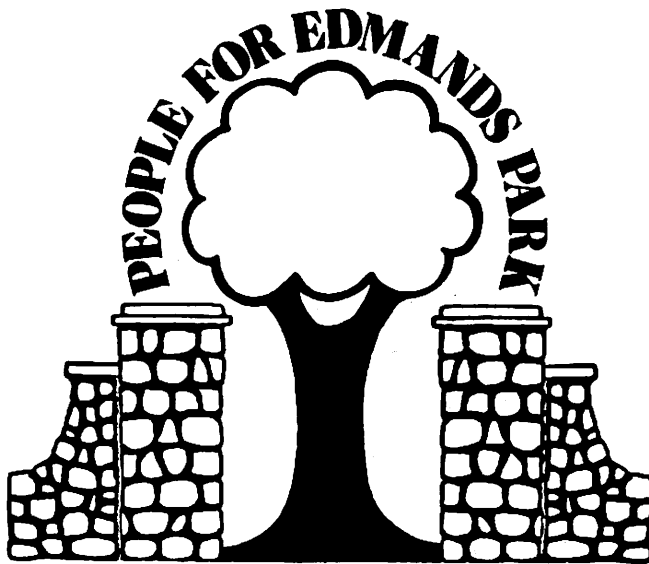


People for Edmands Park is a group of the Park's neighbors and others in the City who are interested in restoring the Park to its original state as a place of beauty and rest.



Edmands Park (also known as the Cabot Woods) is a 33-acre natural area donated to the City of Newton in 1913 by the estate of J. Wiley Edmands. It is one of the few real open spaces remaining in our community.

Its present condition can best be described as a combination of natural features and public neglect, as well as active abuse. If this pattern continues, Edmands Park will cease to exist as a park and will be transformed into an urban eyesore.

People for Edmands Park is a group of the Park's neighbors and others in the City who are interested in restoring the Park to its original state as a place of beauty and rest. We have attempted to bring together what is known of the land's history, its geology, its wildlife, and its present status, so that we can all act together to give Edmands Park life once more; this may be its last chance.

We are just beginning. We need to inform each other of the Park's past, and of future possibilities, before Edmands is covered by an avalanche of refuse.

At our open meeting on March 7, we will ask for your ideas. We will ask you to hear and speak to those City officials and representatives whose agencies or constituencies affect Edmands Park. We will ask you to join our strong young organization and lend your energies to the renewal of this stunning piece of land.

Come and make a commitment; it can only be to your benefit.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU MAY CONTACT

John and Tami Bliss	244-6495	Carol Gilson	244-1540
Sheila Brownstein	332-9880	Sam Huntington	965-5063
Bob Buxbaum	332-6548	Richard & Eleanor LeBovidge	332-2609
Bill and Ruth Dain	244-1158	Dave Peterson	965-0257

EDMANDS PARK

Physical Description

Edmands Park is a city-owned park located in Newtonville. It is bounded on the west by Blake Street, on the south by Mill Street, on the east by Boston College and Sacred Heart College, and on the north by back yards of residences fronting Blake, Rochester and Westchester Streets.

The park is over 33 acres. It is primarily wooded, with a shallow pond and associated marsh near the northern end, and a smaller wetland buried in the woods in the southeast corner. This southern wetland area is fed by a stormwater outfall from Blake Street. This outfall has caused considerable erosion as water runs down a sharp embankment to the wetland area.

The land form in the park is hilly, with one dominant ridge running north and south along most of the western edge of the park. This ridge is the remnant of an esker* left by glaciers. It originally extended beyond the northern boundary of the park to Cabot Street. A goodly portion of the esker was excavated and flattened, including an area in the northern part of Edmands Park that now serves as a parking lot. The lowland area east of the esker originally was part of a stream and wetland system that led down through Cabot Park, on along Jackson Street and into the Charles River. This system is largely culverted now.

*

An esker is a sinuous ridge of stratified gravels formed as a result of a water runoff channel or tunnel that develops in glacial ice. As the glacial runoff diminishes, gravels collect in the channel bed. The stratified gravel deposits comprise a sort of earth casting of the former shape of the channel and the sinuous line follows the channel's former course.

The prevailing character of the park remains wooded and natural although there have been a number of man-made physical improvements made. The park has a web of dirt and gravel paths and roads. The primary road through the park is Colby Street, which runs east/west from Blake Street to the Sacred Heart College, and splits the park roughly in half, north and south. There are also minimally passable vehicular roads through the southern half of the park, with a curb cut access to Blake Street. Another road runs north off Colby along the west side of the marsh and pond and connects to the parking lot which is served by a driveway and curb cut off Blake Street. In all, there are three points of vehicular access to the park off Blake Street and one from the Sacred Heart College.

Numerous footpaths and trails work off these dirt roads, including one trail along the esker's ridge line, and another path along the east edge of the pond and marsh which, along with the roads, completes a loop path circuit round the pond and marsh.

Other man-made elements in the park include a concrete dam, spillway and channel drawing water off the northern end of the pond, a wood deck bridge over the dam, a wall and chain link fence system along Blake and Mill Streets, and stonework foundation walls and chimneys of former log cabins along the path system.

The esker has created a gravelley soil that has favored oaks, but many other species of trees can be found in the park. There are also instances of goldenrod, wild flowers, and lady slipper. A variety of animals and birds have been sighted in the park at various times.

Historical Development

The earliest known records indicate that the park was part of a farm of over 500 acres owned by Jonathan Hyde in 1656. Hyde's farm extended south to Newton Center, where he deeded the Common to the City of Newton Center in about 1700.

This farm was later subdivided. A city map of 1895 indicated that there were 16 acres of land owned by A. Lawrence Edmands within the original Hyde farm boundary. James H. Young owned two parcels totalling 26 acres along the east side of Blake Street. These parcels became a part of the park when it was given to the City of Newton by the trustees of Edmands estate in 1913. Mr. Edmands or his estate apparently bought these two parcels after 1895.

The parkland was sold to the City of Newton on February 13, 1913 for \$1.00, with conditions that the park be used for park, parkway and playground purposes. These conditions were set by the trustees of the Edmands Estate, who wanted the city to have this land for park use in memory of J. Wiley Edmands, who was a public minded financier and businessman. The deed also states that the City of Newton was not required to spend any money for development and improvement of the park.

This non-requirement was apparently faithfully followed until 1934-1935, when WPA labor, funded jointly by Newton and the federal government, affected several improvements. The pond was created by excavating a basin and creating a clay bottom, building a concrete dam, spillway and water channel. A bridge was built across the dam. Paths were improved and created. A log cabin structure with stone fireplace and foundation was erected, the stone wall and fence system along Blake Street installed, and various cement picnic seats and picnic areas were built. WPA crews also created the parking lot area, and may have excavated and flattened and removed the esker itself in order to install their work.

The WPA project of 1934 and 1935 constitutes the only major improvements made to the park except for the installation of a polyethylene pond liner in 1973. This liner replaced the pond's original clay bottom that would no longer hold water. Most of the WPA improvements still have visible traces in deteriorated forms. The picnic seats are completely gone, and the log cabin is now only marked by the stonework chimney and foundation walls, but the wall and fence system, pond, dam, spillway and water channel, path and road system are still evident and functioning.

The subsequent history of the park from 1935 onward is marked by the rapid destruction of the log cabins and picnic seats through vandalism, illegal dumping and burning, intermittent reports and plans on how to best use and improve the park, periodic citizen group interest and cleanup operations and nature studies.

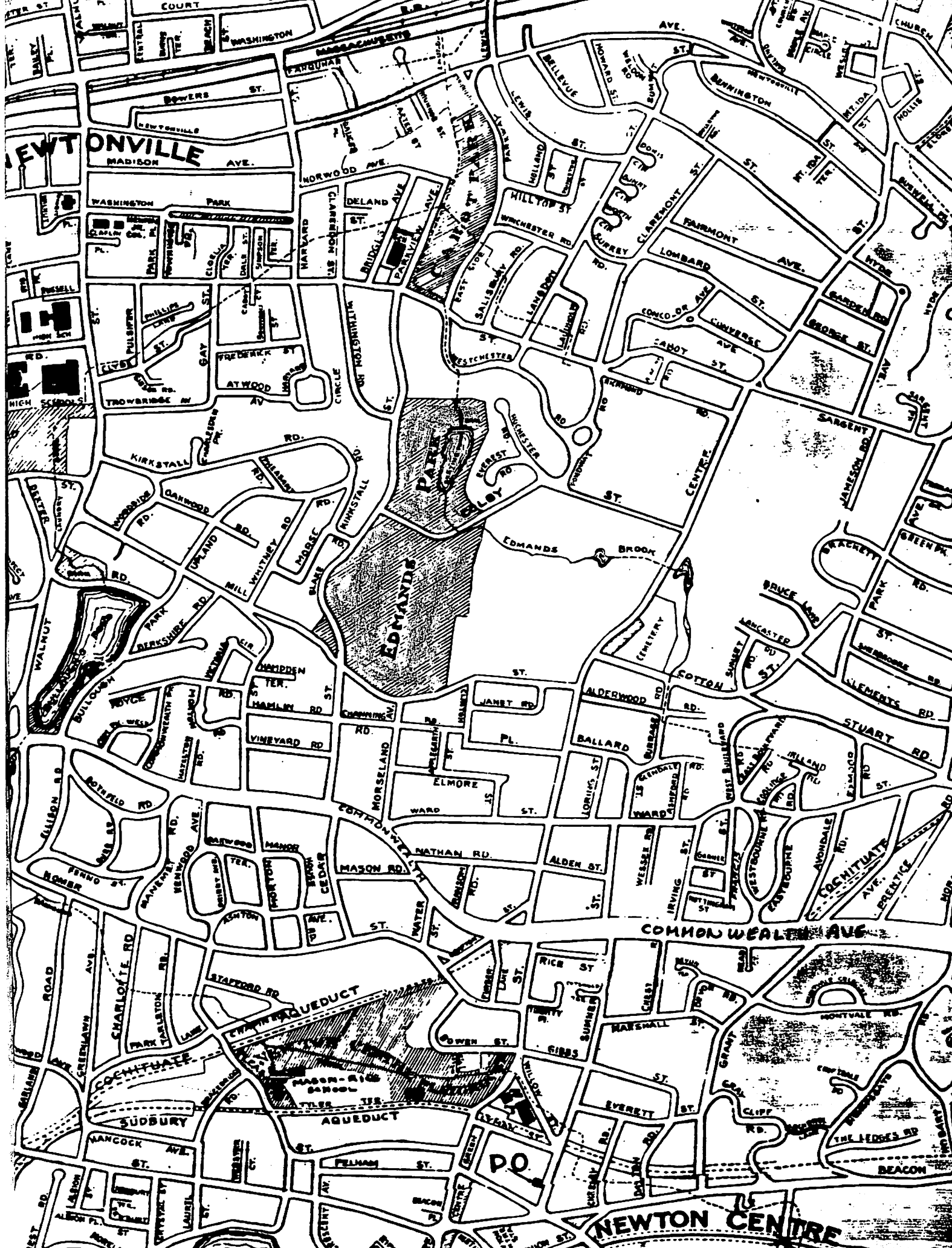
Notable among the reports and plans were Dr. Vinal's report in 1952 proposing a broad base of interest in the park for naturalistic interpretation, and another report (date and author unknown) indicating a conservationist function for the park, replete with a naturalist-caretaker, headquarters building, and many varied programs.

A good deal of citizen interest in the park was generated in 1960. A survey was made, a tour led by Dr. Vinal, and a discussion group formed. This led to cleanup operations in 1961 and 1962, with some tree planting being done at that time. Other cleaning operations have occurred before and after the efforts of 1961 and 1962. There have also been efforts to obtain funds for park improvements. The park has been used for nature studies and observation by the schools. Mark Hauser's school project description of plant species in the park is a summation of the major vegetation found there.

Today the park is primarily used in the winter for skating, sledding, cross country skiing and snow shoeing. Strolling, jogging, dog walking, bird watching and casual nature study take place throughout the year. Illegal dumping and burning continue to blight the park.

The park remains largely natural in character, with signs of public neglect and abuse. This would appear to describe its condition over the past 30 years.

Park Description and Historical Summary
prepared by David H. Peterson for
People for Edmands Park,
January 1979



NEWTONVILLE

EDMUNDS PARK

COMMON WEALTH AVE

NEWTON CENTRE

WASHINGTON PARK

HIGH SCHOOLS

WALNUT

GULLSON RD

ROBERTSON RD

COCHITUATE

MANCOCK AVE

KIRKSTALL RD

WALNUT

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