FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST NEWSLETTER

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Happy Birthday Friends of Upton State Forest

contributed by Ellen Arnold

Twenty years ago, in February 2005, co-founders Ellen Arnold, Frank Evans, Bill Johnston, and Joan Shanahan came together to form Friends of Upton State Forest (FUSF). By June, we were ready to go public and over forty people came to a meeting at Upton Town Hall where we introduced the idea to find out how much support we would have. We got a resounding YES to the idea!

Initially, the impetus was concern over the condition of the remaining historic Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) buildings since the South Barn had been lost to snow load in 2003. We recognized that if we were to be successful, we had to expand our focus to include not only the historic resources, but the natural resources and recreational interests as well.

From the beginning, we recognized the value of partnerships. Not only do we appreciate all our partners, but we have made many new friends who value Upton State Forest for various reasons. We are grateful for the support we received from public officials and legislators who have been responsive to our advocacy and questions. As advocates for our forest and the CCC Camp buildings, it has been a goal to work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation for the benefit of Upton State Forest. We have not always agreed with their decisions but have great respect for the work they do and have supported them with our advocacy for their state-wide budget. For me personally, I have found that staff at all levels have something to teach me and it has expanded my knowledge about the natural and historic resources we have in our forest.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. *Margaret Mead*

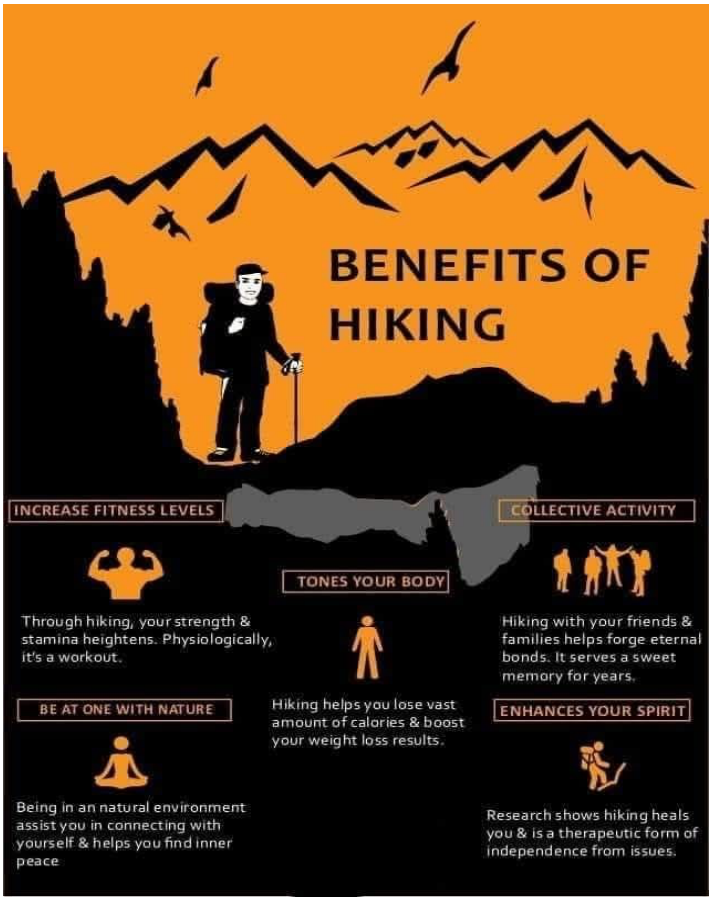
Happy Birthday FUSF cont'd

The first year was a flurry of activity on several fronts. Our challenge was to turn our advocacy into a legitimate 501 (c) (3) non-profit while engaging our members and finding and reaching out to anyone who could help us. We had a lot of enthusiasm but had to focus so that our efforts would be worthwhile. The biggest complaint I got was that I wouldn't let anyone use a chainsaw or power tool at a work party until we had insurance! When I applied for insurance, I was asked how many members we had. I told them that I would be thrilled with 50 members, but in our first year we had over 100 members!

At that June meeting the park supervisor displayed a large map of Upton State Forest. What jumped off the map at me was a large, privately held, inholding near the bog that had trails going through it. Fund raising for a property appraisal became our first project. We met with Metacomet Land Trust and they agreed to hold the donations since we didn't even have a treasury or non-profit status! It was a long road, but that property was successfully acquired by DCR within the past two years. That first year we also successfully nominated the CCC Camp buildings for the 2005 Preservation Massachusetts "List of Ten Most Endangered Historic Resources in Massachusetts". That, and acquiring National Register Status for the camp, provided legitimacy and impetus for stabilizing the buildings.

Someone from DCR once told me that if we made it through the first year, the next benchmark for success would be to still be around in three years. Here we are twenty years later with much still to do, but much done! The satisfaction I have from that is that not only are we still here, but we have accomplished much and met many like-minded people who are truly Friends of Upton State Forest.

In future articles we will review some of our other accomplishments and partners. For more details about our first years, you can find articles in the 2015 winter and spring newsletters on our website. https://friendsofuptonstateforest.org/the-friends/newsletters/.



Did You Notice Our Counter?

Thanks to a contribution from the FUSF, DCR installed a counter at the beginning of Park Road to count the number of visitors to USF. The number of visitors will help us understand traffic to the park which can increase funding for maintenance and improvements.

President's Message

We are celebrating two milestones in 2025. It is the 90th anniversary of the opening of the CCC camp, and the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Friends of Upton State Forest. This newsletter includes a reprint of Ellen Arnold's "In the Beginning" with a new introduction by Ellen. The article tells the story of how the Friends of Upton State Forest started. I also wanted to mention that the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Stewardship Council met on February 13th and approved the Resource Management Plans (RMP) for all the facilities in the Blackstone Complex, which consists of Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park, Douglas State Forest, Purgatory Chasm State Reservation, Southern New England Trunkline Trail, Sutton State Forest, and Upton State Forest. One of the responsibilities of the Stewardship Council is to adopt the management plans submitted to them by DCR, which is required to create plans for all the reservations, parks and forests managed by it. The plans will be available on the Department of Conservation and Recreation's website soon. I am very interested in seeing how the Upton State Forest RMP incorporated the comments that were made on the draft plan.

Welcome New Members

Dana Perry, Westboro

Thank You for Your Donations

Bay State Trail Riders Association
Linda Gay and Tom Cox
Chip Kent
Mark O'Connell
Mike Penko
Alexander Perry in honor of Dana Perry
Dana Perry
Kenneth Prince
Chris Scott
Eric Shobe
Tri-Valley Front Runners, Inc
Karen Yeowell

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

Reminder! Renew Your FUSF Membership

2025 is here…time to renew your FUSF membership. Your contributions fund trail and CCC maintenance, special programs and keeping you informed through this newsletter. Thank you for helping us keep FUSF alive!

dcr
Massachusetts

Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park
Department of Conservation and Recreation

coming events

JANUARY–MARCH PROGRAMS

All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. All programs meet in the River Bend Farm Visitor Center unless otherwise noted. Programming is subject to change. For the most up to date programming information, call (508) 278-7604 or visit our website at bit.ly/blst_updates.

ADA/Reasonable Accommodations
617-645-0358 | moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov

Sundays — **Woodlands and Waterways Tour, 11 a.m.—12 p.m.**
Walk along the banks of the Blackstone Canal and learn about the life that it supports. We'll be looking for signs of wildlife as we discuss the ways we keep our watershed clean!

Appropriate for ages twelve and up. The walk is approximately 2 miles.

Thursdays — **Trek the Blackstone Walk, 1—2 p.m.**
Take a walk with us along the Blackstone Canal! We'll follow the tow path on this recreational walk and point out any items of interest along the way.

Appropriate for ages six and up. All children must be accompanied by an adult. The walk is approximately 2 miles.

Fridays — **Kidleidoscope, 10:30—11:30 a.m.**
Join us each week. We will read a book, then do an activity and craft that relates to the story. Each week has a different theme, so stop by often!

Appropriate for ages 3-6, siblings welcome. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturdays — ***Farm to Factory* Tour, 11—11:30 a.m.**
Explore the story of the Blackstone Valley and its communities from pre-European settlement through European style agricultural development, industrialization, and into today.

Appropriate for ages 12 and up.

Fridays & Saturdays — **Building the Canal Tour, 1—2 p.m.**
Come with us on a guided walk along the Blackstone Canal. Find out about the canal's historical and cultural significance and its role in the farm to factory transformation of the Blackstone Valley.

Appropriate for ages 12 and up. The walk is approximately 2 miles.

Please see our *Exploring the Blackstone River Valley Recreational Hike Series* flyer for details on our recreational hikes in the area. We host weekly hikes throughout the Blackstone complex.

Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park
287 Oak Street, Uxbridge, MA 01569. Tel. (508) 278-7604

Calendar of Events

April
4/27 – Park Serve Day
9 AM – 1 PM at USF

June
6/1 – National Trails Day

September
9/14 – BSTRA Western Theme Ride – 8 AM – 2 PM – event parking only at the CCC

October
10/26 – BSTRA Pumpkin Ride – 8 MA – 2 PM – event parking only at the CCC

FUSF Merchandise Available

Hoodies and T-shirts available. Send an email to the FUSF mailbox friends@friendsofuptonstateforest.org with your order.

Hoodies $35 for members, $40 for non-members.

T-shirts $13 for members, $15 for non-members.

Be sure to frequent our **Facebook Page** https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064832672690 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 via Zoom

Watch for future programs and events as our calendar for 2025 unfolds!

To join our mailing list, send an email request to friends@friendsofuptonstateforest.org

02/13/24 (last updated)

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 # PayPal Amount paid: Category:
Year Paid:
Cards issued by: Newsletter address entered by: