



FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST INC. NEWSLETTER

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President's Message

Recently I heard a speaker at a forum about trails and land trusts say that only a small percentage of people join groups that actively support the places they use to enjoy their interests. The comment stuck with me because it is my personal belief that if you live somewhere or use something you should give back and try to make it better.

For FUSF giving back can take several forms. We can educate others about responsible and safe use of our forest. Promoting understanding and respect among user groups is important. At our work parties we can repair and improve trails that we use. We can help educate young people about the history, environment and wildlife associated with Upton State Forest. Promoting preservation of our CCC buildings will ensure that future generations will be able to visualize the past. We can support DCR and the park system so that it will be here for others to enjoy in the future.

Be proud that as a member you are giving back. Ellen

Thank you to Upton Senior Center

We want to show our thanks to the Upton Senior Center for sharing their space for our meetings. We are asking that you bring a paper good such as packages of paper plates, napkins, cups, plastic silverware and paper towels to the annual meeting. They will be donated to the Center.

Annual Meeting and Program

January 14, 2007 at 7PM
Upton Senior Center
(Public welcome, bring a friend.)

“Jungle Birds of Upton State Forest” By Mark Blazis

There will be a **very brief** business meeting with election of officers followed by the program. Mr. Blazis will explain how birds provide a connection between Upton and the distant jungles through their spring and fall migrations.

Mark Blazis was personally chosen by the late Roger Tory Peterson for the Roger Tory Peterson award given annually to North America's most notable nature educators. A safari leader in Kenya, Tanzania, Namibia, Botswana, South Africa and Madagascar he has also been doing research in Ecuadorian Amazonia, where he has led over 30 expeditions.

In Massachusetts, he directs two bird banding research stations, studying the genetics of Lyme disease pathogens carried by Neotropical migrant birds. An ardent conservationist, fly fisherman, hunter and former biology teacher he is the editor and co-author of ten books on the fauna and flora of Worcester County.

Refreshments

We need three or four volunteers to provide refreshments for the annual meeting. Please call Ellen at 508-529-6610 if you can help.

Preserve the Legacy



CCC enrollees at Dean Pond, Upton
Photo from DCR CCC Archives

During the early years of this county there was a need for lumber to build homes, factories and furniture. Pasture was needed for livestock and land was cleared for farming. As our nation grew and prospered the forests disappeared. In the early years of the 20th century people began to see the consequences. Large sawdust piles, left when a portable mill moved on, were common. Erosion and huge forest fires were devastating the land. The public outcry encouraged legislators to begin setting aside public lands. In 1933, during the Great Depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected to office with a promise of a “new deal for the forgotten man”. Along with this promise he had talked about the conservation of natural resources.

Inaugurated on March 4 he called six men to his office on March 9 at 4 PM and introduced the concept of a civilian army that would put young men to work at conserving our natural resources. After laying out his plan for two hours he asked the men if they thought it could be done. Upon their agreement that it could he asked them to have a bill on his desk by 9 PM that night. At 10 o'clock the bill was presented to Congressional leaders and by the end of March it had become law. On April 4 Robert Fechner, a vice president in the American

Federation of Labor, became the Director of Emergency Conservation Work and on April 6 the first enrollee was signed up in Pennsylvania. By the first of July there were 275,000 men located in 1300 camps throughout the county.

Here at Upton State Forest our camp opened in 1935. While the C's were here they reforested the land, did combat with gypsy moths and other pests, built Park Rd. and the Hurley Truck Trail (on Pratt Hill). They built Dean Pond dam, cleared vistas and built picnic areas, stone steps and water holes for fire fighting. In addition they participated in more than one rescue effort and fought forest fires as well as restoring Route 140 after the flood of 1936 washed out the Wildwood Dam.

The men at the Upton camp had worked at Miles Standish State Forest before coming here. They moved on in 1938 to build Salisbury Beach State Reservation. While they were at Upton they also worked at places like Purgatory Chasm in Sutton and other area parks.

Throughout the county and the Commonwealth the story was the same. Parks, bridges and dams, campgrounds, lookout towers and roads were built. Telephone lines were strung. Surveys were conducted. Fire hazards were reduced, pests were brought under control and trees were planted. Time was measured in man days and accomplishments were measured in miles, acres, gallons of water and cubic yards of earth. Without doubt their story is one of the greatest of the 20th century, eclipsed only by the war that ended the program.

2008 brings the 75th Anniversary of the CCC and the opportunity for us to say thank you for what they left us. There is no better way to do that than to let people hear their story and to inspire them to help “Preserve the Legacy.”

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 first in a three part series.)

Bill with Gyrfalcon

C. Johnston photo



The beginnings of falconry are lost in the mist of time. Various researchers place the first falconer somewhere in Asia as a hunter/gatherer some 5,000 to 7,000 years ago. Like the domestic dog, a descendant of the wolf, the first bird of prey was probably taken from the nest as a chick and employed to help fill the cooking pot with much needed protein. Unlike the wolf to dog scenario birds of prey have never been domesticated. They are successfully propagated in captivity, but they retain the same wild genes of their ancestors. Another significant difference is the non-social nature of hawks and falcons. Dogs and humans exist in a social hierarchy that involves the position of pack leader and subordinates. Raptors (birds of prey) do not recognize this structure and do not generally cooperate with each other or hunt collectively.

In the relationship of falcon and falconer the falconer is no more than a facilitator, providing opportunities and assisting in the hunt. That is to the bird's advantage and promotes a sometimes tenuous working relationship between

the two. Fail to meet his end of the bargain and the falconer may see his or her falcon heading for greener pastures.

Never an over popular sport, falconry flowered briefly during the middle ages when kings flew Gyrfalcons at herons and my lady enjoyed a day of lark hawking with her Merlin. Several factors contributed to the sport's Angelo/European decline, the invention of the firearm, the end of the feudal system and the rise of the industrial era along with advancements in technology.

Falconry has always been a major component in Middle Eastern culture where the sport is steeped in tradition. Today following the flight of Saker Falcons after hobara (a large desert dwelling bird) atop a camel has been replaced with the relative comfort of a modified SUV, without its roof. Arab falconry and Arab falconers still remain one of the primary supporters of worldwide falconry. The United Arab Emirates is the first nation to petition the United Nations through UNESCO to have falconry in their country recognized as an intangible cultural heritage.

Governor Patrick's Bond Bill

On December 21 Governor Patrick filed a bond bill titled "*An Act Providing for the Preservation and Improvement of Land, Parks and Clean Energy in the Commonwealth.*" He was quoted as saying "The Commonwealth needs parks, farmlands and recreational facilities that are second to none in order to attract new residents and visitors, and enhance our quality of life."

Content of the bond bill to support the Department of Conservation and Recreation may be viewed at <http://www.envirobond.org/patrickbond.php>

Phillips Wildlife Laboratory

Today the field headquarters of the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife is located in Westborough. From around 1942 until 1956 the former CCC buildings at Upton State Forest served as the department's field headquarters. It was named Phillip's Wildlife Lab after John C. Phillips, the internationally known conservationist. This occupation represented one of the more significant chapters of Upton State Forest history as well as the history of wildlife management programs in Massachusetts.

Field studies were conducted on deer, beaver, grouse, cottontail rabbit and the wood duck as well as other species. There was a project overseen by Jim McDonough of Westborough that first suggested that the New England Cottontail and the Eastern Cottontail could be distinct species.

In 1948 a reorganization of the Fish and Game allowed for a section to do information and education. On September 6, 1949 Daniel Grice was assigned to take photos and movies of all Bureau programs. A dark room was constructed in the east ell of the Administration building.

The well respected magazine *Massachusetts Wildlife* began life in a small office in that same ell. Bryant "Red" Chaplan was hired to coordinate public relations. With little more than a desk, a typewriter and almost no budget he produced a two page mimeographed newsletter. About 50 copies were sent to sportsmen's clubs, officials and members of the media. Today it is a magazine published four times a year without ads. There are colored photos, articles about wildlife and department programs as well as book reviews.

During this period a bureau library was established. All books and publications of the bureau were

incorporated into it and an index file was set up.

Information for this article came from interviews with Jim McDonough, Dick Tibert and the library of the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife.

Massachusetts Wildlife

A subscription to the quarterly magazine published by the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife is available by visiting www.masswildlife.org or by calling 508-389-6300.

It is great reading any time of year but especially in the winter months when we are occasionally "trapped" indoors.

Barred Owl Study

MassWildlife and others are asking the public for help in acquiring Barred Owl specimens for a study to understand periodic irruptions. This year seems to have brought an unusually large number of the species to our area. If you find a dead Barred Owl you are asked to bring it to the Wildlife Clinic at Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine off Westborough Rd. (Rte 30) in North Grafton. Their number is 508-839-7918. More information is available at www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw. When you get to the site, click on December newsletter. Injured owls should be brought to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Web Site of the Month

www.mass.gov/dcr

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is an umbrella for many departments including the Division of State Parks and Recreation. Once you are on the DCR site click on Activities and then click on Off Highway Enforcement Working Group to follow their progress.

Contacts and Interviews Wanted

Studying history is a humbling experience because for everything you learn there is so much more to seek out. In addition everything you learn should be documented with confirmation from a second source. There are times when verbal history is the only source until one day you find a written document with a word or paragraph that confirms what you have been told.

An example of this is the “New State” story. This piece of history was passed on to the late Carl Anderson by his uncle and others. Mr. Anderson was a credible source for much other documented information so it was easy to believe his story about the New State settlers. One day when doing deed research for cellar holes the words “New State” used as a point of reference jumped off the page. It was exciting to find written documentation of Mr. Anderson’s verbal history.

The Historical Resources Committee is interested in learning as much as we can about the history of the lands and buildings of Upton State Forest. We also want to know as much as we can about the Civilian Conservation Corps; the Massachusetts State Guards in the 1940’s when they were at Upton and the programs of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife at Phillips Wildlife Lab as well as the Department of Environmental Management at USF. If you know anyone that worked at Upton State Forest please let them know we would like to speak to them.

In addition we are interested in hearing from any CCC alumni or their families. They do not have to have served at the Upton camp. Any information will be shared with the DCR CCC Archives.

Call Ellen at 508-529-6610 or email fusf@charter.net.

FUSF Annual Report

The FUSF annual report will be completed by the annual meeting on January 14. Members with email will receive their reports electronically. Members without email may pick up their copies at the annual meeting. Any not distributed at the meeting will be mailed by regular mail.

Details about the treasury are available upon request according to the time frame specified in our by laws.

Third Grade Comments

We thought you would enjoy reading some unedited and thoughtful comments received after the third grade visit to the CCC Camp.

“The whole class loved the two man saw. It was actually hard to pull back and forth on the saw.”

“I loved the CCC camp. It was a lot of fun. I liked the parad area. I also liked the two man saw.”

“I thought every – thing at the C.C.C. camp was ausem.”

“Thank you for sowing us the CCC Camp.” “I liked cutting the log.”

“The CCC was in between the 2 world wars.”

“CCC workers built ponds.”

“Also the CCC planted millions of trees.”

“We learned that the CCC planted trees and made trails and made nice picknick places. I think it was nice of them to invent the CCC.”

“CCC lowered gypsy moth population.”

“CCC used two handed saws.”

“There was a path that lead to Dean Pond.”

“There was a barn with horses. I used to feed carrots to them.”

“The gypsy moth can make trees die. That’s bad because trees help us to breath.”

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friends of Upton State Forest

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

- January 14 **Annual Meeting & Program, 7 PM**

 “Jungle Birds of Upton State Forest”
 (speaker, Mark Blazis)
- January 22* Trails Committee & Historic Resources Committee, 7 PM
- January 28 Board Meeting, 7 PM
- February 19* Trails Committee & Historic Resources Committee, 7 PM
- February 25 Board Meeting
- March 14 **Pot Luck Supper**
 (Save the date. We are planning a special program.)
- March 18* Trails Committee & Historic Resources Committee, 7 PM
- March 24 Board Meeting
- March 31 **CCC Day at the State House**
 (details next newsletter)
- May 17 **CCC Day at Upton State Forest**

* Please note that Trails and Historic Committee are meeting on the same nights.

**All dates subject to change.

Nominating Committee

The following slate for Officers and Directors has been submitted and will be voted on at our January meeting. If you wish to be a candidate for election in opposition to anyone on the slate please notify Barbara through fusf@charter.net or Ellen at 508-529-6610.

Ellen Arnold: President
Joan Shanahan: Vice President
Chris Scott: Treasurer
Agnita Knott: Recording Secretary
Betty Roche: Corresponding Secretary
Louis Calabrese: Member at Large
David Kennedy: Member at Large

Email Problem

It has come to our attention that **msn and hotmail addresses** are not able to receive mail from Charter. You can try going to your mail settings and adding fusf@charter.net as an acceptable sender. If that does not work please contact your email provider and complain that they are blocking Charter. In the meantime your newsletters will be sent by regular mail and you will not be able to receive alerts and other messages from us.

Membership Dues Special

There is a 20% discount for dues paid by or at the Annual Meeting on Jan. 14. All members paid for 2008 will have their names in a drawing at the meeting for some very nice prizes.

Quote of the Month

“To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival.”

Wendell Berry