



Andover Village
Improvement Society
Andover's Land Trust
Founded 1894

Fall 2016
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avis update

AVIS Starts Capital Campaign to Protect Merrimack River

By Susan Stott

AVIS is asking the public to contribute to a capital campaign to raise \$400,000 to purchase a portion of the former Franciscan property on River Road in Andover. In 1930 the Society of the Friars (Franciscans) purchased the former Hood farm in Andover, just east of the Tewksbury town line on the Merrimack River, to build a seminary to educate young men. In 1992 AVIS negotiated a license with the Franciscans for the St. Francis Trail across this property along the Merrimack River. The Bay Circuit Trail runs over this half mile trail as well as two miles east and west across the AVIS Deer Jump and Spalding Reservations along the river.

This is a very special property. Not only does it protect the river (Lawrence, Methuen and Andover have intakes for their water supplies downstream) and the Bay Circuit Trail, but botanist Walter Kittredge wrote the following: "I first walked this section (the Franciscan property) on Labor Day in 1982 as a young botanist, and was immediately impressed with how different this forest felt, as though one had entered a cathedral, with its towering arched trees. This mature stand of Oak-Pine-Hemlock Forest is uncommon in our area, requiring cool steep north-facing seep slopes like this one."

A primary goal in the Andover Master Plan and the Andover Open Space and Recreation Plan is: "The Saint Francis Seminary land along the river, now 69 acres, is a prominent feature of the scenic beauty of Andover's Merrimack River frontage. AVIS has a license to maintain a trail along the river, but it can be terminated at any time. The town or AVIS should make a major effort to acquire this beautiful river frontage, particularly if any change in use is contemplated."

In 1996 Melmark Inc. established a school for autistic children adjacent to the seminary and leased land from the Franciscans for parking and other purposes.

In 2013 the Town passed the Senior Residential Community Overlay District, permitting denser development on the Franciscan land while requiring 30 percent of the land to become permanently protected open space. Control of the Franciscan parcel is essential to Melmark's mission. Melmark obtained an option on the land from the Franciscans and sought a senior housing developer for the land closest to River Rd. Melmark selected Pulte Homes and obtained permitting for the senior housing development in early 2016. Melmark acquired the land from the Franciscans in July 2016.

In 2015, after Melmark designated 34 acres which AVIS might acquire along the river, AVIS obtained an appraisal and negotiated a price with Melmark. AVIS and Melmark signed a P&S in March 2016. About 26 acres is available for acquisition in early 2017 and the remaining 8 acres in 2018. Another 8 acres will be given to AVIS by Pulte Homes.

The \$400,000 AVIS campaign for the Franciscan purchase includes \$292,545 for the 26.6 acre parcel and \$88,000 for the 8 acre parcel, plus \$19,455 to fund trail stewardship. To date AVIS has commitments of just over \$200,000 from three foundations and several leadership donors. AVIS has applied for additional grants and will reach out to its membership and all its leadership donors. We ask you to give generously to the campaign to acquire and permanently protect the Franciscan parcel. Donations can be sent directly to the AVIS address or donors may contact an AVIS Trustee for more information.

Deer Jump Work Parties by AMC

by Annette Grams

Two separate work parties from the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) worked on the Deer Jump Reservation this summer. The crews, with guidance from Warden Carl Hayssen, provided erosion control and new steps on both ends of the meadow near Ravens Bluff. In one case, they installed more than twenty-one (21) steps and two water bars to divert water off the trail at the top of the slope. AMC is now managing the Bay Circuit Trail. The Bay Circuit is a permanent recreation trail and greenway extending through 37 towns in Eastern Massachusetts, linking parks and open spaces in fifty-seven Boston area communities. For more information go to www.baycircuit.org.



Photo by Annette Grams

An Interview with Susan Hunt, Warden of Shawsheen River Reservation

By Alix Driscoll

Why would one gild a lily, or beautify a serene riverbank, so to speak? Susan Hunt does just that most admirably. As Co-Warden of the Shawsheen River Reservation she has taken on the duty to bring even more beauty to the area by creating a stone planter filled with native wildflowers at the trailhead by the Horn Bridge. Two years ago she hefted New England fieldstone into a six-foot oval after pouring a solid cement foundation to withstand the floods. Lupine, columbines and many pollinators grace her planter; wildflowers also are woven into the river's bank. As Susan says: "Its value is without price." And so it is.

"I did this because I could. These reservations are invaluable to me. Any opportunity I have to give back is the least I can do for the lifetime of enjoyment AVIS has given to me," shared Hunt.

She was guided by Ranger John Wragg and fellow Warden Don Milligan.

Realistically she noted that without volunteers the many AVIS reservations, and the town-owned parcels, would be shambles. Hunt has been working on the AVIS reservations for eight years and it seems she has always known about AVIS lands; they were her playgrounds from her childhood days. Her roots run deep; there are at least five generations of Andover natives in her family including Hunts, Hendersons and Eldreds, and she knows lots of lore. She relates one curious tale of a Dick or Richard Eldred who planted trees in the Shawsheen meadow area about six decades ago. Presumably, when seen from the air, the trees spell out his initials.

Susan is convinced that because now there is more development the accessibility to AVIS and to other preserved open space is more necessary than ever.

Other projects

At Baker's Meadow, Hunt has built a culvert bridge from fieldstones. To punctuate her handiwork her whole family wrestled a



A Work in Progress: Close up of the wall and plants that Susan Hunt is adding to the Trail Head at the Shawsheen River Reservation. Photo by John Hess

900-pound boulder into place with a crowbar to protect the little bridge. This dovetails nicely with the work of an Eagle Scout, a member of Troop 76 in Ballardvale.

At the new Sakowich Reservation on Oriole Drive, Hunt tore down and rebuilt a double-faced stonewall. "The stones lay themselves out" she says.

She has built a small headwall to a drainage ditch at West Parish Meadow next to Reservation Road. Ranger John Wragg graciously has overseen several of her constructions.

Susan's next project is to plant more native plants at the Shawsheen River Reservation, and hopefully put another flowerbed along the Shawsheen Greenway.

"I've got a lifetime ahead!"

When not creating beautiful natural structures and planting wildflowers, Hunt leads Susan Lorraine's Landscape Design LLC and is studying environmental science.



Sanborn Reservation Warden Burt Batcheller speaks to a group while hiking on Meg's Trail as part of the dedication ceremonies held on 4/23/16 for the expanded Sanborn Reservation. Photo by Fred Snell

Financial Report for CY2015

By Matt Dallett

Income		Operating Expense	
Membership Dues	\$ 22,830	Fundraising	\$ 419
Contributions/Grants	51,529	Program Services	32,991
Investment	15,860	Management &	20,877
Other	10,997	General	
Total	\$ 101,216	Total	\$ 55,305

Improvements to Reservations	\$ 5,092
Land Acquisition	\$ 212,049

The expenses above do not include the tens of thousands of dollars' worth of time contributed by volunteers, including Wardens, Trustees, work parties, and pro bono lawyers and graphic designers, who do the work to keep AVIS running and its reservations available for the public.

Withdrawal of the Proposed Natural Gas Pipeline

By John Hess

On April 22, 2016, Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company filed a letter with FERC indicating that: "As a result of inadequate capacity commitments from prospective customers and a determination that the Project is uneconomic, Kinder Morgan, Inc., Tennessee's parent company, announced on April 20, 2016 that the company would suspend further work and expenditures on the Project." Then, on May 23, 2016, Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company filed a letter withdrawing its application. AVIS is pleased that the Nat Smith Reservation as well as other conservation land and private homeowners are no longer threatened by this pipeline. AVIS tried to provide information to the public about this project and thanks all those who wrote letters and/or attended meetings.

New Map Tool Makes Accessing Andover's Rivers, Trails and Ponds Even Easier

By Steve Golden

Ever wonder where to launch a boat, bike on a quiet road, or hike in Andover's expansive trails network? A new web-based map app has been developed by the Andover Outdoor Challenge team, with the support of the Andover Trails Committee, to take the guess work out of how to find the best locations to paddle, pedal and hike. Best yet it is free and can be opened on your smart phone, so you can use it in the field. Developed in coordination with the town of Andover GIS department, this tool will soon have the capacity to link you to many other resources in Town for deeper exploration.

The new "Andover Mass. Trails & Rivers Web App," (andovertrails.org/map) includes overlays for hiking, biking, and paddling, and provides the location of boat launches, bike routes, and parking to access our Town's expansive trails network. A valuable complement to the map is the information on current conditions, events and programs provided to those that sign-up at the 2016 Andover Challenge Signup Page. By adding your name to the list of enthusiasts, you will stay connected to the network of like-minded walkers, paddlers, and cyclists in Town.

If you have questions about how to use this new map, or about the Andover Outdoor Challenge send an email to andoverchallenge@gmail.com

Shawsheen River Greenway Dedication

By John Hess

AVIS and the Town of Andover Conservation Commission recently acquired two parcels of land at the end of South St. in Andover (accessed through Tewksbury) along the Shawsheen River. The AVIS parcel was previously owned by the Tisbert family and the Town of Andover parcel was a portion of the solar farm. These two parcels, added to the original AVIS land donated by the Sanborn family in 1959, create a singular reservation along the bank of the Shawsheen River of 50 acres. You will see a change now that motorized vehicles are no longer allowed on the land and a new pedestrian trail system has been installed. Except for about 150 feet of frontage owned by National Grid, all of the river front in Andover on the west side of I-93 is now protected. The Town and AVIS collaborated on the creation of Meg's Trail, a new hiking route through all three parcels. The dedication ceremony for Meg's Trail on April 23, 2016 was attended by approximately 120 people. Some even arrived at the event by canoe. Please see photos in this Update.

New Members from 9/15–8/16

Kathleen Clairmont	Nancy McDowell
Matt Dallett	Mark McCarthy
Keith Wollman	Armand & Patricia
Louis Hrono	Viscosi
Uresh Patel	James Holden
Andover High School	Linda and Larry Ardito
Class of 1985	David Shrestinian
Bruce Belbin	Art Rousmaniere
Rosalyn K Wood	Elias Lampas
David & Lynn Welbourn	Elinor B Olney
Pete Basiliere	Nancy Mulvey
Donna Cooper	Jeffrey Hazelwood
Marie Nardone	Robert Castro &
Marilyn LaDue	Montserrat Rovira-Bru
Charles & Suzanne	Joan Harris
Kendrick	Richard Moffatt
Rob and Dawn Butler	Jeffrey Ouellette

Skug River Running Dry

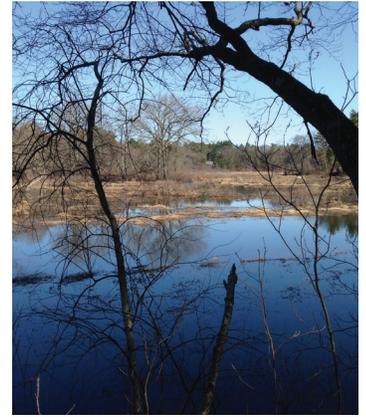
This summer's drought has had its toll on all the waterways and ponds of Andover. This picture of the Skug River was taken from the Hornidge Bridge looking upriver. The Skug River once ran strong enough to power a saw mill about 1/2 mile downriver from where this picture was taken



Photo by David Bunting

Where Is It?

This storage shed is on one of AVIS' most popular reservations. Do you know where? Answer is on page 5.

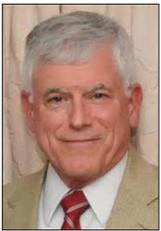


Photos by John Hess

Art on the Shawsheen River

By John Hess

The Andover Historical Society, The Shawsheen River Greenway Committee, and other organizations are sponsoring a Shawsheen River Arts Exhibition for the Fall of 2016. This juried art exhibit features two-dimensional art that focuses on the Shawsheen River, its landscape and history. All selected works will be on display at the Andover Historical Society, 97 Main Street, Andover, from September 10 to December 22, 2016. Please take some time this Fall to view this artwork that features the wonderful, re-discovered river in the heart of Andover.



Letter from the President

By Mike Timko

While doing some background digging for this letter, I discovered an anniversary that almost went unnoticed. The first edition of the AVIS Newsletter occurred in June of 1966, 50 years ago this summer, apparently authored by Peggy Keck. That first edition

started like this:

“Dear Fellow Members;

With this newsletter, the Board of Trustees of the Andover Village Improvement Society is initiating what it hopes will be a semi-annual report to you on the activities of the Society for the past six months. The Board believes that well-informed members will encourage others to join us and will themselves be encouraged to offer suggestions, criticisms, ideas, and assistance. We would like to gain more widespread support and greater public understanding of our aims, and to do this we need your understanding and help.”

The newsletter, named the AVIS Update since 1985, has gone through many changes over the years but I could not say it any better. It is clear that the spirit and purpose of the Society has not changed in those 50 years and is as strong as ever.

One reason why AVIS has been so successful over the years is that it has attracted many dedicated and passionate members to its ranks. Matt Dallett has been a part of AVIS for 25 years and has served as Trustee, Treasurer and legal advisor for the past 18. Matt has now retired from the board and I want to thank him for his exceptional service and wish him well. We are pleased that Larry Ardito has agreed to join the Board and take up the duties of Treasurer. Andrew Caffrey joined us last March to fill the legal advisor role.

As you will read on Page 1, I have signed the agreement to purchase a big piece of the former Franciscan Monastery grounds. Because of the importance of this property, we have received the support of a number of organizations who contribute to conservation causes, but we will need everyone's support to complete this project. Please consider making an additional donation, or increasing your annual appeal donation. We can only continue to succeed with “your understanding and help.”



AVIS is pleased to participate in the Andover Farmers Market held every Saturday in the summer and early Fall by the Andover Historical Society. In this photo from July 30th, Susan Stott explains the AVIS map to an interested attendee. Photo by John Hess

AVIS to Dedicate Trail to Family of John Wragg

AVIS Trustees have voted to dedicate a trail to the family of long-time donor and volunteer, current Ranger John Wragg. Watch for the signs to appear soon in the West Parish Meadow for Rognar's Route. Many thanks to John for all his work on behalf of AVIS.

Fall 2016 - Winter 2017 Calendar

Saturday, Sept. 10, 2016

Work Party

9 AM - 12 PM

Shawsheen Road Reservation

13 Shawsheen Road, Andover

All volunteers are welcome to help clean up this small reservation. Bring work gloves. Park on Cuba Street. Led by Warden Pete Vachon. For more information contact Pete at 978 809-9132 or pptrvachon@yahoo.com.

Saturday, Sept. 10, 2016

Andover Day

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Main Street, Downtown Andover

Join AVIS and hundreds of other vendors at Andover's traditional downtown celebration. AVIS will have a booth on Main Street and welcomes all members to stop by for a visit.

Saturday, Sept. 17

Family Nature Hike

9:00 - 11:00 AM

West Parish Meadow, Indian Ridge & Baker's Meadow reservations

129 Reservation Road, Andover

Do you know you live close to a natural gem of rolling spaces, woodlands, and wetlands maintained for your quiet enjoyment by one of the oldest conservation groups in America?

AVIS invites you to a trail hike with one of AVIS's trustees. The hike will begin at the Trail Head to the West Parish Meadow Trail near West Parish Church.

For details and updates check facebook.com/AVISAndover/ or contact Denise Boucher, 978 470-0243 or denisegirish@gmail.com

Sunday, Sept. 18, 2016

Family Hike

2:00 - 3:30 PM

Goldsmith Woodlands

491 South Main Street, Andover

Enjoy a family-friendly, 2-mile round-trip hike on a beautifully maintained wide, level walking trail with some gradual

inclines. We will hike to a peninsula with panoramic views of Foster's Pond and return on the same trail. Well behaved dogs welcome. Dogs must be kept on-leash. Parking for several cars is available in the reservation parking lot, with additional on-street parking available across Route 28 on Gould Road.

For further information contact Denise Boucher, 978 470-0243 or denisegirish@gmail.com

Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016

Work Party

9AM - 12PM

Burns Reservation

4 Clark Road, Andover

All volunteers are welcome. Park on Chester Street near trailhead between # 14 and # 16. Bring work gloves. We will be removing invasive plant species - mostly winged euonymus ("burningbush") and shrub honeysuckle, as well as clipping stump sprouts from the burningbush that were previously cut down in the Spring. Led by Warden Richard Barry, rbarry04553@gmail.com, 617-501-1765.

Sunday, Oct. 23, 2016

Bewitched in Andover Hike

1:00 - 3:00 PM

Goldsmith Woodlands

491 South Main Street, Andover

In the seventeenth century, New England's forests were seen as an impenetrable evil; home to voracious wolves, marauding Indians, and - worst of all - a malicious, lurking devil. Join Andover Trails and the Andover Historical Society's Jane Cairns who will share stories of Ann Foster and Martha Carrier, near neighbors of Foster's Pond, as well as other Andover residents accused of witchcraft during the Salem Witch Trials of 1692.

The hike, which is free and open to the public, consists of relatively level walking and will take about 2 hours. Parking for several cars is available in the reservation parking lot, with additional on-street parking available across Route 28 on Gould Road.

For further information see the Andover Trails website www.andovertrails.org or contact dbunting@andovertrails.org

Sunday, Jan. 29, 2017

AVIS 48th Annual Snowshoe & Cross-Country Ski Trek

9:45 AM

Harold R. Rafton Reservation

273 High Plain Road, Andover

Meet for the 10 AM outing. Park near the leaf composting area on High Plain Rd. No registration, No pets. Hike if no snow, rain cancels. Leaders; David Dargie, 978-996-4475 david@dargie.com and Vale Reservation Warden, Ken Doran.

Sunday, Feb. 12, 2017

Family Moonlight Snowshoe & Cross-Country Ski Trek

5:45 PM

Goldsmith Woodlands

491 South Main Street, Andover

For all ages and abilities. Bring a headlamp or flashlight and enjoy cookies and hot chocolate around a campfire in the woods. Park in front of #491 S. Main St. at the Goldsmith Woodlands entrance. No registration. No pets. Hike if no snow, rain cancels. Leaders; David Dargie 978-996-4475 david@dargie.com and Vale Reservation Warden, Ken Doran.

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

AVIS Annual Dinner and Meeting

6:00 PM

Old Town Hall

20 Main Street, Andover

SAVE THE DATE!

Details of Registration and Speaker - to be determined. Please check website or Facebook.



Illustration by
Emily Trespas

Answer to "Where Is It?": Deer Jump Reserva-
tion just east of the National Grid power lines.

Avis Membership
 Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Town, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____
 Dues: _____ \$30 Individual _____ \$100 Sustaining
 _____ \$50 Family _____ \$15 Student & Senior

AVIS
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 Andover, MA 01810

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

AVIS
 PO Box 5097
 Andover, MA 01810.

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!

For additional AVIS events see
AVISANDOVER.ORG

Phone
978-494-6089

To check for other hikes visit
ANDOVERTRAILS.ORG

Facebook
FACEBOOK.COM/AVISANDOVER

For AMC walks see
AMCBOSTON.ORG

Email
UPDATE@AVISANDOVER.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 1,000 acres of land are managed by AVIS and are open to all for passive recreation.

Please be sure to check our website, avisandover.org, for hikes and other activities during the fall and winter.



Town Manager Andrew Flanagan speaks to the assembled crowd about the importance of the collaboration between AVIS and the Conservation Commission on the creation of the Meg Batcheller trail through the Sanborn and Lightning Tree Reservations. Photo by Fred Snell



Many of the group of over 120 attendees at the Dedication Ceremony for the Meg Batcheller Trail on 4/23/16 gather for lunch and to hear speakers who emphasized the importance of collaborating to protect the waterfront along the Shawshen River. Photo by Fred Snell

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