

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Winter/Spring 2024

FSPF Saturday Work Days

By Lally Stowell

The FSPF monthly Saturday Work Days begin on May 18 and will continue through October 19. 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, assisting with new plantings, 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 Stewardship Team 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 form (parents must sign for under-18s). 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 in May, June, 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; lallystowell@icloud.com.

FSPF 2024 Work Day Schedule

- May 18, 9-11 am (rain date May 19, 1-3 pm)
- June 22, 9-11 am (rain date June 23, 1-3 pm)
- July 27, 8-10 am (rain date July 28, 1-3 pm)
- Aug. 17, 8-10 am (rain date Aug. 18, 1-3 pm)
- Sept. 7, 9-11 am (rain date Sept. 8, 1-3 pm)
- Oct. 19, 9-11 am (rain date Oct. 20, 1-3 pm)
- Sept. 14 Fun Day 10 am-1pm (rain date Sept. 15, 1-4pm)

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 FSPF 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.

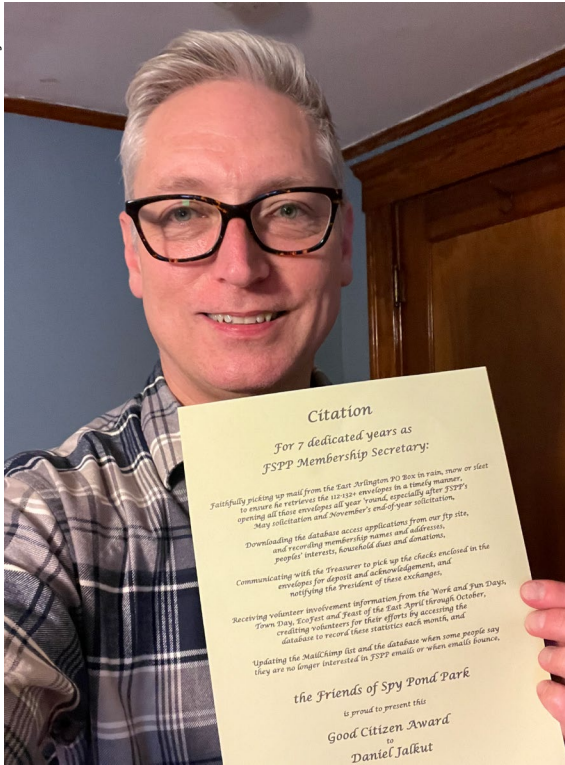
Volunteer Spotlight

Jen and Claire Brockman, a mother/daughter team from Arlington, showed up one Work Day and came for all the remaining Work Days last year. And, beyond the regular season, from September to November, they participated in the watering rotation for the seven new shrubs planted last fall. They also made efforts to recruit more folks to water the shrubs. We appreciate their contributions very much.



PHOTO BY JENNY BARON

PHOTO BY DANIEL JALKUT



Daniel Jalkut, FSPP Membership Secretary, took a selfie at home with the Citation the FSPP presented him at the FSPP 2023-24 Annual Meeting for his 7 years of dedicated service

Citation

*For 7 dedicated years as
FSPP Membership Secretary:*

Faithfully picking up mail from the East Arlington PO Box in rain, snow or sleet to ensure he retrieves the 112-132+ envelopes in a timely manner, opening all those envelopes all year 'round, especially after FSPP's May solicitation and November's end-of-year solicitation,

Downloading the database access applications from our ftp site, and recording membership names and addresses, peoples' interests, household dues and donations,

Communicating with the Treasurer to pick up the checks enclosed in the envelopes for deposit and acknowledgement, and notifying the President of these exchanges,

Receiving volunteer involvement information from the Work and Fun Days, Town Day, EcoFest and Feast of the East April through October, crediting volunteers for their efforts by accessing the database to record these statistics each month, and

Updating the MailChimp list and the database when some people say they are no longer interested in FSPP emails or when emails bounce,

the Friends of Spy Pond Park

is proud to present this

*Good Citizen Award
to
Daniel Jalkut*

January 21, 2024

Persistent Problem of SGAR Use in Arlington

By Laura Kiesel

A Red-tailed hawk was found dead on the bike path along Spy Pond in November. His body was sent in for a necropsy and the results were very clear: fatal levels of the deadliest Second-generation anticoagulant rodenticide SGAR Brodifacoum in his system. Additionally, a screech owl was found dead in my neighborhood in East Arlington, though unfortunately the body was disposed of by the town before Save Arlington Wildlife (SAW) could retrieve it for testing. Sadly, yet another screech owl was discovered last week in the same neighborhood. This time the body was recovered and was sent in for testing. We should know the results by this publication, but the initial exam showed internal bleeding--consistent with SGARs poisoning. In other words, this is all very

much still a prominent problem in town and dead wildlife are being found at an alarming rate--including at Spy Pond. I just interviewed with ACMI about this and the segment should have aired mid-December.

PHOTO BY SELINA MAITREYA



Arlington banned SGARs on its public lands, but it wasn't using it in East Arlington. SGARs are still used widely all over Arlington on private property. That is why it is so important for the state to grant us the Home Rule petition to give us permission to also ban its use on private property as well because that is where it is being used in our town. Written testimony to the Committee of Environment and Natural Resources can be emailed to: JointCommittee.Environment@malegislature.gov

In case you are interested, Orion Magazine also published a piece about MK the eagle and Arlington, including our efforts to get SGARs banned, here: <https://orion-magazine.org/article/mk-eagle-arlington-massachusetts-killed-2023/>

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

In January after a wonderful presentation by Elaine Crowder, ArMI, at the FSPP Annual Meeting, we celebrated our last year's accomplishments, set goals, and elected officers. Many thanks to the 112 households which made financial contributions in 2023. Our finances are in good shape, and soon we will send out our annual solicitation for dues and donations (in May). You can view our meeting minutes and all past newsletters on our website.

We are looking forward to a successful year of Work Days, when our Stewardship Team will guide the many individuals and groups of volunteers who gather to help groom many areas of the park, especially the planting beds. If you are able, we'd love to have you join us! This spring we look forward to heralding the wonderful sights in our park once again. Hope to see you there!

Warm regards,



Karen L. Grossman
President
Friends of Spy Pond Park

- 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.
- Have desired number of newsletters printed, distribute and maintain a supply of newsletters and brochures at the Arlington libraries and in the park.

Please give serious consideration to stepping up, being part of a vibrant organization that cares for our beautiful Spy Pond Park. It is very rewarding to contribute to our Arlington community in a meaningful way. **To express your interest, please contact me at your earliest convenience: fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org**

A Tribute to Richard "Dick" Norcross

By Karen L. Grossman, FSPP President

The Friends of Spy Pond Park will long remember Richard "Dick" Norcross who passed away this past December 7, 2023. He was an avid volunteer on Work Days in the park, trimming bushes and trees in the planting beds along the shoreline to enable park visitors to enjoy an unobstructed view of Spy Pond and pulling invasives to allow native plants to flourish. More recently, Dick donated funds for updated bicycle racks that will be installed this spring. He often expressed his love for our beautiful park. We will miss him, his enthusiasm, and support. A complete obituary appeared January 14, 2024, in the Boston Globe:

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/bostonglobe/name/richard-norcross-obituary?id=54039036>

FSPP Open Positions

By Karen L. Grossman, FSPP President

General VP:

- Follow and assist in carrying out FSPP Presidential tasks, as requested to do so.

2 people to split the role of VP for Communication and Outreach:

- Attend Town events and festivals, provide complete signup requirement explanation for people prior to and on Workdays, give community service credit to volunteers, when requested,
- 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 FSPP brochures, and accept memberships.
- Assist in designing a FSPP display board for use at the above events and schedule and erect a display at the Robbins Library, whenever possible.



Richard Norcross taking a rest from pulling invasive plants among the Goldenrods

PHOTO BY RUTH SLOINICK

Neighborhood Collaboration for Invasive Removal and Planting Native Plants

Annual Meeting Speaker, Elaine Crowder, ArMI
Transcribed by Megan Chrisman, FSPP Recording Secretary

Previously active FSPP member Elaine Crowder established ArMI (“Arlington Massachusetts Invasives”) after learning about invasive species through her work with Adrienne Landry on FSPP’s Stewardship Team (the Beautification Committee at that time). The ArMI group encourages people to recognize and play an active role in eradicating invasive plants in Arlington.

Last year ArMI and Town Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent David Morgan ramped up the Pink Plants Invasive initiative at Robbins Library (details available at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XUTlyceKXUXZDtE8gDztsiOkkBMFPFSM2xaoMjQtaQ/edit?usp=sharing>). ArMI then helped continue to set up signs in three sites (Crusher Lot, Robbins Library, and along the bike path). ArMI volunteers painted invasive plants pink to help distinguish them and accentuate the growth pattern for passers-by. After leaving the paint on for a month, they held a public chat to help familiarize people with the organization’s goals. Next, they aim to expand this education into the neighborhoods of Arlington so that people can become involved at home to help manage their own invasive plant growth. Through this initiative, volunteers who know that they have an invasive plant in their yard can volunteer through ArMI to host a pink plant sign and have the plant painted pink to spread awareness, before eventually removing it from their property.

Elaine presented photos and descriptions of invasive plants that have most frequently crept into residential yards without being recognized, including black swallow-wort, roundleaf (oriental) bittersweet and bittersweet nightshade. Many of these invasive plants are vines. Invasives that have been invited into Arlington properties through landscaping include Japanese barberry and burning bush.

Elaine welcomes those who are interested in participating to take the ArMI survey or to email her at armi@communication-exchange.com.

In the Q&A session, Elaine noted that garlic mustard has not been featured in ArMI’s campaign, yet, because most people are already aware of it. Charlotte Milan and green teams in the schools have been involved in pulling it up around town. Mid-to-end of April is the best time of year to pull up garlic mustard. The plants covered by ArMI’s initiative have a longer cycle when they can be pulled and removed.

When discussing how to handle invasive plants growing in condominium or shared property, Elaine acknowledged that it’s not always possible to remove the plant in that type of circumstance, but recommended compromises such as clipping it back

to the base or pruning berries to prevent spread, and changing the plant when it comes time to re-consider landscaping plans.

She clarified that the Town of Arlington was primarily involved in establishing the site at the Robbins Library, resulting in around thirty participants and attendees at a session there. ArMI is expanding into personal properties to enable more people to spot invasive plants where they live. They are hoping to expand to three more public sites and three neighborhood sites in the coming growing season.

ArMI’s base campaign is effective because the pink paint is attention-grabbing, with the sign helping to drive the point home. Elaine wondered if FSPP could host an ArMI sign for a portion of the summer near the park. Karen noted that this may be a good fit on the Minuteman Trail embankment adjacent to the park, since ArMI’s work is like our ongoing FSPP revegetation project along the Pond’s shoreline. FSPP will discuss this; perhaps we could post a sign during an upcoming Work Day.

Karen thanked Elaine for her informative presentation and will publicize the links for those who were unable to attend.

- An Arlington MA Invasives ‘ArMI’ project using iNaturalist captures all invasives observed in Arlington using the phone app. Join this project and learn more about invasives in Arlington: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/arlington-ma-invasives-armi-army>
- Pink Plant Invasives in Your Neighborhood - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CMGogHLOtLeOiHzPjqSsynDSldkR3Aa7vPRdIDR09OA/edit?usp=sharing>

New Ice on Spy Pond (2022)

Yesterday rain
over old ice and melt
reflected an orange sun;
tonight, below the level hum
of route two traffic,
new ice is singing
as it gathers and converges
bank to bank:
not the hollow booms
remembered, of old ice shifting,
but clicks and ping-pong,
echoes of fractal fractures
ringing bank to bank—
as if the pond were shrugging
in its sleep, and singing
songs of whales
in the deep.

Phil Lewis

Phil Lewis (lewis.pg@gmail.com) is an Arlington resident who regularly circumnavigates Spy Pond on foot.

PHOTO BY JENNY BABON



The days getting longer means more playtime at the Spy Pond Park playground



PHOTO BY MITHILESH SHARMA



PHOTO BY MITHILESH SHARMA

PHOTO BY MITHILESH SHARMA



Mithilesh Sharma captured the fleeting signs of winter this year at Spy Pond



PHOTO BY LINDA CLARK

One of the many winterberry shrubs planted as part of our revegetation project. We have been replacing invasive plants with native plants such as this winterberry which is ready for a stunning close-up of its December berries. Local wildlife fed on them this winter.

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings:

Sunday, March 24, 2024
7:00 p.m., Zoom link TBA,
 &
Sunday, May 5, 2024
6:00 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:
 Lauren Bonilla fsppvoluteer@gmail.com
 Jamie Ciocco jamcio@gmail.com
 Communication, Outreach and Publicity Committee:
 Anne Ellinger (781) 646-1705
 Marshall McCloskey (617) 548-9877
 Bulk Mailing Coordinator: Anna Doctor (615)-686-0328
 Chair for Publicity: Jenny Babon (774) 253-6325
 Stewardship Team:
 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

We recognize those who have made contributions to the FSPP in 2023. This money enables us to pursue our mission of supporting the preservation, enhancement, and enjoyment of Spy Pond Park and Spy Pond as natural and community resources. We extend sincere thanks for the generosity and commitment of the 112 individuals, households, and foundations involved in this effort.

2023 Donations

\$400 and above

Brad Barber

\$300

Lt. Eric Hall
 Anderson
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