The 54th Annual Meeting and
Shoreline/Wetlands/Woodlands Cleanup of the
Udalls Cove Preservation Committee
will be held starting at 10 AM on
Saturday, April 29, 2023

Meet on the Back Road (Sandhill Road), west of the Little Neck LIRR station. We will provide trash bags, work gloves and maps advising where you can spend a productive hour or two collecting trash.
Then stay for the free picnic lunch at Memorial Field!

<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

The Return of our Anual Meeting/Cleanup/Picnic!

The 54th Annual Meeting and Shoreline/Wetlands/Woodlands Cleanup of the Udalls Cove Preservation Committee (UCPC) will be held on Saturday, April 29 starting at 10 AM. This will mark a return to our long-standing pre-COVID tradition of starting with a short meeting to let you know what we've been up to, followed by our annual cleanup, followed by a free picnic lunch for all our volunteers at Douglas Manor's Memorial Field.

We've had successful cleanups each year during the pandemic, but we have held our annual meetings virtually over Zoom, and we suspended our picnic lunch. This year we will put them all together again. (Participants are encouraged to take precautions they deem appropriate, including masking and maintaining social distance.)

We appreciate the steadfast support we've had from our members during the past three pandemic years, and we hope to see many of you in person at the Cleanup this year!

Turn the page for updates about UCPC's efforts to promote ***CPR*** – ***C***onservation, ***P***reservation and ***R***estoration – for the natural areas in and around our community!

Udalls Cove Preservation Committee, Inc.
Founded 1969
251-31 42nd Avenue
Little Neck, NY 11363

718-224-7256
udallscove@aol.com
www.udallscove.org
Facebook.com/UdallsCove

A 501(c)(3) Tax Exempt Organization

OFFICERS:

Walter Mugdan
President
Bruce Stuart
1st Vice President
Pat St. John
2nd Vice President
Karen Dinegar
Recording Secretary
Junko Savage
Treasurer

DIRECTORS:

Nancy Barthold
Gloria Bodie
James Cella
Christopher DeGeorge
John Duane
Aline Euler
Thomas Holman
Jeanne McCullagh
Effie Missoulis
Junko Savage
Peter Segal
Doug Sloan
Cecilia Venosta
Jerry Vilbig

Past Presidents:

Aurora Gareiss †
Doug MacKay †
Ralph Kamhi †

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!

facebook.com/UdallsCove

EVEN BIGGER NEWS for BIG ROCK!

Last year, in our 2022 newsletter, we congratulated our friends at the Douglas Manor Environmental Association (DMEA) on the successful launch of their ambitious project to restore the marsh and establish 800 feet of natural shoreline for Udalls Cove from Douglas Manor's Memorial Field north to "Big Rock," the large glacial erratic that sits just offshore at the Point.

A year ago we reported that *Save the Sound*, the well respected organization with which DMEA has been partnering, secured two federal grants totaling $904,461 towards the cost of Phase 1 of the two-phase project. **This year we are delighted to report that *Save the Sound* secured a further grant of *$2.38 MILLION* towards Phase 2 of the project!** The combined grants are closing in on the $4.2 million needed to complete the project.

The new funding was announced on Dec. 6, 2022 by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Big Rock Project is one of 88 projects nationwide for which $136 million in grant funding was announced that day. The projects are designed to help communities prepare for increasing coastal flooding and more intense storms due to global climate change, while improving thousands of acres of coastal habitats.

DMEA has been working on the Big Rock project since 2014.The project will include native salt marsh restoration and bio-engineered stabilization techniques to prevent shoreline erosion, particularly along the steep sections north of Memorial Field. Three acres of salt marsh will be restored; and 0.14 acres of oyster habitat will be created through installation of oyster castles – interlocking blocks typically made from a blend of concrete and oyster shells, that create a surface for juvenile oysters to grow on. They also help reduce wave intensity, further protecting the salt marsh and the shoreline. The project will reduce erosion from storms and engage the local community, public schools, and university students in environmental stewardship.

The Udalls Cove Preservation Committee (UCPC) voiced enthusiastic support for these grant applications. Some of the grants require matching funds; UCPC is partnering with DMEA to raise those funds. During the coming year *Save the Sound* will be working to select a contractor to carry out the project, and secure the necessary permits from various regulatory agencies. Phase I construction is expected to begin in 2024. ***BRAVO TO DMEA on this extraordinary accomplishment!***

The Udalls Cove Preservation Committee NEEDS YOU!

☛ Please attend our brief Annual Meeting and OUR 54TH ANNUAL CLEANUP at 10 AM on Saturday, April 29, 2023.

Meet at the "Back Road" near Aurora Pond, west of the Little Neck Railroad Station, and we'll provide trash bags, work gloves, and maps suggesting where to work.

After the cleanup, stay for the free picnic lunch at Memorial Field in Douglas Manor!

❦ And please send your membership contribution today! ❦

<<

The Past Year in Review

April 12, 2022: Just three days after our 2022 Cleanup, the old concrete structure with the painted daisies (or were they sunflowers?) was finally removed from the head of Udalls Cove, where it had stood for more than 85 years. Its removal was the last step in the 16-month-long project to replace the outfall pipe for the Belgrave Sewage Treatment Plant. 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. Most of the old pipe was left in place so as not to disturb the marsh over which it runs. 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.

Photo by Elana Mugdan

May, 2022: The Seatuck Environmental Association, in cooperation with the Long Island Sound Study, sponsored a "citizen science" project to determine the presence of American eels in Gabler's Creek. The previous year Seatuck, in collaboration with the NYC Parks Department, studied the suitability of the creek and Aurora Pond as habitat for eels, River herring (also called Alewife) and otters. One purpose of the study was to determine whether it would be worthwhile to install a fish ladder below the outlet of the pond to enable herring to move up from the creek into the pond. The good news is that our citizen scientists, as well as the Seatuck scientists, documented quite a number of baby eels (called elvers) in the creek, just below the pond outlet. The Seatuck scientists also found evidence of the presence of an otter (probably a transient) on the Great Neck side of Udalls Cove. The bad news is that the water quality of Aurora Pond is inadequate to support River herring, so construction of a fish ladder is not warranted. The biggest issue is phosphate levels, which were found to be well above the preferred range for herring. The high levels of phosphates are the result of excess fertilizer running off from residential lawns. Excess fertilizer is also responsible for the algae blooms that are frequent on Aurora Pond during the warmer months. *[Photos show Seatuck scientists taking water quality samples in Aurora Pond (right) and upstream in Gablers Creek (above left).]*

May 16 & 21, 2022: We extracted two large pieces of plastic debris – one from the middle of Udalls Cove and the other from the shoreline on the west side of the Douglaston peninsula. The only way to reach the one in the Cove was to walk through the 6-inch deep mud at dead low tide, then roll it end-over-end to the shoreline. Both items had to be cut up with a chain saw in order to carry the pieces up to street level. Our friends from the NYC Parks Department took all the pieces away for disposal.

The Year in Review, Continued

August 2, 2022: For years the garbage dumpster at the Douglaston Firehouse was far too small, and in very bad condition *(photo on left)*. The result was that a lot of trash found its way into the adjacent Udalls Cove Park. Earlier in 2022 we wrote to City Councilmember Vickie Paladino asking her to help secure a new dumpster, and it arrived in early August. We had asked that the new dumpster be larger, with heavier covers so the raccoons would be less likely to get in. Those requests were honored *(photo on right)*, and we thank our friends at the Firehouse, the FDNY, and Councilwoman Paladino.

September 11, 2022: During wind storms, two trees fell across trails in Udalls Cove Park – one near Aurora Pond, the other in the Virginia Point section of the park. As part of our continuing efforts to keep the trails open and accessible, we cut away the sections of the fallen trees blocking the trails. We use a powerful battery-operated chain saw to clear the fallen trees, and a battery-operated 20-inch hedge trimmer to clear excess vegetation from the sides of the trails. Each trail needs to be cleared of excess growth about three times during the growing season.

October, 2022: THANKS to UCPC Board member Jim Cella for his great work to reinforce and stabilize the wooden steps leading down from Depew Avenue to Orient Avenue, near the North Ravine trail in Udalls Cove Park. The steps were installed by Eagle Scout John Palmadessa in December 2019, and they receive lots of use. Heavy rains had washed out some of the soil underneath the steps. Jim packed stone chips under and around the steps *(photo at right)*. They look great, and have withstood even the heaviest rainstorms!

October 15, 2022: Lefteri Kapnisakis completed his Eagle Scout project: installation of 10 hand-made swallow nest boxes *(photo at left)*. Mounted on metal poles, the boxes are about seven feet above the ground. The boxes have a hinged side, so they can be cleaned out at the end of the nesting season. Lefteri and his work crew installed six boxes in the Doug Bay section of Alley Pond Park, just west of 233rd Street. The other four boxes were installed on the shores of Udalls Cove, across the water from the Osprey Landing section of Udalls Cove Park. Lefteri is a member of Scout Troop 268. His was the 23rd Eagle Scout project hosted by UCPC ... read on to learn about #24 (and #25 is scheduled for Spring 2023).

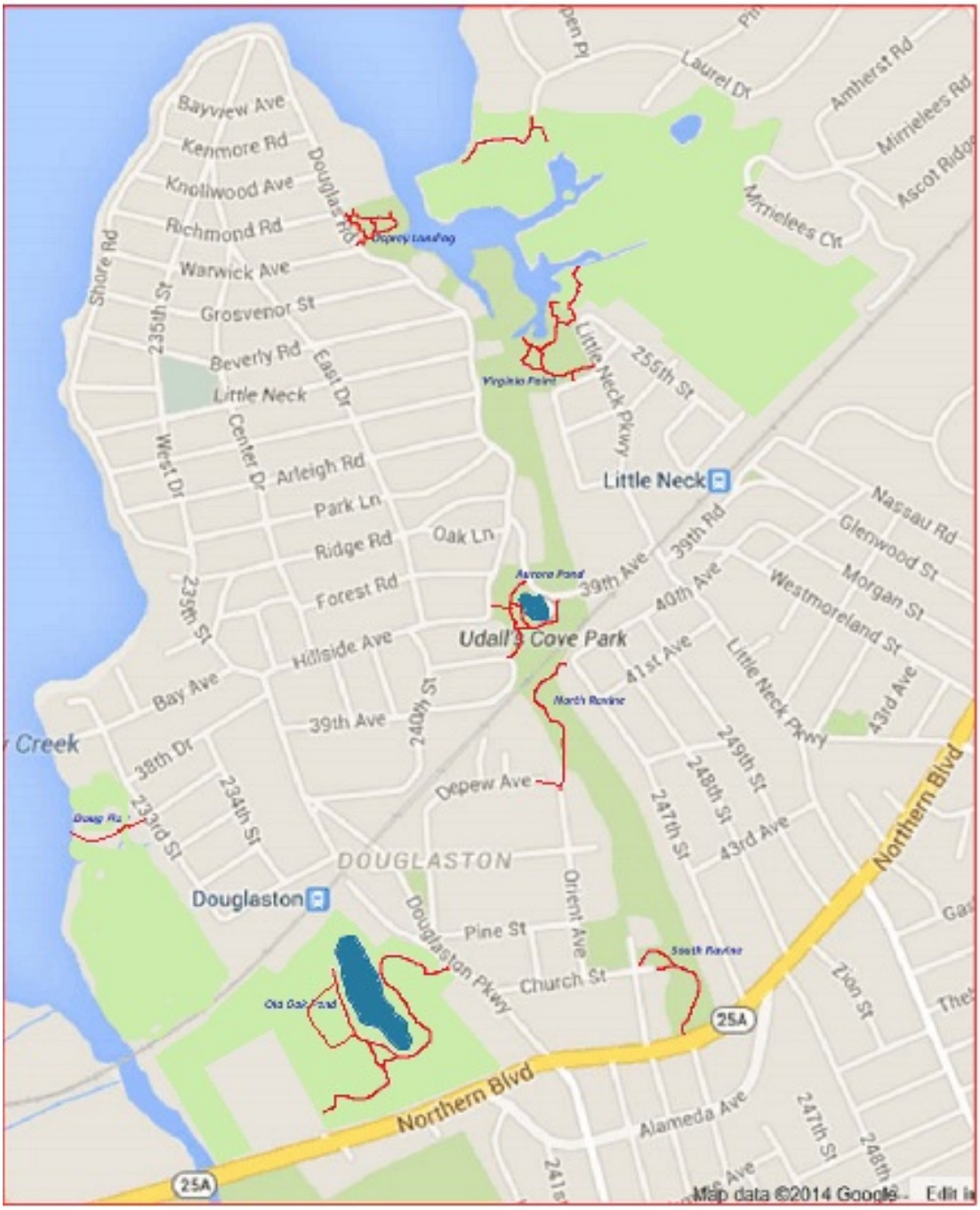
The Year in Review, Continued

November 13, 2002: Brady Bosse of Troop 71 completed his Eagle Scout project, installing nearly 33 feet of wooden walkway across a stretch of trail in the Virginia Point section of Udalls Cove Park. A small stream running just to the south of the walkway made this area of trail perpetually muddy. His crew of about a dozen scouts and a few adults also spread a thick layer of fresh wood chips over some 330 linear feet of trail. Because the trail bends here, Brady's two 16-foot sections of walkway needed to meet at a 10-degree angle. Cutting the pieces of wood to provide this angle was an interesting challenge. The prep work was done off-site a week earlier – all the pieces were cut, pilot holes were drilled, and the underlying frames of the two sections of walkway were assembled. On installation day, the frames and the loose decking boards were carried in by the crew, and the boards were screwed to the frames on-site. Brady's was the 24th Eagle Scout project hosted by UCPC; the 25th is scheduled for Spring, 2023 and will involve a further extension of this walkway over the remainder of the muddy portion of trail.

December 18, 2022: We are trying to protect the South Ravine portion of Udalls Cove Park, adjacent to the Douglaston Firehouse, from excessive salt spreading during snow-and-ice conditions. With the support of the NYC Parks Department, we designed, purchased and installed two "NO SALT" signs along the short extension of Church Street (formerly 44th Avenue) that runs adjacent to the north side of the Firehouse towards the parking area in the back. Just north of the roadway, Udalls Cove Park slopes steeply downhill towards Gabler's Creek. Though it is increasingly rare for us to have snow and ice, when we do have those conditions (or even when we *might* have them) the spreaders typically drop large amounts of salt, which is then washed into the park when the snow melts. The salt severely damages the park vegetation. We communicated with the Sanitation Department, the Fire Department and, of course, the Parks Department. (In fact, the segment of road in question, and the parking lot in the back of the Firehouse, are actually on Parks Department property.) The project was planned and implemented by UCPC First Vice President Bruce Stuart.

December 27, 2022 and January 11, 2023: Our park lands made the lists of the **Top 10** and **Top 9 Secrets** of **Douglaston** and **Little Neck**, respectively, published by *Untapped New York.* The Top 10 list for Douglaston features the "secret" shorelines of Udalls Cove and Little Neck Bay, with a description of the Doug Bay trail maintained by UCPC *(see our Trail Map on Page 7)*. However, UCPC takes some issue with the article's description of the waterfront as "quite polluted." The water is significantly cleaner than it was just a few decades ago. A majority of the time the water quality is actually quite good, though bacteria from sewage is a problem, especially after rain events. The fisherman who use the area do leave behind a lot of trash, which we regularly clean up. The Top 9 list for Little Neck celebrates Udalls Cove Park as "one of the few remaining salt marshes on the metropolitan North Shore." To find the articles, Google "Secrets of Douglaston" and "Secrets of Little Neck."

EXPLORE YOUR PARK!



During the past 25 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.)

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

AND ... you can also enjoy a walk through newly restored portions of Alley Pond Park. Enter from the dead-end of 234th Street on the south side of Northern Boulevard, just west of the Chevrolet dealership.

The Udalls Cove Preservation Committee ...

... working since 1969 to ***C***onserve, ***P***reserve and ***R***estore the wetlands and woodlands in the Udalls Cove watershed.

Join our 54th Annual Cleanup
on Saturday, April 29, 2023 – Details inside!

The Udalls Cove Preservation Committee
251-31 42nd Avenue
Little Neck, NY 11363