



Andover Village
Improvement Society
Andover's Land Trust
Founded 1894

Fall 2011
Vol. 118, No. 2

avis update

Dave Doub Leads Effort On A Work of Art

By Dave Doub

A new bridge was constructed this summer through a collaboration between Andover Trails Committee and AVIS and the effort of many volunteers. To cross a fifty foot span of the old Shawsheen River, the standard AVIS boardwalk design would not work. Instead, a truss design was used and constructed on site at the Vale reservation. The triangular truss segments and slightly arched beams trigger a quizzical reaction when seeing the bridge for the first time in the middle of the woods. "Where did this come from?" Simply, it was the product of many people spending their Friday afternoons suspended over the river on temporary supports while each piece was fitted and bolted together. David Bunting and Al French of the Andover Trails Committee organized the work crews. Dave Doub and Fred Snell worked out the design. Video clips by Brendan Lewis posted on www.andover.patch.com of the truss bridge construction show the first beams being cabled into position by Burt Batcheller and Ken Doran. The final clip has Tom Appleton, Andy Menezes and Bob Decelle removing the temporary supports leaving the completed structure to stand on its own.

The bridge and recently completed boardwalk by Eagle Scout Adam Jones are accessible from a new trailhead at the end of the Ballardvale train station parking lot. The new trail joins the existing trails on the Vale Reservations soon after crossing the bridge. Combined with other segments to be completed next year, these trails will become the Andover River Walk recreation path.



Addition to Keck Reservation Completed

In 2008 AVIS purchased 8.7 acres, including Jack's Meadow along Gould Rd. to add to the Peggy Keck Reservation. The AVIS Annual Appeal for the Land Acquisition Fund provided the first \$500,000, while the Cavallaro family agreed to a loan for the remaining balance of \$250,000, to be paid over the next three years. AVIS completed payment of the loan in July 2011 and the Land Acquisition Fund is once again growing in preparation for future land acquisition opportunities. The generosity of many Andover residents, as well as grants from the Stevens Foundation, Foundation M and the Highland St. Foundation, made it possible for AVIS to respond when this land became available for preservation. The same generous donors also helped AVIS raise the funds to pay off the loan.

Since 2008 AVIS has restored the meadow and developed trails to link the old and new sections of the Keck Reservation. Walter Kittredge, biologist from Harvard has also compiled a list of the plants present on the Keck Reservation, available on the AVIS website, www.avisandover.org. This new addition also enables hikers to connect, with a careful crossing of Rt. 28, to the Goldsmith Reservation to the west.

Thank you to the trail builders, the wardens and all AVIS members and friends.

Andover Day

AVIS set up a table on Saturday, September 24 in downtown Andover along with many other non-profit organizations as well as stores and vendors to celebrate Andover Day. A big thank you to Heather Holman of Prudential Howe & Doherty Realtors, 12 Bartlet Street, Andover for sponsoring our table this year. If you didn't come out this year, we hope to see you at our table next year!



Artwork by Emily Trespas

From the AVIS President

Fred Snell



We've all seen articles in newspapers and magazines that tell how open green space helps people's mental health - presumably by reducing stress. But other studies seem to also indicate that proximity and exposure to the natural world also shows a positive influence on physical health as well. Here are several examples:

As reported in USA Today 9-15-2009, "The closer you live to nature, the healthier you're likely to be. For instance, people who live within 1 kilometer (.6 miles) of a park or wooded area experience less anxiety and depression. Dutch researchers report." The study also found a strong correlation with less physical ailments including cardiovascular, respiratory and neurological diseases.

The website <http://www.livescience.com/3490-nature.html> summarized three studies:

1. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Landscape and Human Health Laboratory scientists have found : "Access to green spaces can lead to improvements in physical health too, other studies have found. One study of 80- to 85-year-olds conducted in Tokyo found that those with access to green space had a lower rate of mortality, even when socioeconomic status was taken into account."
2. Another study in the United Kingdom found that the health disparities normally seen between the wealthy and non-wealthy disappeared when access to green areas was factored in.
3. One study conducted in Indianapolis found that children in greener neighborhoods had a reduced risk of being overweight or obese.

What does all this mean? It simply means that here is another reason why our mission of protecting open space and providing access to it for the public adds so much to the richness of living in Andover for us and for our future generations. We are so fortunate to not only have the beauty of the lands around us but that it's good for us too.

Fred



Artwork by Emily Trespas

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.

PO Box 5097 Andover, MA 01810
www.avisandover.org
update@avisandover.org

A Tip of the AVIS Hat to Dick Dillon

By Alix Driscoll

Warden of the Harold Rafton Reservation and work party volunteer.

"Doing just what is needed"

In addition to lovingly caring for "his" 220 acres, AVIS's Rafton Reservation, Dick Dillon pitches in on any job needed on any reservation. David Dargie, who introduced Dillon to AVIS, shares, "Whenever there is a problem at any AVIS location. I ask Dick, can you take care of that? He always says yes."

The two put up about 100 AVIS signs, which took about a year. Dillon goes to many of the AVIS work parties, taking charge of tools, equipment and trash removal. To add to his impressive completed to-do list, Dillon along with Mike Timko and other volunteers removed the bridge by Fish Brook, lengthened it and replaced, "doing just what is needed."

Currently Dillon is enjoying working with Dave Doub and John Wragg and other work party members. He assists Wragg who directs the Andover High School cross-country team, which has adopted the trails on West Parish Meadow and Indian Ridge and spreads mulch seasonally.

Born in Cambridge, a self-defined city lad, he learn to maintain hard-won open space when he came to work for the Andover Water Treatment Plant and learned about the opportunities in AVIS from longtime warden and volunteer, David Dargie. "I agreed I would be a warden for two acres or 200; I'll do it."

That's now a decade of wardenship and a decade of work parties later: hauling, chopping, bridge building, directing, trail constructing, volunteering and, caring.

Rafton Reservation gives him strength

Dillon admits that he gathers strength from this hard-hewn parcel of New England land, AVIS's largest reservation. "As with all the wardens, they enjoy their own private relationship with the land they protect." He describes Rafton as large, quiet and rocky. It mirrors the fortitude of the rock-bound New England folks who settled this land with all its challenges, three and a half centuries beforehand. It speaks to him of "the hardness of making a living from this non-fertile land, of unemotional, hardworking settlers and their struggle to make nature productive" He accepts what nature has given and what will be taken back.

Dillon's favorite spot? The lookout point on Fish Brook is the place he particularly cherishes. "It is a beautiful peaceful spot with dams and beavers."

And with a sense of awe and humility, Dillon says he has learned that there is "a billion years of geological history" on the Peggy Keck Reservation, just a few miles across town.



Winter & Spring Hikes By Fred Snell

Snowshoeing West Parish Meadow, Indian Ridge, and Baker's Meadow

On March 6, Fred Snell led a hardy group through these reservations. If you remember back to this past winter, this was a time when we had deep snow on the ground and it had then rained and froze with a solid crust on top. Normally the crust holds and you just walk along the top. On this day the sun was out and it softened the crust by midday. Under these conditions, the snowshoe holds for a moment on the icy crust and then you suddenly sink up to your knees or more with each step. It makes the going slow for the first people in the group. We all took turns "breaking the trail" and had an enjoyable day playing in the snow.

Goldsmith Reservation

Helen Palmer and Judi Barthakur led this early spring walk on easy terrain in scenic woodland on March 20.

Deer Jump and Rafton Reservations

Led by Dennis Crispo the group hiked about 4.5 mi. through Deer Jump Reservation along the Merrimack River. Then they followed the wooded Conservation Commission land connector along Fish Brook onto the Rafton Reservation.

Mountain Laurel on Deer Jump

On June 19, Fred Snell and Maggie Christopher led a hike along the Deer Jump Reservation to see if we could catch the bloom of the Mountain Laurel. The hike was jointly sponsored by AVIS and the Andover Committee of the AMC. About twenty of us were able to see this magnificent plant in full bloom on a clear sunny day on this beautiful reservation bordering the Merrimack River in Andover.

We started from the Launching Road entrance and proceeded up-river. After a mile and a half we began to find the plants just north of the open field that we maintain just west of the Raven's Bluff subdivision. Some of us continued west under the power lines on land we lease from National Grid to find blooms with more pink coloration due to the sun exposure.

Ongoing hikes are held by the men's and women's groups at the Andover Senior Center, the Andover Committee of the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Andover Trails Committee, and AVIS. Contact these groups for schedules.

andoverseniorcenter.org,
amcboston.org/andover/
andovertrails.org/



The Blue Bird Project

Girl Scout Troop 61224 recently installed Information Stations by the Shawsheen River Reservation to educate visitors about Blue Birds.



Avis Seeks Technical Support

AVIS is always trying to improve its forest and property management. We have decided to form an ad hoc committee on scientific and technical issues. This committee will serve as a sounding board for land management issues and provide support to the Trustees as we learn more about how to manage the lands that we conserve and protect. Anyone interested in serving on this committee, please contact Fred Snell. Thank you in advance for your participation in this effort to improve our knowledge and skills in land management.

Thank You

We want to recognize the great partnerships that have developed over the past few years with the Andover Senior Center, the Andover Trails Committee, and the Andover Historical Society. Working together with the Senior Center more people have been able to enjoy the beautiful trails in Andover. The Andover Trails Committee has not only been a vocal supporter of AVIS but they have done tremendous volunteer work to improve trails and to make new trails, where needed, including their work on the new bridge in the Vale Reservation. Our partnership with the Andover Historical Society has brought to life some of the exciting tales about Andover and particularly those that happened in AVIS property. Thank you to these groups for their collaboration.

A tree on the Sunset Rock Reservation was dead and imperiled a house on Timothy Drive. After discussion with the neighbor and checking with several tree services, David Dargie was able to get a very good, discounted price, from Steven Reposa of Reposa Tree Service. We would like to offer our appreciation to Steven for his support of AVIS.

Avis Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town, State, Zip: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Dues: _____ \$25 Individual _____ \$100 Sustaining

_____ \$40 Family _____ \$10 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!

AVIS

PO Box 5097

Andover, MA 01810

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

Paid

Permit No. 344

Andover, MA 01810

Fall 2011 - Winter 2012 Calendar

Sunday, January 29

Annual Rafton Reservation Hike/ Ski/Snowshoe

Rafton Reservation, Andover.

Meet at 10 AM for AVIS' 42nd annual X-C ski trek. From I-93, go E on Rt. 133 for 0.5 mi. to the first set of traffic lights, take L on Greenwood Rd. for about 1 mi., take 2nd L onto High Plain Rd..

Travel about 1 mi. (cross I-93 & I-495).

Park near leaf composting area. No reg.

No pets. Hike if no snow, rain cancels.

Ls Burt Batcheller, (978-475-3665),

David Dargie, (978-996-4475, david@dargie.com)

Sunday, February 12th, 2012

Annual Goldsmith Woodlands Moonlight Hike/Ski/Snowshoe

Goldsmith Woodlands, Andover.

Meet at 6:00 PM for family moonlight snowshoe and cross country ski trek for all ages and abilities. Bring a headlamp or flashlight. From Rte. 125, travel N on Rte. 28 (S. Main St.) for about 0.4 mi. Park in front of #491 S. Main St.

at Goldsmith entrance. No pets. Hike if

no snow, rain cancels. Ls Burt Batcheller

(978-475-3665), David Dargie (978-996-4475; david@dargie.com)

Tuesday, March 13, 2012

Annual Meeting

We regret that it has gotten to be too expensive to have a dinner and speaker as part of our Annual Meeting. So, this year, we are considering having our regular business meeting to elect Trustees on this date but without a dinner. Please mark your calendars to come and vote on your leadership. We will have another event in the Spring time to celebrate the great outdoors in Andover. Stay Tuned!!!

Fred Snell
Pam Eaton
Lindsey Timko

President
Membership
Designer