



Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation

PO Box 478
Stoneham MA 02180

Middlesex Fells Protection Alert

Biking Groups are Pursuing More Habitat Destruction in the Fells

Mountain biking special interest groups have mobilized to overturn existing rules and regulations enacted to protect the Middlesex Fells Reservation's fragile ecosystem and allow the enjoyment of the Fells by all visitors. Mountain bike advocates are aggressively lobbying for major expansion of biking in the Fells, including bike access to miles of Fells' hiking trails, as well as biking after dark, and biking during winter months.

BIKE RIDING IN THE FELLS

TURNING HIKING TRAILS..... INTO THIS



Despite almost 40 miles of legal bike trails to enjoy in the Fells, the New England Mountain Bike Association is now demanding:

- Creation of a biking trail through sensitive habitat and near wetlands;
- Authorization of mountain biking on unmarked, unregistered paths;
- Conversion of the three mile Reservoir (hiking) Trail for mountain bike use;
- Bike use in the Fells after dark, causing habitat destruction and wildlife disturbance;
- Removal of winter closure policy to allow riding in all seasons.

In addition, NEMBA's goal is to triple Fells bike loop routes. For details on how NEMBA has targeted the Fells to convert it into a biker playground obstacle course see: <http://www.gbnemba.org/fells-action.html>

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Irreversible harm: Biking on hiking trails creates gullies, and carves out wider trails by destroying mosses and vegetation, rutted and eroded soil allow native plants to be replaced by invasive species like garlic mustard.

Visitors deterred from using hiking trails: In surveys conducted by the Friends in 1996 and 2004, mountain bike impacts topped the list of visitors' comments. Unrestricted bike riding on hiking trails, with its associated speed and safety hazards, ruins the tranquility of a quiet walk. *Speeding bikes are a particular danger to the elderly and children.*

No enforcement: Mountain bike access to the Fells was introduced in 1989 authorizing access to miles of fire roads and a loop around the Winchester Reservoirs. Access was based on the condition that the state parks agency would enforce regulations protecting hiking trails, habitat, and visitors from unauthorized bike

use impacts. Fells bike use regulations have never been enforced.

The Friends of the Fells does not oppose mountain biking in the Fells. We simply request that all visitors -- including bikers -- obey park rules designed to protect the park for all to enjoy. We call on the Department of Conservation and Recreation to remember its mission to "*protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources*" by immediately **instituting an impact study of trail conditions and, on that basis, develop a management plan for public education and enforcement of current regulations.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

A Public Meeting has been proposed: In their first step toward turning the Fells into a wide-open biker playground, NEMBA submitted plans to DCR for CONSTRUCTING A NEW BIKE TRAIL in the Dark Hollow Pond area. This would threaten sensitive habitat and encroach upon protected wetlands.

Once the date and place for the public meeting has been announced we will contact you: **Everyone who cares about the future of the Fells will be urged to attend!**

Your comments are needed now. Tell DCR administrators and your elected officials to ensure that the Fells is protected. Explain why the Fells is important to you and why the DCR must hold off decisions to increase bike activity until a full Fells Reservation trail and habitat damage assessment is carried out and resource protection policies are in place. Please cc your emails to: friends@fells.org

Your help now will make a difference for years to come!

Representative Paul Donato Rep.PaulDonato@hou.state.ma.us
Representative Katherine Clark Rep.KatherineClark@HOU.State.MA.US
Representative Christopher Fallon Rep.ChristopherFallon@Hou.State.MA.US
Representative Jason Lewis Rep.JasonLewis@hou.state.ma.us
Representative Sean Garballey Rep.SeanGarballey@Hou.State.MA.US
Senator Patricia D. Jehlen Patricia.Jehlen@state.ma.us
Senator Richard R. Tisei Richard.Tisei@state.ma.us

Write the following DCR officials at: 251 Causeway Street, Boston, MA 02114; or *send emails* to:

DCR Commissioner Rick Sullivan rick.sullivan@state.ma.us
DCR Director of Urban Parks Samantha Overton samantha.overton@state.ma.us
DCR North Region Supervisor Nick Gove nicholas.gove@state.ma.us
DCR Fells District Manager Tom Walsh thomas.m.walsh@state.ma.us
DCR Director of Partnerships Conrad Crawford conrad.crawford@state.ma.us
DCR Director of Recreation Gary Briere gary.briere@state.ma.us

For Friends of the Fells statement on *Mountain Biking in the Fells*, see: <http://www.fells.org/visit/events.cfm>

Thank you!

The Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation
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