



MASSACHUSETTS WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY

Chelsea Facility
2 Griffin Way
Chelsea, Massachusetts 02150

Telephone: (617) 242-6000
Facsimile: (617) 305-5990

Frederick A. Laskey
Executive Director

November 18, 2010

Mr. Paul Jahnige
Middlesex Fells Trail Plan
136 Damon Road
Northampton, MA 01060

Re: Middlesex Fells Reservation Trail System Plan

Dear Mr. Jahnige:

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) would like to offer its comments on the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Middlesex Fells Reservation Trail System Plan. The MWRA understands that this is DCR's first attempt at developing a Trail System Plan and that the Plan will not be finalized until the Resource Management Plan is completed.

The MWRA's comments focus on four areas:

- MWRA Facilities and Infrastructure;
- The Existing Memorandum of Agreement between the MWRA and DCR;
- Section 8 (m) Permitting;
- General Comments/Suggestions on the Plan.

MWRA Facilities/Infrastructure

The Draft Plan does reflect many of the MWRA's earlier comments emphasizing the need to protect critical water supply facilities and infrastructure that exist with the Reservation, including a covered reservoir, a pump station, valves, pipelines, tanks, gatehouses, open reservoirs and access roads. These facilities exist in an area used by thousands of people, and the MWRA must protect all water supply infrastructure in the Fells.

The 20-million gallon Fells Covered Reservoir, located in the High Fells, is a key component in the MWRA's Water Supply Program, as is the co-located open backup reservoir. This ensures sufficient water distribution storage and supply for the MWRA's Northern High Service Area.

In addition to the underground facility, the MWRA maintains pipelines that run through the reservation. The MWRA retains easements along these pipeline routes that must be protected.

Memorandum of Understanding between MWRA and DCR

MWRA will continue to retain control and manage those features critical to its operations within the Reservation. The existing Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) for Spot Pond and the Fells Reservoir between the MWRA and the DCR reference the MWRA's right, in consultation with the DCR, to revise the public access policy to further limit public access to the Fells Reservoir and Spot Pond in response to operational changes. The Fells MOA further notes that MWRA may implement additional restrictions or terminate public access if it believes that public access has a negative impact on the water supply.

It is the MWRA's position that protection of the public water supply will always take precedence over any extension of public access. To that end, the MWRA's specific concerns are as follows;

- All trail areas should be clearly marked with appropriate signage indicating what areas and activities are off limits.
- Trails should not be routed near or across dams or other critical MWRA facilities.
- Rules and regulations should be enforced.
- Policy changes should reflect public input, but never at the expense of water supply concerns.

Section 8-(m) Permitting

The MWRA will be responsible for operating and maintaining the Middlesex Fells Covered Storage Facility and all associated surface piping and easements. Pursuant to the MWRA Enabling Legislation, Section 8 (m) of Chapter 372 of the Acts of 1984 enables the MWRA to issue permits to build, construct, excavate, or cross within or near an easement or other property interest held by the MWRA, with the goal of protecting Authority-owned infrastructure. An 8 (m) permit will be required if DCR proposes any construction or structures that may impact MWRA infrastructure within the Fells Reservation.

General Comments/Suggestions on the Draft Plan

- Introductory Letter from Commissioner Sullivan, Second Paragraph
Suggest adding to first sentence: . . . meadows, woodlands, and wetlands and
"significant water supply resources and infrastructure"

- Section 3 Management Goals, Features, Experiences and Expectations, Page 19, Part 3.1
Suggest adding another bullet: *Provide for public access while protecting public water supply for the MWRA and the Town of Winchester.*
- Section 4, Page 29 Part 4.2 Watershed lands
Suggest more proactive signage/education on the no swimming rule.
- Section 6, Page 38, Part 6.3 Improve Trail System Maps and Signage
Suggest that special signage be developed to highlight water supply areas/facilities, perhaps with an MWRA logo.

In closing, the MWRA looks forward to working in partnership with DCR in maintaining public access in the Fells and believes that both can exist side by side. We look forward to participating in the upcoming meetings and discussions on the Resource Management Plan. Please contact me at (617) 305-5917 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



David Gilmartin
Director, Office of Emergency
Preparedness

cc: Mr. Joseph Orfant, DCR
Frederick A. Laskey, MWRA
Michael Morris, MWRA
Marianne Connolly, MWRA


Nov 9, 2010

Dear Sir:

This is to request that a legally required Resource Management Plan be put in place to protect the Fells Reservation. Such a plan should include plans for enforcement of all regulations to protect Fells resources and visitors.

Sincerely,

Charles Aylward


Melrose, MA

Nancy Corthell

Wakefield, MA 01880

Nov. 6, 2010

Re: New Trails Plan for Fells

To Whom It May Concern,

Please finish the Fells Resource Management Plan Process before any changes are made to the Fells trails. Treat this beautiful natural area with respect.

I walk in the Fells in numerous areas. I walk in the South Border Road Area, Virginia's Woods, the 8 mile hiking trail, etc. They are loved by so many of us who walk the woods for the diversity of plants and overall beauty of the area. It is a treasure that is not taken for granted.

Meeting fast riding bikers on those trails is a challenge for walkers or joggers. Out of nowhere an "on your left" can be downright frightening and forces you right off the trail. It ruins the relaxation of the walk. They run over the plants when they meet a group of walkers, and ultimately that can't do well for the plants in the understory.

Creating the new bike trails that is suggested in the new trails plan THROUGH THE WOODS UNDERSTORY will destroy the plants in those areas.

THERE IS NO PLANNED ENFORCEMENT of these trails and it would be very difficult to enforce anyway due to the large area involved even if funds were available to hire rangers. Finances are not readily available.

Conservation should take precedence over recreation in these fragile areas. Please don't allow the bikers to ruin this conservation area that we are so fortunate to have.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Corthell
(Giswan)

HENRY H. HAMMOND

[REDACTED]
Boston, Mass. 02113

Nov. 9, 2010

tel [REDACTED]

Department of Conservation
and Recreation
Northampton -

Dear Sirs or Madams -

I have just learned of a plan to convert the majority of Fells Reservation hiking Trails to bicycle use.

① would you please send me whatever written material you have concerning this plan, ASAP?

② I strenuously oppose the idea of converting hiking Trails to mountain biking.

We in the Boston metropolitan area are amazingly blessed to have this little patch of unspoiled nature right in our backyard, about 5 miles from the center of Boston.

We are fortunate that our predecessors had the good sense and foresight to protect and conserve this priceless resource.

To enjoy nature, one must slow-down, open his or her eyes and ears, and smell the roses.

Leave the bicycles at home.

Treasure nature.

Thank you.

Henry Hammond
200. 74.

November 09, 2010

Dear to whom it may concern:

As a Life Member of the Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation, I support a plan to reduce the usage of bikes on the trails in the Fells. I have been hiking in the reservation since I was eight, now forty-nine! I am also a life member of the Appalachian Mountain Club and have led many excursions on the beautiful foot paths in the park!

I urge the D.C.R. that the Fells Trails Plan Policy changes be considered only as part of a comprehensive Resource Management Plan public process.

Some of the major foot trails such as the Reservoir Trail are being eroded and overused by mountain bikes. These trails were meant for peaceful walks by their users. I would like to get more involved as a volunteer to help in the effort to protect these wonderful trails!! I may be reached @ [REDACTED] or [REDACTED], Stoneham, MA.

02180-3953. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and to hear my concerns.
Your friend Dave

11/7/10

Fells Trails Plan
136 Damon Road
Northampton MA 01060

Please do not expand the bike trails in the Fells Reservation. It would be like rewarding bad behavior. The bikers already have paved trails but are constantly traveling on the nature trails. (the dirt paths)

I'm elderly and a walker (not even a hiker) ~~_____~~ tell you the number of times I've been run off a trail by bikers speeding down a hill

~~_____~~ "get out of the way!" I walk in the woods to escape the noise and pollution of the traffic in my neighborhood. I enjoy the beauty of the woods, observing the wildlife and the peacefulness. The bikers have damaged so many trails, the plant life and the young trees.

They scare away the wildlife
Please consider the
Resource Management Plan
suggested by the Friends of the
Falls. so we can all enjoy
the reservation.

If you want to help
the bikers why not give
them bike lanes along the
roadway + leave the
nature trails for those
on foot.

Sincerely

Joyce Coppage
[REDACTED]
Melrose, MA 02176

JOYCE COPPAGE

[REDACTED]
MELROSE, MA 02176

Dear [Name],
[Faded text]

Com [Faded]

I [Faded]

[Faded text]

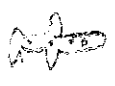
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re: [Faded]

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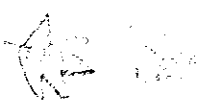
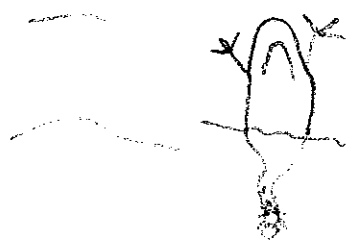
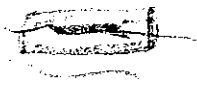
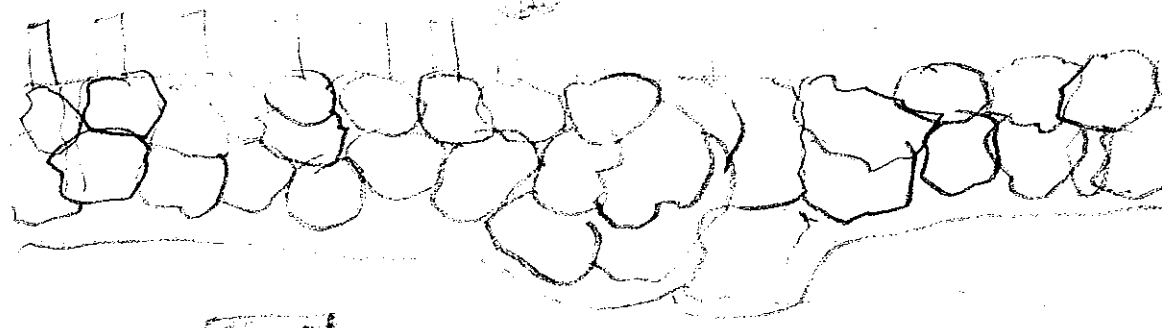
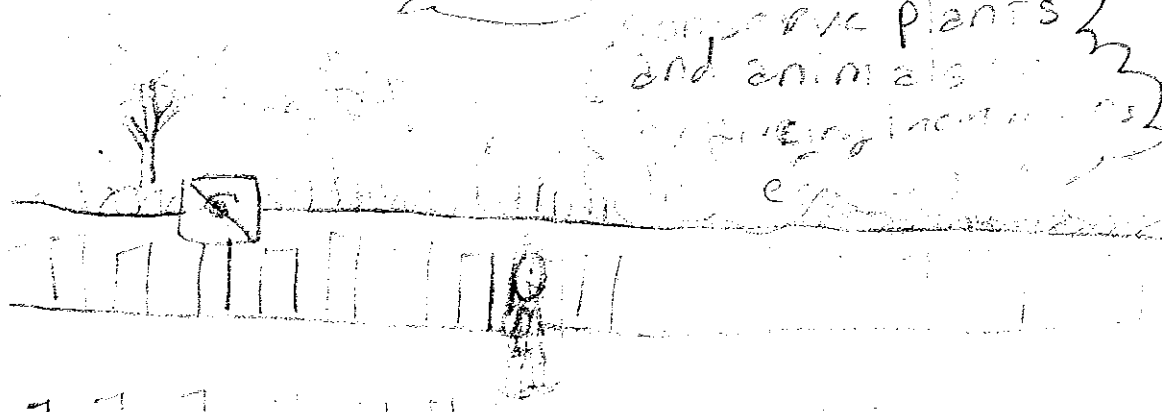


A few...



MA, 02.80

...we need to
...plants
...animals
...
...





New England Mountain Bike Association

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Executive Director

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His Excellency Deval Patrick, Governor
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
State House
Boston MA 02133

November 9, 2010

RE: Sierra Club Efforts to Derail Public Process at the Middlesex Fells

Dear Governor Patrick,

At the November 7th DCR Stewardship Council meeting, Massachusetts' Sierra Club director, James McCaffrey, referenced a letter he recently sent you asking that you put a halt to DCR's public process for the Middlesex Fells Reservation Trails Plan. We urge you not to derail this process which has been ongoing for over one year.

To the credit of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the unprecedented investment in researching the ecological, cultural, historical and social features of the Middlesex Fells has resulted in a level of knowledge about this Urban Park that surpasses any other in the Commonwealth. Using DCR's new Trail Planning Guidelines and Best Practices Manual, the resulting Draft Trails Plan for the Fells is the most complete tool DCR has ever used in planning and managing their trail and natural resources. It is a model that can be used at any of the 200 properties under DCR's stewardship. It represents a complete resource management tool for trails, and it will become an integral part of any future Resource Management Planning process.

Contrary to what McCaffrey argues, the intent of the Draft Trails Plan is to immediately improve ecological and resource protection at the Middlesex Fells. The plan would immediately initiate the reduction of a spider network of trails used for sexual cruising and create a sustainable trail corridor through this afflicted area of the park using *existing* trails. The only reason we can see that McCaffrey opposes this is because a couple of trails would be re-classified to allow cycling. However, not allowing the process to proceed and failing to enact DCR's Fells Trails Plan would allow the environmental damage and public safety issue to continue unabated.

McCaffrey's argument that DCR can not make trail use decisions prior to the undertaking of a lengthy and costly Resource Management Plan is spurious. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 12, Section 2F states that DCR Commissioner shall submit management plans for all reservations, parks and forests that are under the management of the DCR. Commissioner Sullivan is, in fact, doing exactly that. However, nowhere in the law does it state that DCR can not manage and make adjustments to its trail policies in the interim. With over 200 DCR properties and only a few completed thus far, and an estimated ability to

complete two RMP's per year, McCaffrey would have the agency wait nearly 100 years before it undertakes any trail planning on its properties.

Nowhere does McCaffrey state what he disagrees with in the Middlesex Fells Trails Plan but we believe that it is a less-than-veiled personal attack on legitimate mountain bike recreation at the Fells, a position not supported by his national organization.

The public process trail planning process has been exemplary, and Sierra Club's attempt to derail it is unconscionable. As with other stakeholders, Sierra Club was made aware of all public meetings, calls for comment, and all stakeholders meetings. They are a well organized and powerful lobbying group in Massachusetts and Mr. McCaffrey's attempt to halt the process using your intervention is an example of their organization using their power to subvert the public process.

The only thing flawed about the public process is Sierra Club's attempt to derail it.

This is the New England Mountain Bike Association's (NEMBA) first communication with you and your office, and I wish the circumstances surrounding this communication were more positive. Since you may be unfamiliar with NEMBA, our organization is composed of families throughout the Commonwealth and the rest of New England who enjoy mountain biking and stewarding public trail systems. Our motto is "Ride the Trails, Save the Trails," and we are the largest source of volunteerism for the DCR. We are also contracted to teach trail design and construction to the agency. This season alone our volunteer program has donated 152 days of trail care to 73 different parks around New England. Our organization promotes responsible cycling, produces many charity riding events that raise funds for local parks, and puts on many cycling activities for children and their families - 35 so far this year.

Congratulations about your re-election – we are at your service.

Respectfully,



Philip Keyes
Executive Director

cc/ Secretary Ian Bowles, EOEEA
Richard Sullivan, DCR Commissioner
Conrad Crawford, DCR Director of Partnerships
Paul Jahnige, DCR Director of Greenways and Trails Program
DCR Stewardship Council Members

William Page

[REDACTED]
Melrose, MA 02176
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Fells Trails Plan
136 Damon Road
Northampton, MA 01060

11/17/10

Hello,

As a resident of Melrose, MA, I frequently take long walks in the Fells.

I want the Fells to be an area for the full public to enjoy, but believe it must be preserved in its natural condition.

I oppose any plans that would not protect plants, animals, or the utter beauty of the place. Mountain bikes are fine on some roads, but on other paths, particularly after rain, they are destructive.

I bring plastic bags with me on my walks and pick up trash that others leave behind. I urge you to have the same level of respect for our natural beauty.

Thanks
[Signature]

NOV. 15, 2010
[REDACTED]
MARSHFIELD, MA.
02050-1717

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I AM APPALLED TO HEAR THAT THE DCR IS CONSIDERING GIVING OVER YET MORE LAND IN THE MIDDLESEX FIELDS TO BIKING INTERESTS. I'M SURE YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH ALL THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST THIS - LET ME JUST SAY THAT BIKING RULES & ETIQUETTE ARE NOT EVEN NOW BEING ENFORCED.

ALTHOUGH I NOW LIVE IN MARSHFIELD, I CONTINUE TO VISIT THE FIELDS FREQUENTLY TO USE IT AS IT WAS INTENDED TO BE USED - FOR PASSIVE RECREATION - NOT FOR VEHICLES.

I IMPLORE YOU TO CAREFULLY DEVELOP A RESOURCE PLAN THAT WILL FIRST CONSIDER THE ECOLOGY, FLORA & FAUNA OF THE FIELDS IN ORDER TO PRESERVE IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. THEN IT WILL TRULY BE A PLACE THAT PEOPLE CAN ENJOY.

SINCERELY,
SHEILA TRESCHAK
(MEMBER OF FRIENDS
OF FIELDS SINCE 1960 -
USER OF THE FIELDS
SINCE ABOUT 1950).

November 9, 2010

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Fells Trail Plans
136 Damon Road,
Northampton, MA 01060

Dear DCR,

I am writing to request 1) that the Fells Trails System Plan remain in draft form while the Fells Resource Management Plan (RMP) process is underway, and 2) that no significant changes in Fells Reservation trail use be made until the Fells RMP process is completed.

We as a family appreciate the beauty and natural diversity of the Middlesex Fells Reservation on a daily basis. We regularly hike its trails, enjoying it as a form of family recreation and as an opportunity to learn about and teach our young daughter about its rich variety of plant and animal life. In metropolitan areas such as Boston, such opportunities are already rare enough. As it is, all too often, we come across signs of camp fires, beer cans, paint balls, and trash. This is not to suggest that mountain bikers don't respect the natural environment, but that the Fells is already suffering from human impact and insufficient oversight by DCR and the appropriate legal authorities.

As a biker, myself, I can appreciate the appeal of mountain biking in the Fells. But mountain biking and hiking don't mix well on the same trails, at least not in the Fells. All too often, as hiker, I've had to jump out of the way to avoid injury because a mountain biker came around a corner or over a hill too quickly and without sufficient notice. I hate to think what would have happened if it had been my daughter or one of her friends.

Sincerely,
Robert H. Taylor, MSW




Stoneham, MA 02180

From
Tues, Nov 9, 2010
from: Michael J. Cristofani
[REDACTED]
West Medford, MA
02155



To: DCR, An urging that
Fells Trails Plan policy changes be
considered please as part of a
of a comprehensive Resource
Management Plan public process;

© 2009 USPS RECYCLE

2010, Nov 7,

Please, do not open
the Fells up to more bike
use. The damage will be
irreparable.

NY maintains and conserves
its parks, even in city limits.

See article.

M. Morady

**Fells Trails Plan
136 Damon Road
Northhampton, MA 01060**

Dear Sir,

Please reconsider converting hiking trails in the Fells Reservation to bike use. The 35 miles of bike trails available should be adequate.

Bikes are vehicles and considering how fast some of these vehicles travel they will present a danger to walkers and hikers. Someone will be hurt by a biker appearing suddenly on a hiking trail.

The Fells is not designed for a full scale recreational park. Why must the Fells be open to more bike traffic? This should be a place where one can hike and walk safely and enjoy the peace of nature. There are enough bike paths in the area.

What protection of the Fells is being considered in the Resource Management Plan? How do you intend to enforce the rules that exist now? How will future rules be enforced and be whom?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frances F. Akell', written in a cursive style.

Frances F. Akell

Malden, Ma 02148

Nov. 15, 2010

Fells Trails Club
136 Damon Rd.
Northampton, Ma 01060

To whom it may concern:

I cannot believe what I am reading about converting most of the Fells Reservation hiking trails to bike use! What a disaster this would be - devastation of beautiful hiking trails and plant life preserved as a reservation (Definition "something set apart for a particular purpose," specifically, a reservation of land) for these many years. Must we destroy every pristine tract of land? We need areas where we can "get back to nature" and enjoy peace and quiet and be assured that we can be safe.

I understand there are already 35 mi. open to bike use - already too many! There must be management and control of the use of our precious reservation. We must respect the ideas and park designs of architects like Frederick Law Olmstead and others. Once the Fells is destroyed, there will be no way to restore it to its original beauty, a veritable treasure to all the communities that have enjoyed it for so many years. We must all play a part in preservation of this space!

Sincerely,

Low Lockwood

Mark Hanson

Melrose, MA 02176

November 16, 2010

Re: Middlesex Fells Reservation Trail Plan

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to submit feedback to your Fells reservation trail plan. First I will make some general comments and then specific points on your plan.

I am an active Fells user who is regularly found hiking with my kids, walking my dog, or riding my bike in the Fells. I moved to Melrose specifically because it was close to the Fells. It is a fantastic natural resource and my wish is to make the Fells better for everyone and as such I support your plan to allow increased mountain biking access.

I do not see it as a mountain bikers vs hikers issue as friends of the fells paints it but it should be about people who care about and use the Fells working together to improve this great resource. Your report specifically states (as do several scientific studies) that mountain biking causes similar amount of erosion as hiking so why when I happen to bring my bike am I treated as a second class citizen in the Fells compared to when hiking? As long as I am respectful of other users (and I expect them to behave the same to me) I see no reason why we can not all share the trails and all work to improve them. We are not looking for special treatment, just equal treatment to any other user of the Fells and in return we are prepared to put in our time and effort into activities like trail building to make sure the trails are sustainable for all the Fells users.

Comments on Recommendations

6.1 : I fully support closing/moving trails that do not make sense (dead ends, spider trails, ones near endangered species, etc) and reducing the number of miles of trails in the Fells. This will help preserve the habitat, and make the Fells easier to navigate.

The 'no net gain' guideline is a good guideline as long as it is not applied too narrowly. For example a trail that goes straight down a gully and is suffering lots of water erosion may be 6' wide, it could be replaced by a sustainable trail that weaves down the hill and does not suffer from water erosion which is only 1' wide, so the trail may be slightly longer but it occupies a lot less area. This would both be a more sustainable trail and by freeing up land allow more opportunity for plants so even though it would be a net increase in trail mileage it would be a reduction in trail area. So I feel the spirit of the 'no net gain' guideline is being met here.

Your comments on improving trail intersections are excellent. I have long felt that the intersections are confusing, badly signed and lead to a large number of Fells users getting lost. Reducing the number of intersections and providing clear signage at each one would be a big step forward.

6.2 : Improved communication with the various stewardship groups and MOA's with these groups would definitely help make sure we were all working together to improve the Fells as effectively as possible and will hopefully foster greater co-operation between the various groups.

6.3 : Besides great mountain biking access I would put improved trail maps and signage as my next highest priority. When I visit a new area the first thing I do is to obtain a map so I can decide where to explore, make sure I do not get lost and also the maps normally provide the rules of the road so I am clear on what is allowed. Until I saw the excellent maps you had produced as part of this trial plan I had never seen any detailed maps on the DCR web site, the only useful maps I had seen were produced by Fiends of the Fells or FellsBiker.com. If you could provide a good map to distribute as both a paper copy and a downloadable map clearly detailing the trails and providing rules of the road I think it would really improve the experience of new people to the Fells.

I have ridden/hiked in Lynn Woods a lot and their map is excellent, specifically numbering each intersection with both a grid reference and a number so at any intersection you can look up at the nearest tree, see the number and then immediately find your location on the map. A similar scheme in the Fells would be great.

I also like the idea of designating loops appropriate to different types of Fells users in the maps.

6.4 : I fully agree we need to protect the natural resource, your suggestions here look good. One point however is during the 'mud season' I would prefer to see the Fells closed to all users as any user will churn up mud during this season and in order to protect the trails we should make sure no one goes on it. If there is a muddy patch a hiker will go around it so making the trail wider and increasing the size of the muddy area, a mountain biker will normally go through it which will make a mark in the mud but will not make the trail wider. We could argue about which behavior has less impact, but I think both situations are bad for the trail so the only reasonable solution is to ban all users from the single track sections on the Fells during 'mud season'. Also the season itself should be variable as decided by the DCR as some years you may need to keep the trails closed longer than other years if there happens to be more rain/snow melt.

6.5 : I agree that parking at Sheepfold is a problem in summer; I am not sure if a day use fee would work but it is worth exploring this option. At the marjam entrance it is not clear currently if the parking is for public use or the land is owned by marjam, I had heard it was marjam's land, but at least some signage to make this clear would help. Anything you can do to improve parking would be greatly appreciated.

A new 'all persons' trail near Flynn rink would be excellent.

6.6 : I fully agree, anything to improve trail etiquette would be great. Many times I have helped someone find their way back to Sheepfold and to formalize this 'trail ambassador' program would be nice.

6.7 : More rangers would improve the trail experience, hopefully they can encourage good trail use more so than having to enforce the rules.

6.8 : I disagree with hiking only trails and feel all trails should be multi-use. All trails being multi-use is the standard followed at other parks and as mountain biking has a similar environmental impact on the trails why should some trails be hiking only. The Fells was created as an urban park for the user of the citizens of Boston and surrounding areas, part of the original remit was that it was felt the citizens of Boston needed somewhere to explore nature and get exercise and it seems that mountain biking in the Fells is completely consistent with this original intent. Mountain bikers are not asking for special treatment, just equal access to the trails, if you are to have hiking only trails where are the mountain biking only trails? However I would not feel right having mountain biking only trails because when I happen to be walking with my kids why should I be excluded from this 'biking only' trail, the same applies for hiking only trails, it is wrong to exclude a particular user group.

Now some trails are more suited for particular user groups, e.g. some sections of the rock circuit trail are not practical for mountain biking but do make for some fun hiking, so you will not find mountain bikers on this trail. So users will naturally segregate themselves into trails that meet their needs more closely, also by designating trail loops for different users as suggestions in the map you provide this will further help segregate users without banning people from sections of the Fells. I strongly feel that any user should be

allowed to use any trail in the Fells as long as they are respectful of the other users and the environment, and this will lead to much better behavior than taking an adversarial approach of banning people from sections of the Fells.

The Skyline trail is mostly rocks so there will be no environment impact from a mountain biker using this and only a few mountain bikers are skilled enough to ride this trail so it will still be mostly hikers. If hikers wish to have more solitude then the rock circuit is even quieter as it is on a section of the Fells less used and is highly challenging as a trail so this would be ideal for them as could be suggested in the map.

I live in Melrose and so access through Virginia Woods to the rest of the Fells via mountain bike is an important safety concern. The alternative is to ride on the roads which I would rather avoid because it is more dangerous. The main trail through Virginia Woods is wide and easy to navigate so I do not understand why mountain bikers needing to use this as a corridor to the rest of the Fells in order to avoid riding on one of two busy and somewhat dangerous roads would be banned.

I do not feel separating uses by time of day is practical, it is too complex for a typical user to know what time what behavior is allowed or not allowed and often due to kids/work/life you do not get much choice on when you have a few free minutes to spend some time in the Fells.

Separating overlapping segments and Skyline, Reservoir and Mountain Bike Loop trails would be great, and a yield triangle is a good idea.

I also want to make clear I think your proposals to increase the access mountain bikers have to the trails is a fantastic step in the right direction and I am very encouraged that you are proposing doing this. My comments in this section just address my concerns that your proposal does not go far enough in allowing equal access.

6.9 : These are all great steps in the right direction, other than the comments I already made against 6.8 I fully support these ideas.

6.10 : I have a dog and often go to Sheepfold, having it officially acknowledged that off-leash dogs are allowed here which is the de-facto behavior already would be great.

This is the first significant change to Fells policy I have seen in a long while, so I wish to thank you for taking the time and effort to talk to the various users and formulate a plan which takes all the requirements into consideration. I am sure it has not been an easy process but as a regular user of the Fells I really appreciate you and the DCR taking more of an active role in helping improve the Fells. Overall I think it is a big step forward and look forward to the implementation of this plan.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Mark Hanson and the date 11/16/2010.

Mark Hanson

[REDACTED]
Medford, MA 02155

Nov. 6, 2010

Re: New Trails Plan for Fells

To Whom It May Concern,

FINISH THE FELLS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS before any changes are made to the Fells trails. Treat this beautiful natural area with respect.

I walk in the Fells on several trails off South Border Road in Medford, Virginia Woods In Stoneham, and trails near Spot Pond. They are loved by so many of us that walk the woods for their diversity of plants and overall beauty of the area.

Meeting fast riding bikers on those trails off South Border Road is a challenge for walkers or joggers. They run over the plants when they meet a group of walkers, and ultimately that cannot portend well for the plants in the understory.

CREATING the NEW BIKE TRAILS that is suggested in the new trails plan THROUGH THE WOODS UNDERSTORY will destroy the plants in those area.

THERE IS NO PLANNED ENFORCEMENT of these trails AND IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE anyway DUE TO THE LARGE AREA INVOLVED, even if funds were available to hire rangers. Finances are not readily available.

Conservation should take precedence over recreation in these fragile areas. PLEASE.

Sincerely yours,

Frances M. Kirwan

Jeffrey Corthell

Wakefield, MA 01880

Nov. 9, 2010

Re: New Trails Plan for Fells

To Whom It May Concern,

Please finish the Fells Resource Management Plan Process before any changes are made to the Fells trails. Treat this beautiful natural area with respect.

I walk in the Fells in numerous areas. I walk in the South Border Road Area, Virginia's Woods, the 8 mile hiking trail, etc. They are loved by so many of us who walk the woods for the diversity of plants and overall beauty of the area. It is a treasure that is not taken for granted.

Meeting fast riding bikers on those trails is a challenge for walkers or joggers. Out of nowhere an "on your left" can be downright frightening and forces you right off the trail. It ruins the relaxation of the walk. They run over the plants when they meet a group of walkers, and ultimately that can't do well for the plants in the understory.

Creating the new bike trails that is suggested in the new trails plan THROUGH THE WOODS UNDERSTORY will destroy the plants in those areas.

THERE IS NO PLANNED ENFORCEMENT of these trails and it would be very difficult to enforce anyway due to the large area involved even if funds were available to hire rangers. Finances are not readily available.

Conservation should take precedence over recreation in these fragile areas. Please don't allow the bikers to ruin this conservation area that we are so fortunate to have.

Sincerely yours,



Sue B Myers

From: Sue B Myers [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 09, 2010 7:01 AM
To: 'FellsTrails.comments@state.ma.us'
Subject: Comments on the Fells Trail Plan

Hello, I am Sue Myers, Cambridge resident, and frequent user of the Fells trail system. I wish to express my concern for this very fragile area that experiences heavy urban use.

I grew up in Winchester and Melrose and have known most parts of the Fells all of my life. I have participated in AMC cross-Fells hikes and usually hike the Winchester Reservoir section on a weekly basis. I treasure the older growth trees, the views of the 3 Winchester ponds, and the finding odd plants like sassafras, shag bark hickory, and all the lady slippers in the spring.

My concerns with the trails as they presently exist are: biking. The area is busy, full of children, and abused by the cyclists. Much trail erosion is caused by bikes using the trails they are not posted for, and especially using trails when bikes are seasonally not allowed. They grind up mud and top soil making the trails deeper and exposing tree roots. I frequently see cyclists just take off in the woods to make a shortcut. They do not belong in such a place. Cyclists belong on specific courses for them (mountain trails promoted by private companies). If accommodations for cyclists must be made; they should be limited to few trails, and trespassing, out of season riding and making their own trails should result in a fine. As I understand it, they had once promised to maintain their trails, but this maintenance has never happened.

My second concern about the trails, and I am focusing on the Winchester area, is the fact that dogs swim in the reservoirs, and such activity has increased in recent years. The land is posted, no one supervises the roadways any more, and dog owners are simply flagrantly indifferent to posted rules and general sanitary issues. If the reservoirs are "open" to dog swimming, then that should be the rule, and non motorized boats should also be allowed.....

If I could suggest three changes they would be : ban bicycles

Enforce regulations about use of the reservoir waters, and develop a trails group that will maintain/supervise trail use. (not an enforcement group, but a preservation group)

Thank you.

Sue-Ellen Myers
[REDACTED]



Nov. 12, 2010

To Whom It May Concern.

I am writing out of concern that in an attempt to consider "everyone's" decisions are going to be made that will in fact destroy the Middlebury Falls.

The Falls was not designed for a ever intended to be a wide-open recreation park. It was designed and created to preserve the beautiful environment, purity of the woods, the plant and the animals, and to allow the public access to this serene and peaceful recreation.

To open this beautiful and contemplative recreation which has brought appreciation and understanding of our natural heritage to countless hundreds of thousands of people - just to allow our TINY minority access with machines that would totally destroy all that the Falls was created to maintain is too horrific to even contemplate!

Please - don't go down in history as the Department that destroyed the Falls!!

Vicki Kaufman

Melrose, MA 02176



New England Orienteering Club, Inc.

[REDACTED]
Woburn MA 01801

November 15, 2010

Fells Trail Comments
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
136 Damon Road,
Northampton, MA 01060.

The New England Orienteering Club (NEOC) is dedicated to the sport of orienteering and map navigation education. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft Trail System Plan for the Middlesex Fells Reservation.

Orienteering is a sport in which participants travel both on and off trail, using a map to visit checkpoints. We have been orienteering in the Middlesex Fells for decades. Each year our club, along with our partners, works to bring several hundred visitors to the Middlesex Fells to orienteer, through permitted orienteering meets, and navigation education field trips for schoolchildren.

Because orienteering typically involves off trail use, we are concerned about the negative tone of the draft trail plan characterizing all such use. To the best of our knowledge, orienteering has not resulted in such negative impacts. We subscribe to the environmental land use policy of our national federation, Orienteering USA, which is included as Appendix 2.

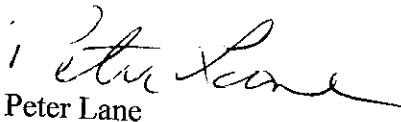
We recommend that the Draft Trails Plan be altered in order to: acknowledge orienteering as a use of the Middlesex Fells, name orienteering clubs as stewardship partners, and change the language concerning off-trail use. We detail the proposed changes in Appendix 1.

NEOC looks forward to continuing to work with DCR staff to support orienteering in the Fells, to protect sensitive areas and to enhance the visitor experience for all users.

I can be reached by phone at [REDACTED] or info@newenglandorienteering.org

Sincerely

New England Orienteering Club, Inc.


Peter Lane
President

New England Orienteering Club, Inc.

Appendix 1: Proposed changes to the draft trail plan

Motivation:

- Orienteering is an existing use of the Fells, and should be acknowledged.
- Orienteering clubs are stewardship partners of the DCR.
- In your draft trail plan, we were pleased to see acknowledgment of permitted off-trail activity, but were concerned about the negative tone used elsewhere about all off-trail use. Off-trail activities such as nature study and orienteering, properly managed, cause little environmental damage.

Specific changes we recommend:

1. Section 2.8, Current users: Add orienteering as a secondary use: "Secondary uses include fishing access, horseback riding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and orienteering."
2. Section 2.9, User Attitudes and Behaviors: Change the language to address only damaging off-trail use. Continue support for managed and responsible off-trail use.

Replace the existing sentence on off-trail use with this:

"Off-trail damage: creation of new trails and soil compaction are a risk when multiple users travel off-trail without regard for sensitive areas and times of year."

3. Section 3.4, Recreational Experiences and Expectations: Add orienteering as a "managed experience": Add to your list of managed experiences on page 24 this bullet point:

√Orienteering on a variety of terrain".

Under "The following section provides additional details, discussion and reasonable expectations regarding the above "managed experiences," we suggest that you include a section about orienteering, which we can provide separately.

4. Section 4.1, Ecological Impacts of Trail Activities, page 31: Change the tone about off-trail activities. That is:

Unmanaged off-trail activities – including freeriding, off-leash dogs and off-trail nature study – may extend the environmental impacts of recreational use beyond the existing trail network and expand the area of wildlife disturbance.

5. Section 5, Staffing and Stewardship Partners: Include the New England Orienteering Club as a Stewardship Partner

The New England Orienteering Club (NEOC) educates the public about map navigation through educational programs and organization of orienteering sporting events.

Within the Fells, NEOC has partnered with various groups to host orienteering meets for the general public, and navigation training for schoolchildren.

New England Orienteering Club, Inc.

Appendix 2: Land Use Policy of Orienteering USA

Orienteering is a sport of cross-country navigation using a specially made detailed map. Walking or running across terrain without following trails is a fundamental feature of the sport.

As U.S. population grows and the amount of open land decreases, the land we use for orienteering comes under many competing human pressures which can jeopardize the natural environment. We orienteers have two motivations to protect the environment. First, quality orienteering is vitally dependent on a rich natural environment. Second, most of us were drawn to the sport partly because of a love of nature, and are thus motivated to protect nature regardless of our involvement in orienteering.

So that the areas where we orienteer are preserved for all users now and in the future, the U.S. Orienteering Federation upholds the following environmental standards for all orienteering events conducted by its member clubs:

- Orienteering shall operate within all legal environmental standards, and also within any framework agreed upon with land managers.
- No long-term damage to animals, plants, landscape or archaeological features shall result from an orienteering event.
- Any temporary damage, such as plant trampling, should no longer be discernable after 3 months of a growing season.
- No litter, equipment or extraneous material shall remain once a venue has been vacated.
- Where a venue contains vegetation, wildlife, or features of special sensitivity, event organizers shall cooperate with land managers to provide special protection.

In order to implement these standards, it is USOF's policy that its member clubs adhere to the following guidelines:

1. **Map Making** – When selecting sites for future maps, permission shall be obtained from the appropriate land managers to ensure that the area of interest can be used for orienteering events. As part of this permission process, the land managers shall be informed about the nature of orienteering so that an educated decision is made about the use of the land. They shall be specifically asked about off-trail usage and designated environmentally sensitive areas. It may be helpful to include in these discussions the formal studies that have been conducted on the environmental impact of orienteering.

Where appropriate, areas known to be designated environmentally sensitive or damageable from orienteering activity may be labeled sensitive on the map as part of the map making process.

2. **Event Scheduling** – Events shall be scheduled so that venues are not over-used. A venue is receiving an appropriate amount of use if no long term damage is created. A venue's tolerance for orienteering use depends on the nature of the venue and on the attendance at

New England Orienteering Club, Inc.

events. An urban park may sometimes be used weekly for small local events, whereas a preserve may tolerate only one such event per year. Events shall not be scheduled during times that land managers deem critical to the protection of wildlife or vegetation.

3. **Course Design** – Land managers shall be consulted during the course design process to ensure that the design takes into account sensitive areas, which may change seasonally or from year to year. It may be decided to mark some areas out of bounds and design the courses around them, whereas other areas may be incorporated such that they are crossed by a limited number of participants. If necessary, participants can be routed to specific stream crossings, fence crossings, etc., to avoid causing damage.

Anticipated event attendance shall be taken into account. The greater the attendance, the more care needs to be taken to minimize impact.

4. **Event Management** – When appropriate, information shall be posted and instruction given alerting participants to environmentally related conditions and rules.

[REDACTED]
Melrose MA 02176

November 14, 2010

Commissioner Rick Sullivan
Department of Conservation and Recreation
136 Damon Road
Northampton MA 01060

Dear Commissioner Sullivan,

The threats continue fast and furious: Why are so many people bent on winning the rare and incredible resource that is the Middlesex Fells Reservation? The Fells is not a bike park, not a dog park. The Fells is a quiet, natural, low-key environment in which we city-dwellers can commune with nature and temporarily escape the bustle and noise of our lives. If I want to have to look over my shoulder every few seconds to see if someone is racing up behind me, and on any and all of the shared paths in the Fells that's what I have to do, I can go into Boston. Even when riders aren't racing or being reckless, to sense someone bearing down from behind is jarring and unnerving and interrupts the quiet, peaceful reverie I walk in the Fells to find

Bicyclists can ride in plenty of places; I ride a bicycle myself. But when I walk I want my experience to be slow, calm, relaxed. The thirty-five miles of trails already designated for wheeled-transportation in the Fells are plenty. With all of the disruptions and potential sources of Fells ruination we've had to deal with and try to prevent over the last ten years, we need a quiet, slow place more than ever.

This forest in the midst of the helter-skelter places we all live is already endangered and we must take action now to preserve what's left. For the kids who live in Everett and

2.

Chelsea and everywhere else that's cement and steel, and cars rushing by, trucks rumbling up and yes, bicyclists weaving along the sidewalks, keep the bicyclists on the thirty-five miles of trails already assigned. Close and repair all of the non-designated trails the bikers have worn into the delicate, botanically-diverse surface as part of the full resource management plan required by Massachusetts law and moral responsibility to the generations that came before and preserved this wonderful space, and those to come who will need this irreplaceable resource even more than we do.

Sincerely,

Anita + Dan Schoen

Nov. 16, 2010

I am writing to urge a
Resource Management Plan

and against converting most

Fells Reservation hiking trails

to bike use. Gail Caldwell's

new memoir Let's Take the Long

Way Home extols the gloried

of ^{Fells} hiking trails experience

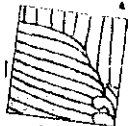
ON FOOT. Please, don't introduce

wheeled traffic. Many of us seek out the

Fells for its serenity. Keep bikers on paved

roads + leave the unpaved paths to walkers.

Anita D. McClellan



Cambridge Green

Anita McClellan

Cambridge MA 02138-6727

A program of

www.cambridgeartscou...



3c USA



Attn: Public Comment

Fells Trail Plan
136 Damon Road
Northampton, MA 01060

dmk

Comments on Fells Trail Plan. +

Walking is our basic form of transportation for 10^s of thousands of years. Individual wheeled vehicles are quite new. Rocky, narrow fells trails are definatly not places for a mix of bikers, walkers, and hikers. Most of the people that use the fells know who will end up having the right of way. Rules don't mean much to most bikers.

The majority of them will not even signal people when they come up right behind them. Expansion of biking to other trails is uncalled for.

Dog walking, (most dogs are running free), needs

to be controlled. There are easily several hundred dogs in the Fells on most weekend days. When they jump on people or nip or bite were told they are just being friendly. I guess that's a good excuse for muddy paw prints and drool on peoples clothes.

Some 'professional' dog walkers are regularly using the Fells, some have as many as 6 or 8 dogs running loose.

These people need to be excluded from the Fells!

More people are using our park areas for purposes that don't fit well into areas that are

more densely populated
than ever before.

How about much better
enforcement of the
situation as it exists
now!!

That includes D.C.R.
roads where cars
are regularly going
15-20 mph over and
faster!! Than the limit!

Thanks for
your attention to these
matters.

Dana + Ingeborg
Jewell



Dana M Jewell

[Redacted]
Melrose MA 02176

[REDACTED]
Medford, MA 02155
October 13, 2010

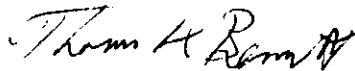
Fells Trails Plan
136 Damon Road
Northampton, MA 01060

I grew up in South Medford (some time ago), and used to take the trolley to the Fells to pick blueberries near Wright's Tower, and swim in Wright's Pond. When my wife and I were looking for a home, we chose this area, not only for its convenience to Boston, but also for its proximity to the natural beauty of the Middlesex Fells Reservation. That was almost thirty years ago, and we still believe that the nearby reservation adds to the value of our property and neighboring property values in Medford, Malden, Melrose, Stoneham, and Winchester.

I'll admit that these days I spend my outdoor time on the golf course more than in the woods. But my wife walks in the Fells and reports frequent near collisions with mountain bikers. I hear similar stories from a young, tough friend who regularly runs on hiking-only trails. Unlike my wife, who gets out of their way, he stubbornly stands his ground, forcing offending bikers to brake and swerve to avoid hitting him. So far this method of trail sharing works for him, but it isn't for the faint of heart. Designating more trails for bike use may eventually drive even my confrontational friend to run elsewhere.

More bike trails will degrade nature in the reservation, spoil it for use by others, and will eventually devalue neighboring property values. Please don't give in to pressure from the biker lobby. They're funded by the sports industry, and care more for their own recreation than for our common land -- land that you're paid to protect for all.

Sincerely,



Thomas K. Bennett

cc: Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation
Mayor Michael J. McGlynn

October, 20,

Protecting the Woods

The following neighbors and/or abutters of the Middlesex Fells Woods do not wish to have motorized bikes on or off the wooded trails, especially by our homes.

Name/signature	address
1. Jeannette + Rich Checkill	22 Ronaele Rd, Medford, Ma
2 Robert J. Leahy	25 Ronaele Rd Medford MA
3. Ellen J. Maloney	30 Headland Way, Medford
4. R. Maloney	30 Headland Way, Medford
5. Cath. R. Smith	32 Ronaele Rd Medford MA
6. J. M. Amore	10 Ronaele Rd Medford MA
7. Charlotte Bloomberg	6 Ronaele Rd., Medford
8. Bella Joseph	4 Ronaele Rd
9. Max Heinig, Medford	5 Arden Road 02155
10. W. Hoff	5 Arden Road 02155
11. Leo Maccello	11 Barbara Lane 02155
12. Anthony Arena	15 Barbara Ln.
13. Lucille Amador	21 Barbara Lane
14. Paul Matarazzo	25 Barbara Lane
15. Maria DiStefano	28 Barbara Lane
16. Maria Salerni	31 Headland Way
17. Nora Kaplan	21 Ronaele Rd.
18. Elizabeth Lynde	20 Ronaele Rd

has been established

Oct. 14, 2010

for how they re-creates Representatives of DER,
since its inception I strongly oppose the

Please do not Planned conversion of
Spoil a "good thing" walking trails to
biking trails at the

Sincerely,
Michelle Felts, as
Folke Jones) the two uses are
incompatible.

The character
of the Reservation

ELISSA ELY, M.D.

Belmont, MA 02178

Telephone

11/6/10

Dear DCR,

Please know I am strongly opposed to converting most of the Fells Reservation trails to bike use. It's an unsafe + unnatural expansion. Please please reconsider. Walking there - without bike traffic - remains one of the only local respites in the Boston area.

Thank you,

Elissa Ely

11/8/10

To whom it may concern:

I am very concerned about the deterioration in the landscape of the Fells by "road bike" use. I support the concept of a Resource Management Plan for the Fells.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Faith A Stinson
Medford resident

[REDACTED]
Stoneham Ma 02180

November 7, 2010

To: DCR

Re: Falls Trails Plan

Dear Sirs/Madams:

I would like to urge the DCR to open further trails in the Middlesex Falls to mountain bikers only after a Resource Management Plan is adopted and a plan for enforcement of all regulations is in place.

The proposed changes in trail use would impact all users of the Falls, + their rights must be protected. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Romano

Lee Bracken

[REDACTED]
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

November 7, 2010

Fells Trails Plan
136 Damon Road
Northampton, MA 01060

To Whom It May Concern:

For over a century the Fells has served as a Reservation where visitors can experience and appreciate nature.

Please do not change Fells trail usage until after completion of a comprehensive Fells Resource Management Plan.

A Resource Management Plan would consider environmental and safety impacts of opening hiking trails to bike use and would include plans for enforcement of all regulations to protect Fells resources and visitors. This is essential to protect Fells plant and wildlife, and to ensure the safety of everyone who enjoys the Fells.

Changes in trail use proposed by the Fells Trails Plan should only be considered as part of a full Resource Management Plan.

Sincerely,



Lee Bracken

cc: Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation