FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST NEWSLETTER

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Happy 90th Anniversary Civilian Conservation Corps

We're dedicating this issue to the celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and to honor the men and their families who lived and worked at Upton State Forest. If you're not familiar with its history, this is a great read. Enjoy!

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated on March 4, 1933, 34 days later, on April 7, the first member of the Civilian Conservation Corps was enrolled. Creating the Civilian Conservation Corps was one of FDR's first actions as president.

Five days after his inauguration, on March 9th, he met at the White House with, among others, the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture and War. During this meeting FDR described his idea for a program to employ young men between the ages of 18 and 25 to do emergency conservation work. After two hours he asked the group if it was feasible. They agreed it was, and then he asked them to draft a bill for him that day.

On March 21, FDR submitted the bill proposing the Civilian Conservation Corps to the House and Senate. On March 31, after discussion and some amendment, the bill, "An Act for the relief of unemployment through the performance of useful public work, and for other purposes" was passed by Congress. The Act authorized the President:

> "under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe and by utilizing such existing departments or agencies as he may designate, to provide for employing citizens of the United States who are unemployed in the construction, maintenance, and carrying on of works of a public nature in connection with the forestation of lands belonging to the United States or to the several States which are suitable for timber production; the prevention of forest fires, floods. and soil erosion; plant pest and disease control; the construction, maintenance, or repair of paths, trails, and fire lanes in the national parks and national forests; and such other work on the public domain, National and State, and Government reservations incidental to or necessary in connection with any projects of the character enumerated as the President may determine to be desirable."

On April 5, FDR issued Executive Order 6101, which appointed Robert Fechner the Director of Emergency Conservation Work for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of the Act. It also created an Advisory Council to the Director consisting of representatives appointed by each of the Secretary of War, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Labor, and established a fund of $10 million dollars. Labor was responsible for hiring, War for responsible for running the camps, and Agriculture and Interior were responsible for running the conservation work.

On April 7, the first young man was enrolled and the work of the CCC began.

Roosevelt knew that a large population of restless, unemployed young men, some without a complete education could mean trouble. He also recognized serious environmental issues that needed to be addressed. In the west, serious drought and poor farming practices was causing terrible dust storms known as "Black Blizzards". Already impacted by the financial crisis, with their land literally blowing away, Dust Bowl families were leaving their farms in large numbers hoping to find work. This was the largest migration of people in American history with over 2.5 million people leaving the Plains states. In the East, years of timber harvesting and clear cutting for farms caused erosion and fires.

Enrollees were housed, fed, and clothed in camps under the jurisdiction of the Army. Each man earned $30.00 a month with $25.00 sent home to their families. Each camp had a Post Exchange where enrollees could spend the $5.00 they retained. Camps bought supplies locally so the infusion of money helped the local economies as well as the families who received the monthly checks. Each morning the Army turned the men over to the Forest Service for the workday and when work was done men had a chance to enroll in night classes if they chose. Local enlisted men who were experienced in the type of work were hired to train enrollees to do the work. A typical enrollee gained twelve pounds in the first six months attributed to being fed regular meals and gaining muscle mass doing the work.

By 1942, the highly successful program was no longer needed. The crisis of the environment and restless young met had been met and funding was provided to phase out the program. War was on the horizon and another benefit of the CCC was the large number of men who had been exposed to Army discipline and camp life. In addition, some of the skills they learned in the C's were useful in a wartime army.

Submitted by Ellen Arnold and Bill Taylor

Celebrating the Legacy

As we celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) nationwide, Friends of Upton State Forest (FUSF) are looking forward to 2025 which has local significance to the CCC and to our organization. In 1925, the first purchase of land that would be designated Upton State Forest was the "Gaskill lot" located off Chestnut St in Upton. On May 17 of 1935, twenty-three men from the 102nd Company, CCC at Myles Standish State Forest came to Upton to clear a camp area to prepare for the opening of Camp SP-25 at Upton State Forest. Friends of Upton State Forest banded together in 2005 to "preserve, enhance, and protect the natural and historic resources of Upton State Forest" (USF).

1925-2025-One hundred years

When Great Britain colonized New England, they looked at what seemed like an unending supply of lumber since their own timber had long since been depleted. The Act of 1729 designated that all trees measuring 24" in diameter at 12" above the ground be reserved for the King to be used as masts for the British Navy. This was one of several contributing factors that angered colonists leading up to the Revolution. Land was cleared for farming and, as our country grew, and there was a need for timber to build homes, barns, factories, and other buildings. The Act of 1783 even required each town to designate a "scaler", sometimes called a surveyor to measure all harvested wood products for sale. Little thought was given to land conservation or reforestation.

From 1810 to 1830, population in the US almost doubled with great logging camps built to supply the needs of a growing country. In New England, logging camps were like small towns with their own church, post office, general stores and later, short line railroads. In the early years, logs were mostly moved down rivers in large log drives until railroads made it safer and more efficient to move them. During the late 1800's, people became alarmed about the deforestation, resulting slash fires caused by sparks from trains, and erosion. In 1911, the Weeks Act established National Forests in the east with special concern for land that protected watersheds and riverways. In 1914, the Massachusetts legislature established the State Forest Commission to improve wasteland and begin reforestation. As a result, the Commission began buying properties, paying $5.00 an acre. Their intent was to purchase, reforest and allow the landowner to buy the property back in ten years. Here in Upton the first purchase of land in 1915, was known as the "Gaskill lot", a 60-acre parcel located off Chestnut Street. Since the previous owner did not choose to buy it back, in 1925 it became the first parcel that would eventually become Upton State Forest. In the early 1930's more "sprout land" was purchased from landowners and loggers. Many of the parcels were owned by Knowlton Farms and Benjamin Wood who had his own portable sawmill. Today the forest is around 3000 acres designated as "parkland" and "woodland".

1935-2025-Ninety years

On May 17, 1935, twenty-three men from the 102nd Company, CCC at Plymouth, MA came to Upton to clear a camp area at the newly designated Upton State Forest. This was in preparation for the arrival of 187 men of the 2105th Company, CCC from Ft. Devens, MA. For the first year, the men lived in tents as they began the Emergency Conservation Work that was the mission of the CCC. When the camp was built there was a Headquarters building, four barracks, an Infirmary, Mess Hall, Educational building, Officers Quarters, Recreation Hall, Supply building, Service building, Blacksmith Shop, Lavatory building, garages, a water tower and two latrines.

While the Camp was active, the men impounded Dean Pond, built Park Road, Loop Road, and the Hurley Truck Trail (now Pratt Hill Road). They also built three picnic areas, and water holes for firefighting. In addition, they cleared fire hazards and burned acres of brush from logging operations, planted 230,000 trees, did surveys, and worked to control gypsy moth. In March 1936, flooding washed out the Wildwood Dam washing out several hundred feet of Route 140. The men of the CCC were able to make the road passable in one day, enabling the hat industry to transport their goods to the railroad in Grafton. That same year an enrollee rescued a young girl who had fallen through the ice on Mill Pond. In April, 1937 they were part of a successful search and rescue effort to find a missing two-year old child.

Plans from that period indicate that a water/observation tower would be built at the height of land on Park Road. Other work was planned in South Upton, but by 1938 funding was being reduced and Company 2105 moved to the Salisbury Beach area to build that park. Although the people of Upton were apprehensive when the camp opened, by the time the Camp closed in November of 1938 they were an accepted and welcome part of the community.

2005-2025-Twenty Years

In 2005, Friends of Upton State Forest was formed out of concern for the remaining historic CCC Camp buildings at Upton State Forest. The Headquarters building is the only one left in Massachusetts and one of only a few extant in the nation. Ellen Arnold, Frank Evans, Bill Johnston, and Joan Shanahan held a meeting at Upton Town Hall to gage interest and were encouraged at the number of people who attended and wanted to participate. From the beginning we recognized that the group should represent diverse interests to advocate for all user groups, as well as the natural and historic resources of the Forest. To achieve our goals, we have partnered with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and others.

Since forming the group and achieving non-profit status we have contributed many volunteer hours through work parties, programming, leading themed hikes, doing a historic resource inventory and working with others to bring about purchase of inholdings and abutting properties. We have also brought value to projects through matching grants that leveraged our funds and, working with other partners, the CCC Camp and associated resources have achieved National Register status.

Submitted by Ellen Arnold and Bill Taylor

Working on Dean Pond Dam…..pics by J. Petrowski

CCC Work at USF

Pratt Hill Water Hole

Painted Valley Picnic Area/Fireplace

Our New Flagpole

Flag raising ceremony of the new flagpole funded with a matching grant by FUSF and DCR. Frank Evans (CCC Alum) and Walter Petrowski who donated toward the project in memory of his father Joe Petrowski who served at the CCC Camp.

CCC Day at the State House

FUSF members and a CCC alum attended CCC Day at the State House in 2009

(l-r) Joan Shanahan, Joan Varney (her dad was at the camp), Ellen Arnold, Frank Evans (CCC alum) Diane Dungey

The Celebration Continues

Flag Raising

On March 31, we raised the 90th anniversary flag of the legislation authorizing Emergency Conservation Work, followed on April 5 when FDR issued executive order 6101 creating the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Park Serve Day

On April 30, after a 1 week delay due to inclement weather, we were able to celebrate Park Serve Day and commemorate the 90th anniversary of the CCC. Volunteers from Friends of Upton State Forest, Bay State Trail Riders and Karla Barrows from Rock Hill Farm who brought along members of the Hoofbeats 4-H club, all joined to help. It was great to see the next generation getting involved and giving back.

The trail at the entry way was cleared (no more ducking under low branches), lawns were raked, the USF entry way and flagpole were freshly mulched, and a bridge on Hopkinton Springs trail was resurfaced.

Thanks to all for their time and energy to help the Park look great!

Park Serve Day

Volunteers hard at work

Completed bridge surface complements of Bay State Trail Riders

Landscape quality work for our entry way and flagpole

Hoofbeats 4-H enjoying pizza after all their hard work

Reminder!
Membership Renewal

Please take a minute to renew your membership for 2023 or join the Friends of Upton State Forest. 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. You can renew on-line on our web site at https://friendsofuptonstateforest.org or using the attached membership form. Thank You!

Thank You For Your Donations!

Gloria Duhaime
Michael and Angela Lupachini
Suzanne Nicholas
Roots in Nature
Eric Shobe
Joan Varney
David Wolff
Karen Yeowall and Mark O'Connell

Don't forget – some companies will match your donation so be sure to ask!

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

Calendar of Events

September
09/10 – BSTRA Western Trivia Ride at USF - 8AM-3PM – parking at CCC headquarters for event participants only

October
10/29 – BSTRA Pumpkin Ride at USF 8AM-3PM – parking at CCC headquarters for event participants only

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 2023 unfolds!

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: