



# New Developments in Belmont Uplands Saga

By Anne-Marie Lambert

The fate of Belmont's Silver Maple Forest—also known as the Belmont Uplands—is still in flux. Two groups have filed appeals with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) opposing development at the Acorn Park Drive site, and efforts to buy the property for conservation land are still alive. Both the appeals and land-buying efforts are spurred by continuing concerns about flooding, stormwater runoff, and wildlife habitat at the Uplands. Meanwhile, O'Neill Properties Group has applied for a residential building permit to construct a 299-unit development on the site.

### Where are the Belmont Uplands?

The Belmont Uplands aren't entirely in Belmont, and they aren't very far uphill. The 15.6 acre property abuts the Alewife Brook Reservation and straddles town lines off Acorn Park Drive. Belmont's share is 12.9 acres; 2.7 acres are in Cambridge. The highest point in the "Uplands" is a mere 27 feet above sea level. The site features a forest of silver maples, trees commonly found alongside rivers, streams, and wetlands.

Out of the total 15.6 acres, 4.6 acres are wetlands, and most of the rest of the site is within 100-foot wetlands buffers where it is illegal to build. As a 2007 letter by the Mystic River Watershed Association put it, "The small hillock that is the principal buildable land is effectively an island surrounded by wetlands."

### Legal dispute with DEP continues

On May 13, 2010, the Commissioner of the Massachusetts DEP granted a superseding order of conditions that would allow building on the Silver Maple Forest land. That order was granted to AP Cambridge Partners, an affiliate of the Pennsylvania-based developer O'Neill Properties Group. The order overruled the Belmont Conservation Commission's denial of permission for the project, which it believes violates the state's Wetlands Protection Act.

The Belmont Conservation Commission and the Coalition to Preserve the Belmont Uplands and Winn Brook Neighborhood have filed separate appeals opposing the DEP's ruling. These appeals allege that irregularities in the DEP proceedings amount to "arbitrary and capricious agency action."

On November 19, 2010, Faustino Lichauco, a member of the Belmont Conservation Commission who is serving as the Commission's attorney, filed a memorandum to move the appeal process forward. This memorandum makes three assertions:

- The DEP should have investigated the discrepancy between the "predevelopment" stormwater runoff figures calculated in 2003 for a commercial R&D proposal vs. those calculated for the 2007 Chapter 40B proposal.
- The DEP should have explained why, despite the Wetland Protection Act's interest in flood control, it ignored the projected rise in level of Little Pond which would result from the proposed development.
- The DEP should have explained why its decision did not consider pre-trial testimony by Scott Horsley of Horsley Witten Associates

that key locations in the proposed plan lack sufficient soil capacity to absorb the projected stormwater runoff during a 100-year storm.

The developer has requested an extension until late January to respond to the motion. The Superior Court judge will decide the next steps after O'Neill files a response.

David Webster, a member of the Belmont Conservation Commission, described the Silver Maple Forest's role in controlling flooding, a key point in the appeal. According to Webster, "The present site has an outstanding capacity to absorb rainfall and therefore act as a sponge to prevent flooding in Little Pond, Little River,

Alewife Brook, and adjacent residences. The currently proposed development of the Uplands is certain only to increase that flooding." Given the proximity of the site to Little River and associated wetlands, and the absorption value of undeveloped forest, Webster's point is easy to understand (see diagram on page 5).

## Groups still working to buy Forest

There has been some progress in long-term attempts to purchase the Silver Maple Forest property for conservation. In November 2010, Belmont voters adopted the state Community Preservation Act (CPA), a source of funding for buying conservation land.

However, it will take time to access CPA funds. The April 2011 Town Meeting warrant is expected to include a bylaw providing for a CPA Committee to review CPA spending proposals and make recommendations to Town Meeting. Even after that vote, Committee members would have to be appointed and begin studying proposals. The earliest Town Meeting might be asked to vote on funds for any Silver Maple Forest conservation is fall 2011 or spring 2012.

At a December 14, 2010, hearing on the Silver Maple Forest in Cambridge, state Representative Will Brownsberger said he was continuing efforts

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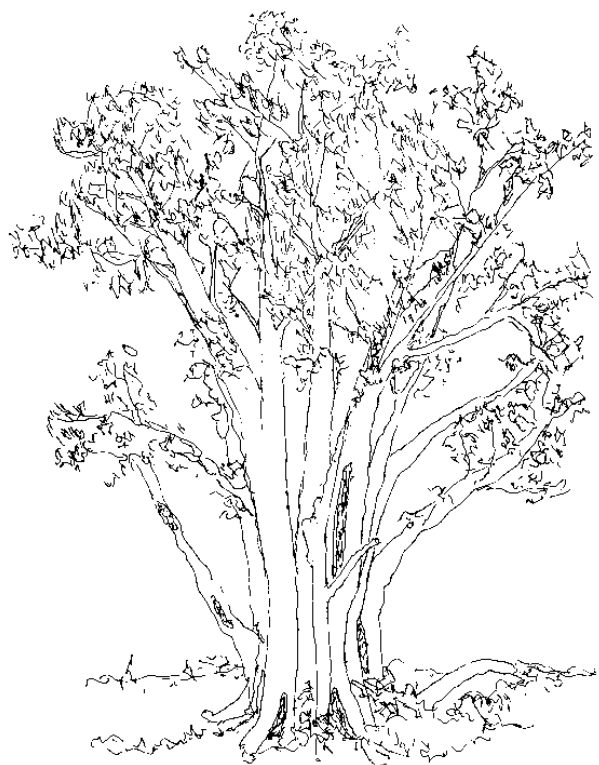
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**Belmont Citizens Forum Inc.** is a not-for-profit organization that strives to maintain the small-town atmosphere of Belmont, Massachusetts, by preserving its natural and historical resources, limiting traffic growth, and enhancing pedestrian safety. 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](mailto:info@belmontcitizensforum.org).



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to pass legislation to have the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) assess the value of the property and give Belmont, Cambridge, and Arlington the chance to buy the land and add it to the DCR-controlled Alewife Brook Reservation. Both Belmont and Cambridge could use CPA funds to buy the Silver Maple Forest.

On January 4, Massachusetts Senator Steven Tolman and Representative Will Brownsberger announced the passage of House 701. The bill does not appropriate any funds, but if the necessary funds are found, and the owner accepts the offer, then the DCR will buy the Uplands and add it to the Alewife Brook Reservation. The bill awaits Governor Patrick's signature.

It is not clear whether other developers might be interested in purchasing the Silver Maple Forest. In 2002, Town Meeting approved commercial zoning for the site at the request of O'Neill Properties Group; O'Neill now has the right to develop a commercial R&D project, subject to certain conditions.

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One of O'Neill's first steps for applying for a building permit was to obtain ZBA review and agreement that the changes were not "substantial." Within a week of receiving the voluminous revised plans, the ZBA judged the changes were not "substantial."

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O'Neill also has the necessary comprehensive permit under Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws to build a residential project with both luxury and affordable units. Chapter 40B comprehensive permits allow developers to ignore local zoning if 20 to 25 percent of those units are affordable by state standards. O'Neill has developed plans for both projects which could be attractive to a prospective buyer. However, Chapter 40B does not override environmental laws such as the Wetlands Protection Act.

## Why are the Uplands important?

The controversy over building in the Belmont Uplands boils down to two issues: flooding and habitat.

In colonial times, low-lying Alewife was known as "The Great Swamp." Centuries of building in floodplains, filling in wetlands, and paving over earth that could absorb flood water have created flooding problems in Belmont, Arlington, and Cambridge. Opponents argue that building on the Belmont Uplands will destroy one of the few areas near Alewife where soil and forest root systems store water during storms. The result would be more local flooding. O'Neill Properties Group believes that its plans provide sufficient flood water storage; opponents dispute that claim.

The Uplands provide diverse upland, forest, shrub, and wetlands habitat to the species that live there. Many of the Alewife Brook Reservation's species cannot survive if they are limited to the Reservation's wetlands; they require dry, upland habitat to breed. According to the Friends of the Alewife Reservation, these animals include three species of mammals, three species of reptiles, and 12 species of birds. Without upland habitat, these species will become locally extinct.

## Uplands Building Permit Underway

Under the threat of a statewide referendum to repeal 40B, which would have required building permit approval by December 31, 2010, O'Neill applied for a building permit for a housing development at the Silver Maple Forest by submitting revised plans to Belmont's Office for Community Development. That office is responsible for enforcing the 42 conditions in the original February 2007 decision by the Belmont Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). A full list of these conditions is available at [www.town.belmont.ma.us/](http://www.town.belmont.ma.us/)

Public\_Documents/BelmontMA\_BComm/  
Uplands40B/40b%20decision.pdf.

One of O'Neill's first steps for applying for a building permit was to obtain ZBA review and agreement that the changes in the revised project plan were not "substantial," in accordance with conditions. Within a week of receiving the voluminous revised plans, the ZBA judged the changes were not "substantial."

At the October 4, 2010 ZBA meeting, Gerard Natoli of the Coalition to Protect Belmont Silver Maple Forest and Winn Brook Neighborhood read a request for a public hearing once all changes are known. The ZBA noted that the reduction in studio units was not considered substantial, even though that change resulted in a higher number of bedrooms, a key factor in standard calculations of sewage.

The ZBA concluded that none of the changes were substantial for the purpose of this review,

and that no public hearing would be required once it was clear whether sewage would be sent through Cambridge or Belmont. The ZBA did say that if there were any future changes to the plan, then the aggregated effect of all changes since the original 2007 hearing would be considered before determining if changes were "substantial" enough to require a public hearing.

The defeat of the 40B repeal in November reduced the pressure on O'Neill to obtain a building permit by the end of the year, but the process is moving along. As of late December, Glenn Clancy, director of Belmont's Office of Community Development, is focusing on a number of unmet conditions which must be resolved before the O'Neill's building permit application can be considered complete. These conditions include collecting \$14,500 from O'Neill to pay for professional review of storm-water mitigation and other site plan require-

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## An Urban Wild:

### A Photographic Exploration of the Silver Maple Forest and the Alewife Reservation by Parrish Dobson

*Photographs from the exhibit* **now available for purchase** *to benefit the Citizens Forum's Land Acquisition Fund.*

Prints come in two sizes, images of 20 by 30 inches on 24- by 34-inch paper or images of 11 by 14 inches on 16- by 20-inch paper.

These are custom-printed digital prints using the highest quality inks and papers.

#### Prices:

24 by 34	\$590 framed (or \$670 with museum glass) of which \$360 is a tax-deductible donation \$450 unframed of which \$305 is a donation
16 by 20	\$380 framed (or \$420 with museum glass) of which \$225 is a donation \$250 unframed of which \$130 is a donation

The photos in the exhibit will be posted by January 15 on the artist's web site, [www.parrishdobson.com/portfolios](http://www.parrishdobson.com/portfolios).

Make your check out to Belmont Citizens Forum, mark it "Urban Wild Photo" and send it, with your choice of photo, size, etc., to Belmont Citizens Forum, PO Box 609, Belmont, MA 02478. Please allow three weeks for delivery. Questions? Call Parrish at 617-512-4653.



PARRISH DOBSON

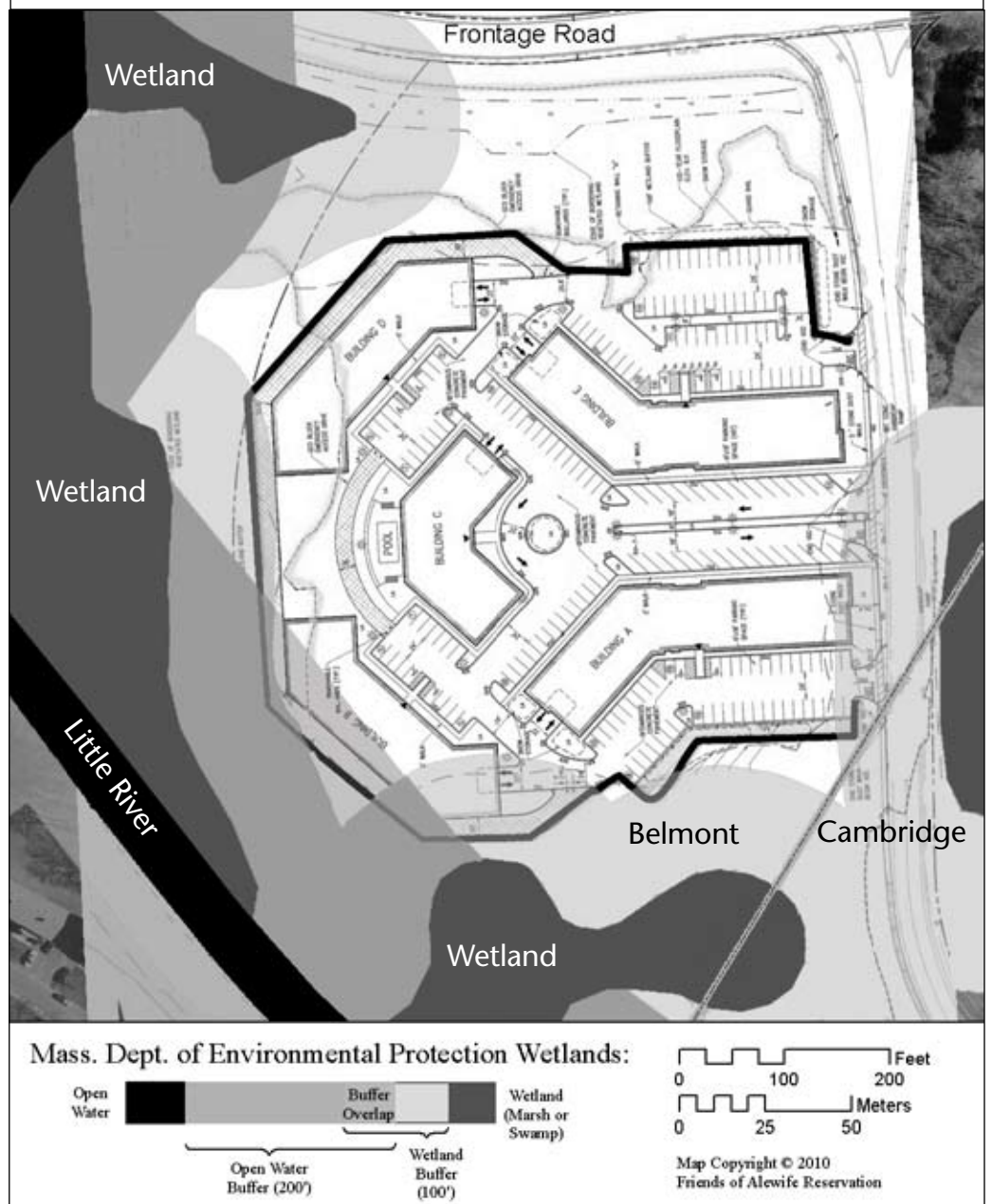


ments by the town's consultants, Fay Spofford & Thorndike. It is not clear at this time which "predevelopment" figures—from 2003 or 2007—will be used by the consultants to assess whether storm-water mitigation plans are adequate.

Another open item is either a permit for a sewer hookup in Cambridge or evidence that the developer has made a good-faith effort to obtain one. O'Neill's affiliate AP Cambridge Partners is in negotiations with Cambridge. At a December 14, 2010, Cambridge hearing, citizens expressed vocal opposition to allowing a sewer hookup. The Cambridge City Council has voted to delay any sewer hookup decision until a court appeal is heard in spring 2011. However, Belmont ZBA's 40B Comprehensive Permit decision of 2007 allows for a sewer hookup to Belmont if negotiations with Cambridge fall through.

Clancy is also waiting for certification of all required permits and approvals, a completed regulatory agreement, conservation restriction, and escrow agreement, and a structural peer review. Once Clancy considers the permit application complete and in compliance with the 42 conditions, he expects to approve the permit. In the unlikely event there should be any conflict between building code regulations and the 42 conditions of the 2007 ZBA decision,

## Wetlands and Wetland Buffers Surrounding Planned Belmont Uplands Development



A map of the wetlands boundaries surrounding the Belmont Uplands site. Shaded areas indicate 200-foot buffers for open water (the Little River) and 100-foot buffers for wetlands.

the applicant would have to return to the ZBA for review and determination as to whether any changes are substantial enough to warrant additional hearings.

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

# Can the Historic Clark House Be Preserved?

*By Joseph Cornish*

The Thomas Clark House has stood at 59 Common Street for 250 years. Now offered for sale for the first time in almost 60 years, this house is one of Belmont's most historic and architecturally intact 18th-century homes. Despite this property's historic status, this home may be threatened by inappropriate alterations or demolition if a preservation-minded buyer is not found.

According to the files of the Belmont Historical Society, this house was built circa 1760 by farmer Thomas Clark for workers who helped raise and harvest his crops. Local tradition maintains that the Clark family witnessed the beginning of America's War for Independence from the hill behind this house, seeing smoke and hearing the sounds of war breaking out on April 19, 1775.

Sometime around the beginning of the 19th century, the Clark family moved into this house after their larger home, located uphill to the west of Common Street, was destroyed by fire. The two-story ell addition attached to the southwest corner of the house was added at this time, and the two-story north wing attached to the northwest corner of the house, known as the "Coach House," was added circa 1840.

Several generations of the Clark family inhabited this house, including Thomas Clark's son Peter. Peter was the oldest living resident in Belmont on March 29, 1859, when, at age 90, he cast the first vote in the newly formed town of Belmont. The property was sold to Dr. Peter and Ann Sifneos in 1954 and it is currently owned by their three children. The Sifneos family has carefully preserved the important exterior and interior features of the house.



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The Thomas Clark House is one of Belmont's most architecturally intact 18th-century homes.





Fireplace with cooking crane, Thomas Clark House kitchen.

## Clark House exemplifies Georgian style

The Clark House is a typical example of the Georgian style of architecture in New England. Its symmetrical five-bay façade facing Common Street boasts a center entry with a Classical door surround consisting of an unadorned entablature resting on two fluted pilasters executed in the Doric order. The massive brick center chimney stack rises from the center of the roof's ridge. An original nine-over-six light window sash with wavy panes of glass remains in place with louvered window shutters that were added in the first half of the 19th century.

A sense of the past agrarian setting is given by historic stone walls, granite posts marking the original entrance to the farm, and open, gently sloping lawns (once part of the larger pasture lands that surrounded the house in the 18th century). Inside, the entry

stair hall is graced with a three-run staircase with hand-turned balusters. Wide softwood floorboards remain throughout the house and glow with a warm patina that only age and centuries of wear can create. The parlors feature raised-field paneling surrounding the fireplaces, once the only heating source in the house.

The original kitchen fireplace remains in place with its cooking crane and beehive oven. The house sports wrought iron door hardware, including butterfly and HL hinges and Norfolk and Suffolk handles and latches. An early brass doorbell, still in working order, announces the arrival of visitors at the side entry that once opened to a driveway. In the attic, the house's heavy-timber oak frame is visible and is a testament to



A painting of the Thomas Clark House captioned "Thomas Clark House 1760."



The Thomas Clark House library.

the skill of the builders who raised the house in 1760.

Perhaps the most intriguing feature of the house for lovers of historic lore is a hidden chamber located behind the first-floor fireplaces complete with a trap door to the second story. That chamber supports local tradition that this home was once a stop for fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad.

This home, like many of Belmont's other

surviving early homes from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, is a threatened historic resource in the town. These homes are not located in one of Belmont's two local historic districts, are not listed on the National Register or State Register of Historic Places, and are not subject to preservation restriction easements. Belmont is also home to wonderful, unaltered examples of 20th-century Colonial Revival and

Modern style homes that are not currently protected.

The town could take steps to protect these resources for future generations by raising awareness of the significance of these properties and by taking measures such as creating new historic districts and encouraging private preservation efforts. Otherwise, Belmont risks losing these historic resources.

Joseph Cornish is Senior Stewardship Manager at Historic New England.

## MAPC Seeks Input for Bike Path Through Belmont

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is working to evaluate the potential routes for a bike path between Brighton Street in Belmont and Linden Street in Waltham. There, the path will connect to the bike trail planned by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation to Berlin, MA.

The MAPC has developed a map showing several potential routes through Belmont for a bike path. The map is available at [www2.mapc.org/Bikepedmapping/mass-central-rail-trail-alignment-study-basemap-draft.pdf](http://www2.mapc.org/Bikepedmapping/mass-central-rail-trail-alignment-study-basemap-draft.pdf).

The MAPC has sought comments from groups including the Belmont Citizens Forum board, planning staff in Belmont and Waltham, and Channing Road residents, and welcomes input from the general public. Comments on bike path routes can be e-mailed to David Loutzenheiser of the MAPC staff at [DLoutzenheiser@mapc.org](mailto:DLoutzenheiser@mapc.org).

The MAPC plans to release a preliminary report sometime in February.



# Belmont Mulls New Approach to Recycling

By Dan Lech

This January, Belmont will review bids for a service that costs the town \$2.43 million a year and has profound effects on the environment and Belmont's quality of life: waste disposal. Belmont's current contract with F.W. Russell for curbside collection of trash and recycling expires in 2011.

More than two-thirds of Belmont's waste spending—approximately \$1.65 million for fiscal year 2010 (FY10)—is for simply collecting and disposing of solid waste. The recycling program is relatively cheap, costing the town just \$370,000 in FY10. Increased recycling saves Belmont about \$70 per ton.

The new collection contract will be for three years with two single-year options to be

used at the town's discretion. The town has a separate contract with the Wheelabrator incinerator where it pays to dispose of its solid waste. Belmont pays only for the pickup of its recycling; the contractor chooses where to bring it so long as it is a recycling facility. The town could save money—and produce less pollution and fewer greenhouse gases—by recycling more and incinerating less.

The town of Belmont does not currently restrict the amount of trash that a household can dispose of. As part of the new Request for Proposal (RFP), contractors are required to bid on three scenarios:

1. The continued pickup and transportation of unlimited solid waste.

Overview of Belmont's Recycling and Solid Waste Program		
Service	Provider	Cost to Town (FY10)
Program Administration	Belmont DPW, Highway Division	\$100,000
Solid Waste Collection*	FW Russell	\$1.01 million
Recycling Collection and Processing	FW Russell is contracted transporter: Russell can use any recycler but normally uses FCR/Cassella materials recovery facility, Charlestown	\$370,000
Solid Waste Disposal	Wheelabrator incinerator, North Andover (contracted through 2015)	Per-ton rate, not fixed amount. Estimated cost \$640,000 Increased recycling saves about \$70/ton
Yard Waste*	FW Russell plus drop-off option	\$310,000 for 21 weeks collection
Appliances, Cathode Ray Tubes	FW Russell	Separate pickup with sticker and fee
Electronic Waste (computers)	FW Russell	Part of standard solid waste pickup
Hazardous Waste: fluorescent bulbs, batteries, mercury	Indirectly through WTE <sup>†</sup> plant with drop-off collection at Belmont municipal departments, selected stores	None. Paid for by WTE <sup>†</sup> plants as permit condition
Hazardous Waste: Other	Minuteman Hazardous Products Regional Facility	Capped at \$12,000/year.
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>\$2.43 million or \$220/household</b>
<p>*Contracted through June 2011; service to be rebid pending request for proposals</p> <p><sup>†</sup>WTE = Waste to Energy plant</p> <p>Source: Belmont DPW, Highway Division; Belmont Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee</p>		

2. The pickup and transportation of one waste barrel (36-gallon size) from each household. Any additional waste would be in waste bags that residents would have to purchase from the town in advance.
3. The pickup and transportation of solid waste via fully automated vehicles. These vehicles would have mechanical arms to lift uniform 40-gallon wheeled trash containers. Each household would be provided with one container, with additional containers being available to residents for a yearly fee to the town.

It currently costs the town less to recycle than it does to dispose of solid waste. Options 2 and 3 are pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) options that would encourage residents to recycle more. Doug Koplow, chairman of Belmont's Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee, also noted that this change would make the recycling program more equitable since "homeowners who do recycle would no longer subsidize those who do not."

The PAYT option is controversial because residents would have to pay for a service that is currently funded by their property taxes. It also faces legal challenges. Belmont's curbside waste removal is funded by a 1990 tax override passed specifically to pay for waste removal. Belmont's Warrant Committee has considered PAYT in the past but rejected it because of that override.

The RFP also calls for bids on two recycling options. The first is for the continuation of the "dual stream" system in which residents separate paper and cardboard from other recyclables.

The second is for a "single stream" system in which all materials are mixed together in one bin. The single stream method allows

for automated vehicle collection and makes it easier for residents to recycle—which generally increases recycling rates.

The potential downside of single stream is an increase in the contamination of the recycling stream when too many diverse materials mixed together hinder the efficiency of the recycling process. The issue of the sorting, processing and end usage of recycled materials is complex, and it's difficult to calculate how efficient the process would be.

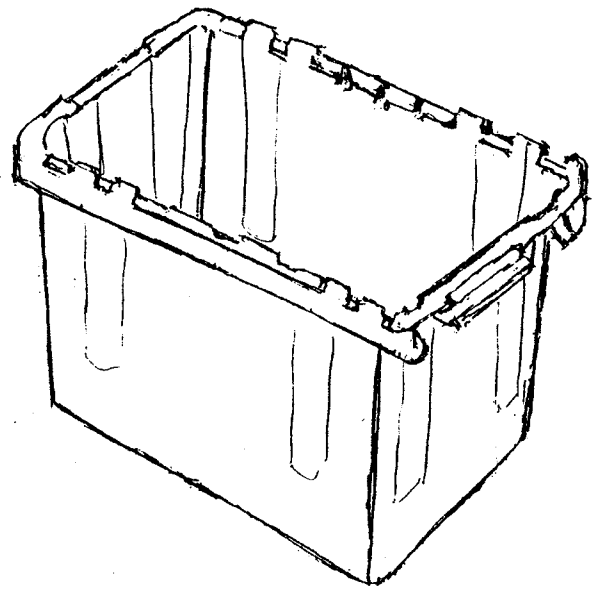
According to Koplow, "There are also unanswered questions about contamination levels in the recycling stream and the quality of recovered materials produced from complex inputs such as milk cartons or juice boxes both of which contain paper, plastic, and sometimes aluminum layers as well. Many of these fractions are shipped to Asia for reprocessing. It is difficult to get good information on contamination rates at that point, or on the mix of products our recyclables are ultimately turned into."

After Belmont's recyclables are collected, they are taken to FCR/Casella Waste Systems in Charlestown where they are sorted and processed. The table below, provided by Casella, shows where these materials end up. Most items are shipped out of state as far as China; some of the closer recipients are brokers who ship the materials to other users.

Current Destinations for Recyclable Materials Processed at FCR/Cassella Materials Recovery Facility, Charlestown			
Item	Material	Destination	End Use
Paper	Newspaper/Magazines	Fitchburg, MA, Canada	Paper Products
Paper	Mixed Paper. Paperboard, Beverage Cartons	Korea, China	Paper Products
Paper	Office Mixed Paper	Auburn, ME	Paper Products
Paper	Corrugated Cardboard	Montville, CT, Solvay, NY Canada	Corrugated Boxes
Glass	Glass	MA	Bottles
Metal	Steel Cans	PA	Scrap Steel
Metal	Aluminum	Berea, KY	Aluminum Cans
Plastic	#1	GA	Polyester Fiber
Plastic	#2-#7	Canada	Containers, Plastic Pellets

## How does Belmont rate?

Koplow said that in general Belmont residents do a good job of recycling only appropriate materials. One thing that Belmont residents try to recycle that should not be recycled, however, is “glass other than packaging such as window glass or drinking glasses,” Koplow said. “The much bigger problem in Belmont is recyclable materials that are thrown away,” he added, such as cardboard boxes which are not properly broken down and thus end up in the trash truck. (Cardboard should be flattened or cut into pieces no larger than 2 feet by 2 feet, then included with other paper recycling in brown paper bags or tied with string in stacks less than 9 inches high.) Many items recently added to the recycling list, such as milk cartons and juice boxes or plastic food “clamshell” containers, continue to be thrown away in error.



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Compared with nearby communities, Koplow said that Belmont rates “better than average” as far as percentage of waste that is recycled. The two highest scoring towns do not have curbside waste removal.

## Composting

The RFP calls for a continuation of the town’s current policy on composting. This policy requires the contractor to pick up yard waste packaged in biodegradable paper lawn bags or in barrels marked with a town-provided “yard waste” sticker every other week in season and transport it to a composting facility of their choice. Residents may also purchase home composting units from the town to turn food waste, leaves, and other organic matter into compost that can be used as fertilizer.

Starting in January 2011, proposals from waste removal companies will be assessed by the Belmont DPW, which will then consult with the town administrator and the advisory committee. Their recommendations will be passed to the Board of Selectmen who will make the final decision on the service and vendor of Belmont’s waste removal. To comment on these issues, please contact the town administrator or the Board of Selectmen, [Selectmen@town.belmont.ma.us](mailto:Selectmen@town.belmont.ma.us).

Dan Lech is a 12-year Belmont resident.

### Recycling and Yard Waste as Percent of Total Waste, Belmont and Nearby Communities

Community	Recycling + Yard waste, % of waste	Recycling alone, %
Needham <sup>†</sup>	66.8	26.5
Wellesley <sup>†</sup>	65.9	21.8
Lexington <sup>‡</sup>	54.6	29.8
Concord	47.2	40.9
<b>Belmont</b>	<b>35.3</b>	<b>20.0</b>
Arlington	35.1	19.7
Brookline	34.9	28.9
Cambridge	33.0	26.7
Winchester	29.1	13.1
Watertown <sup>‡</sup>	23.4	14.7
Waltham <sup>‡</sup>	16.7	3.6
Boston	13.3	10.4

\* DEP data may not match town data due to use of calendar year rather than fiscal year; some waste streams are not counted in town data.

<sup>†</sup> Drop-off program for both trash and recycling. No curbside.

<sup>‡</sup> Abutting community to Belmont.

Source: MA Department of Environmental Protection



# Western Greenway Entices Local XC Skiers

By Meg Muckenhoupt

The Western Greenway is lovely any time of year, but in winter, it glistens. This six-mile swath of green space travels through Belmont, Lexington, and Waltham along old carriage roads, forest trails, and meadows. The Greenway's flat trails and gentle slopes are perfect for cross-country skiing.

Certain spots are particularly stunning. Roger Wrubel, Director of the Belmont's Habitat Massachusetts Audubon Sanctuary recommends the following Western Greenway trails:

- The long boardwalk west of Walnut Street
- The pine allee in the Belmont conservation land parallel to Concord Avenue

- Highland Farm meadow and woods, off Concord Avenue and Somerset Street
- Rock Meadow—or, if it's windy, Beaver Brook North Reservation, which is wooded and protected

Maps of the Beaver Brook North Reservation and Rock Meadow trails are available at [www.walthamlandtrust.org/open-space/guide-to-open-spaces/beaver-brook-north-reservation](http://www.walthamlandtrust.org/open-space/guide-to-open-spaces/beaver-brook-north-reservation). A map of the entire Western Greenway is online at [www.walthamlandtrust.org/open-space/the-western-greenway](http://www.walthamlandtrust.org/open-space/the-western-greenway).

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



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Approaching the woods from Rock Meadow along the Western Greenway.

SUSAN B. JONES



SUSAN B. JONES

Clockwise from left: a winter milkweed pod; the bridge at Rock Meadow; two views of Beaver Brook.

SUSAN B. JONES



SUSAN B. JONES



## Environmental Events

By Sally Rifkin

### 6th Annual Duck Walk.

**Sunday, January 23, 10 a.m.–noon.**

From November to March, various northern-dwelling ducks fly down from Canada to winter in New England. Take a walk with the Waltham Land Trust,

led by local birder Jason Forbes, to see these birds along the Charles River trail system. Free. [www.walthamlandtrust.org/calendar-events/annual-winter-duck-walk](http://www.walthamlandtrust.org/calendar-events/annual-winter-duck-walk). (781) 893-3355, [swadman@walthamlandtrust.org](mailto:swadman@walthamlandtrust.org). Meet at back right corner of Shaw's Supermarket parking lot, 130 River Street, Waltham.

### 3rd Annual Boston Bikes Report Event.

**Thursday, January 27, time TBA.**

More information will be announced soon. Sponsored by LiveableStreets Alliance. [www.livablestreets.info/event/3rd-annual-boston-bikes-report-event](http://www.livablestreets.info/event/3rd-annual-boston-bikes-report-event). (617) 621-1746, [info@livablestreets.org](mailto:info@livablestreets.org). Rabb Lecture Hall, Boston Public Library, 700 Boylston Street, Boston.

### ALT Annual Meeting and Celebration of the Campaign to Protect Elizabeth Island.

**Friday, January 28, 7–9 p.m.**

Bob Wilber, Director of Land Protection for Mass Audubon, will be a guest speaker. Free. [www.arlingtonlandtrust.org](http://www.arlingtonlandtrust.org). Masonic Lodge, 19 Academy Street, Arlington.

### Naked Shrubs: Shrubs in Winter.

**Saturday, January 29, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.**

Identify plants in winter using a combination of branching patterns, bud and bark characteristics, and more. Bring a lunch and a hand lens if possible. Free. Registration required. Sponsored by Massachusetts Audubon Society. (617) 489-5050, [habitat@massaudubon.org](mailto:habitat@massaudubon.org). Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary, 10 Juniper Road, Belmont.

### Know Your Food: Fabulous Beets.

**Saturday, January 29, 2–4 p.m.**

Make Russian borscht and beet salad while exploring the many benefits of beets, which include chromium for muscle strengthening and blood sugar moderation, and support for the immune system. Bring containers to take home your samples. \$20 for members; \$25 for nonmembers. Registration required. Sponsored by Drumlin Farm. (781) 259-2200, [drumlinfarm@massaudubon.org](mailto:drumlinfarm@massaudubon.org). Drumlin Farm, 208 South Great Road, Lincoln.

## The Citizens Forum is hiring: Program Director

The Belmont Citizens Forum is seeking a part-time Program Director to work from home 15 to 20 hours a week.

This brand-new role has broad responsibility to develop more public activities, improve communications with supporters and the general public, and provide fundraising and general operations support to the Board of Directors.

The Program Director must be available some evenings and weekends for committee meetings and events but no travel outside the Boston area is required. This is a freelance position, with compensation of \$23/hour, maximum of 20 hours/week.

Qualifications include familiarity with Belmont, good communication skills, ability to recruit and encourage volunteers, excellent time management and organizational skills, proficiency in Microsoft office, data management programs, and social networking and digital media, ability to take initiative and work independently, and willingness to pitch in wherever needed in a small organization.

To apply, please submit a resume and thoughtful cover letter explaining your interest in the Belmont Citizens Forum and what makes you a great candidate to [info@belmontcitizensforum.org](mailto:info@belmontcitizensforum.org).



## JKR Fund's Annual Fund-Raising Concert.

**Sunday, January 30, 3 p.m.**

Join the Judith K. Record Memorial Conservation Fund for their annual concert, a collaboration with the chamber music group The Record Players. Free. Sponsored by private and corporate funding of the JKR Fund. (617) 733-8989, [info@jkrfund.org](mailto:info@jkrfund.org). *First Church in Belmont, 404 Concord Ave., Belmont.*

## Sustainable Belmont Monthly Meeting.

**Wednesday, February 2, 7 p.m.**

Open to the public. *Belmont Public Library, 336 Concord Avenue, Belmont.*

## Backyard Sugaring.

**Saturday, February 5, time TBA.**

Join the New England Wildflower Society to learn how to make your own maple syrup. Tree identification, tools needed, tapping, weather, boiling,

finishing, and storing will all be covered. Dress for the weather. \$24 for members; \$32 for nonmembers. Registration required. Cosponsored by Drumlin Farm and the New England Wildflower Society. [www.newfs.org/learn/catalog/bot7013](http://www.newfs.org/learn/catalog/bot7013). (508) 877-7630, ext. 3303, e-mail [registrar@newenglandWILD.org](mailto:registrar@newenglandWILD.org). *Drumlin Farm, 208 South Great Road, Lincoln.*

## Know Your Food: Whole Grains.

**Saturday, February 26, 2-4 p.m.**

Learn about the advantages of using whole grains including quinoa, millet, buckwheat, and barley, in everyday cooking. Bring containers to take home your samples. \$20 for members; \$25 for nonmembers. Registration required. Sponsored by Drumlin Farm. (781) 259-2200, [drumlinfarm@massaudubon.org](mailto:drumlinfarm@massaudubon.org). *Drumlin Farm, 208 South Great Road, Lincoln.*

# We need you.

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.

### *I can devote time to:*

- ☐ Archaeology & Historic Preservation
- ☐ Environmental Protection
- ☐ Planning & Zoning
- ☐ Community Path
- ☐ Walking in Belmont
- ☐ Mailings
- ☐ Newsletter

### *I can help pay for this newsletter:*

It costs about \$4,000 to publish each issue of our newsletter. Please donate for this purpose:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250

Name

Address

Phone/E-mail

If you have questions, please call (617) 484-1844. The Belmont Citizens Forum is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Your donation is deductible from federal taxes to the full extent provided by law.

Make checks payable to **Belmont Citizens Forum** and mail to Belmont Citizens Forum, P.O. Box 609, Belmont MA 02478.

*Thank you.*

Belmont Citizens Forum  
P.O. Box 609  
Belmont MA 02478

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