

Martins Pond Accessibility

A fundamental goal of the Reclamation Study Committee and the Martins Pond Reclamation Study Committee is to make Martins Pond accessible to people of all abilities. Accessibility will increase use, which will in turn lead to appreciation and advocacy.

The main recreational access point to Martins Pond is through Clarke Park on Burroughs Road. A small area has been paved to accommodate several handicapped-accessible parking spots. Partnering with the Building Inspector of North Reading and the Commission for Disabilities, MPRSC has been working towards handicapped-accessibility to provide water and boat access to wheelchair-bound citizens. A small walkway was added to reach the dock, and the docking system is being retrofitted to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A wheelchair-bound citizen will be able to visit the park, go out on the dock to fish or simply visit, and get on a boat to enjoy a ride. Mike Soraghan, the Town Engineer, prepared the extensive municipal Mass Waterways Chapter 91 dock permit application for this project. Parks Director Brian Wood provided the initial drawings and site survey for the project and oversaw all construction. North Reading GIS Kim Honetschlager created locus maps for the Chapter 91 application and worked with Brian Wood to identify the location of dock using aerial photos as map background to best convey changes in shoreline. She also created maps of Clarke Park abutters in support of the Conservation Commission application. We have applied for the DEP Waterways Chapter 91 dock license and have discussed this dock at length with them. They are very excited about the project and stated that they very rarely get a request for a handicapped accessible dock and wish they received more.

We consider this a huge accomplishment and are planning to coordinate some boat rides next summer for people with disabilities who may not otherwise have been able to use the Pond. The Wildside Bass Club is also considering how they may use this new resource to get disabled veterans out fishing and enjoying the pond.

North Reading Parks and Recreation has offered to include some park improvements along with the project to further beautify the area. Planting areas were added, a large section of rusted fence was replaced, stone dust was added to the parking lot, and handicapped parking signs were provided. North Reading Parks and Recreation has also donated excavation work, base materials, and additional sidewalk repairs in the park.

Team Building

This funding opportunity has allowed us to build partnerships and receive excellent cooperation. Other than those listed below who were major team members, we received support and assistance from North Reading Department of Public Works, Building Department, Conservation, Board of Health, Parks & Recreation, Wastewater Stormwater Advisory Committee; Merrimack College, Malcolm Pirnie Engineers, Hesperus Web Design, Mass Wildlife, the EPA, the Department of Environmental Protection, Town of Wilmington, North Reading Transcript, Boston Globe, and many others.

Team Members/Team Leaders in bold:

Town of North Reading:

Mike Soraghan, Town Engineer
Kim Honetschlager, GIS Coordinator
Brian Wood, Parks & Recreation Director

Merrimack College:

Dr. Jon Lyon, Dept Co-Chair Environmental Science
Keith Bartelson, Beth Houghton, Lauren Berg,
Mike Horton, Sarah Zazzaro, Kathleen Legere,
Kathleen Quin, and Maria Lonardo-Roy,
Environmental Science Students

Reclamation Study Committee:

Janet Nicosia and Lida Jenney, Co-Chairs,
Paul Cameron, Larry Soucie and Scott Ronco

Malcolm Pirnie Inc:

Jennifer Lachmayr and Alexa Gangemi

Below are photos of some of the team and volunteers hard at work:



Mike Soraghan and GIS
Coordinator Kim Honetschlager



Dr. Lyon taking a breath



Merrimack Students Keith Bartelson and Beth Houghton Doing Martins Pond Water Testing



Paul Cameron, Scott Ronco, Larry Soucie, Volunteer Kath Geoffrion Scannell and Others Pulling Purple Loosestrife Root Balls for Beetle Rearing



Larry Soucie checking culverts for sediment



Paul Cameron and volunteer Scott Jenney at lodge



Lida Jenney, Janet Nicosia, Peter MacLellan (Wildside Bass Club President and Mass B.A.S.S. vice president), and volunteers Julie Colton and Lori Lynes at the 2005 Fishing Derby



Lida, volunteer Donna Cyr, and Janet at the Martins Pond information table at the 2005 Winter Festival

MPRSC Acknowledgments and Program Results

The Martins Pond Reclamation Study Committee is extremely grateful for the opportunity to perform this campaign. It was a labor of love as we are passionate about promoting the health and preserving the future of Martins Pond. Some of the results of the campaign are detailed below.

We introduced new ideas to the general public about their role in water quality in our Stormwater and New Year's campaign and expect, by the positive feedback we have received, that some citizens' behavior will change.

- We informed pond area residents that their actions play a role in the abundance of weed growth in the pond. Many of them have taken steps to change their habits. Neighbors on a street along the pond have switched to phosphorous-free detergent.
- One homeowner on the shore of Martins Pond told us he changed his fertilizer techniques after reading our ad. There is increased awareness in the town about over-fertilizing.
- Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts stenciled storm drains and are working towards environmental badges. These children will continue to spread the word about preventing stormwater pollution.
- Many people have been educated about how all of North Reading's waters are connected.

We became a resource and partner with the Town to help solve increasing problems with beaver activity.

- We streamlined the process for solving human/beaver conflicts.
- We presented the Town with copies of the law, policies and procedures, and a clear assessment and prioritization management plan.
- Dedicated funding for beaver management was approved at Town meeting.
- We gained respect and cooperation with town boards and became recognized as a source of beaver information.

We promoted the natural resource and recreational opportunities of Martins Pond.

- Through increased education at our events, and the reinforcement of the pond as a town-wide resource, we have increased the recreational value and ownership of the Pond.
- We created a fully handicapped accessible fishing area, one of very few in the State.
- We have increased the use of the pond and we have received many emails from potential homeowners through our new website.
- Our organization serves as a selling point with local real estate agents to interest potential buyers.

In closing, MPRSC wishes to thank the Department of Environmental Protection for this funding, and for our State Senator Bruce Tarr and State Representative Bradley Jones Jr., for seeing the supplemental budget opportunity and remembering us at Martins Pond. This project would not have been possible without the years of support from Merrimack

College, Dr. Jon Lyon and his enthusiastic students Keith Bartelson, Beth Houghton, Lauren Berg, Mike Horton, Sarah Zazzaro, Kathleen Legere, Kathleen Quin, and Maria Lonardo-Roy. The value of Dr. Lyon's involvement in mentoring and steering all aspects of the environmental efforts at Martins Pond are immeasurable, and prepared us to execute this project in such a tight time frame. Town Engineer Mike Soraghan is a consistently sympathetic to the problems of Martins Pond, and his advice and assistance was critical in guiding us through the political processes at Town Hall. This effort is an example of a true partnership, and we are proud of the results.

Very truly yours,

Janet Nicosia and Lida Jenney, Co-Chairs
The Martins Pond Reclamation Study Committee
Town of North Reading, MA