FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST NEWSLETTER

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DCR Trail Master Plan Program

contributed by Becky Kalagher

The Trail Master Plan Pilot Program will focus on six properties: Robinson State Park, Leominster State Forest, Brimfield State Forest, Lowell Dracut-Tyngsborough State Forest, Cutler Park Reservation, and Freetown Fall River State Forest. The goal of these plans is to develop trail systems that protect natural and cultural resources, can withstand a changing climate, require little maintenance and enhance visitors' outdoor experiences.

The Trail Master Plan program is designed to improve and manage state trails for the long term. Each plan will focus on making trails safer, upgrading them, improving signage, and using resources wisely. Additionally, the plans will inform future decisions about expanding or closing trails and ensure DCR takes into account the environmental and cultural impacts, climate resiliency, and community needs.

"This initiative is an important step toward strengthening Massachusetts' outdoor recreation infrastructure, which not only enhances quality of life but also drives local economies." said Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation (MOOR) Director Paul Jahnige. "By developing sustainable trail systems, we're not just improving access to nature, but also creating economic opportunities that benefit communities throughout the Commonwealth."

As part of the planning process, DCR will gather data about existing trails, how well they work, their resilience to climate change, and their effects on local natural and cultural resources. This data collection will provide the foundation for creating well-rounded, sustainable plans. The process will also seek public input to ensure the plans reflect local priorities and concerns.

The Trail Master Plan is an important initiative aimed at enhancing the trail system on our public lands, with a planning process to begin in spring 2025. The process will include four phases, with multiple opportunities for public input and feedback to shape the trail system. DCR encourages residents and stakeholders to actively participate and share their insights throughout the process.

Phase I: Data Collection
In this phase, all trails—both authorized and unauthorized—will be evaluated. Cultural and natural resources within the area will also be inventoried. This work will be complemented by field surveys, and tribal consultation will be conducted. Additionally, we will seek public input through a community survey.

Phase II: Identifying Impacts and Opportunities
DCR will analyze the data collected to understand how trails are impacting the area and identify opportunities for improvements. This process will be guided by DCR's Trail Guidelines, Landscape Designation Management Guidelines, and any relevant recommendations from Resource Management Plans. Input from staff, stakeholders, and the public will help shape the findings.

Phase III: Refining the Trail System and Implementation
DCR will create an improved and sustainable trail system along with a detailed plan for how to make those improvements. A public meeting will be held to discuss the proposed design, and feedback will be incorporated into the final plan.

Phase IV: Permitting and Implementation
In the final step, DCR will secure the necessary permits and begin putting the recommendations from the plan into action to enhance the trail system.

This multi-phase approach ensures that the development of the trail system is well-informed, inclusive, and aligned with both community needs and conservation goals.

For more information about the Trail Master Plan process and to review previously completed plans, please visit DCR Trail System Planning.

Completed projects are Middlesex Fells Reservation Trail System Plan, Myles Standish Trail System Plan, Pittsfield & October Mountain Trail System Plan.

In progress are the Robison State Park Trail Mater Plan and the Freetown Fall River Trail Master Plan.

President's Message

Please visit the Friends of Upton State Forest booth at Upton's Heritage Day on Saturday, September 27, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., on the Town Common. We will have our Upton State Forest interpretive panels on display, Upton State Forest trail maps, Town of Upton open space trail maps, and information about the Hike Upton challenge. It's a great opportunity to learn more about the history of Upton State Forest and about the trails in Upton. We will also have our blaze-orange sweatshirts and t-shirts available to purchase. There will be a lot of other things to do on Heritage Day. Other non-profit organizations will have booths where you can learn more about their organizations. United Parish will be sponsoring a town-wide progressive yard sale, the Upton Public Library will be holding a book sale, and the Upton Grange will hold its Agricultural Harvest Fair. There will be crafts and other merchandise for sale. Heritage Day is organized by the Upton Historical Society and Museum. Check their website and Facebook page for more information.

Bill

Thank You for Your Donations

- HW Heusmann
- Liz and David Reiser
- Joyce Sandvik
- Chris Simonella in Honor of the Simonella's
- Joan Varney - in memory of her father Joseph W. Gorman who was a local enlisted man (LEM) at Upton State Forest who served as an educator.

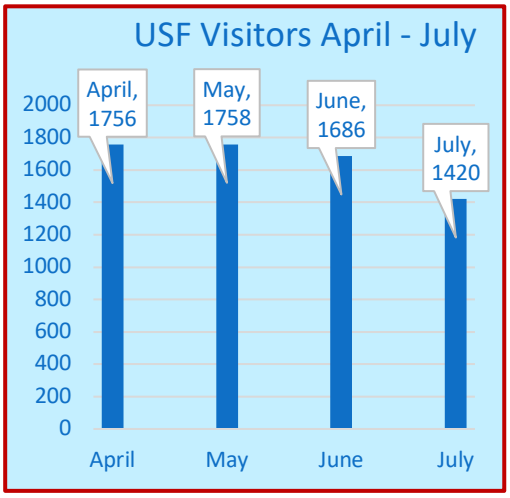
FUSF Board of Directors

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

- Suzanne Nicholas
- Open

The Numbers Are In!

Our trail counter is busy collecting the number of visitors to USF. The number of visitors is fairly consistent April – June with a slight drop in July – perhaps reflecting vacations or the intense heat and humidity.



Welcome New Members

Liz and David Reiser, Upton

Soldiers of the Revolution and Upton State Forest

Contributed by Ellen Arnold

If you know where to look high on a hill off the Hopkinton Spring Trail, formerly known as the Old County Road, there is evidence of the home of Ebenezer Stearns, another Soldier of the Revolution. Ebenezer is reputed to be one of the men who answered the alarm in April of 1775. Although I could not find a record of that, I did find him as a private in Captain Taft's 9th Company when they marched to Tiverton, RI answering the alarm of 7 July 1780. That is confirmed in Fold 3 and records of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Town boundary marker on Hopkinton Springs Trail. Identifies the Hopkinton/Upton border which is also the Middlesex/Worcester Country line. Pic by John Ritz

Born in Milford 26 Jan 1745 he was the son of Jonathan and Beaulah Sterns/Stearns. He married Rebeckah Lackey, daughter of Matthew and Rebeckah Lackey of Upton in 1772. When Matthew passed, his will gifted one shilling in his will to his daughter, Rebeckah Stearns.

Vital Records of Upton list five sons born between 1775 and 1781 to Ebenezer and Rebeckah. One of the sons was listed as Ariel which is usually thought of as a girl's name. Thanks to genealogist, Regina Young we learned his name was A. Royal Stearns. Royal built a home near his father on the other side of the Old County Rd. He only lived there for about two years before marrying and moving to New York.

A census record listed Ebenezer Stearns as having a cider mill on his farm. I am assuming that since his house is not located near water that his mill used oxen to turn the grindstone like the one at Old Sturbridge Village. The mill is confirmed in his interesting probate record which listed 30 barrels of cider with a value of $4.50 and empty casks valued at $2.25.

Some of the other items listed were 2 wagon harnesses at $12.50, 2 hats worth 50 cents, a cloak for $4.00, a clock at $10.00 and all the linen for $17.00. He also had two beds and steads with bedding worth $45.00, sole leather at $2.00, a "hoss shed" worth $10.00, and half of six swine valued at $22.00. The most interesting item was a "buffalo." The last item had me stumped since I never heard of a live buffalo in Upton! Apparently, a buffalo would be a hide worth 75 cents. If it had been a fur coat it would have said buffalo coat which would have had a higher value. Records at his death also showed that he held 17 notes for people who owed him money. That, and the listed property value of his real estate as $1500.00 shows that he was a man of some means.

After Rebeckah passed in 1815, he married widow Lydia Norcross of Hopkinton on 30 Mar 1819. Ebenezer passed 30 Jun 1834 at age 89. He and Rebeckah are buried at the Bradish aka Old North Cemetery at the intersection of North St and Westborough Rd. Lydia died 17 Mar 1843 and is buried with her first husband in Pine Grove Cemetery on North Main St in Upton.

DCR Upcoming Hikes

Sunday, August 17
Wallis Pond Loop, 2 — 4 p.m.
Douglas State Forest
Meet at the Ridge Trailhead parking area (93 Wallis Street, Douglas). ~3.5 miles over a loose gravel surface with moderate inclines. Bathrooms are not available at this site.

Sunday, August 24
Blackstone River Greenway Hike, 2 — 4 p.m.
Blackstone River Valley Heritage Center at Worcester
Meet at the Millbury Street parking area (bit.ly/millburygw).
~3 miles over a paved surface with no inclines.
Bathrooms are not available at this site.

Sunday, August 31
Blackstone Gorge Loop 2 — 4 p.m.
Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park
Meet at the Blackstone Gorge parking area (bit.ly/blstgorge). ~1.5 miles over a rocky surface with steep inclines. Bathrooms are not available at this site.

ADA/Reasonable Accommodations
(617) 645-0358 | moneesha.dasgupta2@mass.gov
Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park
287 Oak Street, Uxbridge, MA 01569. Tel. (508) 278-7604

Fall TVFR Race

The Tri-Vally Front Runners will hold their annual half-marathon and 10K race at Upton State Forest on Sunday, November 9th. You can learn more at:

https://runsignup.com/Race/MA/Upton/Upton5KAndHalfMarathonTrailRace

Dragonflies, Damselflies and Spreadwings, Oh My!

On June 12, Joy Marzoff presented a program on the benefits of dragonflies, damselflies and spreadwings for natural control of ticks and mosquitos. Natural control of these pests provides a pesticide free environment protecting the benefits of bees, birds and other wildlife. The program was held at the Upton Community Center and sponsored by the Upton Tick and Mosquito Control Board with support from the Friends of Upton State Forest.

These signs were available to the program attendees, and you may have seen these signs displayed on lawns throughout Upton. The signs are displayed by residents who are committed to pesticide free yards. Thanks to the Friends of Upton State Forest who contributed to the cost of these signs.

For more information, scan the QR code above or go to uptonma.gov website.

Calendar of Events

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

9/27 – Upton Heritage Day – 9 AM – 2 PM Town Common

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

November
11/09 – TVFR Race 8 AM – 2 PM event parking only at the CCC headquarters

"Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own" Charles dickens

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.

National Public Lands Day September 27

National Public Lands Day is a day set aside to appreciate our public lands such as national parks, forests, lakes, city and state parks, and grasslands. It is also a day for volunteer activities throughout the country. In addition, it is a "fee free day" when entrance fees are waived in national parks and other public lands. Join the Friends of Upton State Forest at Upton Heritage Day to celebrate our local treasure.

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: