

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Summer 2023

The “Other Side” of Spy Pond Gets a Facelift

by Stroker Rogovin

PHOTO BY STROKER ROGOVIN



AMC and scout parents removed English Ivy, an invasive plant

You gotta love square rocks. But more on that anon.

Perfect weather and a small mountain of donuts and coffee greeted 80 volunteers on May 13th as they rallied along the southern shore of Spy Pond to do battle with invasive plants, pick up litter, plant new trees, and prune back branches encroaching on paths and access points to the pond. Starting in 2005, Spy Pond Trails Day is an annual event produced by The Spy Pond Environment Task Group, a volunteer committee working under the aegis of Envision Arlington. More commonly known as The Spy Pond Committee, this group regularly studies the pond and reviews information and professional literature to help advise the town on management strategies for maintaining a healthy pond.

PHOTO BY STROKER ROGOVIN



Scouts removed English Ivy, an invasive plant

Given the excellent job that FSPP does maintaining the park along the northern shore of Spy Pond, the Spy Pond Committee has historically focused on the general ecological health of the pond itself. This includes the linear park along the southern shore, which is used intensively by fishermen, often resulting in erosion of the banks. To answer this challenge, the first three Trails Days constructed ten stone staircases from the paved path at the top of the bank down to the water, hardening access and reducing erosion. The Appalachian Mountain Club provided their professional trail crew to help train and manage volunteers for this work, which was built with curbstone donated by the town. For a crew accustomed to working with the oddly-shaped glacial till of New Hampshire's White Mountains, the look on their faces was priceless once they learned they'd be working with "square rocks."



PHOTO BY STROKER ROGOVIN

Young (and fashionable) volunteers planted dogwoods

Unfortunately, some fishermen don't seem content with the ten hardened access points provided, and erosion continues to be an unsightly and environmentally damaging problem. The Committee's answer has been to plant dogwoods—75 at last count—which will fill out to discourage “bootleg” trails and route traffic to designated points of access. This work was completed with financial assistance from The Town of Arlington, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, The Arlington Land Trust, and the Appalachian Mountain Club.

If you'd like to learn more about The Committee's work and join us for our monthly meeting, please contact Stroker Rogovin at stroker1001@gmail.com.

Busy Spring, 2023 Planting Work in Spy Pond Park

By Adrienne Landry & Lally Stowell, Beautification Committee

BU's Global Day of Service in Spy Pond Park

What a gloriously, cool day to work in the park on April 15! After two unusually hot, 85° days, we were glad to work in the cooler temperature.

Two BU alumni joined us for the morning as part of BU's Global Days of Service. They were Bahare Sanaie Morahed and Georges Petitpas who both did an excellent job working alongside Bill Stalcup and Adrienne Landry. The group dug seven holes for seven new shrubs to be planted next week. They then mixed in compost with the turned earth to refill the holes and await the plants. This was part of an on-going project initiated and lead by Adrienne to replace invasive plants with native plants in Spy Pond Park.

Important work was also done by Sharon Green who mended fences at the end of each planting bed and picked up debris throughout the park. Georges, Adrienne, and Bill also helped bag dead plant debris from last season.

As in past seasons, Lally Stowell coordinated volunteers and kept track of supplies needed for the day. Lauren Bonilla and her family greeted and signed in volunteers while also engaging visitors in conversations about Spy Pond Park and the ongoing work we do to maintain the park for the many visitors who enjoy the park throughout the year.

EcoFest Work Day

April 22 was a cool, overcast day to work. Our group consisted of two volunteers, Kerry McConnaughay and Parvis Khosravi, who signed up through the Town of Arlington EcoFest site. They, along with FSPP members, Linda Clark, Brian Hare, Adrienne Landry, and Bill Stalcup, planted seven native shrubs. Linda, an avid gardener, gave an excellent demonstration on how to plant a shrub that came from a nursery in a plastic pot, to putting it in the ground with water, compost, soil (from the hole) and the plant itself. As mentioned above, we had dug seven holes in preparation for today's planting.

We planted three *Viburnum dentatum* on the edge of the slope and the Park where three large shrubs (trees) had died over the last few years. They are tall, hearty shrubs and should hold the soil on the embankment. We then planted three Red-twig dogwoods in the area behind the stone wall near the parking lot. Finally, we planted a male Winterberry Southern Gentleman, the male partner to the Winterberry red sprite plants that were planted over the last few years.



Volunteers (front) Linda Clark, (l-r back) Bill Stalcup, Brian Hare, Adrienne Landry, Parvis Khosravi, and Kerry McConnaughay participated in an EcoFest activity on Earth Day under Adrienne's supervision. They planted 7 native bushes in Spy Pond Park's planting beds in the holes Boston University alumni had dug the week before for their BU Global Day of Service.

May and June Work Days

On the May and June Work Days there were many volunteers: 19 and 21, including a great group from The Family Connection. They collected many bags of invasive plants, natural debris and trash. We happily report that the native plants that our volunteers planted early this year and in the past 3 years are all thriving, thanks to the efforts of so many.

All spring we had very good days, and a lot was accomplished!



Members of The Family Connection, an organization that connects families and caregivers of children from birth through age 6 with activities, events, workshops and volunteer opportunities in the community, participated in the June Work Day



Steve, Isaac, Eliot, and Jane on the new seesaw



Ziv practiced his strongman moves with his father acting as his trustworthy spotter



Looking towards the pond, she trotted towards it by horseback



We congratulate Todd Graham, Justin Tatami, and Rae Construction on the beautiful SPP playground renovation



Taia, Max, and Lillie, enjoyed climbing the web



The car careened down the slide first to test it out

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Much has been happening in Spy Pond Park. Happy children and parents are finally enjoying the renovated playground with its wonderful new, colorful equipment. The 2023 spring season has brought many volunteers to help groom the playground and the park. On behalf of FSPP, I thank the Beautification Committee leaders, Adrienne Landry and Lally Stowell, for offering valuable guidance to the dedicated groups and individuals. They all graciously offer their time and energy to keep the park looking great. We have 4 more Work Days and hope they will be as beneficial as the ones we've held so far.

I have met with various groups to represent FSPP. Joe Connelly, Director of Parks and Recreation, met monthly with the Friends of Parks to discuss common issues. David Morgan reconvened meeting with Arlington Land Stewards to provide a unified approach to open space areas. Finally, as I mentioned in a previous email, Joe Connelly has also formed a group of dog owners who frequent various Arlington parks. Jess Leber has volunteered to represent Spy Pond Park/Field in those discussions. We look forward to bringing you the ideas and regulations regarding dogs via FSPP emails. FSPP collaboration with other Town organizations is an important aspect of our mission.

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 and contribute to other benefits of Spy Pond Park and Spy Pond in Arlington. And, of course, we appreciate all those who responded to our request for items to include in this newsletter. If you'd like to write something or send photo(s), please let us know.

Thanks again with warm regards,

Karen L. Grossman

Karen L. Grossman
President
Friends of Spy Pond Park

Become a Volunteer Citizen Scientist!

By Laura Kiesel, Freelance Writer and Editor

A few weeks ago, a notice popped up in my Facebook feed showing me a post I made on that same date nearly a decade prior. This one was from 2015 and was about an annual occurrence to which I look forward at Spy Pond. “The lilacs are now in bloom!” I exclaimed and below that, there were my flip phone pictures of the bushes sprouting their purpled flowers.

Despite the lower quality of my phone, the brilliance of the flowers showed through crystal clear, so vivid I could almost smell them. Every year I enthusiastically anticipated this marker of spring and the warmer weather that came with it. But when the reminder popped up, I winced. The date of the post was from May 20, 2015. Yet in present day 2023 on this same date, the lilacs had already bloomed and withered weeks earlier. Specifically, I first took photos of them this year on May 6th and had more photos of them on May 9th. A few days later most of them had vanished. They were long gone by the 20th.

Earlier flower blooms are a sign of our warming world, as are earlier migrations of certain songbirds in the spring and sightings of insects. Some observations can even hint at a threat to vital species—such as brown bats spotted flying over the pond at dusk in February earlier this year during a warm snap when they should still be hibernating. Bats offer critical mosquito and moth control and so if warming weather fools them into coming out of hibernation early, their populations are at increased risk and in turn, insect numbers will rise.

Studying and recording these annual seasonal changes and comparing their shifts from year to year to better glean how climate change is impacting flora and fauna on the local level, is a branch of environmental science known as phenology. Through collecting this data, researchers can understand climate change

better overall. That is why the [USA National Phenology Network \(NPN\)](#) was established in 2007 to share and store phenology data from hundreds of sites across the country through their website, [Nature's Notebook](#). NPN does this by recruiting people to train as Phenology Leaders and establish observation groups at select sites among striving citizen scientists.

[Earthwise Aware](#) is an organization based in the Boston metro area that focuses on collecting phenological data across several local parks and green spaces, including the Middlesex Fells, Horn Pond, and Fresh Pond. Earlier this year, I participated in the 10-week training with the NPN and received my certification as a Phenology Leader. My participation was endorsed

and sponsored by Earthwise Aware, with the intention of enabling them to add new observation sites in Arlington such as Spy Pond. A kettle pond formed by the retreat of the last Ice Age, which once offered ice for people around the world and had Olympic skaters training on its frozen surface in the winter, Spy Pond has long been a bellwether of climate change. Now there's an opportunity to look closer and be part of a larger body of research to track Spy Pond's changes across the seasons and draw insight about the larger implications that it has for our region. The data

Earthwise Aware has provided at its other sites and its reports have been referred to by the Massachusetts State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

It is my hope to have a group of dedicated individuals who can devote some time once a week (or more if they want) recording observations of plants and animals at the pond, starting in September and commit for at least one year. I will offer a brief online training and then bring people out to the Pond to look around and practice tracking sightings of songbirds, waterfowl, insects, and plant life.

If you are interested in being a citizen scientist at either Spy Pond or another local site, please contact me at the Save Arlington Wildlife email at arlingtonpoisonfreepledge@gmail.com or contact Friends of Spy Pond Park and they will put you in touch with me.



PHOTO BY BETSY LEONARD-WRIGHT



PHOTOS BY BETSY LEONARD-WRIGHT



FSPP Saturday Work Days

By Lally Stowell

The FSPP monthly Saturday Work Days began on May 20th and 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 let us know of their interest and bring a signed liability waiver form (parents must sign for under-18s) to participate. We have a limited supply of tools, so if you have gloves and/or clippers, they would be greatly appreciated. Please bring water, too.

Below is a list of Work and Fun Days for 2023. They will be held on the Saturday mornings listed below. The hours for Sept., and Oct. are 9-11 a.m.; for 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: lallystowell@icloud.com.

FSPP 2023 Work Day Schedule

July 22, 8-10 a.m. (rain date July 23, 1-3 p.m.)

Aug. 19, 8-10 a.m. (rain date Aug. 20, 1-3 p.m.)

Sept. 30, 9-11 a.m. (rain date Oct. 1, 1-3 p.m.)

Oct. 14, 9-11 a.m. (rain date Oct. 15, 1-3 p.m.)

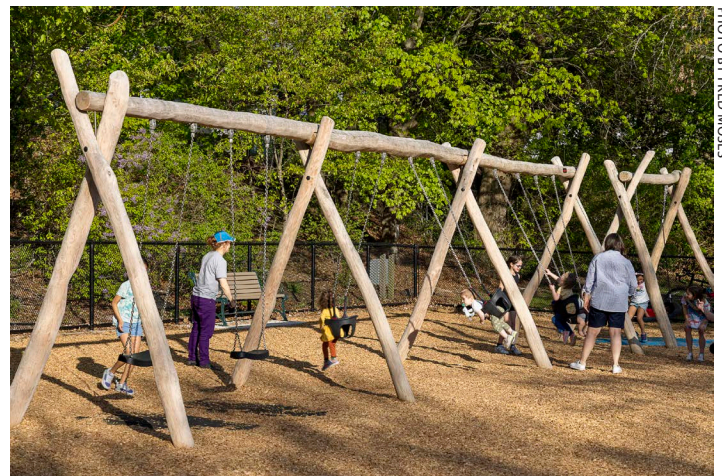
Sept. 9 Fun Day 10 a.m.-1p.m. (rain date Sept. 10, 1-4 p.m.)

Fun Day involves children's activities in Spy Pond Park; It is not a scheduled Work Day.

Liability waivers are required for all participants in these Work and Fun Day activities. If you are working, please download the form <https://friendsofspypondpark.org/pdf/liability-waiver.pdf> 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 Work & Fun Days.



Lally Stowell, Sophia Shi, and Monet Rosenberg at the FSPP Town Day booth last year



Children enjoy the new swingset at Spy Pond Park



A new Fairy box by Peggy Fenner appeared this spring in the same spot on the three branched tree overlooking the Linwood entrance to Spy Pond Park

PHOTO BY ADRIENNE LANDRY

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES

PHOTO BY PEGGY FENNER

Great Fun Day Volunteer Opportunity

Saturday September 9, 10-1
(rain date Sunday 1-4)

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

We've put on fabulous volunteer-run Fun Day festivals in 20 of the last 22 years-and now we're organizing the 21st!

Together we brought so much happiness to so many hundreds of people each year. Would you like to be part of making it happen on September 9?

We need every role that makes the event so great: bark boat helpers, musicians, staffers for the craft tables, puzzle table, info table and toddler table, scavenger hunt creators, faery costumed dancers and fairy house makers, face painters, boat ride guides, animal displays and bug-catching guides, publicists, photographers, bubble-blowers, and set-up and clean-up volunteers.

We also need donations of prizes (nature-observational tools like binoculars, and nature-themed toys and books, and sheets of birch bark. And we need at least one canopy.

If you'd like to participate, contact me at Betsy@classmatters.org • 781-648-0630.

Looking forward to cooking up some fun with you!

FSPP 2023 Volunteer Opportunities

General Vice President:

Want to gain leadership skills? You can learn what it takes to run a nonprofit organization in this position on the FSPP board.

- Follow and assist in carrying out FSPP Presidential tasks, as requested to do so. (Details forwarded to those interested)

Bulk Mail Coordinator:

- Manage nonprofit mailing status, organize & facilitate dues/donation solicitation mailings in May and November

Canoe for a Cause

For the Mystic River Watershed Association

MyRWA needs you! Come out to one of their summer field days to help remove invasive water chestnuts from the Mystic River — you can volunteer on the water or on land! See details at www.mysticriver.org

Thursday, July 6 | 9-11 AM | [Details & Registration](#)

Saturday, July 8 | 12-3 PM | [Details & Registration](#)

Wednesday, July 12 | 9-11 AM | [Details & Registration](#)

Thursday, July 13 | 4-6 PM | [Details & Registration](#)

Saturday, July 15 (Latino Conservation Week) |
10 AM - 1:30 PM | Registration coming soon

Wednesday, July 19 | 9-11 AM | [Details & Registration](#)

Wednesday, July 26 | 9-11 AM | [Details & Registration](#)

Thursday, August 3 | 4-6 PM | [Details & Registration](#)

Saturday, August 5 | 8-10 AM & 10 AM-noon |
[Details & Registration](#)

Thursday, August 10 | 10 AM-noon | [Details & Registration](#)

Why Remove Water Chestnuts?

Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) is native to Asia, Europe, and Africa. Outside its native habitat, water chestnut spreads over the surface of rivers and lakes, crowding out native plants and altering the water chemistry. In the fall when the plants die, their decomposition draws down the dissolved oxygen which fish and other aquatic animals need to survive. Additionally, the plants get caught in motorboats and limit the use of waterways. If we don't remove water chestnuts, they will take over the freshwater portion of the Mystic River!

Book Donation



Oakes Plimpton

Oakes Plimpton will be donating 40 copies of "The Ice Business" booklet for FSPP to sell during outreach in the park and events such as Town Day and Feast of the East. Thanks, Oakes, for your wonderful generosity!

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings

on
Tuesday, July 25, 2023
7:00 p.m., Zoom link TBA
&
Sunday, Sept. 17, 2023
7:00 p.m., Zoom link 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: Susan Saw	(781) 439-1490
Recording Secretary: Megan Chrisman	(760) 604-8384
Membership Secretary: Daniel Jalkut	(617) 276-6672
VPs for Communication & Outreach:	
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Jamie Ciocco	jamcio@gmail.com
Communication, Outreach and Publicity Committee:	
Anne Ellinger	(781) 646-1705
Marshall McCloskey	(617) 548-9877
Phinney Morrison	
Chair for Publicity: Jenny Babon	(774) 253-6325
Beautification Committee:	
Adrienne Landry	
Lally Stowell	(781) 777-2759
Web Developer: Julie McBride	
Chair for Outreach/Park Events:	
Betsy Leondar-Wright	(781) 648-0630
Photographers and Videographers:	
Jenny Babon	(774) 253-6325
Fred Moses	fred@fmoses.com
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

Friends of Spy Pond Park

• <https://www.friendsofspypondpark.org>

• P.O. Box 1051

• Arlington, MA 02474-0021

Volunteer Spotlight

By Adrienne Landry

Anna McCormack, Kaitlyn Sample, Alicia Brennan

On the May 20 Work Day, Anna McCormack, Kaitlyn Sample and Alicia Brennan came from Wakefield to help out at Spy Pond Park. They tackled the planting bed most overrun with invasive plants and cleared half of it in two hours. They have made the 25-minute trek to Arlington several times over the past two years. Alicia is an Environmental Science Student at Westfield State University.



Anna McCormack, Kaitlyn Sample, and Alicia Brennan

Bill Stalcup

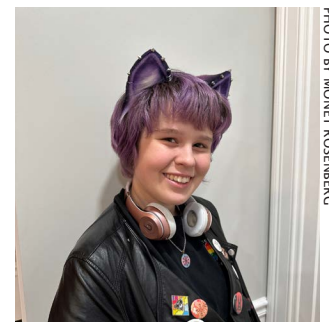


Bill Stalcup

Bill has been an enthusiastic and consistent volunteer on Work Days since 2009. He takes on specific tasks and completes them one by one. Also, Bill comes to work on his own time and has cleared the park and the adjacent embankment of most of the garlic mustard, one of the most abundant invasive plants.

Monet Rosenberg

Monet started with FSPP last year, came almost every Work Day, and worked the FSPP table on Town Day. Monet first came to fulfill the Arlington HS Community Service requirement, but soon took on many additional tasks and has been an enthusiastic, always helpful presence at Work Days. Monet will be a Senior at AHS this year.



Monet Rosenberg