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Press Release

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Mayor Hedlund dedicates Osprey Overlook Park as newest segment of Back River Trail

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Weymouth, MA – Today, in a special ribbon cutting ceremony, Mayor Robert Hedlund and Planning Director Bob Luongo joined with local and state officials, community partners, and members of the public, to dedicate Osprey Overlook Park as the newest segment of the Weymouth Back River Trail. The project utilized \$248,886 in local Community Preservation Funds and a \$157,024 grant through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to renovate the Town's capped landfill as a recovered, natural open space.

"Osprey Overlook Park is a valuable new resource for residents, and a fitting tribute to the osprey that call this area home," **said Mayor Robert Hedlund**. "The park is accessible, walkable, and provides a unique window into the beauty and wildlife of the Weymouth Back River. I want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration for supporting this project, as well as thank our design team and general contractor for making this next segment of the Back River Trail a reality."

Weymouth's landfill was capped and sealed by a protective membrane in 2000. Its location offers intimate access to the Back River's natural environment and is within walking distance of residential neighborhoods, Great Esker Park, and the East Weymouth MBTA Commuter Rail Station. The Town received permitting from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to renovate the site in 2016. The new park was designed by Kyle Zick Landscape Architecture of Boston, and construction was completed in the spring and summer of 2017 by Dayco Construction of Salem.

Weymouth's Osprey Overlook Park includes a loop walking trail (0.75 miles) connecting to Great Esker Park, an ADA-accessible overlook with panoramic views of the Back River, and an interpretative panel that educates visitors on the characteristics and history of the osprey, which fish and nest along the Back River in the spring and summer months. Additional elements of the new park include fencing, guardrails, parking, plantings, seating, and wayfinding signage.

Osprey Overlook Park is the third installment of the Weymouth Back River Trail, which envisions a multiuse trail system running the length of the Back River and Herring Brook to Whitman's Pond. Construction of the park was first proposed in the Town's Back River Trail Master Plan, completed in 2005, and its final design is consistent with the Town's Open Space & Recreation Plan and Massachusetts' Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, both of which identify public demand for new walking trails near water resources.

Earlier installments of the Back River Trail include the Herring Run Pool Park in lower Jackson Square, completed in 2010, and the Kibby Property on Route 3A, adjacent to Abigail Adams State Park, completed in 2016. In anticipation of future phases of the Back River Trail, the Town's Department of Public Works has repaved Wharf Street at the entrance of Osprey Overlook Park, and installed a sidewalk, connecting the park to the platform of the East Weymouth MBTA Commuter Rail Station. This work was completed above and beyond the scope of the Town's LWCF grant, in service of making the park more accessible.

The federal LWCF provides reimbursable grants up to 50 percent of the local project cost for the acquisition, development, and renovation of park, recreation, and conservation areas. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Division of Conservation Services administers the LWCF Grant Program on behalf of the National Park Service for Massachusetts. Nearly 4,000 acres have been acquired and hundreds of parks renovated using the more than \$100 million that Massachusetts has received from the state side portion of the federal program since 1965.

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