



Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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New Stormwater Wetland in Cambridge Opens, Improving Water Quality and Providing New Public Recreation Facilities

CAMBRIDGE – Tuesday, October 15, 2013 - Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rick Sullivan and Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) Executive Director Fred Laskey, in partnership with the City of Cambridge and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), today announced the completion of a new 3.4-acre wetland that will store and treat stormwater runoff and improve water quality in the Little River and the Alewife Brook.

“This project is a prime example of the Patrick Administration’s goal of improving the quality and safety of our infrastructure and increasing the open space in our urban communities,” said Secretary Sullivan. “The completion of the Alewife Reservation Wetland represents years of state agencies working with the local community to achieve our common goals.”

The wetland incorporates both conventional and bioengineered structures designed with a natural look and feel that has won praise from stakeholder groups.

“This new wetland constructed in Alewife Reservation is an extraordinary example of what can be accomplished when new methods of stormwater management are undertaken with creative design and effective funding,” said EkOngKar Singh Khalsa, Executive Director of the Mystic River Watershed Association. “The project is a testament to strong leadership and vision provided by the MWRA and City of Cambridge and consistent advocacy from local residents to support environmental restoration.”

Together with the separation of stormwater from combined sewers, the basin will increase historically low flows in the brook and enhance the health of adjacent natural wetlands, providing a significant improvement over the existing degraded habitat caused by many decades of neglect.

“This innovative wetland is one of the crowning jewels in the MWRA’s billion-dollar program to control combined sewer overflows,” said Executive Director Laskey. “And like the beaches in South Boston, people are able to really see and enjoy the results.”

The wetland includes plant and wildlife habitat, natural flood control, wetlands treatment, recreational and educational benefits and is consistent with DCR’s Alewife Reservation Master Plan.

“This newly constructed wetland not only improves water quality in the Little River and Alewife Brook, but also provides a new and unique recreational and educational open space for the community to enjoy,” said Cambridge City Manager Richard C. Rossi.

The site also provides recreational amenities, including a boardwalk and scenic overlooks, environmental education opportunities, an earthwork amphitheater designed with seating for student classes, interpretive signage and links to the Alewife Greenway Extension’s bike and pedestrian paths.

DCR worked closely with the Cambridge Public Works Department and the MWRA on the design of the project, which will also improve the health of Little Pond, located within the agency’s larger Alewife Reservation.

“DCR’s mission is to provide the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with access to the wealth of open spaces and recreational opportunities we are so fortunate to have,” said DCR Commissioner Jack Murray. “The work we have done at the Alewife Wetlands will have significant environmental benefits, and will quickly become a recreational asset for the Cambridge community.”

The wetland is located behind the MBTA’s Alewife Station. Exit Alewife Station to Alewife Station Access Road and turn right going north under the parking structure overpass, approximately 500 feet. Turn left to cross Alewife Station Access Road heading west to the Alewife Greenway Extension.

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