



MYSTIC RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION  
20 ACADEMY STREET, SUITE 203  
ARLINGTON, MA 02476

PHONE: 781-316-3438 • FAX: 781-641-2103  
WEBSITE: [WWW.MYSTICRIVER.ORG](http://WWW.MYSTICRIVER.ORG)

August 13, 2007

Rick Sullivan, Commissioner  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600  
Boston, MA 02114-2104

Dear Commissioner Sullivan:

**The Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) encourages you to do everything in your power to add the 15.6 acres in Belmont and Cambridge that are known as the Silver Maple Forest to DCR's adjacent Alewife Reservation.**

MyRWA is a grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Mystic River, its tributaries, and the related natural resources throughout the watershed's 22 communities. The Alewife Brook basin is a sub-watershed of the Mystic River watershed.

MyRWA has formally supported House 21, for the acquisition of that land for DCR, in oral and written testimony to the Joint Committee On Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets; and we urge you to add your voice to the many who support this important addition to the Commonwealth's park system. **The financing mechanism in House 21 would give the state a bargain, since about half the funds for the purchase would come from the municipalities and private donors.** (What a turnaround that is! Instead of state support for municipal land purchases, this proposes municipal support for a state land purchase.)

This land has been functioning as an important part of DCR's Alewife Reservation for most of the time since the reservation was created in 1903. Though it was farmed in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during the decades since it has developed into an urban wild.

It is not just a city park, important as those are. The Silver Maple Forest and the adjoining part of the Alewife Reservation are nature in the wild. Many of the wetland species that live in the reservation need to spend some part of their lives in this small bit of upland, to feed or to nest. **Urban wilds are rare, but this one is even rarer: it is accessible from a subway stop, available for city residents, including city schoolchildren, to visit.**

