



# Save the Silver Maple Forest at Belmont Uplands

## Help Pass House Bill 21

### Frequently Asked Questions

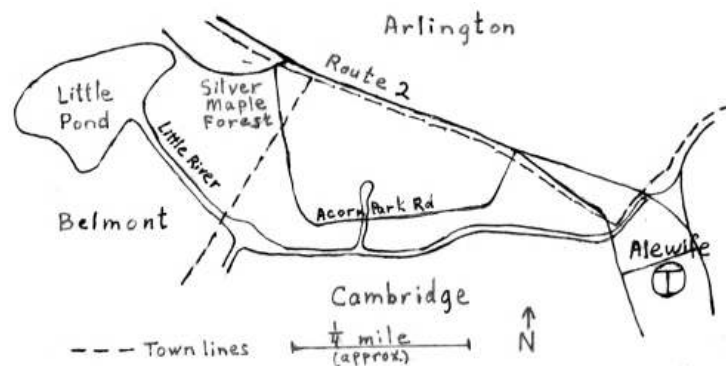
[www.savethesilvermapleforest.org](http://www.savethesilvermapleforest.org)

#### What is the Silver Maple Forest?

The Silver Maple Forest at Belmont Uplands is an undeveloped mixed upland and wetland area of 15.6 acres located in Belmont and Cambridge, Massachusetts. It abuts and is an integral part of the Alewife Reservation ecosystem, which is mostly in Cambridge. The Reservation is a 115 acre urban wild public parkland along both sides of Little River with ponds, a river, streams, marshes and shrub-swamp. It is maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

#### Where is the Silver Maple Forest?

The Silver Maple Forest is located south of Route 2 at the intersection of Frontage Road and Acorn Park Road in Belmont, about 0.7 miles east of the Alewife T stop. The Forest extends over the border between Belmont and Cambridge and abuts the border with Arlington along Route 2.



#### Why should the Silver Maple Forest be preserved?

We must preserve the Silver Maple Forest in its natural state to

- Preserve wildlife habitat: The Forest is home to a rich diversity of plant and animal species. Ninety species of birds, including the American bald eagle, have been seen there, along with mammals such as red and grey foxes, mink, and otters.
- Enhance a nature preserve and create an environmental teaching center that is accessible by T and bike path for enjoyment by city dwellers.
- Preserve an important floodwater detention/retention area.
- Prevent further pollution downstream: The Silver Maple Forest is part of the Mystic River Watershed, which empties into Boston Harbor. Wetlands act as a natural filter of pollutants from water.

### **Why is the Silver Maple Forest endangered?**

A developer has purchased the Silver Maple Forest and is advancing in the permitting process to remove the Forest and build a large development on the land. To preserve the Forest, we must act now.

### **What does House Bill 21 state?**

House Bill 21, if passed, would appropriate \$6 million toward acquiring the Silver Maple Forest (Belmont Uplands) for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. In order to complete the acquisition, the municipalities of Arlington, Belmont, and Cambridge and private donors would be required to provide the difference between \$6 million and the land's purchase price up to fair market value. The bill allows the state to acquire the land for fair market value by eminent domain if necessary. House Bill 21 is sponsored by Representative William N. Brownsberger, Senator Steven A. Tolman, and Representative J. James Marzilli. (For the bill text, see <http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/185/ht00pdf/ht00021.pdf>.)

### **Who supports House Bill 21?**

The following entities have expressed their support for House Bill 21 (see the FAR video recording of the hearing at the State House on June 21, 2007, link given below; and [www.savethesilvermapleforest.org](http://www.savethesilvermapleforest.org)).

Friends of Alewife Reservation (FAR)	Belmont Land Trust
Arlington Conservation Commission	Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation
Arlington Board of Selectmen (unanimous)	Coalition to Preserve the Uplands and the Winn
Belmont Board of Selectmen (unanimous)	Brook Neighborhood
Cambridge City Council (unanimous)	Uplands Alternative Group
Sierra Club of Massachusetts	Mystic River Watershed Association

*Save the Silver Maple Forest* is a campaign by concerned residents of surrounding communities.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Sources for the above information and more can be found at the following websites and publication.

- <http://link.brightcove.com/services/player/bcpid1077048307> (link to a video recording of the June 21, 2007 hearing of House Bill 21 at the Massachusetts State House, video copyright by Friends of Alewife Reservation)
- [www.friendsofalewifereservation.org](http://www.friendsofalewifereservation.org) (Friends of Alewife Reservation website with extensive information, news, archives and a schedule of events at the Reservation)
- [www.uplandsalternative.org](http://www.uplandsalternative.org) (Upland Alternative Group's website with information, news and archives, especially on Belmont neighborhood issues)
- [http://friendsofalewifereservation.org/2004\\_05\\_26\\_birdhousemonitoring\\_records.htm](http://friendsofalewifereservation.org/2004_05_26_birdhousemonitoring_records.htm) (Friends of Alewife Reservation's detailed map of Alewife Reservation showing the Silver Maple Forest and surrounding areas)
- *Biodiversity Study of Alewife Reservation Area: Species, Habitat, and Ecosystems*, a publication of Friends of Alewife Reservation, Cambridge, MA, 2003.

Information on the *Save the Silver Maple Forest* campaign to support House Bill 21 can be found at [www.savethesilvermapleforest.org](http://www.savethesilvermapleforest.org).