

Fellsmere Park Management Plan

Community Draft



The latest version of this document is posted at www.friendsoffellsmerepark.org/plan
Feedback on this Document may be sent to friendsoffellsmerepark@gmail.com

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Executive Summary

Fellsmere Park was established in 1893, with land donated by Malden's first mayors. Inspiration for the park was provided by Malden resident Sylvester Baxter, who helped establish the Metropolitan Parks System and became its first Secretary. The landscape and layout is part of Frederick Law Olmsted's legacy. For more than 100 years, Fellsmere Park has been a respite of quiet splendor and recreational relaxation. It is a true gem in the West End of Malden. It is a well known park destination that attracts visitors from far beyond Malden. It is a Malden treasure.



Figure 1 - Courtesy National Parks Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

The condition of Fellsmere Park and Pond has been well documented in conversations, emails, news stories, web postings, and SeeClickFix submissions. During 2015, we have seen fountain failures, sizable fish kills, and disconcerting activities at the park. "Friends of Fellsmere Park" was established in July 2015, with a corresponding website at friendsoffellsmerepark.org, in response to community concern. The intent is to advocate, educate and complement the work of other groups, like "Friends of Fellsmere Heights", with overlapping interests in the Fellsmere area.

The authors of this document conducted research and informal surveys in July and August 2015. The number of visitors to the park, and the frequency of their use, has fallen as conditions have deteriorated. A number of people have said the conditions we see today are the worst in memory - as reported by multiple individuals who have visited the park over the past 10, 20, or 40 years.

This document summarizes concerns of park users while offering ideas to make Fellsmere Park better. A key goal of this document is to help establish a shared understanding of outstanding issues and encourage a process of public participation for the care and management of Fellsmere Park. Top priorities are: updating and improving signage; establishing a sustainable

rescue plan for the pond and fish environment; achieving an acceptable standard of maintenance for structures and plant life; insuring all this before adding new structures or cosmetic enhancements; securing adequate funding and resources at the state and city level to accomplish these priorities.

Fellsmere Park Overview and History

Fellsmere Park was established in 1893, from land donated by Malden’s first mayors. It is used by many people from Malden and neighboring communities. For more than 100 years, Fellsmere Park has been a respite of quiet splendor and a true gem in the West End of Malden.

From research done by the authors, DCR, and Senator Lewis’ office in 2015, Fellsmere Park is owned by the City of Malden, by deed from the Boston Rubber Shoe Company. In an indenture dated June 1 1904 (MPC 456) the Care & Control of Fellsmere Park was transferred from the City of Malden to the Metropolitan Park Commission. The responsibility for this park passed from MPC through MDC and now lies with the DCR, as statutory successor to both earlier agencies. In 2006 the legislature granted DCR 175k for renovations for the park, and was redone. The DCR and the city of Malden has had a universal agreement to share the upkeep since then.

Fellsmere Pond is man made, originally built as a fire pond to support Elisha Converse’s factories. It is fed through stormwater drains that run into the pond. As far back as 1897, people understood the maintenance challenges faced with the design of a pond like this. As retold in Inna Babitskaya’s popular history, “Fellsmere Park - Emerald of Malden”:

“The report of the park commissions in 1897 gave the pond special attention: “Perhaps the most picturesque spot of the park is the reservoir pond. The body of the water has a bed of about eight acres, but the water is apt to run low in summer. To remedy this, the city engineer has a plan, which will be carried out. To drain the hills and land around the pond, and when this is accomplished it will make a beautiful body water. A depth of eight feet in the summer is necessary to prevent the growth of water plants. ... Fellsmere Park is fed almost entirely by a large storm water pipe that drains from the neighborhood north of the pond, so it represents an ideal location to study and improve storm water runoff within the Malden River Watershed.” (page 45)

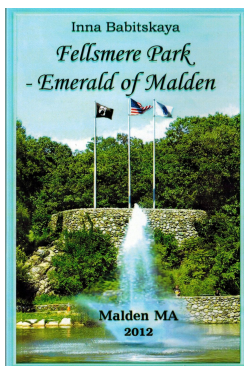


Figure 2 - Cover of Fellsmere Park - Emerald of Malden

Additional historical information is available at this website:

<http://www.maldenhistory.org/FellsmerePark.html>

Resource Management Plan

DCR serves as an exemplar of best practices in park management. Consequently, it is helpful to consider how they approach park planning. An essential ingredient in all their park plans is the “Resource Management Plan.” We believe Malden should follow a similar process in the “Fellsmere Park Management Plan”:

“Resource Management Planning forms the framework for managing public lands based upon a comprehensive inventory and assessment of environmental and recreational resources, an identification of the unique characteristics of a property or management unit, the development of clear management goals and objectives, and an implementation plan to guide the short and long-term management of the parks, forests and reservations under the stewardship of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

The mission of the DCR Resource Management Planning (RMP) Program is to work with all Divisions and Bureaus of DCR, partner agencies and organizations, and the general public to:

- develop and implement an RMP program that meets current and future statewide resource management planning needs for DCR, and
- prepare and submit resource management plans to the DCR Stewardship Council for the Council’s adoption with respect to all reservations, parks and forests under the management of the department.”

DCR has a well-established process for creating a baseline resource management plan for all its parks. Since DCR shares management and maintenance responsibility for Fellsmere Park, it could be an active participant in creating the RMP for Fellsmere Park.

DCR has significant resources and skills to insure that Fellsmere Park’s ecosystem, water quality, wildlife, and success of both aquatic and land species is not compromised.

However, engaging those expert resources requires effort, engagement and outreach and can only be effectively initiated, scheduled, and carried out by Malden’s city officials.

You can read more details about DCR’s RMP at the following website:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/planning-and-resource-protection/rmp/>

Public Participation Process

There is clear evidence of public desire to participate in the management and betterment of Fellsmere Park. This is evident throughout various SeeClickFix postings. We also saw this desire to participate at the recent Fellsmere Park Clean-up.

Volunteers associated with “Friends of Fellsmere Heights” organized and conducted a clean-up of Fellsmere Park on August 1, 2015. More than 50 people participated, with a positive impact on the general cleanliness of the park. This event also heightened awareness brought increased attention to the current conditions of the park and pond. The City of Malden heard resident concerns and responded with a written Fellsmere Pond update on the city’s website. (See August 12, 2015 post at <http://www.cityofmalden.org/content/fellsmere-pond-update>)

Here are a few photos highlighting the involvement and the need for activities like this:



Figure 3 - Volunteers participated in August 1, 2015 Friends of Fellsmere Heights clean-up

DCR offers clear public process participation guidelines related to the establishment of any Resource Management Plan. We should establish similar guidelines for Malden’s parks.

A few of DCR's public participation guidelines are highlighted as follows:

“Each Resource Management Plan undertaken by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will include a **public participation process** to insure that interested parties have opportunities to provide input on the project . Public participation in the review of Resource Management Plans will involve an organized opportunity to gather public input, ongoing opportunities to submit input during the planning process, and opportunities to provide comments on draft Plans.

Public meetings or listening sessions will be posted on DCR's public meetings website and draft Plans will be posted at resource management planning website. DCR encourages the public to provide comments on draft Plans, as well as to register any questions or concerns, by emailing RMP.comments@state.ma.us. Additional means for sharing input with DCR on specific properties will be announced as the planning processes move forward.”

Any Fellsmere Park Management Planning Process should follow best practices of DCR, which includes clearly prescribed steps to involve significant and meaningful public participation.

You can read more about DCR public participation guidelines at the following website:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/planning-and-resource-protection/rmp/public-participation-guidelines.html>

Rules, Regulations, and Signage

It is common practice to have rules and regulations governing parks. Signs are required to inform, educate and remind people of these guidelines.

For anyone who makes even infrequent use of Fellsmere Park, you are likely to witness a wide range of interpretations on what activity is acceptable and allowed in Fellsmere Park.

On one weekend, individuals were observed using an open fire to grill food atop Murphy Overlook. One evening, a group of individuals was observed drinking from open beer cans on the rocky outcropping overlooking the pond as mothers walked by with baby strollers. For a week in July, people were observed camping in the park. Drug use has also been reported. Cigarette butts are a major litter nuisance. (Evidence from the volunteer clean-up corroborated reports like this.)

Signage in the park is generally poor and needs to be significantly updated and improved.

Existing Park Rules and Regulations are posted in few locations. Better signage is required if we are to help improve the quality of Malden's Fellsmere Park experience. Signs commonly mentioned include:

- No Smoking
- No Alcohol
- No Open Fires (without a permit)
- No Littering
- Pick up after your pets
- Do not feed ducks, geese or other wildlife
- Park Hours (currently posted to 10 PM, may need to indicate "No Overnight Camping")
- Malden Police Take Notice (phone number) for violations of these rules
- General Park Information Phone Number / Email Contact



Figure 4 - Aerial Shot of Fellsmere Park (source Google Maps)

Fellsmere Park has three main entry points as shown in the map above. Entry 1 is at the southern tip of the pond, near Murray Hill Road. This historic park sign located there is the first impression for many to Fellsmere Park. This is also the sign most visible to vehicle traffic along Fellsway East.. This sign is badly damaged and woefully out of date (referring to the Metropolitan District Commission, which ceased to exist in 2003 when it merged with the Department of Environmental Management to form the DCR.) This sign incorrectly states the park is "Managed By" the MDC.

Entry 2 is at the northeast corner of the park, from the sidewalk along Fellsway East.

Entry 3 comprised of a long stretch of sidewalk area along the Savin Street area. This includes a significant stretch of sidewalk area, alongside where cars can parallel park. Those sidewalks are sloping and the contours of the park present a steep decline into the park, particularly in the vicinity of the two picnic tables..

Presently, there are no handicapped parking signs or curb cuts at any of the main entry points. ADA Guidelines are available here: <http://www.ada.gov/>. The National Park Service has guidelines on accessibility at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/32-accessibility.htm>.

The National Park Service has a straightforward strategy on Accessibility for Visitors

- Create a welcoming environment for visitors with disabilities
- Ensure that new facilities and programs are accessible
- Upgrade existing facilities to improve accessibility

Source: <http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/accessibilityforvisitors.htm>

These main entry locations are key locations for consistent, comprehensive signage with critical information.

Signs in Fellsmere Park today

- Most signs are out-of-date. Most signs were posted in the era of the MDC - which ceased to exist circa 2006. Consequences (fines, arrest) are posted as being enforced by “Metro Police” or MDC (authorities which no longer exist by that name)
- Signs are inconsistent - one sign notes the fine for littering is \$200, while another sign notes that it is \$1,000; one sign indicates the park is open until 10 pm, while another sign indicates that no parking is allowed at the park after dark.
- Signs are damaged, such as the main Fellsmere Park sign; some signs are covered by brush; some signs have been removed (e.g. a “pet litter box” sign was ripped down.)
- Signs are located poorly - the “Do not feed the geese” sign is located quite a distance from where people usually feed the geese; littering and drinking prohibitions are not posted in places where these activities commonly occur.
- Signs fail to provide critical information (e.g. no phone number is posted for public safety, emergency or even simply informational assistance.)
- There are NO designated handicapped parking spots anyplace around the park



Figure 5 - Malden “branded” signs



Figure 6 - MDC “branded” signs



Figure 7 - DCR “branded” signs also exist in and around the park:

Signs in other Malden Parks

Signs at other Malden Parks are typically in far better condition than those at Fellsmere Park. Other signs around Malden convey the rich history of a park, while also reflecting modernization efforts over the years. Other parks prove we can retain the history, but improve the presentation.



Figure 8 - signs from other parks around Malden

Structures in the Park

Structures in the park should be well maintained. One person recently pointed to the damaged roof of the simple shelter at the Murray Hill entrance and asked, “Would you treat it this way if it were your own home?”

Stone walls, where people sit and fish, have tree roots growing through the rock, weakening the wall. Stone stairways are grown over and hazardous. Rocks lining the banks have pulled away and slipped into the pond. There is considerable pond pollution from objects introduced by visitors.

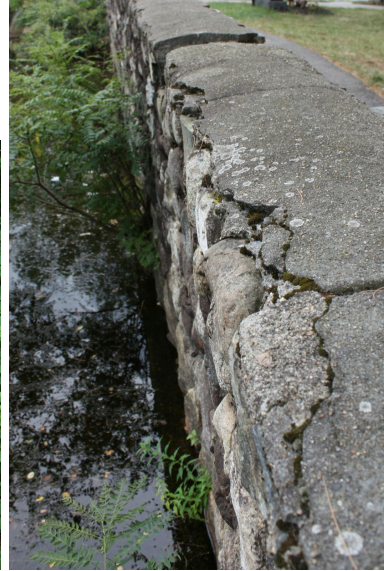


Figure 9 - Condition of park structures, August 2015

The fountains in the pond should be considered integral structures in the park. One of these was designated by state statute as the “Veterans Memorial Fountain”, and there was a “suitable plaque bearing such designation” promised. Where is the plaque bearing such designation?.

AN ACT DESIGNATING THE FOUNTAIN AT FELLSMERE POND IN THE CITY OF MALDEN AS "VETERANS MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN". *Chap. 61*

Be it enacted, etc., as follows:

The fountain now under construction by the metropolitan district commission at Fellsmere pond shall be known and designated as "Veterans Memorial Fountain" in memory of all residents of the city of Malden who died while serving in the armed forces. Said commission shall, upon completion of said fountain, erect thereon a suitable plaque bearing such designation, and may expend therefor such sums as may be appropriated. *Approved February 8, 1957.*

Figure 10 - Massachusetts state [Acts and Resolves of 1957](#)

All of the existing structures in the park should be brought to an acceptable standard of maintenance prior to the introduction of any new, costly structures.

Malden and DCR should be able to maintain the park structures we have before compounding our maintenance issues with the introduction of new structures.

Any future structures being contemplated for the park - whether as simple information kiosks, new benches, or additional shelters - should only be pursued after open, public review and discussion.

Original structures share a thematic design, tracing back to the history of the park and the earliest days of Malden. These historic themes should be retained and carried forward..

Public Safety

This is an important concern of people who use the park as well as abutters in the surrounding streets. This is a challenge since many frequent users of the park do not reside in Malden.

It is unclear from public information who has responsibility for what areas of policing around the park lands and adjacent roadways.

Volunteers associated with "Friends of Fellsmere Heights" are planning another volunteer clean-up for November. These volunteers and organizers have asked that the Malden Police Department and the State Police be represented at this meeting in order to provide an overview of policing activities in and around the park.

Visitors to the park have reported a number observing a number of undesirable activities. These concerns have reportedly been communicated to police and elected officials.

Condition of Fellsmere Park and Pond, as of August 2015

A quick tour of the park by the careful observer reveals a number of problem areas. Because of the unsightly pollution and smell of the pond, this is the most immediately noticeable. Two years ago, more than 75 park visitors signed a petition "Please Help our fight to clean the pond." Most people would consider the pond to be in even worse condition today. Here is a recap of some of the issues around the park and pond:

- Physical structures (e.g. shelter roofs, rock stairways) are in poor condition and require significant repair.
- Many landscape areas around the park are overgrown. This is especially true along the banks of the pond, which have been overtaken by invasive species blocking the beauty of the pond. This condition hinders access to the shoreline for fishing and cuts of scenic views.
- Substantial pockets of poison ivy exist, especially off the paved paths, proving hazardous to people as well as their roaming pets.
- The pond water is in poor condition - by most accounts it is the worst condition in decades. Documented reports depict significant numbers of fish killed this summer.
- The fountains have failed on multiple occasions, leading to removal and expensive repairs.
- The pond is polluted and littered with manmade objects: glass, plastic bottles, tin cans thrown into the pond by visitors. These are beyond the safe reach of shoreline retrieval.
- Organic "algae" problems continue to grow and multiply- generating a substantial tangled growth in the pond, snarling fishing lines and contributing to a strong stench at times..
- Substantial amounts of this "algae" growth now dot the banks of the pond, perhaps removed during the course of fishing. This adds to the strong odor and may pose health hazards for pets seen nibbling at this.

Some of our pond problems are manmade, while others seem to be a confluence of ecological and environmental issues. Many have been reported publicly. A comprehensive plan is needed to address these issues. Here are some of the issues we've seen since June 2015:

Fountain Malfunctions Were Reported and Commented by many people

06/16/15 <http://en.seeclickfix.com/issues/1715907other>

07/07/15 <http://en.seeclickfix.com/issues/1756421other>

Pond Treated with Chemical / Biological formulation

7/17/2015 treated

Dead Fish Were Reported Floating in a Number of Reports

07/27/15 <http://en.seeclickfix.com/issues/1808042animalpetsorwildlife>

07/28/15 <http://en.seeclickfix.com/issues/1809899publicpark>

07/30/15 <http://en.seeclickfix.com/issues/1815024animaldeadanimal>

Excavation Began in Fellsmere Park Without any Advance Notification

8/19/2015 <http://en.seeclickfix.com/issues/1854909constructionwithoutpublicreviewinfellsmerepark>

8/19/2015 <http://en.seeclickfix.com/issues/1854774other>

10/3/2015 <http://en.seeclickfix.com/issues/1954227mathesonsgazebofellsmerepark>

The City of Malden is reportedly taking steps to address the current conditions at the pond. Here is an excerpt from the city update on 8/12/15:

“Recently residents have inquired as to the conditions at Fellsmere Pond. The Malden Board of Health, the Massachusetts Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Department of Public Works are currently examining the conditions of the pond. Fellsmere Pond, formed in 1893 is a fragile system. Soil erosion into the pond has caused it to become shallow and therefore the temperature of the water has risen. This has in turn increased algae and weed growth which is a direct result in the malfunctioning of the two aeration fountains. When the fountains are removed from the water, the oxygen levels in the water are reduced and the water becomes stagnant. This is harmful to the fish and on extremely hot days there have been reports of dead fish in the pond. The fountains are currently being repaired and are due to be reinstalled later this month. Recently, the pond has also been chemically treated to control the growth of nuisance aquatic vegetation.

Plans are currently in place to enter into a multi-season approach for a comprehensive Fellsmere Pond restoration, which includes a survey of the sediment and vegetation and hydro-raking the area where the fountains sit to remove troublesome vegetation.”

Source: <http://www.cityofmalden.org/content/fellsmere-pond-update>

It is unclear what role DCR can or will play in supporting / providing maintenance assistance.

Some information is available on the DCR website, but it appears incomplete:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/maintenance/north.pdf>

Richard Hartley, a state fisheries biologist from the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, has pledged his support: "I would be happy to represent the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife in reviewing possible plans or providing comments relative to the fisheries resources."

It seems clear that resources Malden has invested in the Fellsmere Park and Pond over recent years is inadequate for the maintenance demanded by this area.

The condition of the park is having a direct impact on people who visit. In July 2015, a woman was walking around the pond with her young daughter. She stated this was a regular routine for them over the past ten years - "This is by far the worst it's ever been. People don't want to come here because of this " as she motioned to the pond. She continued, "There are fewer people using the park now. People wonder what is happening? Even many of the ducks have disappeared." And she said, almost in disbelief, "This is horrible."

This "Fellsmere Park Management Plan" is a working document for the future, not a scrutiny of the past. Unfortunately, it's easier to see the severity of the situation - and the typical, daily experience of park visitors - by sharing supplemental photos to highlight conditions.



Figure 11 - Photos taken July and August 2015: 1) algae, 2) floating bottles, 3) and 4) damaged signs, 5) fouled water, 6) overgrown, invasive species, 7) general litter in pond, 8) algae growth and plant overgrowth

along Fellsway East bank, 9) hazardous, unmaintained stairs along W Border Road, 10) damaged shelter roof, 11) pond brush drying on walkway, 12) dead fish / ducks eating dead fish, 13) damaged park bench.

Maintenance and Water Management

There are two main, but different, types of challenges given the conditions identified above. One part of this is maintenance of the Park; the other part is addressing numerous water management issues associated with the Pond. Properly addressing these issues requires recommendations and a comprehensive plan presented and pursued by experts, and shared publicly.

DCR publishes a maintenance schedule for its park properties. The full document exists at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/pe/historic-parkways/5461dd01.pdf>

Something similar should exist for Fellsmere Park and Pond and be reviewed by experts at both the city and state levels to make sure we incorporate available knowledge.

An added benefit of a schedule like this would be to better manage maintenance costs and also identify areas where the City of Malden and DCR can share responsibilities. In addition, willing volunteers could be factored into this plan as well. Here's an example from the DCR document:

Massachusetts also has a well resourced Lakes & Ponds program which could help our current challenges:

“The Lakes and Ponds Program works with local groups and municipalities to protect, manage and restore these valuable aquatic resources. We provide technical assistance to communities and citizen groups, help to monitor water quality at various public beaches to ensure public safety, and provide educational materials to the public about various lake issues.

The Program strives to ensure a safe future for Massachusetts' water bodies through a watershed approach and citizen education and involvement.”

Source: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/water-res-protection/lakes-and-ponds/>

There is also a clearly documented set of guidelines to help “suppress, eradicate, control and otherwise mitigate or reduce the risk of the spread of Aquatic Nuisance Species” (Source <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/legal/3021800.pdf>) Fellsmere Pond needs this help!

MAINTENANCE
SCHEDULE
for
HISTORIC PARKWAYS

● = Routine maintenance, now done by DCR
■ = Desired or enhanced maintenance level

		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	DCR Maintenance Activities (includes some MHD maintenance activities)
Parkway Roadways	A. Pavement surface	■			●	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace in kind, restore crown and cross slope as necessary, fill and seal cracks. • Fill and repair potholes. • Power sweep the roadway surface according to the volume of parkway. Ocean parkway swept daily. • Determine whether DCR/MHD plows roadway during winter storms and frequency.
	B. Shoulders and parking areas	■	■	■	■	■	■					■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reduced salt regimens in environmentally sensitive areas in winter. • Plow selected DCR parking areas. • In spring, regrade shoulders to predetermined slopes, replace materials lost to washouts, remove debris. • Sweep and monitor parking at curbs and adjacent parallel and perpendicular vehicular parking. • Make list of unmaintained parking areas.
	C. Pavement markings				●						■			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repaint all pavement striping every spring; check in the fall for fading and repaint if necessary. DCR policy to reduce pavement markings to a minimum.
	D. Landscape grading, slopes and ledge outcrops					■								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect for winter damage and debris in the spring. • Remove accumulated salts within the first ten feet of parkland curb by soaking with water in spring time to leach out salts. • Repaint all pavement striping every spring; check in the fall for fading and repaint if necessary. DCR policy to reduce pavement markings to a minimum.
	E. Sidewalks and pathways	■	■	■	■				■	■		■	■	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In spring, check for damage, overhanging branches. • Sweep all salt/sand off pathways. • Make list of repairs for summer work. • In summer, pull weeds from pavement cracks. • In fall, remove leaves weekly. • In winter, plow around schools and designated commuter routes.
	F. Retaining walls				■				■			■		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In spring, check for damage, make list of repairs for summer work. • In summer, pull weeds/ volunteer plant growth from cracks in masonry and repair. • Remove leaves from weepholes in fall.
	G. Curbs				■							■		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In spring, check for damage, make list of repairs for summer work. • In summer pull weeds/ volunteer plant growth from cracks and repair

Figure 12 - Maintenance Schedule for DCR management of historic parkways

See also <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/maintenance/>

Hydro Raking

In November 2015, the City of Malden initiated a hydro raking operation.

The city published a description of this activity as follows:

“As part of the City’s multi-season approach to the maintenance of Fellsmere Pond, a hydro-raking process will commence Thursday, November 5th. This procedure is to remove dying and decaying vegetation, leaves and debris in the water so as to improve the quality of the pond. Aquatic Controls is working with Nangle Consulting Associates and will be at the pond for approximately 6-7 days completing this work. The raked up vegetation will be removed by the Department of Public Works. Aquatic Controls equipment will remain at the site for the duration of the hydro-raking process.”

<http://www.cityofmaiden.org/content/fellsmere-pond-maintenance-commence>

The following images show the process. The mechanical rake scrapes the bottom of the pond lifting up debris and silt. Some of the silt is believed to be from runoff that has entered the pond. The paddle boat would then transfer this debris to a front loader waiting on the shore. The front loader would then transfer the debris into a dump truck for removal. A full report should be issued - but early indications suggest it is clearly unsafe to eat any fish caught in the pond.

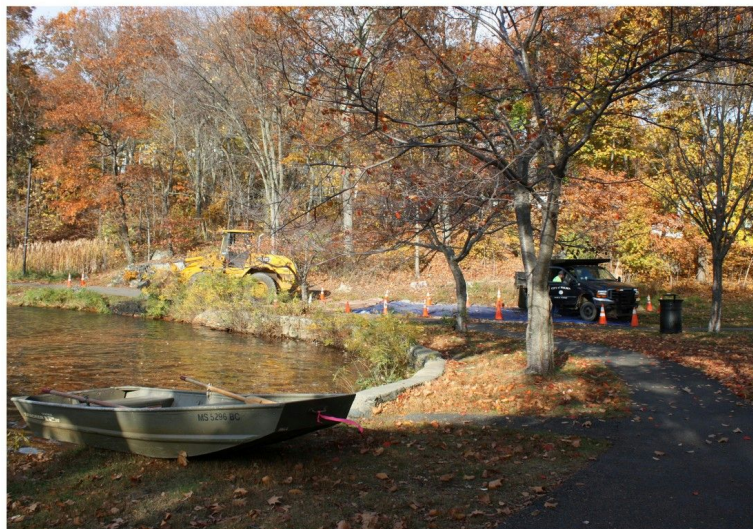


Figure 13, hydro raking the pond, November 2015

Trees, plantings, invasive species

A number of people have complained about invasive species growing around the banks of the pond. This blocks beautiful views and also contributes to plantings falling into the pond.

In some cases, new plantings have failed to thrive, such as the 2015 Arbor Day tree:

<http://en.seeclickfix.com/issues/1892767-tree-all-other>

We should document why these failures occur - was it incorrectly planted? was it improperly cared for after planting? was the original tree weak? was the site location inappropriate for the plant type? Another concern about trees concerns fallen limbs or tree trunks around the park. It would be nice to conduct a tree inventory, perhaps with the assistance of a volunteer tree warden.

There is quite a bit of poison ivy throughout the park. This is a concern for people but perhaps even a greater concern for transmission by pets. If small puppies run through the brush abutting the asphalt walkways, they are at risk of poison ivy exposure, which is then passed through their coats to adults and children.

Funding is required to better maintain the park and pond. What is the current annual budget to for maintaining Fellsmere Park and Pond? What grants and supplemental budgets are available? We are aware of at least four funds which could potentially contribute to the care of Fellsmere Pond and Park:

- Malden City Budget - the Fellsmere Pond Restoration Fund
- DCR multi-year grant
- Ward 3 Mitigation Fund
- Ward 3 Councillor's Fund

There was an existing [statute approved that was intended to support much needed work](#): "\$250,000 will be expended for the cleanup and replanting of the Fellsmere Pond area in the city of Malden". What is the status of that appropriation?

Fellsmere Park and Pond needs the support and assistance of our legislative delegation of elected officials to obtain the release and investment of funds to support Fellsmere Park and Fellsmere Pond.

Malden needs to coordinate a direct appeal to the Governor to release these funds. Further development of this document will hopefully provide sufficient documentation and a baseline plan of options and costs to deal with the issues outlined here. If conditions at the park and the pond deteriorate further, we risk a public health issue.

Information Sharing

Public bulletin boards exist at Fellsmere Park, but are rarely used. There is only limited Fellsmere Park information available on the city's website:

A great deal of input could be gathered from visitors to the park if open lines of communication were established. It would be helpful to publish more information about the park to Malden residents. It would also be helpful to integrate information about significant events, such as this November volunteer clean-up, into official city communications.

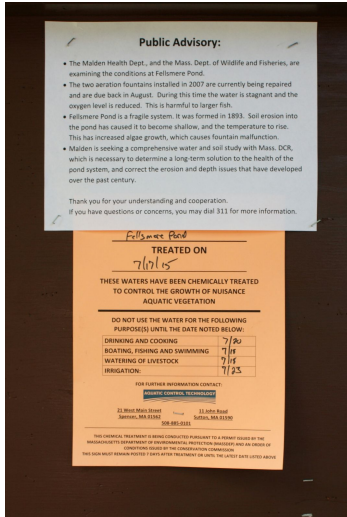


Figure 14, to the left, shows a public advisory on the poor condition of the pond, posted in the park approximately July 31, 2015.

An idea has been shared to identify specific park users as “Park Wardens”, who could establish a network of information sharing that could be helpful in many ways.

For instance, some people greatly enjoy fishing in the park and would like to fish outside of the park’s published hours. It could be helpful to identify dedicated individuals who could be designated “Park Wardens”, their presence at the park could help discourage and deter less desirable activities which seem to take place outside of the “open” park hours.

The “Park Warden” role could also be filled by key stakeholders, such as residents abutting the park, or neighbors who live in the immediate area and demonstrate strong interest in the park.

The public bulletin boards could be used to publish routine maintenance schedules and activities

Events in the Park

Some traditional events, like the wonderful fishing derby, have been abandoned. Why? The poor condition of the pond has hampered these memorable events. Goals should be in place to return the pond to a sufficient quality and condition where this event would, once again, prove to be a great community event.

Other annual events, like the Harvest Moon Festival, have continued to find a welcoming environment at Fellsmere Park. Groups involved with this large event might spawn smaller events in the future.

How about an event with young children and bicycles riding around the pond? Perhaps an evening candlelight ceremony walking around the pond to celebrate some important municipal event?

Informal activities, like ice hockey, prove that year round activities are possible at the park. More 4-season activities should be planned. A number of residents have asked for the park's pathways to be plowed during the winter.

Residents and abutters have expressed interest in summer concerts - classical music, or jazz, or blues. These could be easily arranged on a small, friendly scale. These could showcase local talent - perhaps school bands, or rising local artists.

A multi-city event could be organized at the Park. Two years ago, an informal survey was conducted indicating that most visitors are from Malden, but many drop by from Medford, Revere, Boston, Melrose, Wakefield, Everett and beyond - with plenty out-of-staters (at that time spanning Georgia, Virginia. and California.) Fellsmere Park is Malden's hidden treasure enjoyed by many.



The August 1, 2015 volunteer clean-up was a success, but the "pot luck" part of the event was cancelled due to the environmental conditions. (The summer smell was bad enough that people stopped visiting the park to avoid the strong odor.)

A November 2015 cleanup was another success. Future events will aim to expand the base of active volunteers.

Figure 15 (to the left) shows volunteers at a park clean-up on Nov 7, 2015

Other events have been suggested, including annual Lantern Walk around the pond, as is done in Woburn before dusk on the Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend in memory of those who have died. People make lanterns which hold candles, or buy ones already made.

Other possible events around the park include guided tours by a knowledgeable tree warden discussing the trees in the park. A possible introduction to kayaking or canoeing could take place right on the pond.

Historic Landmarks

Sylvester Baxter (1850–1927) was a prominent writer and urban planner. He lived for many years on Murray Hill Road in Malden. According to WikiPedia, "In 1893 he became the first

secretary of the Massachusetts Metropolitan Park Commission and along with Charles Eliot was a chief force in the development of the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston."

Baxter has been recognized as a forefather of the MDC and the DCR. His travels overlapped with Malden's first Mayor Elisha Slade Converse (July 28, 1820 – 1904). Some say Baxter was an influential advocate for the vision and creation of Fellsmere Park.

On October 6, 2015, a little after noon, Lenny Merullo and Brian DeLacey unearthed a plaque, dedicated by the Malden Garden Club decades ago, identifying the Sylvester Baxter Delta. This had been buried in the delta's dirt for decades. Following clues first unearthed about 20 years ago led to today's discovery. It's located where Savin Street and Fellsmere Road meet.

Figure 16 (below) shows a variety of images from the rediscovery of the Sylvester Baxter Delta.







The Sylvester Baxter Delta can be located using either of the following coordinates into Google Earth or Google Maps:

42°25'48.5"N 71°05'04.8"W

42.430135, -71.084665



Additional References

Malden Conservation Commission -

<http://www.cityofmalden.org/board-commission/conservation-commission>

Malden Recreation Department -

<http://www.cityofmalden.org/departments/recreation-department>

Malden Department of Public Works -

<http://www.cityofmalden.org/departments/public-works>

City of Malden Fellsmere Park Weblinks -

<http://www.cityofmalden.org/content/fellsmere-park-and-pond>

<http://www.cityofmalden.org/content/fellsmere-pond-update>

Fellsmere Park in the Press

<http://malden.wickedlocal.com/article/20150808/NEWS/150808877>

<http://patch.com/massachusetts/malden/371ff3f9-b650-4c44-a4a7-22807c045618>

Feedback

Feedback on this document can be sent to friendsoffellsmerepark@gmail.com

The latest draft of this document is at <http://www.friendsoffellsmerepark.org/plan.html>

Version History

Version 1 - August 15, 2015 - Special thanks to initial reviewers and commenters: Sarah Brown, Fran Clay, Lynn Wang DeLacey, Steven Keleti, Prisco Tammaro

Version 2 - August 22, 2015

Version 3 - August 30, 2015

Version 4 - September 18, 2015

Version 5, 6, 7 - October 2015

Version 8 - November 10, 2015

Version 9,10 - November 15, 2015