# FRIENDS OF UPTON STATE FOREST NEWSLETTER

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# President's Message

I was recently researching a separate topic when I came across a comment about the National Youth Administration (NYA) camp at Upton State Forest, which was active at Upton State Forest from September 1938 to December 1939. That spurred me to search for more information about the NYA camp. My knowledge of the NYA at Upton State Forest was limited to knowing it was a New Deal program that provided vocational training and that its use of the camp saved the CCC buildings from being torn down. I found a Boston Post article from April, 1939, by a reporter who visited the camp that provided a first-hand account of how the camp operated: "The purpose of the resident centers [the Upton camp was one of two run by the NYA] is to give the boys [young men 18-24 years old from families on the relief rolls] a little … practice in a variety of trades in an effort to start them toward a trade. So, at Upton, the boys get instruction in woodworking, metal working, automobile mechanics, operation of a cafeteria and general maintenance. They repair automobiles. At present they are making wooden lockers for everybody in camp. The reporter adds a quote from the director of the camp: "We do what we call exploratory work. We give them instruction and practical experience in a number of different kinds of work so that if they find any aptitude they can develop it. At least they learn the tools and the vocabulary, and they have been taught handiness." The reporter also describes the activities in the camp: "Half the day they spend in one of the shops at the camp; the other half they are in classrooms where they receive some theoretical instruction in the trades they are practicing." I also discovered in my research that In August 1939, a decommissioned Navy plan was delivered to the camp for the purpose of teaching the young men about airport ground operations. Apparently, the plane was left on the parade ground (there must be a picture of that somewhere!). My interest in the NYA camp was rekindled while researching St. Benedict's Farm, a Catholic Worker farm commune, and a story in and of itself, located across from the NYA camp on Ridge Road. A letter written in the winter of 1940 from one of the members of St. Benedict's Farm describing the joys and challenges of running the farm, was printed in the Catholic Worker newspaper, and it included the following: "The National Youth Administration camp broke up and they gave us a lot of cord wood. Also, some beans and peas. It is going to be quite a loss to us, not having them around for they were very helpful with cars. They fixed all our cars and the tractor whenever trouble arose." *Bill*

## Thank You for Your Donations

- Betty Roche in memory of Edward Roche
- Chris Scott
- Donna Stimpson
- Linda and Doug Usher and Trista Brown
- Linda Gay and Tom Coz
- Margaret Dean in memory of Joseph W. Gorman, Sr.
- Mark and Karen O'Connell
- Ray VanBatenburg
- Stop and Shop
- Tara and Keith Neal
- Tri-Valley Front Runners

## 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

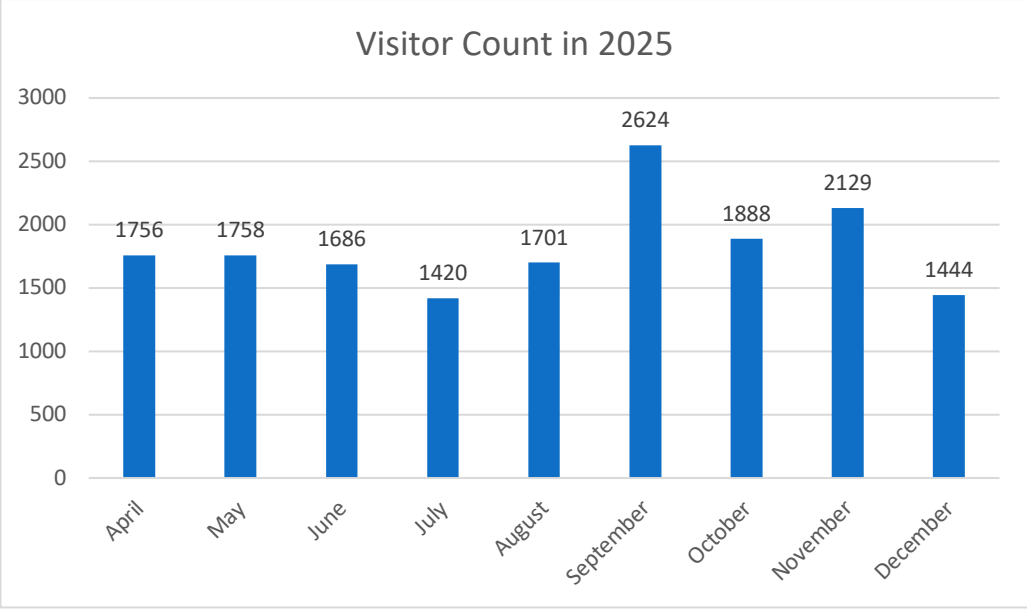
## Send Us Your USF Pics

We're planning to create a video about Upton State Forest and would greatly appreciate your help. Please email us your pictures so we can include them in the video. Additionally, we're looking for someone with experience in video creation, as we lack knowledge in this area. If you have any experience, please let us know. Thank you for your assistance.

## Welcome New Members

Ray VanBatenburg, Northbridge

## Upton State Forest Visitors



dcr
Massachusetts

coming events

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

# Upcoming Programs

Meet in the River Bend Farm Visitor Center. All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Dress for the weather. Programming is subject to change or cancellation. For the most up to date programming information, call (508) 278-7604 or visit bit.ly/blstupdates.

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

| | |
|---|---|
| **Fridays** | **Kidleidoscope, 10 – 11 a.m.**<br>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!<br><br>*Appropriate for ages 3–6, siblings welcome.* |
| **Saturdays** | **Building the Canal Tour, 1 – 2 p.m.**<br>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.<br><br>*Appropriate for ages 12 and up. The walk is ~2 miles over a dirt-packed and forest surface with no inclines.* |
| **Sundays** | **Woodlands and Waterways Tour, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.**<br>Walk along the banks of the Blackstone River 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!<br><br>*Appropriate for ages 12 and up. The walk is ~1 mile over a dirt-packed and rugged forest surface with no inclines.* |
| 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 on-site as well as in Upton State Forest, Douglas State Forest, and Purgatory Chasm State Reservation. | |

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

# Calendar of Events

**April** – Park Serve Day – date TBD

**July 12** – BSTRA Spirit of America ride at USF 8 AM – 2 PM– event parking only at the CCC

**October 25** – BSTRA Pumpkin ride at USF 8 AM – 2 PM – event parking only at the CCC

## Spring Is Almost Here

We will be celebrating Park Serve Day in April. It's a fantastic opportunity for friends and family to come together and help clean up around the CCC building. We'll also be clearing some trails. Stay tuned for the official date!

## Heart Healthy Trails

Looking for easy/moderate trails for your hike? Check them out on our website https://friendsofuptonstateforest.org/visit/trails/

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

## 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 2026 unfolds!**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS: Mass Wildlife will be holding two virtual public hearings on February 23 (6 p.m. and 7 p.m.) on two different proposed deer hunting regulation packages. Feedback is being collected separately for each.

If you can't make the hearings, you can still submit comments by email or mail until March 9. Review regulations, get hearing details, and learn how to submit comments at **bit.ly/Deer-Public-Hearings-2026**

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: