

Hardy Pond's Development

Marie Daly, WLT Board member

Hardy Pond has long been considered “great” for many reasons, not the least of which is the important habitat the pond has provided for many birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, plants, trees, and humans. Situated within a 900-acre watershed, this 42-acre water body is deemed in Massachusetts a “great pond,” i.e. any pond larger than 10 acres.

Now called Hardy Pond, the names have varied since European settlement in 1630. First called the Great Pond in the Woods, the pond was soon termed Mr. Samuel's Pond, after Samuel Saltonstall, the son of Watertown founder Sir Richard Saltonstall. Later, it was called Sherman's Pond, Mead's Pond, Fiske's Pond and finally Hardy's Pond. All of these people were abutters between the 17th and 19th centuries.

Native Americans have lived in this area for 10,000 years and were part of the Algonquin-language tribes. Native American trails included parts of Lexington Street, Old Lexington Road, Lincoln Street, around Hardy Pond, and Trapelo Road. According to Watertown history, in 1632, a Native American leader, Cutsumach, lived on the western shore of Hardy Pond. In 1676, the Native Americans still had wigwams on the western shore, when they observed a large number of dead fish on the shore.

The first European settlers arrived in Watertown in 1630, and beginning in 1636, the town leaders divided and allocated all the land within the town boundaries. This included the land that later became Waltham, which was apportioned into numbered lots called the

Great Dividends. But no European settler actually lived on the land around Hardy Pond until 1695, when Jonathan Smith built a house on the south side. By 1705, William & John Fiske had joined Smith on the south side of the pond. The lands on the north side were first settled by David Mead, who had a house and a mill on the west side of Chester Brook, just south of Trapelo Road. The Mead land on the west side of Lexington Street was purchased by the Stearns family, and Jonathan Stearns built a house that still stands today at 1079 Trapelo Road.

Harvard College purchased 160 acres of land on the north side of Jericho Hill in 1738, and then sold the land to the farm manager, Nahum Hardy, in 1839. Nahum Hardy lived in the house that now stands at the corner of Lexington Street and College Farm Road, and his son, Noah Hardy, lived along College Farm Road.



Noah Hardy house ca 1900

In 1895, in reaction to the Cambridge taking a large swath of land in Waltham for a reservoir, Waltham aldermen proposed taking the land around Hardy Pond by eminent domain to secure a six-square-mile watershed for a future drinking water source. Tests had revealed that the Hardy Pond water quality was excellent and the supply “inexhaustible.” These plans never came to fruition.

By 1910, people in Waltham began to appreciate Hardy Pond as a place for camping, swimming, boating and ice skating. People could take the trolley cars along Lexington Street, and spend a day picnicking in the relatively cool breezes of North Waltham. At the same time, the descendants of the Smith, Fiske, Wellington and Stearns families were looking to sell the old farmsteads. Both factors attracted developers looking to purchase large tracts that they could subdivide.

The Wellington estate on the north side was the first to go, purchased by the Wellington Grove Company. Lots of 1,500 square feet were sold as campgrounds, and the developer even included a free tent with the



1854 map showing the locations of the Hardy houses, and the Fiske, Smith, Viles, Wellington and Stearns houses.

Great Land Bargains
Wellington Grove
Hardy's Pond, Trapelo Road, Waltham

The Finest Camping Ground Within the City of Waltham.
 Only ten minutes' ride from the heart of the city.

HARDY'S POND
 has over sixty acres, good boating and fishing, abounding in Pickerel and White Perch. Has been a Resort for Campers for years. First time offered for sale to campers.

BUNGALOW AND CAMP LOTS
\$20.00 to \$60.00
 A Few Higher. \$5.00 down, \$1.00 weekly

GARDEN AND CHICKEN FARMS
\$100
 \$5.00 down, \$1.25 weekly.

Forty acres good farm land. Some all plowed and manured ready for planting. **OVER ONE-HALF MILE ON TRAPELO ROAD.**
OWN A LITTLE FARM—Raise your own vegetables and beat the food trust. Raise chickens and get fresh eggs and appreciate the difference between them and those held in cold storage.
HOW TO GET TO WELLINGTON GROVE—From Waltham take Lexington car to Trapelo Road. 6c fare. Grove 3 minutes from Waltham-Lexington car line. Come now and get a choice location. Own a piece of this fine land either for camping or farming.

Wellington Grove Land Co.
 431 Old South Building, 294 Washington St., Boston. Telephone
 Come at Our Expense. We Pay Car Fares Both Ways.

1913 advertisement for the north side of Hardy Pond

Ode to a Willow

By Emily Szczypek — WLT Steward, Charles River

Willow I will weep for you now.

You no longer have your ample bough.

The birds will no longer in your branches nest.

I have kissed your bark goodbye and know you have given us your best.



Kayakers enjoy the peace and beauty of the Pond

purchase. Next, the Baystate Realty Exchange sold land in 1920 and 1921 on both sides of Lake Street, providing old Army tents that they claimed could be divided into four rooms. Also in 1921, the Moody Land Company began developing the Mount Lake Villa sections.

In 1969, the General Investment & Development Company built 706 units, called Windsor Village, on Stearns Hill. In 2005, Lincoln Properties Company developed another portion of Stearns Hill when it built 264 units called The Ridge.

As we can see, humans have exploited the waters and surrounding lands of the 42-acre Great Pond in the Woods for a variety of uses for thousands of years, first for its natural resources of fish and game, then its rich soil and natural marsh grass and a possible water supply, and later, for recreation and residential development.

Waltham Land Trust Accepts Gifts from Donor Advised Funds

Anna Richardson, WLT Board member

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What is a Donor Advised Fund? A donor advised fund is like a charitable investment account, for the sole purpose of supporting charitable organizations you care about, including the Waltham Land Trust. The fund itself is considered a public charity so when you contribute cash, securities or other assets to a donor advised fund, you are generally eligible to take an immediate tax deduction. The fund has to be approved for that purpose and your gift must be irrevocable to take advantage of the tax benefits. The funds can then be invested for tax-free growth and you can recommend grants to any IRS-qualified public charity at any time. To set up a donor advised fund, contact your investment or tax professional.