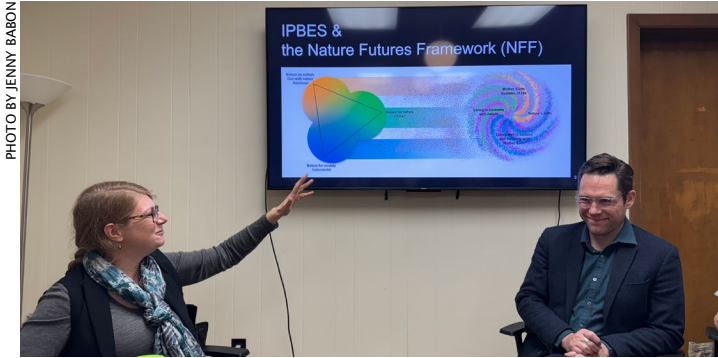


# Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

## Winter/Spring 2025

### Highlights from the Keynote Presentation at the FSPP Annual Meeting

By Jenny Babon, Communications and Outreach Co-Chair



Kathryn Davies and David Morgan discussed “Arlington’s Plan Integrating Nature and Community” at the FSPP Annual Meeting

David Morgan, Arlington’s Environmental Planner, and Kathryn Davies of Tufts University, presented “Arlington’s Plan Integrating Nature and Community.” The presentation showcased the town’s efforts in implementing the Nature Futures Framework (NFF), a global initiative aimed at promoting sustainable urban development while preserving natural environments. This framework is built on three key perspectives. The first, Nature as Culture, emphasizes the relational and cultural value of nature. Second, Nature for Society highlights the instrumental benefits of nature for human well-being. Lastly, Nature for Nature recognizes the intrinsic value of natural ecosystems.

Kathryn Davies presented data from the Arlington Nature Futures pilot project, which surveyed 278 Arlington residents to assess community values regarding nature and park use. The survey revealed trends demonstrating variations in activity preferences among different demographic groups. Notable differences were observed in activities such as playground use, birdwatching, people-watching, and gardening. The study also highlighted the underrepresentation of younger residents and people of color in the survey results.

According to data from survey respondents, the study provided several actionable recommendations for the town. Short-term initiatives include organizing and sponsoring a nature-based club for socializing and education, as well as creating a rental and storage system for recreational equipment such as bicycles, kayaks, and canoes. Longer-term objectives involve expanding mixed-used paths in both manicured and natural areas to promote safe walking and biking, and developing new infrastructure with sustainable standards to minimize the disruption of open spaces.

David Morgan also provided updates concerning ongoing and upcoming initiatives, including the 21 Pond Lane Initiative. This project, which recently concluded its feasibility study, will develop a “Garden in the Woods”-style biodiversity hotspot featuring native plants and minimal maintenance requirements, with a triangular pathway within the garden. The plan will also consider how to improve access to the Minuteman Bikeway from 21 Pond Lane. He also gave an update on a Community Development Block Grant Program. This new initiative in collaboration with the Minuteman Bikeway Improvement Project aims to enhance the park with native plantings, improved signage, and safety enhancements along the bikeway.

You can view the presentation slides on the FSPP website: <https://friendsofspypondpark.org/pdf/ANF-FSPP-1-12-25.pdf>

### Volunteer Spotlight

Mengting “Coco” Guo came to all but one Saturday 2024 Work Day. She came and immediately asked, “What do you want me to do?” No job is too big or too difficult for her to tackle. And she works until the job is done. Coco traveled from North Reading to Arlington to help each month. That is a 16.5 miles drive one way which takes about half an hour. Most people come to volunteer because they like the work and being out in nature, and Adrienne Landry believes that is the case with Coco. She is generous with her time and good nature. Coco volunteered in 8 other parks in the Mystic River Watershed this past year, too! Thanks to Coco for her dedication helping the Stewardship Team in Spy Pond Park.



PHOTO BY ADRIENNE LANDRY

# FSPP Goals for 2025

## (some continued or expanded from 2024)

1. Monitor and influence as much as we can the Park Director and Commissioner's efforts re: shoreline rehab, path improvement, and tot lot play area in our best interests.
2. Coordinate with Hardy School 4th grade re: a unit for study of the Spy Pond Park environment and field day in SPP involving parents, the DPW, and Charlotte Milan from Arlington Recycle—this was done in 2018 and will be investigated for 2026 via Hardy School leaders.
3. Monitor the mandate for handling litter/trash carry in/carry out for events as designated by the Park Commission.
4. Recruit and integrate the General Vice-President into doing some Presidential tasks, as needed, whenever possible.
5. Explore additional art for the park and investigate what is being done in other parks – investigate themes with connections to Arlington history and indigenous peoples. Contact Arlington Public Art.
6. Monitor the Town's interest in establishing permanent signage about the soil erosion project and care of the planting beds. Report on the effectiveness of the temporary signage.
7. Put up signs near the rain gardens with a QR code link to an explanation on our website about their environmental purpose and add fencing.
8. Identify and award 1-2 worthy citizens for outstanding service to the FSPP.
9. Explore publicizing ArMI's mission before and during our Work Days.

## Musings on Melting Pond Ice – a harbinger of spring

By William Eykamp

Until recently, the pond had decent snow cover. Ice can continue to thicken beneath the snow, but very slowly because of the insulation that snow provides. Snow also blocks light, making algal growth in the water slow to a stop.

Eventually the snow thins, and the sun intensifies. Light can then penetrate the ice, and amazingly, the ice acts like glass in a greenhouse. The water beneath the ice heats up faster than it would if the ice were absent. The ice begins to melt, and the counterintuitive fact is that pond ice melts from the bottom!

Now here comes the tricky part. At some thickness, at around 6" thick or so the ice is transformed into something that looks like long water candles when viewed from underneath. Vertical ice crystals are interspersed with water, and the features are a few millimeters in diameter. It still looks like solid ice from the top. Because this structure conducts light very well, the ice turns black. It also conducts heat well. This is the beginning of the end; time to put away the skates for the season. The ice is turning "rotten." Many of us have put a leg through it at this stage.

The rest happens fast. A little wind comes up and the ice begins to break up around the edges. Then it starts breaking apart into large sections, with open water in between. The last scene has the wind breaking the candle-like structures into little pieces which tinkle when they pile up on the leeward shore. It is a pleasant sound of Spring.

## There's Always a First Time

(as told to Jenny Babon)

Chris from Newton is no stranger to ice fishing, he's been doing it since he was 15. Today, however, marks a first - testing the frozen waters of Spy Pond. Though he grew up braving Vermont winters, drilling holes in the ice with his dad on a lake near their home, this local pond presents a fresh adventure.

Setting up a third fishing hole just off North Beach, he was surprised that the water plunges to 20 feet deep, despite being so close to shore. The ice itself is about 10 inches thick, solid enough for a safe fishing experience. He and his friend Steve are planning to drill ten holes, hoping to catch Northern pike, a species known to inhabit the pond. With experience and patience, they hope for a successful day on the ice, reminiscing about old traditions while making new memories on Spy Pond.



Chris explained setting up his ice fishing pole

# FSPF Saturday Work Days

By Lally Stowell

The FSPF monthly Saturday Work Days begin on May 17 and will continue through October 18. 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, also.

Below is a list of Work and Fun Days for 2025. They will be held on the Saturday mornings listed below. The hours in May, June, September, and October 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](mailto:lallystowell@icloud.com).

## FSPF 2025 Work Day Schedule

May 17, 9-11 a.m. (rain date May 18, 1-3 p.m.)

June 21, 9-11 a.m. (rain date June 22, 1-3 p.m.)

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

Aug. 16, 8-10 a.m. (rain date Aug. 17, 1-3 p.m.)

Sept. 27, 9-11 a.m. (rain date Sept. 28, 1-3 p.m.)

Oct. 18, 9-11 a.m. (rain date Oct. 19, 1-3 p.m.)

Sept. 13 Fun Day 10 a.m.-1 p.m.  
(rain date Sept. 14, 1-4 p.m.)

Fun Day involves children's activities in Spy Pond Park; it is not a scheduled Work Day, but we do seek volunteers.

*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.*

*William Stalcup sent us these links so we can find out how important maintaining Spy Pond Park is to us all:*

<https://walkersarms.tumblr.com/post/733728334539816960>

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/mental-downtime/>

## President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Once more, after a two-year absence, there has been ice on Spy Pond for at least 2 weeks now.

As I write this, recently I have seen one person ice sailing, others ice skating, playing hockey, bicycle riding, dog walking, ice fishing, and finally, cross country skiing on the snow-covered ice!

The photos in this issue are a wonderful display of much of this activity, thanks to the contributors. Watch for the FSPF Robbins Library display in March with many other photos from recent years. You may even find yourself, friends, or family pictured there!

Thanks to the Mystic River Watershed Association for hosting us at their new offices on Maple Street for the FSPF 2025 Annual Meeting on January 12. It was a big success with our speakers, David Morgan, Arlington Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent, & Kathryn Davies, Tufts University Lecturer, Urban & Environment Policy & Planning.

Hope you are enjoying winter while you look forward to the spring weather. Nature will wake up with blossoms on the trees and in the planting beds along the park shoreline, as well in our own yards. We had 100 different volunteers working in SPP in 2024. The annual cycle of life continues and we'll be working in the park again soon!

Warm regards,

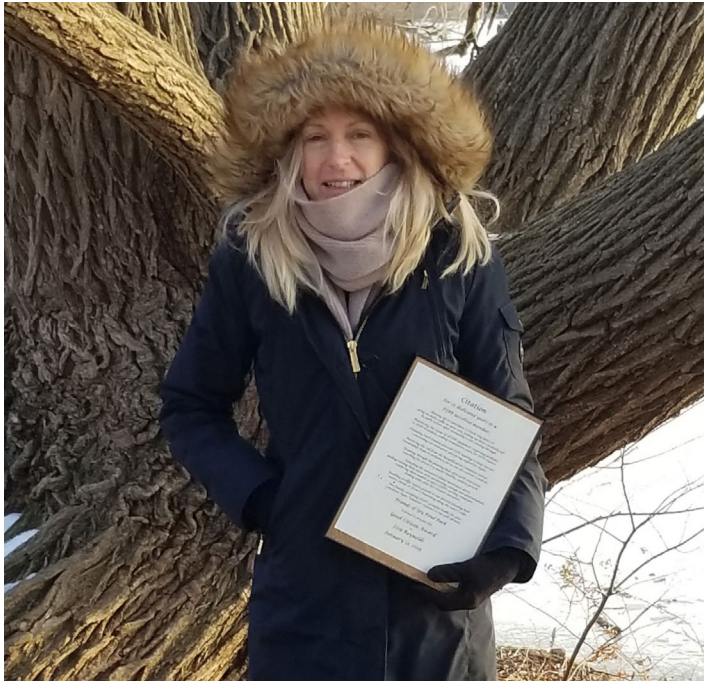


Karen L. Grossman

President

Friends of Spy Pond Park

PHOTO BY STEPHEN REYNOLDS



Lisa Reynolds is a long-time Friend of Spy Pond Park and an Arlington resident. She has been, for many years, our “poison-ivy expert.” Whenever she is contacted to remove poison ivy in the planting beds at the water’s edge, she takes care of it right away. She not only takes out the designated plants pointed out to her, but she combs the area around the plants and removes any more she can find. Here is the Citation we presented at the Annual Meeting. Lisa shows her pleasure in this photo in the park since she did not attend the meeting.

## Poison Ivy Update, and Some Trash Talk

By Lisa Reynolds

Dear Karen Grossman and the FSPP: Thank you for the Good Citizen Award, which recognized the work I’ve been doing to rid the park of poison ivy, weeds, and trash. And thanks to Lally Stowell for spotting poison ivy and marking it with her homemade markers, and to all the volunteers who work to keep the park free of trash and weeds.

### Poison Ivy (Toxicodendron Radicans)

The bad news is that the poison ivy hasn’t been eradicated yet. It hides so well that I’m not sure if it will ever be fully eradicated, but we’ll do our best to keep it to a minimum and prevent it from spreading outside the 2-3 shoreline beds that it occupies. Here’s a little poem to Spy Pond Park’s poison ivy.

*Sleep now in your planting bed my poison ivy foe,  
I know you’re there under the rocks and beneath the willow’s toes,  
Sleep soundly now under your soft blanket of snow,  
For soon your bed will become our battlefield of woe.*

### Citation

*For 25 dedicated years as an FSPP involved member:*

*Showing up to contribute 2-3 Work Day hours or going on daily walks on your own, picking up litter carelessly left by park visitors after picnicking or just passing through,*

*Monitoring the status of all SPP equipment, reporting problems to FSPP President, seeking remediation plans for DPW repairs,*

*Attending Park Commission and FSPP meetings to keep current concerning our endeavors and giving supportive input,*

*Receiving the call from the Beautification Committee turned Stewardship Team to perform a job no one else wanted /could do,*

*Roaming through the planting beds after park renovation searching for poison ivy amidst healthy, natural growth,*

*Attacking the unwanted plants mentioned above, pulling/cutting them down with unrelenting courage and determination, rendering them unable to infect FSPP’s worthy volunteers dealing with other less virulent intruders,*

*Enabling prolific native growth in our beloved planting beds- native shrubs or flowers flourishing along the water’s edge,*

*And finally, accepting FSPP’s grateful thanks for your consistent Super Volunteer response to our calls of need,*

### Friends of Spy Pond Park

*is proud to present this*

*Good Citizen Award*

*to*

*Lisa Reynolds*

*January 12, 2025*

*Editor’s note: You may not want to try Lisa’s technique in your own yard unless you have resistance to poison ivy’s negative effects as Lisa does.*

### Park Trash (Homo Sapiens Purgamentum)

The good news is that the park trash situation has improved over the 25 years that I have been helping, along with all the



**Trash from Karen Grossman’s 1 ½ hour search for litter throughout Spy Pond Park on the Oct. 19 Work Day**

volunteers, to clean it up. I’ve noticed that the type of trash has changed somewhat. There are fewer cigarette packages and butts, beer bottles and cans, and liquor bottles and nips. Water bottles, clothing, soda cans, and food wrappers have, in part, taken their place. To borrow a quote from MLK:

“The arc of the FSPP trash is long, but it bends towards cleaner.”

PHOTO BY BETSY LEONARD-WRIGHT



We call to mind how glorious the trees were in November and imagine the spring buds coming soon

PHOTO BY LAURA KIESEL



Laura Kiesel spent hours last October rescuing this juvenile, black-crowned night heron at Spy Pond, untangling the unfortunate bird from discarded fishing line

PHOTO BY SHARON GREEN



Dog walking on Spy Pond snow-covered ice with a baby on board



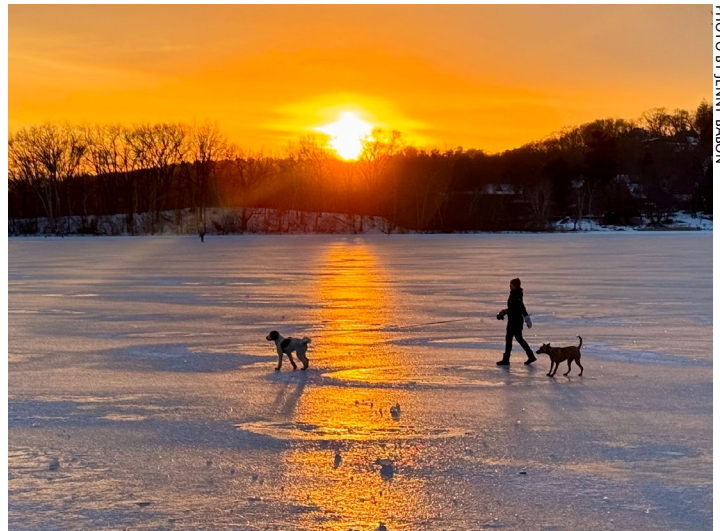
As the snow fell in SPP December 2024

PHOTO BY DAVID BRICKLIN-SMALL



On Sunday, December 1, Arlington police and fire personnel oversaw the extraction of a car at the Spy Pond Park boat ramp that had been driven into Spy Pond the day before

PHOTO BY ANDREA MICHELE



Paw friends took a stroll on frozen Spy Pond

PHOTO BY JENNY BARON

# Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings:

**Sunday, March 2, 2025  
7:00 p.m., Zoom link TBA,**

**&  
Sunday, May 4, 2025  
7:00 p.m., Zoom link 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: Susan Saw (781) 439-1490
  - Recording Secretary: Megan Chrisman (760) 604-8384
  - Membership Secretary: Daniel Jalkut (617) 276-6672
  - VPs for Communication, Outreach, & Publicity:
    - Jenny Babon (774)-253-6325
    - Jamie Ciocco [jamcio@gmail.com](mailto:jamcio@gmail.com)
  - Communication, Outreach and Publicity Committee:
    - Anne Ellinger (781) 646-1705
    - David Nejezchleba [emnej22@gmail.com](mailto:emnej22@gmail.com)
  - Chair for Outreach/Park Events:
    - Betsy Leondar-Wright (781) 648-0630
  - Bulk Mailing Coordinator: Anna Doctor (615)-686-0328
  - Stewardship Team:
    - Adrienne Landry
    - Diana Maggini (337)-704-1873
    - Lally Stowell (781) 777-2759
  - Web Developer: Julie McBride
  - Photographers and Videographers:
    - Jenny Babon (774)-253-6325
    - Fred Moses [fred@fmoses.com](mailto:fred@fmoses.com)
    - Mithilesh Sharma (617) 233-9218
  - Photographer's Assistant: Open
- Newsletter contributions and general comments can be sent to [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto: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 2024. 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 105 individuals, households, and foundations involved in this effort.

### 2024 Donations

#### \$1,000

Vivien Gattie  
Julie Anne Meadows

#### \$400-\$499

Brad Barber  
Rob Kanzer

#### \$300-\$399

Lt Eric Hall Anderson  
Jess Leber  
Katherine Shields

#### \$250-\$299

Anonymous  
Maria Cook  
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#### \$200-\$249

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Beverly & Ralph Cadorette  
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Willa & Lynn Taber  
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Beverly Williams

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Kathy Modigliani  
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