

Spring Edition!

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SKATEPARK EXCITEMENT ON THE RISE!

WITH MORE AND MORE COVERAGE, all of it highly positive, appearing in Boston newspapers in recent weeks, the idea for a new Charles River Skatepark is building momentum. "Funds roll in for skatepark," announced a recent edition of the Boston Herald, catching the spirit of this exciting and innovative project. A Boston Globe editorial expresses solid support for the initiative. Have you heard the PSA on WFNX at 101.7 FM?

Budgeted at \$1.1 million including site preparation services to be provided by the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, this cooperatively funded venture promises to be a leading example of how concerned citizens can make a difference through imaginative planning and concerted action.

Located within the New Basin area of the Charles River Parklands under the approach ramps to the Zakim-Bunker Hill Bridge, the skatepark will be designed and built primarily with private support. The Charles River Conservancy is assuming full responsibility for the fundraising effort.

On December 15th, 2003, young athletes from throughout greater Boston helped the skatepark design process in a public meeting at the Boston Public Library with

nationally recognized skatepark designer Zach Wormhoudt. Over 200 young athletes have already attended public meetings. Along with his California team, Wormhoudt is working closely with Central Artery/Tunnel Project engineers and Carol R. Johnson Associates, the landscape designers of the New Basin Parklands surrounding the skatepark. By the time you read this edition of *Parklands*, a preliminary design will be virtually complete.



"This is the perfect time for the skatepark," says Massachusetts Turnpike Authority Chairman

Matthew Amorello in response to a question in an exciting, new skatepark fundraising video produced by Eye Candy Cinema in association with the Charles River Conservancy (See it at www.charlesriverconservancy.org). Amorello and a growing number of community and business leaders such as former Lieutenant Governor Thomas O'Neill III, support the skatepark initiative.

Amorello's Turnpike Authority has pledged to provide site preparation and infrastructure development for the project. Mayor Sullivan has included \$100,000 for the park in the proposed Cambridge city budget and is working with State Representative Timothy Toomey, who has publicly endorsed the project and also sits on the Cambridge City Council.

Skatepark, continued on page 4...

Crossing Dangerous Intersection All A Matter of Timing



Small modifications in stoplight timing at the intersection of River St. and Soldiers Field Rd. (by the Doubletree hotel

– see map on pp. 2-3) will make street crossings by users of the Dr. Paul Dudley White Pathway significantly safer. That's the conclusion of a recent CRC report.

In planning what is arguably one of Greater Boston's worst intersections, engineers forgot all about Parklands Pathway users. On average, pedestrians have two seconds to cross this traffic maelstrom. They do so without benefit of crossing lights, curb cuts or even a crosswalk.



The Conservancy's report, written by Kol Peterson, makes several recommendations. The simplest is adjustments to light timing. Others include:

- Squaring off the rounded corners of the intersection, slowing turning traffic down and narrowing the intersection for those crossing. Redoing the curbs would also provide an opportunity for new curb cuts.
- Reduce the turn lanes that connect Soldiers Field Rd. with Western Ave. to one lane from two. Narrowing the road would allow a wider, safer path.

A low-cost, quick-to-implement solution along the lines suggested by the Conservancy offers relief to Parklands users, now.

For a full copy of the report, visit the Conservancy website at www.charlesriverconservancy.org.



CHARLES RIVER

P · A · R · K · L · A · N · D · S

SPRING 2004

Somerville Charter School (now Prospect Hill Academy) students celebrate a successful Service Learning experience.



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All up and down the Charles, great things are in the works...

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WATERTOWN YACHT CLUB
 Renegotiating the leases to private clubs on public land so that they can produce appropriate revenue, community benefits and public access has become (at the urging of the CRC and others) a top priority for the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

HELL'S HALF ACRE, CAMBRIDGE
 Second graders from Shady Hill School are planting a border of native flowering plants along the Dr. Paul Dudley White Pathway in partnership with the Conservancy's service learning initiative.

WEEKS BRIDGE
 Bridges Aight on September 22 will include the Revels. The LEF foundation has pledged \$10,000 of the \$50,000 needed to permanently light the bridge.

NORTH POINT PARK, BOSTON
 Work for this park and its water features next to the future skatepark is underway. Toxic soil is adding to the challenge in creating this link between Cambridge and the Harbor. See story on page 1.

MEMORIAL DRIVE NEAR MIT
 The state's Historic Parkways Initiative is making great progress. Wider parks and better paths make crossings safer, traffic calmer, vistas broader, and strolling and cycling easier.

MAGAZINE BEACH AND HYATT HOTEL, CAMBRIDGE
 New storm water drains are being installed, part of a six year project that will improve water quality and provide an opportunity for shoreline restoration.

HERTER PARK WEST
 Athletes from Newton North High School helped clear debris from this recently reopened stretch of parklands.

RIVER STREET & SOLDIERS FIELD ROAD
 River Street Bridge - site of CRC recommendations. See story on page 1.

NONANTUM RD, NEWTON
 Newton Aldermen passed a unanimous resolution to narrow Nonantum Rd. and widen the Dr. Paul Dudley White Pathway.

ALONG THE RIVERBANK ON THE BOSTON SIDE BETWEEN HERTER PARK AND NEWTON
 Heavy equipment and giant pipes are signs of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority's multi-year effort to upgrade the aqueduct that parallels the Charles.

PARKLANDS AMBASSADORS, new volunteers trained by the CRC, will soon be out on the parklands guiding users and giving out CRC information. If you are interested in becoming part of this special group, go to www.charlesriverconservancy.org.

HATCH SHELL, ESPLANADE
 Conservancy Volunteers are teaming up with WBOS to help coordinate recycling and trash pick-up during the April 24th Festival for the Earth.

NASHUA ST. PARK, BOSTON
 Extensive tree plantings mark the progress toward the opening of the new Nashua Street Park later this year.

Want to learn more? Go to: www.charlesriverconservancy.org



President's Message...

April, 2004

Dear Friends,

A big thank you to everyone who gave to our year-end annual fund drive in December and January. Every gift matters, going directly toward the renewal and stewardship of the Charles River Parklands. Speaking of stewardship, thanks also to all the volunteers who cut brush, removed invasive plants, restored shorelines, eliminated graffiti, or braved winter cold to prune hundreds of trees along the river.

We welcome the new spirit that is evident at the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) under the energetic leadership of Commissioner Kathy Abbot, a proven Parklands executive. The chance for level funding in the state budget is to be viewed in a positive light considering recent cutbacks. Many changes are underway, including DCR's move to 251 Causeway Street (just a stone's throw from the Charles River) and Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' move to the rehabilitated Saltonstall Building on Cambridge Street.

Also, we are working actively with the EOE and their Office of Public-Private Partnerships, headed by veteran Parklands advocate Betsy Shure-Gross.

Public dialogue got a boost on February 15th when some 50 representatives of local Parklands Friends groups met with 15 senior state officials for an exchange of ideas on how to work together to improve state-owned parklands throughout the metropolitan area.

When you're out in the Parklands this spring, keep an eye out for our Conservancy Volunteers. Some 1500 people have spent time improving the Parklands since this program debuted a year ago last October. This spring, also be on the lookout for our Parklands Ambassadors, trained volunteers whose mission is to assist Parklands visitors and introduce them to the Charles River Conservancy. Please give them a warm hello!

Together we're making a difference in renewing the Parklands! If you are not already a Conservancy member, why not consider joining now?

Sincerely yours,
Renata von Tscharnner
 Renata von Tscharnner, *President*



Parklands Enrich Learning Experience for Students Grade 2-12

THIS SPRING students from six Boston-area schools will be exploring the Charles River Parklands. From coursework developed by the Charles River Conservancy in collaboration with their teachers the students will learn through hands on experience about the Parklands.

improvements to the Charles River Conservancy and local community leaders. Second graders from Shady Hill School, who are studying the Charles River all year, will plant a border of native flowering perennials along the Dr. Paul Dudley White Pathway in Hell's Half Acre.

Funded by a grant from the Boston Foundation, the Conservancy's new Service Learning Program will introduce students to ecology, landscape design and history, all within the context of the Parklands. Later, using their newfound knowledge and skills, students will assist in maintenance and restoration projects.

Students from the Horace Mann School for the Deaf in Allston will explore the plant community of Herter Park West and learn how they can improve the habitat there for birds and butterflies. Students from Morse Elementary School in Cambridge will spend time learning to row with the Riverside Boat Club, then give back to the Parklands by cleaning up trash and removing invasive plant species.

The Conservancy's Service Learning Program was launched in the fall of 2003 as a way to combine lessons in ecology and parklands design with community service projects.

If you are interested in learning more about how to get involved in the Service Learning Program, please contact Britt Lundgren at bml@charlesriverconservancy.org or call her at 617-641-9131.



Newton North athletes in Herter Park West.



Swimming in the Charles!

The pictures are yellowed and frayed, but the subject is unmistakable: happy swimmers at the beach on a warm summer day. Something else catches the eye; the locale is not Revere Beach or the Quincy Shore, but the Charles River in the 1930s, when Magazine Beach and Gerry's Landing drew crowds unconcerned with water quality. That was then. Now, thanks to the efforts of the Environmental Protection Agency, the cities of Boston and Cambridge, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Charles River Watershed Association, things have changed. The Charles River Conservancy has joined with those organizations and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, along with former EPA administrator John DeVillars to assess what remains to be done. Dredging hazardous sediments proximate to beach sites is on the list. Finally, the water is clean, at least most of the time. We're not quite there yet, but we're closer than you might think.

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...Skatepark, continued from page 1

In addition to public sector support, early planning grants have come from the Tony Hawk Foundation, the Boston Foundation and the Boston Foundation for Architecture. Many individuals have also come forward with major gifts. Fundraising is off to a great start, with three generous donors pledging \$50,000 each. Another has offered to quadruple all skateboarder donations up to \$20,000.

Inline skaters and even snowboarders are lending their muscle to the fundraising effort. Well-attended promotional events at Rye Airfield's indoor skatepark in New Hampshire and Wachusett Mountain are helping to get the word out. An eye-catching skatepark poster is about to be distributed to skate shops throughout New England with the generous support of Blue Collar Distribution.

Local board, skate and bike shops have been incredibly helpful, handing out fliers for public meetings and donating items for raffles.

Donors have included Timeless BMX, Belmont Wheelworks, Ski Market and Eastern Boarder, who all have contributed great stuff to the effort.

Hope is that by the time you receive your fall edition of Parklands, fundraising will be complete and a groundbreaking date set. But fundraising is far from complete. To lend financial support to the effort, keep up to date on breaking events, or view the new skatepark video, visit the Conservancy web site at www.charlesriverconservancy.org.

Skatepark plans and feedback options are included on the site. Make sure to sign up to receive skatepark e-mail.

Excitement for the project is building. A similar facility in Louisville, Kentucky has become a major destination for skaters from across the US. There's new energy beginning to develop in the Parklands, and with generous help from Parklands readers, it's anticipated the skatepark will bust out into the hottest spot to skate, blade and trick bike in America!

If you know a young skateboarder, inline skater or BMX biker tell them about this project and the website, so they too can get involved.

SUPPORT THE CHARLES RIVER CONSERVANCY!
JOIN ONLINE AT:
www.charlesriverconservancy.org

Parklands Veteran Honored



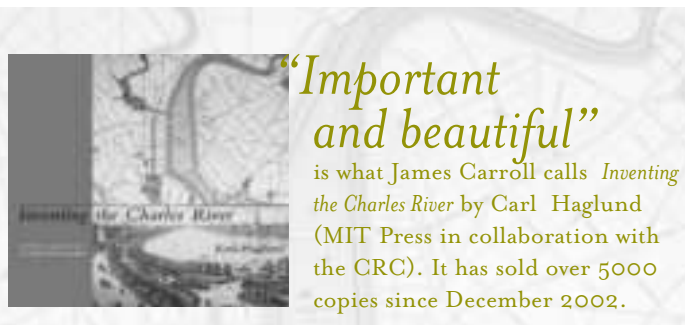
ALLAN MORRIS, mentor and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) liaison to the Conservancy Volunteers program, was honored by the Charles River Conservancy Board of Directors at its February 6th Board meeting. Allan is superintendent of the DCR's Southwest Corridor Park, but Conservancy Volunteers know him mainly as a wise teacher and dedicated Parklands steward.



Larry Evans, Renata von Tscherner and Aspen Tech employees.

Cambridge Business Community Gathers in Support of Conservancy

OVER SIXTY Cambridge corporate and political leaders gathered at the Hotel Marlowe on the evening of February 26th to learn about the Conservancy and plans for new amenities along the Charles River. Larry Evans, CEO of Aspen Technology, hosted the event and David Clem, CEO of Lyme Properties co-signed the invitation. Cambridge mayor Michael Sullivan addressed the gathering, announcing a \$100,000 request for the Charles River Skatepark he has inserted in the city budget. State representative Timothy Toomey, along with former weatherman Bruce Schwoegler urged those gathered to join the Conservancy in its efforts, either by becoming a corporate member or by holding company volunteer days. Special thanks to the Hotel Marlowe and Bambara restaurant for sponsoring the reception.



"Important and beautiful" is what James Carroll calls *Inventing the Charles River* by Carl Haglund (MIT Press in collaboration with the CRC). It has sold over 5000 copies since December 2002.

GeesePeace

WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE CANADA GEESE, whose legendary beauty graces the Parklands, but whose copious waste creates problems everywhere? That was the question addressed at a February 18th meeting hosted by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSCPA) in conjunction with the Charles River Conservancy. Those gathered explored possibilities for implementing the GeesePeace program along the Charles – a humane and effective way to resolve conflicts between humans and Canada geese.

In addition to "do not feed" education and egg oiling to stabilize the population, the program also features skilled dog

handlers and trained border collies to herd geese at predetermined times of the year. Although host communities will have to assume a portion of the cost, the MSPCA is offering a \$500 "challenge grant" to ease the burdens.

Those interested in learning more about this innovative and humane program, or offering volunteer or financial support, should contact Stephanie Hagopian at the MSPCA's Living With Wildlife Program at (617)541.5104. Or call Britt Lundgren, Volunteer Coordinator, Charles River Conservancy, (617)641.9131.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

CHARLES RIVER CLEAN-UP
April 24th

Join your friends and neighbors to help clean the Charles River from its source in Holliston to where it empties into Boston Harbor.

FESTIVAL FOR THE EARTH
April 24th

CRC is partnering with WBOS to ensure that Festival for the Earth does as little damage to the Parklands as possible. Come volunteer, then hang out in a special VIP area and meet on-air personalities and festival musicians.

CRC VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION
May 26th

Anyone who has ever volunteered with the Charles River Conservancy is invited for a free Boston Duck Tour! Dessert and coffee, open to all Conservancy members, will follow at a to-be-announced location. The Charles River Skatepark video, produced by volunteers from Eye Candy Cinema, will be featured.

PLANT YOURSELF IN THE PARK
June 5

The Charles River Conservancy will be participating in Plant Yourself in the Park Day on June 5 by hosting several teams of volunteers in the Allston/Brighton section of the Parklands. Visit the Conservancy's web site or www.bostonparks.org for more information.

TRIP TO PROVIDENCE RI TO SEE THE WATERFIRE
August 28th

Join the Conservancy for a bus trip to experience the bonfires, torch boats and music of WaterFire on downtown Providence's Three Rivers. Spectacular!

BRIDGES ALIGHT WITH THE REVELS
September 22nd

Join the Conservancy and the Revels for an evening of music, pageantry and light along the Charles River near the Weeks footbridge.

COMING UP
this spring and summer...

Slide lectures, kayak/canoe trips, nature walks and more. To keep informed subscribe to CRC's email newsletter (visit www.charlesriverconservancy.org) See the calendar section of the web site, too.

AND DON'T FORGET TO VOLUNTEER...

Volunteer events happen all the time. Schedule a day for your group or check the calendar for dates open to the public.