



# Edmands Park

Off-Leash Dog Area Proposals

**Community Listening Session**  
w/Newton Parks, Recreation,  
and Culture Department

December 11, 2024  
Newton City Hall



## **Tonight's Outline**

1. Newton's off-leash program
2. Overview of Edmands Park
3. Summary of new proposals
4. Edmands Park, additional analysis
5. Nearby off-leash programs
6. Public comments (limited to 3 minutes)

# Off-Leash Dog Areas

## Statutory Authority

### Newton City Ordinance 3-30 Off-Leash Program

1. Authorizes the establishment of off-leash areas
2. Establishes rules including requirement for an off-leash tag

*Dogs may only be off-leash in designated off-leash areas, while wearing the required off-leash medallion.*

*On all other public property, the leash law is in effect.*



# Off-Leash Dog Areas + ½ Mile Walking Radius

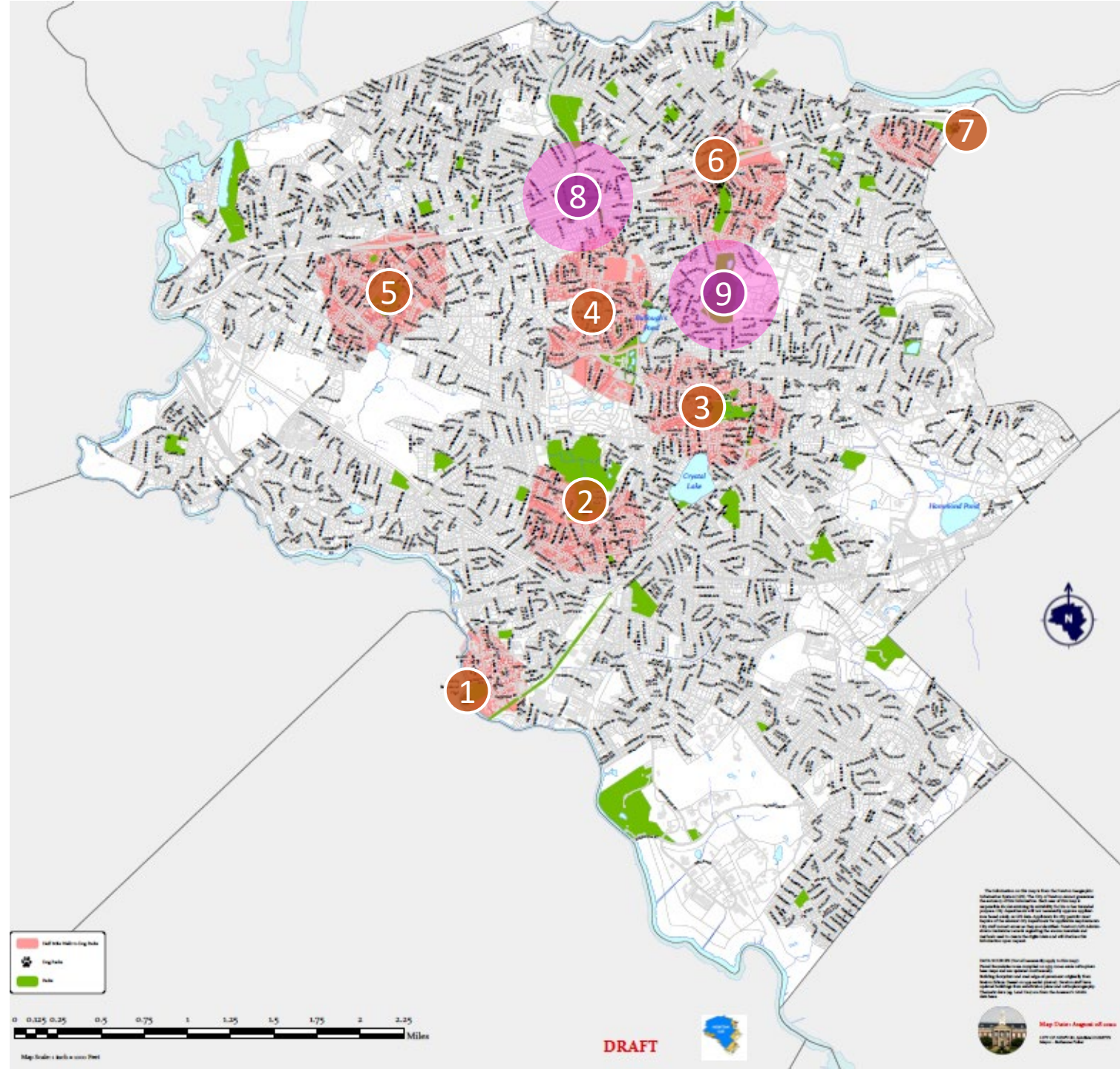
- 1 Bobby Braceland (lower level, behind bball field)
- 2 Cold Spring (enter from Dunklee Street)
- 3 Newton Centre Playground (Centre St., Homer St., Tyler Terrace)
- 4 Claflin (Lowell Ave.)
- 5 McGrath (Washington St.)
- 6 Cabot Park (Newtonville Ave & East Side Pkwy)
- 7 Hunnewell (Newton St. @ New Balance parking lot)

## Future Off-Leash Area (Winter/Spring '25):

- 8 Walker Park

## Proposed Off-Leash Area:

- 9 Edmands



# Newton Off-Leash Dog Areas

	Cabot Park	Claflin Park	Hunnewell	Newton Centre Playground	Cold Spring Park	McGrath	Bobby Braceland	Walker Park*	Totals
<b>Off-Leash Acreage</b>	0.2	0.6	1.9	1.8	3.2	0.2	1.1	0.5	<b>9.5</b>
<b>Total Site Acreage</b>	11.6	1.2	4.6	21.9	65	10.6	8.8	1.0	<b>157</b>
<b>% of Site for Off-Leash</b>	2%	52%	41%	8%	5%	2%	13%	50%	<b>6%</b>

\* Walker Park's off-leash area estimated opening late winter/early spring 2025

## Maintaining Off-Leash Dog Areas

- Pet waste bins—emptied
- Pet waste bag stations—refilled
- Patrols for compliance and educational outreach
- Guidelines and maps posted and updated
- Fencing installed/maintained, esp. double entry/exit gates

# Dogs living in Newton must be licensed by April 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

- Permits available at the City Clerk's office, or by mail.
- Copy of dog's current rabies certificate required.

## Dog Permit Options

### **1. Dog License Only**

- Spayed/Neutered: \$20.00
- Intact: \$25.00

### **2. Off-Leash Medallion + License**

- Spayed/Neutered: \$70.00
- Intact: \$75.00

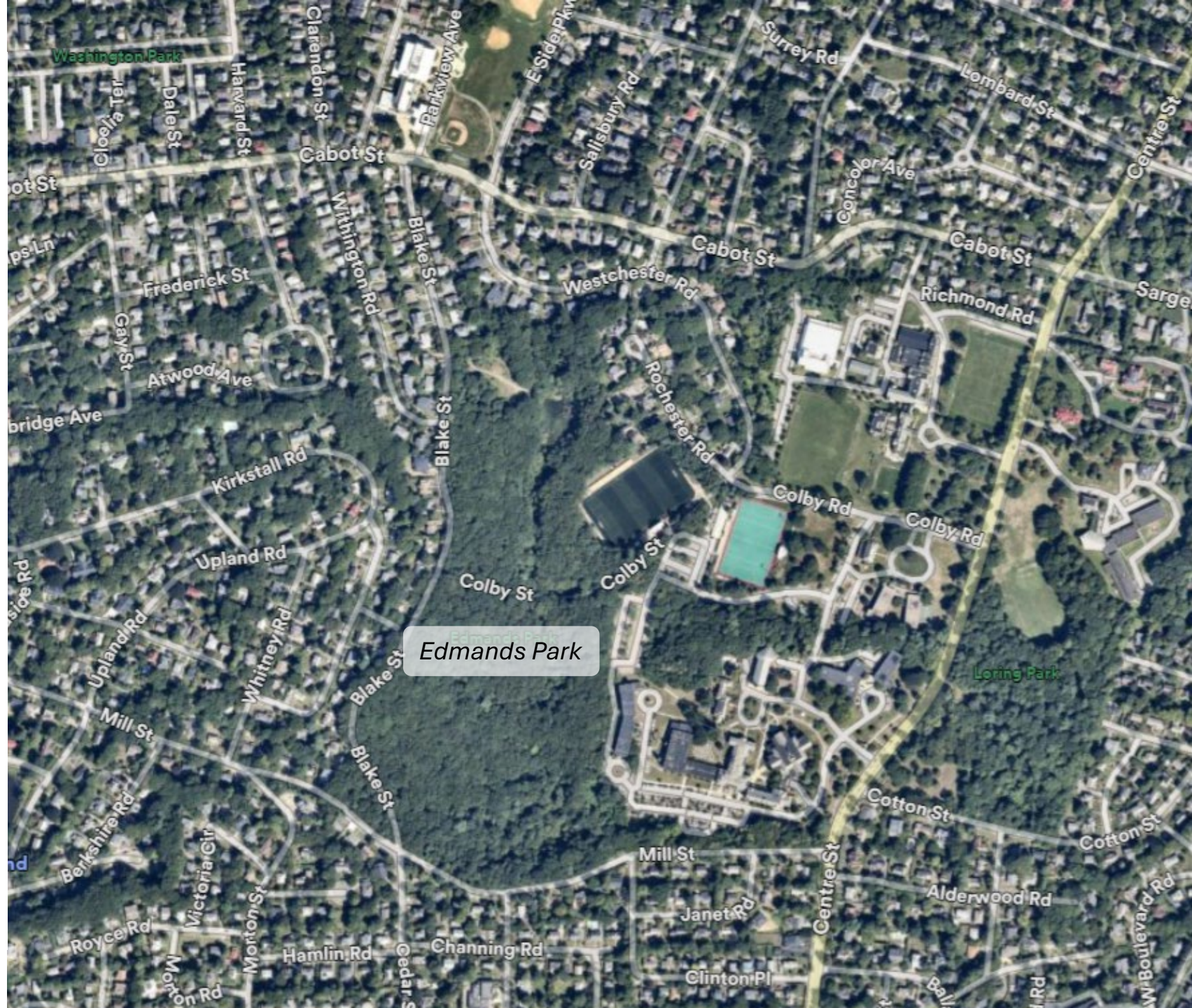
### **3. Commercial Dog Walkers**

- One company permit: \$250 (\$350 for non-Newton company)
- Each additional permit: \$75 (\$100 for non-Newton company)



# Edmands Park aka Cabot Woods

- Established **1913**
- **32.6 acres**
- Oak forest w/beeches, maples, birches, pines
- Natural features include **wetlands, Edmands Brook** (intermittent), **glacial esker** (w/sandy soils + steep slopes)
- Mostly surrounded by **stone walls**
- No programmed uses; **passive uses** include walking, jogging, nature study, birding, cross-country skiing, etc.
- Open: **dawn-dusk**



# Cabot Canines Proposal Summary

## Request

- **Entire park** becomes an **off-leash dog area**, all of the time
- Supports a **volunteer stewardship** program to model good behavior and educate visitors about off-leash rules.
- Welcomes opportunity to be a key member of a **Neighborhood Liaison Committee**, to provide a “forum for reporting, monitoring, discussion, and resolution of issues and concerns”

## Supporting Statements

- Off-leash dog walking has been **unofficially happening** in Edmands Park for decades.
- Edmands is **unique area** in city for dogs on trails
- Official off-leash proposal initiated in **response to city’s increased monitoring** efforts in 2023, leading some to stop using the park
- **Not conservation land** or state-designated priority habitat

## Acknowledgement

- Expected costs: **additional pet waste bins & bag stations**—currently only @ 2/5 entrances (on Blake St.)



# Edmands for All Proposal Summary

## Request

- Do **not** allow off-leash dogs
- Focus on improving **ecology, wetlands, and habitat**

## Supporting Statements

- *“Whether on a stroll, bird watching, youngsters at play, cross country running, orienteering, teens on a nature study, dog walkers or bikers - a **public park welcomes all** to enjoy and feel secure.”*
- Scientific studies indicate dogs off leash dramatically **reduces survival of nesting birds**
- Not every dog jumps on strangers, but many park visitors experience an **uninvited dog jumping** on them, leading to safety and accessibility concerns
- *“Pet waste can be the **single biggest contributor** to elevated phosphorus levels in urban/suburban waterways,”* (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2017)



# Edmands Park

## Trails, Entrances/Exits, Parking

- 5 entrances
  - 3 on Blake Street
  - 1 on Mill Street
  - 1 via Colby Rd./Boston College
- Potentially up to **87\*** parking spaces surrounding park
- **2.52** miles of trails—currently just **one** Animal Control Officer and **one** (part-time) Off-Leash Specialist

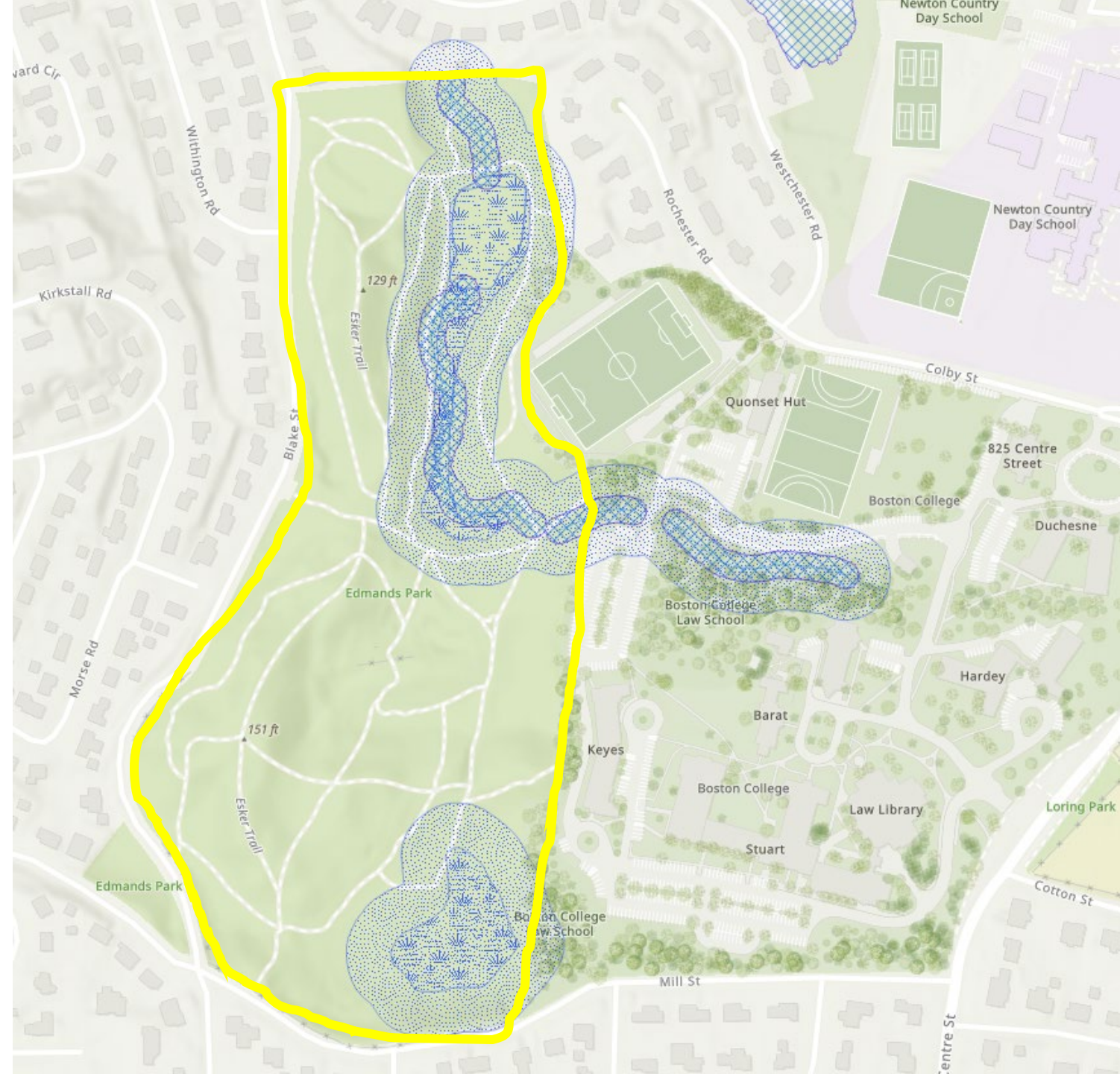
\*Requires additional verification

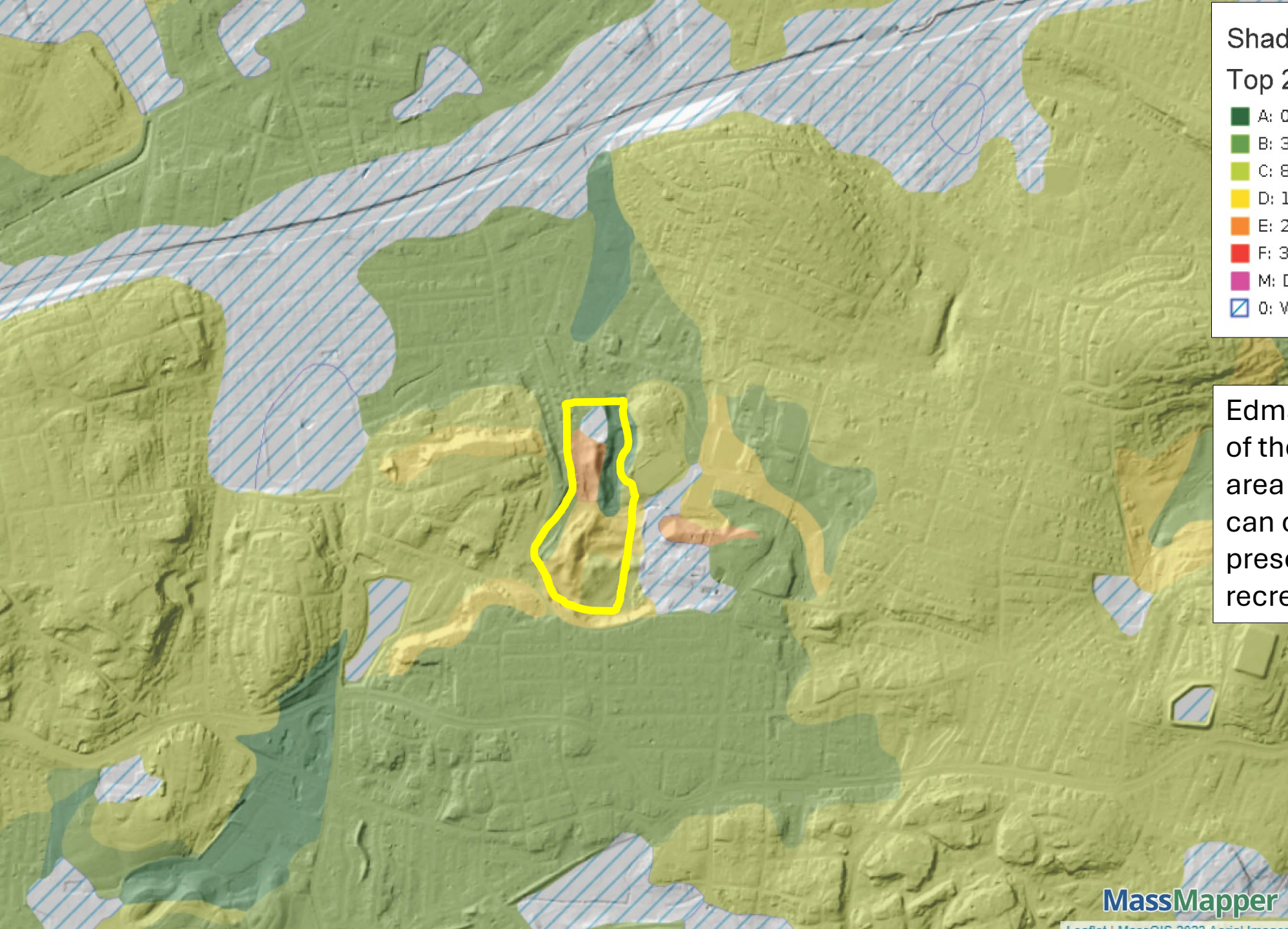


# Edmands Park

## Water Resources

1. **Edmands Brook** (intermittent)
- +  
2. **Wetlands** (conditionally wet)
- +  
3. **Wetland Buffer**—100' from seasonal edge of wetland
- +  
4. **City Floodplain District**—100 yr. flood area according to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps





Shaded Relief from Lidar  
Top 20 Soils: Slope by Category

- A: 0-3%
- B: 3-8%
- C: 8-15%
- D: 15-25%
- E: 25-35%
- F: 35%+
- M: Dam
- ▨ 0: Water or urban land (no assigned slope)

Edmands Park contains some of the steepest slopes in the area @ 25-35% grade—this can contribute to erosion, and presents locally special recreational opportunities.

# Edmands Park

Middlesex, Massachusetts, United States

118  
Species

197  
Checklists

50  
eBirders



118  
All Years

47  
This Year  
2024

14  
This Month  
Nov 2024

Last Observed

Includes ground-level nesting & foraging species: ovenbird, palm warbler, Virginia rail, Nashville warbler, eastern towhee, and brown thrasher



Palm Warbler  
Source: Audubon Society



Ovenbird  
Source: Smithsonian

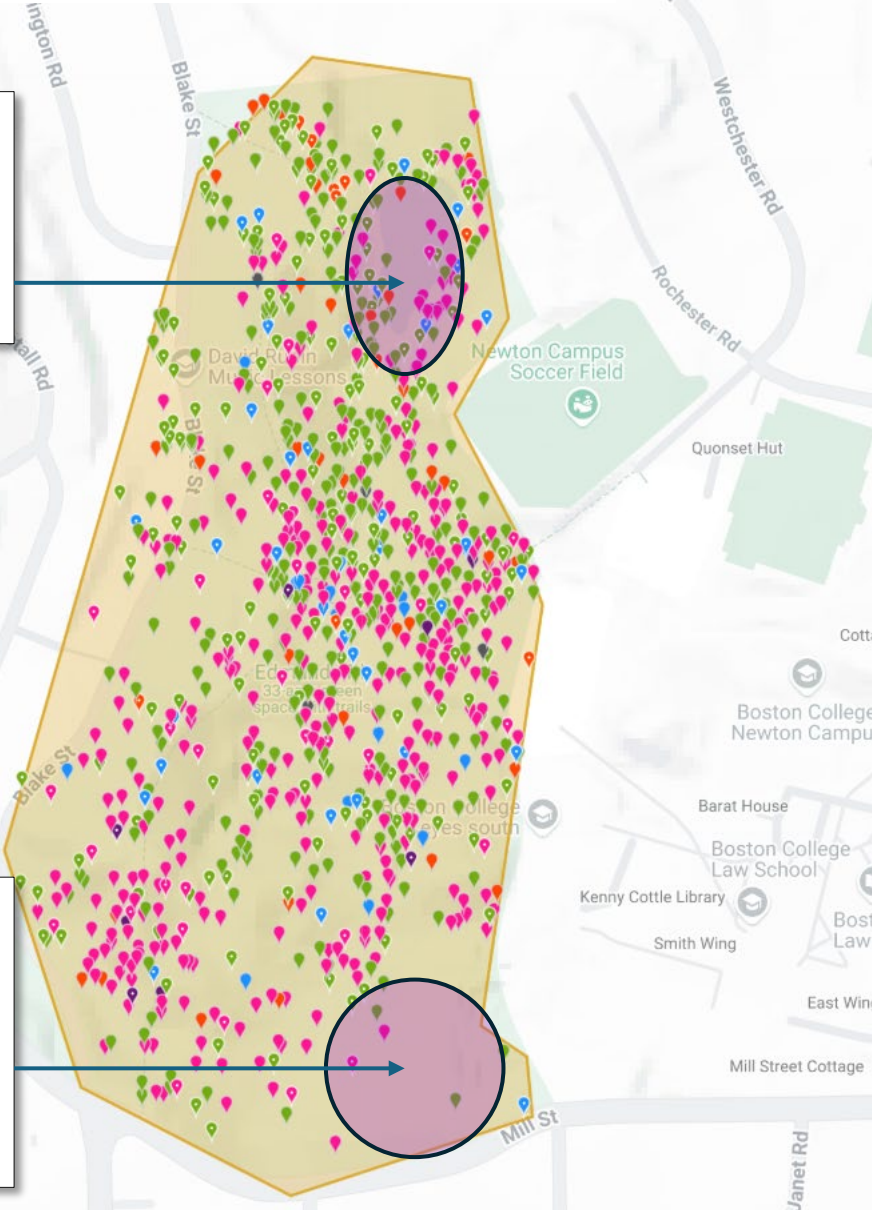
SPECIES NAME	COUNT	DATE
1. <b>American Robin</b> <i>Turdus migratorius</i>	12	25 Nov 2024
2. <b>Common Grackle</b> <i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>	9	31 May 2024
3. <b>House Finch</b> <i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i> *	6	23 Nov 2024
4. <b>American Black Duck</b> <i>Anas rubripes</i>	5	19 Jun 2024
5. <b>Mourning Dove</b> <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	4	23 Nov 2024
6. <b>Barred Owl</b> <i>Strix varia</i>	3	29 Jun 2024
7. <b>Blue Jay</b> <i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	3	25 Nov 2024
8. <b>Chipping Sparrow</b> <i>Spizella passerina</i>	3	11 Oct 2024
9. <b>White-throated Sparrow</b> <i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>	3	11 Oct 2024
10. <b>Mallard</b> <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	2	26 May 2024
11. <b>Red-bellied Woodpecker</b> <i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>	2	25 Nov 2024
12. <b>Eastern Wood-Pewee</b> <i>Contopus virens</i>	2	14 Aug 2024

# Edmands Park · iNaturalist












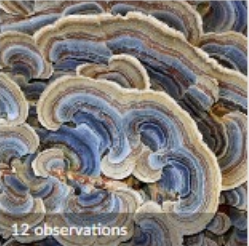



Overview **1,696** OBSERVATIONS **423** SPECIES **348** IDENTIFIERS **207** OBSERVERS Stats

Wetland with trail access: observations noted

Wetland and no trail access: few observations noted



## Map of Observations

 <p>36 observations</p> <p><b>Eastern Gray Squirrel</b> <i>Sciurus carolinensis</i></p>	 <p>26 observations</p> <p><b>Winged Euonymus</b> <i>Euonymus alatus</i></p>	 <p>25 observations</p> <p><b>Eastern White Pine</b> <i>Pinus strobus</i></p>	 <p>19 observations</p> <p><b>Common Greenshield Lichen</b> <i>Flavoparmelia caperata</i></p>	 <p>16 observations</p> <p><b>Mapleleaf Viburnum</b> <i>Viburnum acerifolium</i></p>
 <p>15 observations</p> <p><b>American Beech</b> <i>Fagus grandifolia</i></p>	 <p>15 observations</p> <p><b>Crowded Parchment</b> <i>Stereum complicatum</i></p>	 <p>14 observations</p> <p><b>Common Bonnet</b> <i>Mycena galericulata</i></p>	 <p>14 observations</p> <p><b>White Wood Aster</b> <i>Eurybia divaricata</i></p>	 <p>13 observations</p> <p><b>American Pokeweed</b> <i>Phytolacca americana</i></p>
 <p>12 observations</p> <p><b>Eastern Skunk Cabbage</b> <i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i></p>	 <p>12 observations</p> <p><b>Turkey-Tail</b> <i>Trametes versicolor</i></p>	 <p>11 observations</p> <p><b>Eastern Chipmunk</b> <i>Tamias striatus</i></p>	 <p>11 observations</p> <p><b>Fortune's Spindle</b> <i>Euonymus fortunei</i></p>	 <p>11 observations</p> <p><b>Red Chanterelle</b> <i>Cantharellus cinnabarinus</i></p>

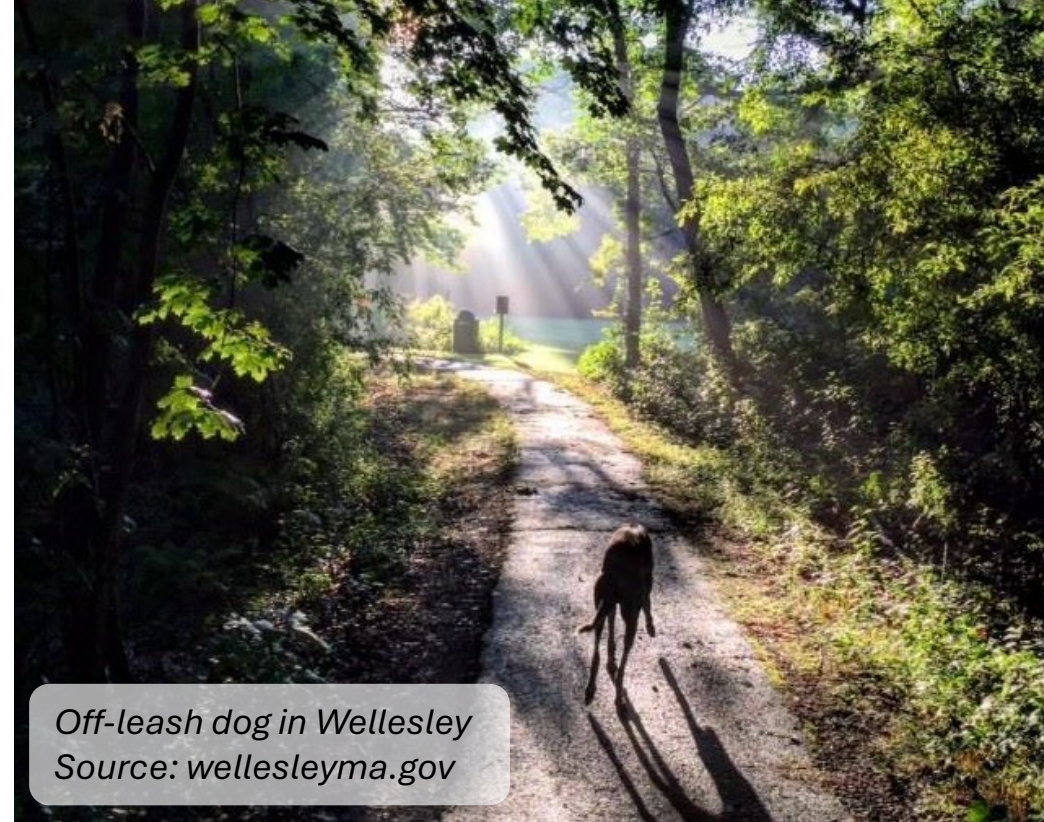


# Nearby Off-Leash Programs

- **Wellesley:** Dog must be under **immediate control** of owner or on leash.
  - Perrin Park: AM and PM off-leash hours

Immediate control = “*dog responds to one command of COME and remains sitting beside the owner or keeper.*”  
[Animal Control Regulations | Wellesley, MA](#)

- **Weston:** Off-leash allowed; “Out of sight is out of control.”
  - Cat Rock Park: residents only on weekends
- **Lexington:** Dog must be under **immediate control** of owner.
  - Willard’s Woods: on-leash on weekends; off-leash on weekdays
  - Parker Meadow: no off-leash on Universally Accessible trails



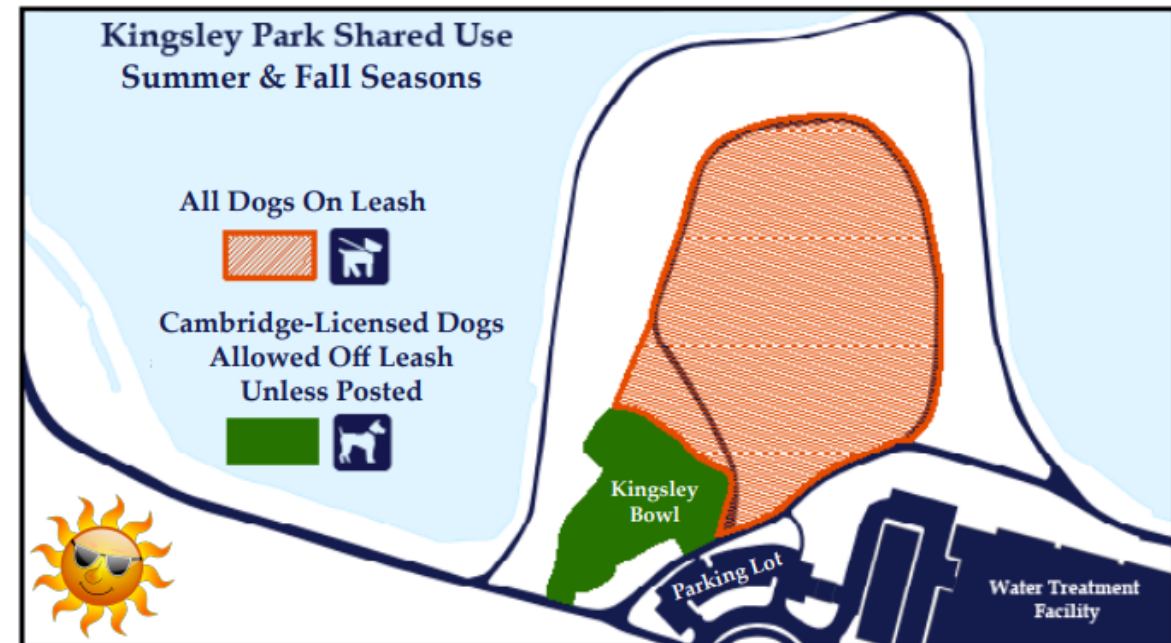
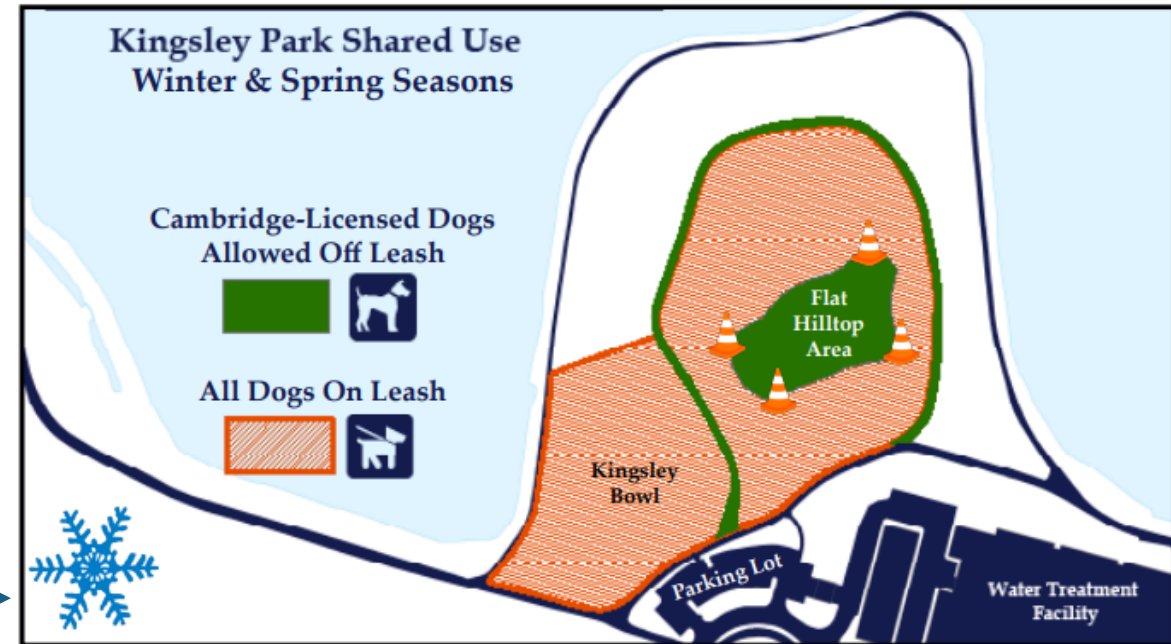
Off-leash dog in Wellesley  
Source: [wellesleyma.gov](http://wellesleyma.gov)



Off-leash dogs at Cat Rock Park, Weston  
Source: [bringfido.com](http://bringfido.com)

# Nearby Off-Leash Programs

- **Cambridge**
  1. Dedicated Off-Leash Dog Areas
  2. Shared-Use Off-Leash Areas
  3. Shared Use Hours (Mornings)
  - Fresh Pond Reservation
    - Kingsley Park →
    - Multiple uses: shared trail, limited use, no dogs, etc.
- **Brookline's Green Dog Program**
  - Off-Leash hours at many parks. Schedules differ:
    - Dawn to 9am
    - Dawn to 1pm
    - March-November only
    - Dawn-Dusk, December-February only
  - No dogs on fields during "mud season" (as ground thaws)—generally entire month of March



# Proposals Side-by-Side

## Proposals Agree On

- Edmands Park is a unique and beloved open space.
- People love walking, running, birding, sitting, and meandering on the park's trails—with *and* without their dog/s.
- Encountering off-leash dogs at Edmands is a common occurrence.



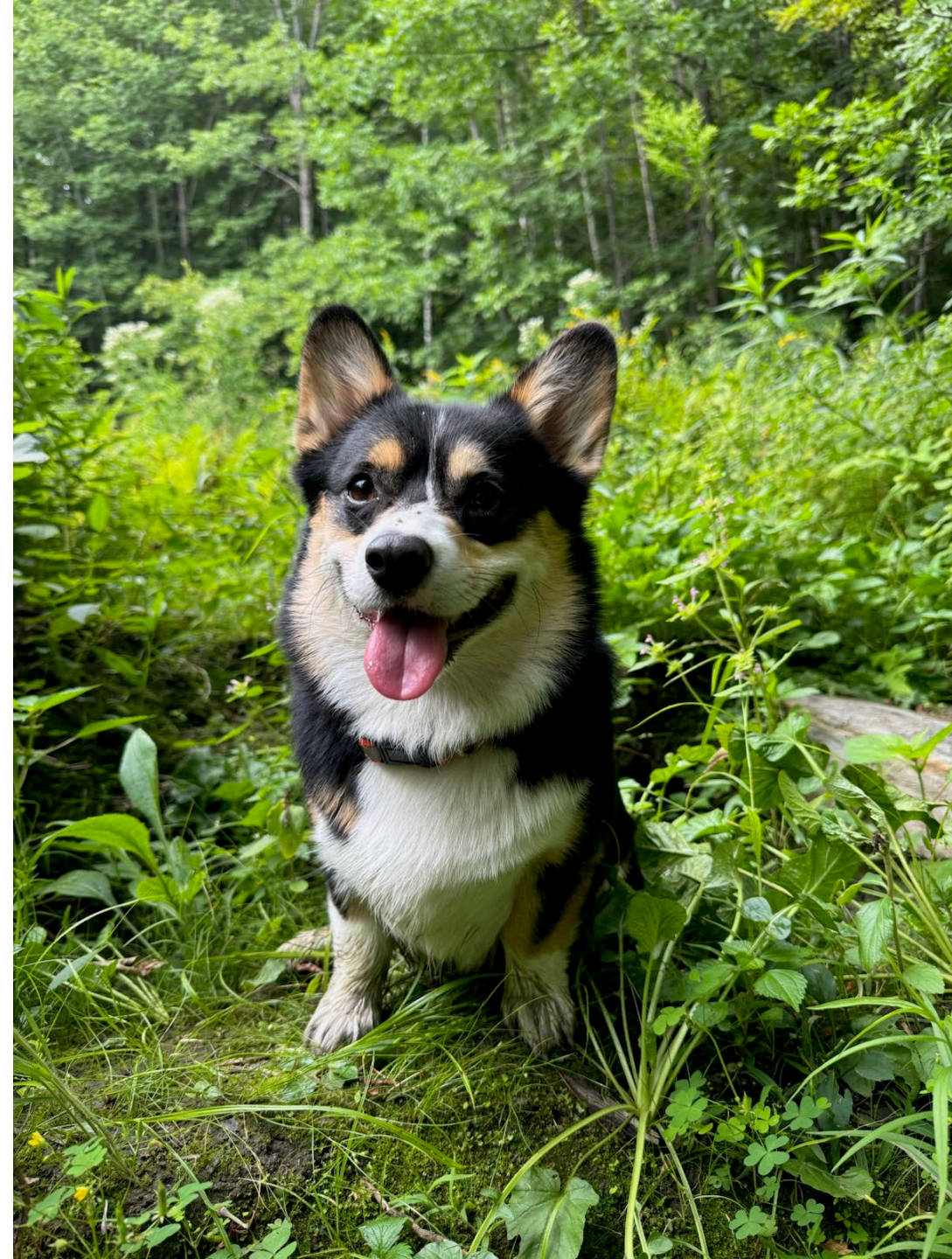
## Proposals Don't Agree On

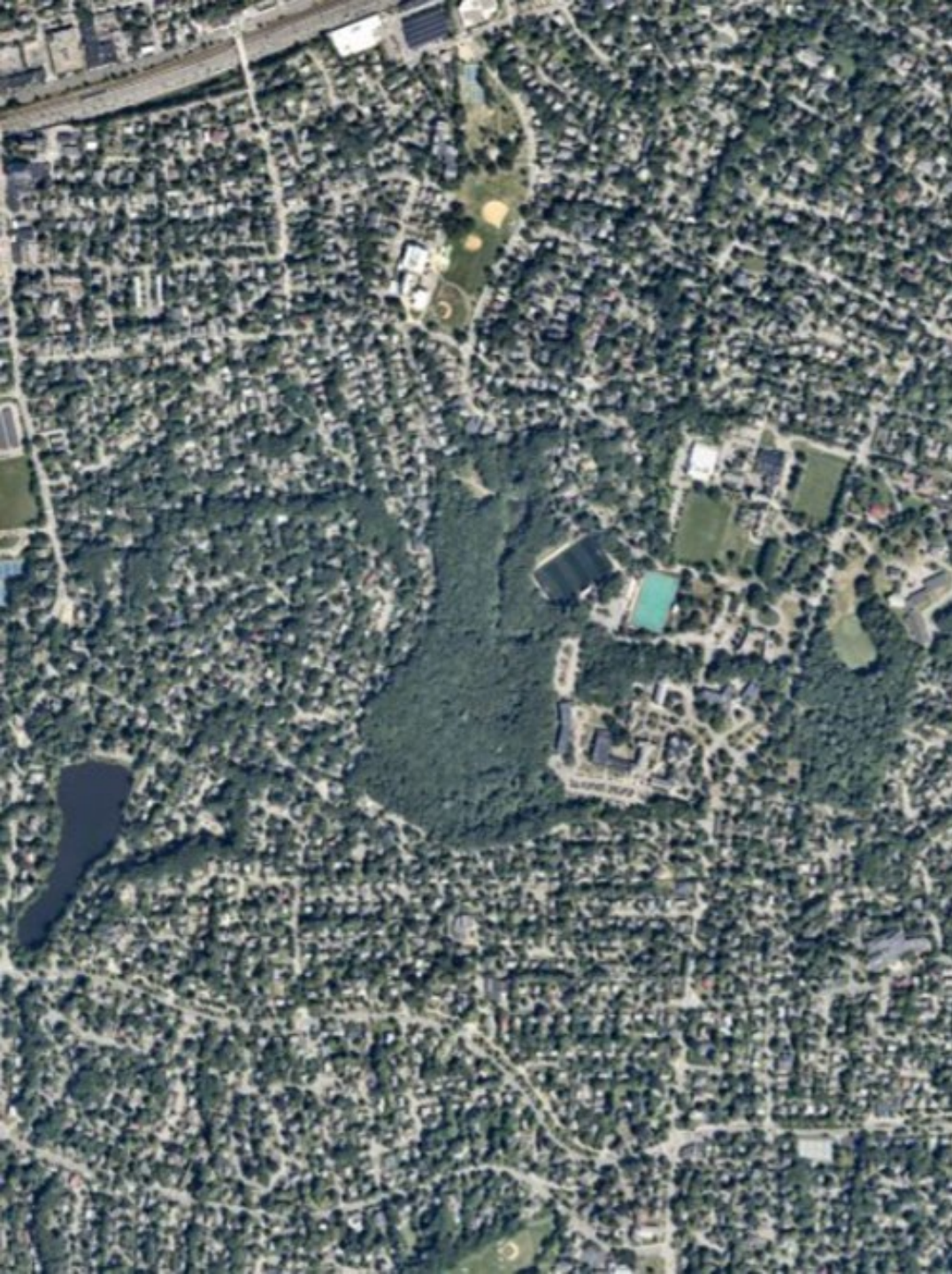
- To what extent dogs must be on-leash while in the park
- How much dogs impact wildlife and water quality

# Public Comments

- **3 minutes** for each speaker
- First comments to sponsors of two proposals: **Cabot Canines** and **Edmands for All**
- Please do not repeat comments; focus instead on **adding to the discussion**.
- Make sure you **sign in at the door**—we will use list for future outreach!

Note: **Newton PRC staff and OLAWG** are here to **LISTEN**; will answer only **program-specific questions**; we are **not looking to debate proposed solutions or alternatives tonight**.





**Thank You!**

Send additional  
comments/thoughts:  
[parks@newtonma.gov](mailto:parks@newtonma.gov)

Visit us on the web at  
[https://www.newtonma.gov/  
parkprojects](https://www.newtonma.gov/parkprojects)

