Capping Historic Wells at Upton State Forest
Contributed by Ellen Arnold, FUSF Resource Inventory Team Chair
and Ellen Berkland, DCR Archaeologist

Open well at Upton State Forest.

In 2007, during a guided hike led by FUSF members, one of the hikers discovered an open, abandoned well near one of the historic sites we visited. Another hiker took a GPS reading on it and we passed the information to our park supervisor. A few years later FUSF formed the Resource Inventory Team which visited and documented many sites of historic value throughout the forest. All of the information gathered was shared with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Cultural Resource Office (OCR) and was included in the Cultural Resource Management Plan for Upton State Forest. Many of the sites we visited were formerly homes and farms and had open wells nearby.

Cont’d on page 2
Capping Historic Wells at Upton State Forest cont’d

MA DCR owns and manages close to a half-million acres of land across the Commonwealth. The past agricultural land-use history finds farmsteads and associated outbuildings and subterranean features, including wells on most DCR properties. Improperly abandoned wells can create a safety hazard to both humans and animals. Most historic wells are fieldstone-lined and are very dangerous because most were finished flush to the ground. Additionally, an abandoned well can channel surface contaminates into the ground water.

Most states hold current landowners responsible for the proper capping or decommissioning of wells. Historic DCR wells fall under the general category of “A” (Sand and Gravel Wells with Diameters Greater than 2.5 Inches). Working closely with other regulatory agencies, including the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), DCR has developed a protocol for capping historic wells that is currently in a draft form. In addition, a Well Database Status report (last updated July 7, 2010) is being updated by DCR’s Viki Zoltay. Guidelines for the general treatment of these cultural features are outlined in the DCR Office of Cultural Resource’s Best Management Practices for wells. Currently, two weeks in November have been set aside for a crew from the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to begin temporarily capping open wells in DCR parks.

DCR and the Friends encourage you to report any historic wells that you find to the park supervisor or the Friends so that steps can be taken to secure them. Always use caution in the forest, especially if you are off trail or have an off-leash pet.

The Friends want to thank DCR Commissioner, Leo Roy and members of the DCR OCR, for taking steps that will secure these historic structures, making the forest a safer place to enjoy. We also appreciate the field work done by volunteer members of the Resources Inventory Team.

Message from President Bill Taylor

I’ve recently enjoyed walking many of the trails in Upton – in Upton State Forest and on the town-owned conservation lands – and wanted to thank everyone at the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Upton Land Stewardship Committee, the many Scouts and all the volunteers that maintain these trails. I enjoy walking in the woods immensely and I’ve found the trails to be well-maintained and I appreciate the opportunity to walk them. I think we are blessed in Upton with a fine selection of trails of various length, terrain and forest type. Recently, someone asked me “What’s your favorite trail in Upton?” and I realized as I was out walking one day that it’s the one I’m on. Thanks again to everyone that maintains them and makes them so enjoyable to walk.
Upton held its annual Heritage Day on September 30.

The Friends joined the celebration providing information about our mission, membership, the park and offered our FUSF merchandise for sale.

It was a great community event and a number of folks visited our table to learn more about us.

Thanks to Bill Taylor, Agnita Knott, Chris Scott and Jerry Zaslow who were available to share information with the visitors to our table.

The 3rd of three open houses this summer was held on September 17 at the CCC. This provided a great opportunity for visitors who had never been inside the camp to see how the workers lived. Thanks to the DCR, Bill Taylor and Marcella Stasa for sharing information with all the hikers, dog walkers and others who stopped by to get a glimpse of days gone by.
Annual BSTRA Trivia Ride

The Bay State Trail Riders Association held its annual Trivia Ride on July 23 in USF. Riders teamed up with a list of questions about the United States and headed out into the forest to locate the clues……a few hikers even joined in the fun.

Sue Wheeler from BSTRA dreamed up the trivia questions and presented ribbons to the winners. They were so clever, no one guessed all questions correctly…..guess we need to bone up on our American history.

Sadly, Sue Wheeler passed away in a horseback riding accident in August. She was an active member of BSTRA and offered her time to maintain trails in our state forests. She will be missed by all and our hearts go out to her family.

Hunting Season Dates

October 14 – November 25 – Upland Game Bird Hunting
October 16 – December 30 – Deer Hunting

NO HUNTING ON SUNDAYS


FUSF offers orange vests and apparel. To order, go to the FUSF store on our website to order. On-line ordering coming soon!!

Get Your Orange On!
Be Safe, Be Seen

4
Did You Know?

Think picking up dog poop is just annoying? The amount of poop in such a concentrated area like USF creates toxic waste that gets into the water. Be kind and pick up after your cherished pet (and don’t forget to leash them while hiking in USF – for their safety as well as others)

Did you think all plants had already been discovered?
(Time, June 5, 2017) Scientists found 1,730 new plant species globally in 2016.

Take a Hike
Studies show that nature walks improve heart and lung function and walking with friends lowers cholesterol, blood pressure and resting heart rate. Walking can also help preserve your memory.

Looking for some easy hikes?
Try these
www.onlyinyourstate.com/massachusetts/easy-short-hikes-ma/

Partnership with Environmental League of Massachusetts
FUSF is proud to partner with the Environmental League of Massachusetts to collect stories featuring park users and activists. We’re looking for your best photos, videos and audio files to tell your personal story about why Massachusetts state parks matter. Submit your story at www.environmentalleague.org/mymapark to have it featured on social media throughout the fall.

Get Well Wishes
Our thoughts and prayers go out to Bill Johnston and his family after Bill had a fall from a roof resulting in serious injuries. Bill is one of our co-founders and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Thought for the Day
“Only when the last tree has died and the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realize we cannot eat money”
Cree Indian Proverb
October
10/22 - Mushroom foraging and identification program @ 1:30 PM at USF – meet in front of the CCC headquarters

10/29 – BSTRA pumpkin ride - no parking at the headquarters parking area. Thank you BSTRA for sharing the proceeds from this ride with FUSF

November
11/3 – Backyard Wildlife Program, Upton VFW @ 7 PM
11/12 – MRA multi-sport race – no parking at the CCC headquarters
11/18 – Mass Forest & Park Friends Network Gathering, Upton VFW @ 9:30 AM – 3 PM; http://dcrfriendsnetwork.org

“Wildlife In Your Backyard”
Friday, November 3rd at 7 PM at the Upton VFW

Please join us for a special program sponsored by the FUSF with Joy Marzolf, Education Coordinator-Public Programs at the Mass Audubon’s Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary.

From dragonflies and butterflies to reptiles, birds and mammals, a wide variety of animals may visit local backyards. What animals are you most likely to see in Fall, Winter and Spring? Come find out more about our local wildlife, as well as occasional visitors, and what brings them to our neighborhoods.

FUSF Membership
Join or renew your FUSF membership at our November 3rd program to take advantage of a 10% discount.

Be sure to frequent our Facebook Page for announcements of future events.

Board of Directors meetings – 3rd Monday of each month @ 7PM at the Upton Police Station training room
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auditing</th>
<th>Fund Raising</th>
<th>Newsletter</th>
<th>Refreshments</th>
<th>Trails Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Historic Resources</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Resource Inventory</td>
<td>Telephone Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Publicity</td>
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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:** (Prices effective through 09/01/17) (Circle one)

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

**Additional Donation Amount:** General Fund or Special Fund?
Anonymous? Yes--- No--- Memorial or Honorarium?
Name of person being recognized?

(* 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: