



Friends of the Fells News

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.

Issue 1, March 2016



Photo by Mike Dealmonc

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Signs of Early Spring

It is difficult to believe that it is almost springtime all ready. Despite more than a few disappointed cross-country ski and snowshoe enthusiasts, we had a terrific winter. As you will see, we have many exciting things happening in the month ahead with more to come including our Annual Meeting (we will send a save the date in next months e-news), Park Serve Day on April 30th, and Freedom Trail's Hidden Treasures Week from May 14th -22nd when we will have one or more events offered every day of the week.

We hope to see you at one of our March Fun-Raisers or out on the trails. As always, thank you for your continued support of the Friends of the Middlesex Fells!



Photos by Gillian Badwan

A Visit from our Feathered Friends

The Botume House has had some great visitors this Winter, including a Juvenile Red-Tailed Hawk featured to the left.





Photo by Mike Ryan

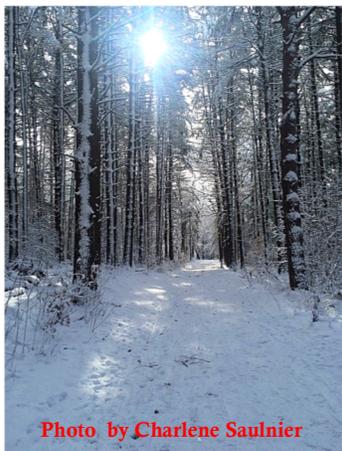


Photo by Charlene Saulnier



Photo by Mike Ryan

Mustangs of the Fells

“Mustangs of the Fells has had a significant impact on our entire school community. Students, parents, and faculty members have been energized by the idea that we can, and should be venturing into the Fells. The Mustangs of the Fells has far exceeded our initial expectations.”

-Dr. John Perrella, Headmaster at Medford High School

The Mustangs of the Fells program was launched in September and is currently funded through a grant from Medford Health Matters. To date, 25 students have been regularly involved with this program, and the number is growing exemplified by new students who are joining outings following the conclusion of Fall and Winter sports seasons. Student participants reported in a mid-year program review that they are surprised by the magnitude of the Fells and impressed

with all they can do and learn. Some students new to the Fells reported increased comfort levels with engaging with nature.

Some of the projects students have engaged in through this pilot in three short months include: 1) participated in hands on/field based map reading exercises; 2) hiked round trip to Pine Hill Tower and Bear Hill Tower; 3) used Mass GIS maps and GPS units to locate and document potential vernal pools; 4) participated in

stalking and awareness games such as Keeper of the Keys, Meet a Tree, Camouflage, and Rope Walk; 5) participated in owls of the Fells ID program and Tracking and Mammals Study program with DCR; and 6) performed service based field activities including a trail beautification day. Participants also greeted and gave a presentation to Friends of the Fells supporters at the Friends’ First Annual Donor Brunch in December.

Forest Kindergarten

Forest Kindergarten incorporates “total nature emersion, interest-led flow learning, emergent curriculum, open-ended questioning teaching style, and authentic play. (<http://cedarsongnatureschool.org>)” The philosophy is rooted in the idea that children benefit both physically and psychologically from opportunities to engage in

unstructured, outdoor play and exploration. Children enjoy opportunities to get regular physical exercise outdoors, while learning about the different plants and animal species they encounter in the Fells.

Stay tuned: next month we will post registration information. Like last year, members will be able to register in advance and receive a program fee



discount. We also anticipate expanding. We seek to initiate a new 1-week trial program for children ages 7-9 and 10-12. For more information please email neil@friendsofthefells.org

The Return of the Marbled Salamander



"Conservationists are doing important work...going beyond traditional conservation goals of stopping endangered species from becoming extinct. Instead, they are leading the rare opportunity to restore one of our lost native species."

The Marbled salamander is a large and handsome amphibian, which reaches the northern edge of its global range in Massachusetts and extreme southern New Hampshire. The marbled salamander is also the rarest amphibian (frogs and salamanders) in Massachusetts and is listed as a threatened species in the Bay State. Locally, marbled salamanders were once widespread north of Boston but have almost disappeared from eastern Massachusetts.

A denizen of rocky forests with scattered vernal pools, it is believed marbled salamanders were probably common in the Middlesex Fells when European settlers arrived. Unfortunately, the species disappeared from the Fells before the middle of the 20th Century. Today, with its vigorous and regrown forests and abundant wetlands, the Middlesex Fells once again offers great habitat for marbled salamanders and many other salamander and frog species. Herpetologist Matt Gage has documented more than 100 vernal pools in

the area. These will provide excellent breeding habitat for marbled salamanders. The nearest sizable population of this rare species is, however, in the Blue Hills south of Boston. There is no chance that the salamanders can repopulate the Fells on their own.

That's where Medford High School and a Massachusetts non-profit conservation organization, Grassroots Wildlife Conservation (GWC), come in. Working with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and Zoo New England, GWC captured 60 newly hatched salamander larvae from a frigid vernal pool in Holyoke this past December. Students and teachers of Medford High School and by GWC staff and volunteers have raised these young salamanders.

In the past couple of weeks, most of the salamanders have metamorphosed from gilled larvae to air-breathing salamanders, ready to soon begin their lives in rocky woodlands. Students, teachers, and GWC staff

have begun scouting the Middlesex Fells to identify the best possible release sites for the salamanders. This spring, these special salamander "pioneers" will be released to live and breed in the Middlesex Fells.

Together, these conservationists are doing important work. They are



The Marbled Salamander, "A Handsome Amphibian"

going beyond traditional conservation goals of stopping endangered species from becoming extinct. Instead, they are leading the rare opportunity to restore one of our lost native species.

Volunteer Spotlight: Diana Lomakin

“Making a difference doing something that matters...”

Diana recently shared her motivation and inspiration for her outstanding service- *“I have vivid memories of scrambling up to the top of Mount Monadnock when I was very young. My love of hiking has always been present, but it’s only been the last few years that I’ve made an effort to do it regularly. My husband and I typically go to the White Mountains once a month. We are very fortunate that a park as big as the Fells is so close, and have been going there for years, whenever we’re in the mood for a day hike.*

Recently, I went through a reflective phase, and realized that I wanted to do something more meaningful with my life. Thinking about how much I loved nature as a kid, and how I much have always valued the environment and sustainability, I decided to join the Fells as a member.



Diana is a professional font designer from Arlington, Massachusetts who began working as a Friends of the Fells volunteer in 2015.

I took a guided hike with Boot Boutwell, and was totally inspired by his enthusiasm. Next, I signed up as a volunteer, feeling I was on the right path (no pun intended).

I love exploring, finding the beauty in details, and learning about the forest. I feel so happy and free when I’m in the Fells, and I hope that I can help others to feel that same joy. If people experience why parks are so magnificent, maybe they will be inspired to live in better harmony with nature.

The last few months, I have been assisting on the Babes in the Woods Hike. It’s been great catching moments with my camera: parents and their children sharing smiles, identifying animal tracks, and finding fascinating plant life. I’ve also been helping with the website, and am aiming to do more. I feel like I’m making a difference, and for something that genuinely matters to me.

Do you know a volunteer deserving of recognition? Please email your suggestions to Lindsay at lindsay@yarsley.com

Friends of the Fells March “Fun”raisers

Jay Campbell’s Medford Night @ Boston Celtics

Boston, Monday, March 21st, 2016—Typically when we tell you to “Think Green” we are referring to the environment. Well, when you “Think Green” on March 21st, we want you to think of the Boston Celtics. Usually when we talk about “shoots” we’re referring to the early spring plant growth we’re already watching for. On March 21st the only

shoots we want you to be thinking of are the ones that happen between the dribble and the basket! The Friends will be the beneficiary of the Celtics 50/50 raffle and receive 33% of the proceeds from tickets we sell.

Dine Out with the Friends of Friends

Medford, Wednesday, March 2nd, 2016-Dine Out for a Cause at Margaritas on March for great

food, great company, and a great time. 20% of your check will be donated to the Friends of the Fells. Reservations recommended for Margaritas. Please call 339-221-5410.

For information on these events or to purchase tickets to the Celtics, please call 781-662-2340 or visit us at

friendsofthefells.org

CALENDAR

March 1st, "The Wilderness in Our Midst" – *The Joys and Benefits of Engaging in Activities in the Fells* by Executive Director, Neil Anderson, Charles Saulnier, Friends of the Fells Board of Directors and Mustangs of the Fells Coordinator, and Doug Heath, co-author of Middlesex Fells. Winchester Public Library, 80 Washington Street 7:00 pm – 8:45 pm.

March 4th, Let's March forth toward Spring! Join DCR Interpretive Coordinator Gillian Badwan for a hike to celebrate forthcoming Daylight Savings. Appropriate for adults and kids old enough to keep pace (7+). Meet at the Long Pond Parking lot in Winchester (532 South Border Road). For more information, please call Gillian at 617-372-6730.

March 5th, 'First Saturday' Fells Running Club, Let's go for a winter run through the Fells! 3-5 miles loop. Manageable pace. All abilities are welcome! Meet by 8:00am at the Botume House, at 4 Woodland Rd. in Stoneham. Dress for the weather. Call Rich at 617-335-7310 or email rich@friendsofthefells.

March 13th, Animal Habitat Hike. 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. Rain cancels. Email Pete at pbeararl@yahoo.com for more information.

Saturday Morning Fells Hikes, March 5th and March 12th, 8:30 am – 10:00 am, Easy to moderate. Features different Fells locations. Join DCR Interpretive Coordinator Gillian Badwan to learn more about some of your favorite trails for birding, jogging, hiking, and more. Appropriate for adults or kids old enough to keep pace (generally 7+) For more information, please call Gillian at 617-372-6730. For the March 5th hike, please meet at Greenwood Park (across from the Stone Zoo and for the March 12th hike, please meet at the Flynn Rink

March 22nd, Signs of Spring at Long Pond, The vernal equinox has come and gone and spring has arrived. We will see if we can find any signs of spring on a walk down to Long Pond. 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. Steady rain or heavy snow cancels. These walks are free of charge and open to the public. For more information about this walk, call Boot Boutwell at 781-729-4712. To confirm that this walk is going on as scheduled, check the "Hikes and Events Calendar" on the Friends of the Fells website at www.fells.org

Babes in the Woods Hikes
10 am until 11:30 am

March 2nd-Meet at Gate 16-Wyman Path. Nearest address is 83 Hillcrest Parkway, Winchester. On-street parking.

March 9th-Meet at the Bellevue Pond parking area, 68 South Border Road Medford.

March 16th-Meet at the Sheepfold parking area, 698 Fellsway West (Route 28) Stoneham.

March 23rd-Meet at the Greenwood Park parking lot, Pond Street in Stoneham (across from the Stone Zoo)

March 30th-Park at the stone house at 1 Woodland Road, Stoneham. Intersection of Pond Street and Woodland Road. (If you're leaving the Botume House to go to Greenwood Park or the zoo, the house will be on your right halfway down Woodland).

Notes: 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! Contact Gillian Badwan at gillianbadwan@gmail.com for more information.

Join DCR and the Friends of the Breakheart Reservation for some Maple 'Sugarin'

The Friends of the Breakheart Reservation and Department of Conservation and Recreation have extended an invitation to the Friends of the Fells to join them for this very popular annual event. Learn all about Maple Sugarin' from tapping a tree to sampling maple syrup on pancakes.

Sunday, March 13th, Pancake Breakfast, 9 am until noon. Enjoy a breakfast at Breakheart for only a \$5.00 donation to the Friends of Breakheart. Includes juice, coffee, sausage, and pancakes with real maple syrup of course.

Sunday, March 19th, Pancake Breakfast, 9 am until noon. Enjoy a breakfast at Breakheart for only a \$5.00 donation to the Friends of Breakheart. Includes juice, coffee, sausage, and pancakes with real maple syrup of course. Breakfast followed by a tour of the maple sugarin' process including the history of maple sugaring, tree identification, wood splitting, and sugar shack.

For more information, please call 781-233-0834. To schedule a school group visit during that week, please call 617-727-1199.



A message from our friends at Whole Foods

"Enjoy a night out at UNOs in Burlington! Say you're with Whole Foods Market and for the whole month of March UNOs will donate 10% of your meal to the Whole Planet Foundation which gives microloans to women in developing countries to help them start their own businesses"



Join Us for a Run!

*The Friends of the Fells Running Club Meets
on the 1st Saturday of each month.*

In November, a new Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation program was born. The Friends running club welcomes runners of all ages and abilities and enjoys highly scenic running tours (typically 3-5 miles) of the Fells at various locations. Please contact the Club's founder and our Board Chair Rich Sanford at rich@friendsofthefells.org for more information. Please see page 5. for information about March runs.

Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, Inc.

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[Recipient]

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