**For Immediate Release:**

**Silver Maple Forest Protest**

**Saturday, June 28th**

**10am-12pm**

**Rally and Parade**

**617 415-1884**

**From: Ellen Mass**

**Friends of Alewife Reservation**

**186 Alewife Brook Parkway #304**

**Cambridge, MA 02138**

**www.friendsofalewifereservation.org/sightings**

As climate change continues to raise sea levels, the resulting higher storm surges will dramatically alter our coastal areas. The Mystic River Watershed, including the Upper Alewife Basin, are vulnerable to high flood risk as the Amelia Earhart dam becomes less viable to contain storm surges from the higher seas. Rapid development continues to fill the Alewife floodplain with buildings reducing its ability to mitigate flooding. Thus it is critical to preserve as much of the remaining undeveloped floodplain intact. A unique opportunity to do so exists in a seven acre wetland acres of mature silver maple forest next to Alewife Reservation, one of the largest urban wilds in Boston. This forest would significantly help protect Arlington, Belmont and Cambridge from flooding due to climate change. Despite its enormous value for flood mitigation, the forest is under threat of destruction, to be replaced with a 300 unit housing development. A region-wide rally and parade to the forest by local groups is called to protest the granting of curb cuts and to oppose any permitting of East Coast development Firm, O’Neill Properties of Pennsylvania. Concerned residents, whom the endorsers say comprise the majority of the towns and city populations, do not want the forest clear cut and developed. The groups presently request a delay in all building permitting for the forest and its FEMA floodplain surroundings. They ask that Cambridge’s climate Vulnerability Assessment Study, now winding up, be completed and interpreted so that climate change can be taken into account before giving any more development permits.

Friends of Alewife Reservation, Green Cambridge, Sierra Club, Belmont Citizen Forum are sponsors, and other local environmental organizations will rally and parade in front of the MBTA Alewife Station and to the silver maple forest Saturday, June 28th from 10am to 12pm to bring attention to the location of the T station which is only five feet above sea level. Speakers will include elected officials and spokespersons for the forest. The groups will be attending a Belmont Selectmen’s meeting in behalf of these requests demanding they be considered and be honored for future health, safety, for the sake of future generations. They ask for protection of the ecoservices the forest provides as a wildlife refuge, carbon sink, and for pollution, temperature and flooding mitigation.

According to scientists who testified at earlier DEP Hearings in behalf of the “uplands”, Alewife Reservation’s natural resources are critical for mitigating climate change induced storm surge and sea level rise impacts in the Upper Alewife Basin and as far away as the Boston Harbor. Scientific assessments reveal that the forest provides critical wildlife habitat for native species such as 20 species of mammals including deer, weasel, otter, fox, coyote and mink, and over 90 species of birds such as red tail hawks, and 40 nesting species such as the Baltimore Oriole and Yellow Warbler. The 130 acre urban wild is an important recreational resource for the towns and city, highly accessible on the Alewife T red line from as far away as Dorchester. Rally organizers and supporters are asking their state, municipal and regional government representatives to put a stop to the pending destruction of this critical natural resource, and to bring the land owner and local town, city and community leaders together to discuss the acquisition of the “Belmont Uplands”.