



Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation
Dedicated to the Protection and Harmonious Use of the Fells

NEWS RELEASE

Monday, May 2, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT INFO

Neil Anderson
Executive Director

Phone: 781-662-2340

Email: friends@fells.org

Web: <http://www.friendsofthefells.org>

**FRIENDS OF THE FELLS ORGANIZES CLEANUP OF THE MIT GEODETIC
OBSERVATORY TRAIL AND HISTORIC SITE ON PARK SERVE DAY**

**VOLUNTEERS COLLECT MORE THAN ONE TON OF TRASH AND INVASIVE PLANTS
IN THREE AREAS**

The Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation rallied volunteers who collected more than one ton of trash and invasive plants in three Fells hiking and walking areas during the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)'s Park Serve Day last weekend.

About 125 Friends members, area residents and students filled more than 50 garbage bags during the four-hour event on April 29. Through our innovative Students of the Fells program for high school and middle school students, the Friends also sent another dozen volunteers to assist the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) cleanup at Torbert Macdonald State Park in Medford. The day's activities drew preschoolers to senior citizens to the forest, as well as groups, including a boy's sixth birthday party and multiple Scout groups.

"The cleanup gave people a way to learn about conservation and stewardship in a fun, welcoming environment. This year was especially gratifying because we were able to combine the educational element with the solid, measurable work projects," said Lindsay Beal, Vice Chair of the Friends Board.

At least 70 of Friends volunteers cleaned trails that began at the Flynn Rink in Medford and the path leading up to and at the historic site of the MIT Geodetic Observatory in Malden. Built in 1899 at the top of a hill that is among the highest points in Malden, the former MIT observatory was used for mapping and geolocating. The facility fell out of use when the school founded the MIT Haystack Observatory in 1970, but the foundation remains.

The Middlesex Fells Dog Owner Group (FellsDOG), in conjunction with DCR, organized a cleanup with about 50 participants at the Sheepfold meadow in Stoneham.

Volunteers gathered trash on or near hiking trails and open areas. They also pulled up garlic mustard, an aggressive invasive species known to reproduce quickly and produce chemicals that inhibit the growth of native plants.

When volunteers arrived at the check-in table at the Flynn Rink parking lot, The Friends equipped them with gloves, trash grabbers, garbage bags and water, and taught them how to identify and properly remove the garlic mustard. Three cosponsors helped Friends arrange this important event, which prepares the forest for several months of extensive recreational use: DCR, Digital Trail Guides, and citizens of Malden.

About the Middlesex Fells Reservation

The 2,575-acre parkland became a state-owned forest park in 1894. Malden, Medford, Melrose, Stoneham, and Winchester border the Fells.

The Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation is dedicated to the protection and harmonious use of the Fells Reservation (“Fells”); promoting awareness, policies and programs to honor and preserve the ecological, historical and recreational resources of this urban forest reservation. The goals of the Friends are to instill awareness and appreciation of the Fells as a valuable natural and historical resource which will foster a sense of stewardship within the larger community; to develop programs for recreation, enjoyment, and study of the Fells which are harmonious with landscape and habitat; and cooperation with others, develop and advocate for policies designed to preserve and protect the Fells Reservation. For more information about our programs or to join the Friends of the Fells, please visit the Friends’ website at <http://www.friendsofthefells.org>

##