



Magazine Beach Partners

Making Magazine Beach a more welcoming and vibrant park, connecting its community and stewarding its natural grounds.

2020 Annual Report
December 1, 2020
MagazineBeach.org



Dear Friends of Magazine Beach,

The pandemic has made Magazine Beach's importance as a refuge clearer than ever. As we've been cooped up at home, it's been critical to have large outdoor spaces as an antidote. At the park people have been building forts, working out, relaxing, and gathering in small groups. The new canoe/kayak launch and river overlook are resources of delight. Contributions to Magazine Beach Partners (MBP) and teamwork and support from the City of Cambridge and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) made it happen! Thank you, all.

With its many new improvements Magazine Beach is looking more welcoming and beautiful than ever. In July the protective fencing came down, allowing us to enjoy the shoreline path, thousands of new native plantings, and the expanded Powder Magazine patio and terrace. What a difference they make!

Beyond its 17-acre size and central location, the park is also important as a longtime, favorite picnicking destination. Local families have long been drawn by the site's river breezes and old shade trees, and to swim at the Veterans Memorial Pool. Improving Magazine Beach is not just a historic preservation and beautification project, but one of social and environmental justice. In the city, we must have common spaces for gathering and green spaces for health. These are both precious commodities, both matters of equity.

For the sake of Cambridge and the local environment, we must continue to invest in our park. Next up: the removal of the sunken parking lot behind the pool and the planting of new trees to replace old ones that we lose with each severe storm.



2020 also marks a decade of the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association (CNA) and MBP engagement at the park. Let's see this work through. Only by collective efforts and commitment can we get the job done.

Join us, old and new friends of Magazine Beach. See you at the park!

Cathie Zusy

President of Magazine Beach Partners

Board of Magazine Beach Partners:

Cathie Zusy, President

Ken Carson, Secretary

Brian Conway

Richard Garver

Decia Goodwin

Heather Saforrian

Fred Yalouris



2020 Accomplishments

Park Improvements

Despite covid-19, DCR has carried out many basic operations. They:

- repaired a leak at the pool and opened the pool and spray deck this summer
- reseeded and watered lawn areas in both March and June
- removed fallen trees and branches
- cleaned graffiti from the Powder Magazine
- replaced new native shoreline plantings and mounted protective fencing; and
- took down shoreline fencing, revealing Phase II-1 improvements.

Magazine Beach Partners is thankful for DCR's many contributions. That said, like many multi-sector capital projects and larger initiatives, our park improvement plans face significant delays. For plans, see "What's Next" on page 8.



Young trees now line the path to the Powder Magazine.



The shoreline path with goose netting to protect plantings.



The Powder Magazine with its new granite terrace.

Stewardship

We are the eyes on the park. We love it and recognize its importance. Magazine Beach Partners walk the park several times a week. And 3-4 times a month, we notify the DCR and/or the City, which maintains the playing fields and is responsible for trash removal for the eastern part of the park, about:

- fallen trees and limbs
- the need for trash and recycling pick up
- graffiti removal
- bathhouse and pool issues, including showers not draining, the need for hand sanitizer and covid-19 protocols, and more.

This summer we also:

- provided hand sanitizer for the bathhouse (courtesy of Trader Joe's)
- provided trash bags for picnickers
- and, after the spring covid-19 spike, catalyzed a return of trash cans in the park.
- When we learned that Eversource was surveying the park for the placement of high voltage wires, we asked DCR to investigate.

We also negotiated with DCR and the City of Cambridge to secure the City's planting of more trees in the grove and arranged for the Charles River Conservancy (CRC) to water them. This will now happen in 2021.

Finally, when the pandemic kept groups from engaging in clean ups of the park, we invited individuals to help, providing them with work gloves and trash bags. And many did!



The CRC waters the new trees along the shoreline during the drought.



Surveyor flags dotted the park to mark existing utilities for Eversource. Eversource's goal: to bury high voltage lines on the grounds.

Advocacy

Magazine Beach Partners signed two joint letters regarding I-90, the noisy raised highway just across the river. This project has the potential to transform the park experience, making it a much quieter and more restorative place. The first letter in July advocated for better transit (before, during, and after construction), for improving the riverbank, for not rebuilding the viaduct, and for making Allston a greener and healthier neighborhood with connections to the river. The second letter in October supported an at-grade alternative.

We are proud that on October 1, MassDOT appointed MBP board member Fred Yalouris to the I-90 Task Force as the Cambridge Community Representative.

We also authored letters in support of two other important park projects across the river, the Muddy River Project and the Charlesgate Alliance.



Just across the Charles River is the noisy, raised I-90 viaduct. We advocated for it to be replaced with a more sustainable, multi-modal alternative.

Partnerships

We are Magazine Beach Partners because that's what we do, partner with others to get things done. Our primary collaborators are DCR, who manage the park, and the City of Cambridge, which has been a stalwart supporter and has inspired all park improvements since MBP's formation by matching DCR dollars. Other core partners are MIT, the Charles River Conservancy, Meadowscaping for Biodiversity, and the Riverside Boat Club.

We supported MIT in its efforts to bring its rowers to the park this spring when their boathouse was under construction. Sadly, despite extensive preparations, pandemic restrictions prevented this from happening.



CRC volunteers picked up litter, weeded, pruned and cut back invasives.

The CRC organized 5 park cleanups and, most importantly, watered the new trees planted as part of Phase II-1 park improvements. We are grateful. They also launched their floating wetland from the park in late June and featured photos and the history of the park in 4 of their newsletters.

Meadowscaping for Biodiversity (MS4B) brought students from their Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program to the park in July and returned in October and November to remove invasive plants, pick up trash, and rake leaves.

The Riverside Boat Club, located on the west end of the park, remains the park's most longtime organizational partner. They were there with us when the neighborhood did its first park cleanup in November 2010.

THANK YOU, Magazine Beach partners!



MS4B has brought teens to the park for 3 years now, to plant meadows, do service work, and learn about the importance of biodiversity.



The CRC launched its floating wetland from the park in June as part of a 2-year study to see how it might inhibit cyanobacterial blooms in the river.



Due to the pandemic, Riverside was closed for workouts and only opened in June for single sculls.

Programs

- Due to covid-19, the pool was open at 50% capacity. Attendance: 8,702.
- The pandemic kept us from hosting our usual variety of summer programs, but we were able to offer 5 free outdoor yoga classes in September and October.
- Waypoint Adventure continued to offer small group experiences for adults and youth with special needs. They held 8 days of programs at the canoe/kayak launch and spent another day at the park playing Navigation Games.



The pool opened at 50% capacity. No covid-19 was reported!



Waypoint Adventure at the park in 2019.



Come fall, neighbor yogi Carol Faulkner led outdoor classes.

What's Next?

Plans

Our work is not done! Magazine Beach Partners is dedicated to:

- working with DCR to find a strong community-oriented tenant for the Powder Magazine
- moving forward with Phase II-2 (Let's get rid of the sunken parking lot!)
- seeing park improvements realized along Memorial Drive: park entrances, kiosks, and a walking path distinct from the path along the parkway, which best serves cyclists
- working with DCR, the City, and the CRC to plant and water more trees at the park
- installing the history- and nature-related interpretative markers
- launching our Summer Youth Stewardship Program (with thanks to the Cambridge Community Foundation for their support)
- working with MassDOT and advocates on both sides of the river to plan for a quieter at-grade I-90
- continuing to nourish partnerships: with them we are strong and can accomplish so much.

Please Contribute!

Your tax-deductible contribution will help us move closer to Phase II-2 improvements. We are all volunteers. 100% of your gift will be applied to tangible improvements at the park.

- Send checks made out to "Magazine Beach Partners" to MBP President, Cathie Zusy, 202 Hamilton St, Cambridge, MA 02139.
- Donate on Paypal at magazinebeach.org.
- Volunteer your time or talent! We're looking for help with photography, publicity, editing, assisting with our events, and more.

Contact Cathie Zusy at czusy@magazinebeach.org or 617.868.0489



Phase II-2 will turn the sunken parking lot into a grassy beach.



A grassy beach, a dock and an outlook will better integrate the pool with the park and increase engagement with the river. Rendering courtesy of Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge

Fundraising

In September, the City of Cambridge committed \$150k of Community Preservation Act Open Space funds for Phase II-2's parking-lot-to-grassy-beach project, pending a DCR match. Thank you, Cambridge!

Covid-19 prevented us from our usual fundraising activities.

Magazine Beach Partners 2020 Financial Statement

January - November 2020

Prior Years Retained Revenue as of 1 January 2019	\$82,291
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Expenditures*

Program Costs (insurance, permit & stipend)	1,170
Fundraising	120
Administrative Expenses	207
Total	<hr/> <u>\$1,497</u>

Income

Individual Donations	1,595
Group Donations	100
DCR allocation for development and design of interpretive signs	16,600
Total	<hr/> <u>\$18,295</u>

Net Available for future park investments	\$99,089
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* Expenditures have been underwritten by an individual donor.



A warm and sunny day in May.



Our spooky pre-Halloween snowfall.