



Issue 9, November 2016

News of the Fells

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Ann Frenning Kossuth

The Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation is dedicated to the protection and harmonious use of the Fells; promoting awareness, policies and programs to honor and preserve the ecological, historical and recreational resources of this urban forest reservation.

www.fells.org
 781-662-2340
friends@fells.org

Why Do Leaves Change Color? StoryWalk® by Ann Frenning Kossuth

Why Do Leaves Change Color? written by Betsy Maestro, was the fall 2016 self-guided StoryWalk® through the Middlesex Fells Reservation.

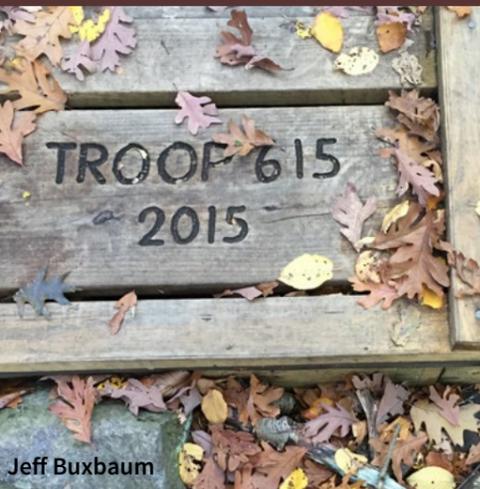
The walk began at Stoneham's Greenwood Park (across from the Stone Zoo), and continued along the Crystal Springs Trail in an easy, 1/3-mile loop.

This was the 10th collaborative StoryWalk® of The Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the North Suburban Child and Family Resource Network, Medford Family Network, the Malden CFCE

Program, and Melrose-Wakefield Mass in Motion.

Over one hundred families enjoyed the beautiful story, scavenger hunt, and walk. The 328 participants came from 16 Massachusetts communities. Watch for information on our next Storywalk® this winter. A grand total of 1,154 families, and 3,694 people of all ages have participated since we began in the spring of 2014.

Thank you for your support and enjoyment of these walks. These walks are building young brains and bodies while your family is enjoying time together, the fresh air, and literature.



News of the Fells

Issue 9

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Found in the Fells, November

by Bryan Hamlin

In some years, good fall colors can still be seen early in the month. But as November progresses, the forest floor becomes carpeted with nature's discards; and if there hasn't already been a frost, there soon will be. Snow in November is not so common in the Fells, and ponds won't freeze over yet. But the beech leaves stay holding on, looking like burnished copper, and faintly tinkling in the wind. Shafts of light penetrate deeper into the woods, giving delightful patterns and highlights. And the witch hazel continues to bloom through it all, well into November, the long twisted yellow petals reminding some of a witch's fingers.

foundinthefells.com

Indeed, not all is lifeless by any means. The animals are not the only ones busy preparing for winter. Several plants have been quietly forming buds, getting ready for next spring. Skunk cabbage is one with thick, gray-green pointed sheaths that will sit out the winter, sometimes under water, ready to reveal their unusual flowers late next March (you don't have to wait five months to see this—just click on "March" on foundinthefells.com). And the several members of the Ericaceae family that are so abundant in the Fells—the blueberries, huckleberry, bearberry and others—all have buds ready for next spring.



Your autumn traditions may include favorites like apple-picking and leaf-peeping hikes. Most of us here at the Friends of the Fells enjoy that type of thing, too. But we have several other important traditions this time of year, too, including our annual Spot Pond National Public Lands Day COASTSWEEP, which we held on October 1 this year. COASTSWEEP is a state program affiliated with the International Coastal Cleanup. We all know simply picking up trash in our public lands helps the environment, beautifies our parks, and helps prevent our wildlife from becoming entangled.

But the data collection aspect that COASTSWEEP includes is helpful as well. It helps scientists figure out exactly how the specific items that are most likely to be found will impact our natural world. It can help people plot and plan various "best practices" cleanup approaches when they know exactly what they are apt to be dealing with. It can help with discussions with companies (if the items found are branded) when it comes to working together on collection programs or designing ways to make companies' products more biodegradable or sustainable. Plus, it is just fascinating! Not only will we pass on our finds to policy makers, but the students who took a hands-on approach with this project can extend



COASTSWEEP Tradition Continues

by Lindsay Cornell Beal

the learning by examining the data in their classroom.

In addition to all the bits and scraps you'd expect to find, every year we find a number of unusual items. This year, that list includes a ceramic coffee mug, two pairs of long underwear, a spatula, a set of Tinkertoys, and 20 large cucumbers, as well as a set of barbells and several abandoned bags of concrete mix. We picked up about a quarter-ton of trash overall, but those last two finds made up about half of that number. After an excessively dry summer, we got the rain we've been asking for right on our planned cleanup day. It didn't deter our volunteers! About 50 people showed up, which is close to our usual

turnout. We'd like to extend special thanks to the Malden YMCA Adventure Club, CATS Academy, the BSCES, and Hike 'n' Carry co-founder Linda Schwetz. New volunteer Cynthia Stillinger did a great job co-running the check-in booth—her first gig with us! The rain didn't slow us down! We covered our goal areas: the grounds of Flynn Rink, the fully accessible coasts of Spot Pond and Quarter Mile Pond, and the sidewalks of Woodland Road.

Stay tuned for ongoing volunteer needs. Next up: Fall For the Fells 5K Trail Race and Festival on November 6. If you'd like to help out, contact Lindsay Beal at Lindsay@yarsley.com.



Flickr user no_exit2012

03 Fells Running Club Sunrise "Intermediate" Trail Run

7:00 - 8:45 AM

Greenwood parking lot, 176 Pond Street, Stoneham (across from the Stone Zoo)

Join Rich in exploring several Fells trails and paths (including parts of the Crystal Spring, Virginia Wood, Rock Circuit, Cross-Fells and Bike Loop trails) to complete a loop around Spot Pond. Expect to run ~5 miles at a pace of around 11 minutes per mile over rocky and uneven terrain. Meet at 7:00am at the Greenwood Park Parking Lot on Pond St. in Stoneham (across from Stone Zoo). Rich will be waiting near the bulletin/map kiosk beside the parking lot. We'll start running by exactly 7:15 (once there is sufficient daylight). Lightning or very heavy rain cancels. Call Rich at 617-335-7310 or email rich@friendsofthefells.org for more information.

06 Fall for the Fells: Whole Foods 5K Trail Run and Fall Fest

12:00 - 5:00 PM Medford High School
489 Winthrop Street, Medford

Whole Foods Market is proud to partner with Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation to present an all-new "Fall for the Fells" 5K Trail Race & Fun Fest! Family fun will be provided at the Medford High School athletic fields by Medford Family Network, other partners include Marathon Sports, and more! Registration starts at 10:00 AM.

13 Fells Running Club "Intermediate" Trail Run

8:00 - 10:00 AM

Upper Sheepfold Parking Lot,
off route 28 in Stoneham

Let's challenge ourselves as we make

room for Thanksgiving feasts. Shane will lead a run of the steep and rocky 7-mile Skyline Trail around the Western Fells at a pace of around 11 minutes per mile. Meet at 8:00am at Upper Sheepfold parking lot, off route 28 in Stoneham. We'll begin running at exactly 8:10. Shane will be wearing a white t-shirt. Contact Shane at Shane.t.mcnally@gmail.com for more information.

13 Tree Walk 10:00 - 11:00 AM

Bellevue Pond Parking Lot
68 South Border Road, Medford

Join Harvard botanist Walter Kittredge for a short stroll around Bellevue Pond, where we will learn how to identify a couple dozen of the different trees that grow in the Fells. For more details email Walter at oaknashnthorn@gmail.com. Rain cancels.

14 Autumn at Bellevue Pond

9:15 - 11:30 AM

Bellevue Pond Parking Lot
68 South Border Road, Medford

We will take a walk to Bellevue Pond searching for late blooming flowers and plants still in fruit. We'll also look for winter weeds, those hardy herbaceous (non-woody) plants whose skeletons decorate the autumn and winter landscape. The walk will focus on plant ID as well as fun and interesting natural history. Perhaps we'll see a few witches and skeletons left over from Halloween! Meet at the Bellevue Pond parking lot on South Border Rd (opposite #70) in Medford. Steady rain cancels. For more information, call Boot Boutwell at 781-729-4712.

17 Fells Running Club Sunrise "Beginners" Trail Run

7:00 - 8:30 AM

Greenwood Parking Lot, 176 Pond Street,
Stoneham (across from the Stone Zoo)

Let's go for an early "beginner" trail run through the Eastern Fells. We'll cover ~2.5 miles in the area around Whip Hill, at a pace of around 13 minutes per mile over rocky and uneven terrain. Meet at 7:00am at the Greenwood Park Parking Lot on Pond St. in Stoneham (across from Stone Zoo). Rich will be waiting near the bulletin/map kiosk beside the parking lot. We'll start running at exactly 7:10. Lightning or very heavy rain cancels. Call Rich at 617-335-7310 or email rich@friendsofthefells.org for more information.

26 Hike4Life's Walk Off the Turkey Hike in the Blue Hills

11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Blue Hills Trailside Museum
1904 Canton Avenue, Milton

Join the Fells' community partner Hike4Life for their 7th Annual Post Thanksgiving Hiking Event! They are closing out 2016 with a family friendly, intermediate/advanced day hike to bring this awesome year to a fun and healthy finale. Give thanks to our friends, to our families, to our supporters and to our ancestors who guide and watch over us and we give our thanks to you! If the weather is unfavorable, we will postpone to a later date. Contact us at: info@hike4life.org or 617-297-7390. Check the Facebook page for the latest information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1735902123297246/>

Hike 'n' Seek is a nature-themed scavenger hunt for young hikers (toddler through school-aged kids) and their parents. For parents with children young enough to carry on a conventional hike, please join us for *Babes in the Woods* at 11 AM! Location changes weekly.

Babes in the Woods is an adult-paced hike designed for parents who carry their children. These hikes will not be appropriate for young children who walk, and trails will not accommodate strollers.

Please remember to wear appropriate shoes and clothing for the weather, and do not forget to bring water! Check the [Facebook page](#) for the latest updates. Email Diana at dianalomakin@gmail.com for more information.

Hike 'n' Seek meets from 10 - 10:45 AM through November 8

Babes in the Woods meets from 11 AM - 12 PM through November 8

Babes in the Woods meets from 10 - 11:30 AM starting November 15

November

01 Greenwood Park 10AM - 12PM

Both programs will meet at the Greenwood parking lot, 176 Pond Street, Stoneham (across from the Stone Zoo).

08 Botume House Visitor Center

Both programs will meet at the Botume House Visitor Center at 4 Woodland Road, Stoneham.

15 Bear Hill, 90 Fallon Road

Babes in the Woods will meet at the Bear Hill Parking Area, 90 Fallon Road, Stoneham

22 Bellevue Pond

Babes in the Woods will meet at Bellevue Pond. Closest address is 70 South Border Road in Medford. Additional on-street parking is available diagonally southeast across the street on Massachusetts Ave. Watch for permit parking signs.

29 Long Pond

Babes in the Woods will meet at the Long Pond Parking Lot, 532 South Border Road, Winchester.



Diana Lomakin



Diana Lomakin

International Babywearing Week

by Diana Lomakin

October 5–10 was International Babywearing Week, the perfect occasion for North Shore Babywearing, Babywearing International of Greater Boston, and the Babes in the Woods team to hold a special Hike 'n' Seek at Greenwood Park on October 6. After learning about the different organizations, and the many kinds of carriers, we headed into the woods. Most impressive was one skillful mother who was able to carry twin boys in a single wrap. After an educational and fun day, we are happy to gain a few new regulars to our Hike 'n' Seek series.

November Nature Trivia

by Lindsay Cornell Beal

1. Some other local parks have an arguably spookier history than the Fells. Which Essex National Heritage Area site is known for carved boulders at old cellar holes, a fatal bullfight, and a history of piracy?
2. Some folks thought John Lennon was saying “I buried Paul” at the end of Strawberry Fields Forever. In fact, he and those close to him claim he was actually mentioning this Massachusetts state berry.
3. Wild turkeys are constantly walking, while nibbling up insects, nuts, and small animals. What muscle protein darkens their hard-working leg muscles?
4. November 15 is National Recycling Day. About 2,000 years ago, Chinese official Ts'ai Lun developed an earliest known recycled paper out of old fishing nets and hemp. What common current paper ingredient was his innovative paper missing?
5. Which weather phenomenon's name was supposedly inspired by the holiday season, based on when it was originally said to be noticed?
6. Which hardy, small, black-and-white wintering bird goes into regulated hypothermia and uses its excellent spatial memory to remember seed sources and caches (no birdbrain here!)?
7. Bostonians are known for distinctive accents. Steve Simpson, at the University of Exeter, published a study this month looking into what creatures may also have regional accents?
8. Do the cooler autumn temperatures make you want to snuggle with your loved ones? Which local wild canid mates for life?
9. We had a great turnout at our Spot Pond inland Coastsweep cleanup last month, despite heavy rains. Approximately what percentage of coastal beach trash originates inland and makes its way there through various means (storm drains/rivers, winds)?
10. Which animal gets its name from the Greek “skia oura” (shadow tail)? That's a mysterious sounding name for such a chittery critter!

Answers on page 9.

Fells steward Jeff Buxbaum explains his passion for the park and how he grew into the Trail Adopter Coordinator role. The new retiree is now expanding his commitment by contributing his talents to the Friends' board. Check out fellow new board member Jill's profile on page 9, and stay tuned for introductions from other new additions next month.

I moved to Medford in 2009 and soon discovered that this big green splash on the map called the Middlesex Fells was only minutes away. In the years since I have enjoyed hiking and skiing there as much as I can. When I sell my house, I'll be sure to advertise “minutes from the magnificent Middlesex Fells.” I finally woke up to the idea that the park didn't take care of itself, so I volunteered as a trail adopter in early 2015, and took over coordinating that program from Rich Sanford early this year.

My career was as consultant addressing passenger transportation policy issues—most recently how to pay for them. Since retiring, I've divided my volunteer time between the Friends of the Fells (FOF); a new group call WalkMedford that advocates for easier and safer walking in Medford; and Food Link, an Arlington-based organization that rescues fresh food from groceries and restaurants for distribution to social service agencies serving people in need.

In his ongoing role leading the Trail Adopters, Buxbaum reports on the program's successes so far this year:

The non-snowy season is easing to an end, and it's been a busy year for the FOF trail adopters.



New Board Member Jeff

by Jeff Buxbaum

Many thanks to the adopters that have donated their time. Here are some high-lights of the activity so far in 2016:

- 29 trail adopters, 9 of which lead families or groups, for a total of 62 people working on the trails
- 40 work trips representing at least 66 hours of labor covering 67 miles of trail
- 13 thirteen-gallon trash bags filled

FOF adopters have cleaned up party areas, removed invasive plants such as garlic mustard, winged euonymous, and oriental bittersweet. They have trimmed back brush that obscures trails,

cleared brush away from trail blazes and cleared drainage features. They have also reported downed trees that DCR was able to clear later with chain saws—within a few days usually.

We now have good coverage of much of the Fells, but there are still plenty of trails ready for adoption—check out the map here: <http://tinyurl.com/zhep24b>. This is a great season to start adopting—branches have grown as much as they're going to grow for the year, so you can trim them back before the winter season. And it's great to get trash off the trails before the snow.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions at trails@fells.org.



Sheri Qualters

Seeing the Forest Through its Trees

by Sheri Qualters

In a hands-on tree identification class in Virginia Wood last month, Harvard botanist Walter Kittredge shared his knowledge about well-known trees and many other species found under the forest canopy. Eight participants joined Kittredge on the Oct. 15 ramble, walking amid comfortable temperatures in the high 50s.

Kittredge stopped every few minutes to discuss a tree or plant, often pulling down branches so participants could touch the leaves or needles and examine their characteristics with 10x magnifying glasses.

At a yellow birch tree, Kittredge pointed out its doubly serrated leaves, yellowish peeling bark and twigs with a wintergreen scent. He then showed participants a white ash and explained that its leaf system is compound, with at least two leaflets on a stalk, with leaflets arranged pinnately, or on each side of the stem.

Later, he explained that an elm has stringy bark and an asymmetrical leaf base. He assured the class that elms are thriving in their native habitat — wetlands — despite the destruction the Dutch elm disease wrought on ornamental elms throughout the United

States in the 20th century. At a beech tree, he ran a hand along the familiar smooth bark and pointed to the base of the trunk, which resembles the wrinkled skin of an elephant's leg. Kittredge strolled through the forest with a kind of quiet joy, often smiling while explaining many kinds of natural phenomena.

He was pleased that poison ivy is less toxic when its leaves turn yellow and that its berries provide high-fat food for birds; that a chickadee needs 1,000 caterpillars to raise a chick; and that many lichens and mosses are epiphytes, which grow on other plants for physical but not nutritional support, putting them in the same category as orchids and bromeliads in a jungle.

At a felled tree, Kittredge said it's a really good thing when a tree falls across a stream. "It gets things growing in a pool."

Participants touched and smelled leaves and listened attentively to Kittredge's comments. Near the end, one of them demonstrated that the class was paying attention: he pointed out a Shagbark Hickory by its long strips of peeling bark.

New Board Member Jill

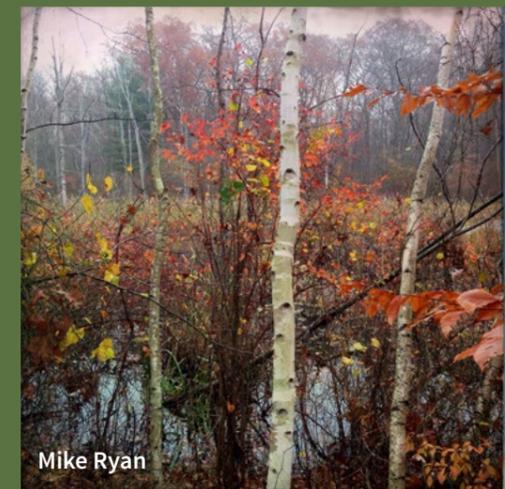
by Jill Geisler

Name: Jill Geisler

Town: Melrose

Occupation: Special Education Teacher, Grade 7

Since the early 1980s, I have considered the Fells my "health club" and am to this day out walking through it five or six times a week. I have volunteered as a docent and trail guide at the Stone Zoo, taught an outdoor PAL (Program for After School Learning) class, led hikes as the Outdoor Specialist for the Stoneham Girl Scouts, and helped to coordinate outdoor activities at the abutting Whip Hill Sanctuary. A highlight of my Fells experience has been my involvement as a trail guide with Winchester Trails, leading second and fourth graders on nature/history hikes in the Long Pond area. My most memorable Fells experiences, however, have taken place when I have been soloing; who can forget sighting their first coyote, startling a saw whet, hearing a barred owl call, getting up close to a walking stick or discovering a monstrous chicken of the woods mushroom? The Middlesex Fells has enriched my life in more ways than I can list and I would like to do my part to ensure that this amazing resource remains healthy and intact so that it can be appreciated by the generations who follow me.



Mike Ryan

November Nature Trivia Answers

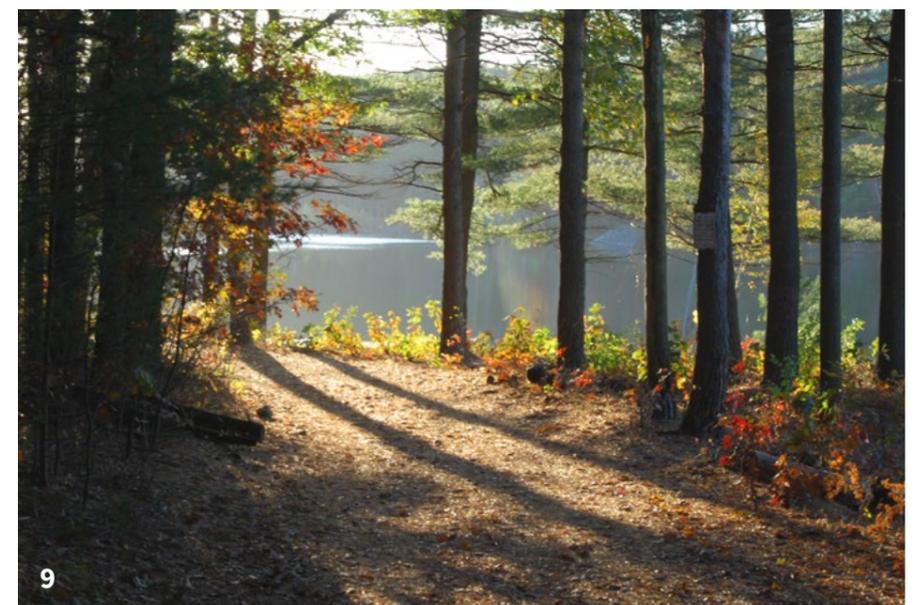
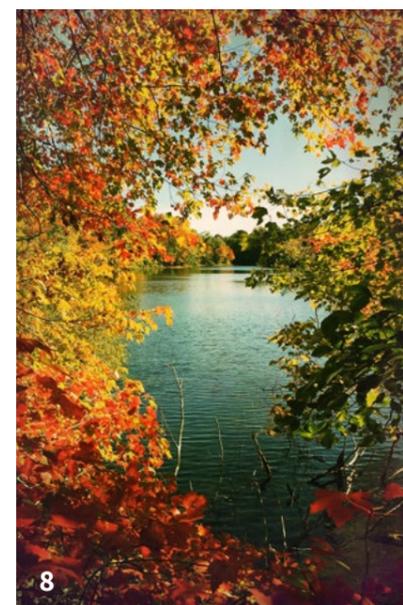
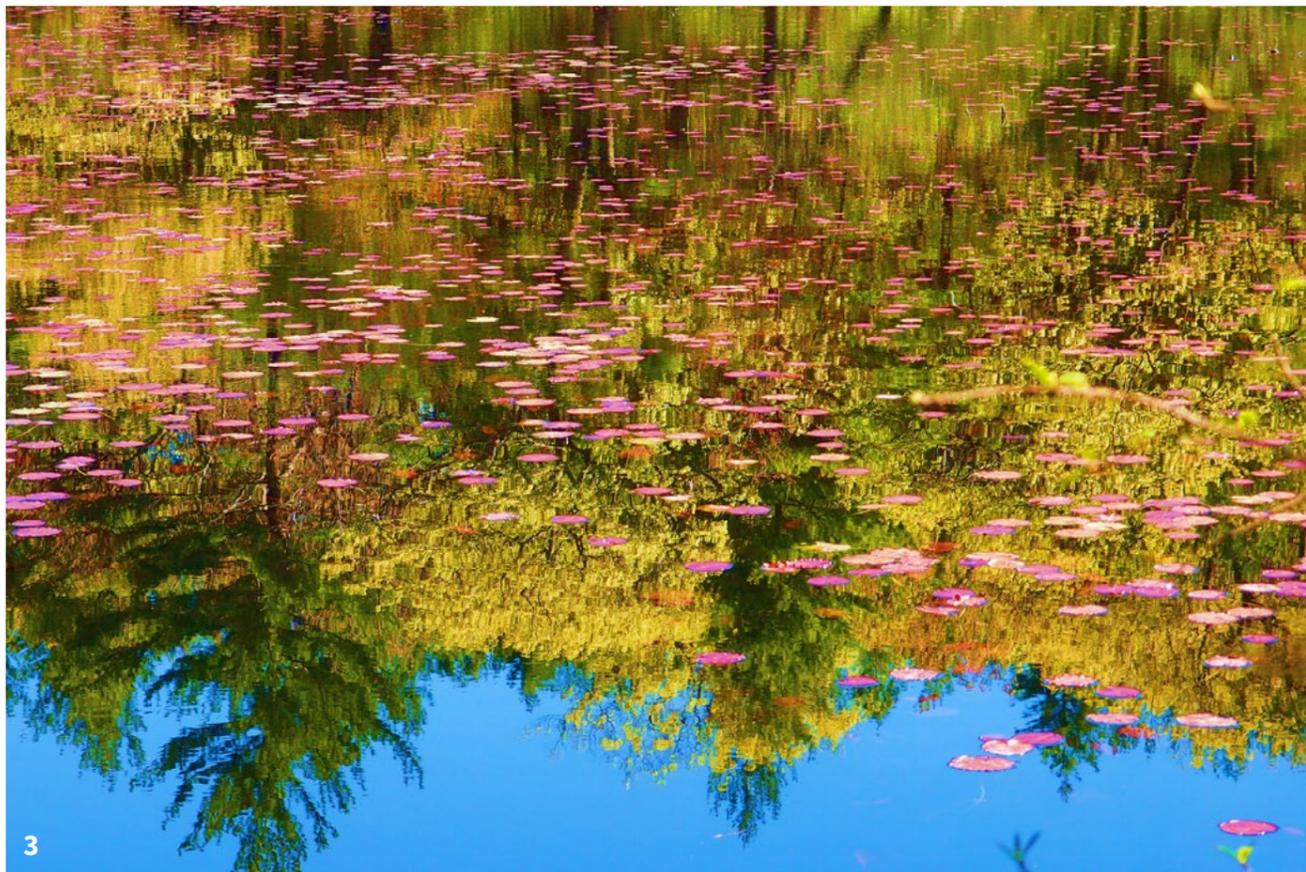
1. Dogtown Common in Gloucester
2. Cranberry [sauce]
3. Myoglobin
4. Trees (recycle your paper or reduce use to save more trees!)
5. El Niño
6. Chickadees
7. Codfish
8. Coyote
9. 80%
10. Squirrel

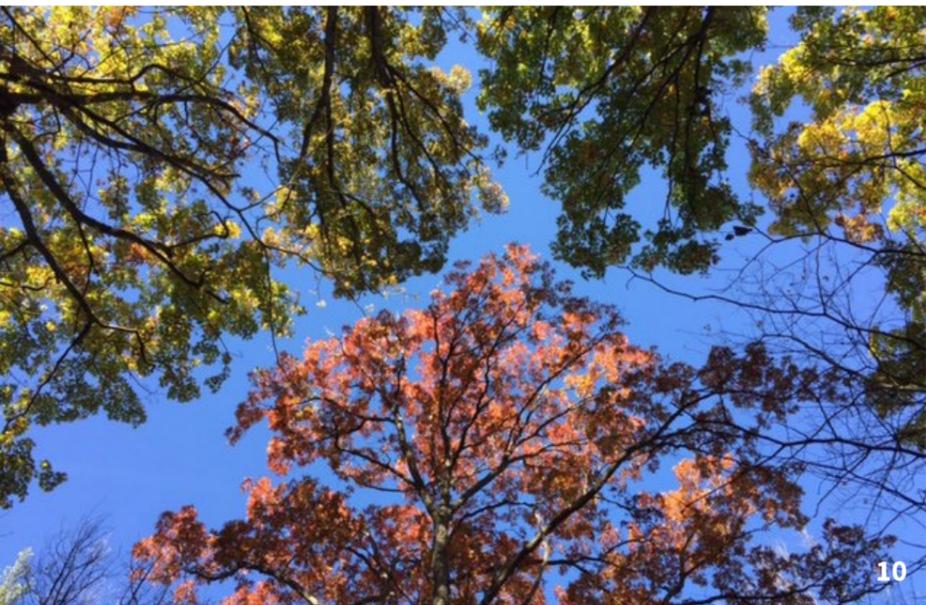
Autumn in the Fells

- 1. Neil O. Anderson
- 2. Mike Ryan
- 3. Flickr user Brooks
- 4. Diana Lomakin

- 5. Dennis N. Crouse
- 6. Sheri Qualters
- 7. Rich Maliawco
- 8. Mike Ryan

- 9. Bryan Hamlin
- 10. Lindsay Cornell Beal
- 11. Bryan Hamlin
- 12. Neil O. Anderson





10



11



12

Fall for the Fells

by Lindsay Cornell Beal

Whole Foods Market and the Friends of the Fells have partnered to offer the Fall for the Fells 5K Trail Race and Festival on Sunday, November 6th at Medford High School (489 Winthrop Street, Medford). Online registration goes until Friday at midnight: <http://bitly/2dmmhXZ>

The event will feature a 5K trail run through the woods of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, a kid's fun run, family activities by Knucklebones, free samples, and food trucks. Festival activities are free and open to the public. Race registration is \$25, or \$30 for a parent/child (under 13) registration. Day of registration fee is \$30 or \$35 for parent/child. The fall festival is FREE and heartily welcomes walk-ins from the community (you do not need to come with a runner). Come join us!

The Fall for the Fells event runs from 12–4pm, with registration opening at 10am. Whole Foods Market Medford (2151 Mystic Valley Pkwy, Medford, MA 02155, 781-395-4998) will offer early bib pick-up for registered runners on Saturday, November 5th from 12–4pm. For more event information, email zone9events@wholefoods.com.

Yes! I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the Fells Defense Campaign

Note: For the first \$10,000 in donations two generous supporters have offered to match every dollar. Your early donation will have double the impact!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

\$500 \$100 \$75 \$50 \$25 Other: _____

Mail to: Friends of the Middlesex Fells, 235 West Foster Street, Melrose, MA 02176

Thank You! Friends of the Fells Board of Directors
781.662.2340 www.fells.org

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