

EVENTS

FRIENDS
OF OIL
CREEK
STATE
PARK



FOCSP Quarterly Newsletter

VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 2

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

PROGRAMS
AND WORK
DATES

Oil Creek 100 Trail Run:
Friday, October 7, 2011 –
Pre-pasta dinner at Titusville
Middle School. OC100 race
Saturday, October 8
through Sunday, October 9,
2011 – Eastern National
Trail Run.

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Get Out and Discover

Oil Creek State Park now has six new backpacks to loan to park visitors. The new “Get Out and Discover!” program is meant to target park visitors who may never have been backpacking, or those that may have forgotten their backpacks at home. Backpacks are filled with items that will assist the visitor in seeing, identifying, and writing down information about trees, flowers, insects, birds, reptiles and amphibians. They also contain a compass used in navigating along trails within the park. By loaning out backpacks, Oil Creek State Park hopes to get visitors out in the park discovering all of the wonderful resources it has to offer.

How to participate in the program:

Visitors who are interested in using a backpack will need to have a current driver’s license. A copy of the driver’s license is kept on file to deter vandalism and theft. The backpacks will be kept in the office and will be able to be signed out on a daily basis. After the visitor has signed out the backpack from the office, they will be able to use the backpack for the day in Oil Creek State Park. Enjoy walking or hiking along 52 miles of hiking trails. Maps of the trails



More backpack information on page 3

2011 Biathalon

Shots rang out in Oil Creek on Saturday, August 13, 2011 as 50 competitors ran and shot 22 caliber guns at targets from 32 feet in the 6th annual Oil Creek Biathalon. This event is a major fund raiser for the Friends and this year’s race was a success. The event took over 36 volunteers who logged about 357 volunteer hours. Between some new major sponsors and entry fees minus expenses, the Group raised \$1765.74. All proceeds will go to-

wards supporting trail maintenance, construction, programs, and other needs of the park. Check out pictures from the event on our website. If you want to get involved next year as a competitor or a volunteer, contact John Sims at pjam@venustel.org or the park office.

Thanks goes out to our volunteers and major sponsors: Enervest, Range Resources, Goss Gass, Dr. David Somers, Gill Consulting, LLC, Friedhabers of Oil City, Dr. Scott Kennedy, Dr. Robert Woods, University of Pittsburgh at Titusville, and Friends of Drake Well

Ranger Report

As the park’s summer season comes to a close, it ushers in a time of change in visitor demographics and weather. September, October and November are seemingly the peak season for many activities including peddling the 9.7 mile bike trail, hiking the 36 mile Gerard Hiking Trail, hunting over 6,000 acres, fall foliage site seeing and photography, wildlife viewing, fishing Oil Creek, and the Oil Creek 100 Trail Runs. With many activities taking place and diverse recreational interests, the park staff encourages safety and the shared use policy. When visiting the park for a day trip or a night stay at the Adirondack shelters, it is suggested to leave a trip plan with a family member or friend and notify a park official, wear visible colors and maintain a first aid kit. Key points to remember when leaving a trip plan; clearly state your recreational intention and location, identify your parking location on a recreational guide and your length of stay and provide an emergency contact phone number with a responsible party.

-Jake Weiland Park Manager





FRIENDS OF OIL CREEK

MISSION STATEMENT:

“The Friends of Oil Creek State Park support the park’s mission to preserve, protect and interpret our natural environment while providing recreational and educational opportunities for residents and visitors to the Region.”



Swinging Bridge
At Boughton on a cross
over white trail of the
Gerard Hiking Trail

FOCSP Message

What We’re About By Kirby F. Neubert

Welcome to all the new readers of this newsletter. The Friends group has decided to email copies to everyone who signs the guest register at the park office as well as to the existing membership. It’s also posted on the Friends group website. Our goal is to keep as many people informed about what’s going on at OCSP as possible and to encourage participation in the events and activities.

It’s probably safe to say that the vast majority of the people have no idea what the Friends of Oil Creek State Park (FOCSP) is all about. And a very legitimate question might be, “Why should I give money to a park organization when my tax dollars are already being spent there?”

Without going into great detail, suffice it to say that each state park is budgeted a certain amount of money every year to operate on. This varies from park to park based on a variety of things. OCSP has a certain amount of money to operate on too, but that sum only goes so far.

So the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation (PPFF) set up what it calls “Friends” groups that are made up of volunteers which can add to and work within the state parks and forests, without having to conform to many of the budget restraints that the park and its staff have to follow.

For instance, we have a longstanding group called the “Over-The-Hill Gang” who clear the trails and make repairs to the Gerard hiking trail weekly. They invest countless hours a year doing work that the park’s maintenance staff couldn’t possibly do due to budget constraints. Not only does this reduce the cost of trail upkeep, but it also frees up the maintenance staff to do more skilled jobs elsewhere in the park.

The Friends group is also allowed to raise funds on its own and keep this money separate from the park’s funds. In this way, money can be raised to make special purchases for the park without depriving the everyday routine expenses of needed money. A good example is the bicycle sheds purchased in 2010. The cost of materials for these sheds was nearly \$2,500. With the park’s budget having been cut so drastically, it couldn’t possibly have bought these much needed sheds. But with money raised by the Friends group and labor supplied by Friends volunteers, two new sheds were built to get the park’s rental bikes out of the weather.

Right now the Oil Creek State Park and Friends are putting a strong emphasis on our trail systems. This includes trails for hiking, biking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. Maintaining the trails we already have along with building new ones will require volunteer labor and extra money that the park doesn’t have in its regular budget. For example, bridges need to be repaired or replaced. The Over-The-Hill Gang directs their efforts to the Gerard trail. That means every other trail in the park needs someone else to clean and maintain it. The FOCSP are in a position to provide both labor and funding to help these projects along.

Another thing Friends members do is help the park naturalist put on presentations. This is a great way to become directly involved with the outdoors. You can get involved at whatever level you’re comfortable with such as anything from putting on part of the presentation to simply providing an extra pair of hands.

The FOCSP host the annual biathlon, and they assist with the Oil Creek 100 Ultra Race. These events produce a large portion of the group’s revenue, and they are bringing national and international acclaim to the park.

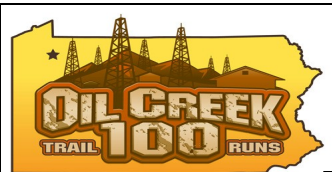
If you aren’t already a member of the FOCSP, I’d encourage you to join. By giving back a little something to this wonderful park you’re helping to ensure that it will be around for many generations to come. The more Friends we have, the more we can do. And the more we can do, the more the park can be enjoyed.

**SKI TRAIL
MAINTENANCE**

Take advantage of the fall weather and join the Friends as they clean and clear the cross country skiing trails in preparation for this season.

Maintenance involves moving debris from the trails, checking damp areas, and other general trail preparations.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE DATES:
October 16th, November 13th, and
December 4th 1:00 PM UNTIL 4:00 PM



More Information on Oil Creek Hiking and Backpacking

Leave No Trace Principles.

1. Know before you go: be prepared; use a map; learn about the area
2. Stick to trails: try to avoid stepping on flowers, trees, creating a foot path; camp at campsites
3. Trash in Trash Out: put all litter in bags and carry home
4. Leave it as you find it: leave plants, rocks & historical items as you found them.
5. Be careful with fire: use a stove for cooking; keep fires small; burn all wood to ash and be sure fire is out completely .

6. Keep wildlife wild: observe wildlife from a distance; do not approach, feed, or follow them
7. Share trails & manage pets: be considerate of others; place pets on a leash



Moutainsmith backpacks are made with post-consumer PET bottles. Eighteen plastic bottles were used in making each backpack, thus saving them from being placed in a landfill

Contents
Binoculars
Compass
Journal & pencil to record information
Field Guides (Insects, Birds, Reptiles & Amphibians, & Trees)



Oil Creek 100 Ultramarathon-Saturday October 8, 2011
People interested in extreme running- even extreme hiking will be competing . Runners from all across the US will be competing in various forms of the ultra marathon – (a foot race beyond the 26.2 mile marathon distance). The Oil Creek 100 is comprised of three distances- 50K (31 miles), 100K (62 miles), and 100 miles. All races use a 50K loop course which is run in a counter clockwise direction, using primarily the yellow loop of the Gerard Hiking Trail between Titusville Middle School and Petroleum Center.

*For more information contact Tom Jennings at rdoc100@yahoo.com or visit the website at www.oilcreek100.org.

**If you are interested in volunteering during the race, contact Katie Peterson, OC 100 Volunteer Coordinator, at katiepeterson15@yahoo.com

*****The Friends of Oil Creek State Park will provide a pasta dinner to the racing applicants on Friday night before the event at the Titusville Middle School cafeteria. The Friend's Group would like to thank the OC 100 for their generous donation of \$750 dollars which will help improve the Oil Creek Trails. We would also like to thank them for opening up our wonderful park to so many more people.**



Park Staff Biographies

– Michele Winger-

Michele Winger grew up in Seneca, PA and currently resides in Oil City, PA with her husband Jerry, and three daughters Britteny, age 15, and Amanda and Samantha, 11 year old twins. She also has three step-children, Justin-21, Jessica-19, and Kayla-18. Michele has an Associate's Degree in Paralegal Studies from State University of New York, a Bachelor's degree in Legal Studies from California University of PA, and a Master's degree in Law and Public Policy, also from California University. Michele is very excited to be working at Oil Creek State Park. She comes to us from the Regional Park office in Prospect, PA, where she has been working as a Clerk Typist 2 since April. She holds many fond memories of coming to the park as a child and continues to be a regular park visitor at many of the State Parks in Northwestern PA. Her family loves picnicking and geocaching at Oil Creek, swimming at Presque Isle, hiking at Cook Forest, and one of their favorite pastimes is camping at Pymatuning..

Joe Guthrie



Joe Guthrie has recently been announced as the Park Maintenance Supervisor at Oil Creek State Park. Joe has been a State Park employee for many years at Pymatuning working through the maintenance ranks. Joe spends much time with his wife and five children. Joe is also an avid hunter and angler.

A New Horizon

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Oil Creek
Bike Trail
Early Fall

Most of Oil Creek State Park is made up of one long, narrow, densely wooded valley with steep mountains on the east and west sides of Oil Creek. Because of that, there are very few vantage points where beautiful sunrises and sunsets can be viewed. Yet there's something new on the horizon that's just as exciting to see.

Just two years ago there was a very strong likelihood that OCSPP, along with many other state parks, was going to be shut down indefinitely. The economy had crashed, and with it came major budget cuts to the DCNR. One of the first knee-jerk reaction solutions was to shut down nearly half of the state parks to save operating costs. But fortunately, "we the people" let our state representatives know that we weren't in favor of that idea and screamed loud enough that that ludicrous thought was abandoned, and not one state park was closed.

However, over the past four years that I've personally been involved in the park, we've lost nearly all of the employees that were here when I got here. Some took jobs elsewhere with most being in other state parks. Some took retirement. By the time this summer rolled around, we were down to only three staff people coming to work in the morning. Things were looking pretty grim.

But just when things were looking their bleakest, a new day began to dawn. Fortunately our new governor has an interest in our state parks, and even though our country is still having economic problems, Oil Creek State Park has been blessed with a budget that has allowed us to rebuild our staff to the point where we can move forward again. It is enabling the park staff to grow by leaps and bounds. And not only are we getting new people on board, but they're all top caliber in their related fields. Our patience is beginning to pay off!

Robin, our new park naturalist, is the staff member who you will probably interact with most directly. She's doing a fantastic job of putting together various programs that educate people about the great outdoors. She's also put programs together that are just plain fun like the bike and train ride. Perhaps most importantly, she's advertising them in a number of different places such as the Friends Group's website, the DCNR website, local newspapers, and at the park office. Take advantage of these activities. You'll be glad you did.

Other newly hired employees will help to ensure your visit to the park is safe and enjoyable. It is our goal to present each of the staff to you via this newsletter as time goes on. Each one brings their own special expertise to the park. Through their combined efforts Oil Creek State Park has a very bright future on its horizon.

By Kirby F. Neubert



Picture By
Kirby Neubert

FOCSP Membership Opportunities!

Friends of Oil Creek State Park contribute in many ways to the community and our resource. Each member receives a quarterly newsletter that has details of park programs, volunteer dates, events that take place and more! With your annual membership, the FOCSP will draw names for opportunities to win a night in an Adirondack Shelter along the Gerard Hiking Trail or Family Value Bike Rental pack for our park's National Recreation Trail from Petroleum Centre to the Jersey Lot, near Drake Well. Annual memberships are due every January and continue through the month of December. Monies collected are used for programs, events and focus projects at the park. If you would enjoy being a part of the FOCSP community, application are available at the park office or by visiting the FOCSP website. (\$10 individual, \$25 Family and \$100 corporate).

Support your Friends and Community



Pennsylvania State Park Calendars \$8.49 + Tax

All proceeds benefit the educational programs, events and focus projects within Oil Creek State Park.

Park Office Hours:
Monday through Friday 8 AM to 4 PM
Saturday and Sunday 10 AM to 6 PM

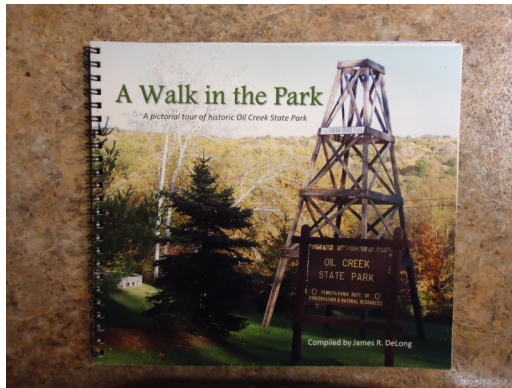
Contact the Park Office at 814-676-5915



Friends of Oil Creek State Park T-Shirts \$ 15.00



Friends of Oil Creek Patch \$ 3.00



A Walk in the Park Photo Guide to Oil Creek State Park \$ 15.00 + Tax



Oil Creek State Park Pin \$ 5.00

Friends of Oil Creek State Park

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Park Office Phone: 814-676-5915

E-Mail: friendsocsp@gmail.com

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