



Paulsen Recounts Building Minuteman Trail

By Sumner Brown

I recently talked with Anne Paulsen about her experiences as state representative getting bike paths built. Anne was state representative for Belmont and parts of Arlington and Cambridge from 1992 to 2007.

BCF I know you bicycle and you bicycled to the State House. How many State Reps bicycled to Beacon Hill?

AP Some walked and a few took public transportation, but I was the only bicyclist. I did not bicycle in winter, but my husband bicycled year round.

BCF What route did you take?

AP From Cambridge I would cross the Charles River at JFK or the pedestrian bridge or Western Avenue and then use the bike path beside Storrow Drive. Then I left the path at the Arthur Fiedler overpass.

BCF You do not need bike paths to bicycle. Neither do I. Why bike paths?

AP I do not need bike paths, but they are wonderful, especially for young people. People can enjoy recreational exercise without the danger of traffic. They support a range of activities: walkers, runners, people pushing baby carriages. The new path from Brighton Street to Alewife Station is a wonderful asset for Belmont. That path shortens the trip to Alewife for many Belmont commuters.

BCF You had a lot to do with that path. When did it get started?

AP The first funding for the Alewife to Belmont path came with help from Joseph Kennedy III when he was our US Representative, more than 20 years ago. It was part of a transportation bond bill. I was involved with that. Back then there was an unofficial path used by people



WALTHAM LAND TRUST

This abandoned rail line in Waltham has been designated a future segment of the Mass Central Rail Trail in Waltham.

going from Brighton Street to Alewife but it was unpaved, rough, and frankly scary at night. The unimproved path along the abandoned railroad was there for as long as I can remember.

BCF Twenty years? Why did it take so long?

AP Twenty years ago no one was sure who owned pieces of land that had been the Central Massachusetts Railroad and that were needed for the path. There were questions of whether the old railroad right-of-way was really completely abandoned. Ownership research took time.

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Belmont Citizens Forum Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that strives to maintain the small-town atmosphere of Belmont, Massachusetts, by preserving its natural and historical resources, limiting traffic growth, and enhancing pedestrian safety. We do this by keeping residents informed about planning and zoning issues, by participating actively in public hearings, and by organizing forums. Our *Newsletter* is published six times a year, in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Published material represents the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Belmont Citizens Forum. Letters to the editor may be sent to P. O. Box 609, Belmont MA 02478 or to info@belmontcitizensforum.org.

Then ownership had to be transferred from the MBTA to the Division of Conservation and Recreation. Then the DCR was not sure what to do about Alewife Reservation. Then DCR and Alewife Reservation land became involved in the Cambridge project to separate storm sewers and sanitary sewers.

During this time the DCR developed a master plan for the Alewife Reservation which helped to resolve many issues needed for the path. I worked with the Secretary of Environmental Affairs to obtain the funding needed for the plan.

The DiGiovanni family owned one piece of land needed in Belmont. Angelo Firenze worked diligently to secure that piece. Once everyone agreed about what to build, we had to wait in line for state transportation funds. Will Brownsberger was instrumental on this, working with the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Finally, the path could not be completed until the constructed wetlands for Cambridge stormwater treatment was finished.

BCF I think the constructed wetlands beside the path is wonderful, but some people objected.

AP That's right, use of undeveloped Alewife Reservation land to build the wetland was disputed. The opposing parties confronted their differences over a period of time and reach[ed] agreements. Cambridge has gone the extra mile with the paths and boardwalks. I believe that when a project has opposition and the parties are forced to reach an agreement, the results are improved.

BCF One problem you did not have was adjacent homeowners concerned with privacy and crime, right?

AP We did not have opposition from adjacent property owners. But I was involved with that for the Minuteman Bikeway. I knocked on doors in Arlington campaigning for state rep in 1992 and I met people who were very concerned about the Minuteman path that was about to open. Of course, after it opened, people found

it raised their property values and there was no vandalism. Then people loved it.

It changed the way people think about streets. Now streets are for all users—pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles.

BCF Beside bike paths, you also wrote legislation that is responsible for the bike lanes on Pleasant Street. They are narrow, but they make me feel much more comfortable.

AP In 1996 I sponsored legislation that requires state-funded street projects to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. There was a backlash, but after two years of various stakeholders working together, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation produced a new highway design manual. Luisa Paiewonsky, a constituent of mine who was MassDOT Highway Division Administrator, supervised that rewrite.

It changed the way people think about streets. Now streets are for all users—pedestrians, bicycles and motor vehicles.

Massachusetts received an award for leading highway design for all road users. Unfortunately, the guidelines in the new design manual are

not always followed. Organizations such as Mass Bike and Walk Boston still need to be vigilant to make sure bicycles and pedestrians get accommodated.

Cambridge is doing excellent road work for bicycles.

I do not want people to feel that they have to drive their cars to a bike path to enjoy bicycling on bike paths. For commuting, bicycling on roads cannot be avoided.

BCF Is there anything else you can tell people about building bike paths?

AP Building bike paths takes a lot of people and a long time.

Sumner Brown is a bicyclist and a director of the Belmont Citizens Forum.

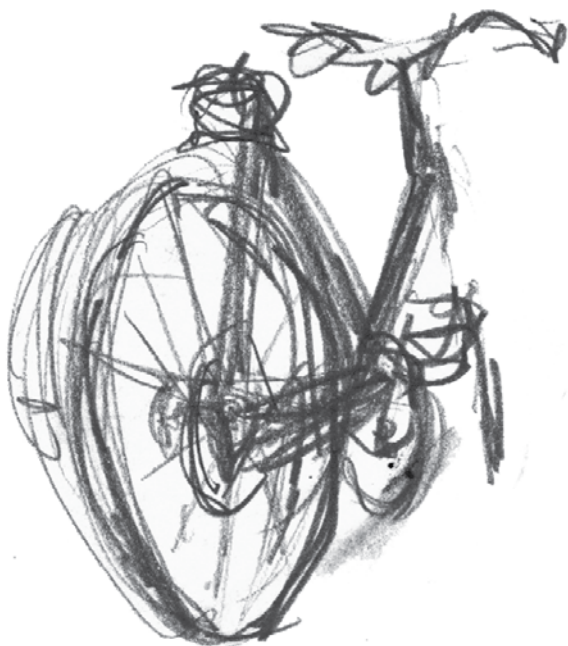
Belmont Community Path Forum

Wednesday, January 22, 7-8:30 p.m.
Beech Street Center, 266 Beech Street,
Belmont

The Belmont Board of Selectmen in collaboration with the Community Path Advisory Committee (CPAC) will host a public forum to solicit questions and feedback on a potential future community path in Belmont. The forum will focus on topics and questions related to potential Belmont Community Path routes. All members of the community are welcome to attend.

This public forum will include a brief overview of CPAC, descriptions of the proposed routes as well as privacy, security, and screening options under consideration, and an opportunity for residents to submit written and verbal questions to both the Board of Selectmen and the CPAC.

For more information, see the CPAC web site: Belmont-ma.gov/Public_Documents/BelmontMA_BComm/CPAC/CPAC.



SUSAN JONES

Regional Bike Path Network is Growing

By Meg Muckenhoupt

Boston's regional network of bicycle paths is expanding rapidly. In 2013 land purchases and funding votes in Watertown, Needham, Concord, and Sudbury supported a growing system of off-road paths for commuting, shopping, and recreation.

For Belmont riders, the most important path development in 2013 was the purchase of land for the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway. The City of Cambridge used \$200,000 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds in May to purchase a former B&M Railroad corridor

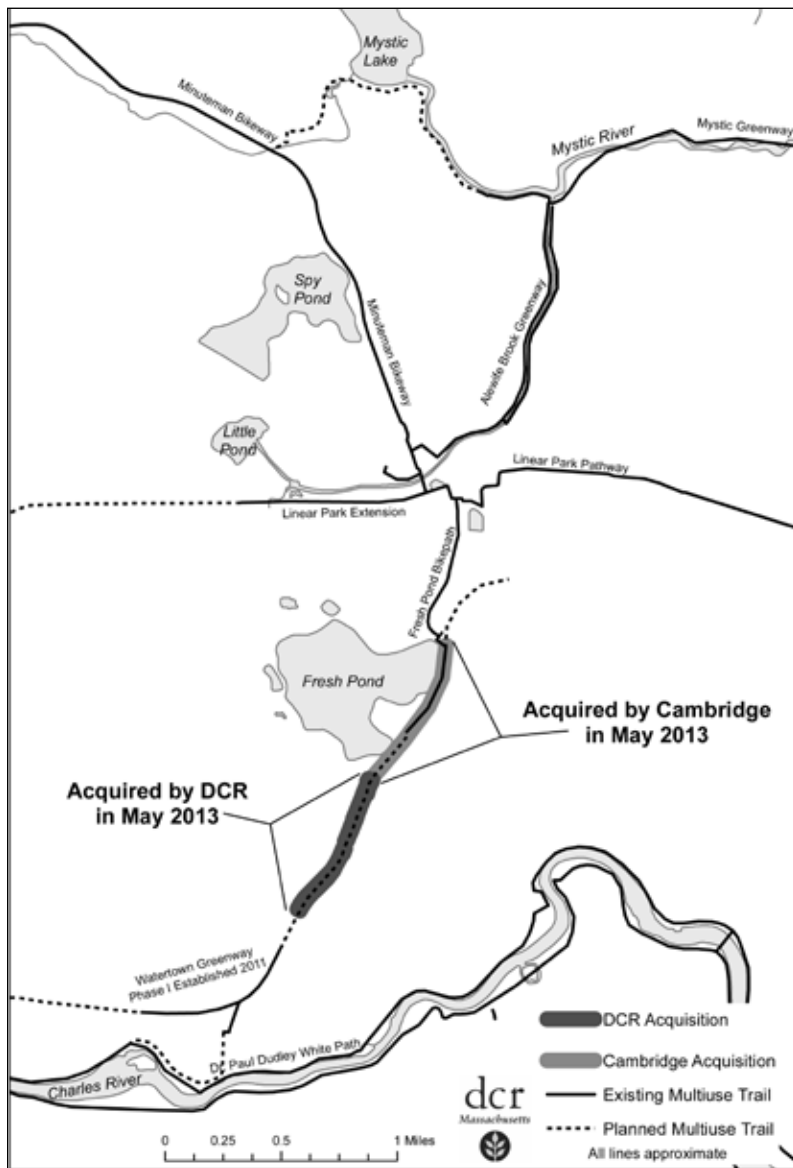
running from Fresh Pond to Huron Avenue in Cambridge. In June, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the City of Cambridge announced the DCR's \$1.3 million purchase of 4.2 acres of land running from Grove Street in Watertown to Huron Avenue in Cambridge. The DCR has not yet found money to design or build these path segments.

With these purchases, there is just one short segment left to plan to link Fresh Pond and the Dr. Paul Dudley White Bike Path along the Charles River: a connection from Arsenal Street to the Charles River. That route has not yet been determined. Another Watertown segment from Grove Street to Arlington Street has been acquired by Watertown, but has not yet been planned or constructed.

Once the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway is complete, cyclists and pedestrians will be able to travel from the Charles River to the Mystic River on off-road paths via the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway and the Alewife Greenway (opened October, 2012).

To the south, on October 25, Newton broke ground on the Upper Falls Greenway, a multi-use path on the former Charles River Branch Railroad running over a mile from Ramsdell Street to the Charles River. That trail is being constructed by the Iron Horse Preservation Society, a non-profit that builds rail trails at no cost in exchange for selling the railroad tracks and ties they remove. The path is due to open later this year.

The Upper Falls Greenway should eventually connect to larger Bay Colony Rail Trail, a planned seven-mile trail along the Charles River Branch Railroad right-of-way through Needham, Dover, and Medfield. In November, Needham Town Meeting voted to allow the town of Needham to lease the Charles River Branch Railroad right-of-way from the MBTA. The 99-year lease allows the town to build a rail trail on the parcel.



COURTESY OF DCR

A map of the land purchased by the City of Cambridge and the DCR for a Fresh Pond-Charles River path.

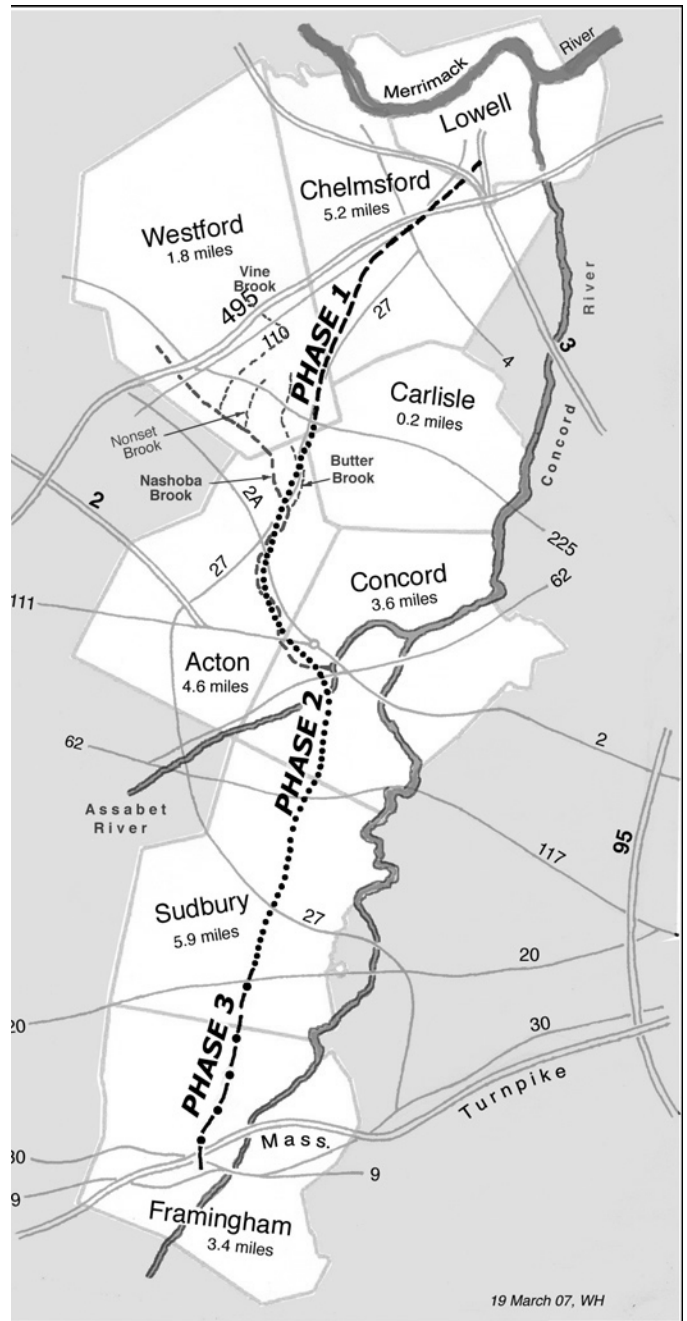
Now, the Bay Colony Rail Trail Association is raising funds to develop a two-mile stretch of the trail running southwest from Needham Junction to the Charles river. This phase of construction involves removing old rails and railroad ties from and covering the path with stone dust. The cost of building the trail is being raised by the Bay Colony Rail Trail Association. As of December 4, the group had raised \$107,558 out of the \$235,000 needed for the work.

Throughout 2013 land purchases and funding votes in Watertown, Needham, Concord, and Sudbury supported a growing system of off-road paths for commuting, shopping, and recreation.

To the west, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT) has gained ground in local and state budgets. The BFRT is a multi-use trail planned to follow the 25-mile right-of-way that made up the abandoned New Haven Railroad Framingham & Lowell line. A 6.8 mile section of the trail from Chelmsford to Westford opened in 2009.

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization announced in August that the Massachusetts Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 2014-2017 would include funding to build 8.5 more miles of path and a bridge for the BFRT. The TIP schedules spending of federal transportation monies. If the federal funds remain available, the TIP will supply \$11 million in 2014 to build five miles of the BFRT in Acton, Carlisle, and Westford, and \$6 million in 2016 to construct a 2.5 mile section in Concord. Another \$6.4 million will go towards a bridge over Route 2 in Acton and Concord in 2017.

In September, Sudbury's Board of Selectmen voted to accept \$58,000 in funding from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail for a preliminary design of Sudbury's 4.6 mile section of the BFRT. In October, the Sudbury selectmen decided to request \$175,000 in town CPA funds for the same purpose. The town had previously set aside \$25,000 for the trail design, bringing the total design monies to \$258,000. The design is projected to cost \$250,000.



The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, with phases marked. Phase 1 of the Trail is open: Phase 2 and Phase 3 are being planned.

Concord's Town Meeting voted in December to purchase two-thirds of an acre of land off Commonwealth Avenue, Concord, to use as a parking lot for the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Concord. Concord's portion of the BFRT extends from Massachusetts Avenue near the Acton Border to Frost Farm, Sudbury.

Meg Muckenhoupt is editor of the Belmont Citizens Forum *Newsletter*.

Bylaw's Effect on Uplands Questioned

By Anne-Marie Lambert

In September, the Massachusetts Appeals Court panel dismissed the outstanding court appeal against AP Cambridge Partners II's planned 299-unit residential complex on the Belmont Uplands site, clearing the way for completing the building permit and beginning construction. However, the building permit application for the proposed "Residences at Acorn Park" remains incomplete.

Meanwhile, Belmont is navigating EPA requirements which prompted a new stormwater bylaw, a possible land acquisition strategy, and warnings from new climate change studies about the region's vulnerability to flooding.

AP Cambridge Partners II did, however, submit a 100 percent design in October 2013 for some of the off-site traffic improvements. Those improvement plans were required by the Comprehensive Permit granted by the Belmont Zoning Board of Appeals under the Chapter 40B Affordable Housing law. They outline ways to mitigate the traffic in the Winn Brook neighborhood during rush hour.

Permit Application Still Pending

AP Cambridge Partners II started their application for a building permit in 2010 with new plans and a partial application. A building permit will allow AP Cambridge Partners to begin clearing the site and constructing a 299-unit residential complex at the Uplands site. With litigation pending, there has been slow progress on completing the application.

The conditions specified in the Comprehensive Permit that still need to be met before a building permit can be issued include:

- Condition 6: Written confirmation that state approval under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act has not expired since it was issued in 2007
- Condition 8b: Signed certification that all local, state, and federal approvals and permits have been obtained
- Condition 25: Signed agreement with Mass Highway, Belmont, and Applicant regarding utility maintenance along Frontage Road
- Condition 28: An inflow/infiltration payment

to the town of at least \$300,000 for sewer improvements

- Condition 37: A signed conservation restriction
- Belmont standard practice: Consolidation of Belmont and Cambridge land parcels into one lot.

(For more information about these conditions, see "Will Belmont's Silver Maple Forest Be Saved?" Belmont Citizens Forum *Newsletter* July/August 2012.)

There are three new aspects to meeting Condition 8b: the first is Belmont's new stormwater bylaw, The second is the Massachusetts 8th Edition Building Regulations (August 2010) which are not included in the 7th Edition currently specified in the application. The third is a Massachusetts building regulation requirement to do additional soil testing when "expansive soils" are likely to be present.

Belmont Bylaw Has New Requirements

Belmont's new stormwater bylaw is stricter and broader in scope than the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA). It applies Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Stormwater Management Standards to areas outside the WPA-defined resource and buffer areas; it prohibits any increase in the volume of stormwater on abutting properties; and it regulates impacts to abutting properties from erosion, silting, flooding, and sedimentation, including impacts to groundwater levels.

As of January 10, Town Counsel opinion is that new local bylaws do not apply to a project after a 40B Comprehensive Permit is issued. The Coalition to Preserve the Belmont Uplands, which opposes development on the site, is looking into the specific cases cited for this opinion.

Even if Belmont's new bylaw was determined to apply to the proposed Uplands development, it includes an exemption clause for stormwater discharges authorized by an Order of Conditions issued by the Belmont Conservation Commission. This exemption was included in order to avoid subjecting a project to multiple processes for the same standards. The Belmont

Conservation Commission denied the project the usual Order of Conditions, but the DEP subsequently issued a Superseding Order of Conditions to enforce the WPA. AP Cambridge Partners considers equivalent to an Order of Conditions. The Coalition disputes this.

The new bylaw was approved by Town Meeting in April, and by the state Attorney General in August. Draft regulations to interpret and enforce it are posted on the town web site and were presented by Glenn Clancy to the Belmont Board of Selectmen on December 2.

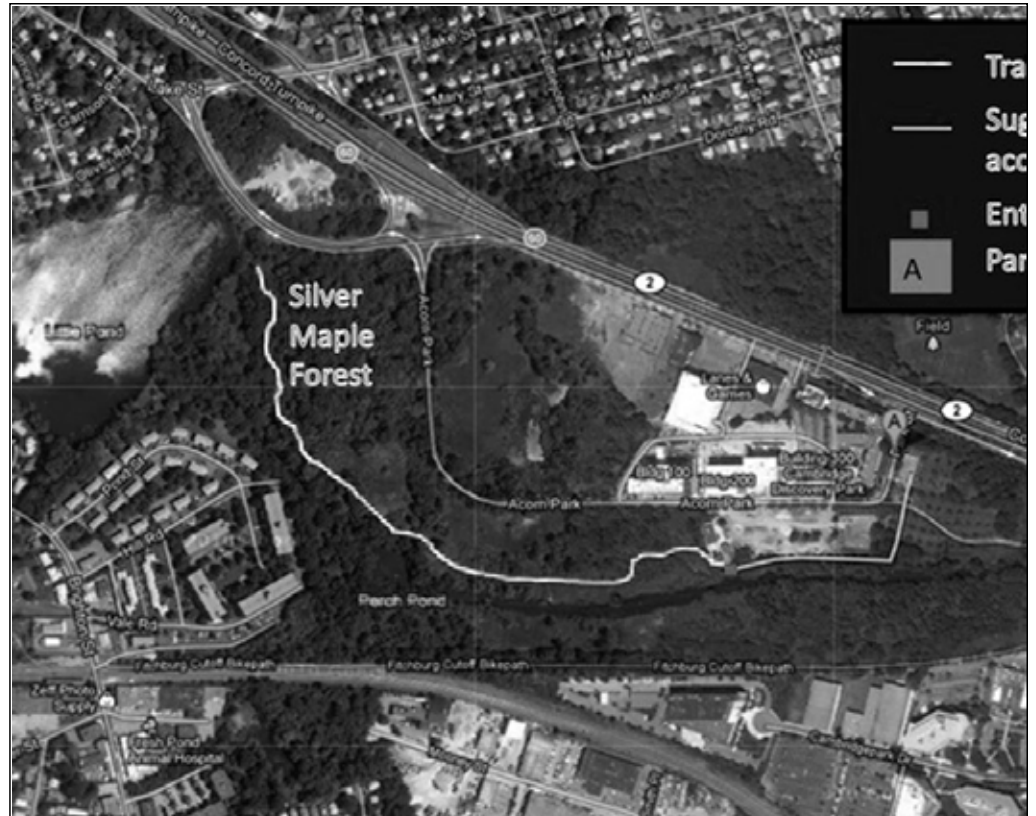
These regulations provide a checklist for obtaining a new Stormwater

Management and Erosion Control Permit prior to undertaking any significant land disturbance in the town of Belmont.

At the request of the selectmen, Clancy requested that the Conservation Commission, Sustainable Belmont, and Town Meeting members send review comments to him by January 17. After lengthy discussion, the Belmont Conservation Commission voted on January 7 to submit comments recommending this clarification: that the exemption does not relieve the applicant from compliance with bylaw requirements that are not required by the WPA. Clancy expects to defer to the Board of Selectmen and Town Counsel on the matter of legal interpretation of the exemption. Avoiding expensive litigation will be a priority as the town navigates the EPA requirements which prompted the new stormwater bylaw in the first place.

Climate Change Studies Progress

The City of Cambridge is in the process of studying its vulnerability to climate change in light of sea rise predictions. A higher sea level might increase flooding in low-lying areas,



A map of the Silver Maple Forest; the Belmont Uplands lie on the right side of the Forest along Acorn Park Drive (center).

including land near the proposed Uplands development. The Little River already rises and flows backwards into Little Pond during high water events, when water from the Mystic River is blocked from flowing out to sea by the Amelia Earhardt dam in Medford. The flood waters seek the lowest point they can reach, which is the channel back up Alewife Brook and into Little River, and Little Pond.

Cambridge's vulnerability study has been delayed from December 2013 to June 2014 until the results of a Boston Harbor study assessing the vulnerability of Central Artery tunnels to flooding are available. The harbor study is sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. A model is being built for the Boston Harbor Basin using ADCIRC, a powerful computer model of coastal processes. A recent appeal from 10 citizens in Cambridge has requested the delay of permitting a hotel development proposed further down Acorn Park Drive until the Cambridge vulnerability study can be completed. Belmont residents will likely also benefit from the results of the climate change modeling in progress by the City of

Cambridge and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. For more information, see www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/projects/climate/climatechangeresilienceandadaptation.aspx.

Meanwhile, the Army Corps of Engineers keeps hurricane inundation maps updated for the purpose of evacuation planning: these show that in the storm surge from a category 2 hurricane, the Amelia Earhardt dam would be breached and large portions of the Alewife and Winn Brook areas would flood. The Uplands site appears as an isolated island in ACOE models of such events (see *Hurricane Surge Maps May Predict Floods*," Belmont Citizens Forum *Newsletter*, May/June 2011.).

Finally, a recent study and computer model by Harvard Forest and Smithsonian Institution warns that recent trends in the loss of forests to development will undermine significant land conservation gains in Massachusetts, jeopardize water quality, and limit the natural landscape's ability to protect against climate change.

A Step Forward for Land Acquisition

On January 10, Trust for Public Land Project Manager Darci Schofield gave an invited presentation to the Belmont Board of Selectmen. Schofield reported that she had spoken directly to the Uplands owner about entering into a "Conservation Transaction." According to the Trust's web site (www.tpl.org), the Trust typically buys land from willing landowners and then transfers the parcel to public agencies, land trusts, or other groups for permanent protection. In some instances, the Trust protects land through conservation easements.

There was no deal to preserve the Uplands from development at the time of the report, and Schofield emphasized the need to keep any conversations between the Trust and the owner of open space confidential. Still, it's encouraging that the Trust considered it worth investing their expertise, position, and staff in this important site.

The Forest Thrives

Meanwhile, this winter's snow has again revealed a highway of tracks from mice, rabbits, raccoons, deer, coyote, fox, people, heron, geese, and ducks. Beautiful ice patterns have been



ANNE-MARIE LAMBERT

A variety of wildlife tracks can be found at the Alewife Reservation.

visible as the marsh freezes and thaws, and remarkable "air shows" have been displayed during early winter's early dusk hours. During high water events, the many tall silver maples continue to provide wildlife protection and stormwater management, even while much of the surrounding ground is frozen.

Anne-Marie Lambert is a director of the Belmont Citizens Forum.

Stormwater Group Seeks Green Solutions

By Fred Paulsen and Anne-Marie Lambert

The new Belmont Stormwater Working Group identified 42 candidate sites for green infrastructure in Belmont at its December 5 2013 kickoff meeting. Green infrastructure for stormwater includes rain gardens and vegetated swales, porous pavement, and planting of trees. All of the above reduce the polluted runoff entering local streams and water bodies.

The Working Group was convened by Sustainable Belmont and the Belmont Citizens Forum to find ways to increase green infrastructure in town, and to work with the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), Belmont, and Arlington to find eligible green infrastructure sites. This work will fulfill the grant awarded to these communities in July (see "Green Infrastructure Grant to Reduce Pollution," Belmont Citizens Forum *Newsletter*, September/October 2013.) The Working Group includes current and former Conservation Commission members, representatives from the School Facilities Department, and engineering and legal experts in stormwater management and environmental affairs.

Patrick Herron, MyRWA's water quality monitoring director, began the meeting by discussing ways to slow down stormwater and filter pollutants before the water reaches our rivers and ponds, and gave local examples, including the rain garden at the Hardy School in Arlington and the pervious pavement at the Lexington Department of Public Works. The 15 participants came up with a list of promising candidates for rain gardens and other green infrastructure:

- Belmont High School
- The First Church In Belmont Unitarian Universalist parking lot
- Winn Brook Field by the basketball court
- Hill Estates parking lot
- Burbank School (rear)
- Grove Street Playground
- Railroad tracks behind Channing Road

- Cushing Village
- Payson Park
- Underwood Estate Park
- Orchard Circle

The group identified these sites as having high potential to reduce flooding, improve water quality, and provide opportunities to educate the public about stormwater runoff. Each site would require engagement with the property owner and with organizations that fund green infrastructure. The current grant will fund water quality monitoring and a design study for two projects, but not the installation. Glenn Clancy, Belmont's Director of Community Development, in cooperation with the the Working Group, will select the two projects.

The next meeting of the Belmont Stormwater Working Group will be on January 29, from



Green infrastructure planters along a street in Portland, OR.

7-9 p.m. at the Flett Room at the Belmont Public Library, 336 Concord Ave, Belmont. See belmontcitizensforum.org/Projects for details.

Anne Marie Lambert represents the Belmont Citizen Forum and Fred Paulsen is a member of MyRWA and Sustainable Belmont.

Record Fund Protects Belmont Open Space

By Kit Dreier

In 2001 the Judith K. Record Memorial Conservation Fund (JKR Fund) was founded to honor the memory of a dedicated local conservationist and to assist the Town of Belmont in protecting, rehabilitating, and maintaining open space in Belmont and beyond.



Judith K. Record Fund
P.O. Box 79138
Belmont, MA 02479-0138

The JKR Fund has its roots in McLean Hospital's land sales. In 1996, McLean Hospital Corporation announced its intention to divest a large portion of its grounds. Many citizens were energized to seek a creative plan by which this land could remain undeveloped and permanently protected.

Concerned residents, led by Judy Record, founded the McLean Open Space Alliance (MOSA). MOSA's hundreds of like-minded members actively supported the town's negotiations with McLean Hospital, and hoped that the result would be the permanent conservation of McLean's open land.

After formal negotiations conducted by the town's Task Force, and hundreds of

hours of public meetings and citizen input, a Memorandum of Agreement was finalized. The MOA allowed McLean to develop portions of its property and mandated that McLean transfer 88 acres of land to the town for open space, and 13 acres for a new cemetery. All this land and additional conservation land held by McLean was placed under a conservation restriction held by The Trustees of Reservations

Sadly, Judy Record did not live to see the 2005 formal transfer of the land, but she had passionately worked to ensure that the Memorandum of Agreement would permanently protect the land. In 2001, the Judith K. Record Memorial Conservation Fund was founded to honor her memory. The Massachusetts Audubon Society is the Fund's fiscal agent, and a Board of Trustees directs the Fund's activities.

Since its inception, the Fund has primarily focused on the recently named Lone Tree Hill, the 88 acres transferred by McLean as conservation land. The Fund has worked with the Land Management Committee, which administers Lone Tree Hill, to enhance the property for public use. Grants for this purpose have been made to:

- Conduct a comprehensive trails study
- Design and install trail signs and markers
- Erect two information kiosks
- Rebuild the historic stone wall along its



Open space at McLean Hospital

northern border on Concord Avenue

The JKR Fund Trustees also makes grants to other organizations and projects in Belmont. For example, grants have been made to:

- Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary to create a universally accessible trail
- Mass Audubon Society towards two conservation purchases: a portion of the Weeks family property contiguous with Habitat and a portion of the Belmont Hill Club now called “The Habitat Extension.” Each parcel is protected by a conservation restriction held by the Belmont Land Trust.

- The Girls Scouts of Belmont for landscaping improvements at Clay Pit Pond
- The Belmont League of Women Voters towards the publication of “A Guide to Conserving Land in Belmont,” available at www.belmontcitizensforum.org

Open space is crucial to the well-being of communities – of people and wildlife alike. It nurtures our physical and emotional health and provides habitat for animals and birds. All living things benefit.

Residents of Belmont are blessed with an abundance of open space within our less than five square miles. There are over 200 acres of town-owned lands, including conservation areas Clay Pit Pond (33 acres), Lone Tree Hill (88 acres), and Rock Meadow (70 acres), parks, playgrounds, and two cemeteries. The 59 acres of the historic Beaver Brook Reservation, the first reservation established by the Metropolitan Parks Commission in 1893, straddles Belmont and Waltham. It features a running brook, a waterfall, and ancient woodlands.

There are also some privately held lands such as Mass Audubon’s Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary,



An historic stone wall on Concord Avenue was rebuilt using Judith K. Record Fund monies.

the Belmont Golf Club, and Richardson Farm. Each of these green spaces afford peaceful oases in an increasingly hurried and crowded world.

The JKR Fund relies on its annual fundraising concert presented by the Record Players, a classical chamber ensemble founded by flutist Andrea Mason Nolin and made up of Belmont-based professional musicians. This year’s concert will take place on Saturday, February 1, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Church in Belmont, 404 Concord Avenue. Admission is free but tax-deductible voluntary donations may be made in advance through sponsorships, or at the door, to the MAS/JKR Fund. Please visit the jkrfund.org web site for further information and maps or call (617) 489-4727.

Kit Dreier is chair of the board of trustees of the Judith K. Record Memorial Conservation Fund. The other trustees are: Eugene Record, Treasurer; Dix Campbell, Rosalie Kerr, Jeanne Mooney, Martha Moore, Jeffrey North, Anne Paulsen, Ellen Schreiber, and Heli Tomford.

Mystic River Book Illuminates Urban Waters

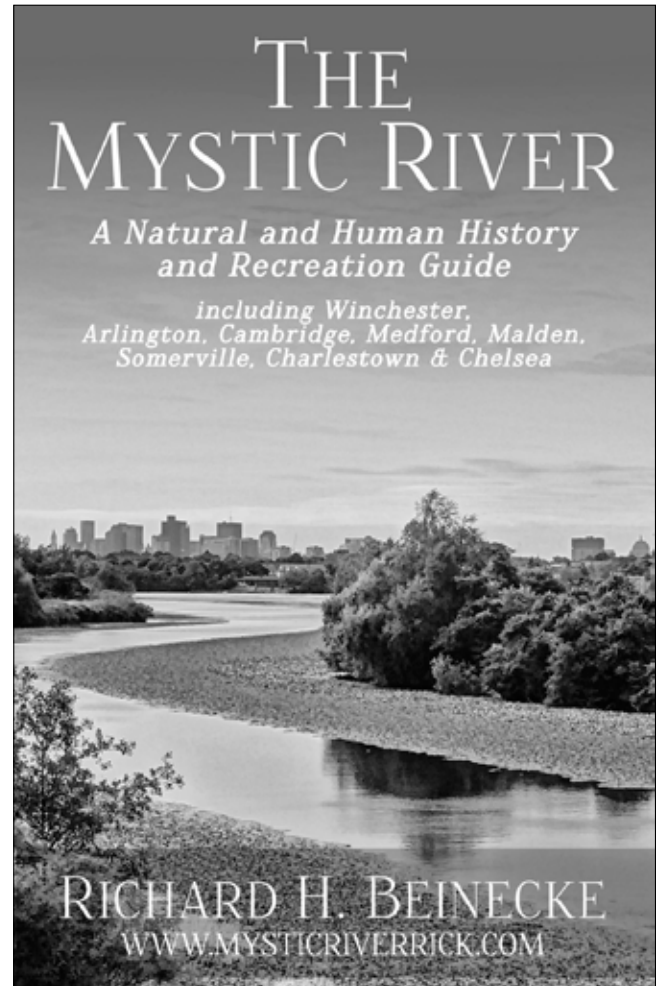
By Beth MacBlane

Whether you're new to the Mystic or a seasoned paddler, *The Mystic River: A Natural and Human History and Recreation Guide* by Richard Beinecke is a valuable addition to your bookshelf. Rick takes you on a trip down the Mystic, noting put-in locations for paddling, what wildlife you might expect to see, and nearby historical markers.

This book covers part of the 22-community Mystic River Watershed—essentially the communities that abut the Mystic, Malden, and Chelsea Rivers: Winchester, Arlington, Cambridge, Medford, Malden, Somerville, Charlestown, and Chelsea.

The book begins with an historic overview of the river, noting everything from the area geology, Native Americans, the Middlesex Canal and more. From there, the book turns to a paddler's guide, offering four suggested trips from the Upper Mystic Lake all the way down to Boston Harbor.

The book is a great resource for other recreational opportunities, includes a list of community events and organizations, offers a bird and fish list, and provides a general guide to sources of pollution. Rick clearly portrays the Mystic as a working, urban river that was and remains essential to Boston and beyond, and also makes the case that the river remains a vibrant,



living system with a variety of birds and other wildlife.

I'll admit that when I first met Rick, I wasn't sure he could pull off such an ambitious project while also working full-time and being as involved as I knew he was in the community and with his family. But Rick's passion for rivers won out, and his dream of having a paddling guide to the Mystic River is a great companion whether on the river or the trails nearby. His new book is a valuable resource for the Mystic River community, and the e-version offers additional resources and color photographs.

Rick is also giving presentations and book signings—check his web site to find out more: mysticriverrick.com. I hope that you pick up a copy of this book and are inspired to explore your local riverways and parks!

Beth MacBlane is outreach coordinator for the Mystic River Watershed Association.



A black-crowned night heron found on the Mystic River.

LORI HARRIS

Corrections

The article "Uplands Geology Makes Development Difficult" (Belmont Citizens Forum Newsletter, November/December 2013) stated "Entrepreneurial farmers planted silver maples there in the last century in hopes of draining the area."

Although the Belmont Uplands and larger Silver Maple Forest were components of the Heustis Farm at the turn of the 20th century, the Forum has been unable to locate documentary evidence that the silver maples were planted with a purpose in mind. A 2002 Open Space Plan for the Belmont Uplands site prepared by Epsilon Associates for the town of Belmont terms the Uplands area "regenerated forest."

The same article stated "The Uplands experiences frequent, extensive floods." The sentence should have read, "The area surrounding the Uplands experiences frequent, extensive floods."

The Belmont Citizens Forum apologizes for any confusion.



LORI HARRIS

Heron along the Mystic River.

Thank You, Karen Parmett



Karen Parmett

The Belmont Citizens Forum board would like to thank Karen Parmett for her service as our first program director.

During the past two years, Karen has revamped our web site, organized events, involved Belmont students with our Newsletter mailings for community service credit, and taken care of the many important tasks that keep an organization like ours on track.

We are truly grateful.

SUSAN JONES

Environmental Events

Belmont Community Path Forum

Wednesday, January 22, 7-8:30 p.m.

The Belmont Board of Selectmen in collaboration with the Community Path Advisory Committee will host a public forum to solicit questions and feedback on a potential future community path in Belmont. The forum will focus on topics and questions related to potential Belmont Community Path routes. All members of the community are welcome to attend. Belmont-ma.gov/Public_Documents/BelmontMA_BComm/CPAC/CPAC. *Beech Street Center, 266 Beech Street, Belmont.*

Little River Nature Walk

Saturday, January 25, 1 p.m.

Anne-Marie Lambert leads an historical and wildlife walk to Little Pond in Belmont, discussing areas of development, floodplain ecology, and silver maple forest news. www.friendsofalewifereservation.org. *Alewife Reservation parking lot at Acorn Park Drive, Cambridge.*

Alewife Reservation Wildlife

Wednesday, January 29, 7 p.m.

Join the Friends of the Alewife Reservation to hear wildlife expert Dave Brown discuss the Alewife Ecosystem, where otters, coyote, fox, and mink join more than 90 species of birds. www.friendsofalewifereservation.org, info@friendsofalewifereservation.org, (617) 415-1884. *University Hall Amphitheater, Lesley University, 1815 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge.*

Program Administrator Sought

The Belmont Citizens Forum is currently accepting applications for the position of BCF Administrator. Responsibilities include database and e-mail management, mailings, supplies, and other administrative activities. Approximately 5 hours/week at \$15/hour. Resumes should be submitted to bcfprogramdirector@gmail.com

Belmont Stormwater Working Group

Wednesday, January 29, 7-9 p.m.

Meet to discuss green infrastructure approaches to reducing Belmont's stormwater runoff (see article p. 9). *Flett Room, Belmont Public Library, 336 Concord Ave, Belmont.*

Judith K. Record Fund Concert

Saturday, February 1, 7:30 p.m.

The Record Players, a classical chamber ensemble founded by flutist Andrea Mason Nolin and made up of Belmont-based professional musicians, will perform to benefit the Judith K. Record Fund (see article p. 10). Voluntary tax-deductible donations may be made in advance through sponsorships or at the door. jkrfund.org, (617) 489-4727. *First Church in Belmont Unitarian Universalist, 404 Concord Ave., Belmont.*

Walden Pond State Park Hike

Sunday, February 2, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. The hike may cover over three miles. No dogs. Please wear sturdy footwear, dress for the weather, and bring water. Free, \$5 Sunday parking fee. Walden Pond State Reservation, (978) 369-3254, www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/events/northhikes-winter.pdf. *Meet at main parking lot, Walden Street (Route 126), Concord.*

Sustainable Belmont Meeting

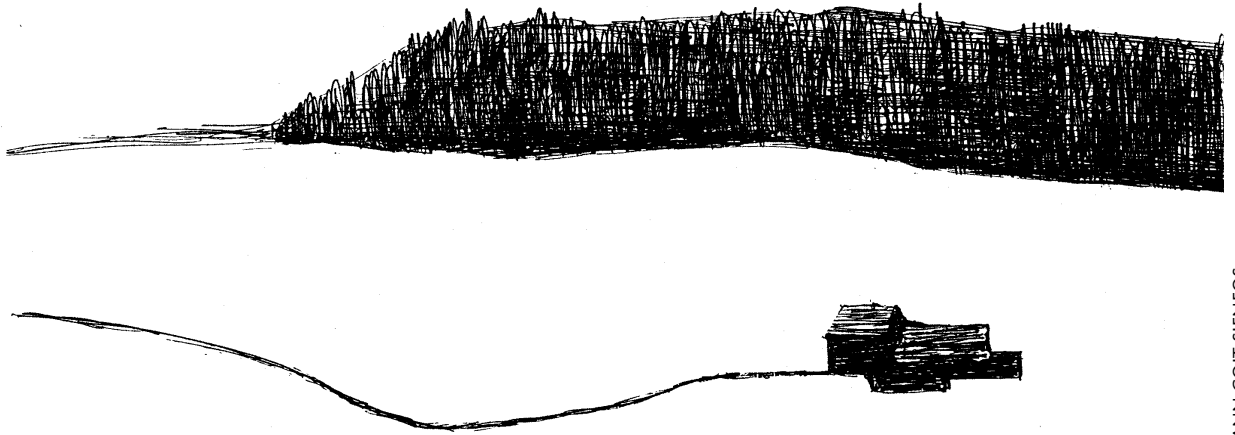
Wednesday, February 5, 7-9p.m.

All meetings are open to the public. Sustainable Belmont invites everyone to attend, share expertise, volunteer time, and discuss sustainable activities in our community. Active members will share progress made on various initiatives. www.sustainablebelmont.net. *Flett Room, Belmont Public Library, 336 Concord Ave, Belmont*

Concert for the Silver Maple Forest

Saturday, March 1, 7:30 p.m.

The Belmont Coalition to Preserve the Uplands will host a fundraising concert by The Loomers with special guest foodbaby. www.belmontcoalition.org. *Location TBA.*



ANN COIT SIFNEOS

We welcome your support.

If you can volunteer even a few hours a month, you can make a difference. You do not need to be an expert—just a person who cares about our town.

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- Environmental Protection
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