



# FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST INC. NEWSLETTER

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Volume 3, Number 3

May 2008

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## President's Message "Earth Day"

Today is the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. It is a sad commentary on our civilization that we have to set aside a day to cherish the earth we live on. Every day should be one that we recognize our impact on the place we live and act accordingly.

Now that winter is over and the snow banks are gone the evidence of man's carelessness is everywhere. When I take my daily walk I bring a bag to pick up the trash by the road. There are coffee cups representing every chain as well as the local shops. Some household trash could have blown from the recycle truck and bins in our yards. Other trash like the lawn mower picked up during our work party, cans and bottles, cigarette butts, candy wrappers and snack bags are deliberate.

At our work party in April people picked up trash on Southborough Rd as far as the town line and then did a half mile along the Westborough Rd. In that distance they filled the back of a pickup truck.

**WHY?** Why can't people just take it home and put it in their trash? Didn't anyone teach them it isn't right? Wouldn't it be nice if some year there was no trash to pick up?

So, I wish you a happy spring and thank you for supporting an organization that cares about and for a little piece of the earth. Ellen

## "Let's Talk Again"

### Members Meeting May 20, 7PM at Upton Senior Center



This is the second time we have done a "Let's Talk" meeting. A lot of good ideas came from our discussions on that night two years ago. The calendar page on the back of every newsletter and the potluck supper are two of them. A meeting like this gives us a chance to get to know each other better. It also gives the Board of Directors a chance to get your input as to what you expect from us. After listening to the discussion with Conrad Crawford at the potluck supper it seemed like it might be a good time to do it again.

If you have any topics you would like us to talk about please get them to me at [fusf@charter.net](mailto:fusf@charter.net) or 508-529-6610 or you can just bring your questions and ideas that night. Grab some refreshments and after the usual reports we will talk.

Hope to see you there. If you can bake please get in touch with me at the number above.

### Quote of the month

"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

Native American proverb.

## A Brief History of Falconry

By William F. Johnston, Jr.

*(A cofounder and member at large on the first FUSF Board, Bill is currently Vice President of the Americas for the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey. This is the third article of a series.)*



Nebraska

William Johnston photo

I sat in my truck watching the first faint rays of dawn begin to pierce the dark. The outside temperature was minus 13 degrees but the heater was cranked up and I was comfortable sipping steaming black coffee. The first life in the brightening sky was a large flock of wintering crows flying over the grass-lands of central Nebraska's Sandhills. I was parked on a small rise overlooking large fields of cut corn waiting for native Prairie Chickens to arrive for their morning feed. The only sounds were the occasional whine of one of the two kenneled pointers or the rustle of feathers as the large falcon perched behind me became impatient with the wait.

The sky continued to brighten as flocks of native grouse move in from the surrounding prairie. They settled in the corn in groups of 25-30 birds and at length heads began to disappear among the decapitated corn stalks. After an interval of 15 minuets, I stepped into the brisk morning air. The falcon is ready as she is accustomed to our routine and gently steps from her perch to my gloved fist. The dogs are ready too and I open

the door to their kennel giving directions to "find the birds". Off they go with noses to the ground working the area back and forth until suddenly one then the other slam into a point. I unhood and release the falcon. She sits there viewing her surroundings. Then, she is gone pumping her wings to cover ground and gain altitude. Within moments the falcon has reached her pride of pitch at about 800 feet up and a quarter mile out. She can be clearly seen out over the field silhouetted against the rising sun. I carefully walk to the patient statue still dogs and give the command, "get em up!" All hell breaks loose as 50 to 60 frantic wings beat in unison. Rising vertically to about 30 feet, the grouse make a rush for distant parts. They know the falcon is there, they have evolved with it and try to out fly, out maneuver and out wit their aerial predator. The falcon's teardrop decent puts her on a collision course with the grouse. Using the advantage of size and speed the falcon closes on her intended target. At the point of impact the Prairie Chicken pulls one of its famous tricks and does a wobbly barrel roll as the falcon shoots by. A second grouse appears directly below her as the falcon executes a wing over and collides with it. The chicken folds like a rag doll and falls to earth. Just as the falcon circles in to claim her prize the grouse springs to life and sprints off for the horizon. Soon falcon and grouse are out of sight over the distant prairie, one in pursuit of the other. Several minutes pass before I see the form of the returning falcon. She has lost some height but is still about 600 feet up. When in position, the dogs are sent in again and as often happens a late rising grouse concealed in the corn has it's sights on a stand of small trees and shrubs about 500 yards away. A poor strategy. (Continued on page 3)

### **History of Falconry**

(Continued from page xx)

The falcon connects and both descend earthward as the falcon sets her wings to bleed off speed and altitude. Several grouse feathers drift slowly down following the two birds and gently settle in place. I build a small cairn and place one of the feathers on it giving thanks to the grouse for giving itself so that another may live. In the ancient dance between predator and prey one continues and one does not. This is our eighth time out in as many days with all the other flights ending in defeat. In nature's crucible a wild falcon might have succumbed to starvation. Mortality among first year birds be it falcon or grouse is very high. Those that survive to procreate will pass on the genes that will continue to make the species strong and resilient.

### **Membership Report**

We have 102 current paid members for 2008. Welcome to the following new members: Agnes "Bunny" Lyman of Whitinsville, Arlene and Chip Boyle, Lisa and Chip Stratton all of Upton and Phyllis Foley.

Please remember to invite people you meet to join. Let them know about the work we do and tell them they can pick up a membership form at the kiosk or at [fusf@charter.net](mailto:fusf@charter.net).

### **Bird Banding Invitation**

Remember that FUSF members have been invited by Mark Blazis to observe his bird banding station. It is at the Auburn Sportsmen Club on Saturday mornings in May. If the weather is damp and cool they will not be banding to avoid stress on the birds.

### **BSTRA Signs**

Thank you to Bay State Trail Riders Association for providing two signs regarding proper disposal of animal waste. One has been placed at the kiosk and one at the headquarters area where horse trailers park. This donation was a result of a discussion among the BSTRA members of the Trails Committee.

In addition to the concerns about horse waste Ellen has been approached at the map box twice recently about the dog waste at the trail head and on the trails. The rules say that animal waste should be removed from the parking lot, grassy services and the trail head. Everyone loves animals and understands why their owners enjoy bringing them to the park to walk but people do not appreciate having to negotiate a mine field of animal waste.

It is not up to FUSF to police this issue but we hope that everyone will be considerate of others and bring gloves, scoopers and disposal bags with them when they bring their animals. They should not be left at the parking lot but taken with you for disposal. Horse waste should be put into your trailer and taken with you.

### **Members Family Picnic**

Since CCC Day has been moved to October the picnic that would have been on that day has not been scheduled. If you would be interested in FUSF having a summer picnic get in touch with Ellen at [fusf@charter.net](mailto:fusf@charter.net) or 508-529-6610.

If you are interested in a picnic do you want hot dogs & hamburgers, catered like last year or brown bag it with FUSF providing soda, water, chips, etc.? Do you prefer Saturday or Sunday?

## CCC Day 2008 at the State House



Upton Delegation

March 31, 2008 marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the legislation that established the Civilian Conservation Corps. In honor of the day the Department of Conservation and Recreation hosted an event at the State House in Boston. Sponsors were Senator Augustus and Senator Morrisey. Also participating in the ceremony were Ian Bowles, EOEEA Secretary, Rick Sullivan, DCR Commissioner and Ken Foley of DCR.

CCC alumni and family members were honored with the presentation of certificates and hats made for the occasion. A proclamation designating March 31 as CCC Day in Massachusetts was read.

Frank Evans, member of FUSF and CCC alumnus of the camp at Mt. Tom State Reservation was one of those honored. Joan Varney, another member, was presented with a certificate by Senator Augustus in honor of her father, Joe Gorman, who served at the Upton camp as an educator and soccer coach.

Also representing FUSF and Camp SP-25 at Upton were Ellen Arnold, Steve Warren, Romuald and Irene Radziewicz, with John Dwinell and Sean Lovejoy from DCR. After the ceremony members of the group enjoyed a tour of the state house before returning home.

### Historic Resources Committee

The committee is pleased to welcome Jim Nash as a new member. Jim's ancestors had a home and about 100 acres of land in what is now Upton State Forest.

One Saturday members of the committee hiked to several CCC sites in the forest. Bill and Jane Milligan are developing a letter box series tied to the CCC history so we were scouting places to put them. Watch the newsletter for the introduction of the boxes this fall.

Ellen's program for Upton Historical Society about the CCC at Upton was well received with around 51 people in attendance. CCC alumni, Frank Evans and David Malhoit and others shared memories of the CCC Camp and Camp Stover.

The committee is making plans for CCC Day at Upton on October 11. Watch for details in the next newsletter.

### Celebrate the CCC Legacy Events

#### May 17 Myles Standish State Forest

Friends of MSSF are holding a morning work party followed by a noontime barbecue at Fearing Pond, location of the last remaining CCC log bathhouse in MA. There will be family activities and a ceremony honoring CCC alumni.

Questions: [slheller@comcast.net](mailto:slheller@comcast.net) or 508-591-7533.

#### May 31 Wendell State Forest

A DCR sponsored event with a living history tent, family activities and a ceremony honoring CCC alumni. Bring your own lunch; grills are available at this CCC built park. Questions:

[Bryant.Stewart@state.ma.us](mailto:Bryant.Stewart@state.ma.us) or 413-659-3797.

Directions to both: [www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr) Click on Find a Park, then alphabetical listings.

### **Trails Committee Report**

Members of the Committee have been meeting at Upton Senior Center during the winter months. Now that the weather is good they plan to change the meeting format. Karen Ober and Lurissa Marston are planning "Walk and Talk" meetings for anyone that would like to join them. Liability waivers will be required to participate in the walks.

Watch your emails for the list of dates. We will send a post card with the information to non email members.

### **Vernal Pool Workshop and Hike**

Thank you to Tom Dodd for a great Vernal Pool Workshop and Hike. Fourteen people including two children enjoyed the program. We visited a pool off Middle Rd. finding the necessary egg masses etc: to certify the pool. On the way out we visited a pool that we certified two years ago and stopped at a couple of sites of historical interest (You know that if Ellen is on a hike that is going to happen!). Participants received a beautiful poster of vernal pool inhabitants provided by Fish and Wildlife. Along the way Tom pointed out some interesting birds and a blue azure butterfly.

Thank you to Alice Evans for baking banana bread for AM refreshments and to Cathy Dodd and Marcella Stasa for their assistance.

According to aerial surveys there are over a 100 potential vernal pools in Upton. If anyone is interested in helping to get them certified please get in touch with FUSF and I can pass your contact info to Tom.

### **Websites of the Month**

[www.mass.gov/dcr/gpp](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/gpp)  
[www.hopkintontrailsclub.com](http://www.hopkintontrailsclub.com)  
[www.lakewhitehall.org](http://www.lakewhitehall.org)  
[www.westboroughcharm.org](http://www.westboroughcharm.org)

### **April Work Party**



Despres family with trash picked up on Southborough and Westborough Roads

Thank you to all who supported the FUSF work party on April 12. Twenty six people signed in to work for a total of 104 volunteer hours. The weather was much better than predicted. The only ones that got wet were Ellen and Russ who stayed five minutes too late and got caught in a late pm shower!

Trail work was done and two more water bars installed on Park Rd. General yard work was done around the Headquarters area. Low hanging branches were cut around the driveway. A third crew filled a pick up truck picking up trash on Southborough and Westborough Roads.

Volunteers included Ellen and Russ Arnold, Tammy Dykstra, Frank Evans, Louis, Marion, Glenn and Whitney Despres, Norm Fahy, David Kennedy, Donna Johnson, Agnita Knott, Sean Leblanc, Lurissa Marston, Brett and Matt Morganelli, Karen Ober, Betty and Ed Roche, Jennifer, Gary and Connor Shults, Marcella Stasa, Lillian and Harold Tolstrup, Colby Tuttle and Kathy Wicks.

A lunch of pizza, salad and dessert was provided by FUSF. Bakers were Ellen, Lurissa, Karen, Betty and Alice Evans.

Thank you to Jeff Cate and Rich Trubiano of the Hopkinton staff for their time and assistance.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **Friends of Upton State Forest\*\***

(Unless otherwise noted, all meetings will be at Upton Senior Center)

**Members Meeting, 7 PM May 20**  
**“Let’s Talk Again”** see page 1

Please note this is a Tuesday.

### **Trails Committee\*\*\***

See Trails Committee Report on page 5

### **Historic Resources Committee**

May 19	7:00 PM
June	no meeting
July 21	7:00 PM
August 18	7:00 PM

### **Board of Directors**

May	no meeting
June 23	7:00 PM
July 28	7:00 PM
August 25	7:00 PM

### **Members Picnic**

To be determined

### **CCC Day at Upton State Forest**

October 11 **Save the date!**

**All dates subject to change**

### **Upton Open Space**

**May 3 10 AM Canoe paddle**

Paddle from the Pleasant St. West River parking area through a little explored area of Upton State Forest to Old Zac. Be prepared to portage around several low beaver dams. Participants must wear a life preserver (PFD) at all times. Reservations: Mike Penko at 508-529-6811 or [mpenko@charter.net](mailto:mpenko@charter.net).

**May 15 9AM Workout Walk**

Meet at the Warren Brook parking area off Old Grafton Road. Enjoy one of Upton’s beautiful properties with a vigorous walk and good company. A two mile loop with the option to reverse the loop for a four mile walk. Wear appropriate clothing and shoes. The trail can be uneven. Heavy rain cancels. Questions: Marcella Stasa, 508-529-3709 or [mstasa1@earthlink.net](mailto:mstasa1@earthlink.net).

**July 12 10AM Butterfly Walk**

Walk the former Stefans Farm property with Tom Dodd as he identifies local butterflies. Dress appropriately and bring binoculars. Park near the power lines on Mechanic St. Heavy rain cancels. Questions: Marcella Stasa 508-529-3709 or [mstasa1@earthlink.net](mailto:mstasa1@earthlink.net)

### **Hopkinton Trails Club**

**May 17 National Parks Day**

The Club will be relocating a section of the Long Trail in Hopkinton State Park to bypass a vernal pool. This will be an afternoon event to allow participation in the Lake Whitehall clean up in the AM. More info: [www.hopkintontrailsclub.org](http://www.hopkintontrailsclub.org)

**May 24 Duck Pond Hikes 10 AM**

Join Hopkinton Trails Club for a long and short hike in the Duck Pond section of Hopkinton State Park. Meet at the ranger station on Route 85. The long hike will include an introduction to geocaching.

### **Park Serve Day-May 17, 2008**

Our friends at Lake Whitehall will observe Park Serve Day with a clean up around Whitehall. Meet at 9AM at the Whitehall Boat Ramp (off Rte 135 near Spring St.). FOW will provide trash bags, maps and water. Wear gloves and bring insect repellent and sun screen. Information: [www.lakewhitehall.org](http://www.lakewhitehall.org)

Event notices for other organizations are provided as a service for our members. FUSF assumes no responsibility for the events or listing information.