



FOCSP

Quarterly Newsletter

VOLUME 3 - ISSUE 3

Winter 2011-2012

President's Column

As we quickly approach the end of the traditional calendar year we also are very near the end of the seasonal year. On December 22nd winter begins. This season is usually considered to be a "dead" season as all of nature looks to be lifeless. Without their leaves the trees appear to be dead and seldom are any animals seen outdoors, not even humans.

But while this may be the time for some wildlife to hibernate, it's a great time for people to get outside and take a look at what's still there. With the leaves gone, vistas and other things in the woods can be seen that have been hidden since late spring. The cold air is more invigorating than the stifling heat and humidity of last summer. And the beauty of a snow-covered landscape is hard to beat.

Oil Creek State Park has a lot to offer to the person who wants to venture outdoors during this pristine time of year. Efforts are being made to keep the cross country ski trails on top of the mountain near the ski hut well groomed all winter long. New signs have been installed to help guide newcomers and to encourage responsible usage of these trails.

For those who prefer a more natural type of ski trail, the rail-trail is left ungroomed, and is mostly level for its entire length of nearly ten miles. All other trails are open to either cross country skiing or snowshoeing. In fact, snowshoeing can open a winter wonderland that very few people ever see. Trails as such aren't needed, and the deeper snow and winter itself protect any plants that may otherwise be damaged while traveling afoot any other time of the year.

A very much underutilized feature of the park in the wintertime is Oil Creek itself. The two delayed harvest areas of the stream are open to fishing year round. (Check your fishing digest for all regulations that apply.) Although extra caution should be used, this is a great way to beat the cabin fever of winter.

So don your winter apparel and grab your camera or fishing rod and enjoy what God has put out there for you to see and experience, and Oil Creek State Park is the place to do it.

- Kirby F. Neubert



PARK MANAGER'S REPORT

Serving as park manager of Oil Creek State Park for nearly three and a half years, I have had the opportunity to serve the undisputed best run State Park service in the nation and work with a dedicated user community and partners! Pennsylvania State Parks are noted for resource stewardship, quality services, our understanding of personal needs of users, and ability to properly manage the land entrusted to the commonwealth by increasing the visitors' experience through recreational, cultural and outdoor educational opportunities. In achieving the goal of better serving our visitors' needs through outdoor experiences, many difficult decisions are weighted on my shoulders. Decisions are not hasty, rather made through a collection of resource plans and feasibility studies, designed to promote the parks operation as a whole. I value community involvement and look forward to future improvements! Jake Weiland

PROGRAMS

AND WORK

DATES:

NIGHT SKIING

JANUARY 7, 21

FEBRUARY 4, 8

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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.”



Mike Henderson-50K-Bib 419-Water Team Leader-73yr-old—Jim Benson-

The Oil Creek 100, 100K, 50k trail races were a huge success this year. The weather was beautiful and race conditions were near perfect... Tom Jennings, race organizer states, “ ‘ I did it, I finished!’ I love hearing those words as happy 50K, 100K and 100 mile participants cross the finish line. Some of them scream it out as they bound across the finish line literally skipping and leaping like a child, and others gasp it as they hunch over with hands on knees and struggling to stay upright. Some finishers don’t say anything but you can tell by the tired satisfied look on their face that is what they are thinking...

...Oil Creek 100 Trail Runs is under the Road Runners’ Club of America umbrella and one of the objectives of the organization is to promote fitness and running as healthy exercise. As race director I wanted to create an event in 2009 that had sufficiently long cut-off times to encourage any person looking for a lifestyle change to give Oil Creek a try – and to have a chance at experiencing that amazing finish line feeling of accomplishment. The 50K and 100K are especially hiker friendly with 30+ minute per mile pace cut-offs. This year the 100 miler was RRCA’s “Eastern Regional Ultra Championship” race and at 32 hours to complete has the quickest pace requirement of 19 minutes per mile.” -Tom Jennings race director-

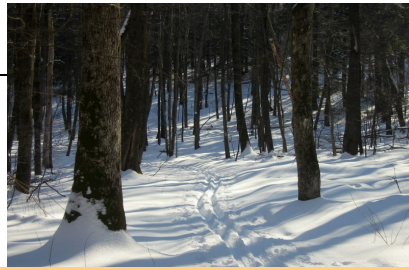
The racers are a special breed and many have written to Tom about their experiences. Here is one example: “Let me take a moment to try to describe how wonderful the volunteers were at all of the aid stations. Each runner is made the center of attention. ... At every single station, they took my pack from me, opened my camelback bladder and on the way to the drink containers, were asking what I needed it filled with. Wow! Tom Jennings, RD, is to be congratulated for the hard work he devotes in pulling together such a top-notch event and also having such a wonderful team of organized assistants.” Tom’s thoughts are already on next year, “2012’s 100 mile race is RRCA’s national ultra championship race and both the 50K and 100K should sell out in hours. This response to a race that is only entering its 4th year is a testament to the fabulous sponsors and the volunteers from Oil Creek State Park’s surrounding Oil Region. The runners often comment at the finish line and in post-race emails that the race volunteers make them feel like family instead of just a race participant.”

Parting thoughts from one racer, “Once again I cannot adequately express my gratitude to the community of Titusville, Tom and his posse for rolling out the red carpet and sharing their town and beautiful natural resource with us this past weekend. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart. You guys really know how to throw a party. Cam”



Pictures: Wolfkiel aid station. One runner finding her “Star” in the middle of the night. Wolfkiel turned “Hollywood” under the moon—around 1 AM

Cross Country Ski News



Volunteers Work to Prepare Ski Trails For Winter

Several volunteers have worked hard on three separate Sundays to do maintenance and prepare the ski trails for the upcoming snow season. Volunteers have cleaned out culverts, cut back brush, trimmed branches and cut down trees along various parts of the trail system. New trail markers that were purchased by the Friends' Group are also being installed. These markers designate the difficulty of the trails, point out caution on hills, and ask hikers and snowshoers to walk to the side of the trails. The Park Staff has also been working hard; they have mowed and cleared 27 fallen trees off the trail system and have replaced 4 wooden bridges with culverts.



New Oil Creek Cross Country Ski Area Information

New changes are taking place at the Oil Creek State Park Cross Country Ski Area this season. Due to cutbacks in funding in staff and aging equipment, Oil Creek State Park can no longer keep up the demands of regularly grooming the cross country ski trails. Instead, there will be a new Special Activities Agreement (SAA) with Sun Valley Nordic, LLC. Sun Valley Nordic has purchased a Tidd-Tech Trail Tenderizer track setter and groomer which will be pulled by a tracked ATV. Grooming and setting tracks greatly enhances the skiing experience and the safety of skiers of all ages and abilities. The red, blue, and green loops, as well as the white connector trails will be groomed, and the track will be set for classical skiing- as needed- depending upon snow fall and trail conditions. The goal is to attract skiers from the tri-state area and bring more winter visitors to the park.

The Friends of Oil Creek State Park support these efforts. They are also members of the US Cross Country Ski Areas Association. The Friends' Group has purchased and placed new trail markers. New trail map signs and a new ski trail pamphlet (depicted on a topographic map) have been made.

The biggest change this year is that a nominal fee to use the ski trails will be charged to offset the cost of conducting these operations. Ski Trail passes will be available from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at the park office on weekdays and at the ski hut on weekends. The trail fees will be announced soon. The park staff and the Friend's group are looking forward to an exciting future for cross country skiing in Oil Creek State Park and hope you come out and enjoy the trails this winter.

Night Skiing dates Jan.7, 21...February 4, 8— Please bring skis, flashlight, and a snack. These events will be free to the public.



Juston Flick,

For as long as I can remember, I have been interested in the outdoors, both recreationally and with career goals. I was raised in the small town of Boyers, in Butler County. Since I was a child, I have had the opportunity to enjoy fishing, hiking and backpacking. I lead an active lifestyle which includes running, weight training, and many outdoor sports. I also enjoy everything about Ford Mustangs. I attended Butler County Community College where I earned two degrees. The combination of these degrees in Criminology and in Parks and Recreation Management, in addition to my Act 120 Municipal Police Academy degree, has prepared me to meet the needs of a diversified DCNR Ranger. Previous to working at Oil Creek State Park, I had the opportunity to volunteer at Moraine State Park for two years. There I assisted in the maintenance trades, Ranger ride along, and resource management planning.



The Over the Hill Gang of Oil Creek State Park

The 36 mile long Gerald Hiking Trail in Oil Creek State Park is partially maintained by a group of old “geezers” know as the OVER THE HILL GANG. These guys trim back brambles, bushes, shrubs, and tree limbs; they also remove fallen trees and other obstacles from the trail. When needed, work is done to make the trails safer by placing fenders along edges to prevent erosion, building and painting bridges, as well as blazing trees.

The “Gang” meets for breakfast each Wednesday morning at Sam’s Restaurant in Titusville before proceeding to the trail- weather permitting.

All the full time members are retirees from all walks of life. Currently there are 17 members. The oldest member is 80 years old; many members are in their seventies. While the “Gang” does do some hard work at times, their real joy is going out in the beautiful park. The “Gang is always looking for new “young” (60-65) members

Pictures at left-

Some of the structures built by the Gang...

Top-Wood shed at Wolfkiel Camp Ground-

Middle- One of the many foot bridges throughout the park-

Bottom- Building the bike shed for bike rentals-

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**

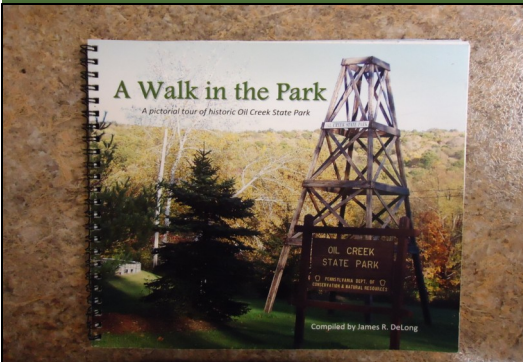
All proceeds benefit the educational programs, events and focus projects within Oil Creek State Park.

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**



**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 Patch
\$ 3.00**

Friends of Oil Creek State

305 State Park Road
Oil City, PA 16301

Park Office Phone: 814-676-5915

E-Mail: friendsocsp@gmail.com

Website: www.orgsites.com/pa/focsp

