



WOMPATUCK NEWS

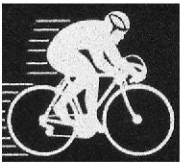
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Friends of Wompatuck State Park

Fall Edition 2006

Mountain Biking Spectacular at Wompatuck State Park

By Eric Oddleifson FOW Secretary



September 9 and 10th 2006: these are the days the New England mountain bike community descended upon

our park. September 9 saw the long-delayed arrival of the New England Mountain Bike Association's annual festival. Set up in South field, NEMBA Fest brought over 30 vendors, the Friends of Wompatuck food tent, the mountain bike Olympics, marked trails throughout the park for all skill abilities, and hundreds of riders from throughout the region. It was a sunny, hot day with temperatures in the mid to high 80s. This annual festival, held at different locations throughout New England, brought mountain bikers of all skill levels together to celebrate our sport, make new friends, and enjoy some good FOW food. This was the first event that FOW sponsored a food tent. Headed up by our vice president Steve Cobble, who is a professional chef, and supported by numerous volunteers from within FOW and from the southeastern chapter of NEMBA, the food tent was a great success.

By 11 am. on Saturday NEMBA Fest was in full swing. Hundreds of participants headed out on show rides, talked to vendors, or participated in the mountain bike Olympics. The event was a huge success and plans are underway to see if we can bring it back to our park next year.

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Portrait of King Philip from the Haffenreffer Museum, R.I., date and artist unknown.

Josiah Wompatuck, King Philip and the Native Americans

By Jim Rose FOW Historian

First Native American contact with Europeans probably occurred along the coast of Cape Cod 1,000 years ago. Norsemen from Scandinavia landed in northwest Newfoundland in 986. In 1497, John Cabot explored northeast Newfoundland and more than likely encountered the Beothuck tribe living there.

Englishman Captain John Smith specifically mentioned tribal contact when he explored Cohasset and the coast of New England in 1614. A present day plaque commemorating

the event can now be found at a water's edge park in Cohasset Harbor.

Soon after Captain Smith departed, three separate epidemics swept across New England between 1614 and 1617 destroying three fourths of the original native population. In 1620, the Pilgrims found most of the Wompanoag villages abandoned. When Puritans first settled Boston in 1629, only 500 of the Massachusetts tribe were alive. Smallpox decimated most of the tribe in 1633.

Soon afterwards, Rev. John Eliot began his missionary work among the natives in the area. The new Christian converts were gathered into 14 villages of "Praying Indians." Committed to strict rules of Puritan conduct, tribal traditions quickly died away. No organized groups of the

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Mountain Biking Spectacular at Wompatuck (cont.)

To cap off a great afternoon, the Root 66 mountain bike race series held its short track finals on Saturday as well. The race-course was set up around the South field and was approximately 1 mile long. A relatively smooth, non-technical course, it was designed to test a racers endurance and strategy. Root 66 held for short track races amidst its busy longer mountain bike racing season. It was a thrill for NEMBA Fest participants to watch the racers fly around this one-mile course and it was a perfect complement to NEMBA's annual festival.

Sunday the 10th of September saw the return of the Landmine Classic Mountain Bike Race. For numerous years, Paul Peasley and Kevin Chichlowski of Bike Barn in Whitman (located on Route 18) have organized this successful mountain bike racing event. This year was

Paul's last as he is moving with his family down to Tennessee in the near future. We wish Paul and his family all the best and offer profuse thanks to all of his dedicated hard work. Kevin will continue to be the primary sponsor for this race and will be working closely with FOW over the coming years to organize this event.

For this year's race, FOW members help to organize and volunteered to help run the event and made it a great success. The race course consisted of a challenging 9.5 mile loop entirely on the right side of the park. Approximately 180 racers competed despite the threat of rain to test their skills against some of the area's best riders. Wompatuck's ranger Steve Gammon and FOW member's Brian Hill and Eric Oddleifson represented the FOW Team! The race went off without any major difficulties and no serious injuries.

For a second day, FOW members worked furiously to feed the masses at the food tent. Over both days, with proceeds from the food tents and The Landmine Classic Mountain Bike Race, FOW was able to raise enough money to support our efforts to maintain and enhance Wompatuck State Park for the next year.

Many individuals worked tirelessly to help put all of these events on over the entire weekend. They are: Paul and Mary Peasley, Kevin Chichlowski, FOW President Bill Boles, FOW Vice President Steve Cobble, FOW Treasurer Chris Hebert, FOW Secretary Eric Oddleifson, Jim Dillon, Liz Bowling, Elizabeth Oddleifson, the Bike Barn Racing Team, Phillip Keys, the SE NEMBA chapter, and many other individuals! Thank you and see you next year!!! ■

Eric

Josiah Wompatuck, King Philip and the Native Americans (cont.)

Massachuset are known to have survived after 1800.

Sachem Josiah Wompatuck was a member of the Massachuset tribe. His father was Chief Chickataubut. When he died, Josiah was raised by his father's brother, Kutchamakin. Wompatuck was exposed to Christianity at an early age and was considered a Praying Indian. He and members of the Wompanoag tribe who he associated with transferred the land of present day Hingham to the town in 1665.

The Wompanoags inhabited southeastern Massachusetts and the eastern shore of Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island. The Massachuset inhabited valleys of the Charles and Neponset Rivers including the present site of Boston and its suburbs. Massachuset translates to "The people of the great hills (Blue Hills)," and Wompanoag translates to "Eastern people" in Algonquin.

Although involved in the Christian way of life, the Praying Indians occasionally resorted to war-

fare. After the Mohawk tribe attacked Praying Indians near Boston in 1665, Wompatuck led a retaliatory attack on the Mohawk village of Gandouagu in 1669. His raid failed, and his war party was ambushed in retreat.

When the King Philip War swept New England in 1675, many of the Praying Indians joined King Philip, also called Metacomet, of the Wompanoag tribe. Puritan missionaries attempted to collect those remaining into praying villages, but only 500 could be found. Despised by Philip's warriors, Praying Indians volunteered as scouts and guides for the English. Still suspect, many loyal natives were killed by the colonialists. The colonial militia transferred most of them to Deer Island in Boston Harbor, where many succumbed to disease and malnutrition.

Approximately 800 English died in battle during King Phillip's War. Measured against a European population of around 52,000, this death rate was nearly seven times that of World War II. Along the South Shore King

Phillip's warriors attacked the towns of Weymouth, Hingham, Scituate, and Plymouth killing eleven settlers at Clark's Garrison (now the parking lot of the present Plymouth Plantation).

The Native Americans suffered even worse. The English massacred natives at Turner Falls, Massachusetts and at the Great Swamp in South Kingston, Rhode Island, bringing the war's toll to over 3,000 Native Americans. Those who survived lost property rights and individual liberties, and many were sold into slavery.

At the conclusion of the war in 1677, only seven of the original 14 praying villages and 300 Praying Indians survived. To this day, some of the descendants from the praying town at Punkapog are still living near the cities of Canton, Mattapan, and Mansfield. There are currently five organized bands of Wompanoags that have survived: Assonet, Gay Head, Herring Pond, Mashpee, and Namasket. ■