# FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST NEWSLETTER

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## Sure Signs of Winter

***Scott Heim*** shared his pics while hiking through the Warren Brook Conservation Area in mid-January and saw these bear tracks coming from Pell Farm and into the northwestern seed tree forest cutting area.

Bears typically hibernate between mid-December through February, depending on food availability.

I guess this bear didn't get the memo about hibernation!

Who would have guessed that we would be 2 years into the global Covid pandemic? Upton State Forest continues to be a refuge of sorts for records number of people coming out to enjoy the forest. It helps clear the mind, gets us moving, and reminds us of the wonders of nature!

*"In a world of constant change and streaming technology. I find solace in the forest where a tree remains a tree."*
- Angie Weiland-Crosby

# The President's Message

The state has about $2 billion in remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to distribute and the Massachusetts Conservation Voters (MCV) organization is encouraging citizens to send a message to their state legislators to allocate $100 million of these funds to state parks. The Friends Board agrees and will be sending a letter to legislators in support of allocating $100 million of the ARPA funds to the state parks. If you want to send a message to your legislators, the MCV website, massconservationvoters.com, provides a convenient way you to do that via email. It has a draft email that can be customized, and it will automatically send it to your legislators based on your zip code. This will be the second distribution of ARPA funds. The state recently passed legislation that distributed nearly $3 billion in ARPA funds and fiscal 2021 surplus state tax revenue. $15 million went to state parks, though Governor Baker originally proposed $100 million for state parks.

While visiting the MCV website I learned that the Governor's proposed fiscal year 2023 budget eliminates DCR's retained revenue account, which is funded with user fees, and fully funds it from general tax revenues. For 2023, the Governor proposes a $73.5 million operating budget for DCR. In 2022, DCR's operating budget, the funds raised from general tax revenues, is $50.5 million and its retained revenue (user fees) target is $25 million. To meet the target of $25 million, DCR must raise fees of $32 million, as it can only keep 80% of the amounts raised. As put by the MCV, "the uncertainty of reaching that goal has a profound impact on the agency's ability to plan for the fiscal year." User fees also raise an equity issue.

For more information on how DCR is funded and the challenges it faces, I encourage you to check out the DCR Special Commission report, (which can be viewed at https://www.mass.gov/doc/umdi-dcr-special-commission-report/download). The Special Commission was created by legislation to, among other things, "recommend ways DCR could improve the management, operations and asset conditions of its natural, cultural, and recreational resources). The report also focuses on the important role Friends groups have.

# Help Wanted

**FUSF Secretary** – we're still looking to fill our board secretary position. Responsibilities include taking and publishing the minutes from our monthly meetings in addition to managing other documentation for our organization.

**Website Support** – as we continue to improve our website presence, we need some help from someone to provide occasional website updates and backup support for Mike Penko.

If you are interested in either of these positions, mail us at news@friendsofuptonstate forest.org.

We'd love to have you join us.

## FUSF Board of Directors

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

- Alisa Bernat
- Suzanne Nicholas

# Welcome New Members

Eric & Eileen Shobe, Upton, MA

## Reminder! Renew Your FUSF Membership

Please take a minute to renew your membership in the Friends of Upton State Forest. Not a member? Please consider joining. Your membership helps us provide this newsletter, sponsor nature related programs and contribute to the ongoing work of maintaining our Upton State Forest trail system.

A membership form is attached to this newsletter or go to our website and you can now pay via PayPal.

**Thank You** – your patronage is very much appreciated!

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. (via Zoom call during Covid-19)

**Watch for future programs and events as our calendar for 2022 unfolds!**

## Making a Dontation to FUSF?

Some companies will match your donation to a charitable organization. It's worth looking into. *THANK YOU!*

## April is National Park Service Month

Locally, DCR has designated April 23rd as Park Serve Day. Look for upcoming details on how we will participate at Upton State Forest.

# Calendar of Events

**April**
**4/23 – DCR National Park Serve Day** – watch for upcoming details

**October**
**10/01 – BSTRA Wild West Ride** – participant parking only at the CCC headquarters 7 AM-3 PM

**10/30 – BSTRA Pumpkin Ride** – participant parking only at the CCC headquarters
7 AM-3 PM

## FUSF Merchandise for Sale

FUSF merchandise is temporarily unavailable for sale on our web site. We are in the process of enabling PayPal for ease of purchase. This will be available soon. We do have some limited items available. If interested, send us an email. Thanks for your continued patience as we update our new web site.

**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**: (Circle one)

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

**Additional Donation Amount**: General Fund* or Special Fund?
Anonymous? Yes--- No--- Memorial or Honorarium?
Name of person being recognized? _____
*If no place is indicated for donation, it will go to the General Fund.

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

Below this line is for office use only:
Payment: Cash Check # Amount paid: Category: Year Paid:
Cards issued by: Newsletter address entered by: