FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST NEWSLETTER

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WooHooo!
It's done and it's beautiful!

Despite the heat and weather delays, workers ripped up the old pavement, graded and put down the base in preparation for the new pavement at the CCC headquarters.

If you have used this parking area, you know the challenge of the bumps and potholes hoping that your car or horse trailer doesn't bottom out and cause damage.

Thanks DCR for our new parking area!!

Message from President Bill Taylor

I am pleased to report that Upton State Forest was made safer over the last few months with the temporary capping of the wells in June and the repaving of the CCC camp driveway and parking areas in July. The potholes at the entrance to CCC Way were also filled in. The entire paved area is now completely smooth, and the rock that protruded from the rear parking area is gone. Using the driveways and parking areas is much safer now. Also, the risk of a human or animal falling into one of the Forest's wells was reduced after a group from the Student Conservation Corps installed temporary caps on all the known wells. The caps consist of metal/mesh grates laid over the wells and held in place with stakes. These caps, which only address the risk of falling in and not the risk of contaminating the groundwater, are not the permanent solution. More durable caps, ones not subject to rusting, being dislodged, capable of holding significant weight, and that prevent contaminants from reaching the groundwater will be installed in the future. It's also possible that the wells will be filled in. The Department of Conservation (DCR) is working with Department of Environmental Protection to finalize the protocol for decommissioning the historic wells. Thanks to DCR for completing these important projects. Unfortunately, another safety issue has arisen as the Rabbit Run trail from Southborough Road to the bridge on the trail has been flooded with about 6 inches of water and it's not possible to use the section of the trail between Southborough and Westborough roads. It's now necessary to walk/ride along Southborough and Westborough roads to go between the Westborough and Southborough road trailheads, which is less safe. The flooding is due to a beaver dam between the bog berm and the culvert at Westboro Road. Debris blocking the fence at the culvert is also contributing to the flooding. Temporary and permanent solutions will require coordination between DCR and the Town of Upton's Department of Public Works, Board of Health and Conservation Commission. We intend to work with the DCR and the town to resolve the flooding. Please let us know if you come across any trail or other issues so that we can alert DCR. Enjoy the summer!

Temporary well caps

Related News

www.mass.gov/lists/the-citizen-forester-newsletter
www.MassLand.org
http://tourblackstone.com/events/
https://www.provgardener.com/org/narragansett-indian-tribal-historic-preservation-office
http://www.hopkintontrailsclub.com
https://uptonma.myrec.com/info/activities/

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Hiking Through History

Stone Features at Upton State Forest

by Ellen Arnold

When you hike the trails at Upton State Forest you are hiking through history with stories everywhere if you know where to look. The lands that became our park were occupied and used in many ways by people who came before us. There is evidence of farms, dams, mills, surface quarries, and roads in our forest. Here in New England we are blessed/cursed with an abundance of stone. Everywhere you go at Upton State Forest you will find interesting natural stone features as well as stones that speak of human habitation. The most obvious is the many cellar holes to be found throughout Upton State Forest. It is fascinating to study the holes and research the deeds and people connected to them.

Stone fireplace at Painted Valley

One of the most interesting natural features is Whistling Cave aka Cave of the Winds. It is not really a cave, but a placement of boulders open at both ends with a top across them, giving the appearance of a cave. Some say the wind "whistles" through the cave while others say the sound is actually the wind through the pines. Whistling Cave Trail is arguably the most challenging trail at Upton, but if you approach the cave from the end near Middle Rd it is doable for most. We suggest doing this with a hiking buddy and good footgear. Since it is quite steep near the Park Rd end you may want to turn back after you visit the cave.

The CCC used stone at several places to make recreational sites that have become engulfed by the forest. Off Park Rd, the stone steps near the Old Knob picnic area and the stone fireplaces are examples. The most interesting story there is the stone tower that was not built. Plans for the park show a stone tower that would have had an observation deck at the top and a water pumping facility in the bottom to provide water for the three intended picnic areas. They also built waterholes known as fire holes used for firefighting. You can view an example to the right of the main gate from the trailhead parking lot. The Friends have found a total of 5 in two Upton State Forest parcels.

Steps at Old Knob

Hiking Through History cont'd

Evidence of earlier activity, stone walls weave their way throughout the forest indicating evidence of land clearing, boundaries, and farms with animals. You will notice in places that you are walking between stone walls that are two rods (33 feet) wide. This lets you know you are traveling on an old road. A good example of that can be found on Middle Road and in places on Hopkinton Spring Trail. Middle Road was formerly known as Nash Rd and was the road to John Nash's house.

Another site off Middle Rd is Pilkington's Quarry where you will find cut stones that were intended to be grist mill stones. Alexander Pilkington was one of three brothers in a family of stone cutters who learned their trade in England and traveled here after 1850. There were other earlier stone cutters, but Alex is the one who lived and worked at his trade into the 20th century. They provided stone for home foundations, cemetery monuments, and grist mills. Almost anywhere you go in Upton there is evidence of their work.

When towns were laid out, the boundaries were marked with stone markers. MA law required that members of the Board of Selectmen "perambulate the boundaries" and confirm the markers every five years. This custom has largely been ignored in recent history but town reports through the years describe times it was done in the past. There is a good example of a town boundary on the Hopkinton Spring Trail that marks the boundary between Upton and Hopkinton. Prior to 1735 when Upton was incorporated it would have marked the boundary between Hopkinton and Sutton since North Upton was taken from Sutton lands. There is a book at the Upton Library that has a great deal of information on boundary markers in various towns. It is very large and you will need to ask the librarian to see it.

More recent stone markers can be found in the state forest on both sides of Westborough Rd. They are stone posts that mark the boundaries of the Worcester County Highway. Marked with "WCH" they can be found at intervals along the road. There are also a few remaining on Southborough Rd near the bog.

Before European settlement, native people were using stone for various reasons. This history is not so well known but this summer we have an opportunity to learn more. The Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Trust has extended an invitation to join them for a field trip beginning at the Upton Cave Park on Elm St and then to Pratt Hill to discuss the stone features that have been deemed eligible to be a discontinuous historic district. More information about the walks is in the calendar on page 7. **Preregistration is required to participate**.

This article is only the tip of the iceberg about Upton's stone features, but I hope it stimulates interest in learning more.

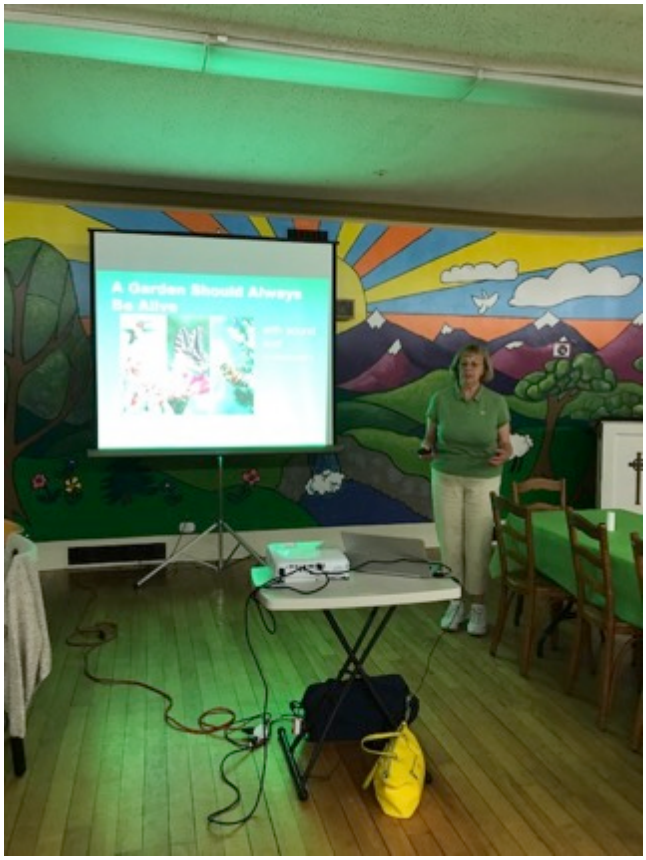
Hopkinton/Upton boundary marker on Hopkinton Spring Trail

"Attracting Birds, Bees and Butterflies to Your Yard"

Annual Potluck Supper & Program

Contributed by Mary McManus

Betty Sanders was our guest speaker at the FUSF annual potluck supper on June 1st. Betty is a Lifetime Master Gardener with the MA Master Gardener Association. She is a nationally accredited flower show judge and has studied gardening at Arnold Arboretum, New York Botanical Garden and New England Wildflower Society. Betty and her husband downsized to a new house 2 years ago which includes very little if any grass area and mostly plants and shrubs to minimize the time it takes to care for the yard. Betty spoke of the many plants and shrubs she chose to attract birds, bees and butterflies. All three need a source of food, water and shelter to survive and it's all included in her yard display. When providing water in your garden, she says to keep in mind that bees need to keep their feet dry when drinking because if their feet get wet the bee becomes too heavy to fly. Birds prefer to drink from running water because they see it as cleaner or they will drink from a perch. They will bathe in standing water. Butterflies prefer to drink from mud water for the minerals. Betty gave a handout listing the many perennials, annuals, shrubs and trees that will attract these inhabitants. She also spoke on the pros and cons of organic vs inorganic gardening and alien vs native plant species. Betty concluded with a Q and A period that lasted more than 30 minutes which proved how engaged her audience was.



FUSF Merchandise for Sale

Visit the FUSF store on our website to order tees, sweatshirts, caps, vests, and tote bags. Spruce up your summer and fall wardrobe with our FUSF merchandise!
Go to www.friendsofuptonstateforest.org

Welcome New Members

David and Liz Reiser of Upton
Dennis Twomey of Westborough

Trail Work Days

On April 28th, volunteers gathered at USF to celebrate **Park Serve Day**. The CCC headquarters were raked, flowers planted and trails were cleared.

FUSF, Bay State Trail Riders and the DCR joined together to clear trails at USF on June 16th. With clippers, saws and chain saws (thanks Becky Kalagher) in hand, volunteers spread out on Middle Road, Hawk, Swamp, Loop and other trails to remove trees and cut back growth. Thanks to all of the volunteers who help make these trails easier to navigate.

Annual BSTRA Scavenger Hunt

The Bay State Trail Riders Association held their annual scavenger hunt on May13th. The theme this year was "Be Happy" as riders teamed up with a list of clues to seek out the "clued" objects. For example, "to remind you to be flexible" (rubber band); "to remind you not to blow up" (balloon). Kudos to those riders who got on and off their horses to collect the objects…….fun for all!

Calendar of Events

The **Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Trust (NITHPT)** are excited to connect with anyone interested in learning to recognize, appreciate, and protect ceremonial stone landscapes.

Starting in **June and continuing through October** of this year, they will be leading monthly field trips in Upton to show people the Upton Chamber and companion features on top of Pratt Hill in Upton. The trips will be on the **second Saturday of each month**. **The July date is full, but they are accepting reservations for future dates.**

Although there is no charge for the field trip, NITHPT is a not-for-profit 501C(3), and charitable donations are welcome to support their mission to protect and preserve ceremonial stone landscapes.

What: Field trip to the Upton Chamber and associated ceremonial stone landscape features atop nearby Pratt Hill

When: Second Saturday of each month – 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Where: Meet at the VFW parking lot at 15 Milford St, Upton, MA 01568

1. From there we will carpool to the Upton Chamber at Heritage Park, and then to the base of Pratt Hill
2. We will park at the base of Pratt Hill and walk to the NITHPT land at the top of the hill to see the stone features there
3. For elders and handicapped we will arrange transportation up the hill if given advanced notice

RSVP: Please send email to nithpt.csl@gmail.com (we can accommodate 20)

August
08/11 – NITHPT field trip 1PM – 4PM

September
09/08 – NITHPT field trip 1PM – 4PM
09/29 – Upton Heritage Day – Town Common 10 AM – 2 PM

October
10/13 – NITHPT field trip 1PM – 4PM
10/28 – BSTRA annual Pumpkin Ride at USF – no parking at the CCC headquarters

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 @ 6:30 PM in the Upton Police Station training room.

Watch for future programs and events as our calendar for 2018

FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST
PO BOX 258
UPTON, MA 01568-0258

NEW MEMBERSHIP ----- MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL------ (check one) (Please Print Clearly.) (Information is for Friends of Upton State Forest only.)

Date_____

Name:_____
(For family membership please put two names)

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____State_____Zip code_____

Telephone: _____E-mail _____

Would you consider being a member of one of our committees? Please circle your choices.

Auditing	Fund Raising	Newsletter	Refreshments	Trails Committee
Education	Historic Resources	Program	Resource Inventory	
Events	Membership	Publicity	Telephone Committee	

What is your interest? Circle all that apply. (Please use the reverse for comments, or to tell us, if you wish, of other organizations, you belong to that support these interests.)

Bird Watching	Horseback Riding	Orienteering	Snowmobiling
Cross Country Skiing	Hunting	Open Space Preservation	Trail Running
Hiking	Letterboxing/Geocaching	Photography/Art	Wildlife Watching
Historical	Mountain Biking	Snow Shoeing	Other (what?)

Membership Categories: (Prices effective through 12/31/18) (Circle one)

Family of 2 adults & children (under age 18) ---------- $37.50
Individual ----------$25.00
Senior 65+----------$12.50
Student full time with current student id ----------$12.50

Additional Donation Amount: General Fund or Special Fund?
Anonymous? Yes--- No--- Memorial or Honorarium?
Name of person being recognized?

(* Please note: There is a $25.00 charge for returned checks.)

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Cards issued by: Newsletter address entered by: