



Andover Village
Improvement Society
Andover's Land Trust
Founded 1894

Spring 2026
Vol. 133, No. 1

avis update

An invitation to the Opening of the All Persons Trail at the Goldsmith Woodlands

With gratitude for your support,
AVIS invites you to celebrate the opening of its
first All Persons Trail
At the Goldsmith Woodlands, May 16, 1 p.m.

For people of all abilities: all are welcome.
The trail ends at *Bessie's Point* with a view
of Foster's Pond.

Bessie Goldsmith gave her land in trust in 1966.
AVIS has maintained it since 1977.

The Boston Foundation transferred ownership
to AVIS in 2025.

The All Persons Trail was constructed by
the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Goldsmith Woodlands parking is limited
to people using mobility devices.
Other visitors may park at the Primrose School,
305 South Main Street. Andover.



Photo by Judy Timko



To honor John Hess, former president of AVIS, many of the Trustees gathered at the West Parish Reservation to dedicate his bench on a lovely fall day. Seated left to right: John Hess, Mike Timko, President Annie Gilbert, Standing: Kay Frishman, Jim Sutton, Amy Janovsky, Libby Poland, Lynn Landry, Susan Stott and Dan Hayes. Photo by Mike Timko

President's Letter By Annie Gilbert



The start of 2026 brings with it the opportunity to reflect on what AVIS accomplished in 2025. At the top of the list is the installation of the Goldsmith Woodlands All Persons Trail, AVIS's first accessible feature and the largest project we have ever undertaken. This achievement would not have been possible without the leadership of Susan Stott and the incredible generosity of our donors and members. We'll need more help from everyone to get Phase Two of the project across the finish line: a larger, safer parking area that will be accessible to all.

We are so grateful for the countless volunteers who did important work for AVIS throughout the year. More than 80 Eco Team members logged 875 hours of work on 12 different reservations. Their work included clearing invasives, planting natives, and assisting with the remarkable habitat restoration project unfolding at Jillian Way. Our Wardens and Rangers also worked tirelessly to keep our trails safe and to respond to the growing challenges of severe wind and storm events. We owe big thanks as well to volunteers who have taken the lead on special projects for AVIS. These include Nick Haddon, who is spearheading the AVIS archive project; Bruce Littlefield, who is heading up the group working on the new Andover Trail Guide; and Stewart Monderer, who is organizing our second AVIS Photo Contest.

When you are out enjoying our trails, please take a moment to think about all the volunteers who keep these beautiful properties safe and ecologically sound. If you're ever interested in helping out, just let us know! And do keep an eye out for a special new AVIS bench in West Parish Meadow, dedicated this fall in honor of John Hess's tenure as president. A fitting tribute to a wonderful leader.



photo by Mike Timko

ANNUAL MEETING Of the Andover Village Improvement Society/ AVIS

April 14, Indian Ridge Country Club
73 Lovejoy Road, Andover
6 p.m. hors d'oeuvres and cash bar, \$40.

Business Meeting 7 - 8:30 p.m.
Election of Trustees, Financial Report, Land Management,
Land Stewardship, All Persons Trail

Speaker - Jeff Denoncour, coastal ecologist
Restoring the Balance – The Importance of Deer
Management

Mail checks to Jude Livermore, 173 Summer St.
or visit avisandover.org

Heads Up for The River Herring Count Spring 2026 Run

By Dr. Jon Honea, Andover Conservation Commissioner, Professor at Emerson College

For the last 10 years, ever since two dams were removed from the Shawsheen River by the Town, volunteers have been counting river herring at the pedestrian-only bridge over the Shawsheen linking Atria Senior Living to Powder Mill Square. Removal of the dams opened up historical spawning habitat to river herring migrating from the Gulf of Maine, where they grow into adulthood to spawn in freshwater.

Each volunteer watches the river for only 10 minutes and then records their observations using a QR code posted at the counting bridge. To get an accurate estimate of the total numbers of spawners, we need at least nine counts every day from late April when the first spawners arrive to early June when the spawning run ends.

At the end of the spawning season, I send the data collected to the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, which is working to keep track of this "Species of Concern" along all our waterways that have undammed connections to the ocean. After MDMF uses our data to estimate the total number of river herring spawning upstream of our count location, they send us the estimate and I announce it to all the volunteers.

This past spring as well as some other years, we had the necessary nine or more counts on only a few days, so that made the final estimate (429 spawners) less accurate (wider error bars on the graph). Please be on the lookout in spring 2026 before next spring's spawning run for a request from AVIS and others to help by counting fish for 10 minutes whenever you're free when the river herring come to Town from late April to early June.

List of Donors from January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

We can never thank our supporters, volunteers and donors enough.

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

Ruth Alfasso

Linn Anderson

William and Susan Henderson

Chris & Debbie Andrews

Steve & Lisa Andrews

Linda & Larry Ardito

Joan Ashlock

Rebecca Backman & Stephen Cotton

Bo Baird

Barcelo Family Giving Fund

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John and Maria Bartlett

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David Brown and Trish Fleming

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Par Donahue

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Dave and Kate Doub

James Doucett

Alix Driscoll

James and Joan Duff

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Robert and Patricia Tully

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Village Garden Club of Andover

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Ms Francis Y. J. Wheeler

Deborah and Peter White

Rob Wilkie

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Essex County Community Foundation

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The Waldo Trust

West Parish Church of Andover

New Lupine Wardens, Paula and Mark Bordogna, Protect Their Reservation

By Alix Driscoll

The venerable arch railroad bridge, an inquisitive blue heron, a sandy beach for fishing, thousands of herring fighting their way upstream to spawn in the spring, the site of the historic Andover Canoe Club, and two acres right in the middle of Town; that's the Lupine Reservation, and the Shawsheen River runs through it.

Just south of the Andover Center Railroad Station the Shawsheen curves to expose the historic 19th century bridge, all New England hewn granite and dry laid. Lupine is just at the end of Central Street facing the Town's canoe/kayak launch.

Wardens Paula and Mark Bordogna protect this singular treasure "as a way to give back to this community and a way to help the environment" They know the river is different at various times of year.

They explain that they started on an Eco Team project with Leader and Trustee Lynn Landry, a while back, learning about battling invasives and then were offered an opportunity to become wardens. A hiking family, they have trekked widely with their daughters in the White Mountains and Baxter State Forest.

An ongoing challenge is collection of trash near the Abbott Bridge,, (named in 1745 Town Meeting), also called the Horn Bridge for its painted sign, and keeping the trails mowed says Professor Paula, a math teacher at Merrimack College. "But the fishing folk are very neat."

Her husband, Mark, is an electrical engineer with a long-time position at the North Andover Bell Labs and more recently at Intel Corporation.

"From our perspective, we volunteer to help keep the reservation as enjoyable and accessible and clean as possible for those who want to use it. We enjoy contributing to the environment. We love the peacefulness of the reservation. It's

small, but there are some trails for walking, and there's a bench available for relaxing. The river and arched bridge are beautiful, and the sounds of the birds bring joy," shares Paula.

Paula and Mark Bordogna, are new wardens for the Lupine Reservation, also a part of the Bay Circuit Trail. Courtesy photo.



The Workings of the Powerful Eco Team in 2025

By Lynn Landry, co director of AVIS's Eco Team and Amy Janovsky Lead of Land Stewardship Committee

The Eco Team held its last session of the season on November 29, 2025, at West Parish Meadow. With the help of a large group from South Church planting at Jillian Way, we ended up with a higher total number of hours than even last year, more than 875 hours.

The season started off slowly, with several rainout days, but ended with a string of beautiful, crisp fall days that were spectacular for working outside. The summer drought conditions kept planting to a minimum until the last handful of sessions, when a couple of hundred plants and a lot of seed were added back into the reservations.

By the numbers: 81 Eco Team participants worked on 12 different reservations in groups of 12 to 23. The groups cleared invasives and planted natives on Sanborn, Taft, Jillian Way, Lupine, Shawsheen, Purdon, Goldsmith, Highlands, Sunset Rock, Inwood Lane, Stanley, and West Parish Meadow.

On November 8, 2025, there was a lovely project by 73 Scouts and family volunteers, and South Church participants where they helped plant 65 trees and native seed at Jillian Way. The Eco Team will be back working at Jillian Way, with two more sessions.

2026 Eco Team Work Parties

These dates are subject to change.

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| April 11 Sat. | July 11 Sat. | Sept. 26, Sat. |
| April 25 Sat. | July 25 Sat. | Oct. 10 Sat. |
| May 3 Sunday | Aug. 2 Sunday | Oct. 18 Sunday |
| May 23 Sat. | Aug. 15 Sat. | Oct. 24 Sat. |
| June 6 Sat. | Aug. 29 Sat. | Nov. 1 Sunday |
| June 20 Sat. | Sept. 12 Sat. | Nov. 14 Sat. |
| June 29 Sunday | Sept. 18 Sunday | Nov. 28 Sat. |



Rich Bizzozero, AVIS Warden, demonstrates how to plant young trees for the Eco Team.

The Rockery Story in Bronze

By William Kolbe, AVIS Warden of the Turtle Mound



Bill Kolbe, warden of the Turtle Mound, with the bronze inscription about this historical structure. Photo courtesy of Dave Lewis

Over the last several years, a local historic megalithic structure, the Follansbee Rockery, has been the focal point of AVIS and community efforts to restore it to its pristine character.

David Dargie, AVIS Land Manager, presented me with loppers and trained me on a rotary saw to tame the overgrown brush and small trees threatening to engulf it into the bowels of the adjacent forest. We also cut and removed a major limb from an oak tree that fortunately had fallen just a few feet from the rockery's east flank during a recent storm.

Amy Janovsky, AVIS Land Stewardship Chair, responded to the invasive knotweed overwhelming its

west flank and infiltrating the main structure by contacting Walker Agro. The owner, Nate Walker, effectively treated it and to this day the rockery remains knotweed-free.

Retelle Tree cut and removed two dead oak trees on the site and left ten yards of wood chips, which I spread over the top and front of the structure.

The crowning achievement of all these efforts was the mounting of a bronze plaque on a granite post, likely hewn by Paul Bailey Follansbee around 1870. Thanks to Annie Gilbert, AVIS President, and the greater AVIS Board of Trustees and leaders, a plaque was commissioned to show the history of the rockery.

Enter Dan O'Neil, former Assistant Superintendent at the West Parish Garden Cemetery and talented mason artist, who credits Follansbee for his passion for stonework. Dan helped me stand the 4' tall, 250-pound granite post earlier this past fall and he anxiously awaited the arrival of the plaque to finalize its mounting. This was no easy task.

The surface of the granite post is rough, with protrusions and indentations that prevented a leveled placement of the 7" x 10" plaque. On the morning of December 18, 2015, a beautiful, sunny, warm day, Dan began the arduous task of grinding and chiseling to create a recess in the post that would house the plaque and effectively shield it from rain and snow.

It took four hours to finally attain the perfect housing for the plaque. Four holes were then drilled for the studs and an ample amount of construction adhesive was applied into the holes and on the stone backing. The plaque was perfectly secured; we shouted in jubilee.

I hope you have the chance to visit the Follansbee Rockery on Lakeside Circle, close to the Haggetts Pond Rail Trail. It's the culmination of the efforts of a father and son who spent 20 years building a unique stonework attraction for their nursery business. And now, its history is eternalized in bronze.

Try Exploring Andover, Tea Time Hikes around Andover with Mark Kaluzny AVIS Trustee

www.avisandover.org/events

Bay Circuit Trail, Harold Parker State Forest To Skug River Reservation, Thursday, March 12, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

West Parish To Poms Pond, Thursday, March 26, 2026, | 10:00 a.m.

Bay Circuit Trail, Andover to Tewksbury Spur, Thursday, April 9, 2026, | 10:00 a.m.

Harold Parker State Forest, Stearns, And Sudden Ponds, Thursday, April 23, Thursday, April 23, 2026, | 10:00 a.m.

Bay Circuit Trail, Deer Jump and Retelle Reservations And Beyond, Thursday, May 14, 10:00 a.m

Goldsmith Woodlands and All Persons Trail, Thursday, May 28, 2026, | 10:00 a.m.

Bay Circuit Trail And Boxford State Forest In North Andover Thursday, Thursday, June 11, 2026, | 10:00 a.m.



Land acknowledgement adopted March 8, 2022

We acknowledge that AVIS reservations are located on the ancestral lands of the Pennacook, Pawtucket and other Indigenous people, which was their home for more than 10,000 years. We honor the land we manage and all the Indigenous people who were here before, are here now, and will be here in the future. We recognize that we are guests on this land and are mindful of our impact. With this acknowledgement, we commit to continuously care for this land, using sustainable practices to protect the environment and reservations.

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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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 1,200 acres of land are managed by AVIS and are open to all for passive recreation.

AVIS Annual Meeting, April 14,
Indian Ridge County Club.

Opening of All Persons Trail
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- Oct. 10 Sat.
- Oct. 18 Sunday
- Oct. 24 Sat.
- Nov. 1 Sunday
- Nov. 14 Sat.
- Nov. 28 Sat.



Photo of Sandpiper at Baker's Meadow by ©Stewart Monderer. The second AVIS Photography exhibit is at the Robb Center in March and then at the Memorial Hall Library in April.

ANNIE GILBERT
President

JIM SUTTON
Membership

ALIX DRISCOLL
Editor

LINDSEY CHANDLER
Designer

