



## THE FELLS: FOREVER THE PEOPLE'S FOREST PARK

# Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation

## Position Paper: Fells Reservation 90mm Meadow / Hockey Rink Proposal

September 28, 2018

The Friends oppose construction of a hockey rink facility in the 90mm meadow and Ramshead Hill areas of the Middlesex Fells Reservation near the Winchester/Medford border. This site is part of a 125-year-old conservation area, part of the Greater Boston Metropolitan Park System, the oldest of its kind in the world.

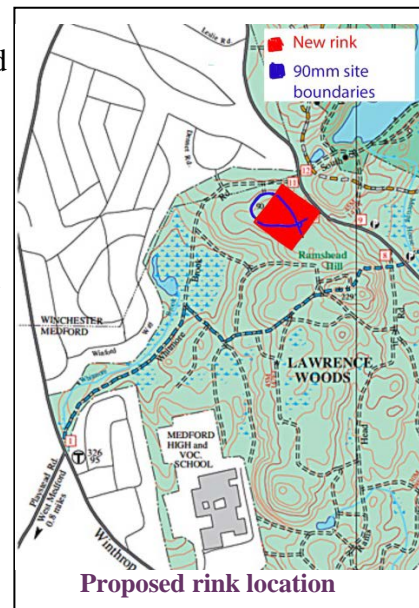
**Traffic:** A hockey rink on this site would bring unacceptable traffic levels and alterations to South Border Road, a historic parkway listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The facility would also negatively affect a large neighborhood that abuts the Fells immediately to the west.

**Nature:** This project would erase 50 years of hard work by volunteers and MDC/DCR staff to return the abandoned military site to its natural state and a recent project that created a vibrant meadow rich in birds and pollinators, including butterflies and bees. It would eliminate an area of critical natural resources supporting high levels of biodiversity with over 130 plant species, 67 butterfly species, and an Audubon Important Bird Area.

**Ecological Services:** The meadow and forest soak up water, reducing sudden flows of runoff that lead to flash floods during heavy rains. There are already flooding issues in the nearby Winford Way area in Winchester, and climate change is predicted to increase the frequency of severe rain events. Preserving natural spaces and undeveloped areas is critical to mitigate these effects and ensure climate resiliency.

**Education:** The 90mm meadow provides hands-on educational experiences for many young people and families. A Medford Girl Scout troop has been working to maintain this site for the last year, and other Girl Scout troops have volunteered to continue that work. Students from Medford High School visit this site as part of their environmental curriculum. The Medford High Football Team and Tufts students have also participated in conservation projects in this area.

**Recreation:** Contrary to the description by the rink promoters, there is only a small area with asphalt and concrete foundations in the 90mm meadow site, both of which have been almost entirely reclaimed by nature. The site is primarily a rocky summit meadow surrounded by oak forest through which a network of multiuse trails extends to Ramshead Hill. Recreation is a vital part of our community; however, this proposed use would destroy a valuable ecological, community, and educational resource, and is not appropriate for this location.



Recent use of the 90 mm meadow in the Middlesex Fells Reservation:



**Medford Girl Scout Troop #75198 begin work at 90 mm meadow**



**Incoming Tufts first-year students volunteer at 90 mm meadow**