

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Spring 2017

As Winter Passes, the Return of Spy Pond Work Days! Join Us!

By Ruth Slotnick, Beautification Committee Member

PHOTO BY RUTH SLOTNICK



Ruth Slotnick and Colin Blair flex their muscles after returning all equipment to the shed

With spring here, so are the monthly Spy Pond Park Work Days lasting from April to October. Work Days always bring an enthusiastic and collaborative team of experienced and first-time volunteers ranging from adults, youth, and children—mostly from Arlington and neighboring Belmont, who enjoy a variety of much-needed seasonal tasks for cleanups. Our Work Days all start the same—regular members arrive early to set-up the EZ-up tent, table, chairs, and waiver sign-in sheets for volunteers along with our self-designed t-shirts (which are for sale!). These items are retrieved from a nearby storage shed containing rakes, hoes, and a variety of garden tools and gloves. One regular member typically brings water, cookies from Whole Foods, and coffee from Dunkin Donuts. All these activities are performed with warm smiles and good cheer as members arrive to set up, and approximately four hours later, replace the items with pride.

While not as time intensive as the summer and autumn months, wintertime leaves behind a rough, but thawing terrain of dead vines, leaves, and sadly, a collection of debris that litters the shoreline and beds. The litter endangers the wildlife living in the beds and in the water.

This year, the Beautification Committee, led by Lally Stowell, compiled the following priorities for 2017:

- Dig a trench on both sides of the fences along the planting beds and the playground to keep away tall grasses
- Remove small branches and some logs from the shoreline and in the beds
- Remove weeds/grasses from between the cobblestones, adding vinegar
- Remove trash from the beds, playground, shoreline, and beaches
- Cut back invasive plants from the planting beds (i.e., False Indigo, Japanese Honeysuckle, Bittersweet)
- Rake the wood chips in the playground and the branches/leaves from the lawn areas
- Clear the parking lots and storm drains of fallen leaves
- Trim the hedges along the shoreline at Linwood Beach
- Trim new saplings from trees in the planting beds

Each of the above tasks takes time, repeated attention, and dedicated groups of volunteers to oversee each step along the way. All the while, the waterfowl, migrating birds, and sounds of happy children celebrate the arrival of spring while we clean.

Please join us by welcoming spring this year at the pond! If you have volunteered in the past, please join us again! If you haven't had the chance, we could really use your help this year even if it's holding open a yard waste bag or supervising a small group of teenagers.

You can drop by any time between from 10am-1:00pm to lend a hand. You can even buy a t-shirt to benefit our organization. There are always plenty of chocolate cookies, hot coffee, and appreciative smiles to go around to keep us going from one month to the next.

PHOTO BY RUTH SLOTNICK



Some of the many tools the FSPP supplies for volunteers to use

Working in the Rain

By Betty Athanasoulas

The October 22, 2016 Work Day was rescheduled for Sunday because of rain. However, the young Zhen Ren Chuan Martial Arts Center volunteers had their heart set on working on Saturday, so it was decided to go ahead with the Saturday schedule for this group and the Sunday rain day for People Making a Difference®.

I headed out for Spy Pond Park at 12:15 pm to help Lally and Marshall set up, but it was pouring and I was already thinking of my alternate plans for the afternoon. Never did I imagine finding the tent already set, the table and materials laid out, and Lally and Marshall, our intrepid leaders, patiently awaiting the arrival of the Martial Arts volunteers. I got into wishful thinking mode again and thought I would end up having the afternoon to myself after all, but then Teresa (I think that was her name) arrived to join People Making a Difference®. She didn't know of their change of plan to work on Sunday. Undeterred by the rain, Teresa was ready to work. Joe Pye Weed beckoned to be cut back, so we lost no time in picking up our tools and setting out to work.

A first-time volunteer, Teresa maximized her experience learning to identify the invasive plants as she cleared the beds, cut back Joe Pye Weed, bagged the garden waste, and brought them to the area for pick up—all accomplished by 2:15 pm. I was happy I could put to good use everything I learned over the years from Lally and the members of the Beautification Committee during our weekly walks. The soft rain, so welcome after the prolonged drought, did dampen our clothes but not our spirits. It added a marvelous new dimension to the experience. I realized that our monthly tasks might be the same, but the conditions vary and every individual or group brings to it something that makes every work experience unique. Thank you, Teresa, and Zhen Ren Chuan Martial Arts Center volunteers, for making working in the rain so much fun and, People Making a Difference®, for completing the work for the 2016 season at Spy Pond Park on Sunday, October 23. We are grateful to all the volunteers for their support and help to maintain and beautify Spy Pond Park throughout the season.

Annual Spy Pond Trails Day

Saturday, May 13th, 9am-1pm

Please mark your calendar to join the Spy Pond Environmental Task Group on Spy Pond (along the path that parallels Route 2 between Lake St. and Pleasant St.) for the annual day of trail maintenance, pruning vistas, bagging litter, controlling invasive plants, and generally improving this scenic slice of public land so enjoyed by all. Recommended parking: exit 60 off Rt. 2, head towards Mass. Ave. (N) on Lake St., first left onto Colonial Drive, left onto Roanoke, left and park along Spy Pond Parkway.

Area Events

Parks, People & Power

Wed., April 5, 2017 6:30-8:00 pm, Partners Healthcare, 399 Revolution Drive, Somerville, MA 02145

The Mystic River Watershed Association invites you to a lecture featuring Alexie Torres-Fleming. Alexie, award-winning speaker, activist, community organizer, advocate and urban planner from the South Bronx, NY, co-founded the Brox River Alliance and the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance. She will share her story of creating a community driven movement to revitalize parks along the Bronx River. Following the lecture, there will be a panel with Ms. Torres-Fleming, Amber Christophersen, Mystic Greenways Director and Roseann Bongiovanni, Executive Director of GreenRoots, discussing how a democratic, participatory and innovative process can transform parks—and communities—along the Mystic River.

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/parks-people-power-building-a-movement-for-the-mystic-greenways-tickets-32472313564>

Beers and Cheers for the Mystic

April 13, 6:00-9:00 pm, Nightshift Brewing Company, 87 Santilli Hwy, Everett • Live Music by Billy Holiday

The annex at Night Shift Brewing in Everett will be full of excellent craft beer and Mystic enthusiasts, complete with live music. Come out and support efforts to protect and restore our rivers, and learn about volunteer opportunities starting this spring. All funds from your \$20 ticket support the Mystic River Watershed Association and include a beer and entry into a raffle for some awesome Patagonia gear.

\$20 entry includes a beer and a raffle ticket- to buy a ticket, visit www.mysticriver.org/events

<https://night-shift-brewing.myshopify.com/products/beers-cheers-for-the-mystic>

21st Annual Mystic River Herring Run & Paddle

Saturday, May 20, 2017 • Run, walk, paddle or bike for the fish!

The Mystic River Herring Run and Paddle includes a 5Krun/walk race, three paddling races (3, 9, and 12 miles), educational booths, children's activities, and more. All events are held at the DCR Blessing of the Bay Boathouse in Somerville. The 5Kcourse continues along the Mystic River bike path and through DCR Torbert MacDonald Park. There are no street crossings on this flat course.

www.mysticriver.org/herring-run-paddle

2017 FSPP Work & Fun Days

By Lally Stowell

The FSPP monthly Saturday Work Days begin on April 29th 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 three 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 sign a waiver form (parents must sign for under-18s).

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 Days for 2016. They will be held on the Saturday mornings listed below from 10 a.m. -1 p.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 a record number of eager volunteers this year! For more information, contact Lally Stowell; lallystow@yahoo.com.

April 29, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date April 30 1-4 p.m.)

May 20, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date May 21 1-4 p.m.)

June 24, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date June 25 1-4 p.m.)

July 22, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date July 23 1-4 p.m.)

Aug. 19, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date Aug 20 1-4 p.m.)

Sept. 23, 10 a.m. 1 p.m. (rain date Sept 24 1-4 p.m.)

Oct. 21 10 a.m. -1p.m. (rain date Oct 22 1-4 p.m.)

Sept 9 Fun Day 10 -1 p.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 the above Work and Fun Day activities. If you are working, please download the form 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 activities sponsored by the FSPP.

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

After being confronted with March snowstorms, we encountered the official first day of spring! Although the days are brighter now, due to springing forward on the clock, we still eagerly await the warm weather that suffered a false start just a short time ago. After all, this is New England and we'll be blessed with flowers and sunny seasonal days before we know it, just believe.... The first Work Day is later in April this year, so we hope you'll do your part during visits to the park by picking up litter on your own before that time.

The Spy Pond Edge Protection and Erosion Control Project has moved along and, hopefully, will be funded once again by Town Meeting with other CPA proposals. Please offer words of support to your district representatives. The Conservation Commission has also applied for supplemental funding from another source for the paths and educational signage. We'll hear about additional measures later this year as the Conservation Commission completes permitting and readies for construction in 2018.

The call for artists to design and paint the park bench in the tot lot play area in Spy Pond Park resulted in several submissions. The committee: Adria Arch, Arlington Public Art, Karen L. Grossman, FSPP, and Jon Marshall, Director of Parks and Recreation, has selected a design that will be installed on the bench sometime over the summer. We'll be announcing the result in the FSPP Summer newsletter. Come to the park to watch for the bench's transformation!

Please watch your mail for our 2017 dues and donation solicitation that will be coming your way soon. We appreciate your involvement in any way you can support our goals: as a volunteer in the park and/or via being a source of funds. We are grateful for all our Friends of Spy Pond Park!

Sincerely,



Karen L. Grossman

President

Friends of Spy Pond Park



Spring is here at Spy Pond

**Friends of Spy Pond Park
next meetings
at
Karen Grossman's
Sunday, April 2, 2017 &
Sunday, June 4, 2017
both at 7:00 p.m.
32 Hamilton Road #402**

RSVP (optional) to 781-646-5990
email fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

Park on Linwood Street off Mass. Ave. or on Lakehill off
Lake St. at the far end of the complex.

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: Marshall McCloskey	(617) 548-9877
Recording Secretary: Open	
VPs for Communication & Outreach:	
Sally Hempstead	(860) 944-1370
Jamie Ciocco	jamcio@gmail.com
Chair for Publicity: Elaine Crowder	(781) 648-1927
Beautification Committee:	
Betty Athanasoulas	(781) 646-1343
Gail McCormick	(781) 646-0614
Richard Norcross	(781) 641-2404
Ruth Slotnick	(813) 732-2639
Lally Stowell	(781) 777-2759
Beverly Williams	(781) 316-1917
Web Committee: Fred Moses	fred@fmoses.com
Deepak Bidwai	deepbidwai@gmail.com
Chair for Outreach/Park Events:	
Betsy Leondar-Wright	(781) 648-0630
Fundraising Chair: Open	
Photographer and Videographer:	
Ram Subramanian	ramkumar@gmail.com

Newsletter contributions and general comments can be sent to
fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

Friends of Spy Pond Park • <http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org> • P.O. Box 1051 • Arlington, MA 02474-0021

What I See at Spy Pond

By Carolyn Kipp

I grew up in Arlington from 1973 through about 1994 and lived on Thorndike Street. During my college finals, studying was very noisy around where I lived, given Alewife construction at the time. I used to walk down to Spy Pond all the time to study. One day, I wrote this poem. I've just kept it to myself but thought I'd share it. I live in Mansfield now but my heart will always be in Arlington. It might be fun for kids (and adults) to try to figure out what I was looking at.

A million tiny flashes
Bright like silver eyes winking.
I stare at these magnificent mirrors while thinking
A billion flickering stars
With no other purpose than to dance, and dance, and dance on.
I wonder if the ducks and geese can see
What I see at Spy Pond.

Editor's note: You can send your guesses about what Carolyn was looking at, if you'd like, to: fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org and we'll forward your ideas to her.

Fleeting Thoughts about Spy Pond Park While Preparing for Tax Filing

By Colin Blair, faithful FSPP volunteer

Most times that I go over to Spy Pond Park, two things stand out:

One, it appeals to people of all ages, even teenagers. Best are kids with grandparents, looking at the water and birds from the very edge, and

Two, it's so quiet. No car noise at all, no trucks backing in. What a difference from Massachusetts Avenue only 2-300 yards away! One could be out at Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary in Lincoln.

I can't wait for the snowless days of cleanup!



Sally Hempstead and Marshall McCloskey sign up volunteers

PHOTO BY RUTH SLOTNICK