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Alewife Reservation Constructed Wetland

Grand Opening
Oct. 15, 2013
2:00 – 5:00pm

Invited speakers:

City of Cambridge Mayor Henrietta Davis
City of Cambridge City Manager Richard C. Rossi
Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Rick Sullivan
Federal District Court Judge Richard Stearns
EPA Region 1 Administrator Curt Spalding
MWRA Executive Director Frederick Laskey
DCR Commissioner Jack Murray



Welcome to the Alewife Reservation Constructed Wetland

The 3.4-acre stormwater wetland constructed within lands, owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), is the result of years of planning and coordination among the City of Cambridge, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), and DCR together with many other federal and state agencies, local community groups, residents and area property owners.

The project began in 2001 as a revised element of the MWRA's plan to control combined sewer overflows to the Alewife Brook. The City worked closely with DCR and MWRA to create a wetland system that achieved the goals of sewer separation and met the ecological and recreational objectives of the DCR Master Plan for the Alewife Brook.

The design and function of the stormwater wetland includes the following key features:

- A natural system to attenuate and treat stormwater before it discharges into the Little River.
- Passive recreational amenities: walking trails, boardwalks, scenic overlooks and interpretive signage.
- Enhanced habitat through the provision of native plantings designed to provide food and cover, islands to provide breeding

grounds isolated from predators, and an oxbow-like wetland designed to provide improved fish breeding habitat for Alewife and Blueback Herring.

- Outdoor educational opportunities include signage, an earthwork amphitheatre designed with seating for students, and a trail and boardwalk system providing the community with a close-up view of a functioning wetland.
- A diversity of habitat zones include deep, emergent and high marsh; wet meadow, broadleaf floodplain and open water; and scrub/shrub and riparian woodland. Over 115,000 new wetland plants and over 4,000 upland plants are also installed.
- Interconnected trails for recreational walking/running, access for bird watching, nature walks and other recreational activities.
- Enhanced access to the wetland by the newly completed multi-use pathway constructed by Massachusetts Department of Transportation, which provides an important connection to the Alewife MBTA Station and Minuteman Bikeway.

Constructed in an area that was previously known as the Great Swamp, the restoration of the wetland is a vital component to the long-term viability and health of the river corridor. We hope that you will enjoy this new addition to the "urban wild" of Cambridge.

