



# Friends of Hall's Pond

December 2019

## SANCTUARY NEWS

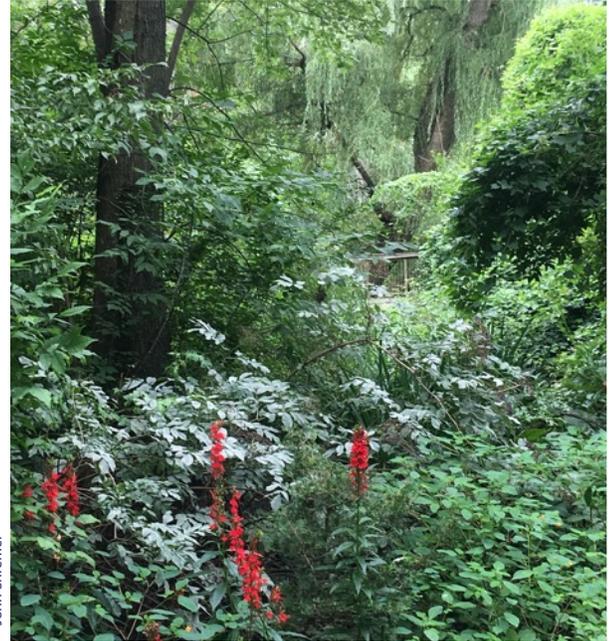
### A Time to Reflect

Tom Brady, Brookline Conservation Administrator, Town Arborist, and Tree Warden

AS WE WIND DOWN the fall season and begin our transition into winter, it is a perfect time to reflect on what has been accomplished and what needs and issues will need to be addressed in 2020.

2019 has been a vibrant and busy year for the Sanctuary. The *Friends of Hall's Pond* has had two enormously successful work-filled Community Days, and Frank Caro and his volunteers have continued to provide a tremendous amount of care and upkeep to the Sanctuary as the season has progressed. These efforts are critically important in our goal to control the ever-advancing invasive species currently present on site. We saw the successful implementation of some new water bars to control runoff. These were the result of a successful project by a local youth who is advancing to the rank of Eagle Scout! Last October's storm illustrated just how valuable this project is in curtailing erosion and runoff at one of our access pathways. These incremental steps all add up to improve water quality and maintain the health of the Pond.

As is the normal practice, the major maintenance and upkeep of the Sanctuary has con-



John Shreffler

*Lobelia cardinalis*, "Cardinal Lobelia" in the Wooded Wetland section of Hall's Pond this past August.

tinued throughout the year using Town staff and contracted services. Items addressed include tree pruning and removal, regular mowing of the formal garden areas, maintenance of the sediment forebay which protects the Pond from harmful sediment, drainage improvements to control and mitigate runoff that may

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### From the Co-Presidents

Ellen Forrester and Frank Caro

THANKS TO PLENTY OF RAIN in the spring and summer, 2019 was an excellent year for vegetation at Hall's Pond! The perennials and



Frank Caro

Despite the rain at the Spring Community Day, we planted over 250 shrubs and perennials.

shrubs that we planted in recent years flourished! Throughout the growing season, the formal garden never looked better.

We scheduled our Spring Community Day well into May to maximize our chances for good weather. Unfortunately, we were challenged by an unexpected rain shower that began just as we were starting. Our intrepid volunteers ignored the rain and planted many perennials and shrubs. Next year, we again have hope for good weather, live music and activities for children at Community Day.

Ferris Hall, a founding board member, spoke at our annual meeting about the history of the Cottage Farm neighborhood and Hall's Pond. The talk attracted a standing room only crowd. Ferris's excellent slides are now on our website.



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**A Time to Reflect**, continued from page 1

affect the sanctuary, and repairs to fences and entrance gates which enclose the Sanctuary. We have also been keeping an eye on construction activities in the vicinity of the Sanctuary that could impact this resource.

Recently I paid a visit to the Sanctuary to complete a walkthrough and to ensure that this fall's wind events did not leave any hazardous situations in its wake. As I approached the Sanctuary I saw and heard a large group of elementary school children with their teachers and chaperones. As I walked throughout the Sanctuary the sounds of exploration, excitement, and laughter filled the air. In an instant my energies rose and my spirit was lifted in hearing and observing these moments of discovery.

So, I invite you to visit the Sanctuary this autumn and take a nice stroll through this natural gem and stop and find your own moment of discovery! Enjoy this fall season, and bundle up and enjoy the sights and sounds of the winter season as well! I look forward to seeing all of you at the 2020 Spring Community Day.



Harry Bregger

Marc Parent from DPW Parks and Open Space installing a dry well near the Formal Garden on Fall Community Day. The dry well will minimize runoff from the adjacent parking lot.

**Co-Presidents**, continued from page 1



Nate Dow

*Belted Kingfisher at the Pond, September 25.*

Fred Bouchard and Neil Gore led early morning bird walks in the spring. Our volunteer maintenance team kept the formal garden looking attractive all summer. In the sanctuary, the volunteers kept the vines out of the trees.

The "See and Share Sightings" section of our website continues to grow. Particularly striking are recent photos by Nate Dow of a belted kingfisher that used to be rare at Hall's Pond but is now a fairly regular visitor.

Our Fall Community Day was also a great success. With the good fortune of enjoying beautiful fall weather, we attracted lots of participants. Our activities included placement of Betsy Shure Gross's Black Willow grove in its permanent locations west of the pond beyond her bench, planting of bulbs and perennials, live music provided by John Harris and Don Monroe, story telling for children provided by Caroline Richardson from the Coolidge Corner library, and a bird walk led by Neil Gore.

John Shreffler edited this newsletter again this year. Harry Bregger continues to do an excellent job in designing our newsletters and posters [but is looking for a volunteer to train to replace him]. Helen Herman has stepped forward to serve as Corresponding Secretary and new board member Diane Ryan is serving as Recording Secretary. Together, Helen and Diane are filling an important position that had been vacant for

many years. I wish there were space here to acknowledge all of the volunteers who made significant contributions. We continue to need more volunteers.

Your membership payments and more generous gifts are important to us. We use the money to purchase plants for the formal garden, sanctuary and meadow. Your financial contributions and volunteer work encourage the Town to finance major projects at Hall's Pond. The Town has several large projects waiting to be done at Hall's Pond. Most conspicuous among them is rebuilding the boardwalk. Your contributions to the *Friends* help to make Hall's Pond a higher priority for the Town.

We urge you to continue your visits to Hall's Pond during the winter. The Sanctuary has a special charm when the plant life is dormant and the shadows are long.



John Shreffler

Volunteers cleaning up at the end of this year's very productive Fall Community Day.

## Mother Nature's Little Helpers

Fred Bouchard



MAMA EARTH runs a pretty smooth eco-system (even universe) but She can't do it all. She sees to it that chickadees spot last year's flicker drill-

holes to make this year's nest. And, as maples work on photosynthesis, they give off carbon to turkey-tails and other fungi, which return the favor giving trees extra nutrients and water. (Reference terms: *Opportunism* and *mutualism*).

So naturally, we humans try to give Mama a little boost. Our natural environment may look a bit messy, but we don't over-rake or clear beneficial natural debris. Light leaf-raking sacrifices tidiness to allow ground cover to shelter overwintering fauna, like queen bees, amphibians and insects. Decaying debris feeds smaller bugs, which in turn help aerate and fertilize the soil, thus benefiting larger birds and animals.

In more obvious aids to Mother Earth, we stake and sheath saplings to assure upright growth and protection against predation. We clear garden escapees ('volunteers') and uproot invasive ground-covers like vinca, euonymus and agepodium.



Yet more obvious Nature aids are to plant ecofriendly flora and supply nest sites. Within the Sanctuary and formal garden, we work hard to plant beneficial native perennials, annuals, shrubs and trees, such as *Asclepia* (milkweed) for Monarch butterflies, *Pinus nigra* (white pine) for seed and cover, *Aronia* for early flower nectar and late season berries, *Agastache* (hyssop) for late season nectar. These provide food sources and cover to our local flora and fauna and all, of course, look fantastically beautiful to the human visitor!

*Black-capped Chickadee* (the Massachusetts state bird), *Northern Flicker*, and *Monarch Butterfly*.

(Photos by Shawn Carey, not at Hall's Pond)



A Tree House, set up at the pond edge, is designed specifically to encourage migrant Wood Ducks to move in next Spring. Brilliantly plumed and fast-flying, the flashy Wood Ducks nest in hollow trees, old woodpecker holes – or a roomy pre-fab nest box. Females select the site, males stand guard until eggs are near hatching, then both raise the nestlings. Once



*Wood Ducks, potential nesters, have been showing up in recent years, thanks perhaps in part to our improved habitat.*

threatened by habitat loss, Wood Ducks (like American Kestrels) have made a comeback through concerted housing efforts. Migrating woodies have yet to take up residence, but Hall's Pond is now ready to welcome them. Listen for their squealy calls (so unlike the Mallard 'quak!') come March.

Logs strategically placed pondside encourage turtles to sun themselves. Red-eared Sliders and Eastern Painteds need little inducement, queuing up nose to tail on warm afternoons like tourists at a cabana bar. Often a Double-crested Cormorant swings by from



*Red-eared Sliders in formation.*



*Double-crested Cormorant drying off.*

Watch for a Bat Box next Spring, attached to a sunny tree in the woods. The *Friends* are espousing the cause of these little-known and oft-maligned, but ecologically valuable, little winged mammals. Bats, true fliers with astonishing hearing, can echo-locate insect prey with laser-like accuracy.

Bruce Wolff

David Lucal

Sam Seifol

## Volunteer Maintenance Team

OUR MAINTENANCE TEAM attends to the formal garden and Sanctuary throughout the growing season. The team removes weeds, dead heads flowers, and prunes shrubs in the formal garden. The team also controls invasive species throughout the Sanctuary. The team complements the work done by the larger number of volunteers who participate in the spring and fall Community Days. This year the team held its first session on a chilly day in the middle of April with a clean-up of the formal garden. The team ended its year with a session on a sunny day in early October when we pruned Rhododendrons that define the south border of the formal garden.



John Shreffler

*Volunteers cleaning up the Formal Garden at our first session of the year.*

For the second time, the maintenance team scheduled its twice-monthly work sessions in advance for the entire season. Reflecting the preferences of our volunteers, all of the sessions were held on Thursday mornings from 9 AM until noon. With a schedule set in advance, our volunteers were able to schedule other activities around the Hall's Pond work sessions. The team also held its second annual picnic in late August to celebrate its efforts. At the end of one of our regular sessions, the picnic was held at Amory Park, just outside of the Sanctuary.

In the formal garden, our deep pruning of established shrubs has produced good results. The recently added herbaceous plants are doing well. With plenty of rain in the spring and through much of the summer, we enjoyed good blossoms throughout the summer and into the fall. In the Sanctuary, we now rarely discover inva-



Bruce Wolff

*Rhododendron in front of the Japanese Maple tree.*

sive vines that have climbed high up into the trees. Our emphasis now is on keeping the vines out of the trees.

Our volunteers find the experience very satisfying. At every session, we see immediate improvements in the appearance of the formal garden. By working regularly in the Sanctuary, we enjoy the gradual progression of the vegetation from spring into the fall.

Our core group of volunteers this year consisted of "veterans" Fran Givelber, Fran Perler, Diane Ryan, John Shreffler, Priscilla Smith, and Janet Wynn. We were particularly pleased to have two newcomers in our core group: Sharon Gray and Joseph Cohen. Helen Herman, Paul Warren (another newcomer), and Neil Gore joined us occasionally. I continue to coordinate the effort.

We continue to welcome newcomers whether they come frequently or only occasionally. We provide equipment and on-the-job training to new volunteers. We find light work for those who want it. We accommodate volunteers who prefer the formal garden. We also welcome volunteers who want to work entirely in the Sanctuary.

Frank Caro ([frank.g.caro@gmail.com](mailto:frank.g.caro@gmail.com) / 617-739-9228)



Fran Perler

*Maintenance volunteer end-of-the-season picnic lunch.*

## The Return of the Carolina Wren

Neil Gore

IN THESE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT environmental times, Hall's Pond continues to serve as a true Sanctuary for us, as it thrives and changes. Birding here in 2019 reflects the variability of our lives, with familiar experiences in different combinations.

Shawn Carey (not at Hall's Pond).



I thought the Spring birding experience was somewhat indifferent and frustrating. The mild winter led into an early but cold, protracted Spring – seemingly now our customary pattern – in which

the migrants were slow to arrive, until flooding in May, and, after which, was over too soon. In short, I felt the most interesting part of the birding year was over.

And then, in mid-summer, I heard a bird that I have missed seeing for several years. The Carolina Wren, one of my favorites, had returned. I confirmed this hearing and sighting often throughout the late summer and early fall. It is the largest of the several members of the Wren family, and has an incredibly loud call – “CHEE-burger-CHEE-burger-CHEE-burger” is my rendition. Although more often heard than seen, it can be sighted, with patience and luck, teed up on a bare branch in the middle of Amory Woods, or on a fence, broadcasting its song.

I say “return” because, before the last few years, it had been a regular at Hall's Pond, and following a mild winter, it is inclined to stay year-round.

This uplifting experience reminded me of other positive sightings: More frequent appearances of Belted Kingfisher, which seems to be having some success feeding at the Pond; a pair of nesting Red-bellied Woodpeckers in a willow overhanging the playing field; and the Yellowthroat, a colorful Warbler which seems to really appreciate the pondside reeds and tangles.

For birders of all levels, but especially for those who want to practice finding birds other than the obvious residents, Hall's Pond provides both a refuge and a pleasant challenge.

## See and Share Sightings

Fred Bouchard

Hi, Sanctuary Visitors! If you see something, say/show something!

People visit Hall's Pond to unwind and commune, but also to observe and explore.

You might spy an odd caterpillar, marvel at a flower, or glimpse a bird.

If you'd like to share or ID it, do add your comment or photo here: [friendsofhallspnd.org/featured-items/see-and-share-sightings/](http://friendsofhallspnd.org/featured-items/see-and-share-sightings/)

Did you find a curious spider web? Get buzzed by darting dragonflies? Discover faint snow-tracks? Post it – *but no people or pet shots, please!*

Conversely, scroll down the *See and Share Sightings* page to see what others have noticed to get ideas of what you might find, or look for, on your next visit. The page shows recent pix of cool critters: *Belted Kingfisher, Fisher Cat* (first-ever!), *Wilson's Warbler, Blue Dasher, Barred Owl, Fork-tailed Damselfly, Eastern Painted Turtles*, and shares views of pretty flora like *Trillium, Japanese Maple, Red Osier*. Add your own sweet tweets.

*Wilson's warbler  
in the morning rain,  
May, 2019.*

Jasper



Jasper

*Least flycatcher,  
May, 2019.*



Chao "Jimmy" Wu

*This fisher was resting on a fork about 40 feet or so up the pine. The majority of the time it was just dozing or sleeping, but kept a watchful eye on the nearby grackles, April, 2018.*

## What Price Nature?

Bob Schram

NO ONE DOUBTS for a second that Hall's Pond Sanctuary is a priceless resource, an amazing treasure in the midst of our community. Having this natural haven tucked within a mile of downtown Boston is a gift we should never take for granted, a legacy which demands constant attention and ongoing investment. And sometimes we do have to take a hard look at the numbers – what does it cost to maintain the Sanctuary and what will it actually cost to realize our vision for the future of Hall's Pond.



A graceful Great Blue Heron gliding in for a landing at the Pond.

It takes money just to preserve and maintain the status quo at Hall's Pond. The Town of Brookline can only do so much to maintain our parks and open space so the *Friends of Hall's Pond* are called upon to help make up the difference. Over the last ten years The *Friends* have purchased thousands of native plants and devoted tens of thousands of volunteer hours to improving and protecting the Sanctuary: by gradually eliminating invasive species and then planting native grasses, ferns, trees and bushes, in our decades-long quest to return the sanctuary to its original pristine state.

The *Friends of Hall's Pond* has been spending roughly \$5,000 a year, above and beyond the Town of Brookline's support, in order to keep up the progress. And at this rate, we still have at least thirty years to go to complete the master horticultural restoration plan. Sadly, our fund raising has not been keeping up with this pace of spending for quite a while, and so our financial resources are gradually dwindling since we have refused to halt the steady progress towards our vision.

If everyone who enjoys Hall's Pond were to become a member of the the *Friends* for just \$25 per year (families \$35), we would be able to keep up our current pace of improvements. If you can help us to raise

Joel Feingold



John Shreffler

Volunteer Melanie Julian with sons Lucas and Owen planting a brand new Black Willow tree at this year's Fall Community Day.

more than this, we can do more to accelerate the long term planting and habitat recuperation program.

Of course we must preserve and protect Hall's Pond for future generations. Of course we must continue improving the habitat for birds and wildlife. So we do need your contributions in order to maintain our progress We hope you can become a member/supporter – any contribution you make will be a blessing and a gift to our wider community. Please use the enclosed envelope to send us your contribution or log onto the Hall's Pond website at [friendsofhallspod.org](http://friendsofhallspod.org) to make an on-line contribution. Please do this right now!

All of your donations are fully tax deductible. The *Friends of Hall's Pond* is a 501 (c) 3 organization.



Sam Seico

Redwing singing, May, 2019.

## Membership Form

The *Friends of Hall's Pond* was founded in 1976 by Josephine Albrecht and others who established a public private partnership: making a commitment to partner with the Brookline Conservation Commission as stewards of the newly acquired Hall's Pond Nature Sanctuary. The *Friends* are committed to the maintenance, preservation and protection of this unique urban resource. Our initiatives include Community Days, tending the Formal Garden and raising funds for the Horticulture Fund.

NEW MEMBER       RENEWAL

**Renewing Members** — to save funds, and trees, the *Friends of Hall's Pond* does not send separate renewal forms by mail as in the past. Please check if your membership is due, and use this form and the enclosed envelope to make your generous donations.

Name (please print)

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

ANNUAL DUES:  \$25 INDIVIDUAL  \$35 FAMILY

I would like to make an addition contribution to support the work of the *Friends* at the sanctuary \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in:

- Community Days
- Maintenance Team
- Investing in the Horticulture Fund
- Working in the Formal Garden
- Taking guided walks in the Sanctuary
- Newsletter and/or Website

Please make checks payable to *Friends of Hall's Pond, Inc.*

Send to: *Friends of Hall's Pond*

PO Box 1844

Brookline MA 02446

Or join at [friendsofhallspnd.org](http://friendsofhallspnd.org), via credit card or Paypal

**We are ALWAYS grateful for your continued support.**

For further information about membership, volunteering, or to contact the *Friends*, please go to [friendsofhallspnd.org](http://friendsofhallspnd.org), or write us at [friendsofhallspnd@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhallspnd@gmail.com). Our organization is interested in your communication and encourages your involvement.

*Friends of Hall's Pond* is a 501(c)3 organization.

My or my spouse's place of employment will match my contribution. (Please send matching gift information from your place of employment to the *Friends of Hall's Pond*.)



Doug Sherman (not at Hall's Pond).

### *Asarum canadense*, wild ginger

Ellen Forrester

This is the Canadian Wild Ginger that is native to the lower states in Canada and here in New England. The flower looks nothing like the tropical ginger flower that we can purchase at the local florist and the roots look nothing like the ginger you buy at the market. This ginger has a thick fleshy root that does smell like ginger. Please don't pick it if you find some. As with many plants, it once had edible and medicinal uses but now we know it does contain toxins. It has large heart shaped leaves that can also cause an irritation if you are sensitive. At the base of the leaves, early in the spring, you can find a brownish burgundy flower, usually at ground level. The plant is only about 6 inches tall. This is a terrific, mat-forming groundcover that thrives in shade but likes a rich composed soil. Early in the season this early flower is a food source for beetles and later in the season is also a larval host to many butterflies. See if you can find some planted nearby.

## The Friends of Hall's Pond

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>Founder:</b> Jo Albrecht	<b>Co-Presidents:</b> Frank Caro Ellen Forrester	<b>Treasurer:</b> Joseph Collins
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<b>Recording Secretary:</b> Diane Ryan	<b>Corresponding Secretary:</b> Helen Herman
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#### Board Members:

Fredrick Bouchard	Chobee Hoy	Patricia Schram
Harry Breger	Deanne Morse	John Shreffler
Dana Bringham	Deborah Myers <small>(Brookline Conservation Commission Liaison)</small>	Kate Silbaugh
Neil Gore		Deborah Stone
Betsy Shure Gross	Deborah Raptopoulos	Bruce Wolff
John Harris	Michael Sandman	Janet Wynn
	Bob Schram	

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**Friends of Hall's Pond**  
PO Box 1844  
Brookline MA 02446

Keep up-to-date at  
[friendsofhallspond.org](http://friendsofhallspond.org)

## Eagle Scout Project

Nineteen scouts from Brookline's Boy Scout Troop 6 dedicated a part of their summer vacations to working on erosion prevention measures in the upland section of the Sanctuary as part of their Eagle Scout community service project. They also worked to dig out the storm drains on nearby Churchill Street to help prevent run-off into Hall's Pond. Michael Cherkasky who organized and led the project to a successful conclusion as part of his Eagle Scout program describes his project thus:



“This Eagle project was to help stop erosion in Halls Pond. There was an excessive amount of water coming down from the street into Halls Pond because of a storm drain that had become clogged up. We dug trenches and filled them with stone and put a log on top to slow the water down and help with draining. We also cleaned up the storm drain so now it should work properly, at least for now.”

Troop 6 has partnered with the *Friends of Hall's Pond* over several years in our conservation and care-taking efforts. A big shout out to Troop 6!

Michael Cherkasky

Michael Cherkasky