

**The Arlington Land Trust is a community-based nonprofit organization established in 2000 to protect undeveloped land in Arlington. As a membership organization, ALT accepts donations and welcomes volunteers to support its work.**

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## Arlington Land Trust News

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## Symmes Redevelopment Features Public Parks and Open Spaces

The redevelopment of the former Symmes Hospital site is at last nearing completion, including the permanent protection of nearly half of the site for the benefit of the public. Two new parks and other woodland areas will be open for all Town residents to enjoy.



Ann LeRoy

**Construction of the residential apartments at Arlington 360 is nearly complete, as seen from the edge of Hattie Symmes Park.**

Over ten years ago, Town Meeting voted to purchase the Symmes property in order to have a say in how the approximately 18-acre site would be developed. With commanding views toward Boston and a steep, partially wooded terrain, the site had the potential to be a major redevelopment opportunity with significant impacts on the Town.

After a lengthy public process and delays associated with the downturn of the economy in 2008, construction finally began in the

spring of 2012 on a residential development at the top of the property. Developer Arlington 360, LLC has nearly completed a 164-unit apartment complex and 12 townhouse condominiums, and is now marketing the apartments for rent and the townhouses for sale.

Arlington 360 sold a two-acre portion of the Symmes site half way up the hill to Shelter/Brightview Arlington for a 90-unit assisted living facility. Construction began in the spring of 2013 and is expected to be completed by

## Friends of Symmes Woods

The Land Trust and the Conservation Commission would like to work with a Friends group to monitor protection and management of the Symmes Woods. Several neighbors are interested in forming such a group, and they will host a meeting in February to begin discussions.

If you are interested in being part of the Friends group, please come to learn more and sign up at the **Arlington Land Trust Annual Meeting** on January 27. If you can not come to that meeting, please contact either Karen Johnson ([kpj64@comcast.net](mailto:kpj64@comcast.net)) or Clarissa Rowe ([Clarissa.rowe@comcast.net](mailto:Clarissa.rowe@comcast.net)) and you will be notified about the February meeting and other plans.



Photos this page: Ann LeFoyer

**Symmes Woods encompasses the area between Summer Street and the new assisted living facility.**



**Hattie Symmes Park (top) offers views of Boston in the distance and of Nora A. Brown Park next to the access road, Symmes Road. Public parking is available at both parks.**

the summer of 2014. A temporary sales trailer for the assisted living facility and a temporary parking area have been installed in the woods along Summer Street, but they will be removed and the area will be restored.

To learn more about these new develop-

ments, visit [www.livearlington360.com](http://www.livearlington360.com) or <http://arlingtonma.brightviewsenior-living.com>.

### Parks and Woodlands

The most prominent feature of the development is the half-acre Hattie Symmes Park with commanding views of Arlington and Boston to the east. Named for his daughter in whose honor Stephen Symmes founded the hospital, the park features pathways, benches, and extensive landscaping.

A second hillside park of almost two acres abuts the upper boundary of the Symmes Woods. It is designed for passive recreation with views of the Boston skyline framed through the trees. Named for Nora A. Brown, the long-time head of the nurses' facility at the hospital, it contains pervious pathways, mowed strips within an open meadow area, and landscaped beds, as well as some benches and picnic tables.

Both parks will be maintained by the development company at its expense, but open to the public under the same rules and regulations as those governing other Town parks.

In the relatively flat area between Summer Street, the new Nora Brown Park, and the assisted living facility lies the bulk of the Symmes Woods, dominated by Norway Maple trees. After the area is restored, this woodland will be accessible to the public for passive use.

Arlington Land Trust and Arlington Conservation Commission have responsibility for guiding the long-term management of the

woodlands and will foster the creation of a "Friends of Symmes Woods" group including neighbors and new residents of the development who will participate in managing the woods. Management decisions likely will include whether and where to locate foot trails and what new species of trees should be planted over the years to increase the health of the woods.

Management of the Hattie Symmes Park, Nora A. Brown Park, and Symmes Woods is governed by a management plan agreed to by the developers, the Arlington Redevelopment Board, the Arlington Land Trust, and the Arlington Conservation Commission.

When all the construction work is completed, the parks and woodlands will be protected by a Conservation Restriction (CR) and Public Access Easement held by the Land Trust and Conservation Commission. The CR, which offers permanent legal protection for the land, will be signed off by the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and by the Town of Arlington in 2014. Small property markers will designate the CR boundaries.





# The Community Preservation Act: Should Arlington Adopt it?

In September 2000, Governor Paul Cellucci signed the Community Preservation Act (CPA) into law. The Act is “a smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. CPA also helps strengthen the state and local economies by expanding housing opportunities and construction jobs for the Commonwealth’s workforce, and by supporting the tourism industry through preservation of the Commonwealth’s historic and natural resources.” This summary comes from the Community Preservation Coalition’s website, [www.communitypreservation.org](http://www.communitypreservation.org).

To date, 155 out of 351 Massachusetts towns and cities have adopted the Act, which is a local option tax on property taxes. Arlington’s restaurant and hotel taxes could also be used to match the state funding. This year the state match is 52.23 percent. For every \$1 raised locally, the state will contribute more than 52 cents toward the community’s designated projects.

Over the past 13 years, close to \$1.2 billion has been raised for community preservation projects, and over 6,600 initiatives have been approved. Among the results: over 7,300 affordable housing units have been created or aided; more than 19,000 acres of open space have been preserved; and over 3,200 historic preservation projects have been started.

How could the CPA help Arlington? It could provide an incentive to negotiate a sale of the Mugar land to be used as permanent open space to provide flood storage and some parkland. It could be used to renovate the historic Jefferson Cutter House, which is the home of the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum. It could provide funds for improvements at the Old Schwamb Mill. It could assist the Housing Corporation of Arlington in their work to provide more affordable housing for Arlington residents.

## Annual Meeting Presents CPA Forum

The Arlington Land Trust’s Annual Meeting on Monday, January 27, 2014, will be devoted to a discussion of the CPA. This forum will provide information that has significance for Arlington’s future. A warrant article will be presented to this year’s Town Meeting asking to put the Act on the ballot so

the citizens of Arlington can decide whether to adopt the Community Preservation Act.

The forum will begin with a short presentation by **Stuart Saginor**, executive director of the statewide Community Preservation Coalition. He will explain the basic tenets of the law and highlight a path to adoption. Then three people familiar with the Act will participate in a panel discussion and answer audience questions.

**Jen Ryan** is an ALT board member, former legislative director for Mass Audubon, board member of the Massachusetts League of Environmental Voters, and Arlington resident. Jen has worked on new legislative changes for the CPA.

## Arlington Land Trust Annual Meeting

### Forum on the Community Preservation Act: Should Arlington Adopt It?

Monday, January 27, 2014  
7–9 pm

Arlington Senior Center  
27 Maple Street  
Arlington, Massachusetts

**Sean Caron**, chief of staff for The Community Builders, is the former director of public policy at CHAPA, Citizen’s Housing and Planning Association. He worked with Jen Ryan and the Coalition on getting new CPA legislation through the Massachusetts House and Senate.

**Sarah Burks** is a board member of the Cyrus Dallin Art Museum, resident of Arlington, and a preservation planner at the Cambridge Historical Commission. The City of Cambridge has made good use of the \$50 million it has received in CPA funds for a variety of projects.

## ALT Member Profile - Roger Tobin and Bonnie Payne

Roger Tobin and Bonnie Payne have been Oxford Street residents for over 25 years. They have pursued their love of cycling, running, and hiking in many beautiful locations, from Scotland to California, Italy to New Zealand! Back home in Arlington, they appreciate the beauty and serenity of open space. In winter they walk along the bike path to the Lexington line and back, enjoying the views along the way. Their children, now young adults, made good use of Spy Pond, the parks, and playgrounds. Bonnie remarks they “are glad to support the work of the ALT to keep these spaces open and to preserve green space, especially in East Arlington.”

Courtesy Photo



# Spy Pond Fun Day on Elizabeth Island

The Arlington Land Trust coordinated boat trips and guided tours of Elizabeth Island during Spy Pond Fun Day on Saturday, September 7. We are grateful to members of the Arlington-Belmont Crew who ferried

visitors back and forth in their two small motor boats. Nearly 70 people were able to walk around the island, most of them for the first time. About half of the delighted explorers were adults and half were children.

ALT board member Ted Siegan and member/volunteer Susan Stamps greeted the visitors and guided them around the island, while other board members coordinated launches and landings with the Crew members at the boat ramp. The natural history tours introduced visitors to the trees and plants involved in forest succession around the two-acre island, and pointed out the remains of some animal skeletons and geese egg shells. Unfortunately, active yellow jacket wasps nesting in leaf litter near the trail forced the cancellation of tours after several hours.

ALT expects to offer more tours next spring and summer so that all who are interested in the island can experience it up-close. In the meantime, we are working on plans for trail maintenance to ensure safe use of the island. The island is open to the public and can be visited at any time by private boat or by walking or skating on the iced-over pond, if the winter is cold enough to allow safe passage. The Town offers boat rentals at Spy Pond Park during the summer months. Consult the Arlington Recreation Department for more information: <https://www.arlingtonrec.com/info/>



Arlington Land Trust and A-B Crew members helped ferry nearly 70 visitors to Elizabeth Island on the Friends of Spy Pond Park Fun Day in September.

## Wildlife Habitat Garden at the Arlington Reservoir

The garden now surrounding the new bridge and spillway at the Arlington Reservoir was overflowing with vibrant textures and colors during its third season in 2013. Designed by Arlington resident and landscape designer Martine Gougault, the garden is now a valued public amenity for the Reservoir neighborhood and the entire Arlington community.

Planted with native shrubs, trees, grasses, and perennials, the garden attracts local wildlife seeking food, water, shelter, and places to raise young. Native plants provide the foliage, pollen, nectar, and seeds that many wildlife species need to survive. The garden hosts many species of birds, insects, and small animals including rabbits

and chipmunks, and even a snapping turtle that wandered out of the Reservoir to lay eggs.

The garden is the result of many years of planning and hard work by the Reservoir Committee of Arlington's Vision 2020. Inspired by an anonymous donation from an Arlington Land Trust (ALT) member, the garden is now supported by contributions from ALT members and local residents, along with valuable assistance from the Arlington Conservation Commission and Department of Public Works. The DPW crews prepared the site and installed water pipes and spigots that help sustain the garden, and they continue to contribute materials such as wood chips for the pathways.

Rachel James





# Improving the Health of Spy Pond

Spy Pond's marshes are hidden from many visitors to Arlington's 100-acre kettle hole pond formed by the glaciers more than 15,000 years ago. Elizabeth Island has a small marsh on its south side, and a larger marsh along Kelwyn Manor's shore faces the south basin of the pond.

Four years ago, the dominant plant was an invasive variant of phragmites or common reed. It formed a solid wall up to 15 feet high and, in Kelwyn Manor, over 100 feet wide.

The Spy Pond Committee of Arlington's Vision 2020, in coordination with the Department of Public Works, has led a multi-year project to reduce the phragmites. The most recent treatment was completed in October. The marshes now host a healthier ecosystem containing a variety of sedges, rushes, grasses, and wetland plants, as well as birds, fish, amphibians, and other fauna.

The committee works on improving the health of Spy Pond for boating, birding, fishing, walking, and wildlife, and improved water quality for all. Other major projects include maintenance and improvements on the trail along Route 2 and the control of Eurasian milfoil and the geese population. The pond is cleaner than it has been for years, and residents are enjoying renewed use of this community resource, although swimming still is not permitted.

The committee works closely with the Department of Public Works, the Arlington Conservation Commission, the Arlington Land Trust, and the

Peter Belknap



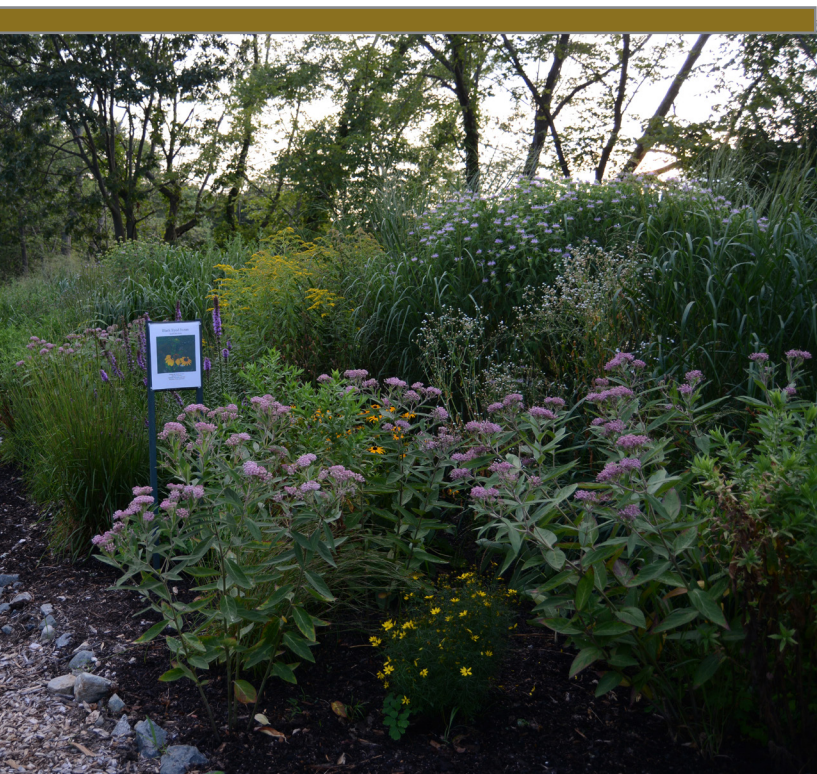
**The phragmites around Elizabeth Island have been reduced as part of ongoing management efforts by the Spy Pond Committee.**

Friends of Spy Pond Park. It meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Town Hall Annex. All meetings are open to the public, and participation is welcomed.

Those unable to join in the committee's activities can lend support by considering a donation to the Town's Water Bodies Fund (c/o the DPW). This fund, established in 2009 by

Town Meeting, benefits the care and improvement of Arlington's water bodies, including the treatment of aquatic weeds in Spy Pond, the Arlington Reservoir, and Hill's Pond in Menotomy Rocks Park.

For more information about the Spy Pond Committee of Vision 2020, contact Brad Barber ([bradb@shore.net](mailto:bradb@shore.net)).



## ALT Member Profile- Kevin and Mimi Barbera

Peter Belknap

ALT members Kevin and Mimi Barbera have lived on Lakeview Street facing Spy Pond with a view of Elizabeth Island since 1972. They enjoy snowshoeing out to the island in winter, when the island seems part of a different, quiet world. Kevin maintains a walking path along his area of the pond and encourages people to use it as long as they recognize that the path is on private property and are respectful.





# Thanks to you! The Arlington Land Trust thanks its members and friends for their generous contributions in 2013.

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# Statewide Land Conservation Activities

The Arlington Land Trust is one of more than 140 land trusts in Massachusetts and is among the active members and friends of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, a voluntary association founded to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, to increase the effectiveness of Massachusetts land trusts in working with the state legislature and environmental agencies, and to promote high professional standards. MLTC has played a crucial role in supporting key conservation legislation and has become an important networking resource for the state's land trusts. Following are several updates on land conservation initiatives that may be of interest. For more information, see the MLTC website ([www.massland.org](http://www.massland.org)).

## Return on Investment in Parks and Open Space Study Released

The Massachusetts conservation community held an event at the State House in early September to announce the release of a report, "The Return on Investment in Parks and Open Space in Massachusetts," authored by the Trust for Public Land and funded by over 25 conservation organizations. The full report is available at [www.tpl.org/massachusetts](http://www.tpl.org/massachusetts). Highlights from the report include the following facts:

- For every \$1 invested in land conservation, \$4 in natural goods and services is returned to the Massachusetts economy.
- Visitors to Massachusetts spend an estimated \$16.9 billion each year and generate \$1.1 billion in state and local taxes. The

total economic impact of this travel is \$26.9 billion. Tourism supports nearly 125,000 jobs, which provides \$3.63 billion in wages per year.

- Outdoor recreation generates \$10 billion in consumer spending, \$739 million in state and local tax revenue, 90,000 jobs, and \$3.5 billion in wages and salaries each year in the state.

- Agriculture, forestry, commercial fishing, and related processing activity are responsible for \$13 billion in output, and 147,000 jobs in Massachusetts.

## Environmental Bond Hearing

On September 19, the Environment Committee held a public hearing at the State House on the environmental bond bill, an act providing for the preservation and improvement of land, parks, and clean energy in the Commonwealth (H.3332). The environmental bond provides capital funding for land, water, and wildlife conservation in the Commonwealth.

Several MLTC representatives provided testimony in support of additional funding, including:

- \$18M for the Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity grant program (LAND);
- \$6M for the Conservation Partnership Grant Program (including two amendments:

adding soil conservation districts to this program, thereby allowing districts to acquire land for conservation, including creating community farms in urban areas; and, allowing land trusts to hold conservation restrictions under

this program);

- \$20M for the Landscape Partnership Program; and
- An increase to \$75,000 for the individual tax credit under the Conservation Tax Incentive program, and \$5 million per year for the statewide cap.

MLTC also supported the creation of the Land Protection Capital Investment Trust Fund to provide a long-term stewardship of land acquired with state investment, as well as lands protected through conservation restrictions. Finally, MLTC's testimony emphasized the impact of state funding on leveraging local revenue for open space projects.

## 2014 Mass Land Conservation Conference

This annual, day-long training and networking event provides land trust board members and staff, parks administrators and advocates, colleagues from federal, state and local government agencies, students, and philanthropists an opportunity to participate in a full day of workshops and discussions that focus on fostering healthy communities in MA through land conservation.

The theme of this 24th MLCC conference, Healthy Land—Healthy Communities, features a keynote address by Dr. Eric Chivian, Nobel Peace Prize recipient and founder of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard University. A wide variety of workshop tracks will cover:

- Healthy Land—Healthy Communities / Emerging Issues
- Land Management and Stewardship
- Land Protection Tools and Techniques
- Legal, Tax and Compliance Matters
- Organizational Management and Fundraising
- Urban Conservation and Greening

**When:** Saturday, March 22, 2014, 8am–4pm

**Where:** Worcester Technical High School,  
Worcester, Massachusetts

**Information:** [www.massland.org](http://www.massland.org)

## ALT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you have not already renewed your ALT membership for 2014, please to go the website ([www.arlingtonlandtrust.org](http://www.arlingtonlandtrust.org)) to download a copy of the membership form, or sign up at [www.networkforgood.org](http://www.networkforgood.org) to renew online.

Thank you again for your support. If you have any questions, please contact ALT at [info@arlingtonlandtrust.org](mailto:info@arlingtonlandtrust.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### No News on the Mugar Site

We regret to report that little progress has been made in our efforts to restart communications with the Mugar family about protecting their 17-acre property in East Arlington. Rumors continue to surface about a possible development project on the site, but nothing has been submitted to the Town to date.

We will continue to keep alive the vision of permanently protected open space at the Mugar site in the critical Alewife region, which is already overbuilt and cannot accommodate severe flooding and traffic congestion.

## Your Town, Your Future: Arlington's Master Plan

The Arlington Master Plan Advisory Committee is continuing to work with the staff of the Department of Planning and Community Development and Judi Barrett from RKG Associates, the Town's master plan consultant, on this extensive planning process. Many public meetings and surveys have been held to gather information from residents about their dreams and concerns for the Town's future.

A number of draft documents have been prepared, including the vision statement and goals and reports on existing conditions in land use, transportation, economic development, housing, open space and recreation, natural resources, historic and cultural resources, and public facilities. The next phase of the process is focused on "working papers" exploring each of the above topics in more detail, along with recommendations for future action.

By law, the Redevelopment Board adopts the master plan. It will then be presented to Town Meeting members for endorsement. The final report is scheduled to be presented to the ARB in late 2014 and to Town Meeting in 2015.

All draft documents and more information about the master plan are available online at [arlingtonma.gov/planning](http://arlingtonma.gov/planning).

**Annual Meeting**  
**Forum on the Community**  
**Preservation Act:**  
**Should Arlington Adopt It?**  
**Monday, January 27, 2014**  
**7-9 pm**  
Arlington Senior Center  
27 Maple Street  
Arlington, Massachusetts

P.O. Box 492  
Arlington, MA 02476

