

Minutes

Massachusetts Forest and Park Friends Network 10th Annual Gathering

VFW Hall, Upton, MA

November 18, 2017

IN ATTENDANCE:

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Andrea	Miller	Borderland State Park
Barbara	Buls	DCR Regional Interpretive Coordinator
Bill	Taylor	Upton State Forest
Bill	Vickstrom	Myles Standish State Forest
Bill	Boles	New England Mountain Bike Assoc./Wompatuck
Bob	Woodruff	Manuel F. Correllus State Forest
Chris	Bruno	DCR, Manuel F. Correllus State Forest
Dan	Badger	Myles Standish State Forest
David	Barber	Franklin Bellingham Rail Trail
David	Whitman	Manuel F. Correllus State Forest
Ellen	Mass	Alewife Reservation
Ellen	Arnold	Upton State Forest
Franco	Campanello	SW Corridor Park Conservancy
Frank	Mand	SE Mass Pine Barrens Alliance
Janet	Sinclair	Concerned Citizens of Franklin County
Jennifer	Norwood	EEA Office of Public Private Partnerships
John	Bescherer	Myles Standish State Forest
John	Best	Manuel F. Correllus State Forest
Joseph	Bella	Lawrence Heritage State Park
Michael	Mitchell	DCR Lawrence Heritage State Park
Mike	Toomey	Douglas State Forest
Mike	Whalen	Peru State Forest
Nick	Connors	DCR External Relations & Partnerships

Norma	Urban	Borderland State Park
Patricia	Keck	Harold Parker
Robert	Bendt	Borderland State Park
Salvatori	Raccitti	Savoy State Forest
Sarah	Freeman	Arborway Coalition
Scott	Morrill	EEA Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator
Sharl	Heller	SE Mass Pine Barrens Alliance
Susan	Masino	Peru State Forest

AGENDA – Attached Below/Linked

OPENING REMARKS

Ellen Arnold

- Welcome to Upton, invited group to visit the Upton State Forest.
- Blaze orange Be Safe Be Seen campaign.
- Introduced Facilitators: Dave Barber and Mike Toomey and Ellen Arnold and Sharl Heller.
- Role of facilitators sometimes extremely involved and proactive.
- We need to have people across the state involved, raise awareness of the issues that could affect all of us.
- Introduced Moderator Mike Toomey, Friends Network Facilitator and Representative to the MA Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee.

Mike Toomey

- Today – cover a lot of ground, always a lot of questions
- Paperwork: agenda
- Public Lands Preservation Act
- Mass Parks and Water Lobby Day (November 2, 2017) Recap – Co-hosted by the Environmental League of Massachusetts, Appalachian Mountain Club, Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers and Scientists (MOSES), Mass Rivers Alliance, the Trust for Public Land, and other members of the Green Budget Coalition.
- Help the ELM campaign, share your story: <https://www.environmentalleague.org/whats-your-ma-park-story/>
- New thing: Central Zone, regional planning agencies across state, Old Colony Planning Commission, and others.
- Pioneer Valley and the Central Mass Regional Planning developing a state-wide initiative, including funding for a statewide trail mapping system.
- Seminars on creating a statewide trail system is underway: and survey on what you want to see (features, water, habitat... Chicopee River Watershed Association two blue trails (canoeing, kayaking, largest basin from Mt. Wachusetts to Springfield, including the Quabbin Reservoir

ROUNDTABLE I

Jennifer Norwood, Director of the Office of Public Private Partnerships, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs:

Link to PowerPoint, *Strengthening Friends Groups: Capacity Building 101*

Strengthening Friends Groups – what you can do and make it work

Capacity Building

Making sure that you are set up to be effective

Not a onetime effort, it's really is about the long term

Basic steps

1. What's your mission?
 - a. All decisions tied back to mission
 - b. Is your mission actually a cause? Your mission should be bigger than a cause.
 - c. Is it more than getting more from DCR? If it is go back and reconsider.
2. Constituents
 - a. Who cares, who should care?
3. Organizational Structure
 - a. Principles of operation
 - b. MOU with DCR
 - c. Board of Directors
 - d. 501C3
4. How do you communicate with the world?
 - a. Live encounters
 - b. Website
 - c. Social Media
 - d. Newsletter
5. Support
 - a. Priorities and constituents drive fundraising.
6. Friends of Boston Harbor Islands mission and activities cited as good template.
7. Getting Started with Building Capacity
8. Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)
 - grants to municipalities, providers trained in shared approach (grants already out to towns)
 - How to engage community (trained 250 people already)
 - Cities and towns now ready to reach out to others
 - Assessing your vulnerability
 - Friends groups are stakeholders, nature based solution for managing climate change
 - Nature Conservancy, Mass Audubon are already in
 - What can we do? Is your town on the list?

Jennifer receives the Friends Network Award of Appreciation for her and the Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' support of the Network. Presented with artwork representing Alewife Reservation donated by Ellen Mass, Friends of Alewife Reservation.

ROUNDTABLE II

We went around the table; each person shared the accomplishments and challenges of their group and the DCR property for which they volunteer. Many shared their hopes for the future.

Mike Toomey, Moderator: This is our opportunity to find out what your group is doing, challenges we have, things that we are dealing with. What would we like to put on DCR's radar screen?

Barbara Buls, DCR Regional Interpretive Coordinator: Loves Friends groups. "Nothing will change until people really love our parks." Challenging at DCR, been there since 98, field staff has been reduced by half in that time—keep on keeping on.

Pat Keck, President of Friends of Harold Parker: First ever fundraiser, 3-year-olds hike, 5k in the forest: at the very least we thought, would break even and attract others—150 entrants, 130 people participated. People ran with their dogs! Provided bandana with map of the race route (swimming, hot dogs, \$2500 dollar take).

Held 30th annual fishing derby.

Our big disappointment: lost our battle to prevent the use of herbicides to control fanwort. We tried to show other methods. We pulled 350 bags of fanwort, clearing about an acre. DCR went ahead and used chemicals despite contrary research. Small victory: change in the chemical used for treatment.

In early August after second treatment algae appeared. All the water was murky, killed every plant in pond, 70-acre pond, held an event in late August to view impact. No signs of life in pond, former park interpreter was horrified. Wildlife all around pond diminished. All activity was gone. Unanimous opposition to chemical treatment by the Friends group. Park staff was not consulted; not informed when treatments were done. No treatment at opposite side.

Dave Barber, Franklin Bellingham Rail Trail, Friends Network Facilitator:

- 74 miles of trails in various conditions
- new kiosk in Franklin
- town line markers
- half mile markers through Eagle Scouts
- way-findings (22 miles)
- Storybook Trail

Susan Masino, Friends of Peru State Forest:

See PowerPoint, *Peru Friends 2017*

Garnet Peak, Peru is a very remote state forest, very little management, beautiful area, wet and high and rocky, icy – historical homesteads up there – amazing history on top, WWII crash site on Garnet peak, natural and historical resources.

Peru historical commission revived at same time. Organized cemetery hikes, memorial event of 1942 airplane crash, 16 paratroopers perished. YouTube video of the 75th anniversary of the crash (special commemorative plate on side of mountain).

Challenges and successes: Forestry plan for 280 acres, selective thinning to multiple areas of clear cut, whole top of mountain (unsuitable area growing trees commercially... here are better areas for growing trees than on top of mountain).

Challenge is to redirect DCR Forestry to areas where it is really needed. Friends are documenting historical resources, advocating to add to Middlefield Reserve (no one spoke up for it) nobody speaking for them.

Forests are ecosystems. They promote mental and physical health. Forest Health? DCR says it is maintaining health by removing tree plantation, and managing for specific wildlife, self-sustaining. Forest management costs money – First rule should be to do no harm: we need to be careful. Look for better areas to conduct forest management. Future desired condition is in question. People are upset.

Advice to DCR: Instead of timber harvesting, take care of invasive plants first.

Mike Whalen, Friends of Peru State Forest: Peru is a Magical place, that has an aura, well worth protecting. It's an orphan forest but a perfect location for Healthy Heart hikes. It's a ghost town; cellar holes, multiple sites that have not been documented. I work as an outdoor educator, Berkshire and Berkshire hills. I'd like to see orphan parks adopted.

Sara Freeman, Arborway Coalition:

See *Arborway Parkway Photos* here.

The Arborway is an urban park. The Arborway is part of the historic Emerald Necklace, Olmstead's idea. Muddy river was becoming a sanitation issue. The Arborway solved the problem that created a link in the park system that linear link from Boston Common all the way to Franklin Park. Parkways are the chain that hold Fenway, River Way, Jamaica Way and Arbor way. Oldmstead's portrait is at Jamaica Pond. Unfortunately, if you try to walk it, the bike path ends, parks further apart. Arborway Coalition took 20 years to restore the continuity of the linear park. It is in a high traffic area, high crash zone.

DCR was under pressure to transfer to mass highways. No, parkways are parks: A Parkway is not a roadway.

Challenges:

High traffic road. When you are in traffic then it doesn't feel that you are in a park.

Successes: Partnership projects—restored wall—removed a chain link fence and replaced it with a fence with iron railings, tree pruning, cross walk and woodlands mgmt.

Four rounds of consultants on transportation to come up with an implementable plan.

4^{5th} anniversary of Article 97, which requires 2/3 approval of the legislature to change conservation land designation.

Support an update of Article 97, HD2334/SD389: *An Act to Protect the Natural Resources of the Commonwealth/Public Lands Preservation Act* – Senator Eldridge, Rep. Balsler Many bills come before the legislature seeking to transfer public natural resource lands, protected by Article 97 of the

Massachusetts Constitution, for other purposes. This legislation would create a transparent process with EEA review before the legislature votes on whether to allow a park or conservation land protected by Article 97 to be converted to another use.

1. Sign petition
2. Call legislatures
3. Group sign on sheet

Bill Boles, Friends of Wompatuck State Park & New England Mountain Biking Association

Quite proud to stay I am no longer President of the Friends of Wompatuck after 13 years. My enthusiasm comes because much younger people are now running organization, taking the group in new directions: Mt Bike race raised over \$9k; Punk track installed. Commissioner Roy approves!

Challenges: Overall challenge: we tend to focus on our individual parks. We don't want to overlook the forest by concentrating on the trees. We should focus on trying to get more money for the DCR. The Appalachian Mountain Club has an effort to get more money for the DCR. The #1 priority is more staff! Staff is down by 40% since Dukakis was Governor. How can you manage a park system effectively without sufficient staff?

F. Gilbert Hills State Forest in Foxboro example: formerly 6 people managed the park, now there is one ranger he has five parks. Since Dukakis, support for parks has gone down on a per capita basis. One of our main priorities is advocating for DCR.

Chris Bruno – DCR Supervisor at Manual F. Correllus State Forest, Martha's Vineyard:

My motto—listen, learn and absorb what I can. We have three dedicated volunteers starting the first official friends group for the Forest. A sizeable forest, 5300 acres of sandplain habitat and pine barrens, contiguous part of the SE Mass coastal pine barrens. SE Mass Pine Barrens Alliance has done a great job of raising awareness. The big things we are trying to do—bring awareness of what is a pine barrens. People literally don't know what it is. They think 'pine barrens' is vacant land and are only interested in rushing to beach. They are unaware of the barrens as core habitat. We wanted to get in here [the Friends meeting] as soon as we could... lot of want in the forest. Great to know that there is a strong network here.

David Whitman – Manual F. Correllus State Forest, Cyclist:

Vineyard off-road bicycle enthusiast

John Best, Manual F. Correllus State Forest:

The Vineyard Off-Road Bicycle Association (VORBA)

Bob Woodruff, Manual F. Correllus State Forest:

Concerns with wildfire. The forest is not being managed. Native Americans managed this for 10k years with fire. We let it become a wasteland. Extinction of the heath hen mentioned. Greater effort needed to restore grassland through the use of prescribed fire, return the land to its origins.

Salvatore Raccitti, Friends of friends on both ends of the state:

Focus has been less on conservation and preservation, more on enjoying. Came to the realization: not finding young people up there. I had the good fortune to hike a spectacular trail with Mike Whalen and Janet Sinclair. In the process of that hike I discovered something too—an incredible idea to get young people nationally involved with trails (confident that it could dovetail with objectives of Friends groups).

Janet Sinclair, Mohawk Trail State Forest:

Three weeks ago, Peru Friends group helped start Friends of Mohawk. Live in Buckland, State Forest there has a little friends group. My interest is in state energy policy, biomass in Greenfield. We live in a huge landscape loss [because] of privately and state-owned land placing boundaries on the bigger ecosystem that we live in. My interest in the biomass policies. It is sad that the state is funding cutting of forests. For me, it is about protecting our forests. Formed Concerned Friends of Franklin County, a group interested in protecting all forests in Western Mass.

Bill Vickstrom and John Bescherer, Friends of Myles Standish State Forest:

We host a Meetup site where we post our events. We've held 1200 events in our existence—hikes, bird and plant ID walks and astronomy nights. Our mission "to educate the public and promote responsible use of the MSSF. Excellent partnership with the DCR for last year's centennial event and with the staff at MSSF in the stewardship of the Forest.

Ellen Arnold, Friends of Upton State Forest:

The work of ELM on behalf of DCR properties is very important—Lobby Day and the Public Lands Protection Act being two projects that Friends groups should support.

Upton used to be an 'Orphan park' (not an orphan anymore).

Upton now has a Resource Inventory that provided valuable materials to affect a management plan (cultural resources compiled).

Challenge: There are eleven open wells, in Upton State Forest. DCR needs financing to cover the wells.

Encourage those who have parks with old settlements to look for wells and report them.

Dan Badger, Friends of Myles Standish State Forest:

Infinite possibilities for connectivity with community and forests—parents and children connectivity, AMC; Scout Craft, Bush Craft training for youth.

Bob Bent, Friends of Borderland State Park:

Borderland spans two towns, Easton and Sharon. 1700 acres forest, pasture, meadow, four ponds, beautiful land. Recreational activities include mountain biking, canoeing, fishing, hiking, disc golf course.

Friends of Borderland sponsor over 200 events for DCR a year. Twelve main events—art show (Blanche Ames) mansion on the property, built 1910, we maintain it.

Two farm houses remain on the property in curatorship, occupied and preserved
Famous for having movies (Ghostbusters ladies, Shutter Island filmed there – Leonard DiCaprio).
Organize Fishing derbies and tours of mansion (Oliver Ames, Governor of Mass). Revenues increased.

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Franco Campanello, SW Corridor Park Conservancy, Inc.:

Circa 2004. Restore the park turned into a wasteland. DOT funds on top of Amtrak lines from Forest Hills to Copley Square.

4.5 miles long, first half mile 4.5 acres, 254 trees (planted 80). One rabbit. Feral cats.

\$25k grant raised and given to restoration of park.

2000 hours of volunteer work.

30 stewards that take a portion of the park

1990, forced on to DCR from DOT.

15-years later, first rangers (afraid to come into the city) appeared. Notable events—2 sharps containers at each end of park, ground zero for opioid park modify for homeless

Challenges: DCR is gutted. Just not enough on the ground people. Some workers do more damage. Snow removal is outsourced. In only 2 feet of snow, the fencing we put in is beaten up. We lost our manager, sent elsewhere, no one managing. Pat Driscoll is gold.

Labor of love: planting as if was located in North Carolina because of the “heat sink” caused by the warmer city temperatures (pavement. Will be highly affected by climate change, 5 feet elevation, if seawater rises.

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Bill Taylor, President of Upton State Forest:

Upton State Forest contains Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) buildings, parade ground, shrubs planted around barracks, outline of barracks, incredible opportunity to tell about the CCC and the role they played in Mass and around nation. Friends are working with DCR to maintain HQ building.

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School used to help on big projects. The building is in good condition: adapted reuse is needed.

DCR is investing in land for Upton still. The parcels are not contiguous. Fragmented forest but the surface quarries in Upton are preserved.

We run programs, improve quality of visitor experience by taking advantage of local cultural council grants. Trail usage promotion, hunter orange vests provided on a trust basis.

Have good relationship with DCR. DCR is underfunded, but incredibly responsive.

Joe Bella, Lawrence Heritage State Park:

See PowerPoint, *Lawrence Heritage Friends Presentation*

Former Mill boarding house – theatre, meetings, gallery.

Events:

- Thelma Todd Birthday party
 - Kite Festival
 - Trolley Tours
 - Old-fashioned July 4th celebration
 - Boat tours on the Merrimack River
 - Bread and Roses Heritage Festival (Labor Day)
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Michael Mitchell, Park Supervisor, Lawrence Heritage State Park:

Appreciates Friends groups.

Ellen Mass, President, Friends of Alewife Reservation (FAR):

Alewife is 150 acres, encroached upon on all sides, as Cambridge is one of the fastest growing cities in the US. Alewife, is a gem in a golden egg. GE and Amazon are coming in, developing very fast. Open space is critical on a flood plain, according to the Climate Change Adaptation Center. Alewife is 5 feet above sea level, Mystic River. On a major transportation artery in city.

Challenges: Syringes in water, encampments of homeless.

While it's a wonderful place, it is just a matter of time before we will get very serious crime in the park. We try to bring most positive attention.

ROUNDTABLE III

Nick Connors, DCR Director of External Relations and Partnerships:

The direct contact for Friends groups.

Thank for you what you do within parks. Our parks would not be what they are without you.

Lot of challenges that apply to some, some to all. Feel free to jump in the conversation.

Staff at urban parks are trained to deal with sharps. Western park staff are trained for old growth forest protection. There is a lot of breadth within the agency.

DCR & Partners: We are seeking partners who can collaborate on volunteers, programming, capital improvements. "We have a billion dollars in infrastructure needs."

"You are the face of the park – goodwill ambassadors." You have local connections.

Herter Amphitheatre success story— A new nonprofit based in Allston raised \$75,000 in private funding for rehabilitating the site, and has already scheduled theater performances there in August. The group is now negotiating logistical details with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, which operates Herter Park.

New requirements for Friends Groups—volunteer stewardship agreement required. Will be negotiating to develop individual MOA for each group.

We are not going to ask each group to carry insurance.

There is no such thing as a recreational permit anymore.

DCR is planning a meeting for Friends groups and volunteers in the spring. Invited Friends to discuss possible dates.

ROUNDTABLE IV

Scott Morrill, EEA Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator

Working for the future development of new trails. This position is new to the EEA. Scott was at DCR for 7/8 years as the Western region OHV coordinator. New job is less hands on with trails, more engaged with policy and coordinating between all constituents.

The 2011 OHV law includes a mandate for new trails and set up a fund for new riding opportunities, education and enforcement.

Hope to increase riding opportunities, 25% of funds go towards expanding riding opportunities. Have a lot of work to do. Difficult in this state, not as much contiguous open, suitable land for OHV trails.

Part of what I am hoping to do: foster mutually beneficial relationships between land owners and OHV community, stewardship of property, riders (maintain and take care of trails).

Anecdote: Savoy – woodlot chapter 61C. Possible snowmobile trails (2000) Stewards are snow mobile clubs. Savoy Canary Cats – cross country skiing through ATV trails. Everybody working together to have more access to the parks. We will have to separate some uses and make sure they do so safely.

OHV and use criteria – Fine filter/coarse filter process.

MEPA, NHESP, DEP, Fish and Wildlife, don't just go out and say, hey, let's put up a trail.

Groups as partners help as stewards of land, educate riders, self-police riders. Delicate balance (one person can ruin user group).

Major part of what I am trying to put forward is forming 501c3 groups (7 OHV recreational groups now). The more people we can get engaged the more trails we can provide.

May change laws: Chapter 90d needs to change to allow more riding opportunities on abandoned roadways, etc.

OHV trails can help economic development, especially in rural areas, i.e., Central Mass revenue increase. A deeply wooded community, without a large population may benefit with OHV trails.

Moving forward, next step – develop a program showing how groups can navigate to become 501c3, how to sustain a club and increase volunteer efforts.

Recreation Management critical: balance user groups. Hoping that when we open up other areas, we will see more revenue, more policing, more place for OHV riders to go.

Q & A

Q: more registration areas?

A. Online registration system hasn't been working. Looking into out of state registration. Onus is on riders to prove they have registered in the state. Working to fix that.

Q. Would this requirement at 25% for new trails go to buy both state and private land?

A. It could.

Q. Change to open up some parks where vehicle presently prohibited?

A. Yes, looking at it.

Q. Coarse/Fine filter review first?

A. All sorts of reviews, Environmental impact, filters, NHESP.

In Maine OHV industry brings in ¾ billion dollars in revenue.

Q. Enforcement of OHV regulations, where is up-to-date information on arrests?

A. Dec. 5 meeting, every 6 months EPO Captain shares data. Is it up to date? Towns not sharing OHV violation fine fees. Court systems are not on board with sharing funds from fines with state for trails, education.

Q Park Watch? MEP are totally ineffective. Went ballistic. That weekend put some MEP out there using information supplied by Park Watch.

A. Hope my new position is a start at fixing that. You can always call me. I can contact MEP officers.

Q. Central reporting?

Q. Should be some effort toward a central number, for tracking data.

AGENDA

9:30 AM Breakfast and registration. Upload slides for your presentation.

10:00 AM

Roundtable discussion I - Jennifer Norwood, Director of the Office of Public Private Partnerships, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs: *Strengthening Friends Groups*.

Award of Appreciation

11:00 AM

Roundtable discussion II - You! Friends groups sharing their challenges and successes.

NOTE: Your slides will become part of a presentation to the DCR Stewardship Council describing the state of Friends groups and the properties we care about across the Commonwealth. Late with slides? Send them, with a brief description to friend@dcrfriendsnetwork.org.

12:00 PM Lunch/Celebration

1:00 PM

Roundtable Discussion III - Nick Connors, Director of External Relations & Partnerships, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation: *DCR Partnerships—The Future of Friends Groups*.

2:00 PM

Roundtable Discussion IV - Scott Morrill, Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs: *The New Massachusetts Off-Highway Vehicle Program*.