

Ribbon cutting marks Phase 1 completion of Muddy River Restoration project

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The simple act of cutting a ribbon marked the completion of the first phase of a significant restoration project in Boston.

Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander, traveled to Emmanuel College in Boston, Massachusetts to join state and local officials for a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Justine Mee Liff Park, part of the Phase 1 completion of the Muddy River Flood Risk Management Project, on April 21. The park is dedicated to Justine Mee Liff, Boston's first female (former) Parks Commissioner, who was a strong advocate for the restoration project.

Christopher Cook, Commissioner, Boston Parks and Recreation, served as narrator for the event. He welcomed the audience and introduced the speakers for the event.

In between remarks, Cook revealed a plaque dedicated to the late Mike Keegan, Project Manager of the Muddy River project. The plaque will be placed on a bench in the new park. The significance of the bench and its location is that it was where Keegan used to begin his tours for those who were interested in the progress of the construction project. Keegan's family, including his wife, Donna and two children, Briana and Christopher; his Mom, Barbara; his sisters, Kathy, Barbara, and Jackie; and other family members were at the ceremony celebrating Keegan's achievement.

Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker praised the partnerships of all involved for the successful completion of Phase 1. "This is a real collaboration between local organizations, local municipalities, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the federal government, and a whole series of interested parties," he said.

Col. Barron explained the New England District's role in the project. "As most of you know, the underpinning of this project was in response, at least from the federal perspective, to some pretty severe flooding and damage that occurred in past years along and adjacent to the Muddy River and some of the tributaries of the area," he said. "Our overall project objectives when we started out with this was to reduce the flood risk and enhance the aquatic habitats along the Muddy River. To do that, the team had to engage in some pretty imaginative engineering along the way."

Boston Mayor Martin Walsh said that the timing for the project was just right. "We're in a special time right now where there really is an investment and a feel for open space and parks, not just here in Boston but throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," he said.

Other speakers included Secretary Matthew Beaton, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; Neil Wishinsky, Chairman, Brookline Board of Selectmen; Former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis; Frances Gershwin, Chair of the Muddy River Restoration Project Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee and members of the Liff family.

After the remarks, Col. Barron, Governor Baker, Mayor Walsh and other dignitaries cut the ribbon. A brief reception followed featuring photographs of the project before and after the construction. During the reception, Scott Acone, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, presented to the Keegan Family a piece of granite with an engraved plaque, honoring Keegan's long time service to the Corps. The piece of granite came from the granite façade of the new Riverway Culvert headwall.

The Muddy River is a small waterway located in the Boston metropolitan area. Most of the 5.6 square mile watershed is located in the city of Boston and the town of Brookline, with a small portion located in the city of Newton. The 3.5 mile long Muddy River flows through the heart of Frederick Law Olmsted's famed "Emerald Necklace," one of the most carefully crafted park systems in America and the oldest remaining linear urban park system in the United States.

The project will be completed in two phases, with phase one already complete. Phase 1 is located from Riverway to Avenue Louis Pasteur. The work consisted of removal of undersized culverts with new Riverway and Brookline Avenue Culverts, daylighting of the former Sears Parking Lot and area upstream of Avenue Louis Pasteur to construct the FRM channel, removal of 2 feet of accumulated sediment from Upper Fens Pond, and the construction of the Avenue Louis Pasteur culvert extension. Construction of Phase 1 of the Muddy River project began on January 2013 and was completed in June 2016 at a cost of

\$35.2 million. Phase 2 is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2018 and is expected to take approximately three years to complete.