

FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST NEWSLETTER



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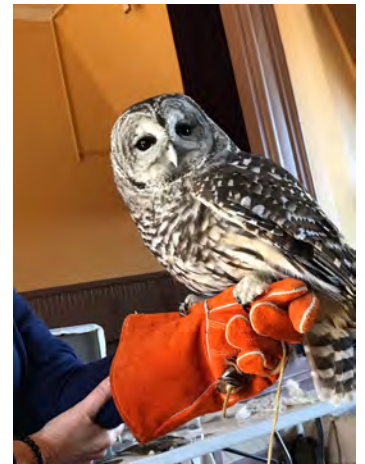
FALL 2019



Owls – the Silent Fliers *contributed by Mary McManus*

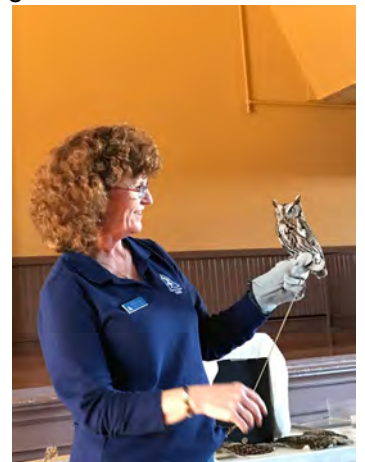
Sixty people attended the Live Owl Program on November 2nd presented by Kathleen Regan, naturalist and educator from MA Audubon's Blue Hills Trailside Museum. Kathleen set up two tables full of owl artifacts, literature and an example of a screech owl's tree trunk nest. Kathleen began the program talking about the snowy owl project at MA Audubon. The migratory patterns of these owls, which happen to be the largest owls in Massachusetts, have been studied for years via satellite telemetry. Much information has been gathered and donations will help to continue this important work.

Kathleen was able to bring 3 live owl species to the auditorium; the Screech, Barred and Great Horned. The audience was taken with the beauty and size of the mammals. The Screech being the smallest and the Great Horned the largest. Many questions were directed towards the audience and the kids had the best answers.



Owls molt or lose their feathers once a year. They also do not have a great sense of smell. Their vision and hearing are the key to their survival. Their heads are able to turn 270 degrees in both directions. This is necessary because their eyes are set in solid sockets. Because owls are active at night, hearing is a must. In order to catch unsuspecting prey, they are able to fly silently due to the surface makeup of their feathers. The owl are named as Screech owls screech, Barred owls have brown and white stripes of feathers that look like bars, and Great Horned owls have tufts of feathers on their heads that look like horns. Owls mate for life and females are 20 % larger than males. The Great Horned is too large to nest inside a tree so will take over a blue heron or hawks nest. Owls are called Apex predators, which means they are on the top of the food chain. Meals include small mammals, skunk and opossum.

The owls Kathleen brought were orphaned as chicks, either blown from nests or habitat taken from deforestation. Once they have been taken in by humans as chicks, it is impossible to teach them how to hunt to survive so they must spend the rest of their lives in captivity. It is never a good idea to keep them as pets. This has been tried but ultimately humans have surrendered them back to wildlife experts.



Thanks to Kathleen for this thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening program!

President Bill Taylor

At the Friends Network meeting, held at the Department of Conservation and Recreation office in West Boylston on November 2nd, I had the pleasure of presenting a Friend of the Year award to the Bay State Trail Riders Association. I was joined in making the presentation by members of DCR's Stewardship Council.

The Friends nominated BSTRA for the award to publicly acknowledge BSTRA for all they've done for Upton State Forest and the Friends. For the Forest, BSTRA has funded significant improvements to Park, Loop and Middle roads using over \$40,000 of their own funds and supplementing that with matching grants from DCR's Partnership Matching Grant program; maintained trails by grooming them for rides held at the Forest and by participating in Park Serve Days; and extended the trail network by building the Rabbit Run and Mammoth Rock trails.

BSTRA's contribution toward Upton's acquisition of the Sweetwilliam Farm property and their help building and maintaining the trail across the property benefits both the Forest and Upton's Warren Brook Watershed Conservation Area. The trail across the property connects the trails in the Forest to the trails in the Conservation Area extending the trail networks of both properties. BSTRA also helps Upton maintain the trails in the conservation area.



For the Friends, BSTRA was a key early supporter of the efforts to create the Friends in 2005 and it has contributed to several of our Partnership Matching Grant projects. Upton State Forest is a better place because of BSTRA and its members, and I was pleased that we had the opportunity to acknowledge them as true friends to the Forest and the Friends at the Friends Network meeting.

I'd also like to acknowledge Sharl Heller and Ellen Arnold of the Massachusetts Forest and Parks Friends Network. Sharl and Ellen have led the effort to hold the annual Friends Network meetings. This year's was the 12th. These meetings include presentations on matters of interest to Friends groups, many made by DCR staff, provide the opportunity to learn and draw strength from members of other Friends groups, and provide the opportunity to meet and talk with DCR staff. I know that they have been very valuable for me.

Upton Heritage Day

It was a beautiful day on September 23rd for Upton Heritage Day. President Bill Taylor represented the Friends providing information to visitors about our mission and encouraging interested folks to join our worthwhile organization. Thanks Bill for manning our table, those who visited us and those that purchased our FUSF logo merchandise.



Archaeological Dig at USF

On November 2nd, DCR sponsored a unique Archaeological Day program at the CCC headquarters. Young and old alike participated in several activities including digging for artifacts, grinding corn with a mortar and pestle, and using stone tools. It was a very educational day learning about our history and how our forefathers lived. Thanks to Molly Cordoza of the DCR for leading the day.

MRA Half-Marathon

On November 10th, the Massachusetts Running Association held its annual half-marathon in USF. It was a crisp November day, but that didn't stop almost 250 runners from warming up and heading into the forest for their run. You have to give these folks credit for running on the uneven trails of rocks, tree roots and leaves. Thanks to Suzanne Nicholas, Bill Taylor and Joyce Sandvik (pictured at the finish line) for helping to direct the runners on the trails. Thanks also to the MRA for their generous \$500 contribution to USF for helping out on the race course.



DCR Trail Improvements



If you've been out in the forest lately, you may have noticed the rocks on the Loop trail where it intersects with Swamp. This is the first phase to fix this area that tends to get very muddy. After the rocks get a chance to settle through the winter, DCR will be back in the spring to fill in this area making it friendlier for those using this trail.

BSTRA Annual Big Pumpkin Ride

With miserable weather looming on Sunday, October 27th, the Bay State Trail Riders Association (BSTRA) rescheduled their annual Big Pumpkin Ride in USF to Saturday, October 26th. Riders and horses arrived in their scariest, funniest and most creative costumes including a headless horseman (Becky Kalagher pictured right). Thanks to Suzanne Nicholas for organizing the ride and decorating the CCC headquarters in witches, ghosts and pumpkins to complete the Halloween theme.

Thanks to several volunteers from FUSF and BSTRA who helped clear the trails on October 5th in the Warren Brook area in preparation for the 8 mile ride. If you haven't ventured out in this area from the Rabbit Run trail, give it a try....some nice trails. Thanks also to BSTRA who contributed \$217 from this ride to FUSF to be used for trail improvement.



Volunteers heading out to clear trails from Sweetwilliam Farm

Related News

<http://www.mass.gov/lists/the-citizen-forester-newsletter>

<http://www.MassLand.org>

<http://www.hopkintontrailsclub.com>

<https://uptonma.myrec.com/info/activities>

A Nice Reminder from National Park Services

HIKING ETIQUETTE

IN YOUR NATIONAL PARKS

KNOW YOUR RIGHT OF WAY

Check signage for the trail you're hiking, and follow the correct right of way yields. Generally, hikers coming uphill are breathing heavily but have the right of way. If you're descending the trail, step aside, judge hikers accordingly, and give space to the people climbing up.

MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN

When you encounter other hikers and trail users, offer a friendly "hello" or a simple head nod. Try not to be creepy about it. This helps create a friendly atmosphere on the trail. If you approach another trail user from behind, announce yourself in a friendly, calm tone and let him/her know you want to pass. Yelling "BEAR" and "RUN" is not helpful.

STAY ON THE TRAIL

Don't step off trail unless you absolutely must when yielding. This includes impromptu dance-offs with fellow hikers. Going off trail can damage or kill certain plant or animal species, and can hurt the ecosystems that surround the trail. So can bad dancing.

LEAVE NO TRACE

Always practice Leave No Trace principles: Leave rocks, vegetation, and artifacts where you find them for others to enjoy. Do you stack rocks in your backyard? Also, animals should remain in park.

DO NOT DISTURB WILDLIFE

They need their space, and you need yours, too. Just like you with your ex, keep a safe distance from any wildlife you encounter. Some parks require you to stay a certain distance from wildlife, so check park regulations before your visit.

READ THE SIGNS

Never leave the trail to try and get a closer look at an animal because it can hurt the habitat and the animal and put you in danger. Oh, you need a sign? It's over there. And there. There's one! Did you see that one?

TAKE TIME TO LISTEN

When hiking in the great outdoors, let nature do the talking. We said be quiet! Not only will other visitors appreciate the peace, but so will the wildlife. Why are you still talking? Many wildlife species rely on natural sounds for communication, and disrupting those sounds can hurt their chances of survival, or at the very least result in extreme eye rolls from animals the likes you haven't seen since...well, earlier from your family.

BE AWARE OF SURROUNDINGS

Always be aware of your surroundings when hiking in national parks. It will help keep you and any members of your group safe, and it will help keep wildlife and their habitats safe and healthy. You're not lost. You're still in the parking lot.



NPS.GOV

When in doubt about something just remember the "golden rule" — treat other trail users how you want to be treated, and respect the wildlife and lands of our great national parks.

It's Still Hunting Season

If you haven't seen this video, it's an amazing demonstration of the effectiveness of wearing blaze orange in the forest!

https://player.vimeo.com/video/47113670?fbclid=IwAR3SazEG-AIz6z9z-AEtEJIDEmArhbxstNCzMFq9St_3rua4hHPZGeRbnxE

Calendar of Events



Nothing scheduled through February.

Happy Holidays and stay warm!

Welcome New Members!

Kuldeep Singh from Upton

Katherine Robertson from Upton

Thank You!

Joan E. Varney for her FUSF donation in memorial to her father, Joseph W. Gorman, Sr.

FUSF Board of Directors

Bill Taylor, President
Joyce Sandvik, Vice President
Mary McManus, Secretary
Chris Scott, Treasurer
Agnita Knott, Membership
Members-at-Large

- Alisa Bernat
- Suzanne Nicholas

Be sure to frequent our **Facebook Page** for great nature pics, local info on our environment and announcements of future events.

Board of Directors meetings – 3rd Monday of each month @ 7:00 PM in the 1st floor conference room at the Upton Town Hall.

Watch for future programs and events as our calendar for 2020 unfolds!

FUSF Merchandise for Sale

Visit the FUSF store on our website to order tees, sweatshirts, caps, vests, and tote bags. Go to www.friendsouptonstateforest.org



Do you shop Amazon? You can help support FUSF by using AmazonSmile Charity Lists and selecting FUSF when you order. A percentage of your order will go to FUSF. THANK YOU

