

From: Pete & Laura Lane [REDACTED]

Sent: Thu 3/3/2011 5:37 PM

To: MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Recreational uses

Attachments:

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I attended the Recreation workshop last evening and listened. I think it was a very constructive and productive program for all.

Problems/conflicts/overuse that occur in the Fells are certainly not unique to the Fells. Part of the solution in many places is volunteer patrols. We heard from the Dog Walkers at Callahan State Park in Framingham/Marlboro. There was mention of some volunteer patrol at Blue Hills. I'm one of the volunteer Alpine Stewards on the Franconia Ridge in New Hampshire's White Mountain National Forest. The Alpine Steward program is a partnership between the Appalachian Mountain Club and the US Forest Service. We believe that the Alpine Steward program has a positive effect to help preserve the rare and fragile alpine vegetation. So, I suggest that part of the solution to the problems/conflicts/issues could be a volunteer patrol. It would be partnership between the major stake holders (Friends and Boston Chapter of the Mountain Bike Association), and the DCR.

A volunteer patrol does not have enforcement powers. However, their presence goes a long way toward responsible behavior. And, although it would not solve all problems/conflicts/issues, it would go a long way toward reducing them.

Pete Lane

From: [diane mutchler](#) [REDACTED]

Sent: Fri 3/4/2011 2:26 PM

To: [MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP](#)

Cc:

Subject: A copy of my email sent to the Friends of the Fells

Attachments:

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RE: Mike from the Friends of the Fells asked me to forward my email to him (written 3/4/11) - to you

Hello Mike (Friends of the Fells),

I was able to attend Tuesday's (3/1/11) meeting; yes, I was the woman who briefly read from my email.

Your presentation was the best of the three, Mike. Your message was clear, it was kind, and it was the truth. The other two presentations; i.e., mountain biking and dogs - oh, it was painful to be indoctrinated in this way, this "warm and fuzzy" way. The slide shows were so unbalanced.

Mike - what a slide show I could have presented, and it would have been accurate. If I had only known. All of the dog mess. The dogs charging at me. The barking dogs in the distance as they get my "scent" down the trail, getting ready to "greet" me. And then the owners yelling at them "Come!" "Come!" And they don't "come." Instead, I come to a standstill and wait until the dogs are away from me. And I continue along on my hike or skiing, to contend with dog mess and dog urine.

What will happen when the snow is melted and we are not able to easily distinguish the dog waste in the Fells? The other day I heard a mother quickly yell out to her little daughter, "Don't get near that!" "Yes, it's terrible, honey." What an education that is giving our young children about the poor standards of today's dog owners.

I also thought about the lovely spot along the edge of the reservoir (near E. Boundary Road - at my end). It's one of my favorite spots to sit back and relax in the summer. But, now so many dog owners use this as a swimming playground for their dogs, I get nervous as I'm coming "around the bend" to this spot, hoping no dogs are around so I can sit down / lie down and be quiet and enjoy the beauty up there. But how often it's rudely interrupted by a "galloping" dog(s) jumping into the water, and then running up to the dry land, and shaking - all over. The owners pretty much have no control over the dogs, nor do they try. It has become clear this is "the place to be" for dogs. A great place for them to cool off and have fun. So, it has become "stressful" for me, since I love being there so much, but I will use the word "hate," since I hate it when the dogs show up and behave in this way. It ruins it for me. It just isn't right. This is the same spot where I ended up with dog slobber all over the back of my hair because a dog came up to me so quickly while I was sitting quietly. My friend was so upset when it happened; I became silent because it was so gross.

So - the slide show presented to us by the dog walker woman was unfair, one-sided; and bottom line, totally unrealistic, and do I dare say - deceptive?

A couple of years ago I was hiking the Skyline trail by myself - a beautiful day. I was on a clearly marked trail "No Bicycles." It was a narrow portion (bushes on either side). Suddenly a female mountain biker came up behind me and bluntly yelled out, "Can you get out of my way?" At first I looked around and saw I'd have to step into shrubs, etc., but then it dawned on me that this was a no bikes trail. I stopped and politely and firmly told her so. She used the "b" word with me, and told me to move. I realized it would be wrong for me to do so, and I kept walking along. She then used other "colorful" language, and I turned around and reminded her (not yelling at her) this was not a trail for cycling, and it is clearly marked. She used the "b" word with me again, and turned around in a huff.

I've also had to quickly get out of the way of mountain bikers on my regular summer hikes on the Rock Circuit trail. I can hear them coming from a distance at times because they are not always quiet (I can't recall if they are allowed on these particular trails?). In my case with mountain bikers, they do not politely step to one side and make sure the hiker is "well taken care of" as one of the biker speakers said *she* did. *I* get out of *their* way. Again - the slide presentation by the mountain biker was pure indoctrination (you noticed there was no sound with either presentation?!).

Both presentations - so lop-slided, and do I dare say deceptive? Or perhaps deluded?

We live in very selfish times, Mike. Some use the term narcissistic, and I would agree with that. The afternoon of the meeting I took my usual 2-1/2 mile walk around my neighborhood in Malden, which comes close to the Fells along the E. Border Road. After the first dog mess "spotting" on this walk, I decided to count how many "droppings" I came upon on this walk. Some were directly on the sidewalk, some were right at the edge of the home owner's lawn or on their lawn near the sidewalk, and some were in the dirt areas around the trees right next to the sidewalk. One homeowner had a sign in their shrub area "Please Clean Up After Your Dog." Someone had twisted it around so it was upside-down. Anyway, the total number of "sightings?" 29! Yes, Mike - 29! And that was with me walking at a good clip, not truly searching hard.

My point - this is the general mentality of dog owners in the times in which we're living. I was walking through nice neighborhoods, and I wasn't looking really hard. And how many "piles" are still covered by the snow, I wonder? So - perhaps the woman at the meeting doesn't behave in this way, and perhaps the dog walkers at Tuesday's meeting do not either, but, I believe they are the minority, and I draw that conclusion from all of the dog mess and urine at the Fells, and all of the dog mess on my daily neighborhood walks. We **MUST** deal with reality, Mike, when making important decisions, and these people are not doing so.

I believe I am correct in saying, if these two groups get there way, things will continue to get worse in the Fells. Already I am so distressed at times during my hikes / skiing, due to all of the dog mess and urine, and due to the fact most dogs are off leash, and they are not under voice

command, as one "pro-dog" woman said they must be. To all the dog groups who want off leash in the Fells - First - first, they should come clean up all of the dog mess in the Fells, and get the word out to dog owners - No More of This! And make sure the Fells stays clean / sanitary. 2nd, *they* should patrol all of the Fells to make sure dogs are on leashes, since that is the current rule. And, keep the dogs from swimming in the drinking water / reservoirs, where signs are posted "No Swimming." Make sure the dogs stay away from all of us who don't want them near us, and keep them from loudly barking when they get our scent in the distance, and then often "charge" and bark when they see us. Before these dog lovers are given more "freedoms," *they* should first fix all of the problems being caused by the current dog owners / dog walkers. They shouldn't be "given an inch".

And regarding the mountain bikers - oh, what a horrible thing it will be to open the Fells up to them even more.

In general today, people don't want to hear about rules. People want to "do their own thing." They feel this is a free nation, and they can pretty much do whatever they wish, and as I've learned during the past few years or so, don't you dare say anything to someone otherwise, because they will usually curse and cuss at you, and they become aggressive. Others I've spoken to recently agree 100 percent. We pretty much are fearful to correct anyone in these selfish and aggressive days. I've never dared to speak to a dog owner in the Fells, because I don't want to get yelled at, etc.

Yes - these are very rude, selfish and aggressive times. Mike / The "Friends" are 100 percent correct. But, I felt the overall tone at the Tuesday's meeting was - you/The Friends are the bad guys, so unbending, so inflexible, so lacking in feelings, and the "rest" are the good guys, and they are right.

However, they are wrong, and you / The Friends are correct. But, sad to say, I would be very surprised if "it goes" in your direction.

I left the meeting right as the group discussions were being formed. I get up at 3:30 a.m., so it was time to depart. Also, I didn't want to get frustrated listening to lop-sided discussions. Maybe I'm wrong - maybe the group meetings produced good results. Could you please let me know the results of the group meetings, and the meeting overall?

Thanks for your time. I'm 100 percent behind you and The Friends. Oh - if you would like to forward this email to anyone else, please feel free to do so. I believe it is a very accurate email. I hope it will be helpful.

Sincerely,

Diane Mutchler

████████████████████  
Malden, MA 02148-3090

████████████████████

From: Chris Paddock [REDACTED]

Sent: Sun 3/6/2011 6:07 PM

To: MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP

Cc:

Subject: Dogs and the Middlesex Fells

Attachments:

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to encourage Department of Conservation and Recreation to maintain the current level of off-leash dog activity at the Fells. While I recognize it is not entirely within the rules for dogs to be offleash, there is little to no enforcement of the on-leash policy, and there seems to be little to no conflicts between dog owners and other heavy users of the park.

As a heavy user myself--we're there sometimes 4 to 6 times a week--I'm often amazed by how respectful and responsible other dog owners are, both to each other, to the park itself, and to other types of users. In fact, all users of the park seem to take to heart what we have in this beautiful area. Litter on the trails is virtually non-existent. Sharing between mountain bikers, hikers, runners, and dogs is exceptionally well self-regulated.

Please consider these comments when defining the Management Principle and Goals for the Middlesex Fells Reservation Resource Management Plan. I've been hearing and seeing comments that the dog community is both destructive and that we don't care much about this plan. It would take one day of observation at the Fells to see how much use we get out of it, and how utterly and completely harmonious the park is used between all types of users. You owe it to those that truly care about this precious space, those of us that use it perhaps more than any other group, to incorporate our needs.

Sincerely,  
Chris Paddock

From: Kate Edwards [REDACTED]

Sent: Mon 3/7/2011 6:36 AM

To: MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP

Cc:

Subject: In support of shared use of the Fells

Attachments:

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March 7, 2011

Middlesex Fells RMP Comments  
c/o MA Office of Public Collaboration  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
100 Morrissey Blvd., M-1-627  
Boston, MA 02125

To whom it may concern,

I am one of many visitors to the Middlesex Fells Reservation who enjoys using the trails with my dog off leash. I control my dog; I do not allow my dog to run up to or jump up on other people; I do not allow my dog to disturb wildlife or damage plants and the environment. I use a leash when necessary to maintain control over my dog. I pick up my dog's waste and dispose of it properly.

For the most part, I feel that my recreational interests are served at the Fells.

The regulation that dogs must be on leash at the Fells is inconsistent with the recreational usage of a significant number of people.

I strongly encourage the Department of Conservation and Recreation, in defining its Management Principle and Goals for the Middlesex Fells Reservation Resource Management Plan, to allow for people to continue enjoying the trails with off-leash dogs.

Sincerely yours,  
Kate S. Edwards

From: Michael Fager [REDACTED]

Sent: Mon 3/7/2011 12:55 PM

To: MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP

Cc:

Subject: Comment on the Middlesex Fells RMP

Attachments:  Why Dogs Should Not Be Allowed on the Fells.doc(53KB)

[View As Web Page](#)

Friends,

Attached is a comment on the Middlesex Fells RMP.

Michael Fager

## Why Dogs Should Not Be Allowed on the Fells

Michael Fager

I live in Somerville and I use the Middlesex Fells. I use the Fells mostly for walking and hiking, but also birding and other wildlife watching

The Fells is unique in that it is a large urban park that has not been developed as a park. Rather, it has been preserved in a natural state, so one can actually hike in the Fells and feel like they are far from the city. Shortly after entering the Fells the woods close around you, and the quietness and atmosphere is more like a state forest in western Massachusetts than a park in suburban Boston. The Fells is large enough that if you choose, you can hike all day over a variety of terrains without backtracking. The Fells is also large enough that your encounters with others are infrequent. In some of the lesser used areas, you can actually feel alone.

However “off leash” dogs are a major flaw in that experience. As shown in the Fells Trail Plan, upwards of 85% of dogs using the trails in the Fells are “off leash”. This means that they are walking down the trails or through the woods totally free of the control of their owners. It is common to encounter strange dogs wandering down the trail uncontrolled. Encountering a strange dog anywhere, but especially in the woods, is not a benign experience. Dogs will approach closer than is comfortable, and may rub against you, jump up on you, bark at you, drool on you or just smell your private parts. Occasionally (based on the anecdotal evidence of others walking in the Fells) a strange dog encountered in the woods may bite. All of this behavior is inappropriate, inconsiderate and simply should not happen. I do not allow strangers to engage in such threatening or intimate behavior, so I simply do not understand why dog owners think it is ok for their dogs to behave that way.

For a person afraid of dogs, every strange dog is a threat, sometimes even a severe threat. Just seeing an unrestrained dog can produce severe anxiety that does not resolve until that dog has left the area, or been restrained by its owner. But if that dog jumps on, drools, rubs up against or in any other way threatens someone who is afraid of dogs, a walk in the Fells can become unnecessarily frightening. This kind of behavior by unleashed dogs can drive people away from the Fells.

I have encountered more unleashed dogs in the Fells than I care to recollect. Almost invariably, when the dogs' owner appears they will say "Don't worry, she won't bite." Then they try to control their dog by calling out to it. Unfortunately, neither of these is comforting or helpful.

First, the encounter with the strange dog has already occurred, and the unpleasantness that surrounds that cannot be undone. While your dog may never bite you, or people she knows, I am a stranger to your dog and to you. Your dog may perceive me as a threat and act accordingly. A dog owner can never presume that because their dog loves them, it would never threaten or bite anyone. In fact, dog owners should presume the opposite. A person who is a stranger to your dog is more likely to be perceived to be a threat. Anyone walking in the woods should not be subjected to that kind of a threat. It is because of this behavior that leash laws were invented, and why the rule in the Fells is that dogs should be leashed.

Second, in my experience the vast majority of the time when people attempt to call their dogs off, they are not successful. I have encountered very few people who have actually trained their dogs sufficiently so they will respond when called. The result is ineffective yelling at a dog that does not respond.

The two other issues with dogs in the Fells are bicycles and droppings. Bicycles and off leash dogs simply do not go together. A loose dog on a bicycle trail is a dangerous situation. A dog that runs in front of a moving bicycle creates a dangerous situation. It is even worse when, as happened to me, an unleashed dog ran in front of my moving bicycle and inexplicitly sat down, forcing me to stop short.

Finally, some unleashed dogs can and do chase bicycles moving down the trail. Regardless of what one thinks of mountain bicycles, they are a part of the Fells experience, and should not be subjected to the risk posed by unleashed dogs running uncontrolled down the trails.

Dog droppings, or feces, poop, land mines or simply dog sh~~it~~, lying on the ground in any form is unacceptable, and the height of dog owner rudeness. No one should have to keep a look out for dog poop when walking, riding or skiing through the Fells. Yet, as many people walking or skiing through the Fells this winter can attest, dog poop litters all of the trails. It is so bad that a number of people have told me that there is so much of it that they simply do not want to cross country ski there. Having to stop and clean dog poop off your skis or shoes is so obnoxious and unpleasant that it can ruin the experience for anyone. It is an experience that simply should not be experienced by anyone. Yet it is a serious problem in the Fells.

But dog poop is more than just unpleasant. Dog poop is an environmental and health hazard. The U.S. EPA advises that dog feces should be kept away from public water supplies, one of the major uses of the Fells. (See also the DCR pamphlet "Dog Waste and Surface Water Quality".) In addition, dog poop is known to carry diseases such as canine Parvo virus, *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia lamblia*, *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, whipworms, hookworms, roundworms and *Coccidia*. Many of these diseases can infect humans. There is simply no excuse for dogs to leave their droppings anywhere on the Fells.

The allowance of off leash dog recreation on the Fells turns the entire Fells into a dog park. The unfortunate result of that is the Fells becomes a place where those who chose not to recreate with dogs are forced to include dogs in what ever they do. Unfortunately, many of the encounters with off leash dogs are not pleasant. For all of the reasons outlined above, and all of the undiscussed impacts the presence of dogs has on the flora and fauna of the Fells, dogs should not be allowed in the Fells.

From: [Jahnige, Paul \(DCR\)](#) [REDACTED]

Sent: Mon 3/14/2011 10:41 AM

To: [MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP](#)

Cc:

Subject: FW: Fells

Attachments:

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-----Original Message-----

From: Mary Schwager [REDACTED]

Sent: Saturday, March 12, 2011 7:01 PM

To: mass.parks [REDACTED]

Subject: Fells

I'm writing to express my concern about the current discussions about use of the Fells for dog walking. I think it's an amazing park for dogs and I've noticed the dog owners are very responsible. I would hate to see restrictions for dog use and think everyone can co exist.

Thank you

Mary Schwager

Sent from my iPhone

From: Michele Biscoe [REDACTED]

Sent: Tue 3/15/2011 9:07 AM

To: [MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP](#)

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Comments on Recreation Workshop

Attachments: [110311RecreationWorkshopComments-Document\\_Image.pdf\(234KB\)](#)   
[ATT1023111.txt\(66B\)](#)

[View As Web Page](#)

To whom it may concern,

Attached please find my public comments for the Middlesex Fells RMP regarding the Recreation Workshop on March 2.

Sincerely yours,  
Michele Biscoe

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<<110311RecreationWorkshopComments-Document\_Image.pdf>> <<ATT1025932.txt>>

[REDACTED]  
Somerville, MA 02143

11 March 2011

Middlesex Fells RMP Comments  
c/o MA Office of Public Collaboration  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
100 Morrissey Blvd., M-1-627  
Boston, MA 02125

Re: Middlesex Fells Resource Management Plan Recreation Workshop

To whom it may concern,

As a panelist who participated in the Recreation Workshop on March 2 at the McGlynn School Cafeteria in Medford, I would like to formally register my disappointment with the way that the workshop was facilitated.

I participated in a small group meeting on February 15 with representatives of other Fells stake-holder groups (cc'd here). The meeting was organized and facilitated by the Massachusetts Office for Public Collaboration for the purpose of discussing possible ways to improve the dialogue during the RMP process and building relationships early on. In this meeting we developed lists for proposed "rules of engagement" and "elements of good dialogue and collaboration" for the Fells RMP process:

Rules of Engagement

Hard on problem; soft on people  
Respect  
Accountability  
Fairness  
Transparency  
Aware of intent vs. impact  
Speak for our self, not others

Elements of Good Dialogue/Collaboration

Stop demonizing  
Assume good intent  
Explicit about interests  
Goals  
Seek clarity  
"Go curious"

I was asked to share these Rules/Elements with the Fells Dog Owner Group, which I did.

For the Recreation Panel I was instructed to speak in general terms about the experiences of families with dogs at the Fells. I was asked *specifically* to refrain from critiquing what the other panelists have to say about their perspective on the importance of user experiences and to refrain from debating the physical impacts that each use has on the trails.

I was surprised, therefore, when one of my colleagues on the panel, Mike Ryan, Executive Director, Friends of the Fells, did not follow these instructions. In his prepared comments, Ryan directly challenged the position of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) and specifically accused NEMBA of misrepresenting the impacts of cycling on the trails.

We were given rules, and the Friends of the Fells violated them blatantly. I trust the irony is lost on no one that the Friends of the Fells—who have made it clear that enforcement of the rules at the Fells is of critical importance to them—nonetheless behave as though they are above the rules and, in fact, are not held accountable to the rules.

Moreover, as a panelist I was instructed that, after the panel, there would be a Q&A. I understood this to mean that the audience would have the opportunity to ask questions of the panelists, and we would have an opportunity to respond.

A critical breakdown in facilitation happened when, after the first question from the audience, which was about the impact of mountain bikes on the trails, Mike Ryan responded and was permitted to pile on mountain bikers. The professional facilitators were visibly nonplussed when Tom Grimble of NEMBA—who rightfully should have been the one to field the question—stood up to address the comment. Grimble was directed to sit down. Right away, the participants realized that the Q&A format was a sham, and any potential for constructive dialog was lost.

At the end of the Recreation workshop, the people who attended the small-group meeting on February 15 were called upon to share our thoughts about the collaborative process and about next steps moving forward together. To add insult to injury, Bryan Hamlin, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Fells maneuvered to have the last word of the evening. Hamlin then did not, in good faith, address the collaborative process and next steps. Rather, he spoke directly in opposition to recreation at the Fells and grandstanded about the Fells being at a “tipping point”. And he was allowed to do so.

Recreational users of the Fells have been very patient throughout the RMP process and the series of workshops. We were asked not to raise issues relating to recreation at workshops devoted to other issues and we have been respectful in honoring that request.

A vocal minority disrupted the Recreation workshop by making comments to the effect that “there are other voices that are not being heard tonight: those of the plants and animals!” The facilitators should have been prepared to step in and remind participants that a workshop on Flora and Fauna had already been held, that materials from the workshops are publicly available, and that comments may be submitted in writing to the appropriate addresses.

Leading up to the Flora and Fauna workshop, I was admonished privately by the DCR and the facilitators that the rules of engagement would be enforced to keep the discussion on topic. At the previous workshops there was no need for enforcement, because recreational users understand what it means to police ourselves. We have participated in this process in good faith with courtesy and respect. The same cannot be said of the Friends of the Fells. This lack of respect on the part of one stake-holder group towards others reflects poorly on those who are organizing and facilitating the process.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michele Biscoe'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'M' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michele Biscoe

cc: Heather Clish, Deputy Director of Conservation, Appalachian Mountain Club  
Bryan Hamlin, Chairman, Friends of the Middlesex Fells  
Philip Keyes, Executive Director, New England Mountain Bike Association  
James McCaffrey, Chapter Director, Massachusetts Sierra Club  
Heidi Ricci, Senior Policy Analyst, Massachusetts Audubon Society

From: [Bill Woodson](#) [REDACTED]

Sent: Wed 3/16/2011 11:08 AM

To: [MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP](#)

Cc:

Subject: RMP

Attachments:

[View As Web Page](#)

I just received an e-mail about your request for comments. I regret I cannot attend the meeting but I'd like to get some of my comments on record.

My name is Bill Woodson and I'm a 39 year old resident of Rockport, MA. I am married with 3 daughters and I am a Network Engineer for SAS Institute. I first started going to the Fells back in 1998 when I moved to Somerville from CT. I would both hike and bike the trails with my wife and friends. I remember thinking to myself what a great piece of land smack dab in such an urban area. The problem was that when biking I was confused as to what trails were permissible to ride and what trails were considered off limits. I saw one marked bike trail and the rest of the signs were kind of random so we pretty much rode anywhere we wanted. I later found out that some of these trails were considered off-limits to bikers and that there was a strong anti-biking group called Friends of Fells that were trying to get all bikers kicked out of the Fells. This disturbed me greatly so I got involved with the local MTB group NEMBA as I saw how adamant they were with working with the management to help care for the park and make it better for both riding and hiking. Well this only furthered my frustration as we saw project after project blocked by FOF. Projects like building bridges over mud bogs, re-routing trails around swampy areas, closing off braided trails were all blocked at the last minute and instead more and more "Can't bike here" signs went up instead.

I've since moved to Rockport and I rarely visit the Fells now, mostly because of the anti-biker sentiment that is going on. I've watched the trail issues from afar and from what it appears it looks like management has been almost absent and FOF has been given the run of the land. If you take a look at other parks in MA this is not an issue. Most parks have land managers that are happy to have MTB groups that are willing to work on trails and help clean and patrol their parks. I'm not aware of any other park in this entire state that has such an issue with mountain bikers on their trails. I think Lynn Woods is a good example of a success story with Mountain Bikers. It wasn't long ago that Lynn Woods was riddled with crime, litter, graffiti, broken glass, and sketchy looking people. Over the years biking groups like NEMBA and now Diesel Bikes have worked with the land manager and things have improved dramatically. It's now safe to be in this park alone. Litter, broken glass, graffiti are going away, and those sketchy characters are nowhere to be found. This was all done w/o any official meetings and sanctions and w/o any police presence.

I'm encouraged by the RMP process and hopeful for the future of the Fells, but I'm also very skeptical at the same time. We've seen a number of movements trying to get more access for MTB in the Fells and they've all been squashed by the FOF. So I ask you to take us mountain bikers seriously when you make your decisions on what to and what not to do with the trails in Middlesex Fells.

Sincerely,

Bill Woodson

From: Bryan Hamlin [REDACTED]

Sent: Wed 3/16/2011 1:24 PM

To: [REDACTED]; [MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP](#)

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Comments on Recreation Workshop

Attachments:

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Dear Michele,

I am quite taken aback by your e-mail and personally hurt. It comes two weeks after the recreation workshop which many I think felt had gone quite well, in the circumstances.

I was very grateful to have participated in the February 15th small group meeting and appreciated that opportunity to get to know you. Following that meeting you e-mailed me about the possibility of me helping arrange some nature hikes in the Fells for children and dogs to which I responded positively. As a result we spoke before the start of the Recreation workshop and you introduced me to your husband.

As did you, I also circulated the "rules of engagement" to my colleagues. It concerns me if you were instructed as to what to say and what not to say as a panelist. Free speech is one of the precious corner-stones of democracy in America. It should be possible to speak the truth, as we see it (and of course we all see it differently) without rancor and animosity. But if we are not allowed to say what is on our minds at all, then frustration builds and we get no closer to solutions.

I cannot comment on whether there were slips in the chairing of the meeting - memory is blurred after two weeks. But I can assure you that I absolutely did not maneuver myself to have the last word. If I was meant to say something about the collaborative process then I wish it had been made a little clearer. After Doug Thompson twice asked me to say a few words I spoke from the heart as a biologist - I really do believe that unless all of us different recreators care for the nature of the Fells, it could collapse into something few if any of us would then want to recreate in.

As soon as the meeting ended, your husband, I believe it was, and I talked again. I wish that if what I had said or done had upset you that you had spoken to me then about it. Certainly since our February 15th meeting I have worked hard at getting into dialogue with NEMBA folk and others who disagree with the Friends of the Fells. From my side I will never refuse the opportunity to talk about our differences and try and resolve them. Another request for a nature hike has come from a NEMBA person who was in my break-out group at the Recreation workshop. As Spring comes now - the first wildflower is already in bloom in the Fells - I look forward to sharing with anyone what gives such joy to me. Please let's still do the walk with Kate and Strummer.

Sincerely,

Bryan

----- Original Message -----

From: "Michele Biscoe" [REDACTED]

To: <MiddlesexFellsRMP@umb.edu>

Cc: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2011 9:07 AM

Subject: Comments on Recreation Workshop

To whom it may concern,

Attached please find my public comments for the Middlesex Fells RMP regarding the Recreation Workshop on March 2.

Sincerely yours,  
Michele Biscoe

From: Michele Biscoe [REDACTED]

Sent: Wed 3/16/2011 1:58 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Comments on Recreation Workshop

Attachments:

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Dear Bryan, et al.,

Yes, it is unfortunate that my comments come two weeks after the Recreation workshop. Indeed I had been waiting to share them until the all the materials from the meeting--including the Workshop Notes--were posted online on the DCR website (<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/rmppast.htm>). For the previous meetings the materials have been posted within a week.

Regretably, many of the materials including the Workshop Notes, as well as two of the four panelists' presentations, are still not available today on March 16. It would have been helpful to me in preparing my comments to have been able to refer to the public records for the meeting.

The agenda does not even do the panelists the courtesy of identifying us. With so much of the information from the Recreation Workshop missing from the public record, my comments serve an important role in providing transparency in this process.

With their permission, I will be pleased to share the instructions that I and all the panelists--including Mike Ryan--received by e-mail from John Goodrich and from Heather Clish in her capacity as moderator.

Sincerely,  
Michele

On Mar 16, 2011, at 1:24 PM, Bryan Hamlin wrote:

Dear Michele,

I am quite taken aback by your e-mail and personally hurt. It comes two weeks after the recreation workshop which many I think felt had gone quite well, in the circumstances.

I was very grateful to have participated in the February 15th small group meeting and appreciated that opportunity to get to know you. Following that meeting you e-mailed me about the possibility of me helping arrange some nature hikes in the Fells for children and dogs to which I responded positively. As a result we spoke before the start of the Recreation workshop and you introduced me to your husband.

As did you, I also circulated the "rules of engagement" to my colleagues. It concerns me if you were instructed as to what to say and what not to say as a panelist. Free speech is one of the

precious corner-stones of democracy in America. It should be possible to speak the truth, as we see it (and of course we all see it differently) without rancor and animosity. But if we are not allowed to say what is on our minds at all, then frustration builds and we get no closer to solutions.

I cannot comment on whether there were slips in the chairing of the meeting - memory is blurred after two weeks. But I can assure you that I absolutely did not maneuver myself to have the last word. If I was meant to say something about the collaborative process then I wish it had been made a little clearer. After Doug Thompson twice asked me to say a few words I spoke from the heart as a biologist - I really do believe that unless all of us different recreators care for the nature of the Fells, it could collapse into something few if any of us would then want to recreate in.

As soon as the meeting ended, your husband, I believe it was, and I talked again. I wish that if what I had said or done had upset you that you had spoken to me then about it. Certainly since our February 15th meeting I have worked hard at getting into dialogue with NEMBA folk and others who disagree with the Friends of the Fells. From my side I will never refuse the opportunity to talk about our differences and try and resolve them. Another request for a nature hike has come from a NEMBA person who was in my break-out group at the Recreation workshop. As Spring comes now - the first wildflower is already in bloom in the Fells - I look forward to sharing with anyone what gives such joy to me. Please let's still do the walk with Kate and Strummer.

Sincerely,

Bryan

From: James A. Spiegel [REDACTED]  
To: MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP  
Cc:  
Subject: FW: Fells RMP Update 3.16.11\_Urban Parks Patron\_Comments  
Attachments:

Sent: Wed 3/16/2011 12:55 PM

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From: James A. Spiegel AIA  
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 12:45 PM  
To: Jahnige, Paul (DCR)  
Subject: RE: Fells RMP Update 3.16.11

Hello Paul,

Regarding the thread below and the DCR Public Input phase of the RMP.

I am concerned regarding the "Path Ahead" and the "Enforcement Workshop" noted below.

I wrote a very long letter to you/DCR last year as an architect in support of modernization programs of urban parks, at the Fells in particular. I walk, hike, run, bike (road and mountain) xc-ski and have also walked/run my dog at various times of the year.

I have been following the progress on the fells "situation" for over a year now.

It is now clear to me that there are certain parties making extended efforts to limit park use to park patrons, i.e. walker/hikers/walkers restricting bikers from "their" trails. I do not know what group they represent, i.e. "The friends" etc. or if this is the DCR's viewpoint. It seems that those in support of biking and their efforts to enhance biking in urban parks are not being heard and/or taken at full face value. Further to it appears now that restricting bike use is the current viewpoint. Further, bike trail building, bike trail improvements and/or access is now on hold, which is not an appropriate stance at this juncture.

I find this restrictive segregated attitude an embarrassment. Clearly we can do better. It has been documented that mountain bikers and their associations provide ongoing trail maintenance on the trails that these groups use. Hikers and their associations rarely do.

Further, and appropriate stance would follow yielding always to equestrians and walkers, hikers, runners and dog walkers (refer to the attached yield metrics). There are always a few bad eggs here and there, park patrons of all activity types, not solely bikers. It would be ridiculous to presume that bikers are at issue.

I have frequented the Fells for over two decades, regularly hike the white, orange and blue trails and have seen little if any trail maintenance on these trails. The only new efforts evident are new signs posted since 2001 noting access restrictions to the reservoirs and signs restricting mountain

biking. There has been storm damage clean up here and there, however little trail/park improvements as I stated in my narratives submitted last year, likely due to inadequate funding.

It is my position that the trails should be open to all (year round) and yield signed, accordingly. Please refer to the attached signage file. Beyond open access for all throughout urban parks, funding for ongoing maintenance and new improvements are the real challenge here. Efforts should be made to enhance the park system and not hinder its use to park patrons.

It is a fact with improved parks access, adequate signage, maintained way-finding components (kiosks etc) and adequate lighting comes safer environs, which deter vandalism, robbery and assaults on pedestrians and improve the urban quality of life.

I do not know the DCR's position on urban parks access, however, it would be appreciated if the DCR took a stance of progress and not repression.

Sincerely,

Jim

James A. Spiegel AIA LEED AP MCPPO  
Principal  
J5architects PLLC

██████████  
Manchester, NH 03104  
██████████  
██████████  
██████████  
██████████

-----Original Message-----

From: bounce-279798-9167417@listserv.state.ma.us

██████████ On Behalf Of Jahnige,

Paul (DCR)

Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 10:07 AM

To: ██████████

Subject: RE: Fells RMP Update 3.16.11

Banner

March 15, 2011

. a natural park would offer valuable educational facilities and lead the people to study the rocks and flowers, and especially our New England forest-trees; that here the city child could catch his first glimpse of

Nature, and the overworked professional or business man and the tired laborer could find recreation and relief.

- Rosewell Lawrence, "The Middlesex Fells," Appalachia, 1886

#### Reminder: Fells RMP Education and Interpretation Workshop

Tonight, Wednesday, March 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Botume House, 4 Woodland Rd, Stoneham, DCR will host the fifth in our RMP Workshop series, this one focused on Education and Interpretation planning at the Middlesex Fells. At this workshop, DCR's interpretive and ranger services staff will present on interpretive planning, and then invite the audience to share their efforts, experiences and ideas about education, interpretation and visitor's services in the Fells.

#### On the Path Ahead

DCR is nearing the end of the Public Input phase of the RMP. After this week, we will be hosting one final Workshop on the issues surrounding Enforcement at the Fells. Please note the change in location!

#### Enforcement Workshop

Wednesday, March 23, 2011

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Breakheart Reservation, 177 Forest Street, Saugus

Directions: From north or south: Take Rte. 1 to Lynn Fells Parkway exit, follow Lynn Fells Parkway a short distance, take a right onto Forest Street. Park entrance is after Kasabuski Rink.

#### Share Your Thoughts

DCR will continue to accept thoughts, ideas and comments during this public input phase through March 31, 2011.

Emails or written comments should be sent to the process facilitators from the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC) at to:

MiddlesexFellsRMP@umb.edu or to:

Middlesex Fells RMP Comments

c/o MA Office of Public Collaboration

University of Massachusetts Boston

100 Morrissey Blvd., M-1-627

Boston, MA 02125

Please be aware that all comments provided during this process will become part of the public record. All comments will be posted on the DCR website as part of our effort to share comments with the public, after the redaction of personal contact information (such as email addresses, street addresses, etc.).

Updates, meeting notes, public comments and other materials concerning the Fells RMP process and upcoming meetings will be posted at [www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/rmppast.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/rmppast.htm).

#### Following the Workshop Series

The RMP will enter a phase of information analysis, evaluation and writing by an interdisciplinary DCR team. During this phase DCR will draw on the following information sources: public input, natural and cultural resource data collected and verified for the Fells, scientific literature, sister-agency guidance, best management practices, and staff expertise. We will evaluate these sets of information and prepare management recommendations within the context of the Management Principle and Goals that have been described for the Middlesex Fells Reservation. Ultimately, DCR will produce a draft RMP and make recommendations based on this process for final public comment.

We expect the draft RMP will be released in late May, 2011 and availability of the plan for public review will be announced in the Environmental Monitor.

#### Links and Resources

The presentations and public comments from prior workshops can be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/rmppast.htm>.

Please forward to others who might be interested in the Middlesex Fells Reservation.

To unsubscribe from this list, simply email [REDACTED] with your email address and type "unsubscribe" in the subject or body.

To subscribe, please email your contact information to [REDACTED].

dcr-logocolor This Middlesex Fells update is an electronic newsletter from the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Resource Management Planning Program, in the Bureau of Planning and Resource Protection

Deval Patrick, Governor

Tim Murray, Lieutenant Governor

Richard K. Sullivan Jr., Secretary, Energy and Environmental Affairs

Edward M. Lambert Jr., Commissioner, Department of Conservation and Recreation

DCR Greenways

From: Mike Ryan [REDACTED]

Sent: Wed 3/16/2011 4:30 PM

To: michelebiscoe [REDACTED]

MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP; [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Subject: Fells Recreational Experiences Workshop

Attachments:  [110311RecreationWorkshopComments-Biscoe.pdf\(110KB\)](#)  [ATT1607552.htm\(200B\)](#)

[View As Web Page](#)

Re: Middlesex Fells RMP Comments, 11 March 2011

Dear Michele,

Given the numerous references to me in your comment letter of March 11, I am responding with this email.

In separate conversations with the DCR Fells RMP process leaders it was explicitly stated to me that each panelist would share recreational experiences encountered in the Fells Reservation, including what contributed to the quality of those experiences and what detracted from those experiences. The expectation conveyed to me was that a full discussion of issues regarding recreational experiences in the Fells would help clarify and resolve issues as part of the Resource Management Process.

During my presentation as part of the March 2<sup>nd</sup> Recreational panel I offered the perspective of persons visiting the Fells seeking to connect with the variety of nature found in the Reservation.

The Fells is a *Reservation*, a preserve of nature. People visiting the unique natural features of the Fells have the right to expect nature will be honored and protected, and that the trails can be experienced in calm and safe conditions. This was the theme of my presentation on recreational experiences in the Fells.

I stated that the ability for people to connect with nature in the Fells rests on two questions:

- "1. Are the Fells natural features recognized and protected?"**
- 2. Can we experience these features in comfort and safety?"**

If the answer to both questions is *yes* the Fells will continue to serve its function:

But if the answer to *either* question is *no*, people hoping to experience nature as a respite from city life will stop visiting the Fells. *Displacement will take place*. The Fells will have been converted from a *Reservation* into an intensely used Recreation facility."

The answer to the two questions regarding the Fells experience requires *empirical* investigation.

In my brief presentation I conveyed statements from Fells visitors who have posted comments on their Fells recreational experiences to the DCR Fells Trails Plan.

I also presented factual, empirical examples of asymmetrical impacts to the nature of the Fells which affects the ability of people to experience nature in safety and comfort, and I concluded:

**"What promotes natural values and experiences in the Fells should be encouraged. What detracts from preservation of nature in the Fells, and ability of visitors to experience nature in safety, should be identified and managed."**

I hope this is helpful in clarifying the role I played in the Recreational Experiences Workshop.

Mike

From: Peggy Wiseman [REDACTED]

Sent: Wed 3/16/2011 5:10 PM

To: MOPC Middlesex Fells RMP

Cc:

Subject: Middlesex Fells

Attachments:

[View As Web Page](#)

Dear Mr. Jahnige,

Although I realize that you are being lobbied and pressured by many diverse and demanding constituencies; I hope that you will make the preservation of the Middlesex Fells your top priority. It is vitally important that we nurture and protect the delicate plant life in the Fells in order to pass this treasure on to future generations. Although I am not opposed to biking in the Fells, I believe that the trails where it is allowed now are more than sufficient for the needs of the biking group, and hope that we can encourage them to observe the rules in order to mitigate any damage to the trails.

Thanks you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Margaret A. Wiseman

[REDACTED]  
Winchester, MA 01890

February-March 2011

Middlesex Fells RMP Comments  
c/o MA Office of Public Collaboration  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
100 Morrissey Blvd., M-1-627  
Boston, MA 02125

To whom it may concern,

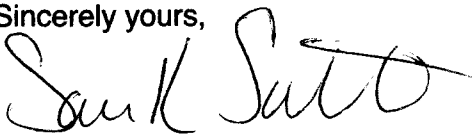
I am one of many visitors to the Middlesex Fells Reservation who enjoys using the trails with my dog off leash. I control my dog; I do not allow my dog to run up to or jump up on other people; I do not allow my dog to disturb wildlife or damage plants and the environment. I use a leash when necessary to maintain control over my dog. I pick up my dog's waste and dispose of it properly.

For the most part, I feel that my recreational interests are served at the Fells.

The regulation that dogs must be on leash at the Fells is inconsistent with the responsible recreational usage of a significant number of people.

I strongly encourage the Department of Conservation and Recreation, in defining its Management Principle and Goals for the Middlesex Fells Reservation Resource Management Plan, to foster positive recreational experiences for all users including mountain bikers and people with dogs.

Sincerely yours,



Sara Samathis

name



number and

Medford, MA 02155

city, state, zip



February-March 2011  
Middlesex Fells RMP Comments  
c/o MA Office of Public Collaboration  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
100 Morrissey Blvd., M-1-627  
Boston, MA 02125

To whom it may concern,

I am one of many visitors to the Middlesex Fells Reservation who enjoys using the trails for biking, jogging, snowshoeing and hiking with my dog off leash.

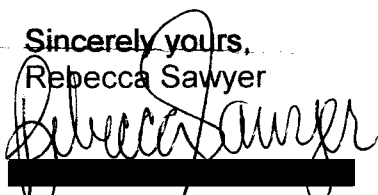
I control my dog; I do not allow my dog to run up to or jump up on other people; I do not allow my dog to disturb wildlife or damage plants and the environment. I use a leash when necessary to maintain control over my dog. I pick up my dog's waste and dispose of it properly; although, I do wish there were more options for trash disposal!

For the most part, I feel that my recreational interests are served at the Fells.

The regulation that dogs must be on leash at the Fells is inconsistent with the responsible recreational usage of a significant number of hikers, bikers, skiers and snowshoers'

I strongly encourage the Department of Conservation and Recreation, in defining its Management Principle and Goals for the Middlesex Fells Reservation Resource Management Plan, to foster positive recreational experiences for all users including mountain bikers, joggers, hikers etc. with their off-leash dogs.

Sincerely yours,  
Rebecca Sawyer



Boston Ma 02113

Email: [REDACTED]

Cc: Fells Dog Owner Group