

## Watershed Improvements

The DCR Alewife Master Plan (2002) includes a full design with scientific studies which determine needs of *the Alewife Reservation*. The adjacent narrow Alewife Greenway runs along Route 16 where bike and walking pathways are planned through Arlington, Cambridge, Somerville, Medford to the *Mystic River*. The Master Plan describes a well restored Reservation with a 10 acre water quality storm water basin, extended wildlife habitat with large amounts of filtered water, to recharge Little River. The Plan also includes 68,000 plants, an outdoor amphitheater, boardwalks, oversight observation areas, and proper porous pathways for environmentalists, extensive signage, a history panorama, and an inlet for alewife spawning. Eradication of acres of invasive species and toxic soils are included in the Plan. The storm water management project of the City and the Mass Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is projected to improve the river water quality 95 percent, and will follow the US EPA guidelines for the National Clean Water Act and its upgraded compliance standards. The Mystic River watershed is now a cleanup target of the state and federal agencies following recent renewals of the Charles and the Neponset watersheds.

## Herring Run Little River to the Pond

Every spring, Alewife herring (anadromous fish), swim up from *the Atlantic Ocean* through murky water in *Little River* through *Perch Pond* to spawn in *Little Pond* in Belmont. In the fall, fingerlings from the fresh water return downstream to their saltwater sources. Once an important industry in the area, herring seining gave northwest Cambridge its Alewife name. Today, the great Alewife migration is appreciated and celebrated with an annual May "Herring Run" road race sponsored by the Mystic River Watershed Association. Today many coastal groups monitor the FAR follows Mass. Coastal Zone Management reports in order to monitor spawning grounds at Winn Brook's *Little Pond* where herring have spawned for many years.

## A Future with Challenges

Today, urban pollution, flooding, and destruction of our local urban forest threaten the entire ecosystem of *Alewife Reservation* and its neighborhoods. We know that watershed deterioration also impacts nearby property. American woodcock have lost habitat and herring sightings have diminished. Because of the wilderness animals and birds that reside on the Alewife refuge, domestic dogs or cats are not allowed to run free in the habitat of wildlife.

Along riverbanks, tall cattails in marshes stand uneasily against the invading phragmites reeds. Thousands of birds roost here during summer and winter. *Jerry's Pond*, separated from the Reservation proper, is surrounded by active recreational fields, but is contaminated and not maintained. As highly desirable open space, the polluted fenced Pond, grass and wildflowers are inaccessible to the four thousand tenants that live across from it, but are part of the Alewife ecosystem.

## Question

Can members and friends be bold and unwavering in their determination to clean up the Alewife watershed, and to connect the wildlife corridors? Can we work together with federal, state and municipal agencies, despite the necessity to spend tax revenues?



Orange Crowned Warbler

## About Friends of Alewife Reservation

FAR is a volunteer organization found in 2002 dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the Alewife Reservation urban wild. The newly formed FAR Task Force Board includes environmental, business, neighborhood and educational groups which presently exist and are active. A member brings his or her interest group to the wild for stewarding, community service, for environmental education, or for a special conservation project.

### FAR Task Force Plans

- ✓ The FAR public schools task force brings Elementary school youth to learn earth and biological science and to draw on the Reservation for field study or art drawing.
- ✓ A neighborhood group brings families to walk and hike, and receive serenity and connection with nature from the Reservation.
- ✓ Reservation abutters advocate for the preservation of the local woodlands.
- ✓ An Educational Task Force provides a Summer Ecology Camp for Boston and Cambridge youth during July and August.
- ✓ FAR conducts interpretive walks and educational projects for other groups
- ✓ The DCR, together with FAR, sets up activities and assists in needed regulations

FAR works closely with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to steward and to advocate for the Alewife Master Plan which the State Parks agency is committed to completing.

Friends of Alewife Reservation warns of combined sewer overflow discharges on its website. It attends Conservation Commission meetings in Belmont, Arlington and Cambridge. FAR promotes legislation such as the *2008 Environmental Bond Bill* to maintain and protect Massachusetts, our local region and its ecosystems. FAR works in close partnership with local businesses to help restore and protect the Reservation. FAR offers an annual youth Ecology Camp for six weeks in the summer.

## Become an Urban Steward for the Alewife Reservation

**Support** FAR with your membership contribution

**Volunteer** for cleanups or be a point persons for events

**Be a FAR Monitor** for alewife herring and bird boxes

**Advocate** for Alewife Reservation Master Plan and for storm water improvements

**Invite** a Task Force member to give a presentation to your school or neighborhood group

**Create** your own FAR Task Force for preservation and restorative projects

**Join** the Mystic River Watershed Association

**Cooperate** with the FAR- DCR partnership to help monitor our public Alewife land for safety and health.

**Join and volunteer** for the FAR Ecology Camp staff to teach youth from Boston and Cambridge