



Andover Village
Improvement Society
Andover's Land Trust
Founded 1894

Spring 2018
Vol. 125, No. 1

avis update

River Herring Return to the Shawsheen after Two Centuries

By Dr. Jon Honea

It has been a little more than one year since the Balmoral and the Marland Place dams were removed from the Shawsheen River. These restoration projects were the result of the years'-long efforts of regional nonprofits, state and federal natural resource agencies, and local officials and stakeholders led on the Town side by Andover's Conservation Director, Bob Douglas. The primary goals were to increase safety and to open up approximately four miles of historical habitat to migratory fish such as alewives, blueback herring, shad, and American eels—all of which need to travel between freshwater systems and the ocean for different stages of their life cycles. Alewives and blueback herring are collectively termed “river herring” since they are nearly indistinguishable from each other and have similar lifecycles, and also to distinguish them from their marine cousin, the Atlantic herring.

Three fun words to learn: diadromous, catadromous, and anadromous. “Diadromous,” Greek for “across running,” refers to organisms that live part of their life cycle in oceans and part in freshwater. Diadromy comes in two general forms: 1) “catadromous,” meaning “down running,” describes organisms like American eels, which spawn in the ocean and then spend most of their lives rearing in freshwater, and 2) “anadromous,” meaning “up running,” describes organisms like river herring, which spawn in freshwater and then rear in the ocean. Increasing habitat for river herring is of particular interest because they are listed as Species of Concern by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the federal agency that manages fish that live at least parts of their lives in the ocean.



Photo by Jon Honea

Last spring, only a few months after the dams were removed, the Shawsheen Greenway sponsored the first annual volunteer river herring count on the Shawsheen River. More than 250 individuals volunteered for the effort, including many students and, of course, members of AVIS, with many volunteers bringing along their family and friends, including many children. In the end, the Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries estimated from our observations that more than 1,500 river herring had spawned in the newly opened section of the river. We won't know if the restoration effort was a success, however, until and unless their off-spring return to spawn. That will be in about three years.

We plan to continue to watch the river during the spawning season from April to May and to welcome the Shawsheen's river herring run back to their historical habitat. We hope you'll join us, so please be on the lookout for a call for volunteers sometime in March. The commitment is minor: only 10 minutes of observation from a pedestrian bridge and river herring are fairly easy to distinguish from other fish you might see. Hope to see you at the river soon!

Dr. Honea is a professor at Emerson College and an Andover Conservation Commissioner.

He will be speaking at the AVIS's Annual Meeting on March 13, at the Old Town Hall. Please see separate article on page 2 for details.



Photo by Paul Materazzo

Franciscan Campaign Successfully Completed Thanks to Generous AVIS Donors

By Susan Stott

In March of 2016 AVIS launched a \$400,000 capital campaign for the acquisition of 34 acres of the former Franciscan property to protect the Merrimack River and the Bay Circuit Trail. The first parcel of 26.6 acres was acquired in April 2017 for \$292,000.

The campaign included \$20,000 for trail restoration and installation. About half of these funds were expended this past summer to provide materials for Eagle Scout projects and to support an AVIS/Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)/Groundwork Lawrence (GWL) partnership. The GWL Green Team spent two weeks relocating and restoring trails under the supervision of the AMC teen trail crew staff.

AVIS received a Conservation Partnership reimbursement grant of \$85,000 from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition six foundations (Bafflin Foundation, Davis Conservation Foundation, Fields Pond Foundation, Foundation M, Highland Street Foundation, and Stevens Foundation) made grants to AVIS totaling \$225,000. Finally, you, our generous donors, gave AVIS more than \$100,000, about twice what you normally give to the annual appeal, bringing the campaign to a close with almost \$425,000.

Melmark has committed, but is not yet ready, to convey the second Franciscan parcel, about eight acres, to AVIS. Thanks to you, AVIS has the funds for this acquisition. In the summer of 2018 the Eagle Scouts and the GWL Green team will do a similar amount of trail work. Thanks to you, AVIS has funds available to help with the next land acquisition opportunity.



Pictured are the workers celebrating their achievement in clearing the historic Turtle Mound on Lakeside Circle in Andover in the Fall of 2018. The Mound was covered with masses of invasive species, dirt and trees. According to Dr. Ryan Wheeler, Director of the Peabody Institute of Archeology, the AVIS Turtle Mound, "is worthy of study" and AVIS will undertake that effort. Photo by Mike Timko

www.avisandover.org
978 - 494 - 6089
facebook.com/avisandover

Membership Drive - Town Residents

By Jim Sutton

In June of 2017, a letter was sent to all town residents pointing out the opportunities to enjoy nature that exist in Andover because of the 1200 acres in AVIS's 30 reservations. Andover is a place where eagles soar over the Merrimack River and where nature can be observed and enjoyed nearby to every neighborhood. Happily, the message was well received. Between the time the letter was sent and the end of December, we received 216 positive responses, which increases AVIS's membership to over 600.

When AVIS was founded in 1894, it envisioned including all townspeople as members. If you have not yet responded to our letter, please join us now. All new members will receive a copy of the AVIS trail map. And please enjoy the land we have purchased for you and for all to enjoy. A 2018 membership letter will be in the mail soon.

AVIS Annual Dinner & Meeting

February 28, 2018 • Old Town Hall, 20 Main Street, Andover

6:00 p.m. Reception

7:00 p.m. Dinner

8:00 p.m. Meeting and Speaker

We welcome you to join us for the 2018 AVIS Annual Meeting and Dinner; another evening of conversation and food. Our speaker this year is Jon Honea, Andover Conservation Commissioner and Professor at Emerson University. Dr. Honea's research focuses on the influence of environmental change, including restoration and climate change, on species, populations, and communities of organisms. He teaches courses in ecology and conservation, sustainability science, water resource use, environmental economics, and science communication. He will present information about the removal of dams from the Shawsheen River with an emphasis on the return of alewives and other fish to the upper river.

Tickets to the dinner portion of the event are \$35 per person (wardens \$15) if purchased by February 28th, 2018. The price increases to \$40 per person (wardens \$20) if purchased after February 28th. Guests may attend the Meeting and hear the speaker at no charge.

In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint, separate invitations will not be sent out this year, rather additional information will be included in a membership renewal letter at the end of February.

In the event of inclement weather, please check the AVIS Website and Facebook page for updates on event scheduling.

To purchase tickets, please provide the following information and mail it along with payment made payable to The Andover Village Improvement Society to:

AVIS Annual Meeting 2018 c/o J. Livermore
175 Summer Street, Andover, MA 01810

Name(s):

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Number of Tickets:

Payment Amount:

Andover Scouting is Alive and Well By Brian P. Major, Scoutmaster, Troop 75

During the weekend of September 22-24, 2017 over 100 Boy Scouts from Andover Troops 73, 75, 76, 77 and 79 joined together to celebrate a weekend of scouting adventures in the Albert R. Retelle Reservation, a 50-acre conservation property in Andover, Massachusetts. This Andover Boy Scouting Camporee was a year in the making with the assistance of Robert Decelle, Special Project Manager of the Andover Conservation Commission. The camporee was designed to take advantage of the entire Retelle Reservation property. Each of the troops set up their campfires adjacent to the AVIS Deer Jump Reservation along the Merrimack River. The camporee Opening and Closing Ceremonies and the Camporee Campfire were held in the southern tip of the property adjacent to Brundrett Avenue. The remainder of the property was used for community service projects, a pioneering project and scouting skills competitions.

Each of the troops gathered Friday night to setup their campsites, cook dinner and enjoy the first night of camping and troop campfires. On Saturday morning, the boys woke up with the sunrise to prepare breakfast and then participate in a physical health challenge directed by Rich Barton, Assistant Scoutmaster of Troop 76. He led the boys in "The Low Plank Challenge" with the promise that any scout that could out-plank Mr. Barton would win their troop an ice cream party. Unfortunately, for the scouts, none of the participants was able to win the ice cream smorgasbord for their troop.

The official camporee kicked off with a flag raising ceremony on Saturday morning when each of the troops lined up in the field along Brundrett Avenue and presented their troop colors. The Scouters all saluted as our nation's colors were raised up a flag pole that was made from a poplar tree located on the property. Each



Courtesy photo

of the Troop Senior Patrol Leaders posted their Troop Flags in PVC piping that was installed adjacent to the flag pole. The scouters then joined together to repeat the Scout Law and Scout Oath and to receive their instructions for the remainder of the weekend.

Saturday activities also included community service projects, a pioneering project and scouting skills competitions. Some of the scouters volunteered in a conservation project led by Michael Bettencourt, Eagle Scout from Troop 76, who cut and removed invasive vines that were strangling the apple trees across the reservation. Other scouts participated in a pioneering project that lashed together a formal archway into the reservation near the troop camping area. The third set of scouters gathered to build the Camporee Bonfire made up of scrap wood and downed trees. After cooking lunch, the boys broke up into Patrols and competed in a variety of skill competitions including blindfolded tent setup, fire building to boil water the fastest, tomahawk throwing accuracy, bear bag positioning, and hoisting and building winches with rope to pull a car down a path. Saturday evening concluded with a Camporee Campfire, which allowed the boys to entertain each other with jokes, songs and skits. This event was well received by all of the scouters involved who look forward to continuing to use both Conservation and AVIS properties to hone their camping and scouting skills.



- ▲ tent sites & fire rings
- porta-potty
- Ⓢ round robin stations
- △ Bonfire
- ▭ flags



On November 2, 2017, John Judge, President of the Appalachian Mountain Club visited Andover to see the fine work that the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team accomplished on the Bay Circuit Trail under the direction of AMC staff. President Judge presented Al French, the leader emeritus of the Bay Circuit Trail, a sign in honor of his leadership and vision. Photo by Floyd Greenwood



AVIS Trustee, Fred Snell, is shown leading a hike on the new AVIS reservation (former Franciscan Seminary) along the Merrimack River. This hike was part of the Essex National Heritage Area Trails and Sails event in September 2017. Photo by Mike Timko

AVIS Salutes Fred Snell By Alix Driscoll

Fred Snell has racked up 19 impressive years as a Trustee of The Andover Village Improvement Society (AVIS), seven years as its president, 2005-2012, and many preceding years as a volunteer. "I like doing stuff outdoors," he admits with a chuckle.

An environmentalist from his early days, Snell grew up in Central Pennsylvania "where the streets meet the woods"; he was given a range of tens of miles to hike through the remote lanes, trails and forests.

Snell filled "big shoes" when he took over from Nat Smith, a math teacher at Phillips Academy, who reigned for three decades as AVIS President. Building on his skills as an engineer and project manager at Bell Labs, Western Electric and 30 years at Hewlett-Packard (now Philips Healthcare), Snell knew that encouraging his employees' skills was both wise and fruitful. "I have enjoyed, when working, being able to develop people, both in my former job and on the AVIS Board." He invested in his AVIS Trustees, giving them opportunities to use their considerable talents, setting agendas and time limits, and publishing the Update in color, with lots of green, of course. Creating the AVIS website took lots of his time in 1999, and Snell is proud it was among the early websites for environmental groups in the Commonwealth.

Proudest Achievement is the Sakowich Reservation

Back in 2011, Snell negotiated with Gladys and Tony Sakowich to preserve their singular land, a nine-acre parcel overlooking the northwest corner of Baker's Meadow. In the process of dismantling the residence at the direction of the Sakowiches, with David Dargie's help, Snell also donated many useful articles to ReStore (Habitat for Humanity), Lazarus House and the YWCA's Fina House on the Common in Lawrence. The Sakowiches wished to restore their land to the way they had found it and also wanted to set an example for other landowners to make similar donations. Snell understood their dream and helped them accomplish it. It was a privilege for all of us to welcome the donors and many townspeople to the April 2012 dedication of the new Sakowich Reservation.

A Noted Volunteer

For many years, Snell has volunteered with the local committee of the Appalachian Mountain Club, leading hikes, and he served as Chair for two years. He also served on AVIS's Land Management and Land Acquisition committees. He is a television personality too, creating shows broadcast on local television from The Center at Punchard's "Something about Andover" series including shows on the Community Garden, the West Parish Church permaculture garden, and the Andover

Historical Society app called "Virtual Andover". He leads hikes for the Men's Outdoor Adventures and runs the computer group at The Center at Punchard. He is a member of the Finance Committee at West Parish Church.

Next Steps

With his wife, Marj, Snell looks forward to many more adventures with their five grandchildren, furthering his passion for "doing stuff outdoors."



President's Letter

By Mike Timko

At the Annual Meeting in March, I will be turning over the office of AVIS President to John Hess, who is the current AVIS Vice President. It has been my very real privilege and honor to have served as AVIS President for the past six years. I am happy to say that AVIS continues to be the same vibrant and relevant organization that I inherited from my predecessor, Fred Snell. I am constantly amazed by the enthusiasm and activism of the fifteen-member Board of Trustees as well as the hard-working Wardens and Rangers and, in fact, all of the volunteers who add so much to the community value of AVIS every year. I would also like to thank all of you, our members and donors, who make what we do possible. During my term, we have added some land and made some improvements to our Reservations, but our most important legacy is the continuity that has allowed AVIS to keep up with the times and remain an important part of life in Andover. I am not leaving the Board for now but it is time to pass the gavel to John. He has already taken on more than his share of the workload and I am sure he will do a great job.

2018 is AVIS's 124th year. The AVIS 125th Anniversary Committee, led by John Hess, is already planning a series of events in 2019 to commemorate this important milestone. I think you are going to enjoy this!

Finally I would like to recognize Fred Snell for 19 years of valuable service on the AVIS Board of Trustees, seven as President. Fred will be leaving the Board in March to enjoy his retirement.

When I joined the Board only nine years ago, it seemed filled with Trustees, like Fred, who had always been there and were the very fabric of AVIS, and it was hard to imagine AVIS without them. The majority of those people have now moved on, but they have been replaced by other, younger friends of the outdoors who have stepped up to continue the effort and keep AVIS healthy. I think AVIS's future will be forever green!

AVIS Seeks New Webmaster

AVIS launched a new website in the Fall of 2017. With the able assistance of Chris McKenna and Webmaster Bob Friedenson, AVIS has redesigned its website to be more user friendly, particularly for mobile devices. Going forward, we are looking for a new webmaster. Bob will continue to assist the new webmaster but this is a great opportunity for someone with excellent computer skills to help AVIS maintain and update its website so that AVIS members and the public can get added enjoyment out of the reservations. Anyone who is interested, please contact John Hess at (978) 470-0806 or hess.john@att.net.



Fred Snell, AVIS trustee for 19 years (seven years as president of AVIS) enjoys the bench given to him by grateful AVIS members. See story about Fred elsewhere in this Update. Photo by Marj Snell

Thank You

We can never thank our supporters, volunteers, and donors enough. Here are a few we wish to recognize:

The Boston Foundation

for annual grants of \$5,000 from the Bessie P. Goldsmith Fund that are used for improvements and maintenance on the Goldsmith Reservation, as well as necessary tools and equipment.

Annual Appeal Donors: November 30 - December 31, 2017

Thank you for supporting AVIS with your membership and for joining us in keeping land protected and open to the public.

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Think Spring!

By Steve Golden

The Shawsheen Greenway is thinking ahead to spring and welcomes your help:

Have an old canoe or kayak that you haven't used in a few years that you would be willing to donate for a good cause? The Shawsheen Greenway is working with the Andover's Department of Conservation, and the Recreation Department to develop a canoe/kayak rental program this summer. They are seeking donations of 2 canoes, and 4 kayaks (1 and 2 person) in good working condition to rent to the public for use on the Shawsheen River. If you have one that you would be willing to part with, send an email with a picture and description to shawsheengreenway@gmail.com Your item will be added to the list to consider for inspection, and pick-up in the Spring when the program is ready for roll out.



Storage racks like these will be used for canoes and kayaks

Can you spare as little as 10 minutes to help monitor the return of river herring to the Shawsheen? This spring marks the second year after two dams were removed in Andover. It is estimated that 1500 river herring spawned in the newly opened section of River. The Greenway is looking for volunteers to sign up to count returning blueback herring and alewife starting in April. If you can spare even 10 minutes to help with the count, they can use your support. Look for signup information in March to be posted on the Shawsheen Greenway Facebook site, as well as several other locations.

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 :

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!

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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 1,000 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 summer and fall.

CALENDAR

Sunday, Feb. 11, 2018

Family Moonlight Snowshoe and/or Hiking Event

5:45 p.m.
Goldsmith Woodlands

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. Leader: David Dargie 978-996-4475 david@dargie.com.

Tues., February 28, 2018

AVIS Annual Dinner and Meeting

6:00 p.m.
Old Town Hall
20 Main Street, Andover

Please join us for another evening of conversation and food. Our speaker this year is Jon Honea, Andover Conservation Commissioner and Professor at Emerson University. He will present information about the removal of dams from the Shaw-sheen River. See the article elsewhere in this Update for information about attending the dinner and listening to the speaker.

Saturday, Sept. 8, 2018

Andover Day

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Main Street, Andover

Please join AVIS and other organizations for another fun day in Andover.

Call for Memorabilia AVIS 125th Anniversary

AVIS will be celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2019. Plans are underway. If you would like to help or if you have any historical memorabilia (T-shirts, literature, photos, stories, memories, etc.) please contact John Hess at (978) 470-0806 or hess.john@att.net. We would love to hear from you.

MIKE TIMKO
President

JIM SUTTON
Membership

JOHN HESS & ALIX DRISCOLL
Editors

LINDSEY CHANDLER
Designer

