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President's Message

By Bill Taylor

As part of our mission to protect the natural and historic resources of the Upton State Forest, the Board recently submitted a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) expressing our concerns about the environmental impact of the proposed Medway to West Boylston natural gas pipeline. The plan is to run part of it through the forest in the existing transmission line right-of-way.

FERC, which has to approve the pipeline, will evaluate its potential environmental impacts and issue an Impact Statement (EIS). As part of preparing an EIS, FERC accepts public comments. FERC's main goal in gathering comments is "to focus the analysis of the EIS on the important environmental issues."

The concerns stated in the Board's letter were: the identification of sensitive environmental and cultural resources; plans to protect those resources; the introduction of invasive species by construction equipment; and the protection of visitors from the risks of leaks and explosions.

In addition, we asked that Article 97 be respected, and that, as required by Article 97, any use of USF land for pipeline purposes be approved by a 2/3 vote of the legislature. We also asked that the state receive compensation or land of equal value if a change of use was approved.

FERC requested comments by May 30, but they will continue to accept comments. The public will also be able to comment on the draft EIS. Please let the Board know if you have any other concerns about the impact of the pipeline on USF's natural and historic resources so that we can be sure to address them in any future comments.

Park Serve Day 2016 at Upton State Forest

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E. Arnold photo



M. McManus photo