



Andover Village
Improvement Society
Andover's Land Trust
Founded 1894

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avis update

Wardens Grobicki and Stoica Make a Formidable Team

By Mags Phelps

Deer Jump Reservation spans roughly 174 acres and is sought after for its scenic trails following the Merrimack River. Both AVIS wardens and the neighboring Conservation Commission stewards work to conserve the highlands and wetlands that will never be built on. Nearby and down river are the Town's Retelle Reservation and the Greater Lawrence Technical School. The part of Deer Jump from Launching Road to the Town land is under the protection by Wardens Chris Grobicki and George Stoica.

Chris started as a solo warden back in 2018, when he was asked to help on site as a local resident to the reservation. Back in 2018, the Deer Jump reservation was in a lot worse condition than it stands today. The trail receives more traction from casual hikers due to its lower elevation and shorter 2.2 mile loop. However, since trees can get two to three ft in diameter, and often fall during storms, it's important to clear fallen trees immediately, as they can be really hard to traverse. Chris recounts a veteran once thanking him for the trail clearing, as it made the trail more accessible for an intermediate hiker.

Early on into his career, Chris asked neighbor, George Stoica, to join him in being a warden. George was known for clearing trees in the area for a neighbor. Chris described him as "fearless with the chainsaw, but cautious".

George shared that in Romania, he would spend a lot of time in the forest with his grandparents, as his grandmother would forage for mushrooms and he'd cut down trees with his grandfather. "American forests are not the same; but they are close to me and to my heart," he smiled.

Deer Jump today requires constant trail maintenance as well as continuing Andover's goal of land stewardship. For Chris and George working together as partners, this means protecting the land from invasive species like buckthorn and bittersweet. In AVIS there is more emphasis on caring for the land than acquiring the land. They agree.

Their partnership more than doubles the care for this part of the Deer Jump Trail with the goal of connecting locals back to the wonderful trail AVIS has to offer.

Mags Phelps is a student intern for AVIS trustee Mark Kaluzny in Ms Cutler's environmental internship program at Andover High School. She is focusing on the removal of invasive species on the Vale Trail in BallardVale and is creating environmental lesson plans for elementary school children. She is aiming to pursue forestry in college.



Left to right, Warden Chris Grobicki and Warden George Stoica

Goldsmith Woodlands All Persons Trail and ADA Compliant Parking Improvements

By Susan Stott AVIS Trustee

AVIS first considered developing an All Persons Trail when Peter Jensen (<https://www.trailbuilders.com/>) visited the Goldsmith Woodlands and other AVIS reservations in the winter of 2017. Jensen was the early father of All Persons Trails. I also visited the Charles Ward Reservation on that trip. I was with several AVIS people who walked the trail out to Bessie's Point at Goldsmith Woodlands with Jensen. At that time I thought developing an All Persons Trail would be too expensive and I was not yet convinced of the need.

We all observed how important being in the woods was to the many people who walked the AVIS trails during COVID. Now I have accompanied several friends who use either wheelchairs or "walkers" on an All Persons Trail (APT) in Concord, similar to the APT the Appalachian Mountain Club professional trail crew will build for AVIS in the Goldsmith Woodlands. This new APT will enable people with mobility challenges to visit Bessie's Point, see the lady slippers and hear the wood frogs in the spring.

As I researched the history of the Goldsmith Woodlands I learned a lot. Bessie Goldsmith left the 130-acre woodlands in trust with the Boston Safe Deposit Company in 1962. At that time Bessie Goldsmith also established The Fund for the Preservation of Wildlife and Natural Areas, also left in Trust with the Boston Safe Deposit Company. There was an access easement to walk across land owned by others from Rt 28 to the Goldsmith Woodlands and Fosters Pond, but no place to park off the state highway.



Sarah Young at Goldsmith Woodlands Kiosk. AVIS is planning to build an All Persons Trail to go out to Bessie's Point soon.

Courtesy photo

continued on next page ►

In 1977, AVIS President, Nat Smith, negotiated a lease agreement with the Boston Safe Deposit Company that allowed AVIS to maintain the Goldsmith Woodlands and its trails. AVIS received modest funding from the Fund for Wildlife and Natural Areas to support its work caring for the Goldsmith Woodlands. In 1996 the Boston Safe Deposit Company merged its assets into The Boston Foundation and the lease agreement, recorded at the Registry of Deeds, went with the land transfer and modest distributions from the Fund for Wildlife and Natural Areas continued.

In 2000, the house and land at 491 South Main St. came on the market. Dave Doub, Peggy Keck, chair of the AVIS Land Acquisition Committee, David Dargie and others negotiated the purchase. The Boston Foundation provided most of the funding, through a grant and a loan from the Fund for Wildlife and Natural Areas.

The access easement to the Goldsmith Woodlands went across the parcel at 497 South Main St. In 2004, AVIS worked with the owner to subdivide the lot, leaving the uplands with the house and acquiring the land with the easement and the wetlands. After acquiring the land, AVIS obtained permission from the Conservation Commission to develop a small parking area with about 10 spaces so visitors could park off the state highway.

About four years ago AVIS became concerned about the wetlands at the parking area. Over the past 20 years stormwater run-off, snowplowing and visitors parking large vehicles have encroached on the wetlands. The American Disabilities Act compliant parking improvements will solve the safety problem along the state highway, replicate the wetlands in another location and provide good, handicapped parking spaces at the trailhead.

AVIS is very pleased with the generosity of the almost 200 donors to the 2024 Annual Appeal. We know AVIS now has the funds to complete the trail and replicate the wetlands in the summer of 2025, but we know we have a huge effort still ahead of us to complete the parking improvements in 2026.

Thank you to all who have supported this project to date.

Climate Ready Shawsheen is Topic of AVIS Annual Meeting on April 22

Talking about the Climate Ready Shawsheen at AVIS Annual Meeting on April 22 are in the foreground, Dr. Joyce Losick-Yang, the Town of Andover's Director of Sustainability and Energy; left, Dr. Alex Maxwell, Fuss & O'Neil, senior environmental planner and on the right, Ben Meade, the Town of Andover's Conservation Commission's Agent. Courtesy photo.



President's Letter By John Hess

As we start a new year it is great to look back and see what was accomplished in 2024. Volunteers on the Eco Team provided 850 volunteer hours of work to address the invasive plants in the properties managed by AVIS. All of us should offer a hearty "thank you" to this group of 50-60 individuals.



And, of course, we must also thank the Wardens and Rangers who continue to do such an excellent job to keep the reservations open and safe for visitors.

Others are working behind the scenes doing such tasks, such as Nick Haddon, organizing the AVIS archives who is helping AVIS assure that our records are properly documented and stored in a safe place, including digitally where appropriate.

Thank you to Annie Gilbert and to Stewart Monderer and the other volunteers who helped organize a very successful photo contest to help preserve memories of iconic AVIS sites. The photo contest ended in November 2024 and the winners along with honorable mentions will be on display at the Robb Center until March 28th, 2025 with an additional exhibit at the Memorial Hall Library during the month of June.

Progress continues to be made on the All Persons Trail planned for Goldsmith Woodlands, a way of making the outdoors more accessible. We must thank Susan Stott and the others who are working to make this a reality.

Anyone interested in helping with these tasks may contact AVIS through the website volunteer tab or by writing to me directly.

Of course, thank you to you, our members, for your generosity in supporting AVIS as we move forward in response to the challenges that we face.

The Annual Meeting of the Andover Village Improvement Society/AVIS

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

6:00 p.m. (cocktails, dinner)

7:30 p.m. (meeting, speakers)

at the Cormier Youth Center in Andover. The cocktail (cash bar) and dinner portion of the event requires a reservation and pre-payment. Tickets are \$60 each. (AVIS Wardens and Eco Team Volunteers may purchase a discounted ticket for \$30). Payment must be sent no later than:

- April 11 (for credit card payment. See below for the link.)
- April 4 (for check payment. Mail checks to AVIS c/o Jude Livermore 175 Summer St. Andover, MA 01810.

The meeting/speaker part is open to all members free of charge. The speakers will be presenting Climate Ready Shawsheen. All members planning to attend are requested to please RSVP using the form on our website or via the QR Code on page 6.

Please visit the AVIS website for more information about this and other AVIS events at www.avisandover.org

List of AVIS Donors 2024

We can never thank our supporters, volunteers and donors enough! Through the **Bessie P. Goldsmith Fund**, the Boston Foundation made a significant donation to enhance a wetland viewing areas as well as continuing their annual \$5,000 for equipment, improvements and maintenance on the Goldsmith Woodlands property.

Annual Appeal Donors: your financial support enables AVIS to keep our reservations safe and open to the public to enjoy. Thank you!

Nan Agostino	Stephen Derby	Kevin Keller	Natasha Orrick	Sipra Shah
Jennifer Anderson	Suanne Dillman	John Kimball	John Pasquale	Tracy Sioussat
Stephen Andrews	Sheila Doherty	Paul King	James Patterson	Nathaniel B. Smith
Debbie Andrews	John Doherty	James Klauer	Morgan von Prelle Pecille	Marjorie Snell
Chris Andrews	Dave Doub	Christopher Klein	Howard Perkins	Buzz Stapczynski
Tony Aponick	Alix Driscoll	Jennifer Knight	Joanne Pisapia	Susan Stott
Thomas Appleby	Jame Duff	Lyndia Lamson	Tim Platt	David Strong
Tom Appleton	Marie Dupic	James Landy	Elizabeth Poland	John Sullivan
Linda Ardito	Bruce Earnley	Ann Lange	Kevin Porter	Richard Sumberg
Rebecca Backman	Cynthia Egan	Frederick Lauten	Mary Pritchard	Valerie Swett
Peter Bagley	Bini Egertson	Joel Leider	Paul Quirnbach	Peter Symosek
David Barcelo	David Eikenberry	JoAnn. Leitch	Patricia Recesso	Bev Therkelsen
Peter Barmettler	Jonathan Fain	Connie LeMaitre	Jim Reilly	Karl Thiele
John Bartlett	Denise Englehart	Sandra Levine	Mike Reilly	Richard Tiberii
Samantha Beati	Carl Famiglietti	Kenneth Levis	Sue Rice	David Tringali
Gregory Beaumier	George Fantini	Allison Lex	Ronais Rieder	Arthur Tucker
Ellen Bedrosian	Susan Feindt	David Liberatore	Jane Roberts	Yu Tucker
Victoria Bernard	Richard Fink	Richard Lindsay	Willard Robinson	Alina Tverskoy
Champa Bilwakesh	Gregory Finlay	Bruce Littlefield	Dan Rooney	David Wahr
Robert Birenbaum	Gary Fischer	Priscilla Loring	Bonnie Rosencrantz	Helen Walter
Elizabeth Black	Kathleen Fitzpatrick	John Lucas	Cheryl Rothstein	Robert Ward
Judy Eskin Blumstein	Bonnie Floyd	John MacMillan	Aline Rubin	Mike Wartman
Philip Bogdanovitch	Marie Flynn	Michael Mangione	John Ryan	Samuel Washburn
Jennifer Bouchard	Molly Foley	John Marocco	Bernard Savord	Joanne Weightman
Bonnie Bourdelais	Alan French	Amy Matuza	Donna Schneider	George Wermers
Patricia Boutin-Skene	Shirley French	Beth Mazin	Peter Schwarz	David Wilde
David Brown	Kay Frishman	John McArdle	Anne Gemmell Schwind	Shawn Williams
Don Bulens	Jane Gifun	Cheryl McKeough	Gregory Sebasky	Karen Wise
William Burke	Annie Gilbert	John McNabb	Donalda Secor	John Zielin
Lori Buseck	Tina Girdwood	Dave Meehan	James Sellers	
Russ Cannizzaro	Andrew M. Girdwood	Karl Mellin		
Joan Canterbury	Ben Goldthwaite	Joseph Messina		
Matthew Carbone	Elizabeth Griffin	Barbara Mohrman		
Rob Catterton	Chris Grobicki	Brian Mooney		
Alexander Chanler	Ellen Guthrie	Nancy Mulvey		
Vijayasimham Channamsetty	Anne Halsey	John W. Murphy		
Gary Clarke	Joyce Harris	Cathy Nackel		
Jean Cookson	Alan Harris	Bob Nelken		
Donna Cooper	Daniel Hayes	Wendy Nevin		
Dennis Crispo	John Hess	Samuel Nork		
Melissa Cryan	Rowena Hodges	Danielle O'Brien		
Anne Cussen	Frank Hopkins	Maureen O'Brien		
Matt Dallett	David Houston	Dermot O'Farrell		
Carolyn Dann	Timothy Jackson	Fran O'Neil		
Richard Davis	Norman Jacobs	Deb Olander		
Tom Davis	Amy Janovsky	Bevolyn Oliver		
Elizabeth DeLucia	Calvin Jayne	Judith Olmstead		
	Lynne Kasparian	Jim Oppenheim		



Children play on the Octopus Tree in the Shawshen Reservation

All about the Eco Team

By Lynn Landry, Eco Team Leader and Amy Janovsky Land Management Committee Member



Eco Team volunteers hard at work

Eco Team is a fun way to learn about AVIS reservations and to explore the trails. The group focuses on hands-on approaches to identifying and removing invasive plants and encouraging and adding back native species. Come for the season or just a session or two, whatever your schedule permits.

Last year, Eco Team volunteers logged more than 850 hours working in 11 reservations. Along the way, we caught up with old friends, helped newcomers meet new friends, witnessed the joy of teenagers working alongside retirees, had fun with tools that leverage our strength, alleviated some depression, and shared lots of muffins.

The program taps into the urgency many people feel about averting climate change impacts by offering ongoing opportunities.

The Eco Team actively connects with other town organizations like the Conservation Department, school and church groups, and the Andover Pollinator Pathway group. Students can fulfill their community service hours with just a couple of sessions.

Sign up for the Eco Team email list at HamletofLynn@gmail.com. Read more and get session updates at <https://blog.avisandover.org/2025/01/avis-eco-team/>.

2025 Season Calendar (weather permitting).

3/29	Saturday 8:30-11:00	8/2	Saturday 8:30-11:00
4/12	Saturday 8:30-11:00	8/16	Saturday 8:30-11:00
4/26	Saturday 8:30-11:00	8/30	Saturday 8:30-11:00
5/10	Saturday 8:30-11:00	9/13	Saturday 8:30-11:00
5/24	Saturday 8:30-11:00	9/27	Saturday 8:30-11:00
6/7	Saturday 8:30-11:00	10/11	Saturday 8:30-11:00
6/21	Saturday 8:30-11:00	10/19	Sunday 1:00-3:30
6/29	Sunday 1:00-3:30	11/1	Saturday 8:30-11:00
7/6	Sunday 1:00-3:30	11/15	Saturday 8:30-11:00
7/19	Saturday 8:30-11:00	11/29	Saturday 8:30-11:00



Tea Time Hikes: Try Exploring Andover

By Mark Kaluzny, AVIS Trustee

These hikes will be the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, 10 a.m. through June. The hikes visit various combinations of properties belonging to:

- Andover Village Improvement Society (AVIS)
- Andover Conservation Commission reservations
- Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
- Friends of North Andover Trails (FONAT)
- Trustees of Reservations
- Tewksbury Conservation
- These reservations are interconnected; one can go seamlessly between properties. See AVISANDOVER.ORG for further information about each hike.



Tea Time Hikes around Andover Leader and AVIS Trustee Mark Kaluzny. Courtesy photo

Thursday, March 13, 2025	Bay Circuit Trail: Deer Jump and Harold Rafton reservations.
Thursday, March 27, 2025	Bay Circuit Trail through the Charles Ward Reservation.
Thursday, April 10, 2025	Bay Circuit Trail: Andover to the Tewksbury Spur.
Thursday, April 24, 2025	Hike along the Shawsheen River through the Shawsheen, Vale and Greene reservations.
Thursday, May 8, 2025	Bay Circuit Trail: Harold Parker State Forest to the Skug River Reservation.
Thursday, May 22, 2025	Bay Circuit Trail: Ward Hill to Skug River.
Thursday, June 12, 2025	West Parish, Indian Ridge, Shawsheen and Vale reservations to Poms Pond.
Thursday, June 26, 2025	Hike through Den Rock Park and Phillips Academy Bird Sanctuary.

Andover Deer Hunt

By Lt. Robert M. Dalton Jr., Deer Hunt Coordinator

We have just completed another successful and seamless season of the controlled bow hunt. Deer sightings have trended down since we began the program 14 years ago.

Deer typically give birth to 1-2 fawns a year. We saw many does without any young and very few with twins. This is probably due to the continued increase in predators.

Many hunters have been reporting bobcat sightings. We also had many reports of coyotes, fishers and a bear sighting at Fish Brook and Rafton reservations. These predators all prey on young deer. The combination of predators and hunting pressure is helping to restore ecological balance. The goal is to bring the population down to sustainable levels and, in return, reduce the pressure on the natural vegetation and wildflowers. The lower strata of forest susceptible to overbrowsing by deer is vital to many birds and animals; it is their habitat and is required for survival.

MassWildlife monitors our deer herd and adjusts the harvest based on the target population estimate that they deem the habitat can support. A decade ago when a forester visited some Town Conservation lands to discuss possible timber harvesting, the overpopulation of deer was a concern. Upon the forester's return this year, deer were not of concern as adequate forest regeneration was observed.

Reducing the deer population has been a regional effort between private homeowners, the Town of Andover and other towns, and conservation groups such as AVIS, Trustees and Massachusetts Audubon Society.

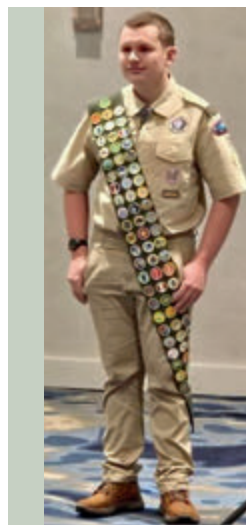
We were one of the first to join this effort. AVIS has been used as an example throughout Essex County as more land continues to be opened up to deer management. It is a win-win as it appears the deer population is trending in the right direction and, in return, hunters are able to procure healthy meals for their families and to help feed hungry people.



Lt. Robert M. Dalton Jr., Coordinator of the Andover Deer Hunt 2024



Indigenous Peoples Day hike started at the Orrick Bench including members of AVIS and Andover Trails. Courtesy Photo



AVIS Warden Earns All Scout Badges

Jimmy Poirier, Andover Eagle Scout with Troop 79 and a co-warden of the Harold Rafton Reservation of AVIS, has earned 139 Scout badges. That's the total number of merit badges a Scout can earn. Jimmy is an honors senior at Essex

Agricultural and Technical School in Danvers and aims to pursue a degree in forestry, possibly at the University of Vermont or the University of Maine. Courtesy Photo

On the Path to Becoming Eagle Scouts

By Buzz Stapczynski

Kyle Haskell, Troop 77, has completed the boardwalk in the Vale Reservation in the Shawsheen River area subject to seasonal flooding.

Martin Bragg and Spencer Thoma, both Troop 77, made significant improvements to the Deer Jump Trail along the Merrimack River. They removed 200 feet of old and dangerous boardwalks and substituted with new boardwalks that are safer and easier to access.

Owen Chatterji, Troop 77, built a new boardwalk in the Andover Highlands Reservation. This boardwalk opens up a new trail in an area subject to seasonal flooding and a new access to the reservation from Highland Road.

Nick Magner, Troop 77, also built a boardwalk in the same reservation also in an area of flooding. In addition, Nick constructed a kiosk in the Reservation to provide trail information to hikers.



Owen Chatterji, Troop 77, is delighted that he and fellow scouts built a new boardwalk in the Andover Highlands Reservation. This boardwalk opens up a new trail in an area subject to seasonal flooding and a new access to the reservation from Highland Road. Courtesy photo

AVIS Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Dues: _____ \$30 Individual _____ \$100 Sustaining
_____ \$50 Family _____ \$15 Student & Senior

You can join or renew online at www.avisandover.org/join.html or make check payable to "AVIS" and mail to :

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For information about planned giving or stock donations contact info@avisandover.org. Contributions and dues are tax deductible to the extent permitted by federal regulations. Thank you!

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For additional AVIS events see
AVISANDOVER.ORG

To check for other hikes visit
ANDOVERTRAILS.ORG

For AMC walks see
AMCBOSTON.ORG

The AVIS Update is a biannual publication of The Andover Village Improvement Society. The mission of AVIS is to acquire and preserve Andover land in its natural state. More than 1,200 acres of land are managed by AVIS and are open to all for passive recreation.

AVIS Annual Meeting, Tuesday April 22, 6 p.m. cocktails and dinner; 7:30 meeting and speakers, <https://avisandover.org>.



TEA Time Hikes: Try exploring Andover, second and fourth Tuesdays, 10 a.m., led by Mark Kaluzny, avisandover.org. March 13 - June 26, 2025.

AVIS Photo Contest, hanging at the Robb Center until March 28.

Skunk Cabbage Unfurling ©James Doucett is the Grand Winner of the AVIS Photography Contest. The photo exhibit will run at the Robb Center until March 28th. Then it will be at Memorial Hall Library for the month of June.



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