



Newsletter, October, 2018

Linear Park Progress Report

Our Linear Park along the shores of Lake Canonchet and Little Neck Pond continues to move toward fruition. Beta Group, the landscape architectural firm we hired last May, has completed conceptual plans that we presented to Narragansett Parks and Recreation, the planning board and Conservation Commission where it was received with interest and enthusiasm. We will soon meet with Jim Manni, the Narragansett town manager, and then make a final presentation to the town council before we authorize Beta Group to complete a more detailed plan with pictures and specifications for paths, structures and gardens.

A highlight of the plan is the creation of berms and rain gardens to control rainwater drainage from Route 1A that is now dumped directly from the catch basins through pipes into the ponds. With the new plan, this water will be treated naturally through the interconnected rain gardens and will nourish a range of native plants. This innovative approach may attract the interest of the state Department of Transportation and result in partnership with it..

Proposed permanent structures in the plan include a partially covered dock for fishing and wildlife viewing by the shore of Lake Canonchet as well as a centrally located picnic pavilion that will provide picnic tables and shade for visitors enjoying the park. Further along the lakesides at the southern end of Little Neck Pond, the plan proposes a boardwalk across the wild flower meadow that would allow visitors to reach a higher area featuring elevated views of the pond. When completed, landscaped and equipped with seating, this area is envisioned as a serene meditation spot.



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The Friends of Canonchet Farm is excited to have arrived at this point and we can all take pride in our volunteers and supporters' accomplishments over the past seven years in removing the invasive plants along the lakesides revealing beautiful views of the lakes. We will keep reporting updates on the progress of the Linear Park in this newsletter and on our website as our organization, in partnership with the town of Narragansett, moves toward making the Linear Park vision a reality!

Trail Updates

Vernal Pond Sign While walking the trail, check out the brand-new informational sign at the edge of the large vernal pool about 150 yards from the western entrance of the trail. The sign, painted by local artist Frances Topping, details the flora and fauna of such environments. This sign was funded by a Community Grant from Rhode Island Foundation. In the picture, taken just after installation, are, from left to right, Kathie Kelleher, Tom Hoagland, Tom Fortier, and Bob Stepanian.



Volunteer Opportunities As usual, our incredible corps of Friends of Canonchet Farm volunteers have wound up their spring and summer focus removing invasive plants from Lake Canonchet and Little Neck Pond shores

to do similar work on the 1.3-mile Canonchet Farm Nature Trail, which runs from the Anne Hoxsie Lane parking lot across from the beach all the way past the South County Museum to the Senior Center next to Narragansett Elementary School. Our fall and winter focus will include invasive plant removal (privet, burning bush, Japanese Knotweed, porcelain berry and Oriental bittersweet), stone wall restoration, trail bed improvement, and for the first time, tree/shrub planting in cleared areas, with trees donated by the RI Tree Council.

Trail work is scheduled for Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon weather permitting. We welcome additional volunteers. Gloves, tools, treats and water are provided for all.

We will return to the Lake Canonchet shore for one morning this fall to install native plants purchased through a grant from URI Master Gardeners to replace some plants that died since the original installation three years ago.

Service Opportunities FOCF partners with service organizations and URI to offer team-building experiences while working to improve the environment. Each of the past two years has seen more than 40 members of the URI Women's Rowing team spreading wheelbarrow loads of gravel on wet and eroded stretches of the trail. They will return on Nov. 3. On Saturday, October 20, volunteers from Alpha Psi Omega, a volunteer service fraternity at URI, will work for a second year on the trail with FOCF volunteers.

If you know of an organization or group that would like to contribute and have a similar experience or just want to volunteer individually, please email events@canonchet.org or call to make arrangements or to just be added to our list of contacts for trail work days and times.

Guided Walks

We are offering four guided Sunday trail walks this fall. All are free and open to the public. Three will begin in the Ann Hoxsie Lane parking lot directly across from the Town Beach South Pavilion, 39 Boston Neck Road (Route 1A). The other one, on Nov. 4, will begin at South County Museum. Each walk will begin at 1 p.m. and end at 3.

Oct. 21: Scott Turner, nature writer for the Providence Journal, will lead a walk along the improved path through Canonchet Farm.

Oct. 28: Lorèn Spears, executive director of Tomaquag Museum, will lead a walk along the trail exploring how the Narragansett people historically used the resources in the area, how their place-names describe features, and what Canonchet Farm can tell us about their history.

Nov. 4: Jim Crothers, director of South County Museum, will lead a walk along the trail exploring evidence of usage of the property from Colonial times to the Governor Sprague era of the late 19th Century. We will explore an old cemetery, the stone bridge over Crooked Brook, a salt marsh, and the museum area.

Nov. 25 Kathie Kelleher, president of Friends of Canonchet Farm, will lead a relaxing stroll through this beautiful natural area. Bring a friend or family member.



Beth Laliberte leading a geology walk last summer.