



# Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation

www.fells.org 781-662-2340 **Events Calendar pullout: pages 5-10**

## News of the Fells Fall 2014



### Mystic Mural Artists Feature Fells Nature

By Anna Miller

**Most area residents have driven past the mural** hugging the I-93 overpass near the Mystic River Apartments. But few may know the story behind this fantastically lively artwork, which has been a work in progress since 1996, headed by local muralist David Fichter.

Each year David and a group of ten or so talented high school students have journeyed around the Mystic River Watershed to learn about nature and convey its beauty back to the Somerville community through the mural. The project was initiated to reconnect Somerville with the Mystic River, which was separated from the town in the 1960's with the construction of I-93.

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(Carol Lieb)

## Botume House Visitor Center

By Gillian Badwan

**T**HE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (DCR), is pleased to announce completion of its long awaited Middlesex Fells Reservation Botume House Visitor Center exhibition.

In a few weeks the Botume House at 4 Woodland Road, Stoneham will open to a stunning new exhibit designed to give visitors an overview of the colorful history and natural bounty the Middlesex Fells has to offer.

Deputy Regional Park Ranger Mike Nelson, who helped oversee the exhibit from its inception, explained "We decided early on that we really

*continued on page 4*



# Friends Launch a Redesigned Website

By Noah Kaplan

**YOU ARE READING THIS NEWSLETTER, SO** you already know there's a lot going on with the Friends of the Fells. From Forest Kindergarten to Trail Adopters to the Botume House Exhibit, the Friends are constantly working to make a visit to the Fells the best experience it can possibly be. But we felt like our website was holding us back from sharing these exciting activities with you in real time.

That's why we are thrilled to announce that Fells.org is all new! If you haven't visited our website recently, head on over and see what's new. It's an all new design, with tons of new features, and all the content you relied on from the old site is still around. Here are some highlights of the new site:

**Easier navigation:** We wanted all of the content on the site to be easily visible from the home page, or any other page. We added a homepage slideshow to highlight our most important upcoming events and announcements. Every page on the site will also feature our new drop-down menus to help you find the information you need. Putting your mouse over the main menu options will show you all the options under each heading. You may even find something you didn't know you were looking for!

**Blogs:** With all of the exciting news surrounding the Friends of the Fells, we thought we needed a faster and easier way to share it with you. The new website is designed to facilitate frequent blog entries. New content

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Friends of the Fells website. At the top left is a photo of a fox. To its right is the title "FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLESEX FELLS RESERVATION" and the tagline "Dedicated to the protection and harmonious use of the Fells". In the top right corner are social media icons for YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Email, and RSS. Below these is a red "BECOME A MEMBER" button. A navigation bar contains links for "Visit", "Participate", "Learn", "Protect", "The Friends", and "Support", each with a dropdown arrow. A search bar is on the right. The main content area features a large banner with three images: a forest path, a lake at sunset, and a field of red flowers. The text "Join the Friends" is overlaid on the first image. Below the banner is a call to action: "Celebrate the Fells. Join the Friends! If you value our efforts at conservation, education, and advocacy, please show your support by becoming a member. Click to learn how to become a member." Below this are two columns: "FROM OUR BLOGS" with three articles ("Favorite Sunrise/Sunset Spots?", "Mid-Summer Animal Activity in the Fells", "Off and running with Forest Kindergarten!") and "Upcoming Events" with two events for July 31, 2014: "Babes in the Woods: Sheepfold to Bear Hill" and "Early Conservation in the Fells".



will be added at least weekly and will be highlighted on the home page. Blog content will also be divided into categories, like News, Programs, Volunteers, and Nature, so you can easily focus on what interests you most.

**Online transactions:** Membership applications and renewals can now be completed and paid for right on the site. We can also easily accept donations using a credit or debit card. We already used our new online systems to register participants for the Forest Kindergarten program. Now you can even purchase Friends of the Fells merchandise like T-shirts, maps, and more.

**The features you know and love:** We wanted the new Fells.org to be a place that offered a lot of new ways to learn about and interact with the Friends of the Fells. What we didn't want was for anyone to miss something that they relied on from the old site. Our Events Calendar still has its own page, or you can see upcoming events right on the homepage. There are plenty of prominent links to guide you to information about how to make a donation or sign-up to volunteer. If there is

something you're looking for but you can't find, let us know and we'll help you locate it.

Even with all this, we're not done yet! The great thing about the Internet is that everything can be updated and improved upon every day. But we need your help to get this site to be the best that it can be. Found a broken link? Think something could be set-up better? Have an idea for a new page or feature? Let us know. You can visit our Contact Page on the site or just send me an email to share your suggestions (feel free to let me know the things you like, too). Our goal is to make the site as useful as possible to our members and friends. But we can only do that if we're hearing from you about what you want to see. So get online and let us know what you think!

*Noah Kaplan is a Friends of the Fells board member. He implemented the new website design and manages the Friends' online content. Email Noah at [web@friendsofthefells.org](mailto:web@friendsofthefells.org).*

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## July 29th Court Hearing for Langwood Commons Environmental Review

### THE 2009 LAWSUIT FILED

by Friends of the Fells, ten individual citizens, and the City of Medford to restore MEPA environmental review of impacts from the huge Langwood Commons housing and office development project was heard in Superior Court on July 29th. The court's decision is expected during September or shortly thereafter.

At issue is the attempt by the developers – with the concurrence of the Department of Conservation and Recreation — to proceed with the development project without completing environmental impact review and to defer analysis of the traffic problems associated with the project's additional 4,500 daily traffic trips. Allowing the developers to build their project at its current scale without a full review of the

Conflicting visions for the future of the Fells Reservation



traffic alterations effectively guarantees that there will be no way to prevent traffic alterations that will destroy the scenic and character-

defining features of the adjacent historic parkways.

It would be too late then to reduce the scale of the development if the MEPA environmental impact review and the Massachusetts Historical Commission's review are deferred until after thousands of additional traffic trips have overwhelmed the amenities sought by visitors to the eastern Fells for over a century.

The lawsuit's goal is that the developers adhere to prior MEPA rulings that a reduced-scale Langwood Commons development project must be identified and presented for public review in order to protect the Fells parkways from excessive traffic impacts and alterations that would adversely affect their scenic and historic characteristics.

# Botume House Visitor Center

*continued from front cover*

needed to touch on the Fells' geology, the local ecology, and the various ways humans have influenced — and have been influenced by — the Fells over time." Detailed photographs, interactive flipbooks, and instructive panels have been installed to fulfill these goals and create a visually stimulating and educational experience for the visitor.

Originally designed by Julie Steinhilber, the project is the result of a years-long collaboration between

ists who first lobbied for creation of the reservation, including insurance innovator and abolitionist Elizur Wright, journalist Sylvester Baxter, and landscape architect Charles Eliot. Carol Lieb of Content Design Collaborative wrote that working on the project "was exciting because we could combine larger than life images from nature created by community members who follow in the footsteps of the rich tradition of stewardship created by Elizur Wright."

The community members Carol references are the exhibit's featured photographers and two recognizable members of the Friends organization; Executive Director Mike Ryan and board chairman and botanist Bryan Hamlin. Dr. Hamlin, who has recently completed a comprehensive survey of the Fells' flora, described his feelings about the installation. "Long after I'm gone," he said, "I trust that the exhibit will be there to help the public understand what they are in the midst of, and therefore will be motivated to both enjoy it and care for it for future generations to enjoy...I hope that the beauty in these flowers will inspire people to care for the Fells well into the future." A gallery of photographs created by visitors will be rotated periodically with new pieces, offering new perspectives to budding artists and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

Initial response to the displays has been enthusiastic. The exhibit includes an updated version of the reservation's map, as well as listings for seasonal interpretive programming and guided hikes with Ranger Services staff members, all offered free of charge to foster a deeper appreciation and understanding of this unique urban green space. "The exhibit is a great introduction for visitors of all ages to learn about the many wonderful places that they can explore while visiting the Middlesex Fells," said Julie Martin, DCR's Assistant Director for Visitor Services and Programming.

A ribbon cutting ceremony will be scheduled for the end of the summer. For more details on the exhibit or information on DCR's free, public programs, please call (617) 727-1199 x 406, email [FellsReservation@state.ma.us](mailto:FellsReservation@state.ma.us), or visit <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/region-north/middlesex-fells-reservation.html>.

*Gillian Badwan is DCR Fells Seasonal Park Interpreter*



*Botume House (Mike Ryan)*

the designers at Content Design Collaborative, DCR Interpretive Services, North Region Ranger Services, and Friends of the Fells board members. "It's been great to be associated with a project that brought together a variety of DCR personnel and its partners," says Ranger Lt. Kathryn Ward, "to produce the beautiful and informative display for the people of the Commonwealth." While the Botume House has previously offered a visitor center display, this is the first time that the space has been home to a permanent installation of this scope. It will serve as a primer for those who are new to the area, and for those already familiar with the area it will serve as a reminder of the specialness of the Fells.

A portion of the exhibit will cover the history of the Fells, starting with its native through to its use as a recreational retreat for city dwellers today. The installation also pays tribute to the determined conservation-





# FALL 2014 HIKES & EVENTS

Spot Pond (Mike Ryan)

We offer a variety of hiking programs in all seasons led by dedicated volunteers who share their knowledge of the many aspects of the Fells with participants. All hike programs are free and do not require registration. Please check the online events calendar for any changes to these listings ([www.friendsofthefells.org](http://www.friendsofthefells.org)).

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## SEPTEMBER ♦ OCTOBER ♦ NOVEMBER

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### **Virginia Wood as Autumn Approaches**

**Tuesday, September 9, 2014  
9:15 am - 11:30 am**

*Leader: Boot Boutwell.* There are still plenty of wildflowers about to brighten up the landscape. We'll talk about the plants in bloom as well as the plants in fruit and other plants of interest. The walk will focus on plant ID as well as fun and interesting natural history about the plants which we see. Meet in the driveway of #1 Woodland Road at the intersection of Woodland Road and Pond Street in Stoneham. Steady rain cancels. All walks are open to the public and free of charge. For more information, call Boot Boutwell at 781-729-4712.

### **Animal Habitats Walk on the Rock Circuit Trail**

**Sunday, September 14, 2014  
10:00 am - Noon**

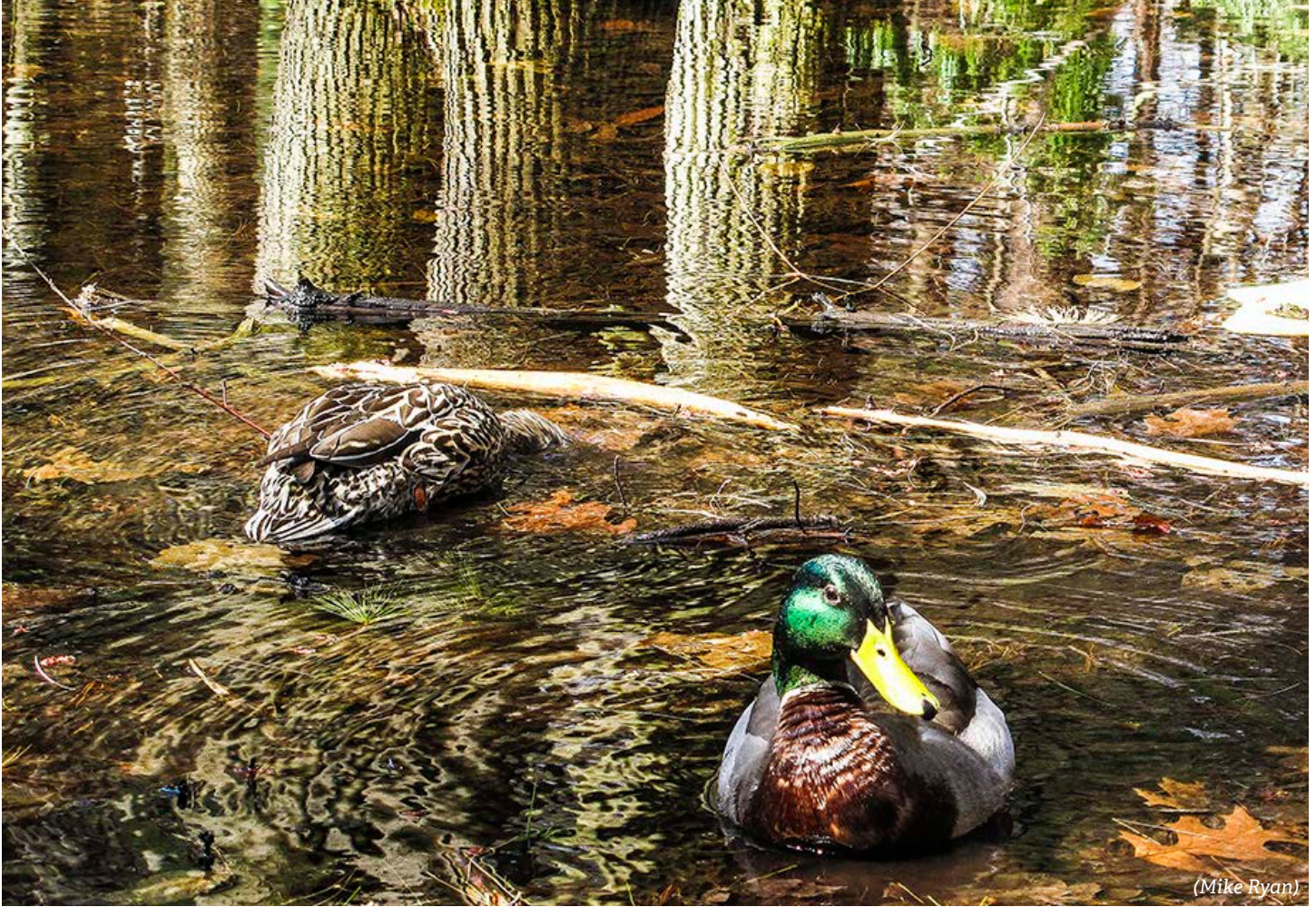
*Leader: Pete Costello of Zoo New England.* Join Pete for a family-friendly walk to explore and discuss animal and bird habitats, nests and animal signs in the Fells. Walking will be Easy to Moderate. Bring water and binoculars. Meet at 10:00 am at the Flynn Rink parking area on Woodland Rd. in Medford (300 Elm Street – on the corner of Elm Street and Woodland Road). Rain cancels. Email Pete at [pbeararl@yahoo.com](mailto:pbeararl@yahoo.com) for more information.

### **A Landscape Changed: Evolution of Land Use in the Middlesex Fells Reservation**

**Wednesday, September 17, 2014  
7:00 pm**

Co-sponsored by the Friends of the Middlesex Fells and presentation by Ryan Hayward, Industrial Eden project. For two and a half centuries the Middlesex Fells was a part of the evolving New England landscape. Generations worked farms, fields and forest. Almost a dozen home grown industries vanished when properties were seized by eminent domain. Come revisit the thriving enterprises that changed surrounding areas and impacted the world! Meet at the Botume House, 4 Woodland Road, Stoneham.





## Serve the Fells for National Public Lands Day

**Saturday, September 27, 2014  
9:00 am - 1:00 pm**

Fells supporters of all ages are invited to join in a day of service at the Fells in conjunction with National Public Lands Day. Experienced Fells hike leaders will lead trail cleanups, habitat restoration, and trail maintenance hikes at various sites throughout the Fells Reservation. Meet at Flynn Rink (300 Elm St., Medford) between 9am and 9:30am to register and receive your work assignment, or email [rich\\_sanford@alum.mit.edu](mailto:rich_sanford@alum.mit.edu) to register in advance. Groups are welcome. Please bring water, snacks, sunscreen and/or bug spray to suit your needs. Lightning cancels, otherwise please dress for the weather. Email [rich\\_sanford@alum.mit.edu](mailto:rich_sanford@alum.mit.edu) for more information.

## Autumn at Bellevue Pond Wednesday, October 8, 2014 9:15 am - 11:30 am

*Leader: Boot Boutwell.* We will take a walk to Bellevue Pond searching for late blooming flowers and plants still in fruit. The walk will focus on plant ID as well as fun and interesting natural history. Perhaps we'll see a few witches and skeletons preparing for Halloween! Meet at the Bellevue Pond parking lot on South Border Road in Medford (approximately 68 S Border Rd). Steady rain cancels. All walks are open to the public and free of charge. For more information, call Boot Boutwell at 781-729-4712.

## Along the Ravine: A Walking Tour of Haywardville

**Saturday, October 11, 2014**

(Rain date: Saturday, October 18)  
**10:00 am**

*Leader: Ryan Hayward, Industrial Eden project; sponsored by the Stoneham Public Library.* This walking tour highlights the evolution of the site's numerous mills from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. We will explore how the waterpower was used, what life was like in the village and how goods produced were shipped around the world. The hour and a half walk will feature historic photos and building recreations. Meet at Pond Street Parking, Gate #41, Stoneham (on Pond Street between the Fellsway and Woodland Road). Additional parking is available at Jerry Jingle Park or Crystal Springs Parking area.



## **Animal Habitats Walk on the Rock Circuit Trail**

**Sunday, October 12, 2014**

**10:00 am – Noon**

*Leader: Pete Costello of Zoo New England.* Join Pete for a family-friendly walk to explore and discuss animal and bird habitats, nests and animal signs in the Fells. Walking will be Easy to Moderate. Bring water and binoculars. Meet at 10:00 am at the Flynn Rink parking area on Woodland Rd. in Medford (300 Elm Street — on the corner of Elm Street and Woodland Road). Rain cancels. Email Pete at pbearl@yahoo.com for more information.

## **Family Foliage Hike on the Crystal Spring Trail**

**Saturday October 18, 2014**

**9:30 am – 11:30 am**

*Leaders: Rich and Eric Sanford.* Hikers of all ages are welcome to join experienced Fells hike leaders Rich and Eric (age: 11) for an autumn hike in the Fells. We'll enjoy colorful fall Foliage and a scenic view of Spot Pond as we circumnavigate the Crystal Spring Trail (1.4 miles. Average hiking time: 1.5 hours). Meet at 9:30 am sharp at the Crystal Spring Parking Area (across from Dunkin Donuts at 2 Lynn Fells Pkwy, Stoneham). Dress for the weather. Bring water, a snack and/or bug spray to suit your needs. Heavy rain or lightning cancels. Call Rich at 617-335-7310 or email rich\_sanford@alum.mit.edu for more information.

## **Working Animals: The 'Invisible' Labor Force**

**Tuesday, October 21, 2014**

**7:00 pm**

*Presenter: Ryan Hayward, Industrial Eden project; sponsored by the Malden Public Library.* Working animals helped to build communities, haul goods and provide transportation. Fire horses protected homes and businesses. Join us for an appreciation of these unsung heroes of Malden and nearby cities. Meet at the Malden Public Library, 36 Salem Street, Malden.

## **Hike'n'Carry at Bellevue Pond and Wright's Tower**

**Sunday, November 2, 2014**

**2:00 pm – 4:00 pm**

*Leader: Linda Schwetz.* Join Linda for an all-ages hike and trail clean-up from Bellevue Pond to Wright's Tower. Bags, gloves, and verification of two community service hours will be provided. Meet at 2:00 sharp at the Bellevue Pond Parking Area (gate #5) at 68 South Border Road in Medford. Rain cancels. Call Linda at 617-803-3173 for more information.

## **Long Pond in Late Autumn**

**Friday, November 7, 2014**

**9:15 am – 11:30 am**

*Leader: Boot Boutwell.* We'll walk through the Long Pond area looking at the natural world as it prepares for winter. Will we see a few late blooming flowers? Will we find a few deciduous trees still hanging onto their leaves? Come along and find out! The walk will focus on plant ID as well as fun and interesting natural history. Meet at the Long Pond Parking Lot on South Border Road in Winchester (approximately 532 S. Border Rd). Steady rain cancels. All walks are open to the public and free of charge. For more information, call Boot Boutwell at 781-729-4712.

## **Animal Habitats Walk on the Rock Circuit Trail**

**Sunday, November 9, 2014**

**10:00 am – Noon**

*Leader: Pete Costello of Zoo New England.* Join Pete for a family-friendly walk to explore and discuss animal and bird habitats, nests and animal signs in the Fells. Walking will be Easy to Moderate. Bring water and binoculars. Meet at 10:00 am at the Flynn Rink parking area on Woodland Rd. in Medford (300 Elm Street — on the corner of Elm Street and Woodland Road). Rain cancels. Email Pete at pbearl@yahoo.com for more information.

## **Over, Under and In: Using Waterpower along Spot Pond Brook**

**Thursday, November 13, 2014**

**7:00 pm**

*Presenter: Ryan Hayward, Industrial Eden project; sponsored by the Malden Public Library.* Water quenched human thirst, beautified land and powered mills machinery for hundreds of years. It was the lifeblood of the regional economy and it was here that the real Industrial Revolution began. Join us for an exploration of the story of Spot Pond Brook as it was altered and improved to suit the industrial community's needs of Haywardville, Melrose and Malden. Meet at the Malden Public Library, 36 Salem Street, Malden.

**To confirm that these walks are going on as scheduled, check the "Events Calendar" at [friendsofthefells.org](http://friendsofthefells.org).**

# BABES IN THE WOODS



Young naturalists (Sarah Maisonneuve)

## SEPTEMBER

Hike and Seek is from 10am-10:45am; Babes hikes are from 11am-noon

Trails will not accommodate strollers.

### September 2

#### Hike and Seek – Quarter Mile Pond

Meet at Flynn Rink, 300 Elm Street (on the corner of Elm Street and Woodland Road), Medford.

#### Babes in the Woods – Woodland Path Trail

Meet at Flynn Rink, 300 Elm Street (on the corner of Elm Street and Woodland Road), Medford.

### September 9

#### Hike and Seek – Bellevue Pond

Meet at Bellevue Pond parking lot, 68 South Border Rd., Medford.

#### Babes in the Woods – Bellevue Pond to Panther Cave

Meet at Bellevue Pond parking lot, 68 South Border Rd., Medford.

### September 16

#### Hike and Seek – Spot Pond

Meet at the DCR Botume House Visitor Center, 4 Woodland Rd., Stoneham. Parking is also available at Spot Pond Boating.

#### Babes in the Woods – Spot Pond Stroll

Meet at the DCR Botume House Visitor Center, 4 Woodland Rd., Stoneham. Parking is also available at Spot Pond Boating.

### September 23

#### Hike and Seek – Whip Hill

Meet at the Greenwood Park parking lot, 144-150 Pond St., Stoneham, across from the Stone Zoo.

#### Babes in the Woods – Crystal Spring to Virginia Wood

Meet at the Greenwood Park parking lot, 144-150 Pond St., Stoneham, across from the Stone Zoo.

### September 30

#### Hike and Seek – Sheepfold

Meet at the Sheepfold parking lot, 698 Fellsway West, off Fellsway/West/Route 28, Stoneham.

#### Babes in the Woods – Sheepfold to Bear Hill

Meet at the Sheepfold parking lot, 698 Fellsway West, off Fellsway/West/Route 28, Stoneham.



## What's the difference between Babes and Hike and Seek walks?

### Babes in the Woods hikes

Through September, these will be adult paced hikes designed for parents who carry their children, and will not be appropriate for young children who walk. Beginning in October and continuing through the colder months, Babes in the Woods will accommodate hikers of all ages for slower paced hikes.

### Hike and Seek walks

These hikes will be offered through September. Hike 'n seek is an opportunity for young hikers and their parents to explore the Fells through nature themed scavenger hunts. For parents with children young enough to carry on a conventional hike through the woods, please join us for our Babes in the Woods hike at 11am!

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# OCTOBER

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**Babes hikes are from 10:00 am - 11:30 am**

**These hikes are appropriate for children of all ages.  
Trails will not accommodate strollers.**

### October 7

#### **Babes in the Woods – Long Pond Nature Trail**

Meet at the Long Pond parking lot, 532 South Border Rd., Winchester.

### October 14

#### **Babes in the Woods – Woodland Path Trail**

Meet at Flynn Rink, 300 Elm Street (on the corner of Elm Street and Woodland Road), Medford.

### October 21

#### **Babes in the Woods – Bellevue Pond to Panther Cave**

Meet at Bellevue Pond parking lot, 68 South Border Rd., Medford.

### October 28

#### **Babes in the Woods – Spot Pond Stroll**

Meet at the DCR Botume House Visitor Center, 4 Woodland Rd., Stoneham. Parking is also available at Spot Pond Boating.

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# NOVEMBER

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**Babes hikes are from 10:00 am - 11:30 am**

**These hikes are appropriate for children of all ages.  
Trails will not accommodate strollers.**

### November 4

#### **Babes in the Woods – Crystal Spring to Virginia Wood**

Meet at the Greenwood Park parking lot, 144-150 Pond St., Stoneham, across from the Stone Zoo.

### November 11

#### **Babes in the Woods – Sheepfold to Bear Hill**

Meet at the Sheepfold parking lot, 698 Fellsway West, off Fellsway/West/Route 28, Stoneham.

### November 18

#### **Babes in the Woods – Long Pond Nature Trail**

Meet at the Long Pond parking lot, 532 South Border Rd., Winchester.

### November 25

#### **Babes in the Woods – Woodland Path Trail**

Meet at Flynn Rink, 300 Elm Street (on the corner of Elm Street and Woodland Road), Medford.



# What is Babes in the Woods?

**Are you home on mornings with young children?** Come for a walk in the woods with Friends of the Middlesex Fells.

Children of all ages are welcome, whether they are hanging out in a carrier, or tromping through the woods on their own two feet. Hike leaders will point out interesting sights and sounds unique to that day's trail. Please note these hikes are not suitable for strollers. See previous page for information on **Hike and Seek walks** which run throughout the summer!

See weekly calendar section for hike dates and locations. Rain or snow cancels. No dogs please. All hikes are drop-in format — no pre-registration is required. Hikes are always free, but we encourage you to become a Friends of the Fells member to help support these programs.

**Additional walks:** Please check our website calendar found at [www.fells.org](http://www.fells.org) for updates about additional Babes in the Woods hikes, and to confirm weekly schedules.

**Program Note** Please download and fill out the liability release form linked to the Friends of the Fells website on the Babes in the Woods Information page. Bring the waiver to your next hike and give to the hike leader.

**Babes in the Woods is co-sponsored** by the Friends of the Middlesex Fells, the Medford Family Network, the North Suburban Family Network, the Malden/Everett Family Network, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

**Questions?** Call the Friends at 781-662-2340, or go to [www.fells.org](http://www.fells.org).



(Sarah Maisionneuve)



# Fells Volunteers make all the difference!

By Rich Sanford

**WITH MORE THAN 3,000 ACRES AND MILES** of trails the Fells Reservation offers unparalleled opportunities for thousands of visitors to experience the beauty of nature each year. To help meet the challenge of keeping the Fells beautiful and welcoming, we are grateful to so many volunteers who have stepped forward to 'give back to the Fells' by participating in trail maintenance and clean up activities in coordination with the Fells DCR rangers.

In the 3 months since mid-April's Park Serve day, four different volunteer groups visited the Fells:

and cans, coffee cups and the occasional discarded clothing article.

- The **Melrose Freemasons Lodge** brought a group of 18 volunteers on June 28th to restore an area where a truckload of asphalt shingles and broken glass was illegally dumped several years ago.

Meanwhile, the new Friends Trail Adopter program is now in full swing! Fifteen individuals and groups have signed up to adopt trails or sites in the Fells. Several of them have already visited their adopted trails to brush back encroaching plants, remove trash, clear drainage

structures and improve the visibility of signage. Visitors throughout the Fells are enjoying a better experience on several trails this year thanks to the support of our Trail Adopters. You too can adopt a trail in the Fells! To find out how click the Protect drop down menu on [www.fells.org](http://www.fells.org)

On July 13th, Friends of the Fells volunteers assisted during

the third annual VERT Sasquatch Trail Race in the Fells and after the race ensured that Greenwood Park and the race route was left cleaner than we found it.

Looking forward, National Public Lands Day is coming up on Saturday, September 27th. The Friends will again host several volunteer opportunities throughout the reservation on that day. If you, your family or a group is interested in volunteering in the Fells please contact Rich Sanford ([volunteer@fells.org](mailto:volunteer@fells.org)) to plan an event that works for your schedule.

*Friends of the Fells board member Rich Sanford is Friends Volunteer Coordinator*



Melrose Freemasons Lodge group removes debris from Fells. (Rich Sanford)

- **Families from Grace Chapel** joined with Pete Costello on Saturday May 10th to clean up trash around Straw Point. The kids were delighted to find a large raccoon skull in the woods, and especially enjoyed balancing on the rocks while pulling trash from the pond.
- On May 31, eight energetic volunteers from the **New England Aquarium Live Blue** program came out to pull invasive garlic mustard plants around Virginia Wood and Crystal Spring. They removed trash, cleaned up a party site, and filled several large bags with garlic mustard.
- Four Scouts and 2 parents from **Medford Boy Scout Troop 416** came out on Saturday, June 7 to help clean up around the North Reservoir, collecting beer bottles



# Forest Kindergarten — Connecting kids with nature!

By Sarah Maisonneuve

**FOR MANY OF YOU READING THIS ARTICLE,** summer vacation as a child meant “going outside to play,” a phrase rarely uttered today in a society that is growing increasingly disconnected from nature. During the month of July, we piloted our new Forest Kindergarten program for children aged 4-6, designed to offer children the opportunity to meaningfully connect with nature in a way that most of us took for granted during our formative years. The program took place almost entirely outdoors for two and a half hours three days a week near the DCR Botume House in Stoneham, giving children the opportunity to grow familiar and comfortable with this particular corner of the Fells. This “place-based” approach was a critical component of the Forest Kindergarten, modeled after Cedarson Nature School in Washington state, the first outdoor nature school of its kind in the country.

We began each week of Forest Kindergarten by taking the children on a short hike (we called it “an adventure”) in the forest. In the beginning, we noticed the kids’ experience and tolerance for the creatures they found varied greatly — from those who fearlessly picked up every insect and worm they came across and matter-of-factly held them out for examination, to children who began crying at the sight and sound of numerous bees buzzing nearby. Over the course of the program, a

wonderful transformation began to take place. As the kids explored the same trails and hideouts each day, the forest grew more familiar to them, as did its inhabitants. Watching groups of bumble bees bounce around the flowers was now a familiar sight, and the little girl who had initially been driven into my arms in tears by their presence was buzzing her way around the forest pretending to be a bee herself by the end of the week. The children learned through experience that there is no reason to fear all the little creatures that share our planet, and it was such a pleasure to watch how easily and naturally they began to develop a connection with nature.

During the course of the program, not a single child ever complained about being bored, or about spending too much time outdoors. Without exception, parents told us that their children loved coming each day and were disappointed when the program ended! We are so delighted with the success of this program and are hopeful we will receive the funding to continue and expand it next summer. Many thanks to the families who joined us in this new adventure, and to both the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the North Suburban Community Health Alliance for making the program possible.

*Sarah Maisonneuve is Friends of the Fells Board member and Youth Program Director*



*(Sarah Maisonneuve)*

# September brings 4th annual Fells Art Month!

September is Fells Arts Month at the Beebe Estate Gallery  
235 West Foster Street, Melrose.

This year's theme is *Nature, our most precious resource*. The show features art of over 20 artists of various media from around the region depicting nature being celebrated, nature under threat, and nature being preserved.

During Fells Art month the film *Trashed* will be screened. In this 2012 documentary, Jeremy Irons sets out to discover the extent and effects of the global waste problem, as he travels around the world to beautiful destinations tainted by pollution. This is a meticulous, brave investigative journey that takes Irons (and us) from skepticism to sorrow and from horror to hope. The film was selected to receive a Special Screening at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival.

Opening reception is September 5 from 7-9 pm. Gallery hours are held each Saturday in September from 11am to 3pm.

For more information, visit [www.fells.org](http://www.fells.org)  
or call the Friends of the Fells at 781-662-2340



TOP: Suzanne Owayda — *Blue Heron*, mosaic  
RIGHT: Michelle Rial – *Bird*, brushed fused glass

## Friends Volunteer Spotlight



Volunteer Lindsay Beal with daughter, Fiona  
(photo courtesy Lindsay Beal)

"I love volunteering for the Friends of the Fells! Sure, you can help people, make friends, and implement your ideas with nearly any volunteer opportunity, but here, you can get a workout, spot and save wildlife, bring your kids, and trade granola recipes. Come join us!"

**Name:** Lindsay Beal

**Town:** Stoneham

**Profession:** stay-at-home-part time supervisor for two little adventurers; freelance writer and editor

**Volunteer Since:** June 2010

**Volunteer Role:** Active on the parental advisory board for Babes in the Woods; helped to coordinate the fundraising effort that allowed the Friends to hire Sarah Maisonneuve, our Youth Program Director. Lindsay regularly leads Hike and Seek and Babes in the Woods hikes.

**Quote:** "I love volunteering for the Friends of the Fells! Sure, you can help people, make friends, and implement your ideas with nearly any volunteer opportunity, but here, you can get a workout, spot and save wildlife, bring your kids, and trade granola recipes. Come join us!"

*To volunteer with Friends of the Fells, email [volunteer@fells.org](mailto:volunteer@fells.org)*





# Mystic Mural Artists Feature Fells Nature

*continued from front cover*



*(photos by David Fichter)*

Formerly just an obtrusive overpass, the section near the Apartments on Mystic Avenue has become a window into the natural beauty of the Mystic Watershed!

Each year David and his students focus on a new aspect of the watershed and paint another section of the mural. This year the focus was on native plants, a topic that brought the group around the watershed to discover local flora. For the first two weeks, the students took trips to different natural hot spots, learning as much about plants as they could, sketching their favorites along the way. They discovered the beautiful Canada Lily flower, curious names like Enchanter's Nightshade and Self Heal, and the edible properties of Cat Tails. Destinations this year included Belle Isle Marsh, Horn Pond, the length of the Mystic River, and different spots around the Fells Reservation. The next four weeks were spent designing and painting panels off-site.

In the process students had the opportunity to learn from various educators. At Belle Isle Marsh, they toured with environmental educators to learn about the marsh's unique ecosystem. At the Fells Bellevue Pond they met with Tufts professor and botanist, George Ellmore, to learn about local edible plants, which proved to be a surprisingly satisfying lesson. They also met with botanist and Friends of the Fells board chairman, Bryan Hamlin, to learn about the many native plants that can be found in areas of the reservation. Bryan helped the group determine which plants should be featured in the mural in which areas, in addition to offering the group a wealth of information about various plant species.

Although the Mystic Watershed contains a surprisingly diverse array of natural spots, one of the most important resources for this project has been the Fells. The Fells provided the students the majority of the plant species that will go into



the mural, and is the only spot to offer such a grand look into a forest ecosystem. Through the Fells, the students have learned how different plants interact with each other and obtained a glimpse into the beauty of nature. With the help of these talented students, the beauty of the watershed will be brought to the Somerville community for all to enjoy on their daily commute.

*Anna Miller, Environmental Educator for the Mystic Mural Project, would like to thank all of the wonderful people who care for the Fells Reservation, especially Bryan Hamlin who showed all the reservation has to offer.*





“Urban Wilds are natural landscapes. Either they are what nature has shaped through depositions, erosion, glaciation and other processes, or they are what nature has fashioned in taking back landscapes people had made for farming, for their estates, or in quarrying stone to raise the built city... Urban Wilds are taken as we find them, because they are places where nature can shape us.” —Boston Natural Areas Network

## HELP NOW: Donate to The Friends of The Middlesex Fells

Your contribution to the Friends of the Middlesex Fells will help preserve this priceless landscape for the enjoyment of this and future generations! We truly need your financial help in dealing with the proposed development which threatens the very essence of the Fells. Your support for Friends programs benefits Fells visitors of all ages.

### Donation Levels

- \$1000 and above: Protector — my contribution is \_\_\_\_\_
- \$500-\$999: Advocate — my contribution is \_\_\_\_\_
- \$100-\$499: Conserver — my contribution is \_\_\_\_\_
- \$10-\$99: Associate — my contribution is \_\_\_\_\_

Instead of mailing a check you may now contribute online! Click 'Support' on [www.fells.org](http://www.fells.org).

The Friends of the Middlesex Fells is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible. Check with your employer's Human Resources Department to see if they will match your gift.

## JOIN US: Become a member of the Friends of the Middlesex Fells

- New Membership (includes trail map!)     Renewal

Which level would you like to join?

- Life Member \$1,000       Sponsor \$100       Individual \$25       Corporate \$500
- Benefactor \$500       Supporter \$50       Senior \$15
- Patron \$200       Family \$25       Student \$15

All but \$50 of Life Memberships are tax-deductible. All but \$5 of Annual Memberships are tax-deductible.

Donate online, or make checks payable to the Friends of the Middlesex Fells and mail this form to:  
Friends of the Middlesex Fells, 235 West Foster Street, Melrose, MA 02176

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Please print legibly.

Personal information is not released for any purpose.

Please add friends@fells.org to your email address book to prevent email blocking.

- Check here if you would like to receive the Friends of the Middlesex Fells volunteer opportunities questionnaire.

\$4 Trail Map describing scenic and natural features found in the Fells.

\$3 *Creation of the Middlesex Fells* by Michael Ryan, executive director, Friends of the Middlesex Fells

\$4 *The Middlesex Fells: An 1898 article* by William de las Casas

\$10 *Changes in the Flora of the Middlesex Fells*, a reprint of the 2012 Rhodora article with a complete list of plant species and habitats.

\$18 Friends of Middlesex Fells Fox T-shirt (Please visit [www.fells.org](http://www.fells.org) for details)

\$8 Pack of 4 Fells postcards: Lawrence Woods Pond, Spot Pond, Spot Pond Brook, Ravine Road Hemlock Grove

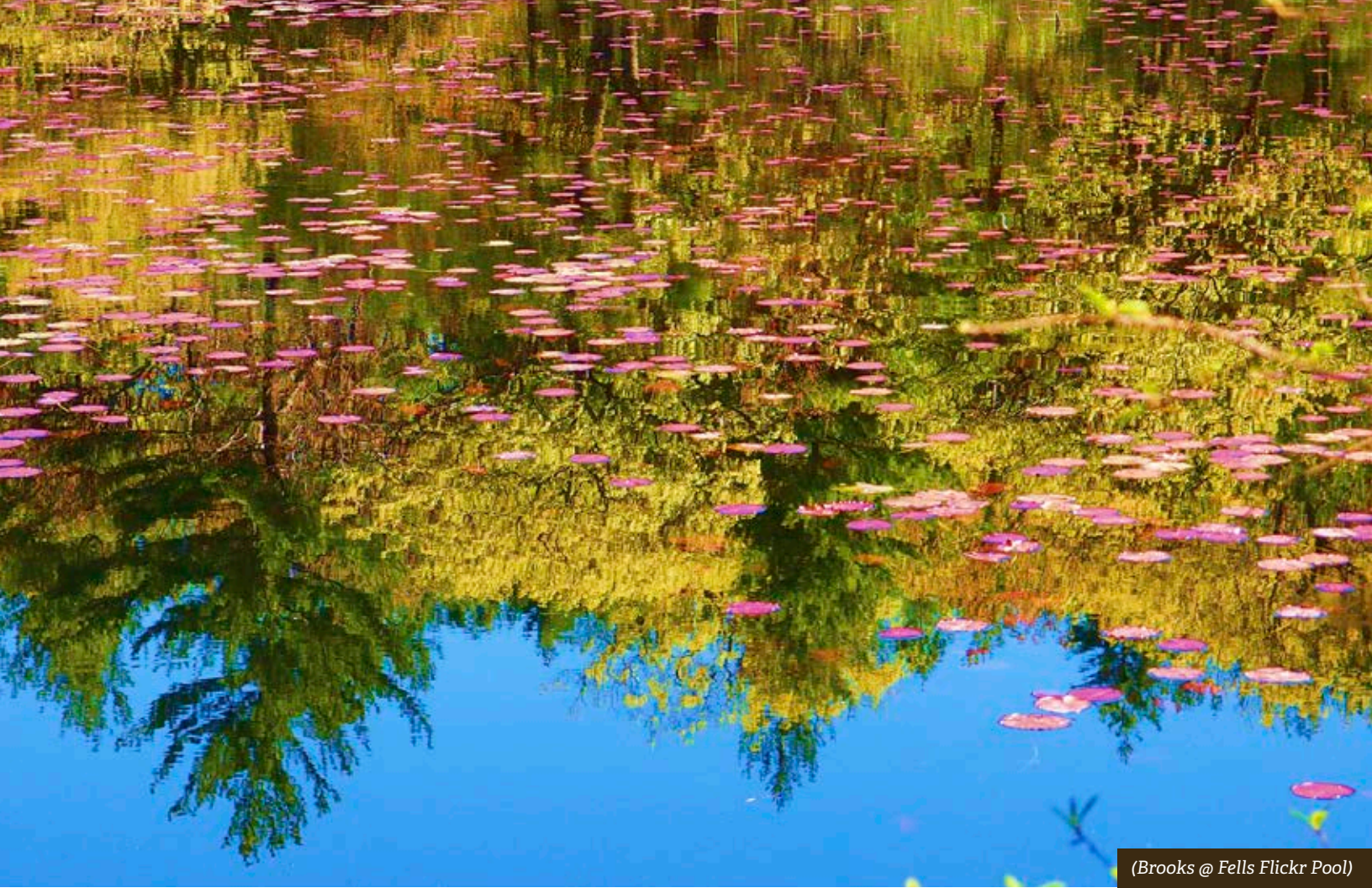
*All prices include shipping and handling.*

*Contact the Friends of the Fells for wholesale prices.*

### Friends of the Middlesex Fells Board

Bryan Hamlin/Chair; Sandra Pascal/Vice Chair; Mike Ryan/Executive Director; Heidi Kelf/Secretary; Mike Oliver/Treasurer; Mayor Robert Dolan; Bob Ghika, Walter Kittredge; Dana M. Jewell; Carol McKinley; Rich Sanford; Bob Weggel, Sarah Maisonneuve, Pete Costello, and Noah Kaplan





(Brooks @ Fells Flickr Pool)

Return Service Requested

If you would like to receive Friends of Fells email updates on program changes, breaking news or alerts, please send your email address to [friends@fells.org](mailto:friends@fells.org).



## News of the Fells Fall 2014

Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation | 235 West Foster Street | Melrose, MA 02176  
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