

# **Benson Park**

2020

# Introduction

- Mission and Vision Statements
- Benson Park – How we got here
- Projects – completed
- Projects – in progress
- Benson Park today
- Future plans and projects

# Benson Park Committee Mission Statement

## Mission Statement

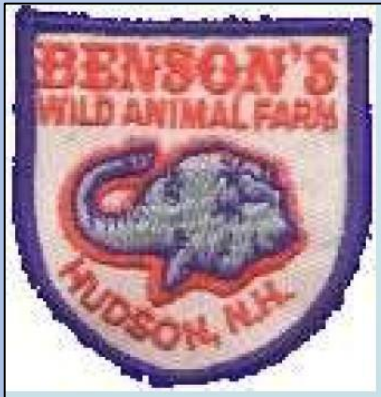
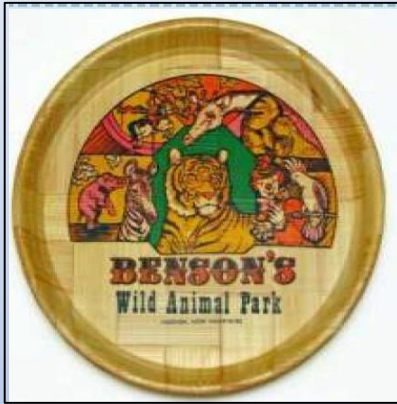
- The mission of the Benson Park Committee is to protect and maintain the rich history of the park. It will preserve and enhance a park which enriches the quality of life for the residents of Hudson and visitors alike, it will preserve the park for the enjoyment of present and future generations, and foster harmony with nature by promoting a wide range of year-round passive recreational activities.

# Benson Park Committee Vision Statement

## Vision Statement

- To foster community pride and volunteerism in achieving our goals
- To plan for educational opportunities on the park's historical and environmental components
- To restore and preserve historical buildings and structures
- To preserve and protect our wildlife natural habitats
- To strategically prepare for future needs and projects

# Benson Park not Benson's Wild Animal Farm



Then



Now

# **Benson Park**

How We Got Here

# How we got here

- Original Benson's Committee formed in late 1990s
- Benson's Master Plan – completed March 2002
- Historic Structures Report – completed 2003
  - Historic structures include:
    - Train Station
    - Benson Office and Kitchen
    - Haselton Barn
  - Historic Structures do not include:
    - Elephant Barn
    - Gorilla House
    - A-Frame
    - The Old Shoe

# How we got here

- Transfer property from state to Town of Hudson
  - Completed January, 2009
- Current Benson Park Committee formed early in 2009
- Work in the park started spring 2009
  - To date, over 350 volunteers have contributed time, effort and other donations to the park
  - Hudson Department of Public Works, also a major contributor
  - Many local businesses have contributed materials and labor
- Open House October - 2009
- Official Opening May - 2010
- Benson Park dedication ceremony – September 25, 2010



# How we got here

With all the changes, it is hard to remember the condition of the park in 2009.

Then



Now



- Office Building and Kitchen



Then



Now

Volunteers cleared the underbrush, fallen trees and paths in the historic area of the park.



# Benson Park Grand Opening

## Sept. 25, 2010



- Subcommittees of the Benson Park Committee 2009
  - Landscaping
  - Trails
  - Buildings
  - Volunteers
  - Photography
  - Dog Park
  - Landscape Adopt-A-Spot

- Friends of Benson Park (501c3 non-profit)



- FoBP's mission is to preserve the legacy of the once famous "Benson's Wild Animal Farm" by renovating the Elephant Barn at Benson Park, into a museum which will house memorabilia and provide educational opportunities to the community. FoBP will accomplish this mission through volunteerism, fundraising, and the promotion of Benson Park.

# **Benson Park**

Projects - Completed



# Projects - Completed

- Replaced roof on Gorilla Cage, A-Frame, Elephant Barn and Office.
- Installed temporary roofs on the Train Station and Kitchen
- Removed building attached to A-Frame

Then



Now



- Repaired and painted the Gorilla House



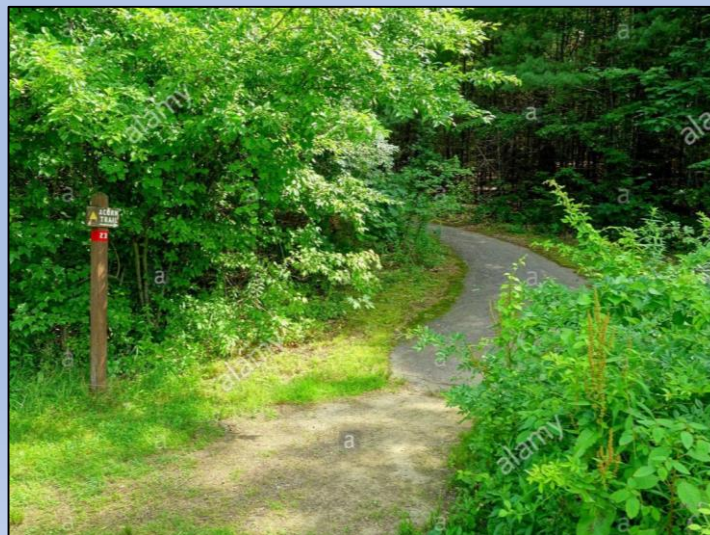
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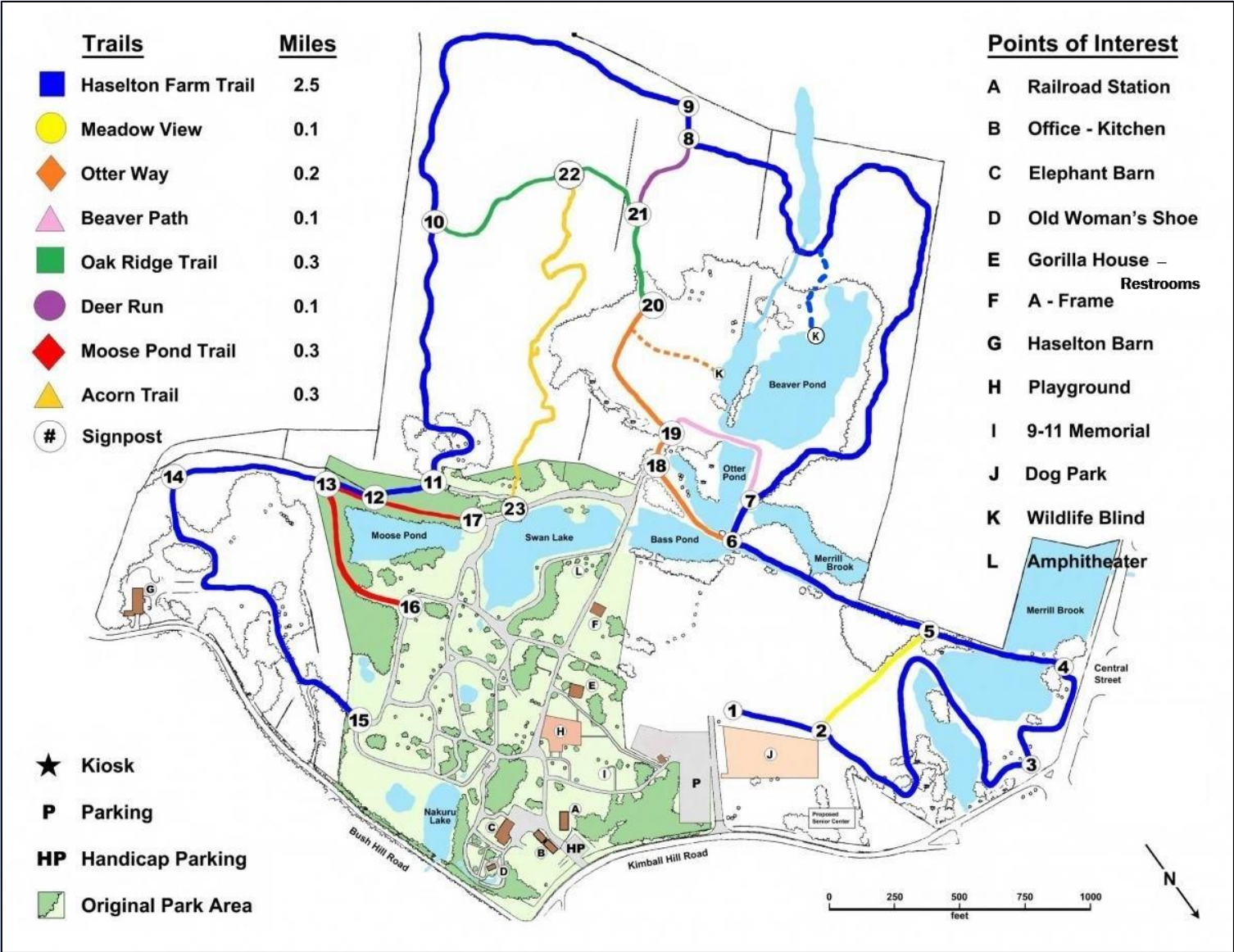
Now



- Trails and Trail Signs



# Trail Map



- Elephant Barn Restoration
  - Siding, painting, repair windows
  - Installed HVAC system
  - Built store

Then



Now



- Restored Cage at the Elephant Barn

Then



Now



- Repaired and painted the Old Shoe

Then



Now



- Train Station
  - Relocation and exterior restoration

Then



Now





- Parking Lot
  - Parking lot expanded to hold 177 vehicles
  - Park entrance kiosk designed and constructed



- Playground
- Cost of equipment taken from Recreation contributions from new home approvals
- Installation supported by volunteers

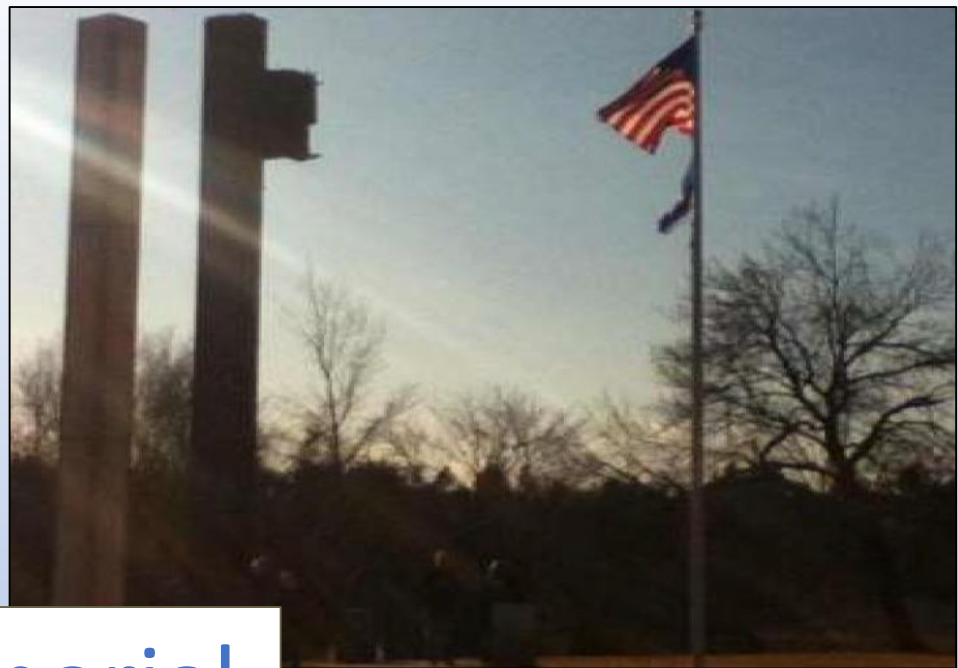


- Secured the Haselton Barn
  - Security measures taken to protect and preserve the barn



- 9-11 Memorial
  - Funds donated by members of the community
  - Hudson firefighters traveled to NYC to bring back a beam from the World Trade Center
  - Accelerated construction completed in time for dedication on 9/11/2011

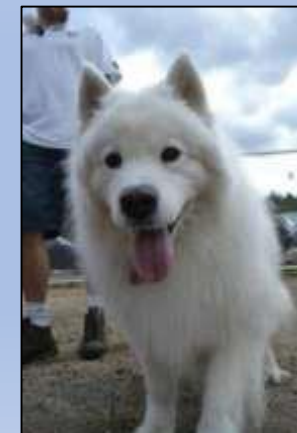




# 9-11 Memorial



- Dog Park
  - Non-profit group formed to design and build dog park
  - Dog park opened September, 2012



- Benches and Picnic Tables
  - Benches were a fundraiser for the Friends of Benson Park



- Bat Houses
  - Built and installed by Litchfield's Campbell High School Biology class in 2010





- Chestnut Tree Project
  - Eight chestnut seeds were planted as part of the American Chestnut Foundation effort to develop a resistant tree



- Restrooms
  - Restrooms are a great improvement to the park in 2019

Then



Now



- Mallory Gray Amphitheater



- Hudson Senior Center and HCTV Center



# Eagle Scout Projects - Completed

- Story Book Hill foot bridges



- Informational Kiosk
  - Former ticket booth

Then



Now



- Foot Bridge on the Haselton Farm Trail



- Gorilla House pathway





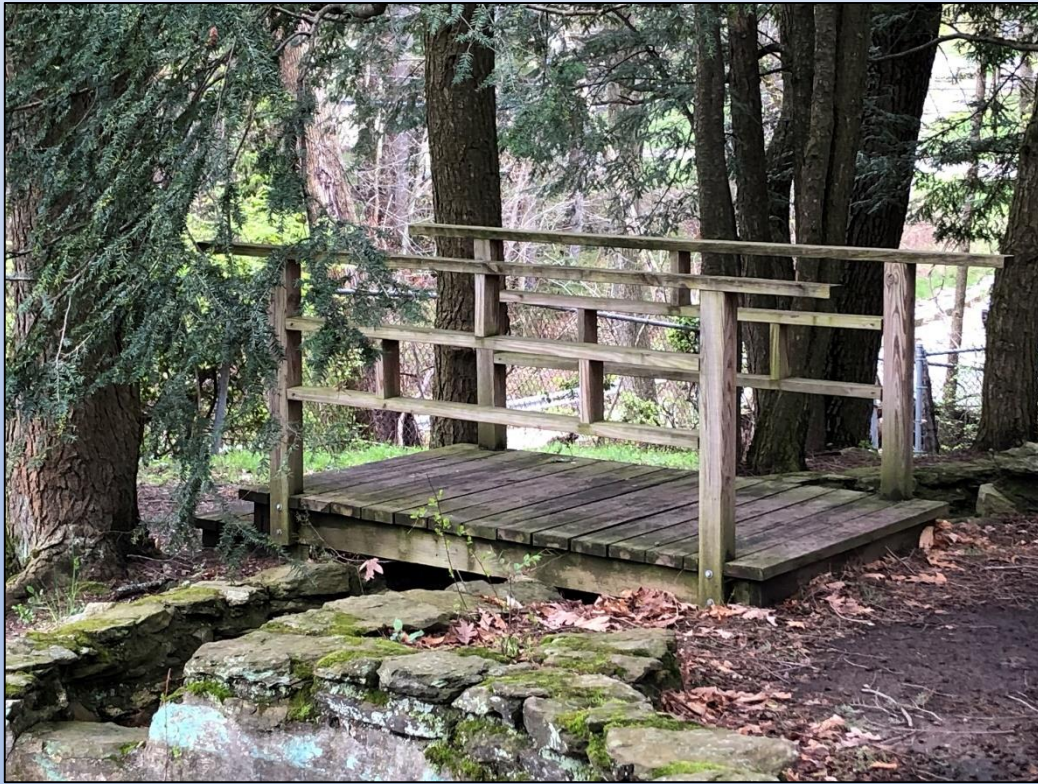
- Wildlife Blind 1



- Wildlife Blind 2



- Foot Bridge on Story Book Hill

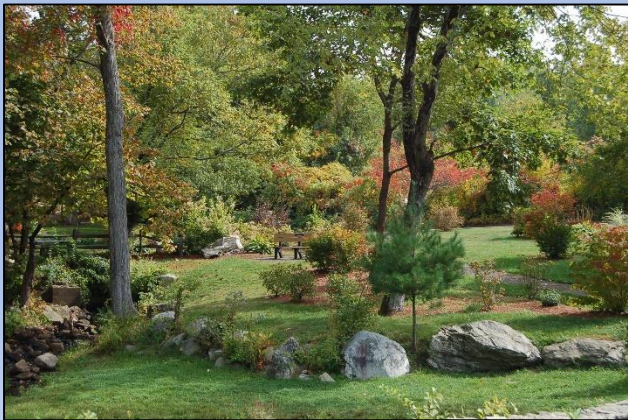


# **Benson Park**

Projects – in Progress

# Projects in Progress

- Landscape Adopt-A-Spot
  - About 30-35 landscape spots have been adopted.
  - Some are single person spots, some are family or group efforts.



- **Butterfly Garden**

- Sponsored by GFWC Hudson Women's Club
- Received 2<sup>nd</sup> place award for GFWC Community Improvement Project, NH



- The Elephant Barn



- Friends of Benson Park obtained a lease from the Town
  - Approved by voters at 2012 Town Election
- Intent is to turn it into a museum
- Fundraising continues and construction is underway

- Elephant Barn
  - Work continues on the future site of a park museum





- Office Building and Kitchen Stabilization
  - One of the 3 historic buildings – restoration will continue over several years.

Then



Now

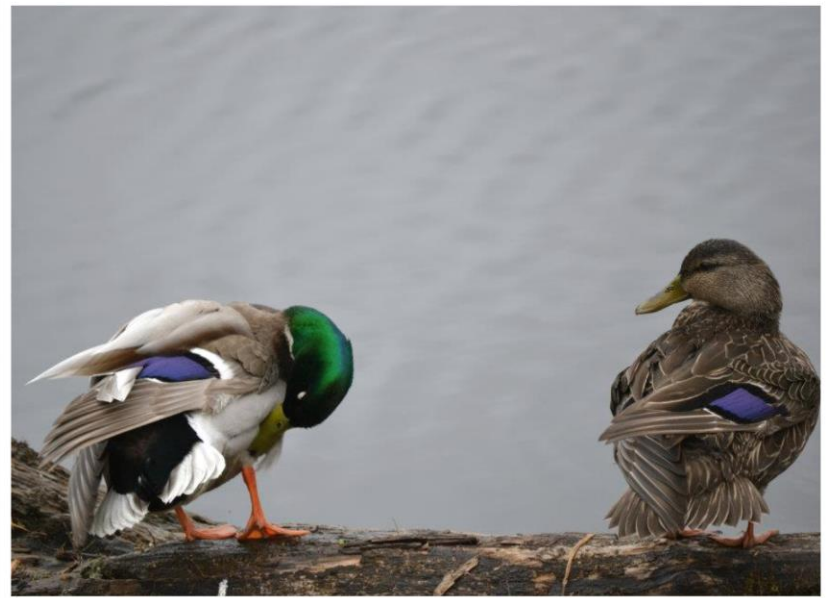


# Benson Park

Today

# Where are the animals?











Danielle Durocher

# Benson Park – Through the Seasons





# **Benson Park**

## Activities

# Fishing Derby



# Cage Concerts





# Volunteers



# Halloween



# Cardboard Sled Races



# Visit with Santa

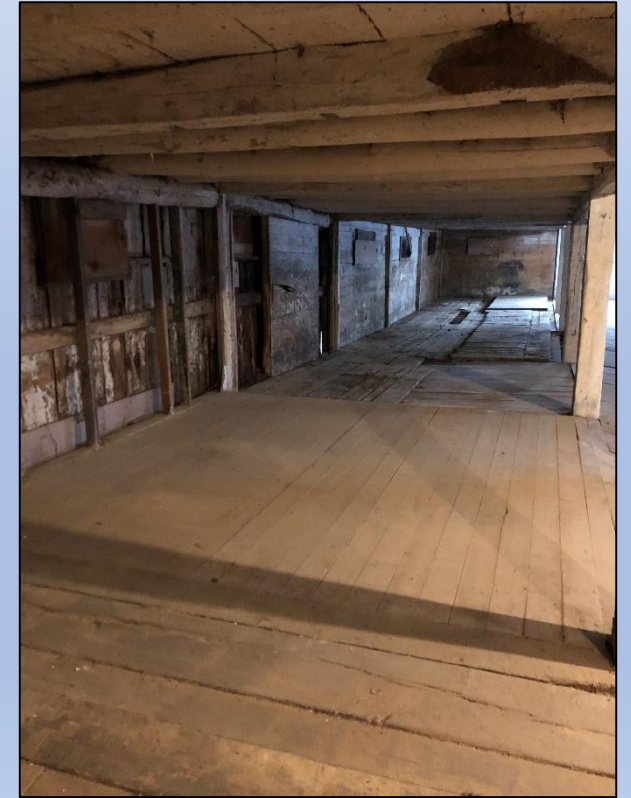
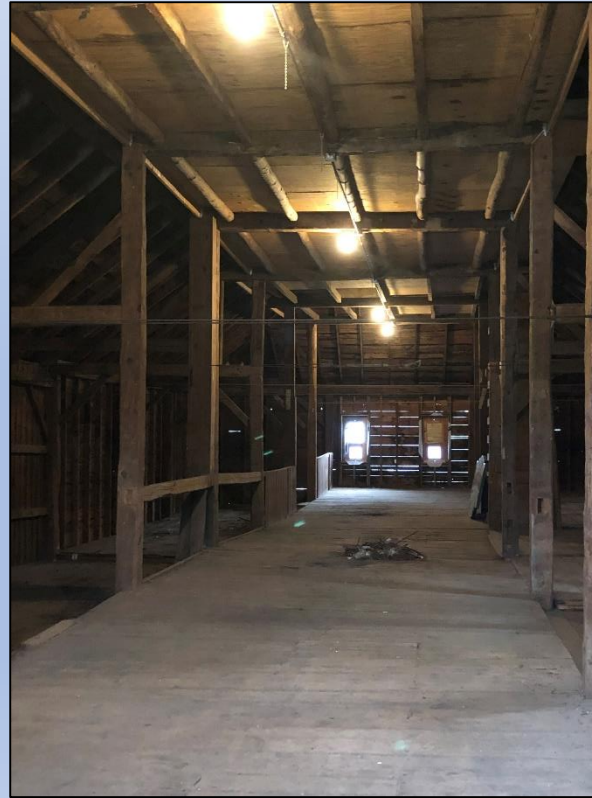


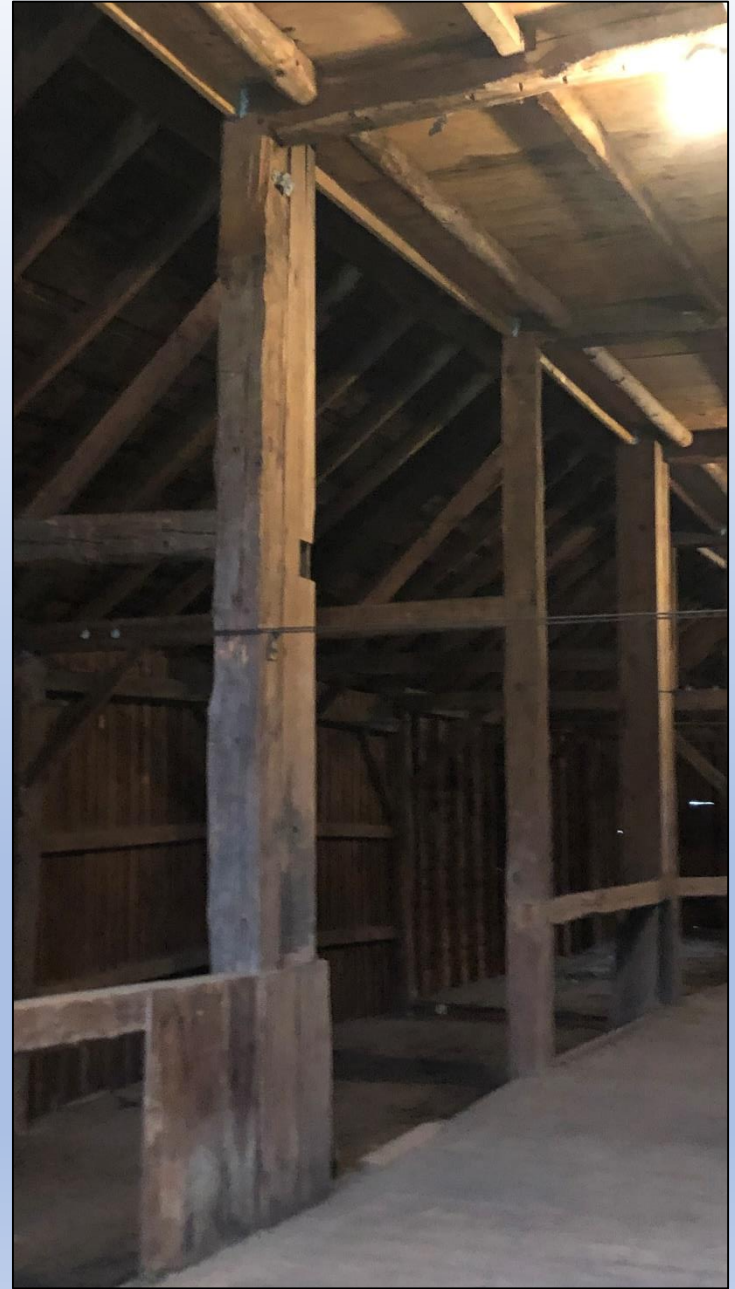
# **Benson Park**

Future Plans and Projects



- Haselton Barn
  - Currently needs preservation work to prevent further deterioration.





- Office Building and Kitchen
  - Restore clay tile roof on the kitchen
  - Replace temporary exterior wall on east side of kitchen
  - Repair and paint siding on the office
  - Reinstall bathroom in the office when sewer and water connections are available
  - Repair/replace interior walls and flooring
  - Repair or replace windows and doors



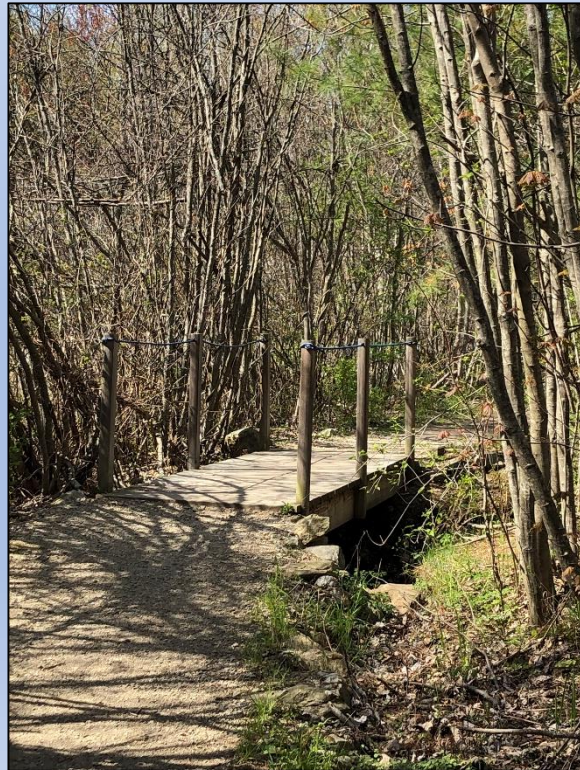
# Benson Park

More to see...

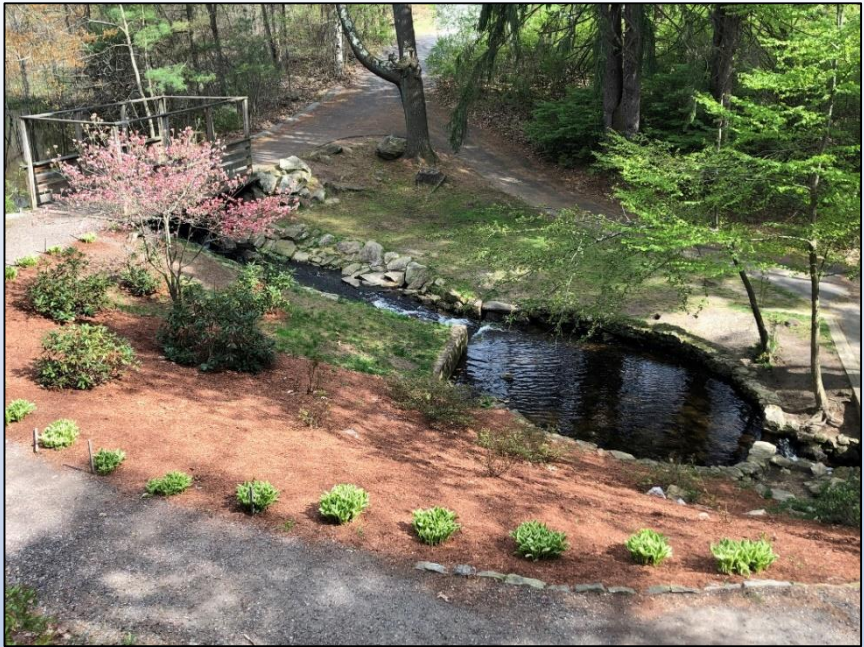


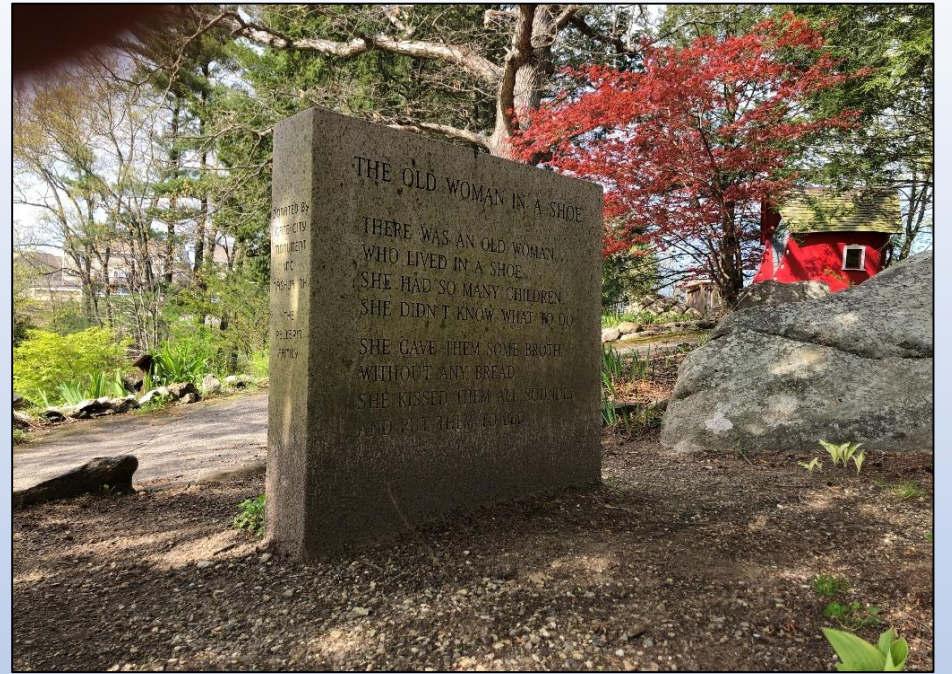














# Contacts

## Benson Park Committee

- <http://www.hudsonnh.gov/boards/bensons>

## Friends of Benson Park

- <http://www.friendsofbenson.org>

# Photo Credits

- A. Desrosiers
- P. Nichols
- P. Appler
- D. Morin
- D. Durocher
- and many more...