



Friends of Upton State Forest Newsletter

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Volume 10, Number 1

Winter 2015

Presidents Message by *Bill Taylor*

I have some exciting news! On Oct. 8th, the National Park Service (NPS) added the Upton State Forest Civilian Conservation Corps Resources Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places, which is “the official list of the Nation’s historic places worthy of preservation.” This project began in 2010 when the Upton Historical Commission (UHC) hired Shary Page Berg to prepare the application for listing. That application was submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) in 2013 and approved by them last December at a meeting Ellen Arnold and I attended. MHC sent it to the NPS in April, and in October it was listed.

While listing does not come with any restrictions or obligations as to what can be done within the district, it is a symbol of its significance, and will be a substantial benefit in the Friends’ future efforts to preserve the historic resources.

There are a lot of people to thank. Upton residents voted unanimously to approve UHC’s request for the funds to pay Ms. Berg to prepare the application. The Friends, UHC and the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) provided valuable information about the resources to Ms. Berg, and she did a wonderful job preparing the application. DCR, the owner of the property, supported the application all the way through the process.

As I think about it now, it feels like a very nice Christmas gift. Happy New Year! *Bill*

Friday, January 30, 7:00 PM

(Snow date-February 6)

Upton VFW, 15 Milford St, Upton

The History of Upton State Forest Presented by Bill Taylor

Over the past 10 years, Bill and other members of the FUSF Historic Resources Committee have done a great deal of research about the history of our forest. Bill also volunteers at Upton Historical Society, and has combed their records for information about the CCC, Upton State Forest and the families who lived there.

He will explain the social and political climate that led to the establishment of state parks in Massachusetts. Then he will discuss the various ways that the land within Upton State Forest was used and how it evolved into the park we know today. He will share many of our historic and current day photos in the program.

The program is free to members. The public is welcome for a donation of \$3.00. Members are reminded that if they have not renewed their 2015 membership this is the last day for the 10% discount on your renewal. A membership form is attached to this newsletter. Please have it filled out when you come. We welcome new members.

Light refreshments will be served. For a notice of delay due to snow, please email news@friendsofuptonstateforest.org. Put “annual meeting” in the subject line.

Index

Calendar of Events	page 6
“In the Beginning”	page 3
Membership Form	page 8
Whitehall Woods Update	page 4

Frank Evans Honored



Frank Mand photo

FUSF cofounder and CCC alumnus, Frank Evans was one of two volunteers honored at the annual conference of the Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends Network. The Friends Network award is given to individuals who deserve special recognition for extraordinary work on behalf of DCR forests, parks, beaches or trails.

Membership Report

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Roger Brown of Goshen, David and Nancy Goldman of Hopkinton, Kenneth Prince of Westborough, and Ryan Newfell, Sandra Lajoie, and Joan and John Sebastian, all of Upton.

Remember that if you renew for 2015 by the annual meeting in January you can deduct 10% from your dues. It is your membership dues that pay for our various administrative expenses (such as the post office box, annual filing fees, website, and insurance), the newsletter, and the programs we offer.

In addition to the satisfaction you get from supporting our organization, members get free admittance to any of our programs. We are also offering a 10% discount on our logo apparel to current members.

There is a membership form on the last page of this newsletter so please renew or join now while you are thinking about it.

A Little Common Sense Closing

For the past three years we have had our logo apparel and other merchandise for sale at *A Little Common Sense*. The owner, Lisa Stratton, has decided to close the store after Christmas. We are very grateful for her generosity in giving us the opportunity to offer our members and others a convenient place to purchase our merchandise.

We are exploring other options, including online sales. In the meantime, you can contact us directly to purchase items. In addition to being a funding source, having you wear our logo helps spread the word about who we are and what we do.

We wish Lisa all the best in her new endeavors.

Upton's Heritage Day

Thank you to the volunteers who helped at our Heritage Day booth on the Upton Common. Jerry Zaslow, Bill Taylor, Agnita Knott and Ellen Arnold helped with set up, clean up and staffed the booth. We offered our logo apparel, membership, baked goods, and a rain barrel raffle. Bakers were Tracy Zaslow, Joan Varney and Ellen Arnold. The rain barrel was donated by Maureen Byrne and won by Russ Arnold. Funds raised at this annual event go to our general account to help pay for expenses and programs during the year.

FUSF Birthday!

FUSF will celebrate our tenth anniversary in 2015. If you have any thoughts of what you would like to see us do to recognize this milestone, please let us know. There will be a committee that may have one or two planning meetings, and we would appreciate having members be part of that. If you can help with planning, please contact Ellen at 508-529-6610 or news@friendsofuptonstateforest.org.



In the Beginning, Part 1

By Ellen Arnold

In 1985, a group of area businessmen approached a local legislator with the idea of turning Upton State Forest into a state-run golf course. When this was reported in a local newspaper I knew that I had to do something! In the days before internet access and social media I searched phone books to get names of environmental organizations, rod & gun clubs, and any other group that might have an interest in preserving our forest. A letter to the editor spurred others to write in defense of the forest too. Then I wrote to every state agency that had anything to do with the environment, wildlife, or state parks. Every once in awhile I pull out some of those old letters and chuckle at how inept and naïve I was, but it did the trick, and our state forest is not a golf course!

At the time I did think it might be a good idea to form some sort of watchdog group, but other obligations meant that I had to put it off. Time went by, and in the mid 1990's, I became aware that a group of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) alumni wanted a CCC statue in Massachusetts and felt that the CCC Camp at Upton would be the right location. In 1998, the statue was installed in Freetown State Forest where a visitors center was planned. The Friends of Freetown are still waiting for the visitors center, and FUSF has worked hard to find a new use for the CCC Camp that will help preserve it.

Fast forward to 2003 when the South Barn collapsed. That morning I stood in front of the rubble and wondered if the building would still be standing if there had been a Friends of Upton State Forest group.

Fast forward again to 2005 when Bill Johnston found stone steps in the forest and sent a note to the Upton Town Crier asking if anyone knew about them. The Crier sent the question to Upton Historical Society where I volunteered. I met Bill in February and answered his questions. Then we talked about the state forest and its importance to the quality of life in this area. I told Bill about my previous advocacy and idea for a Friend's group. He encouraged me to do it and said he would help.

In March, Frank Evans connected me to the CCC Committee again. They were meeting in Upton and he invited me to come. Shortly after that I got a phone call that there was a meeting at River Bend Farm about matching grants called "Fix It First Friends". I dropped the vacuum cleaner and off I went to the meeting! The people in charge of the grant were very encouraging about forming a friends group. Everything was pulling me in that direction!

That spring a letter to the Upton Selectmen about potential sales of surplus state property raised concerns and started rumors that the state forest was in danger of being sold. Although we knew that the state forest was not part of that sale, it did raise the issue of potential threats to the integrity of our forest. I asked Joan Shanahan, who I had worked with in the past on other projects, if she would be interested in joining Bill, Frank, and I. She agreed and we started planning a meeting to gauge public interest. We scheduled a meeting for June and forty people showed up! At the end of the evening it was clear that we could make it happen and our journey began. In 2015, thanks to the support of our members, FUSF is celebrating its tenth anniversary!

Whitehall Woods Alliance Update

In the fall newsletter, we reported that FUSF had joined the Whitehall Woods Alliance, a group formed to preserve the 42-acre property at 203 Pond St. in Hopkinton. At that time, the members included FUSF, Friends of Whitehall, Hopkinton Area Land Trust and Sudbury Valley Trustees. Bay State Trail Riders Association and New England Mountain Bike Association have joined us since then.

On November 14, Hopkinton received a notice of intent to sell from the property owners, which triggered the town's Chapter 61 option to purchase the property (which must be exercised by March 14) for the amount, and under the terms, offered. The owners were offered \$2 million for 12 house lots on 10 acres (+/-) under the approved subdivision plan. The rest of the property, 32 acres, will be given to Sudbury Valley Trustees as open space. The Alliance has proposed the town purchase the property using a combination of CPA funds, a state LAND grant, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) land acquisition funds, private donations, and the proceeds of the sale of the existing house.

The property links Upton State Forest and Lake Whitehall State Park. While the proposed development/open space includes a 50-foot wide trail corridor that would create a link, the Alliance members feel that preserving the property as-is, with the one house lot, would create a better link with a more valuable recreation and wildlife corridor.

In 2008, Grafton protected Pell Farm, which abuts Upton's Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area. In 2011, Upton protected Sweetwilliam Farm, which connected the Warren Brook property on the west side and Upton State Forest on the east side. Now Hopkinton voters have an opportunity to fill in a major piece of the puzzle by protecting 203 Pond St as-is. This

will link Lake Whitehall and Hopkinton open space to Upton State Forest and the Upton and Grafton open space through a more complete recreation and wildlife corridor. It would be a tremendous legacy for Hopkinton.

The Alliance has found there is significant support for preserving the property. Since the Alliance formed, individuals and organization, have pledged about \$75,000, including FUSF which pledged \$1000. The trustees of the Ora Cheney estate have offered an 8-acre parcel on School St. to the town as open space contingent on preserving 203 Pond St.

What can you do? If you live in Hopkinton please attend meetings about this property and send letters of support. If you don't live in Hopkinton, please let family and friends who are Hopkinton voters know about this opportunity. Once it is certain that Hopkinton will use CPA funds toward the purchase, we will be asking for financial donations. For updates, please check <http://whitehallwoodsalliance.org>.

Quarterly Quote

"The leaves fall, the wind blows, and the farm country slowly changes from the summer cottons into its winter wools."

- Henry Beston, *Northern Farm*



E. Arnold photo

Meet Echo!



J. Stowe photo

Many of you will remember our former Regional Park Ranger, Captain Jennifer Stowe, and her Search and Rescue (SAR) Dog, Emmitt Francis. We often met Jenn and Emmitt training on the trails at Upton until Emmitt passed away.

Jenn let us know recently that she has another golden retriever in training for SAR. We look forward to meeting Echo and seeing him on the trails!

Mass Wildlife Building Open

Mass Wildlife has moved back to their Field Headquarters at 1 Rabbit Hill Road in Westborough. The new building houses the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Office of Fishing and Boating Access.

The building has many energy saving features including closed-loop geothermal wells, a roof-top solar array, and many other features.

You can also access the Wildlife Management Area in the rear of the building from the parking lot once again.

MFPFN Conference

Once again, the Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends Network (MFPFN) held their annual conference at the VFW in Upton. Forty-nine people from throughout the state represented twenty-nine friends groups and other organizations with an interest in our state parks and trails.

FUSF members who assisted, or attended included: Ellen Arnold, Diane and Bryan Dungey, Frank and Alice Evans, David Kennedy, Chris Scott, Marcella Stasa and Bill Taylor.

During the day the group presented several awards to two volunteers (see Frank Evans on page 2) and several DCR staff members. FUSF nominated Val Stegemoen, Cary VandenAkker and Don Watt for work they did to remove snow from the CCC buildings last February. The full nomination can be viewed at: <http://networkingfriends.net/friendsnetwork2014awards.html>. Cary was also nominated by Bay State Trail Riders Association for his many years of cooperation working with them on trails. It is the first time in the seven year history of MFPFN presenting awards that two groups have nominated the same person without knowing of the other nomination.

Bill Taylor is shown below presenting the award to Cary and Val.



Frank Mand photo

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friends of Upton State Forest Board Meetings

Board meetings are held at 7:00 PM in the training room at the Upton Police Station, unless otherwise noted.

January 19

February 16

March 16

April 20

May 18

Annual Meeting and Program

January 30, 7:00PM

Upton VFW

15 Milford St, Upton

(Snow date-February 6)

The History of Upton State Forest

Presented by Bill Taylor

Details on page 1

Last day for membership discount!

Members free, non-members \$3.00

Park Serve Day

Saturday, April 25

Registration 8:30 to 9:00 AM

Work from 9AM to about Noon

Many hands make light work so please join us for the annual DCR spring work party. Meet at the Headquarters Building at Upton State Forest near the intersection of Westborough and Southborough Roads. (GPS 205 Westboro Rd). We provide a light lunch for volunteers. A liability waiver is required. Youth over 12 are welcome with a parent's signature. **Youth groups are required to pre register.** Bring tools such as rakes, shovels and loppers. **No power tools.** Dress for work and the weather. Don't forget gloves, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Water will be provided. For any questions, or to pre-register, you can contact news@friendsofuptonstateforest.org. For more info about Park Serve Day go to <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr>.



Hiking Through History

For all hikes, we ask that you dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear.

Children are welcome when accompanied by an adult. A

liability waiver is required for hikes.

Please leave pets at home. Don't forget sunscreen, insect repellent and water.

Check with the hike sponsor in case of inclement weather. There is no charge.

Meet at the Headquarters building at Upton State Forest near the intersection of Westborough and Southborough Roads (GPS 205 Westboro Rd).

Discover Hidden History

Saturday, May 23, 1:00 PM

We are repeating this popular hike with a different interpretive experience.

There are many early North Upton settlers buried in the Bradish or North Cemetery at the intersection of North St and Westborough Rd. Learn about the history of these families and their homes, many of which are within the state forest today.

This is a moderate, two to three hour hike with some steep hills and uneven footing. A liability waiver is required. Children are welcome if accompanied by an adult. Direct questions to: news@friendsofuptonstateforest.org or 508-529-6610.

Look who likes the FUSF hoodie!



M. Byrne photo

Partners

Surprise Donation!

It was a pleasant surprise to receive a letter from the Narragansett Bay Wheelmen, (NBW) that they were honoring our efforts in support of trails, and Upton State Forest with a donation of \$2700.00! The letter stated that it is their hope that the donation will enable us to continue to provide quality programming and preservation at Upton State Forest. Our Board of Directors will be discussing appropriate ways to use their generous donation.

The group is a community of cyclists offering organized rides and events. They promote safe recreational cycling and give back through volunteerism, advocacy and financial support. You can learn more about NBW at <http://www.nbwclub.org/>.

It is very gratifying to have another organization recognize our efforts and offer their support. Thank you Narragansett Bay Wheelmen! Thank you to FUSF Board Member at Large, Chip Kent for bringing our work to their attention!

New Book About Upton

Congratulations to Upton Historical Society on publication of their new book, *A Journey Through Upton Memories!* Several FUSF members were involved, including Barbara Burke who compiled and edited stories from the Society files. Bill Taylor was one of the editors and researchers. Ellen Arnold of FUSF, and Kevin Allen of DCR contributed an article about the CCC Camp. Ellen also wrote an article about "New State", one of Upton State Forest's mysteries. There is also a chapter on Old Roads, some of which are now trails within the state forest.

The cost of the hard cover book is \$32.00. It is available in the Society room on the second floor of the Knowlton-Risteen (town library) building. The Society phone number is 508-529-6600.

Upton Chamber Update

*Contributed by Cathy Taylor
Upton Historical Commission Chair*

In 2011, the Upton Historical Commission (UHC) used Community Preservation Act money to complete an archaeological survey and repair the entranceway of the Upton Cave. This was a unique opportunity to do further investigating using Optimally Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) dating, a method that dates the last time quartz crystals have seen daylight. Additional funding for this was obtained from private sources including the New England Antiquities Research Association (NEARA).

Containers of earth were carefully obtained when the entranceway walls were deconstructed for the repair. The earth samples were sent to the Colorado US Geological Lab for analysis. Four tubes have been analyzed so far.

A 2014 report states: "The 3 samples that were collected in Upton Chamber (Upton #2, Upton #4 and Upton #5) returned ages of 430, 565, and 455 years with an average age of 485 years. When the errors are attached to the sample ages from the chamber, the returned ages are between 365 to 645 years ago (or 1645 A.D. to 1365 A.D.; using the year 2011 as the end year). Upton #10, taken below the bottom of the artifact layers in the archeological test pit located in the front of the entrance to the chamber, did not return the same ages as those in the chamber. The age of this unit is between 650 to 880 years ago and most probably dates the surface the chamber was built on." The 2012 James Milner Associates (JMA) report includes the preliminary results with one sample and is on file with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and can be seen in full on the UHC at *Upton Chamber Report 2012*: <http://www.uptonma.gov/Pages/UptonMABComm/historical/2012%20Full%20Upton%20Chamber.pdf>.

