



**Norman B. Leventhal
Map Center**
at the Boston Public Library

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
October 2, 2017

Contact: Tamani Jayasinghe
508.330.2876 cell
617.695.0369 office

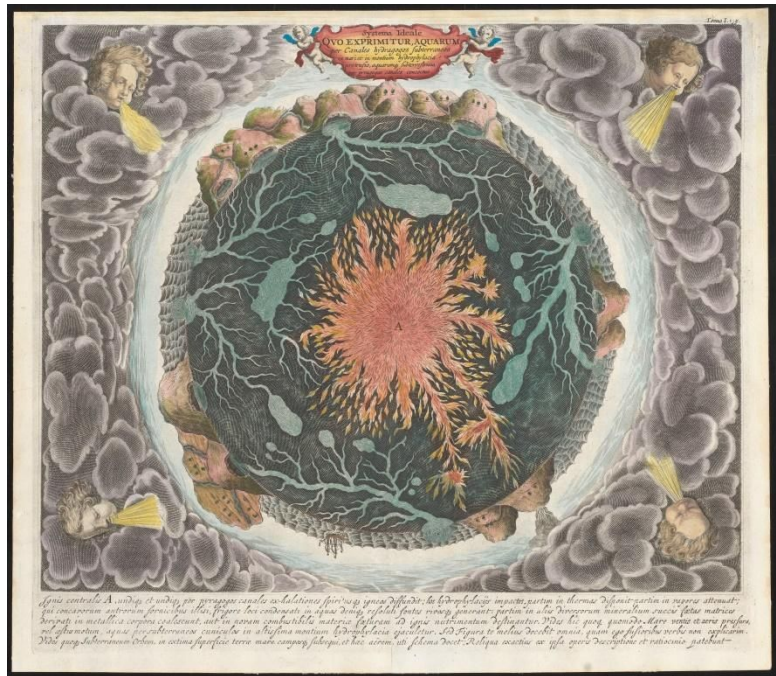
**Norman B. Leventhal Map Center Announces Opening of New Exhibition Exploring
Subterranean Mapping**

“Beneath Our Feet” will be open to the public through February 2018

Boston, MA – The Norman B. Leventhal Map Center announces the opening today of a fascinating new exhibition, *Beneath Our Feet*. The exhibition delves into the exploration and mapping of a wide variety of underground “worlds,” from volcanoes, to catacombs, to natural gas pipelines. Visitors are invited to dig into each of these worlds as well as see the evolution of cartographic, geological, and sensing technology that has made possible the depiction of what lies beneath our feet.

The exhibition begins with maps and artifacts related to subjects in the natural sciences, such as geology and geological oceanography, displaying efforts to study everything from the geysers in Yellowstone National Park to underwater features off the coast of Boston. Visitors will see how technological advances have changed our understanding of geology and landscape, and then, in the exhibit’s second major theme, how they allowed us to begin altering the underground world.

Maps related to coal mining, transmission lines, drilling, and natural gas pipelines explore how humans have transformed the underground landscape through the particular lens of our energy



infrastructure. Visitors can also see maps related to other human activity underground, from the catacombs of Sicily to the ruins of Pompeii.

In these veins, of both the natural and man-made underworlds, the exhibit also includes a particular focus on Boston's underground. In cooperation with lenders from the City of Boston's Archaeology Lab and the Harvard Mineralogical and Geological Museum, the Leventhal Map Center presents a number of displays relating to what lies beneath New England and Boston, from archaeological finds, to stunning mineral specimens, to the "Big Dig" and the fascinating story of the ground under the Boston Public Library.

To address current discourse related to water and energy, the exhibition also includes "Dig Deeper" sections raising topics such as the Dakota Access Pipeline, the Flint water crisis, hydraulic fracking, and surface coal mining. Maps have the power to bring these stories to life, allowing visitors to see the affected areas with their own eyes. Visitors are encouraged to use the maps presented in "Dig Deeper" to enhance their understanding of these four controversial topics.

"These maps show the long history of human fascination with what lies below the Earth's surface, from our earliest ideas of how the Earth might be structured at its core to more recent, highly technologically-advanced maps of underwater geography," said Stephanie Cyr, Associate Curator at the Leventhal Map Center. "We are excited to welcome visitors who will have the chance to learn more about a broad variety of underground features and infrastructure that normally remain out of view."

The exhibition is designed to appeal to all ages, with thought-provoking material for adults, as well as a cartoon mascot, Digger Burrows, designed by local artist and professor of industrial design at Wentworth Institute of Technology. Children are invited to follow Digger's footprints through the gallery to uncover treasure hunt clues and explore kid-sized niches with games, puzzles, and activities.

We invite the public to view this new exhibition and to attend the following programming hosted by the Leventhal Map Center in conjunction with the *Beneath Our Feet* exhibit:

Connecting the Drops: Mapping the History and Innovations of the Boston Water Works System

Hidden beneath Boston's city streets is a complex system that delivers our most basic, municipal resource: water. The story behind that network begins in the 19th century with monumental engineering efforts that created the Boston Water Works. This richly illustrated talk by Dr. Suanna Crowley, Director of Development & Outreach at the Metropolitan Waterworks Museum, will take a look at the history of technological and scientific innovation that delivered millions of gallons of clean drinking water to Greater Boston through the 1970's. A trained archaeologist and anthropologist, Dr. Crowley, also known locally as "Dr. Dirt," will discuss the

deep importance of this water works system and explore how it forever changed the trajectory of development in the city. *Presented in partnership with the Boston Map Society.*

Tuesday, November 7, 6:00 - 7:30 pm

The gallery will remain open for additional viewing until 8:00 pm.

Commonwealth Salon, BPL

<http://www.leventhalmap.org/event/waterworks/>

Unraveling Ancient Life in Massachusetts: Fossils, Paleobiology and Geologic Maps

For two hundred years, geologists and paleontologists have mapped sedimentary sequences and interpreted the ancient environments they represent. Professor Richard H. Bailey, professor of geology in the Department of Marine and Environmental Sciences at Northeastern University, will unearth the evolutionary history of Massachusetts fossils, their value in understanding the geologic development of the region, and their historical depiction in maps. *Presented in partnership with the Boston Map Society.*

Wednesday, November 29, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

The gallery will remain open for additional viewing until 8:00 pm.

Commonwealth Salon, BPL

<http://www.leventhalmap.org/event/geological-maps/>

Children's Events:

National Fossil Day

Celebrate National Fossil Day at the Boston Public Library! Learn how fossils form, make imprints of natural objects, and see real fossils from the Harvard Museum of Natural History.

Presented in partnership with the BPL Children's Library.

Wednesday, October 11, 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Children's Library

<http://www.leventhalmap.org/event/national-fossil-day/>

Boston Beneath Our Feet

Join Boston's City Archaeologist, Joe Bagley and his team of volunteers in a family-friendly hands-on archaeology event. Participants can help mend historic and Native American ceramic vessels, and Joe will provide a demonstration on the ancient art and science of flintknapping by making an arrowhead and demonstrate making fires from flint and steel.

Sunday, October 15, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

BPL Courtyard

<http://www.leventhalmap.org/event/archaeology/>

The Norman B. Leventhal Map Center is open to the public Monday-Thursday 10am-7pm; Friday-Saturday 10am-5 pm; and Sunday 1-5pm.

About the NORMAN B. LEVENTHAL MAP CENTER

The Norman B. Leventhal Map Center is ranked among the top map centers in the United States for the size of its collection, the significance of its historic (pre-1900) material, and its advanced digitization program. It is unique among the major collections because it also combines these

features with exceptional educational and teacher training programs to advance geographic literacy among students in grades K-12 and enhance the teaching of subjects from history to mathematics to language arts. The collection is also the second largest in the country located in a public library, ensuring unlimited access to these invaluable resources for scholars, educators, and the general public. The Leventhal Map Center, incorporated in 2007 as a nonprofit organization, was established by philanthropist Norman Leventhal as a public-private partnership with the Boston Public Library. Its mission is to use the Boston Public Library's permanent collection of 200,000 maps and 5,000 atlases and a select group of rare maps collected by Mr. Leventhal for the enjoyment and education of all through exhibitions, educational programs, and a website that includes thousands of digitized maps at leventhalmap.org. The map collection is global in scope, dating from the 15th century to the present, with particular strengths in maps and atlases of Boston, Massachusetts, New England, the American Revolutionary War era, urban maps, and nautical charts. To learn more, visit leventhalmap.org.

About BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Boston Public Library has a Central Library, twenty-four branches, map center, business library, and a website filled with digital content and services. Established in 1848, the Boston Public Library has pioneered public library service in America. It was the first large free municipal library in the United States, the first public library to lend books, the first to have a branch library, and the first to have a children's room. Each year, the Boston Public Library hosts thousands of programs and serves millions of people. All of its programs and exhibitions are free and open to the public. At the Boston Public Library, books are just the beginning. To learn more, visit bpl.org.

Image:

Athanasius Kircher (1678-1756)

“Systema Ideale quo Exprimitur, Aquarum per Canales Hydragogos Subterraneos ex Mari et in Montium Hydrophylacia Protrusio, Aquarumq. Subterrestrium per Pyragogos Canales Concoctus,”
from “Mundus Subterraneus”

Amsterdam, ca. 1665.

Norman B. Leventhal Map Cnter at the Boston Public Library.

###