

Boston's Best Kept Secret Running Place

By Warwick Ford

All runners have their favorite local trails but a change of running environment can be very beneficial. Provided the new zone is friendly, your time on foot can pass more quickly and enjoyably. This often leads to more time out exercising or training. All Boston region runners know of the attractions of the Charles River trail and the Emerald Necklace. But there is one other place, very handy to the city and reachable by the T, which has an enormous complement of remarkable trails but is frequented only by the locals who know it well.

This place is the Middlesex Fells, a 2,575-acre reservation in the northern suburbs of Greater Boston overlapping Malden, Medford, Stoneham, and Winchester. For the runner or athletic walker, the Middlesex Fells area has many miles of on-foot routes, from rough trails through thick woods to paved paths around scenic lakes. You can think of the Fells as two distinct areas - the west side and the east side - separated by the invasive Interstate 93 corridor. The west side comprises mainly woodlands surrounding three reservoirs - the North, Middle, and South reservoirs. There are several blazed and popular trails throughout this area. Most users of this area either live nearby or drive here - there are several free parking areas. However, you can also get here by public transit at the Winchester Center T station or by bus.



A Typical Fells West Trail

The east side has a different character, encircling the more highly developed but very scenic Spot Pond. There are some good paved and unpaved trails around the pond. You can connect, via some rougher trails, to the Malden Square or Oak Grove T station.



Spot Pond

There are also options to run trails combining both sides of the reservation.

There are maps and a great deal more information in our book *Fun on Foot in New England*.

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