

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Winter/Spring 2022

Spy Pond Playground and North Ramp Renovation

By Karen L. Grossman for Joe Connelly, Director of Parks and Recreation

Two public Zoom meetings gathered public input about the playground to consider needs and interests for the new design. Landscape architect Kyle Zick and the consulting team KZLA used information from survey responses and meeting feedback to create a design that responds to residents' and visitors' comments about the design. FSPP is pleased with the renovation that is occurring. The disability assessments of the park revealed the need for repairs and equipment upgrades.

There will be two or three areas of the playground; one will be used as a discussion/meeting space for educational material for daycare visitors. There are two daycare groups that frequent the area nearly every day of the week. The design shows two climbing areas: one for older children (up to 12 years) and one for younger children. These skew older than the present playground equipment. There will be toy riding horses closer to the pond side and the swings will be back near the bike path embankments to ensure a clear view of the pond for anyone within the confines of the playground.

The main part of the playground will be composed of wood chips. There will also be a soft, rubbery surface and a path that curves around from one side of the play area to the other. Visitors will be able to bring strollers to a space within the fenced-in area. (This was a concern since previously they damaged the roots of the tree outside the entrance where people left them. Karen hopes that we can have a fence erected again around that tree to protect it.)

The idea of a mastodon tusk was incorporated into one corner where young children will be able to crawl through a simulated shape. On the ground there will be a design that represents the ice in the former icehouse that used to be nearby. Visitors will be

able to sit on benches and under a canopied covered area or some new shade trees. A decorative fence in the front will have shapes of things pertinent to the area such as fish, turtles, birds, etc.



The Spy Pond Playground and North Beach Ramp project design is currently in the permitting stages with the Conservation Commission. You can view the KZLA design plans here: <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/59602/637788068242230000>

Other changes are:

1. Two playground entrances, a second one on the bike path walk-down side near the area where the present bench is located so people will be able to enter from that side of the play area.
2. The handicapped ramp is scheduled to be redone using the porous surface that already is on the path through the park. This was not part of the KZLA presentation since it will follow the existing design. The ramp is in dire need of repair, so we are looking forward to seeing it fixed this year.
3. The entire pathway surface through the park will be resealed since there are some pebbles coming up from the path right now; it is not as durable as originally hoped. The sealing is intended to fix that problem.

The hope is that upon Conservation Commission approval, the project will be bid in early March for late spring/early summer construction.

Citation

For 10 years of dedication to Spy Pond Park as

VP for Communication and Outreach:

patiently going through photos taken in Spy Pond Park to select the best ones, using your discerning eye for fashion to decorate our public display boards, helping to arrange the photos to convey our many goals and accomplishments of our local environmental organization,

diligently registering a space for FSPP's booth at Town Day, Feast of the East, and at the Robbins Library, soliciting active members to spend a couple hours doing outreach, loading up the car the night before, setting up the booths early, staying throughout to interact with passersby, overseeing the volunteers, breaking down and returning items to the shed on Pond Lane,

arriving before volunteers to set up the canopy and beautifully arranged outreach table each month on Work and Fun Days in Spy Pond Park April through October each year, signing in the volunteers, cheerfully welcoming and chatting with park visitors, relating important information, selling t-shirts, signing up new members, collecting donations, giving out SPY stickers and recording the day's income from each day for the Treasurer, and

last, but not least, emailing members making requests for articles, suggesting topics for them, asking for Spy Pond Park and Pond photos for 3-4 Newsletters each year, forwarding the submissions to the President, keeping our binders up to date, and stocking the Arlington libraries with the fabulous, finished hardcopies to distribute,

the Friends of Spy Pond Park

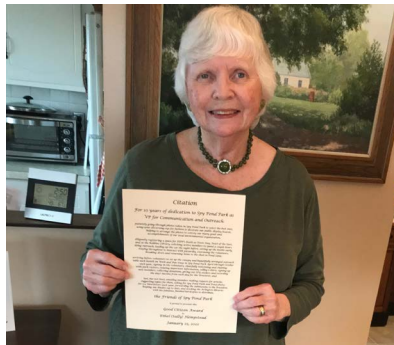
is proud to present this

Good Citizen Award

to

Ethel (Sally) Hempstead

January 23, 2022



Sally Hempstead at home with her FSPP Good Citizen's Award Citation

FSPP Saturday Work Days

By Lally Stowell, Beautification Committee

The FSPP monthly Saturday Work Days begin on May 21st 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 fill out, sign and send us a waiver form (parents

must sign for under-18s) available to download from our website. To sign up and to request community service credit afterwards contact fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org. Please let us know if you're available on the rain date, too. 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 2022. They will be held on the Saturday mornings listed below with rain dates in the afternoon the next day. 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; lallystow@icloud.com.

2022 Work Day Schedule

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

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

July 23, 8-10 a.m. (rain date July 24, 1-3 p.m.)

Aug. 13, 8-10 a.m. (rain date Aug. 14, 1-3 p.m.)

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

Oct. 15, 9-11 a.m. (rain date Oct. 16, 1-3 p.m.)

Sept 24 Fun Day 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (rain date Sept 25 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 and Fun Day activities. If you are working, please download the form from the FSPP website, fill it out and send it to fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org. Children below 18 years of age must have a parental signature to participate in Spy Pond Park Work & Fun Days.



PHOTO BY JULIE MCCRIDE

People had lots of fun on Spy Pond ice a few days this winter; however, always look out for any unfrozen section

Spy Pond Through the Centuries-Episode 3

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

What was happening by Spy Pond in the 1800's?

Ice was harvested from Spy Pond beginning in 1825, and by 1840 it was the biggest industry in town.

Blocks of ice were hand-sawn by 200+ men and dragged to shore by 150 horses. Packed in sawdust and straw, they waited in warehouses, and then were loaded onto trains and taken to Boston Harbor. (The railroad was where the bike path is now.)

Clipper ships carried 150,000 pounds of Spy Pond ice a year to India, China, Latin America and Australia. This international business ended with the Civil War, but ice was still delivered to households' ice boxes.

Abandoned Fishing Line in Arlington

By Anna Henkin

Ellen Kravitz, I think, has been tracking fishing line all over Arlington for at least a full year, but primarily has been around Menotomy Rocks Park. She has a catalogue of animals killed by fishing line, a lot of photographs, and her dog had even gotten dangerously tangled while she was walking him at one point. Her work has been very extensive, and she'd pointed out that she and her husband had tried to collect fishing line themselves and ended up with lacerations and welts many times due to how sharp it was. The new plastic line used these days is indeed extremely dangerous to handle and tangles worse than the older fabric kind. For sure, collecting it is not a job for volunteers without some training and safety equipment.

In terms of my experience with fishing line at Spy Pond, I've seen multiple trees hung with foot upon foot of fishing line, dangling over the water, I've had to untangle a duck that had gotten attached to a bench with fishing line, and I've found hooks and line all around the water's edge. I know other people have found dead animals trapped in line, and another neighbor found a duck with a hook and bobber through its wing. She was never able to get it out, that duck has probably died.

At Spy Pond, with the playground and large number of families with small children picnicking, it's only a matter of time before a rusty hook goes through a toddler's foot, or a dog's paw, or an adult's hand. Kids might pick up and get cut by, tangled in, or swallow bits of fishing line. Hell, eventually someone's bike wheels are going to pick up some line, tangle, and pitch someone forward onto their head. This is an environmental issue, an animal

safety issue, and a human safety issue. The fishing waste problem is a tragic accident waiting to happen.

The main page for Parks and Rec Commission has a blurb titled **Help Sought to Eliminate Abandoned Fishing Line** with this link:

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/town-governance/boards-and-committees/park-recreation-commission>.

Editor's note: As this year's calendar moves towards spring, bringing people back to Spy Pond to fish, we hope people who fish will be careful to collect all fishing lines and consider the danger in leaving them behind.

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

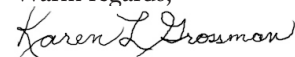
Not much happens in Spy Pond Park during winter months. However, as winter nears an end this year, there is still snow-covered ice on Spy Pond; not for long as the weather warms. The Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP) had a successful Annual Meeting in January with planning for 2022.

We will soon see the beginning of dismantling the present playground and ramp to make way for construction and installation of new equipment in that space following the KZLA design. Unfortunately, that will mean restricted use of that area of the park for a period and the extent is yet to be defined. We will have continued beautification activities in the rest of the park on monthly Saturday Work Days and during the week, on occasion.

As in the past, please watch for the annual dues/donation solicitation in May coming to your street address, if we have it, or just to your email address, if we don't. Please completely fill out the slip enclosed in the envelope, even if you have previously given us the information. We use it to facilitate our acknowledging your support for FSPP's mission. We greatly appreciate your continued involvement and/or financial contribution, to whatever extent possible.

We hope to see you in Spy Pond Park soon!

Warm regards,



Karen L. Grossman
President

Friends of Spy Pond Park

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND 2022 GOALS

FSPP Accomplishments for 2021 in addition to some of the Standing Annual Goals:

1. Monitored and influenced, as much as we could, the Conservation Commission efforts re: shoreline rehab, and path improvement in our best interests,
2. Conducted Work Days in the park May through October. Consultation with Parterre enhanced our understanding of the challenges we face in trying to control invasive plant growth. We provided more intensive invasive plant elimination and began replacing them with native plants and bushes in efforts to curb soil erosion in the planting beds along the shoreline. (Parks and Recreation financed these efforts, adding to the last of the CPA funding for the Edge Protection Project.)
3. Identified and awarded 1 worthy citizen for outstanding service to the FSPP,
4. Created a wonderful Fun Day with approximately 400 attendees, new additional stations for entertainment, education, and outreach facilitated by 34 enthusiastic volunteers, and
5. Recruited a new Treasurer, VP for Communication and Outreach, and Recording Secretary.

We suspended or had limits on achieving some goals due to Covid-19.

FSPP 2022 Goals in addition to standing goals:

1. Continue to monitor and have a strong voice in decisions, as much as we can, with the Conservation Commission and Parks Department re: shoreline rehab, path improvement and signage about the soil erosion project/care of the planting beds in the best interest of the park.
2. Work with the Parks Department and DPW to return fencing to the ends of the planting beds and around the tree at the present playground entrance.
3. Monitor Community Preservation and Parks Department Spy Pond Playground and North Ramp Renovation project efforts.
4. Have permanent number signs made for the planting beds to identify them.
5. Create a way to identify FSPP leaders during Work Days such as "FSPP Beautification".

6. Remove more invasive plants, amend soil, replace with native plants, up to 20 new plants for 2022. Acquire a sapling removing tool.
7. Create and foster a small group of youth and adults who are willing to learn more about the removal of plants and the actual physical act of planting new plants.
8. Coordinate with Hardy School 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 2022.
9. Determine the need for alternatives for handling litter/trash/recycling and investigating how other towns do it.
10. Recruit a General Vice-President, Outreach Committee member(s), Assistant Bulk Mailing Coordinator, Assistant Treasurer, and Publicity Committee member(s).
11. Recruit more FSPP active members.
12. Monitor the Town's pursuit of finances for establishing signage.
13. Identify and award 1-2 worthy citizens for outstanding service to the FSPP

Maintenance in Spy Pond Park

By Adrienne Landry, Beautification Committee

After the Beautification Team's successful work in the planting beds at Spy Pond Park last season, a plan is emerging for work on ridding the beds of invasive plants and replacing them with native plants. The plan might be called, "Toward Maintenance." To give some idea of Maintenance, once we reach a point of, say, 90% native plants, we could consider ourselves "At Maintenance." Why 90%? There seems to always be new invasive plants and some of the established ones are deemed to be invasive over time. We are always learning and trying to keep up with the current intelligence on native plants.

At 90% native, we hope that we will give nominal time to eradication and more time to the cultivation of native plants.

Before our efforts in late 2020 and 2021, I would say there were 80% invasive versus 20% native. Many native plants emerged from under the invasive plants that were taken out.

My hope for the coming year(s) is to create a small core of volunteers, in addition to those who already exist, to learn about invasive plants and how to eradicate them with the least amount of harm to the surrounding plants and the soil beneath them.

Finally, if you have knowledge of, or a desire to learn about, native plants of Massachusetts, your help would be most welcome. I have knowledge in the eradication of invasive plants, but I could also use the consult of those with more expertise in the area of native plants. Please contact me: fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org.

How to Skate Safely on Spy Pond

By Betsy Leondar-Wright



Betsy Leondar-Wright demonstrates safety techniques for ice skating

You may have heard that several people fell through the ice while skating in January and had to be rescued by Arlington firefighters. I'm sure some of you have resolved to never, ever step out onto the ice. Well, everyone has different tolerance for risk, and staying away is the safest option.

But it's glorious out there! Myself, I plan to keep ice skating and walking on the pond ice—cautiously.

Here's some advice for staying safe, from an occasional but enthusiastic skater:

- Don't go out until you see lots of other people safely skating. Usually that will be after several days and nights continuously below 20 degrees.
- Only skate or walk on areas where you see lots of skate marks. Unscratched areas are probably unscratched for a reason. Most of those who fell through went onto an untouched area where there was open water.
- Don't go out alone. Buddy up and watch out for each other.
- Don't walk or ski out when the pond is covered with snow. Unless you can see the ice, and the bubbles and leaves trapped several inches below, you can't tell where the ice may be thin or broken.
- Look down and watch for thin circles where ice-fishers drilled through. Don't be afraid if you hear cracking sounds and deep booming: that's just the ice thickening and shifting; thicker ice makes more sounds. Your warnings will be visual, not auditory.

- Carry a broom or hockey stick. If you do start to fall through, it may catch you—and if it doesn't, you can use it to reach out to a rescuer. The best technique for getting out of the water is to *not* grab the nearest edge of the ice with your hands, but to spread your body out like you're a flying squirrel and slide horizontally on your belly onto the ice. It sounds scary, but it has been done.
- The thinnest ice is along the park, because the prevailing winds blow that direction, and as ice forms, it gets broken up near the shore. Dozens of people had to wade out in January, when the edges of the ice crumbled to nothing. Fortunately, it's shallow there. But if you don't want to get cold, wet feet and ankles, enter from a different side of the pond, like near the Boys and Girls Club and Elks Club, or at the ends of the streets that run from Pleasant Street to the pond.

If you do go out on the ice next winter, you'll enjoy so much: a Bruegel-painting-like scene with toddlers on sleds, hockey games, beginning skaters and fancy twirlers, and maybe if you're lucky someone ice-sailing; seeing Elizabeth Island up close, with no leaves on the trees, when the skeleton of its land shows; black ice with its elaborate patterns of bubbles and cracks; and most of all, the whooshing sensation of gliding through the glorious wide expanse of the pond, all silver and white.

Arlington Fire Department Safety Training

By Captain Martin Conroy, Training Officer for Arlington Fire Department

The week of February 14 members of the Arlington Fire Department trained on ice rescue near Hamilton Road. We do this training several times a year; we usually try to do it in different areas around town every time. All four of our groups rotate through the training. That is why every time we are seen repeating the training for four days in a row. We train with our ice rescue sled and other devices used for surface ice rescue. We always remind the public that the only truly safe ice is in a skating rink, and to utilize the many surrounding public rinks.



A firefighter performed rescue techniques on an ice rescue sled in this practice session

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings

on
Sunday, March 20, 2022
7:00 p.m., Zoom link TBA
&
Sunday, May 15, 2022
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: Sarah Zadova (617) 782-3567
- Recording Secretary: Megan Chrisman (760) 604-8384
- Membership Secretary: Daniel Jalkut (617) 276-6672
- VPs for Communication & Outreach:
 - Lauren Bonilla (617) 987-5891
 - Jamie Ciocco jamcio@gmail.com
- Outreach Committee: Anne Ellinger (781) 646-1705
- Marshall McCloskey (617) 548-9877
- Chair for Publicity: Jenny Babon (774) 253-6325
- Publicity Committee: Open
- Beautification Committee:
 - Adrienne Landry (781) 777-2759
 - Lally Stowell
- 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 2021. 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 141 individuals, households, and foundations involved in this effort.

2021 Donations

\$500 and Above

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c/o Sniscak

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