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## **For Immediate Release**

### **Goldsmith Woodlands Property Transferred from The Boston Foundation to AVIS**

After nearly 50 years of providing careful stewardship of the Goldsmith Woodlands, the Andover Village Improvement Society (AVIS) is now its owner. The deed transferring ownership of the land from The Boston Foundation to AVIS was recorded on May 16th, 2025.

“This is a very exciting moment for AVIS,” said Susan Stott, who led talks with The Boston Foundation regarding the land transfer. “We are thrilled to take on full responsibility for this property, and to move forward with our plans to install AVIS’s first All Persons Trail that will provide access to this beautiful land for people of all abilities.”

The preservation of the Goldsmith Woodlands dates to 1966, when Bessie Goldsmith took steps to ensure that her land — approximately 140 acres between South Main Street and Foster’s Pond — would “forever be held in trust... as a sanctuary for wild animals, birds, flowers, and trees.” She also created The Fund for the Preservation of Wildlife and Natural Areas.

In 1977, AVIS entered into an agreement with the holder of Bessie’s trust to use the premises “only for the operation of a natural woodlands and wildlife area.” At the time, access to the Goldsmith Woodlands was through a small easement from South Main Street and the only parking was along Route 28.

Both the trust and the fund were transferred to The Boston Foundation in 1996. When the house and land at 491 South Main Street sold in 2000, AVIS was able to acquire it to provide off highway parking with the help of The Boston Foundation and the fund established by Bessie Goldsmith. In 2004, AVIS acquired an adjacent parcel and received permission from the Conservation Commission to construct a small parking area.

Today, the Goldsmith Woodlands is AVIS’s most-visited reservation, offering gentle terrain and gorgeous views of Foster’s Pond. The AVIS Board of Trustees decided the trail to Bessie’s Point, a popular overlook, would be an ideal location for its first All Persons Trail, as its relatively flat grade will allow Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines to be met with reasonable modifications to the topography. In June 2024, AVIS was awarded a \$100,000 MassTrails grant

for the project, which will be constructed by the Appalachian Mountain Club professional trail crew using a crushed stone surface. Recent discussions with The Boston Foundation regarding additional funding for the trail led to the Foundation's offer to transfer the entire Goldsmith property to AVIS.

"The Boston Foundation continues to be a proud steward of Bessie Goldsmith's legacy in and beyond Andover," said Kate Guedj, Senior Vice President and Chief Philanthropic Officer at The Boston Foundation. "The transfer of this parcel to AVIS enhances that legacy by making it possible for visitors of all abilities to access and enjoy one of the community's most special natural spaces, and gives our AVIS partners greater flexibility in caring for it."

"We are very grateful for The Boston Foundation's support," said Stott.

For more information about the Goldsmith Woodlands and the plans for the All Persons Trail, visit [avisandover.org](http://avisandover.org)