Friends of Upton State Forest
Newsletter

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Landscape Designations

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is accepting public comment on new draft landscape designations for the properties it manages. There are three categories, each with its own set of management priorities. They are **Reserves, Parklands and Woodlands.**

Reserves will be large contiguous blocks of areas with high value ecosystems. Commercial timber harvesting would not be allowed in reserves, and forest management would let natural processes take their course.

Parklands are areas where the focus is on recreation while conserving cultural and unique natural resources. Limited vegetation management can be done for certain reasons. This could include removing hazards and other defined circumstances.

Woodlands would allow commercial timber harvests that follow the best forestry management practices.

Upton State Forest (USF) has been designated Woodland, with a very small area of Parkland concentrated near the CCC Camp and Trailhead parking lot. Your Board of Directors would like to know your thoughts, so we have scheduled a business meeting to discuss this with you. We hope you will make an effort to attend since this will determine how the forest is managed in the future. In the meantime, you can visit the DCR website for more information go to http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm.

Friends of Upton State Forest Special Members Meeting

Thursday July 21, 2011 7 PM
At Upton Fire Station, 20 Church St.

This meeting is for members to discuss their thoughts about the proposed landscape designation for Upton State Forest. The public comment deadline is August 26. The Board of Directors will be making comment on behalf of FUSF but want your input first. Please try to come and let us know what you are thinking.

There will be a brief presentation to explain the designations followed by discussion.

Park in the rear parking lot and use the rear entrance door. The meeting room is on the second floor at the top of the stairs. An elevator is available. Refreshments are not allowed in the meeting room, but you can bring water.

Preserve CCC Records

The FUSF Board of Directors has authorized the Historical Resources Committee to fundraise for preservation of the Upton CCC records discovered at Cochituate State Park. The records include original blueprints and plans for the CCC Camp, Park Road, picnic areas, Dean Pond, water holes and other features. The records have a two-fold value. They are of great historical importance but also provide information important to maintaining the resources. They are in fragile condition and need to be conserved before they can be handled for use. A letter will be sent with more information in the near future.

North Barn Update

The snow has disappeared and there is a security fence around the North Barn. On June 1 the tornado that ripped through Western MA destroyed several CCC buildings at Brimfield State Forest making the loss of our barn all the more poignant and significant.

DCR has filed a project notification form with Mass Historical Commission (MHC). They received an adverse reply advising DCR of several stipulations required to mitigate the loss of this important historic structure. At the same time, MHC recognized FUSF and the Upton Historical Commission (UHC) as stakeholders. They invited both organizations to be cosigners of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that will determine what DCR must do for mitigation. DCR issued a proposal and we have made a counter proposal that has the support of UHC. We have offered to meet with DCR staff to discuss the differences. Demolition of the barn cannot go forward until all parties have come to agreement and signed the MOA.

The CCC built this water hole on Bridge Road as a resource for fighting forest fire.
E. Arnold photo

Chestnut Planting

K. Desjardin photo

FUSF member, Rufin VanBossuyt is shown in the photo above with Bill Davis, District Supervisor, and Wayne F. MacCallum, Director of the Division of MA Fish and Wildlife. This was during a tree planting ceremony at the Field Headquarters on North Drive in Westborough. An active member of The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF), Rufin started the seedlings in the spring of 2010. He used nuts from the TACF farm in Virginia. The five trees that were planted are 15/16th American chestnut, and 1/16th Chinese chestnut. .

The tree planting is part of the TACF research program. Statistics say that these seedlings should produce trees with high resistance to chestnut blight. That will not be determined until they have been in the field for a number of years.

In the 1950's Fish and Wildlife planted Chinese chestnut near the CCC Camp and at another location in the forest. In the spring, you can find them by the blossoms and in the fall by the nuts on the ground. If you have questions or are interested in the program contact acf.org or rufin@charter.net.

The walking sticks shown in the photo were made by Bill Davis from American chestnut sprouts.

Third Grade Visits the CCC Camp

Blue and red teams lining up to get their orders for the day. E.Arnold photo.

Perfect weather, and Tim Rayworth, in CCC attire, greeted the Memorial School third graders as they arrived at USF to experience a "day in the life of the CCC." Each class sported different color tee shirts identifying their team as they set off to enjoy the day. DCR staff and FUSF volunteers helped man several stations where the students learned about the history of the camp and work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

FUSF volunteers included Ellen Arnold, Frank Evans, Bill Johnston, Mary McManus, Marcella Stasa, Joan Shanahan and Bill Taylor. DCR staff included Justin Blanchette, Lois Breault-Melican, Tim Rayworth and Val Stegemoen. Peter Church, the new Director of Forestry, visited to observe the program and learn about our park.

Thank you to our staff for the great job they always do helping get ready for this very worthwhile event. Thank you to Jan Maglione, third grade teacher and FUSF member, for coordinating the event. In one day, we introduced 125 students, about 40 parent chaperones and several teachers to the CCC Camp and Upton State forest.

Spring Work Party Report

R. Trubiana photo

Members of FUSF, Bay State Trail Riders Association, and Boy Scout Troop 132 gave a total of 61 hours during our spring work party on April 30. Part of the group worked with Jeff Cate, park supervisor, doing spring clean up around the CCC Camp. A small crew, led by Rich Trubiano, of the park staff, restored an illegal trail reported to Park Watch

Donations from the Trails Account, Evans, Dungey and McManus families paid for lunch. Ellen Arnold, Chris Scott and Joan Shanahan baked. Pansies were planted, also donated by Chris. Tool racks donated by Lillian Tolstrup and Mary McManus were installed.

In a thank you note Jeff Cate, said, "Your efforts, in no small part, contribute mightily to the aesthetic qualities which are making the State Forest a favorite among many visitors I converse with on a regular basis."

Out of State Visitors

From March 18 to May 21, random observations recorded license plates from the following states: Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island and Washington, DC.

Meet the DCR Staff

Shawn Bush
District 7 Fire Control

Shawn Bush is the State Fire Warden for District 7 Fire Control. The District is responsible for the detection of wildfires using fire towers in West Brookfield, Mendon, Oxford and Charlton. They also assist the cities and towns of Southern Worcester County with suppression of wildfires and other all hazard, all risk emergencies such as flood, storm damage and search and rescue. The District staff also provides fire prevention education to the public with Smokey Bear and fire safety presentations. When fire danger is low, they work to maintain fire roads and ponds throughout the State Forests in preparation for fire duties. In addition, they do prescribed fire and other hazardous fuel mitigation projects.

Shawn is a certified instructor for Incident Management and a number of other fire and emergency service courses. He is a search manager for the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) search and rescue team, and chairman of the Blackstone Valley Safety Committee. He started with DCR in 1994, serving as a seasonal park employee. After two seasons, he transferred to Fire control and, in 1997, was appointed a full time patrolman. He has been a fire warden since 2006. As a Crew boss for the MA Interagency Wildfire Crew he has traveled all over the US and Quebec since 1994 battling wildfires.

Shawn is especially interested in modern fire weather forecasting, prescribed fire and incident management teams. He is also a member of the MA Emergency Management Team with MA Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). Currently, he is Chairman of the Northeast Forest Fire Protection Commission-Fire Science Working Team. He has served as a call firefighter for 21 years and with the Douglas Fire Department for the last four years.

DCR responded to the recent tornadoes in western MA by sending 87 personnel and equipment. Shawn worked in Wilbraham Wednesday night and Thursday. Then he went to Southbridge from Friday through the following Wednesday, June 8, where he worked as incident commander running unified command with the Southbridge Fire Chief.

Friends of Upton State Forest appreciate all that Shawn and his team do to protect our forest and its users. We especially appreciate the support they provide to our events with Smokey Bear and the third grade education day.

Smokey Bear visits Upton
J. Fahy photo

Membership Report

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their 2011 membership. If you have not renewed, please remember to do so in support of FUSF and to keep your newsletter coming. Welcome to the following new members: Lynn Fantelli, Betsey and Rob Knox, Pauline Marquis, Cindy and Rob Plutnicki, Jason and Lisa Beth Smith, Cathy Taylor, Becky Wetzel, Joel Weiner and Sandra Bellini, all of Upton, Walter Sekula, Norwich, CT, and Doug Harris of Wyoming, RI.

We presently have members from 33 towns and 5 states (MA, RI, CT, ME, and NC) representing the diverse interests of people who come to our forest. Your support is important because it is a statement of your interest in our state park. If you know someone who does not belong to FUSF, but is a user of the forest, please encourage them to join us and make a difference.

Rules and Regs

Many of us use the forest on a regular basis and let the rules of common sense and courtesy dictate our behavior. There are also some rules and regulations that not everyone is aware of. Our intent in this column is to inform and bring little known rules to your attention.

There have been recent sightings of people at USF using metal detectors. While it is not against the rules to have a metal detector on DCR property, it is against the rules to dig or remove artifacts without a permit from the state archaeologist.

http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/9/9-27c.htm

SCA Builds Bridge

SCA crew at USF E Arnold photo

Did you notice all the yellow hard hats at USF during the week of June 20? Members of the Student Conservation Association (SCA), who were busy as beavers building a new bridge off Southborough Rd, wore them! The SCA crew arrived on Monday, June 20 and got right to work demolishing the old bridge. Due to damage caused by flooding due to beaver activity, it had deteriorated to a condition that was no longer safe. The weather cooperated on Monday and Tuesday. The remainder of the week it rained but the crew kept on working.

Members of this crew came from Arizona, California, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Vermont. Based at Plainfield, MA, the crew camped out at Hopkinton State Park while they were here. Thank you to Zach, Gaia, Amy, Brooke, Joe and Anna for coming to Upton and giving us a new bridge. We appreciate the support of staff and the funding DCR provided for the materials.

More information about the interesting history of this valuable program of service modeled after the CCC is available at http://www.thesca.org/about/history

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sweetwilliam Farm

On June 21, the Town of Upton, Sudbury Valley Trust and the owner of Sweetwilliam Farm signed papers protecting 96 acres of the farm. The town will own 63 acres with protection of another 34 acres by a conservation restriction held by the town and Sudbury Valley Trust. Included is a trail easement that will connect Upton State Forest to other public properties, creating a significant trail corridor.

Twenty-one years ago, Sweetwilliam was a rescue horse not expected to live. Adopted and nurtured back to health, the farm was purchased to give him a home. He is shown below, with his owner, Gail Harrington, and Roger Lauze, Coordinator of Equine Rescue & Training for MSPCA, who rescued him.

M. Stasa photo

Friends of Upton State Forest

Board of Directors meetings
July 18
August 15
September 19
October 17
7PM at Upton Police Station

Special Members Meeting
July 21
7PM at Upton Fire Station
See page 1 for details

Discovery Hikes

A partnership between Friends of Upton State Forest and Upton Open Space Committee

July 24 Discover New Connections
Meet at **1PM** at Upton State Forest Headquarters building. We will discover the Sweetwilliam Farm connection via Rabbit Run Trail to visit two Upton Open Space properties. Moderate hike.

August 28 Discover Letterboxing
Meet at **1PM** at Upton State Forest Headquarters building for a half hour introduction to letterboxing followed by a moderate hike to Dean Pond to discover the CCC Legacy letterbox series. Short option offered.

September 24 Return to Peppercorn
Meet at the Crocket Road trailhead area at **1PM**. There is always something to discover at Peppercorn. Join us on National Public Lands Day for a hike with some steep walking.

October 29 Discover Whistling Cave
Meet at **1PM** at the Upton State Forest Headquarters building. Richard Trubiano of the park staff will point out geological features on this scenic, but strenuous hike.

Hikes are free. Remember water, insect repellant and sunscreen. Liability waiver is required. Wear appropriate clothing and footgear. Children welcome with a parent's supervision and signature. Please leave pets at home. For questions, reminders or cancellation notices please send an email to uptonsopenspaceevents@charter.net.

Website of the Month
http://www.sudburyvalleytrustees.org/