

Friends of Belle Isle Marsh

BELLE ISLE MARSH NOTES

Field Trips

Friends of Belle Isle Marsh (FBIM) has been offering a series of monthly community field trips at Belle Isle Marsh since last winter. This fall we began to publicize these trips in local newspapers. The result has been a significant increase in the number of participants, particularly those from Winthrop and East Boston.

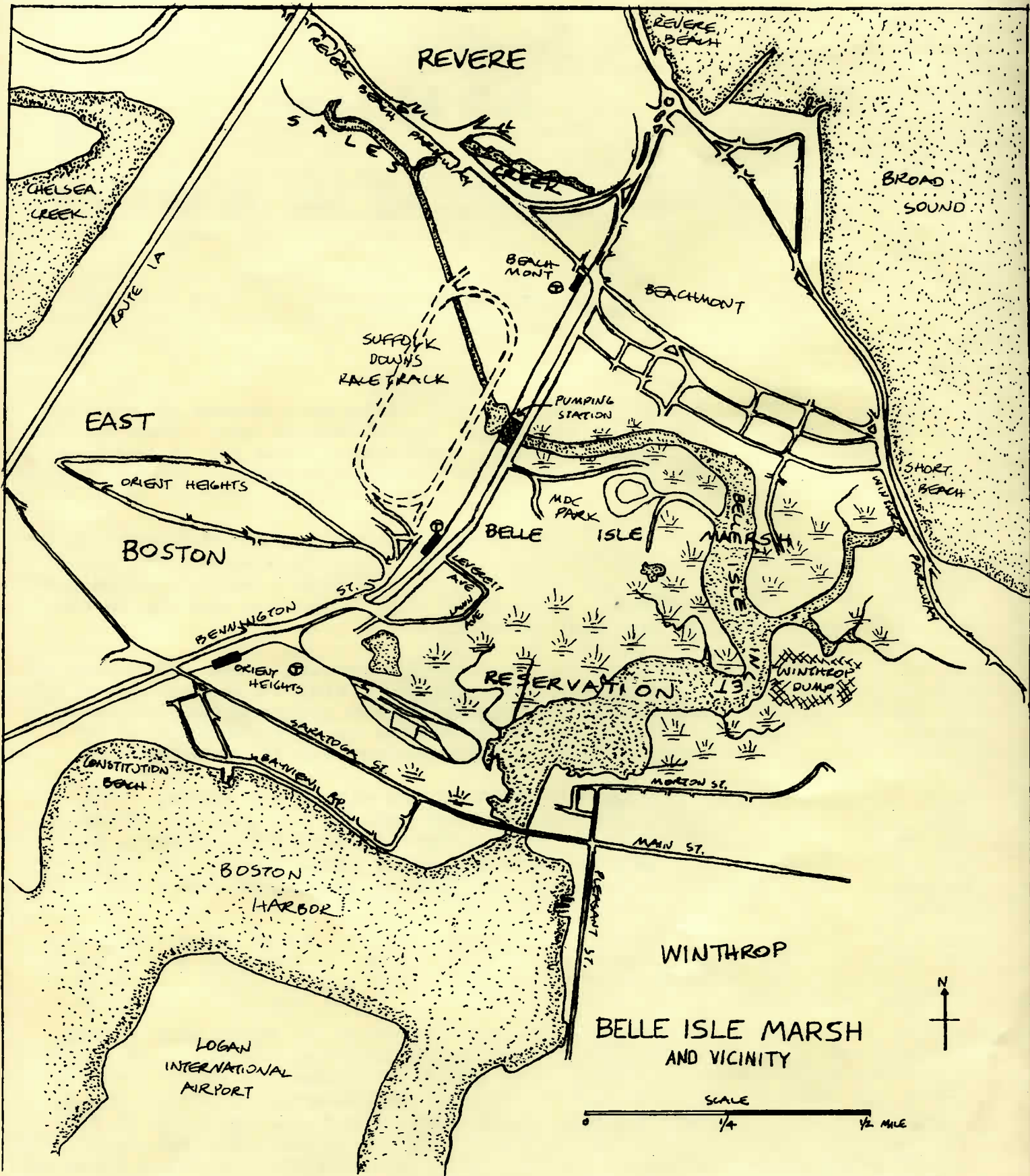
Attending our November trip were 26 persons, including Ms. Dumanoski of the Boston Globe. Her subsequent article in the Globe on November 22, 1982 featured photos of FBIM members Rose Corrado and Kermit Norris, as well as a description of this largest marsh in the City of Boston and the threats to it from petty dumping and encroachment.

Smaller numbers of people came in December and January; some who showed up in January were unfortunately not prepared for hiking in wet areas and had to turn back. On this trip a Short-eared Owl was sighted, and innumerable marsh mollusks and crustaceans were roused from their dormant stage by Craig Jackson's insistence that we should inspect the life in the mud.

These field trips will continue throughout the winter and spring. All field trips start at 2 PM, and are free and open to the public. Please meet at the entrance to MDC's Belle Isle Park on Bennington Street, East Boston. We suggest very warm clothes and water-proof boots: we will walk through parts of the marsh. Please see back of this issue for field trip dates.

Community Clean-up

Several residents of East Boston who are neighbors of Belle Isle joined with members of FBIM in inviting State Representative Gus Serra to a meeting on Sunday, December 5, 1982. The topic of discussion was a clean-up and beautification campaign for the marsh. Representative Serra, who is himself a native of the area and has always taken a strong stand on the preservation of Belle Isle, was impressed by the volume of trash carelessly dumped along the edges of the marsh. Immediate plans for a major clean-up by MDC personnel and machinery were discussed.



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A major clean-up by MDC is obviously needed to remove the bulk of large and persistent trash in the marsh. In the long run, however, it will be the community, the marsh's neighbors, who would ensure the park's preservation and maintenance. In cooperation with Representative Serra's office, we intend to organize a community clean-up day in late spring, when neighbors can come out and join each other in cleaning and celebrating. Thus, a sense of communal and individual pride in this unique urban resource can be built.

Sales Creek

Originally a tidal creek that was connected to Chelsea Creek, Sales Creek is now a polluted, land-locked body of water in the southern area of Revere. During rain-storms, flood-waters in this area rise sufficiently to drown people's property. To alleviate this problem, in 1976 the Waterways Division of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Quality Engineering (DEQE) proposed a plan to pump flood water out of the Sales Creek area and into Belle Isle Inlet. (The option of pumping into Chelsea Creek was rejected due to cost considerations.) The Environmental Impact Report for this project stipulated dredging and clean-up of Sales Creek to prevent adverse impact on Belle Isle Marsh.

The pumping station for this project has been constructed on Bennington Street and was ready for test-operation in December 1982. Meanwhile, the dredging of Sales Creek has been postponed to 1984 or later. The Winthrop Planning Board, alerted last spring to the possibility that Belle Isle and Winthrop Harbor might be receiving a heavy dose of pollutants when the pumping actually got underway, commissioned Environmental Research and Technology Company (ERT) to study the contents of Sales Creek and its bottom sediments. The ERT study found high amounts of coliform bacteria, oil sludge, and heavy metals in the bottom sediments and the waters of Sales Creek.

The Winthrop Planning Board and its Belle Isle Subcommittee have been joined by a number of interested parties, including the Winthrop Conservation Commission, the Winthrop Board of Health, Friends of Belle Isle Marsh, the East Boston Land Use Council, the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, and citizens of Revere, Winthrop, and East Boston, in demanding that no pumping from Sales Creek be undertaken until the impact of such pumping on Belle Isle and the Winthrop beaches and harbor are delineated in a new EIR.

Ms. Dumanoski of the Boston Globe followed her original article on Belle Isle Marsh with a very informative one on November 29, 1982, describing Winthrop's concerns about the Sales Creek project. Since then, a large amount of publicity in local and city-wide newspapers has alerted interested citizens to the environmental issues involved. Many people who had never heard of Belle Isle before have become aware of its existence and importance.

DEQE's latest action has been to take samples of water and sediment from both Sales Creek and Belle Isle and send them off for testing. The results are to help determine what course to follow regarding the pumping station and the dredging of Sales Creek.

Membership Meeting for Friends of Belle Isle Marsh

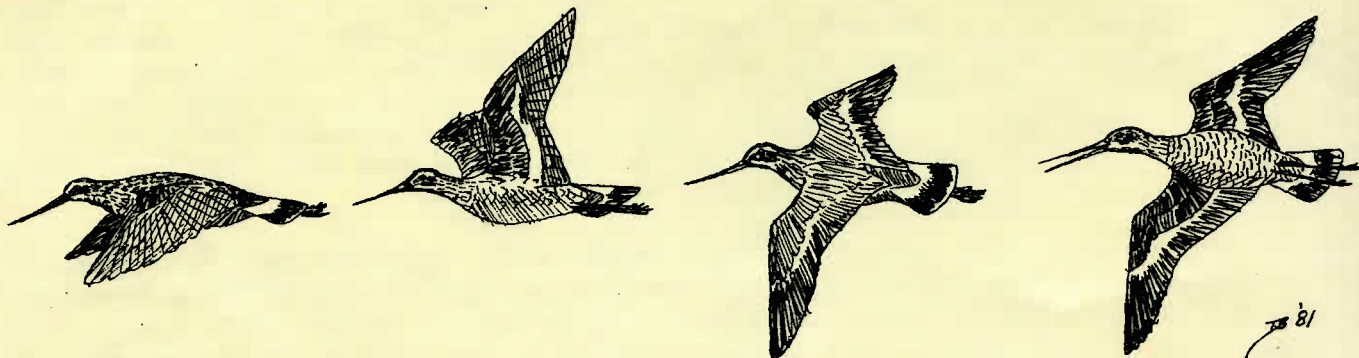
On Sunday, March 13, we will hold an introductory membership meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to bring together many in the community who are concerned with Belle Isle Marsh as open space, city park, and wildlife refuge. We will feature a speaker and slides of the marsh, concluding with refreshments during a social hour. All are welcome to the meeting, which is scheduled to start at 2 PM at our Lady of the Lourdes Church, 2 Endicott Avenue, Revere (near Beachmont MBTA).

Although this meeting is free and open to the public, we are launching a membership drive to raise funds for publication and mailing. Membership cards will be available at the meeting and the yearly membership fees are as follows:

Individual	\$3.00
Family	5.00
Seniors and youth	1.00

If you wish to join up but cannot come to this meeting, please mail a check to FBIM, Barbara Gard, Treasurer, 41 Ware Street, Somerville 02144.

For further information please write to FBIM, 20 Palermo Street, East Boston 02128.



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Saturday	February 19
Sunday	March 20
Saturday	April 16
Saturday	April 23
Saturday	May 14

For further information, please call any of the leaders: Craig Jackson, 321-4382; Kermit Norris, 567-2339; Soheil Zende, 628-8990.