The tennis courts were finally refurbished in November. Mary Rapoza, Director of Parks, Recreation & Beaches for the City of New Bedford reported that the contractor was Hinding Tennis of West Haven, CT and cost $102,730. The surface is USTA approved surfacing. There are now two sets of three courts, one of which is lined for pickle-ball. It is hoped that funds (approximately $28,000) will be available at a later date to replace the rusted fencing. There are no plans presently for the area.

In their heyday, the courts at Buttonwood were the center of tennis activity in the Greater New Bedford area. Led by the Whaling City Tennis Association, clinics, junior instructional groups and tournaments were held. The end of summer season was culminated by the Compass Bank Classic. Before the courts fell into disrepair, they were used by all age levels.

Please save the date for our Annual Meeting. More information will be forthcoming.

We hope that you will take the opportunity during April to visit the Dell, the area west of the greenhouse, to see the daffodils in bloom. Also, last fall the Friends planted tulips, donated by one of our members, in various places in the park.
**History:** The Buttonwood Park Pond and Dam is owned by the City of New Bedford and maintained by the DPI. In 2006, the dam was classified by the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Office of Dam Safety (ODS) as a small size, significant hazard potential dam, in poor condition. The City was requested to conduct repairs on the dam by Nov. 30, 2009, but was granted an extension to allow time to acquire funding. In November 2018 the City was notified that they were selected to receive $1 million in low interest loans to support dam repairs.

The Dam Rehabilitation and Spillway Improvements Project will bring the dam into ODS requirements and mitigate the effects of overtopping. The existing culvert under Fuller Parkway and spillway along with removable stop logs and valve outlet, the upstream dam retaining wall, and other reinforcements are part of the project. It is expected to take between 12 to 15 months. The design is 90% complete. The Friends are concerned with the design along Fuller Parkway and hope to give their input. The cost of dam rehabilitation and spillway improvements will cost over $3 million.

The Pond Dredging and Habitat Restoration Project will remove and dispose of the accumulated sediment, restore the pond’s habitat and stabilize the pond banks to support improved water quality and pond use. The pond is approximately 8.5 acres and was constructed in 1902. It has been filling with sediment from Buttonwood Brook, bank erosion and stormwater outfalls. The sediment has been collecting in the northern part of the pond and near the base of the dam. In addition, invasive species have begun to grow in the pond. The cost of this project is about $3.6 million and should take 24 to 30 months to complete including design, permitting and construction.

The two projects are not contingent upon each other and can be completed separately or concurrently depending on funding availability. The Friends will keep you posted.

Did you know that Fuller Memorial Parkway, the street that is on the south side of the pond, is built on the top of a dam?
Commemorative trees are a thoughtful, environmentally responsible way to honor or remember a loved one. By planting a commemorative tree, you can give a lasting gift to the future of Buttonwood Park.

With a $300 donation, you can have a single commemorative tree planted in Buttonwood Park. Tree size, species, and placement will be selected in accordance with the park’s horticultural plan. Along with your commemorative tree, The Friends of Buttonwood Park will display a plaque in the Lawler Branch Library with the names of the honoree(s). Last fall we planted the two commemorative tree described below.

**Crataegus viridis** ‘Winter King’, commonly called green hawthorn, is a native to the southeastern United States. It is a dense, rounded tree, growing 20-35’ tall with a broad spreading crown. White flowers in two-inch clusters bloom in May, followed by small red fruits in the fall, when leaves turn purple to red. The fruit is sometimes called a haw.

**Morus alba** ‘Chaparral’, commonly called a white mulberry is native to China. Chaparral is a dwarf, deciduous tree which features weeping foliage. It is usually top-grafted to a standard white mulberry about 6' off the ground, thus producing a 6-8' tall tree with an equal or wider spread wherein all branches and foliage weep to the ground.

If you wish to have the Friends plant a commemorative tree to honor a loved one, you may go to our website, [www.buttonwoodpark.org](http://www.buttonwoodpark.org) and click on Take Action.

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**Mission Statement**

*Stewardship, Protection, Renewal*

Our mission is the maintenance and improvement of the park with a focus on supporting and executing projects and activities that contribute to the physical and mental well-being of our urban population — while protecting and preserving the park as a historic landscape.
Friends Receive CPA Grant

Our North Trails project is an ambitious multi-year, multi-phase project to establish a network of trails in the area of the park north of the pond. This is part of our Buttonwood on the Move initiative which started with the new basketball courts. Thanks to you, the basketball courts were built several years ago and we were able to have Ray Dunetz Landscape Architecture, a firm familiar with the principles of Frederick Law Olmsted, complete plans for the trails.

We received first-year Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding of $26,000 to enable us to conduct engineering studies for the first phase of the project. This first phase will be comprised of a trail along the Buttonwood Brook from the bridle path bridge at the north end of the brook to a to-be-reconstructed bridge at the southern end of the brook as it enters into the pond area.

Friends at Work

Last fall we mulched the gardens in the Dell, the Sensory Garden in the playground and the plantings around the Lawler Library. Come spring, while the mulch will help keep down the weeds, we could use some help. If you would like to be a "Weekly Weeder", please contact us by email, snail mail or speak to one of our volunteers when you see them working in the park.