

## **Farrar Pond Long Range Plan**

**August 2016**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Farrar Pond is a natural resources treasure enjoyed by local residents and visitors to Lincoln, Massachusetts. Formerly a wet meadow, Farrar Pond was created around 1900 when Ed Farrar first dammed Pole Brook, also known as Halfway Brook because it marks the midway point between Concord and Wayland. The construction of Farrar Pond entailed raising the grade of South Great Road (Rt. 117) between Beaver Brook and Lee's Bridge. When the first dam washed out in the 1940s, it was rebuilt by the senior Guilbert Winchell who then owned the land. The dam was replaced by a more robust structure in the 1990s that included a concrete spillway and an outlet valve. In recent years, beavers have attempted to raise the water level by plugging the outflow, threatening the basements of abutters. Carefully designed

and assiduously maintained “beaver deceivers”<sup>1</sup> help to maintain an optimal water level and permit the pond to be partially drained every third year to help control aquatic vegetation. At these times, stumps of trees cleared from the original meadow are still visible.

The trail and conservation lands along the south shore of the pond were permanently conserved when Winchell land was developed in the 1970s as part of the first cluster development in the Town of Lincoln. This allowed the Lincoln Ridge and Farrar Pond Village condominiums to be built while preserving the wild attributes of the pond’s margin to be enjoyed by all, including a rich variety of wildlife. (See Appendix 1, Map, page 14.)

**Ownership & Management.** Many people and organizations share in stewardship of this valued resource. Land around and under the pond is owned by a number of individuals, organizations, and land trusts. A great part of the adjacent land is protected by conservation easements. The pond and much of the surrounding lowlands are subject to various wetlands and related environmental regulations.

Trail maintenance, signage, conservation enforcement and remediation, pond health monitoring and management of invasive species in the pond water and ashore are all handled by volunteers on both an *ad hoc* and programmatic basis. The Lincoln Land Conservation Trust has done a great deal of work on our trails over the years. Farrar Pond Associates, comprising abutters and meeting annually, coordinates the above activities in communication with various non-profit (especially LLCT) and government entities that have relevant interests and /or statutory authority. Funding for pond-related activities is by donations received and held by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. (See Appendix 2, Farrar Pond Organization Chart, page 15.)

**Challenges.** The pond and environs are now a relatively stable ecosystem. Challenges persist with development, increased used of pond and trails by visitors, landscape management, pollution and sedimentation, changing climate and weather, trail maintenance and especially invasive plants that could return this beautiful pond to a muddy meadow if not controlled. Identifying and developing the next generation of steward and leader is another significant challenge. Vigilance and participation by all are necessary to preserve the pond and trails and continue improvements that extend the life and health of the pond for future generations.

*(The foregoing paragraphs are adapted from the website [www.fpond.org](http://www.fpond.org).)*

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<sup>1</sup> The “beaver deceivers” consist of cages surrounding the intake for the pond outlet pipe and for three leveling pipes, designed to prevent flooding when beavers dam the spillway. The cages serve to prevent beavers from approaching close to the pipe intakes, where the increasing velocity stimulates them to plug the outlet.

## Farrar Pond Associates

### MISSION AND VALUES

Farrar Pond Associates is a voluntary society of property owners and abutters of Farrar Pond in Lincoln, Massachusetts, formed to preserve and maintain the environment of the pond and its surroundings, for the benefit and enjoyment of its members and the community at large, in accordance with current law and good environmental practice. The Associates provides funding for and supports the efforts of the Farrar Pond Conservation Trust in this regard. –Mission statement of Farrar Pond Associates

Looking ahead to the next decade and beyond and given the challenges outlined above, Farrar Pond Associates faces the continuing need for active stewardship. From the early days of the creation of Farrar Pond, planning and decision making have revolved around these core values:

- Maintaining a healthy **ecology of the pond and environs** and applying best conservation practices to their preservation;
- Preserving the **aesthetics** of this priceless natural resource that enhances our living environment and nourishes the body and spirit of each of us who use and enjoy it;
- Encouraging appreciation and responsible **recreation and enjoyment** for owners, guests, and visitors in the town of Lincoln;
- Developing a sense of responsibility for continued and focused **stewardship** to preserve the pond for use by future generations;
- **Educating and communicating** important information about pond history, health and condition of its water and shores, and guidelines for responsible use and enjoyment.

### LONG-RANGE PLANNING

With these core values in mind, the primary purpose of this plan is to enable the Farrar Pond Associates to set priorities and to use resources strategically to extend the Winchell family's stewardship and vision into the indefinite future. A second important purpose is to demonstrate thoughtful management of the pond and its environs and thus encourage financial support by defining future needs. The intention behind this plan is to continue a process of "taking care of" that has functioned well. We want to safeguard the future of the resources we recognize and value.

The expectation is that each year the plan will be reviewed by Associates officers who will report on progress to Associates members at its annual meeting and to the broader Farrar Pond community. The reviews will guide decisions by the Associates and lead to continuous evolution of the plan itself.

The following sections identify major goals for the years ahead pertaining to natural resources and maintaining pond assets and set forth guidelines for human use and impact on the pond and its future governance and stewardship. These goals include a number of ongoing activities for assessing pond health and strategic interventions, anticipated near-future projects and improvements, and new initiatives.

## I. Natural Resources

### A. Water quantity and quality

Goal 1: Minimize nutrient enrichment via phosphorus and/or nitrogen contributed from fertilizers, septic systems, and animal waste, which could reduce water clarity and encourage excessive plant growth.

Action	Status	Notes
A. Establish a monitoring program to assess current nutrient inputs.	Plan to proceed within a year.	This could involve monitoring phosphorus and nitrogen levels in the pond and inflows (Pole Brook, Beaver Brook, and representative spring sources) As well as upstream in tributaries. (See Appendix 5, Farrar Pond Watershed.)
B. Monitor periodically for any increases in nutrient inputs from tributaries and in the pond.	For consideration in future years.	Monitoring could be done during every five or ten years including weekly sampling of tributaries and pond outflow.
C. If nutrient inputs are found to be high in any source, consider a mailing to residents in that part of the watershed.	Contingent on information received about water quality.	We would want to alert landowners to the issue and suggest measures to reduce inputs (reduce fertilizer use, regular septic pumping, etc.).

Goal 2: Minimize adverse effects from droughts that could stress aquatic life in multiple ways by raising water temperature, reducing water quantity, and concentrating pollutants.

Action	Status	Notes
Contact landowners in the watershed to encourage water conservation measures.	Contingent on circumstances.	Especially important for residents using groundwater (well water) from the area. Research irrigation withdrawals by upstream farms. See Appendix 5, Farrar Pond Watershed, page 22.)

## B. Biodiversity of pond and shoreline

Goal 1: Control the spread and proliferation of invasive species.

Action	Status	Notes
Continue annual surveys and treatments as needed to control invasive species of aquatic vegetation.	As needed; the presumption is this will continue as in the recent past.	While there is also a risk of the introduction of invasive biota (fish, mollusks, insects) during periods when the Sudbury River floods to a level above the dam, the potential for effective control of mobile organisms is very limited.
Conduct periodic surveys of shoreline and trailside exotic invasive vegetation.	Recommended	

Goal 2: Minimize shoreline damage and removal of riparian vegetation by landowners.

Action	Status	Notes
A. Create Farrar Pond Associates Stewardship Committee	Recommended	The Stewardship Committee could take the lead in public education with the goal of providing valuable information to everyone whose decisions affect the pond and its surroundings.
B. Write and distribute Conservation Guidelines for Management of Farrar Pond Watershed Lands.	Task for the new committee.	Define the issues. Explain regulations. Highlight benefits of maintaining native riparian vegetation to biodiversity and aesthetics. Ask abutting landowners not to blow leaves or fell trees into the pond or take other deleterious actions.
C. Follow up as needed	Contingent on circumstances.	Consult and coordinate with Conservation Commission, Lincoln Land Conservation Trust, or other agencies as appropriate.

### C. Pond Longevity

Goal 1: Slow and/or manage the natural aging process of the pond resulting from accumulation of organic matter.

Action	Status	Notes
Assess periodic drawdowns based on ongoing consultation and nutrient analysis	Additional information and discussion required.	Drawdowns, chemical treatments, and other key pond-related actions will continue to be under the direction of the President of the Associates with input from consultants, Associates officers, and other advisors.
Consider rebuilding the outlet to allow deeper drawdowns.	To be planned if indicated by circumstances.	Make whatever adjustments are necessary to the outflow plumbing so that the drawdown could be at the full 4.5 feet permitted by the Corps of Engineers.
Consider preparing contingency plan for dredging.	To be planned if indicated by circumstances.	This option would involve extensive permitting requirements and identification of an acceptable loading site for spoil removal.

Goal 2: Minimize siltation from shoreline erosion or sediment delivered from tributaries.

Action	Status	Notes
Allow beavers to continue maintaining the dam on Pole Brook.	Nature takes its course.	Currently, sediment input from the two primary tributaries (Pole and Beaver Brooks) is very limited due to sediment capture in beaver ponds near the mouth of Pole Brook and the pond on Beaver Brook adjacent to the Mount Misery parking lot. There are also beaver ponds upstream on Beaver Brook.
Evaluate the condition of the man-made dams on Beaver Brook.	To be considered.	Risk seems low but consequences could be high. These dams are in the Mount Misery Conservation Area north of South Great Road.
Monitor tributary streams for activities that could contribute to erosion or sedimentation.		Consult Lincoln Conservation Commission if serious issues arise.

## II. Assets

Goal 1: Make sure the Farrar Pond Dam remains functional and in good repair.

Action	Status	Notes
Evaluate dam inspection reports and respond as needed.	Inspection will take place again in 2019.	
Create photo records of dam for periodic comparison with current conditions	For consideration.	

Goal 2: Counter the beaver community's efforts to raise the level of Farrar Pond.

Action	Status	Notes
Continue "beaver deceiver" program.	Routine.	The "beaver deceivers" consist of cages surrounding the intake for the pond outlet pipe and for three leveling pipes, designed to prevent flooding when beavers dam the spillway. The cages serve to prevent beavers from approaching close to the pipe intakes, where the increasing velocity stimulates them to plug the outlet.

Goal 3: Keep foot trails well-marked, safe, and enjoyable.

Action	Status	Notes
Carry out trail upgrade through filling between tree roots.	Under discussion with contractor.	Plus other enhancements as required for the safety and convenience of trail users.
Maintain board walks and bridges.		Support with funds and/or volunteers as needed.



### III. Human Impacts and Involvement

Appendix 3 identifies current guidelines for recreation activities on Farrar Pond, dating to 1996 and provided by Harold McAleer, Clerk of Farrar Pond Associates.

#### A. Abutter Uses and Impacts

Concern	Response	Notes
Landscaping – lawn chemicals	Landowner education	Properties that are heavily landscaped and use of lawn chemicals can cause polluted run-off into the pond.
Landscaping – invasives management	Landowner education	If abutters to the Trust lands and the pond do not control invasives on their properties, it opens a window for invasives to move into Trust lands which are presently only modestly impacted by invasive plant species.
Landscaping – lawn waste blown or thrown in pond	Landowner education	Adds to nutrient pollution of pond; unsightly.
Docks and other pond-side construction	Promote the value of natural pond edge	Minimally-visible/intrusive etc.
Pollution from septic systems	Evaluate the risk of pond pollution from this potential source	We are unaware of pond pollution being caused by abutting septic systems at present. The impact of septic discharge moving through groundwater into the pond is unknown but presumably minor from good modern systems.
Pollution from stormwater	Evaluate the water quality in run-off from the Flying Squirrel Hollow storm drain and other sources to be identified	Run-off from private properties including condos could be a source of pollution.

## B. Communication and Education

Education is a key component of numerous topics mentioned above. Depending on the goal and the target audience, there are multiple means of communication that can be used. Possibilities include: brochures, newsletters, website, mailings, events (Such as periodic Farrar Pond Festivals), and signage. Sometimes education might be offered directly to particular abutters, stream polluters, or recreational users.

Purpose	Potential Audience	Means of Communication
Reduce pollution through lawn chemicals	abutters	Website, brochures, newsletters, website, letters for newcomers, events
Reduce damage from septic overflows	abutters	Letters for newcomers, brochures, website
Build consensus about vegetation control	FP community	Newsletters, annual appeal letter, events, workshops and speakers, website
Build consensus about beaver impacts	FP community	Newsletter, workshops and speakers, website
Reduce obnoxious recreational use	"Other" users	Signage, in-person feedback, law enforcement support, website
Encourage general sense of stewardship	FP community	Pond festival, newsletters, annual meeting, website, conferences such as Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference.
Build awareness of Farrar Pond history	ditto	ditto
Raise awareness of Bay Circuit Trail	ditto	ditto

Suggested action: plan signage.

Links to Farrar Pond Website: <http://fpond.org> or [www.fpond.org](http://www.fpond.org).

### C. Associates Sustainability

Goal 1. Sustain and increase leadership, involvement, and participation.

Action	Status	Notes
Create "Friends of Farrar Pond."	Recommended.	All contributors and event attendees could be designated as Friends and kept on the Associates mailing list. Friends would receive information and news about the pond and trails and be invited to annual meeting and/or other community education and outreach events.

Goal 2. Meet annual expenses.

Action	Status	Notes
Continue annual solicitation of contributions.	Routine.	Sent by Mass Audubon
Hold occasional fundraising events.	None currently planned.	Build cash reserve for Pond expenses. (See Goal 3 below.)

Goal 3. Be prepared for unexpected large expenses.

Action	Status	Notes
Remind the community of this possibility.	Partially achieved if mentioned in this plan.	Estimate the likelihood and/or time frames of dam repair or other infrequent large expense.
Establish and maintain a reserve fund.	Recommended.	Consider a certain percentage of our funds as reserves and grow the amount over time.

Goal 4. Secure permanent archival of history and legal documents.

Action	Status	Notes
Donate paper files to Town of Lincoln for storage in town archive.	Under discussion.	

## CONCLUSION

"It's only a pond by the side of the road, but there are those who love it," writes Harold McAleer (see Appendix 4, History of Farrar Pond, page 17). Farrar Pond Associates, established in 1963, works to protect this "jewel beside the Sudbury River." The pond, now over 100 years old, has provided several generations of its neighbors with recreational and educational opportunities and serves as a natural sanctuary from a busy and stressful world. It enriches our souls and spirits and enhances our property values.

For the continuing enjoyment of future generations, we must assume individual and collective responsibility for stewardship of Farrar Pond. Sharing information about its history, geology, flora and fauna, and best conservation practices are on-going activities, to be repeated as newcomers join our community. Respecting guidelines for use of the pond and its environs are essential to its preservation. Finally, being good stewards of this invaluable resource in our midst assures that needed resources will be available for continuing maintenance and unexpected projects for keeping Farrar Pond healthy.

Our collective success in each of these endeavors will depend upon our taking positive, protective action together. Of the numerous ongoing activities and proposed initiatives listed above, we propose the following priorities:

1. Continue annual monitoring for invasive aquatic vegetation and chemical treatments as warranted. Cost has ranged between \$1,000 and \$25,000 per year depending on treatments necessary. Average cost is about \$5,000.
2. Perform trail maintenance at key trouble spots, especially areas where travel is hazardous when ice forms on the trail (especially where the trail slopes from side-to-side). The Lincoln Land Conservation Trust has been and continues to be extremely generous about maintaining the trails. Some trail needs have gone beyond what can or should be asked of the LLCT. Landscape professionals or trail crews such as SCA Massachusetts may be engaged to remedy significant trail problems that have arisen after decades of use. We submitted an application for an SCA Massachusetts trail crew to work on the trails in 2016 but our project was not selected. We intend to try again in 2017. The crews are trained and supervised to complete high-priority, technically advanced conservation projects. SCA Massachusetts Staff provide technical consulting, member supervision/support and project oversight. If we are not successful in 2017 we should consider alternatives. Cost: 2016 cost would have been \$7,400 for 10-days of work for a 5-person crew.
3. Conduct a survey and follow-up monitoring to assess phosphorus concentrations in Farrar Pond, its tributaries, and spring sources. Proposed schedule would include monthly sampling at the inflows to Farrar Pond (Pole Brook and Beaver Brook) and outflows (at the dam spillway) from Farrar Pond from September 2016 through September

2018, with the goal of establishing a record of phosphorus inputs from the major tributaries and outputs during a draw-down and non-drawdown year. In addition, collect monthly sampling from April through October of 2017 at 10 locations in the pond to determine any locations with higher nutrient inputs. Collect 5-10 samples in the intermittent storm runoff in Flying Squirrel Hollow, and 10 - 20 samples at spring sources during the winter drawdown period. 2017-2018 cost: 172 samples @\$25/sample = \$4,300. Follow-up sampling program (conducted at 5 year intervals) to be fine-tuned based on 2017-2018 results.

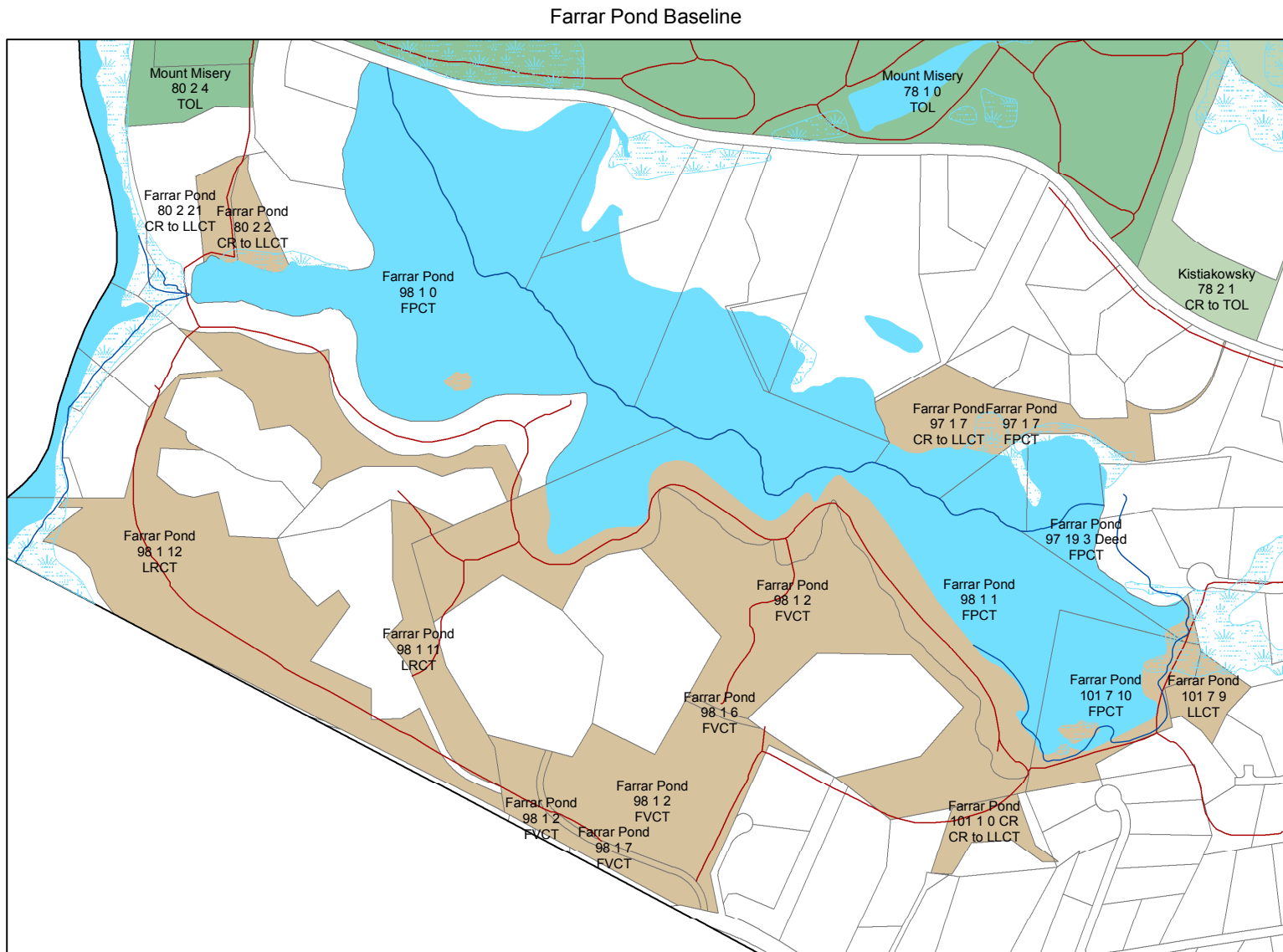
4. Conduct winter draw-down in fall of 2017. Re-evaluate the need to continue drawdowns in 2020 based on density of lily pads (the primary benefit of drawdowns is to reduce lily pad biomass, and these species are much less prevalent than they were when the drawdown program was initiated).
5. Maintain “beaver deceivers” to prevent flooding due to spillway blockage. (Beaver deceivers consist of cages surrounding the intake for the pond outlet pipe and for three leveling pipes, designed to prevent flooding when beavers dam the spillway. The cages serve to prevent beavers from approaching close to the pipe intakes, where the increasing velocity stimulates them to plug the outlet.)
6. As indicated on the Farrar Pond Organization Chart (See Appendix 2), create a group affiliated with Farrar Pond Associates to be called “Friends of Farrar Pond,” inclusive of all individuals interested in learning about the pond and supporting its stewardship. Membership will be open to all residents of the condo villages, nearby neighborhoods, contributors to fundraising programs, and others who wish to be on the mailing list. An invitation to join Friends of Farrar Pond could be included in pond and trail signage and on the website.

The following individuals contributed to this planning process: Diana Beaudoin, Walter Bossert, Buzz Constable , Christie Foote-Smith, Ron McAdow, Harold McAleer, Alaric Naiman, Renata Pomponi, Betsy Stokey, Al Schmertzler, Lou Wagner, Fred Winchell, and Will Winchell.

## Appendices

1. Pond and Parcel Map
2. Current Guidelines for Recreational Activities
3. Farrar Pond Organization Chart
4. History
5. Watershed Map

## Appendix 1



FARRAR POND ORGANIZATION CHART

LAND OWNERS	Farrar Pond Conservation Trust
	Lincoln Ridge Conservation Trust Farrar Pond Village Cons. Trust Massachusetts Audubon Society
	Individuals/Families (about 25)

**FARRAR POND ASSOCIATES**  
(FPA)

**Membership**

- One membership for each family abutting or holding right-of-way access to the pond.
- Two representatives from Farrar Village Condominiums.
- One representative from Lincoln Ridge Condominiums.
- One representative from Mass Audubon
- Four representatives from Farrar Pond Conservation Trust serve as officers and executive committee.

**FPA IS HOW THE LANDOWNERS COOPERATE ON STEWARDSHIP.**

**FUNCTIONS OF THE FPA:**

- Advises landowners
- Raises funds for stewardship
- Authorizes disbursements
- Conducts educational activities
- May help recruit volunteers

**FRIENDS OF FARRAR POND**  
(Proposed)

Individuals interested in Farrar Pond stewardship who wish to be kept informed of needs and opportunities.

### Appendix 3: Current Guidelines for Recreational Activities

The table below reflects both the 1996 Guidelines provided by Harold McAleer and subsequent discussion. Further discussion is needed, both as to revision of the guidelines and to plan for enforcement.

Activity	Guideline	Notes
Hiking	Allowed on trails.	Trails are well used but not overused. Potential for overuse if more hiking is encouraged. Potential impacts to lady slippers, other flora.
Snowshoeing/Skiing	Allowed on trails.	Conditions can be quite difficult due to steep narrow trails.
Kayaking/Canoeing	Allowed for community members and guests	Potential for introducing invasives from other water bodies. Post precautions?
Other boating (which is mostly boating for fishing)	No motorized craft allowed. OR Only silent motors, such as low-power electric motors, are allowed.	The status quo is some public use of the informal access near the Canoe Launch parking lot. No official boat access is available to Lincoln residents, although they are authorized to use the pond. Because no particular causes for complaint have arisen from boating by out-of-towners in recent years, this plan makes no recommendation with respect to access for boaters. As with canoes and kayaks, boats could potentially introduce invasive species into the pond.
Fishing from the shore, dam, or ice.	Abutters only.	
Swimming	Not permitted	Due to health and safety considerations.
Ice skating	Abutters only	Consider posting safety precautions.
Horses	Not permitted	Trail erosion
Dog walking	Permitted with responsible pet management (fecal retrieval, constraint)	How to communicate? Periodic assessment of dog owner performance?
Bikes	Not permitted	Trail erosion. How monitor compliance?
Campfires/Camping	Not permitted	



#### Appendix 4: History by Harold McAleer



It's only a pond by the side of the road, but there are those who love it. Perhaps you've noticed it while traveling along Rt 117 in Lincoln, just east of Lee's bridge across the Sudbury River. It's near Nine Acre Corner and the junction of Lincoln, Concord, Sudbury and Wayland. It touches Route 117 twice with a small hill topped by a single house between the touchings.

Townsfolk skate on the frozen pond in the winter, and in the summer an occasional fisherman will ignore the signs and try for the bluegills, hornpouts, perch, pickerel and legendary big bass rumored to inhabit what looks like a typical deep New England kettlehole pond. Well it isn't! It's actually a swampy meadow flooded into a man-made pond a hundred years ago, but I'm getting ahead of my story.

Farrar Pond is a jewel beside the Sudbury river. Surrounded by conservation land and well-kept homes it provides a small natural sanctuary away from the noise and crush of encroaching cities. Migrating waterfowl make good use of its protection, and osprey and hawk, and the occasional horned owl, make a pretty good living in its environs. Deer and foxes have been seen on the south side and a playful river otter makes annual visits. Fern and fungus pop up around the shore along with bluettes, starflower, blueberry and partridgeberry, and lady's slippers appear in profusion below the upland oaks in May. A narrow walking trail runs all along the south shore from the dam at the west end to Rt. 126 on the east end. It winds in and out among honeysuckle, viburnum, laurels and sweet pepperbush, around coves and points, and up and down beside kettle holes. A brisk walk out and back can provide an hour of aerobics and work wonders for the troubled psyche. This year the Pond is 100 years old.

One hundred years, who would believe it! Just imagine Ed Farrar, as a 37-year-old farmer, at the start of the 20'th century working with handsaws and horse and sledge to construct the pond of his dreams. How did he do it, and even more

puzzling, why? We don't know for certain, but this amalgam of folklore and conjecture may shed some light on the fading history.

### **Background**

Ed Farrar was the sixth owner of the Farrar Farm and the old homestead on Concord Road in Lincoln, MA., on part of the 1500 acres acquired by his great-great-great grandfather George. George's father had been killed in King Philip's war of 1675 in Lancaster and George had been apprenticed at age six to Thomas Gobel of Lincoln, who managed his own as well as the Bulkeley (now Codman) Farm in the southwest corner of Lincoln. At the age of twenty, George acquired his own land "south of South Great Road". In 1692 at age twenty two, he married Mary Howe of Concord, who also worked for the Gobels, and built the original homestead just off Concord Road. The family grew and prospered through the years with many famous descendants. While many of the young men went off to college and distinguished careers, a family tradition kept at least one son at home to run the farm and keep the homestead. This tradition lasted through the middle of the twentieth century and died with Ed Farrar in 1949. The homestead itself crumbled a few years later.

### **History**

The field which was to become Farrar Pond was called Broad Meadow.

It was an extension of a flat flood plain abutting the Sudbury River. The river itself was called Musketaquid by the early Indians to describe the tall grasses which grew along its shore. The meadow was covered with hay grass which was harvested by the Farrar farmers to provide feed and bedding for their animals.

Two streams watered the meadow. One, Beaver Brook, begins near Flint's Pond and flows under Baker Bridge Road and the railroad tracks, through the series of ponds south of Mount Misery to cross under South Great Road and enter the meadow.

In the center of the meadow it was joined by another stream which originates in the wetlands opposite Codman Farm and flows south to cross South Great Road and run beside Meadowbrook Road. It turns right to cross under Concord Road and then tumble down the hill into the meadow. This stream was called Pole Brook because the early farmers would gather the grass harvested in the meadow beside it on crossed poles dragged behind horses. The combined stream then recrossed South Great Road to join the Sudbury River just below Fairhaven Bay. Local legend has it that this combined stream was christened "Halfway Brook" on April 19, 1775 by the minutemen from Sudbury who encountered it halfway between their muster at East Sudbury Center and the Battle in Concord and Lincoln. Another theory has the name predating the Revolution since the crossing of the brook on Concord Road is halfway between east Sudbury (now Wayland) and Concord.

After a river dam was constructed in Billerica around 1800, to provide water for the Middlesex Canal, the meadow would flood periodically in the high waters of spring, and by 1900 had become a swampy flat land with a growth of swamp maples and large chestnut trees.

America was feeling its oats in 1900. Edison's power plants and light bulbs were brightening the Lincoln farmhouses and Bell's telephone was connecting the party lines. Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag" was tinkling out of player pianos everywhere. Two years before, in the 100-day war, the United States had destroyed the Spanish fleet outside Santiago Harbor in Cuba, seized Manila in the Philippines, and occupied Puerto Rico. In 1900 incumbent William McKinley, and his running mate Teddy Roosevelt, easily defeated William Jennings Bryan. The first Olds automobile would be produced in 1901 and Henry Ford wouldn't develop the Model T until 1908. In Lincoln you took a horse-drawn carriage to the train station.

This then was the situation faced by Ed Farrar in 1900, when, with help from Charlie Foreman, a neighboring handyman of American Indian extraction, he started to build his pond.

**Peg Martin**, Lincoln Town Historian writes: "His Uncle, John W. Farrar described it this way: Edward was placing a dam across the gut from the Northwest corner of the great Wood Lot, so called, to the southwest corner of the Great Island, so called, to maintain the depth of water upon Pole Brook meadow, so called, four feet above the top of a split flat-top bound stone on the southerly side of South Great Road, being the corner bound of Edward R. Farrar and Frank Wheeler, for the purpose of an artificial lake for boating, fishing, and skating."

The Farrars owned only the land in the meadow south of the brooks, so Ed needed permission from the other owners, Frank Wheeler and G.W. Baker, to flood their pieces. They readily agreed. Even the Town of Lincoln agreed to raise the level of South Great Road to assuage the frequent flooding and support the new course of the streams into the river through Ed's proposed spillway. (Editors note: Try that today!)

First Ed had to clear the meadow of all the trees. Imagine the work, felling the trees with axe and hand saws, dragging them out behind horses, and then cutting them up! Today when we periodically drain the pond you can still see the hundreds of stumps, including several large chestnuts and many smaller trees. Then he had to construct the dam itself.

**Guilbert Winchell** tells how "old-man Farrar" built the damn. "He dug the fill out of the side of a hill up from the dam and dragged it down with horses. You can still see the big hole where he got it out of. Foxes used to have a den in there some years ago. Somehow he convinced the town to raise the level of Great Road where the stream used to go across to the river and he built the sluiceway in the end of the dam to flow the water into the river through the gut."

**Rich Winchell** says, "I remember the old spillway. He built it out of 2-by-8 or 2-by-10 timbers on the sides, with a wall across of more timbers. He could vary the level of the pond by taking out or putting in boards. It lasted until it blew out one day and my Dad had it replaced."

With the spillway in place, Ed put in the boards and waited for the meadow to fill. Today the water runs into and out of the pond at a rate of about 1 inch a day, so to fill the pond to a depth of 6 feet would take 3 to 4 months. I can imagine Ed walking out behind his house after a hard days work to check the new level in his emerging lake. And think of his feelings when he took his first swim, and caught his first fish!

**Mary (Giles) Peterson**, a Farrar cousin says, "I remember Ed and his brother Sam and the old house and the pond very well; I played there often as a kid. "Uncle" Ed would catch frogs for me in the pond. Ed built the pond with help from Charlie Foreman, who lived in the house he built a couple of houses from mine toward Concord Road. Charlie was a Cherokee Indian from Wyoming who was said to be the model for the "Appeal ToThe Great Spirit" statue outside the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston."

I wonder if Ed Farrar could have foreseen the pleasure his creation would bring over the next hundred years, or dream of the property values it would create! I doubt it. At any rate we all owe a debt of gratitude to this imaginative and resourceful man. As his brother Sam wrote in a 1932 poem:

"Beyond the House is Farrar's Pond  
Sometimes called Edward's Lake  
Because he made a beauty place,  
Where once grew brush and brake."





(Note: Ed Farrar sold his portion of the pond to the Winchell family in 1926, who later placed it into conservation along with strips of frontage as part of the Farrar Village and Lincoln Ridge Condominium developments of the 70's and the Winchelsea development of the 90's. The pond is managed by the Farrar Pond Conservation Trust and the Farrar Pond Association of abutting homeowners.)

**See also: Farrar Pond Website at: <http://fpond.org> or [www.fpond.org](http://www.fpond.org).**



## Appendix 5 Farrar Pond Watershed Map

