



**For immediate release
September 19, 2008**

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DCR BRINGS CIVIL WAR CANNON BALL BACK TO CASTLE ISLAND

450-pound cannon ball found on Thompson Island

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has brought a Civil War-era cannon ball from Thompson Island back to the Castle Island state park in South Boston, where it will be displayed beside the cannon that fired it roughly 140 years ago.

Theories differ on how, exactly, the cannon ball ended up on Thompson Island. One commonly held idea is that during the Civil War and for a few years afterwards, soldiers at Fort Independence on Castle Island performed target practice with the Rodman cannon at the fort. Their target often was Thompson Island, about half a mile away in Boston Harbor. Several cannon balls have been found on Thompson Island over the years, and recently, DCR and the Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center, which owns Thompson Island, joined forces to bring one of the balls back to DCR's Castle Island.

"This cannon ball, and the story behind it and the history it represents, will be a wonderful addition to Fort Independence at Castle Island," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "I offer enormous thanks to the people at Thompson Island Outward Bound and the Castle Island Association for their help and enthusiasm in making this possible."

Last month, DCR workers placed the ball, which is about 15 inches in diameter and weighs about 450 pounds, in a 55-gallon bucket of sand on Thompson Island and loaded the bucket onto DCR's 76-foot boat, Goliath, for the trip to Castle Island. Goliath is a military surplus landing craft normally used for transporting heavy equipment to DCR's Boston Harbor islands.

"Next year will mark the 375th anniversary of the presence of a fort on Castle Island, and having this cannon ball in the park will be an extra added historical attraction for visitors," said Bill Spain, president of the Castle Island Association friends' group. "We are delighted that it made the trip back to the fort."

The cannon ball has been placed on the parade ground inside Fort Independence. Tours of the fort are offered Sundays through Columbus Day weekend (Oct. 12), noon-4 p.m.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.