



Andover Village  
Improvement Society  
Andover's Land Trust  
Founded 1894

Fall 2010  
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## Beaver Deceiver and Mother Nature – The Battle Continues

Fred Snell

Mother Nature seemed to hinder then help AVIS land managers. In December 2009, AVIS members worked on a cold and windy day to install a “beaver deceiver”, also known as a water lever control device in a large beaver dam in the Hammond Reservation. (see photo in the Spring Update). We had been working with the Town and State officials for some time for permission to do this and it finally came in December. However our permit was good for ten days, which occurred during one of the coldest weeks of the winter.

Two large March rainstorms ripped the pipe from its moorings and breeched the dam. Then there was not much rain for the rest of the spring and summer and the beavers had not returned to the dam. Taking advantage of the low water, working under Land Manager David Dargie’s direction, Andy Girdwood, Dennis Crispo, and Fred Snell moved the pipe back into position and secured it with steel cables fastened into large rocks. So far the beavers have not returned to the dry stream bed, but they’ll likely be back when the water returns.



Clockwise starting at top left

The dam as it stood before the Beaver Deceiver; First installation of the Beaver Deceiver; Reinstallation of the Beaver Deceiver

## From the AVIS President

Fred Snell



Deer hunting in Andover? On AVIS Land? AVIS has had a longstanding policy of no hunting on our land. Besides Andover has a no discharge of firearms bylaw.

Why on earth would we consider changing any of this? It turns out that towns like Andover provide a very good environment for deer. Our leash law tends to keep dogs away from chasing them, suburban shrubbery provides food, and the intermix of forested and open spaces are ideal for them. The deer population per square mile in Eastern Massachusetts is about twice the recommended amount and it is growing. AVIS members who attended our 2010 Annual Meeting saw the presentation by State Wildlife Deer Project leader Sonja Christiansen. We learned that each doe has two fawns per year, so without natural enemies or controlled hunting, populations will increase rapidly.

The result of overpopulation is seen in the rise in car-deer accidents, Lyme disease, transmitted by deer ticks, is on the rise, and deer suffer from disease and starvation. Too many deer can also take a toll on not only shrubbery in yards, but can damage the small bushes and trees in the forest by over browsing.

Other conservation groups in the state are beginning to open their lands to hunting in order to bring deer population into balance. Locally, the Trustees of Reservations’ Ward Reservation in Andover has opened their land to hunting by archery. They issue permits to hunters and have specific rules that ensure maximum safety for hikers and others using the reservation. So far, hikers and hunters have had no conflicts. State law forbids any hunting on Sundays.

The Andover Conservation Commission is also looking into opening some of their land to archery. If AVIS is to consider this, it seems to make sense to have a common set of rules with them since many of our lands are adjacent. I envision some AVIS and Cons Com public meetings where people can learn more about this subject, ask questions, and voice concerns. Please let me know your thoughts about hunting on AVIS land.

## Interesting & Informative Hikes

Jane Cairns, a Board Member of the Andover Historical Society, has led a number of hikes in conjunction with the Andover Trails Committee under the leadership of David Bunting. One particular hike was held in the Goldsmith Reservation where hikers learned all about Bessie Goldsmith and her extensive involvement with the town. We are very happy to see this collaboration and look forward to more interesting and informational hikes.



Jane Cairns speaks to hikers in the Skug River Reservation.

## Thank You

AVIS wishes to thank retiring Trustee Chris Vrontas for his many contributions to our organization. Chris became a Trustee in March 2006 and brought to the Board valuable insight into legal matters, drive and enthusiasm for our cause, and a great sense of humor. He led a committee to examine our mission and strategies to help improve external communications. This effort led to the formation of our current Communications Committee.

Chris got elementary school kids informed about AVIS and nature with an innovative series of web pages as part of the ELF (Environmental Learning for the Future) program at the High Plain School. He also served on the Nominating Committee several times. Thank you so much, Chris, we will miss you.

## Andover Youth Services Working Along Railroad Tracks

Andover Youth Services led a group of 12 hard working middle school kids in clear trails along the Shawsheen river near the horn bridge. Lending a helping hand that day were

Mackenzie Dutton

Viviane Garth

PJ Gavel

Brooke Kabriel

Aaron Minton

John Piehl

Hannah Ricketts

Nicole Righter

Erica Shaw

Michael Trainor

Aimee Ward

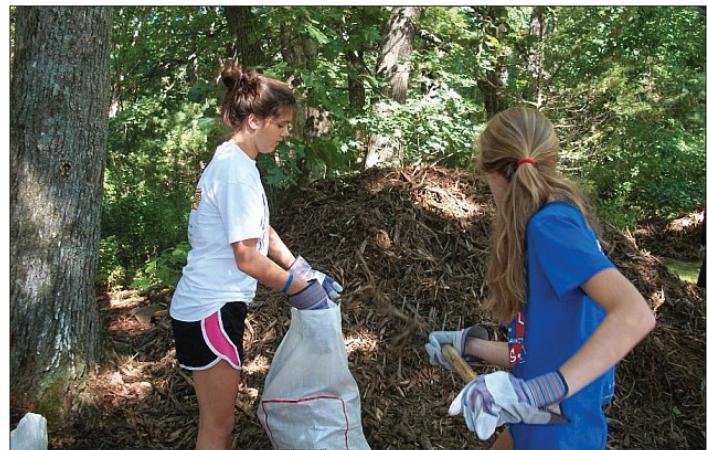
Ashlee Ward

The group leaders were Andover Youth Services staff—Afton Cuomo, Kyle Lightner and Aly Formichella.

## AHS Cross Country Teams Up with AVIS at Indian Ridge

John Hess

One of the AVIS Wardens, John Wragg, was successful in recruiting the Andover High School Cross Country Team to help with maintaining the trails in the Indian Ridge Reservation. On Saturday, September 18, 2010, the track team used shovels, pitch forks, wheel barrows, and plenty of muscle power to spread wood chips on the trails. This collaborative effort will not only benefit Indian Ridge hikers but also the Cross Country Team which utilizes those trails. Many thanks to all who helped.



AHS Cross Country Teammates take a break from running to lend a hand at Indian Ridge.

## Trail Maintenance

AVIS uses donations from its members and friends for regular trail maintenance. These donations are very important to our ability to keep trails open and useable by the public. In addition to routine maintenance, we work with many groups and companies in the area on special projects. The photos in this edition are examples of some of the projects we conducted this summer. Many thanks to those who helped - without you we could not do it.

# AVIS Donors

Over 225 donors gave to the AVIS annual appeal in 2009-10, including three grants totaling \$25,000 and 18 leadership donations (\$1,000 or more) totaling \$32,523. The total raised in the annual appeal was \$77,866, including \$46,252 for land acquisition and \$7570 for the land stewardship endowment. Gifts to AVIS were made in memory of Richard M. Canterbury, Dick Eldred, Mary French, Carol Gath, Dick Hornidge, James Keck, Murray Postal, Fred Stott and Fred Wallace. Additional gifts were made to AVIS in honor of David A. Jordan and Elizabeth Johnson, Elizabeth Provasoli, Anthony J. Risitano, Jr., Nat Smith, Toby, and the U.S. Military.

Thank you to AVIS many generous supporters. With your help we will complete the purchase of the addition of the Keck Reservation from the Cavallaro family next summer and be ready for the next acquisition opportunities that present themselves to AVIS.

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## Restoration of Fish Brook Bridge



AVIS work day to repair the Fish Brook at Deer Jump.

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For information about planned giving or stock donations contact [info@avisandover.org](mailto:info@avisandover.org). Contributions and dues are tax deductible to the extent permitted by federal regulations.

Thank you!

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## Annual Dinner

Date: Wednesday, March 9, 2011

Location: North Andover Country Club

We are still looking for this year's Annual Dinner Speaker, so if you have any suggestions or know someone you would like to nominate, please contact us at [www.avisandover.org](http://www.avisandover.org).

## 2010 – 2011 Calendar

**Sunday, October 24,  
2010**

Deer Jump Reservation, Andover. Enjoy a scenic walk along the Merrimack River. Meet at 1:30p.m. at the trailhead off from Launching Road. Take I-93, Exit 45 (River Road). Proceed west on River Road for 1.2 miles. Turn right onto Launching Road. Travel 0.25 miles to the trailhead on the right. L. Fred Snell [\(978\) 686-3647.](mailto:fredsnell@gmail.com)

**Sunday, December 5,  
2010**

Goldsmith Reservation, Andover Hike or snowshoe on easy terrain in scenic woodland about 2 hrs. Meet 1:30 PM. Take I-93 to exit 41, go E on Rt. 125, exit at Rt. 28N. Travel N on Rte. 28 (S. Main St.) about 0.4 mi. Park in front of #491 South Main at Reservation entrance just before Gould Rd intersection. Heavy rain cancels. L Fred Snell (978-686-3647, [fredsnell@gmail.com](mailto:fredsnell@gmail.com)

For additional AVIS events, see [avisandover.org](http://avisandover.org)  
For AMC walks, see [amcboston.org/andover](http://amcboston.org/andover)



Fall 2010

The AVIS Update is a biannual publication of the Andover Village Improvement Society. AVIS' mission 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.

Fred Snell	President
Pam Eaton	Membership
Lindsey Timko	Designer

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