

Fresh Pond's Ranger Jean on rules of the road



Fresh Pond, Cambridge

Credit: Anita M. Harris

I often run at Fresh Pond. True, I have a “running” debate with my exercise app, which sometimes calls what I do “walking” but be that as it may... I have struck up a number of very cordial relationships, there, with the dogs and their humans.

Ordinarily, everyone is quite friendly (though I can get a bit ferocious when a human attached to three dogs on leashes blocks the entire width of running path).



But a few weeks ago, I ran into a spate of ungracious humans who yelled at me that I was running on the wrong side of the road, gave me the finger (to be honest, I responded in kind) and one who even tried to force me off the dirt path. I asked Ranger Jean Rodgers if there are right-of-way rules for the



Pond.

Here's her response.

Dear Anita,

Thank you for taking the time to write and share your experiences here at Fresh Pond Reservation. I'm sorry to hear you are having some less than civil interactions with other users. Soft running surfaces are in short supply here at Fresh Pond. No one has a right to them to the exclusion of others. As with all public spaces, sharing and civility are

required however frustrating. If most people keep to the right as they are able, travel on the Perimeter Road would have a level of predictability.

The behavior of others as you have reported it is unacceptable for any reason. I will post some signs in our information boards, the ranger station and at entrances excerpted from the street code booklet that help visitors know that sharing and civil interactions are expected.



The City has just issued "Street Code, Rules and Etiquette for Getting There Together" to address the need for safe and civil behavior when people are moving about the City's Public Spaces. Shared Path Etiquette is addressed on page 16. I plan to post it around the Reservation. <http://bit.ly/CambridgeStreetCode>

Here's a summary and some links to our Shared Use Plan that was developed a while ago with the public to encourage civil interactions and use of Fresh Pond Reservation:

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/Water/freshpondreservation/aboutfreshpond/shareduse>

Shared Use Plan

As the terminal reservoir in the water system that provides drinking water to the City of Cambridge, Fresh Pond Reservation serves as an important buffer to protect the health and water quality of Fresh Pond. The Reservation is also an important open space for Cambridge residents and visitors. Due to limited space on paths, trails, and open areas, as well as increasing popularity due to restoration efforts, occasional conflicts among users can arise. To address these conflicts, the City sought to engage the public in order to develop a shared vision for future use and a clear

implementable plan between the Summer 2010 and Spring 2011. The result of this process was the Shared Use Plan with the intent to accomplish the following objectives (in no particular order):

- *Protect the flora, fauna, and overall ecosystem and water supply,*
- *Promote a welcoming and safe place,*
- *Provide for a multitude of recreational activities,*
- *Promote mutual respect and civility among users,*
- *Improve communication among users and with those managing the Reservation,*
- *Provide for additional education and opportunities to participate in stewardship,*
- *Enhance user safety and enforcement through rules that are easy to understand, posted, and enforceable,*
- *Provide for enjoyment by current and future generations.*

Please feel free to put the ranger phone number (617 349-xxxx) in your phone contact list and call me to come out and assist if you if people don't settle down and share the space with you. I do my best to



answer the phone whether I'm on or off duty. If someone threatens you or puts a hand on you, call the police for immediate assistance (911 or at their business number 617 349-3300).

We all matter and we all make a difference.

Jean Rogers

Chief Ranger

Fresh Pond Reservation

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in Cambridge, MA.

New Cambridge Observer is a publication of the [Harris Communications Group](#), also in Cambridge.