

Town Forest Benefits from Eagle Scout Project

Merrimac Boy Scout John Olds decided that he wanted to make his Eagle Rank service project about improving the use and overall experience of being in the Town Forest. He approached the Town leadership last December with a proposal to place four trail markers containing historical information about the Town Forest. These markers would also include bar codes that could be read on smart phone apps to access the Town Forest maps located on our town website.

As an Eagle project, John organized the research, design and installation of the markers. He worked through the Open Space committee chairperson (Mrs. Sandy Venner) and town historian (Jeff Hoyt) to come up with the information to be displayed. Working with his father and fellow scouts, he designed and built the marker posts and display plates during the summer. Finally, in September, he organized two work parties of scouts to install the posts at various trail intersections in Town Forest. This past month, John presented a scale replica of the final product to the Board of Selectmen.

One of the markers contains the following information:

Historical Marker #3

You are now at the highest point in Merrimac, Red Oak Hill, elevation 315 '. The surrounding 8 acres were donated by the now dissolved Rod and Gun Club. Also atop this hill there was a "pest house" built in 1761. This house was used as a quarantine location for victims of a major smallpox epidemic.

John hopes that everyone heads up to the trails to see the markers before winter weather sets in. He is hopeful that the Town Forest map could be updated to show their locations.

