

Adrienne St. John

As you'll hear shortly from those to follow, this site means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. But pardon my bluntness, to DPW, this site was a headache.

Even before the town purchased the land in 2000, it was a backyard for midnight dumping. DPW has removed countless loads of trash, construction debris and remnants of household improvement projects. There was the request to remove the dead elm trees and we could never plow the area properly for those who use the make-shift paths to bike or job to areas east of here. Even back in the 1980's when Jim Cozzi and Al Razz first removed the stop logs to address backyard flooding, the resulting pond elevation wasn't acceptable to the neighbors

But the headaches turned to migraines when Kristin and I found the huge sink hold at the start of a long awaited project just to clean up the site, let alone having to deal with the Certificate of Non-Compliance by the Office of Dam Safety in 2008. Finally the headache turned to panic during the storms of March 2010 when Rich Warrington, Earle Elliott and Chuck Stone from the Fire Department spent nail-biting hours watching the flood waters rise to cover the secondary culvert, compromise the main channel and dramatically blow out sections on the downstream side of the dam.

Fortunately thru all that there were folks who knew this site had potential.

With the help and perseverance of the Bedford Historic Preservation Commission, the Wilson Mill Park Planning Committee, Selectmen, Conservation Commission and Community Preservation, DPW was able to secure funding for design and permitting from the engineering firm of Haley & Aldrich. PAL worked us through the requirements of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the extremely competent and professional construction crew of New England Infrastructure, Hugh Deery and the "A Team" of Ed, Jeff and Jake, transformed this site to the vision we all had. Finally with the oversight expertise of Elizabeth Bagdonas and Dorothy Africa, the native landscaping you see today was specifically designed and planted by New England Environmental as a fitting touch to a site so well deserved.

I am happy to say that this site is no longer a headache to DPW, but truly another one of Bedford's "Special Places". Thank you all.