9/12/2014

Ed Woll, Massachusetts Sierra Club

Hello Ed,

The newly formed Silver Maple Forest Alewife Alliance (title in process), wishes to engage the Boston Chapter in the Sierra Club to fully address the present floodplain crisis in Cambridge, Belmont and Arlington and downstream to the Mystic River and Boston Harbor.

Background and Requests from Silver Maple Forest Alewife Alliance:

The Sierra Club has stood strong for preservation of Massachusetts forests and has duly noted the crisis over time. October 26, 2010 in "Sierra Club says no to removal of silver maple forest; [Widespread Support for Alewife Floodplain Protectionsm Dec. 2011; Belmont Uplands and Discovery Park Developments -  Bulfinch September, 2004,](http://friendsofalewifereservation.org/2011_Archive/2011-12-21-sierra-club-article.htm) [the  another article by Ellen Mass and Craig Kelley on the silver maple forest not in electronic format.](http://friendsofalewifereservation.org/2009_Archive/2009-12-.floodplain-forest.htm)<http://friendsofalewifereservation.org/2006_Archive/2006_03_riverrestlessspirit_audubon.htm>.

Sierra Club has sponsored a number of silver maple forest Forums, sponsored walks by FAR and Sierra Club, and Sierra Club has written letters in support of preserving the silver maple forest to officials during and after the regional DEP Adjudicatory Hearings which were deeply appreciated.  Most recently in June,  Sierra Club's spokesman, Phil Sego,  spoke to a crowd of 100 at an Alewife rally in support of preserving the woodlands.

Many of us are incredulous that the woodlands are not being preserved despite their floodplain and extensive watershed and wildlife value to the region in such a dense population center of Boston's western corridor. The case has been well made with 3 official city hearings in Cambridge which all favored preservation, and 7 resolutions passed referring to the need to preserve the maple with the last one in 2013: <http://friendsofalewifereservation.org/2013_Archive/2013-03-18-City-Council-Resolution-on%20Belmont-Upland.htm>

For 6 years the Belmont Conservation Commission remained in the forefront of  4 years of litigation which was led by the Coalition to Preserve Belmont Uplands and Friends of Alewife Reservation. The case petition was denied and did not make it to Supreme Court . Issues were primarily storm water, wildlife habitat and [procedural.www.friendsofalewifereservation.org/.../2012-10-04-12P0526-Coalition-to-](http://procedural.www.friendsofalewifereservation.org/.../2012-10-04-12P0526-Coalition-to-) Preserve-the-Belmont-Uplands-100412-Reply-Brief-signed.pdf
[www.friendsofalewifereservation.org/.../Coalition-to-Preserve-Belmont-](http://www.friendsofalewifereservation.org/.../Coalition-to-Preserve-Belmont-) Uplands-Middlesex-10-2205-Plaintiffs-Memo-Support-of-Motion-S...

Scott Horsley studied the Upper Alewife Basin and reported to Willl Brownsberger's information session at the State House with Scott presenting and many legislators attended, all agreeing to the high value of the area of concern.
<http://friendsofalewifereservation.org/2012_Archive/2012-02-29-Horsley-and-Witten-Technical-Analysis-of-Upper-Alewife-Brook-Basin.pdf>

Presently, the very large developer from Pa. known throughout the Eastern Seaboard, lacks his building permit but the permitting by Cambridge of 2500 units on and adjacent to the floodplain has gone unabated since beginning of 2014. FAR made two appeals against a Marriott Hotel which will be built on the floodway with FEMA changes. The agency expanded its scope of determination rather than its elevation in 2010.

Requests from Silver Maple Forest Alewife Alliance:

1. As a result of this significant predicament for our Boston metropolitan environmental future, we in the Alliance call on Ma. Sierra Club Chapter to assist the silver maple forest campaign originating in Cambridge by inviting our professional scientists such as Professor Morimoto or Harvard Herbarium Curator, Walter Kittredge, or Entomologist, Amy Mertl  or Anne Marie Lambert, Town Meeting member of Belmont or any combination to speak to the Club where a significant number of the public can attend,.

2. We especially call on the Ma. Sierra Club of Boston to give full attention to the silver maple forest and its vital function to the Mystic River watershed in its ongoing and upcoming publications. Articles will be forthcoming from the Alliance when asked. In addition, we would like to have a Forum together with your Sierra Club chapter and the forest issue fully addressed and sponsored by the Club.  The dire consequences of ignoring our floodplain protections have been graphically displayed recently in New York and New Jersey shorelines.

Some of the suggestions of Ed Woll at our meeting were well appreciated, especially the reports needed to consolidate economic information by a developer to characterize the site for purposes of understanding its economic value

By delaying the building permit of this "small river floodplain forest" characterized by Pat Swain of NHESP, we will allow the interpretation of the publication of the city climate Vulnerability Assessment Study which will indicate the need for watershed protection of the low sea level location along the watershed of Boston Harbor.

Ellen Mass

For the Silver Maple Forest Alliance

Respectfully Submitted by Ben Beckwith

Silver Maple Forest Alliance

Sierra Club Member