



**Udalls Cove  
Preservation  
Committee, Inc.**

Founded 1969  
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A 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt  
Organization

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**1st Vice President**  
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**2nd Vice President**  
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**Recording Secretary**  
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***The Year in Review***

COVID has restricted what many of us do in our daily lives, but it hasn't kept UCPC from pursuing our "CPR" mission: the **C**onservation, **P**reservation and **R**estoration of the remaining undeveloped wetlands and woodlands in the Udalls Cove watershed. Here's what's been keeping us busy during the past year:

**April 17, 2021:** Over 70 volunteers turned out for our 2021 cleanup, and filled a 30-cubic yard dumpster to the very top. It was particularly nice to see all the



young people -- from little children to high school students -- who helped out!

**May 1, 2021:** We extracted FOUR shopping carts and an orange traffic cone from Aurora Pond, all dumped during the previous few weeks. The carts are heavy, so it took some effort to lift them over the railing to drop them into the pond.

Getting them out

wasn't easy either, but we were successful. Three of the carts were from Stop-and-Shop (now sadly closed), and were returned to the store. The fourth cart was an archaeological relic from Grand Union (which has been gone for more than 20 years).

**June 13, 2021:** We planted an 18-foot tall Princeton American Elm tree in the Aurora Pond section of Udalls Cove Park, near the western entry at the foot of Little Neck Road. The Princeton American Elm is a true native variety that is naturally resistant to Dutch Elm Disease (which during the 20th century killed most of America's elms). *Thanks to Jayden Rodriguez, Daniel Savage and Jim Cella for help with the planting!*



*(Continued on page 4)*





## *The Year in Review, Continued*

**June 19, 2021:** After several weeks of work, we finished placing fresh wood chips over more than 450 linear feet of the west end of the Old Oak Pond trail. The pond lies between Douglaston Parkway and the Douglaston Golf Driving Range. The west end of the trail connects to the parking lot of the driving range; the east end of the trail is at the Joe Hellmann Overlook on Douglaston Parkway.



**July 5, 2021:** Our first Girl Scout project! Samantha Palmadessa worked with UCPC on her Gold Award project, the top award for a Girl Scout. She researched and wrote about invasive species. Later in the year she gave presentations about what she learned to several local groups including the Douglaston Civic Association, the Westmoreland Association and the Little Neck-Douglaston Lions Club. But on this day she put what she learned into practice. At the north end of the Ravine section of Udalls Cove Park, near the LIRR embankment, Samantha removed a number of invasive Japanese Knotweed plants, and planted eight native Silver Maple saplings. Also called Swamp Maples, these trees are happy to live in low-lying, moist woodland areas, exactly the conditions in this location. The saplings Samantha planted are about four feet tall. The previous summer Samantha “girdled” some 25 invasive Norway Maple trees in a nearby section of the park, so as to allow native trees more space to thrive. UCPC has worked with many Boy Scouts over the years, and we're delighted to now have Samantha as the first Girl Scout to have done a project with us!



**During the Summer of 2021:** We worked to keep the trails open throughout Udalls Cove Park and in the Doug-Bay and Old Oak Pond sections of Alley Pond Park. Our network of trails totals about a mile long, though they are located in seven separate, unconnected areas (*see the trail map on Page 7*). The vegetation along the trails grows quickly, and needs to be trimmed back several times during the season, or the trails become unpassable.

**September 1-2, 2021:** Hurricane Ida brought intense rain, flooding, and severe tragedy to the New York/New Jersey area. Some 45 people lost their lives, and the homes of many more were devastated. Though trivial by comparison, our little park also suffered damage. A number of trees came down, a few of them blocking the trails. A staggering amount of garbage was washed into Gabler's Creek and Aurora Pond. The photo at right shows the rubbish that we extracted a couple of weeks after the storm. The haul included two bicycles, a power lawnmower, a weed whacker, four garbage cans (and all their contents), innumerable plastic bottles and plastic bags, and even a large plastic Santa Claus figure. A lot of the debris had gotten stuck near the culvert under the railroad, causing the creek to back up into the Ravine on the south side of the tracks. Large amounts of sand were also washed down the creek during the storm, creating dams in several parts of the creek, and creating a sandbar on the south side of Aurora Pond.





## The Year in Review, Continued



**October 31, 2021:** We had a great time at the Zion Church Halloween Drive-Through event! At least 300 children passed by and got a treat (not a trick) at our table. We enjoyed their costumes, and they enjoyed ours!

**November 5, 2021:** UCPC Board Member and intrepid sailor Tom Holman observed a pod of up to 20 dolphins swimming in Little Neck Bay!

**Other Exciting Wildlife News:** With increasing frequency, bald eagles are being seen in our area. Like their cousins the ospreys, the eagles hunt fish. During 2021 the Little Neck Bay area had a record 5 active osprey nests, with a 6<sup>th</sup> nest nearby in Whitestone.



Photo by Peter Reinharz  
at Flushing Meadows Park

Bald eagles and ospreys are one of the great wildlife comeback stories of the past half century. In 1962, Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring" was published. It referred to a springtime in the not-too-distant future that would be silent because no birds would sing -- the birds would have died because of the rampant use of DDT and other pesticides. Her book sparked the modern environmental movement.



Photo by Steve Rossi  
Osprey over Little Neck Bay

When Carson wrote that book there were only 417 nesting pairs of bald eagles left in the lower 48 states; and osprey populations worldwide had plummeted 90%. Today there are 71,400 nesting pairs, and an estimated 316,700 individual bald eagles; and ospreys are thriving. The key to the successful recovery of both eagles and ospreys was the 1972 ban on the use of DDT imposed by the newly-created U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The pesticide bio-accumulated up through the food chain and caused the birds' egg shells to become too thin, so they would break before the chicks could hatch.

**November 20, 2021:** With the help of Bruce Stuart, Mike Chin, and the NYC Parks Department we finished clearing trees that had fallen across our trails during the previous months. The large white oak tree seen in the adjoining photo had stood near what is now Aurora Pond for about 210 years; it died about 10 years ago. We also cleared a large oak that came down during Hurricane Ida across a trail near the Douglaston Firehouse. And in January 2022 a huge willow tree fell across the Aurora Pond trail; we're grateful that the Parks Department cleared that one.



Eagle Scout Candidate  
Adnan Khan



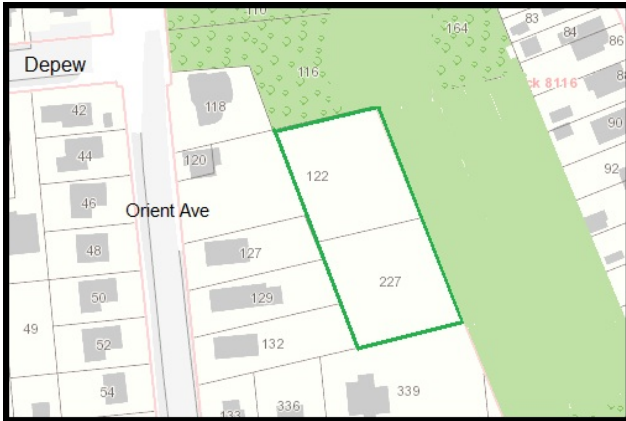
**December 19, 2021:** Eagle Scout candidate Adnan Khan and his crew of 25 workers built about 550 linear feet of new trail in the Old Oak Pond section of Alley Pond Park. Starting from where the existing trail reached a dead end on the west side of the pond, the new section of trail loops up and over a small ridge, and then drops back down to rejoin the existing trail. (See the map on Page 7.) The Old Oak Pond trails can be reached either from Douglaston Parkway at the Joe Hellmann Overlook, or from the east end of the Douglaston Golf Driving Range parking lot.

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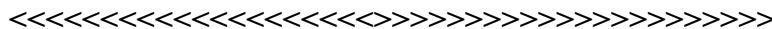
## *The Year in Review, Concluded*

**January 2, 2022:** We did some much needed repairs to the split rail fence along the park boundary near the Douglaston Firehouse. This was our first rail fence, installed some 20 years ago. A few of the posts and rails rot away each year, and piece by piece we are replacing them with rot-resistant lumber.

**February 2022:** We've continued our two-year long effort to encourage the New York City Parks Department to acquire two privately owned lots within the designated boundary of Udalls Cove Park. The lots, outlined on the map below, are in the Ravine sec



Boulevard to the Long Island Railroad, between Douglaston on the west and Little Neck on the east. These two lots are among the five or six parcels within the Ravine that remain in private ownership, nearly 40 years after the City agreed to add this area to the park. We believe that the appropriated funds currently available to the Parks Department will be sufficient to acquire the two parcels, and we believe the current owner of the parcels is willing to sell. Of course, the key question will be the price. The City must first perform an appraisal of the fair market value of the parcels. In February, as this newsletter was being finalized, we were told that the appraisal process is almost complete.



## *Big News for Big Rock ... and the Long Island Sound!*

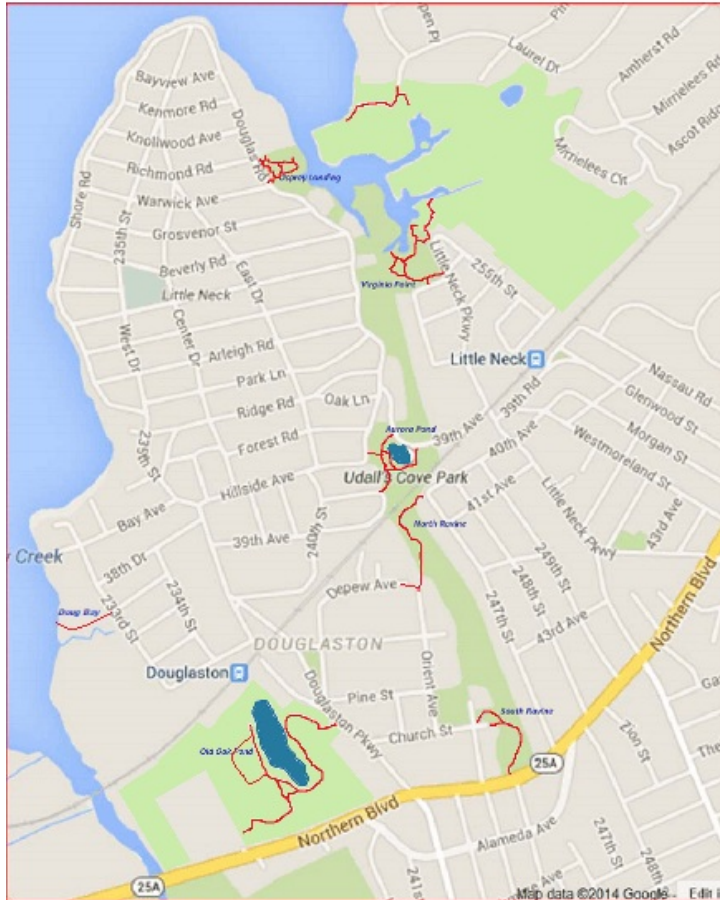
Kudos to our friends at the Douglas Manor Environmental Association! In December, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation announced award of 39 new grants totaling \$5.4 million for projects to improve the Long Island Sound. **The largest single grant – \$604,461 – is for construction of Phase I of DMEA’s project to restore the marsh and establish a natural shoreline along Douglas Manor’s Memorial Field and north to “Big Rock,”** the large glacial erratic that sits just offshore at the Point. The project will reduce erosion from storms and engage the local community, public schools, and university students in environmental stewardship. DMEA has been working on the Big Rock project since 2014. A \$120,000 grant from New York secured in 2018 by former State Senator Tony Avella funded the professional design of the project. The recipient of the new grant is ***Save the Sound***, which will manage the project in partnership with DMEA. We at UCPC were delighted to voice our enthusiastic support for this grant application. The coming year will be spent in getting additional grant funding to cover the \$750,000 cost of Phase I, securing permits from various regulatory agencies, and selecting a contractor. Phase I construction is expected to begin in 2023.



The total cost for all phases of the Big Rock project is \$2.1 million. We're optimistic that DMEA and Save the Sound will succeed in securing additional grants in subsequent years. On February 16 the U.S. EPA announced that under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill passed in November there will be **\$106 million in new funding for Long Island Sound restoration and climate resilience projects** over the next five years. That's in *addition* to the **\$30+ million** in regular annual appropriations for the Sound – up from just \$3-\$4 million in 2017!



## ***EXPLORE YOUR PARK!***



During the past 20+ years we've built or rehabilitated over a mile of trails (*shown on the adjacent map*) across the various sections of Udalls Cove Park, and the nearby Doug-Bay and Old Oak Pond sections of Alley Pond Park. (Old Oak Pond, one of our community's hidden treasures, lies between Douglaston Parkway and the Golf Driving Range.)

There are foot-bridges to cross streams, and wooden walkways over several perpetually muddy trail areas.

Take a stroll, bring the kids, walk the dog, admire the wild flowers, do some bird watching, snap a few photos, or just enjoy the scenery!

**You can also find this trail map on our website, along with narrative descriptions of the various sections of the park and information about how to see and enjoy them:**

**<https://www.udallscove.org/map-and-trails>**

### ***Going ... Going ... Gone!***

By the time you read this, the 16-month-long project to replace the outfall pipe for the Belgrave Sewage Treatment Plant should be finished. The final step in the project is removal of the dilapidated concrete structure with the daisies (or sunflowers?) painted on it, visible from Douglas Manor's Memorial Field. The unsightly structure has been there since the original discharge pipe was installed in the 1930s. The old cast iron pipe was leaking and rusting away. The new pipe was installed underground, about 40-50 feet below the bottom of Udalls Cove. It curves down from the Belgrave plant located east of Virginia Point, and then curves back up to a spot about 850 feet north of the Douglas Manor Point, where the cleaned wastewater is discharged. The old pipe will be left in place so as not to disturb the marsh. But removal of the concrete structure, along with the last 140 feet of pipe extending from the shoreline to the structure, was required under the permit issued by New York State, as UCPC had requested.



# The Udalls Cove Preservation Committee ...



... working since 1969 to conserve, preserve and restore the wetlands and woodlands in the Udalls Cove watershed.

Join our 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Cleanup  
on Saturday, April 9, 2022 – Details inside!

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