



FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST INC. NEWSLETTER

<http://www.friendsofuptonstateforest.org>
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President's Message

Each newsletter I think about what to say in this column. Many times I write several venting articles and then trash them in favor of a more positive message. When a group of us started this organization in the spring of 2005 we had the rather naive vision that we could avoid taking stands on controversial issues. What we have found is that in order to be a Friend of Upton State Forest we have to be involved in discussions that are part of a much broader picture. Starting now I am going to address some of those issues in this column.

Chapter 21, Section 2F of the MA General Laws requires that the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) develop resource management plans (RMP) for ALL reservations, parks and forests that they manage. These plans are to include guidelines for operations and land stewardship, provide for the protection of natural and cultural resources, and ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection and sustainable forest management.

To date only six RMP have been accepted by the Stewardship Council that oversees DCR. It is a huge task to develop a plan that includes all aspects of management and DCR has many properties that they are responsible for. It requires manpower and funding. It is time that our legislators provided the funding to allow DCR to meet the mandate they gave it. Until that happens we are on an airplane that did not file a flight plan.

Ellen

Park Serve Day

April 25, 8:30AM to around noon
Meet at the Headquarters Building at Upton State Forest

Join us for our spring work party at the forest. Plans are being made for several projects. The Trails crew will build a stone water bar below the lower CCC water hole. This will help prevent erosion when the water hole overflows. At the Headquarters area we will be building a kiosk and doing general spring clean up. If there are enough people we will pick up trash on Southborough and Westborough Roads.

Wear work clothes, boots and gloves. Bring loppers, rakes, shovels and tools for spring clean up. Don't forget insect repellent, sunscreen and water. A liability waiver will be required. If you plan to stay for lunch after you work, please let us know you are coming. Otherwise just come and join us. We always have fun working together and we leave with a sense of satisfaction and good stewardship.

Diseases Caused by Ticks and Mosquitoes by Chris Scott

May 18, 7PM, Upton Senior Center

Following our regular business meeting Chris Scott will present a program about the diseases caused by ticks, mosquitoes and other summer insects. Please save the date.

We need volunteers to bake for the meeting so if you can help, contact Ellen at 508-529-6610 or fusf@charter.net. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Meet the DCR Staff

Jeff Cate, Park Supervisor



Jeff Cate is the Park Supervisor of the Hopkinton State Park cluster of facilities, part of the Metro west District, Northeast Region of the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The cluster consists of Hopkinton, Ashland and Whitehall State Parks, as well as Upton State Forest and four flood control facilities within the District.

Jeff works with Richard Trubiano (Forest and Park Supervisor II) and Sean Lovejoy (Facilities Repairer), to provide integrated daily management and operations of the public resources. During the summer months, when park attendance dramatically increases, about 30 seasonal staff joins the team at the complex. In 2008, total visitors to the complex numbered 509,384.

Fresh out of college in 1982, Jeff joined the State Parks at Walden Pond State Reservation as a seasonal laborer.

What began as a seasonal position that “seemed like a good way to get his foot in the door and try on the profession of park operations to see if it fit”, has turned into 25+ years of serving the Commonwealth. He has worked at several parks including Walden Pond State Reservation, Cochituate State Park and Hopkinton State Park in a myriad of job titles ranging from laborer, skilled laborer, seasonal park supervisor, assistant park supervisor to lead supervisor. He served for three year’s as Acting Assistant Regional Director for the then designated Region III, (Central Region) of the Park System.

Of all the facilities at which he has served, he enjoys most the widely diverse range of issues, challenges, natural resources and multi-use nature that the Hopkinton Complex serves up on a daily basis. “It may sound trite” Jeff says, “but no two days are ever the same”.

Jeff can be reached at the Hopkinton Headquarters, 508-435-4303 or by email at Jeff.Cate@state.ma.us. He often attends FUSF General Meetings and would welcome meeting you and answering any questions you have.

Got Books?

One of our members has offered to set up an online book sale account as a fund raiser for us. If you have books to donate please contact fusf@charter.net or call Ellen at 508-529-6610. All books should be hard cover and in good condition. Any unsold books will be donated to a local charity.

Welcome New Members

We welcome the following new members: Derric and Nancy Lowery of Upton, John Savello of Marlborough and Susan and Matthew Dykhoff of Hopedale.



Rudolph "Rudy" Cieplinski
1918-2009

We extend our sympathy to members, Jane and Bill Milligan, on the loss of her Dad, Rudy. He served in the Civilian Conservation Corps at Upton as a baker. He told Jane about arriving at the camp and being lined up on the parade ground with all the new enrollees. The officer ordered five or six men at the end of the line, including Rudy, to leave and follow another officer. They were sent to the mess hall for kitchen duty and eventually to Fort Adams in Rhode Island for cooks and bakers schools.

Rudy remembered the huge ovens and baking 25 pies at a time to feed as many as 200 men. Because the cooks had to rise so early to prepare breakfast they slept in separate quarters. Once they had been to cooks and bakers schools they earned an extra \$5.00 a month. On days off he remembered going to the Puritan Restaurant in Westborough.

Today the entrance to the mess hall is marked by two cedar trees that were shrubs flanking the door. When you

enter the area it would have been at the top of the drive on the west side of the parade ground.

In 2007 Jane helped plant the maple tree that we dedicated to the men of Camp SP-25. Bill and Jane were also very involved in producing the FUSF brochure about Camp SP-25 at Upton.

Historical Resources Report

Chuck Arning, National Park Service Ranger in the Blackstone River Valley Heritage Corridor, has completed a documentary titled "*We Can Take It: the CCC in the Blackstone Valley.*" It includes interviews with CCC alumni and Alec Gillman, DCR CCC Program Committee Coordinator. Working with videographer Irene Kneeland he told the story of young men who helped lift this country out of the Great Depression. Much of the footage was shot at Camp SP-25 at Upton.

We have a dvd and vhs copies to loan. Also available for loan is a dvd of footage shot on CCC Day last fall. Contact Ellen at fusf@charter.net or 508-529-6610.

Donations

Thank you to Lillian and Harold Tolstrup, Stewart Campbell, Frank Evans and John Summers for donations to the historic account and to John Fahy and Norm Fahy for trails account donations.

Thank you to everyone that bought tickets and donated to the raffles at the potluck supper. Winners were: Happy Trails Basket-Alyce Aubin. Spring Has Sprung Basket-Russ Arnold, Chocolate Basket-Irene Radziewicz and Re-gifting Basket-Barbara Burke.

We also appreciate all those that paid full membership during the discounted period. Thank you for your support.

Iron Ranger Painting Contest

By Sharon Hoey

Trusts Development Manager, Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

DCR will seek artists this spring to paint metal contribution containers, also known as Iron Rangers, which receive financial donations to benefit the state parks system through the Conservation Trust and Urban Parks Trust funds. Located at high traffic areas in state parks, Iron Rangers collect donations which are used to support educational programs and conservation projects at the park where the monies are collected. Once painted, they attract more attention and donations increase-in some cases, more than double over the previous year. Interested artists will be invited to submit color design ideas along with a written description of their design and the location of the Iron Ranger they want to paint. Watch your local newspaper for the *Call for Artists*, or visit the website: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/trust/IronRangerCall.htm>

Editor's note: The Iron Ranger at Upton is located at the Trailhead parking lot as you enter the trail system at CCC Way. Another Ranger will be placed in the Headquarters area near the CCC buildings this spring. FUSF would like to encourage donations at our Iron Rangers. We are asking that you let artists know about the contest and encourage them to submit a design. In addition please remember that all donations made at the Iron Ranger will be used at Upton. Please consider donating a dollar or whatever you feel you can afford when you use the forest. We do not pay for parking and are lucky to have this resource in our backyard so please help support it. Pictures of painted Iron Rangers can be seen on the website above. Let's get our Upton Iron Rangers painted!



Iron Ranger at River Bend Farm

Membership Challenge Contest

FUSF is sponsoring a membership contest from March 20 through June 30, 2009. Any member who signs up a new member in any category except Associate will have their name entered into a drawing. In addition the new member (family gets one entry) will have their name in another drawing. If you sign up more than one membership (family counts as one) you will get your name in the drawing for each one you sponsor.

Names of one member and one new member will be drawn at the July Board of Directors meeting. Prize for each will be a LL Bean hand crank flashlight with an approximate value of \$20.00.

A special membership application is included with this newsletter to use during the contest. Have the new member fill out their information and put your name as sponsor. Once their application with payment is received the names will be entered into the drawings.

Good Luck to all!

Hiking Through History

By Ellen Arnold

Hiking through the New England landscape is like a history lesson. There are cellar holes, well worn paths, stone walls, granite ledges marked by stone cutters and other evidence of human activity. Surrounded now by woodland, shrubs that once graced door yards are reaching up for the sun. Abandoned town roads are marked by stone walls that are two rods apart.

At Upton we have numerous examples of early settlement activity. Many of you have seen the foundations of a house and barn at the lower end of Ridge Rd. on the Rabbit Run Trail. According to an Upton Historical Society map prepared by John Morrel and Carol Johnson Blomquist this property was owned by John Childs in 1798. The 1851 map of Upton shows Mrs. Rawson and in 1888 M. Rawson.

According to the 1880 Upton Assessor's records, Moses A. Rawson paid taxes of \$77.81 for 3 horses, 2 oxen, 8 cows, 2 two year olds, swine, house and barn. Also included on his tax bill were the Batchelor house and barn, Pilkington house, 196 acres home land, 18 ½ acres Batchelor land, ¼ acre Pilkington land and 4 acres Bill's cranberry meadow.

Each of the names listed are important because they also had property and homes within the lands that are now Upton State Forest. I am trying to identify the location of each one but what jumped off the page to me is the reference to **Bill's cranberry meadow**.

There has been much discussion about the unusual sphagnum bog located near CCC Way and the Trailhead area. Who built the berms and when? Was it a wetland prior to the berms being in place? Having seen references to Bills meadow in other deeds I began to

suspect that it was the bog area. There were other cranberry bogs that were harvested on nearby Pond Street in Woodville and other Upton locations so we knew this was a possibility. Another possible explanation for the berms was to provide a water source for Ben Wood's steam powered portable saw mill that we know was used in this area. Now it appears that Mr. Wood took advantage of the water power already there just as the beavers are taking advantage today.

The dictionary defines meadow as land predominantly in grass which could indicate that it was a hay field. Another definition is "a tract of moist low-lying usually level grassland." An early topo map did confirm that the land had been wet historically.

There is more to be learned. Who was Mr. Bill and where did he live? My grandmother was a Bill and she had ancestors in Upton. Am I hiking land that my ancestors farmed? When were the berms built? What can we learn about the families that lived in the homes in Upton State Forest?

We will probably never have answers to all the questions. The fun lies in exploring the places and finding answers to make the pieces of the puzzle fit.

Marcella Stasa and I are planning a series of themed historical hikes starting next fall. Hope you can join us.



Barn foundation on Rabbit Run Trail
E. Arnold photo

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friends of Upton State Forest

(Unless otherwise noted all committees and Board of Directors will meet at the Upton Police Station)

April 20, 7PM, Historic Resources

April 22, DCR Program at USF
"Spring Awakening", watch kiosk for details

April 25, **Park Serve Day**, see page 1

April 27, 7PM,
Fund Raising Committee

May 11, 7PM, Board of Directors
Place TBD

May 18, **Members meeting**, see page 1

June 15, 7PM, Combined meeting
Trails Comm. & Historic Res. Comm.

June 22, 7PM, Board of Directors

*Note: all meetings subject to change and weather conditions.

**Please note there have been changes in meetings since the 2009 calendar was issued. Please correct your calendars.

Correction

On page 6 of the January edition in the Backyard Wildlife Reports we noted a brown bear sighting. No, I was not trying to make the newsletter more exciting! It was a typo and should have said *documented **black** bear sighting*.

Quote of the Month

Just living is not enough... One must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower. . Hans Christian Anderson

Parting Shot



Mocha Chip at the Upton barn

Thank you to Chief Park Ranger, Curt Rudge and Ranger Jennifer Stowe for sharing their memories and pictures of the former Mounted Unit at our potluck supper. Everyone in attendance agreed that we miss the unit. Not only were they an effective enforcement unit, but the best public relations tool the department ever had. Maybe someday

Wildlife Notes

Although there are no guarantees, our members sent us the following tricks to deter deer from your gardens.

1. Put surveyor's tape around your garden.
2. Sprinkle blood meal or cayenne pepper around your plants. Refresh after rains.
3. Hang strips of cloth sprayed with strong perfume or aftershave.
4. Leave a radio on in the garden at night.
5. Hang wind chimes or recycled aluminum pie plates on strings.
6. High fencing or netting.

Let us know how it goes!

Volunteer Hours

If you have any volunteer hours for FUSF or for Adopt a Trail for the first quarter please send them to us. Meeting attendance and baking counts.