison-rodent-control/>

To be clear though, this legislation isn't a ban, but it requires pesticide companies to inform homeowners and landlords about the threats of these poisons to non-target species and exercise/exhaust non-poison options first. This is important because many times people are misled purposefully about poisons. Here in HCA housing, I had the exterminators telling my landlords the poisons were perfectly safe and would have no impact on wildlife or pets--which is a blatant lie.

One thing we can do to get this legislation traction is to get more state reps and senators to sign onto this as a co-sponsor.

Sean Garballey is already signed on as a co-sponsor (and he re-filed another bill I helped write that also addresses this issue). But it would help to have others on here as well, so please consider emailing Dave Rogers & Cindy Friedman to ask them to co-sponsor.

If you, or others you know, live in other parts of MA, you or they should contact your legislators to make this ask. I am including the link to the legislation, with the updated list of co-sponsors so far in the comments section, as well as Rogers' and Friedmans' contact info:

Here is the legislation:

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/HD4206>

Here is Dave Rogers' contact info:

<https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/DMR1>

And here is Cindy Friedman's contact info:

<https://cindyfriedman.org/contact-us/>

Please let me know if you have any questions! I'm on Twitter at @SurvivalWriter and my website is [www.laurakiesel.com](http://www.laurakiesel.com).



PHOTO BY JENNY BARON

**"Confluence" is an art installation in Spy Pond Park by local artists Laurie Bogdan and Kimberley Harding that brings awareness to industrial waste damaging Massachusetts waterways. This piece shows a river system woven entirely from reused plastic bags that have been fused together.**

## Residents' Working Group Concerning Dangerous, Abandoned Fishing Line

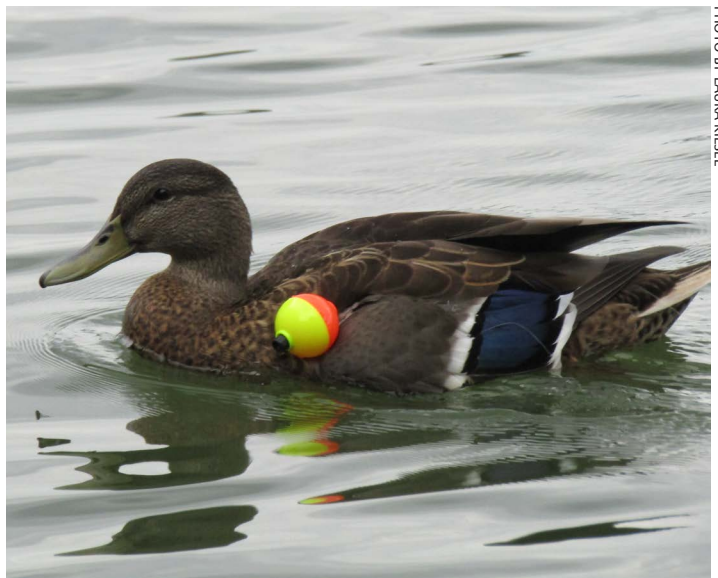


PHOTO BY LAURA KIESEL

**Duck restrained by a loose fishing line and bobber caught around its wing**

The Arlington Park and Recreation Commission, Arlington Conservation Commission, and Arlington Animal Control have received multiple reports from concerned residents regarding the amount of fishing line that is abandoned in our parks and water bodies. The Arlington Park Commission is looking for members of the community who would like to serve on a working group to investigate possible solutions to this growing problem. If interested, please email Director of Recreation Joe Connelly at [jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:jconnelly@town.arlington.ma.us).



# Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings

on

**Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021  
7:00 p.m., Zoom link TBA**

&

**Annual Meeting  
Sunday, Jan. 23, 2022  
Location & Time TBA**

RSVP (optional) to 781-646-5990  
email [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto: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: Sarah Zadova	(617) 782-3567
Recording Secretary: Open	
Membership Secretary: Daniel Jalkut	(617) 276-6672
VPs for Communication & Outreach:	
Jamie Ciocco	<a href="mailto:jamcio@gmail.com">jamcio@gmail.com</a>
Lauren Bonilla	(617) 987-5891
Outreach Committee: Anne Ellinger	(781) 646-1705
Susan Corey	(617) 797-2358
Chair for Publicity: Jenny Babon	(774) 253-6325
Publicity Committee: Open	
Beautification Committee:	
Adrienne Landry	(781) 777-2759
Lally Stowell	<a href="mailto:julmcbride@gmail.com">julmcbride@gmail.com</a>
Web Developer: Julie McBride	
Chair for Outreach/Park Events:	
Betsy Leondar-Wright	(781) 648-0630
Photographers and Videographers:	
Fred Moses	<a href="mailto:fred@fmoses.com">fred@fmoses.com</a>
Mithilesh Sharma	(617) 233-9218
Photographer's Assistant: Open	
Post-processing: Mark Sandman	

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

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PHOTO BY JENNY BABON



Mystic Brass Ensemble Players delighted all with their animated music at Spy Pond Park Fun Day

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES



There was lots of activity at the bark boat station where children made and launched their beautiful floating wonders constructed from natural elements

PHOTO BY AUDREY F. BABON



Theresa Turtle left Spy Pond on July 14, crossed the pervious path, trudged up the hill towards the Minuteman Trail near Linwood Street in search of a desirable spot to bury her eggs

PHOTO BY JONATHAN SPILLER



Sailboat activity at the Boys and Girls Club