

BELMONT LAND TRUST

DEDICATED TO CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

August 20, 2007

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

**Re: In Support of Preservation of Silver Maple Forest, Alewife
Reservation**

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

The Belmont Land Trust is a private nonprofit organization that subscribes to the requirements of the national Land Trust Alliance. Although principally serving the Town of Belmont, we support preservation projects in all of our surrounding towns and cities. We have about 250 active members.

The Belmont Land Trust convened the first regional meeting on the future of the Belmont Uplands and its silver maple forest in 1999. Since then, officers and members of our Board of Directors have served on Belmont town committees charged with reviewing several detailed proposals and other options for the uplands and its unique forest. We have extensive knowledge of the site and adjoining properties, including the DCR Alewife Reservation.

As a result, the Belmont Land Trust has determined that the uplands and its forest are a unique natural resource of great value to Belmont, Arlington, and Cambridge for purposes of flood control, storm water management, conservation, and public recreation, and thereby provides a high value ecosystem service to immediate and the surrounding areas. The best way to protect these important services from development and loss of this important function is to add the uplands and its forest to the reservation.

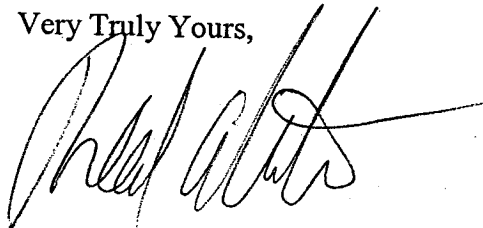
The Alewife area is a complex ecosystem which provides wildlife habitat, flood control, and recreational opportunities in the midst of a densely populated region. It is comprised of the DCR Reservation and the Belmont Uplands. Each is an critical feature of the functioning ecosystem. Protection of the uplands is therefore essential in order to prevent disruption of the entire ecosystem.

P.O. Box 79138 BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS 02479-0138

This preservation becomes even more important due to significant planned development pressure in the neighboring Fresh Pond quadrangle basin bordered by Concord Ave., Fresh Pond Parkway, and the rail road property. The MWRA also plans to dedicate more than four acres of the Alewife Reservation to construction of a pond for retention of sewer system overflows in order to prevent pollution of Alewife Brook and the Mystic River. Addition of the uplands to the reservation would be a means of replacing this public loss of space and recreational land.

In addition to the practical reasons for preserving this area, the Silver Maple Forest is the outstanding aesthetic feature of the Alewife area, and its destruction by development would be an irreplaceable loss. Please consider your agency and governmental support as an important priority goal when budgeting for the purchase and improvement of public land in recreational areas in the Commonwealth.

Very Truly Yours,



Neal A. Winston
President, Belmont Land Trust

NAW/ps
Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Deval Patrick
Rep. Will Brownsberger