

FRIENDS OF OIL CREEK STATE PARK



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Friends of Oil Creek



Bloodroot, another early spring flower, can be found throughout the park



Harbinger of spring;
the fragrant trailing arbutus.

"For, lo, the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone;
the flowers appear on the
earth;
the time of the singing of
birds is come,
and the voice of the turtle
dove is heard in our
land..."

Song of Solomon 2:11-13

Park Manager's Report

In my last write up I mentioned how beautiful the park looked with all the snow on the trees. Then, Mother Nature decided to give me the hardest winter that I can remember. I am a big fan of winter, but I have never seen one so cold and long as this one. I think the groundhog nailed this one on the head.

As Oil Creek transitions into the spring season, we are welcoming back our seasonal staff and preparing for the many projects that we hope to accomplish this year. Most of our projects are small in stature but are worthwhile. We hope to transition into LED lighting which will help cut electric cost, rebuild our pump house, remove hazardous trees, install drainage to several areas of the park, re-blaze our property boundaries, and much more.

In addition to the maintenance end of thing, we hope to continue providing the public with a wonderful assortment of environmental education programs. Robin Baker, has done a wonderful job promoting and conducting interpretive programs for the past four years. She is looking forward to continuing her efforts this year with some new and exciting programming. If anyone is interested in attending a park program, they can check out the calendar of events on our web page or call the park directly.

Enjoy the spring,
Dave Hallman
Park Manager



Overlook at Benninghoff in Spring



The 6th annual Oil Creek 100 Race will be held October 11th, 2014. Registration opened on March 22nd with an excellent response. All three races- 100 mile, 100k, and 50k - were entered in record time.

The 100 mile race is not full but, historically this race will be filled well before summer.

The 100k and 50k were filled in remarkable times.

The 100k sold out in 6 minutes

The 50k sold out in 90 seconds

Even though the 100k and 50k races are filled , runners should not despair because there is a waiting list.

(Occasionally someone needs to drop out.)

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.”



100 milers at aid station #1 on their last lap.



Daffodils popping up along the trail on the top of Benningoff hill.



The not so common Yellow Lady's Slipper found along a park trail.

GREAT CROSS COUNTRY SKIING IN OIL CREEK THIS SEASON TRAIL WORK PAYS OFF THIS WINTER

Kudos to the park staff and volunteer trail workers for their help in creating some of the best ever trail conditions for this winter of cross country skiing. Much work had been done in the spring and fall of 2013. The work included installing culverts, ditch work, removal of large rocks, trimming, brush work, cutting trees, and mowing. A new section of trail was added on the power line and gas lease road which gave skiers more options. When trails are in top shape before the winter, this helps maintain good ski conditions even when snow becomes marginal which is often the case in our area. That is when trail work becomes most valuable. This winter skiers did not have to detour around any wets spots. Many past ski visitors to the park this winter commented on how much the conditions have improved. New visitors were quite impressed.

Mother Nature also contributed to a successful cross country ski season this winter as cold temperatures remained consistent from November to March, and we had record snow fall. The good trail conditions, cold temperatures, and professional grooming helped us maintain our skiing conditions through mid-March. Oil Creek Ski area had almost double the number of ski visits this season over last year. We had many new visitors coming from the Pittsburgh and State College Areas as well as Ohio. Oil Creek is earning the distinction of having the best trails for "classical" skiing in the area!

If you are interested in doing volunteer trail work to keep on improving our hiking and ski trails, come out and join us for our Spring Trail Work Days. We will meet on Sundays at 1:00 PM at the Ski Hut, on May 4, May 18, and June 1. Bring gloves and any tools you can such as shovels, maddox, garden rakes, saws, and trimmers. Some equipment is supplied. Be prepared to get down and dirty and have fun working outdoors. Students can receive community service hours for trail work.

For more information contact us at:

oilcreekfriends@gmail.com.

Ski trail work dates:
Sundays 1:00-4:00- Meet at Ski Lodge
May 4th
May 18th
June 1

Biathalon 2014

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE 8TH ANNUAL BIATHLON

The Friends of Oil Creek Summer Biathlon will again be held on Saturday, August 9, 2014. This is one of the premier Biathlon events in Pennsylvania and is the only one held in a State Park. If you enjoy trail running and shooting a 22, then this event is for you! For more information go to our website

or contact us at

oilcreekfriends@gmail.com



**Keep up to date
with Oil Creek activities
by visiting our new website at:
www.friendsocsp.org**



Orphan Wells in the Park

The Orphan Well Project involves a group of volunteers who look for abandoned oil and gas wells. Since 2003 volunteers have located wells in Oil Creek State Park. The purpose of the project is to protect ground water by getting the wells properly plugged.

The story of oil and gas wells in the park began in 1859 when Col. Edwin Drake drilled the first commercial oil well and started the oil boom of the 1860s. Since then the park land has seen a series of drilling operations. Most of the wells in the park were drilled before 1984 when the state began to require the registration of all oil and gas wells. Over the years most of the wells have been abandoned. Therefore most of the wells in the park are not registered and no maps or other records give their specific location.

Abandoned wells are the source of many environmental problems. The well bore acts as a conduit which allows materials from normally separate layers to mix together. Gas and oil come to the surface. Gas and oil mix into the water table and contaminate springs, streams and water wells. Oil that reaches the surface can pollute streams. Wells also collapse and are hazards to hunters and hikers in the park.

Since the project began volunteers have located over 810 wells in the park. The well hunters work in groups of three to nine. The only way to find an undocumented well is to actually walk the wooded hillsides and look for the telltale signs of an abandoned well. Some still have a pumping jack but most are just pipe casing or open holes in the ground. When a well is found, the group photographs, marks and tags the site and records specific details about the well including its GPS location and turn the information over to DEP for evaluation. DEP then examines the site and adds it to the well plugging list.

Between 1997 and 2010, eleven plugging contracts worth \$2.2 million have plugged 528 wells in the park. More than 650 additional wells are on the list and need to be plugged. Each year additional wells are plugged and more are added to the list. Well hunters are always amazed at how many abandoned wells they find. They estimate that they have covered about 40 percent of the park. The well hunters describe their work in the park as a treasure hunt. They never know what they will find. Some days it's abandoned wells, on other days it's oil field artifacts, and others it's an opportunity to enjoy the wildflowers, trees, shrubs, fungi and animals of the park.

Currently well plugging is occurring in the northern end of the park just south of Drake Well Museum. Anyone interested in helping with the project should contact the park office or John Kolojejchick at 676-6435.



Chicks in the Sticks

Chick-in-the-Sticks

The Friends of Oil Creek State Park are going to initiate a new event on September 20th of this year. We're calling it "Chicks-in-the-Sticks". It's a one day event for women only, ages 14 through ...

We expect to have a large variety of about 20 outdoor related events that range from archery to outdoor cooking, to geo caching, to canoeing, to outdoor photography, etc., etc. Each event will last about one hour and fifteen minutes and will be instructed by a qualified person. Each participant will have their choice of up to four different events.

A catered lunch will be provided. We are also planning on having prizes and other "goodies" .

The main idea behind this program is to introduce women of all ages to experience some outdoor activities that they think they may have an interest in, but without having to make an up-front purchase of equipment. This way they can try it out as well as get started on the right foot with someone who knows what they're doing. If they find they like it, they can pursue it further on their own. If they find they don't really care for it, they've spent very little money or time, but hopefully still had a good time finding out one way or the other.

Keep checking out our website for more information. We hope to start taking registration applications in May. It will be on a first come - first served basis for event registration. You'll have a chance to list four alternative events in case one or more of your first choices are already filled or get canceled. Sign up early!!! Another group has held an event similar to this at Chapman State Park for eight years now and last year they had over 160 women attend. So don't miss out!

If you'd like to help put this event on, (and this includes guys), we're going to need a lot of volunteer help. Contact me or the park office to get more information about this and to sign up. We're also looking for sponsors to donate money, time, prizes, the use of equipment, etc. Advertising for the donors will be provided accordingly.

For further information you can contact me at (814) 677-4633, or via email at kirby@northcountrycreations.com. You can also contact the park office at (814) 676-5915.

Kirby Newbert

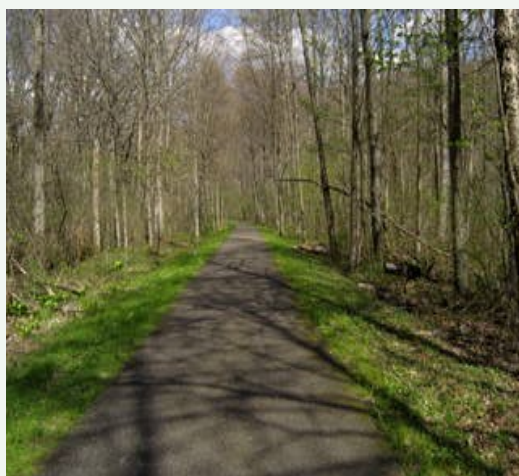


OIL CREEK STATE PARK STAFF IS GEARING UP FOR THE SUMMER!

Dave, Michele and Joe are excited to be welcoming back staff members from last season. Brian Weckerly, Maintenance Repairman, returned to work on March 23. (The Prodigal Son has returned!) He has been working closely with Earl to get the bike trail cleared and cleaned and ready to go! The two of them wasted no time in returning to their camaraderie of insulting jokes and fun.

Juston Flick, DCNR Ranger, and Robin Baker, Environmental Education Specialist, returned this week. Juston has immediately made himself busy patrolling the park and enforcing law and order all around. Robin hit the ground running with school and public programs already planned. She is booking up fast, so if you are looking for her to do a program for you, you'd better call soon!

Sean Morgan, Semi-skilled Laborer, will be returning on April 21. We look forward to having him back to assist with maintenance projects and preparing the park for the busy summer season! Jason Anna, Semi-skilled Laborer, will be returning May 17, when he finishes his college semester at Indiana University of PA. We are looking forward to his return and having the whole Oil Creek family together again!



Thanks to the hard work of the Oil Creek Staff, the bike trail is already cleared of debris and in great condition.

President's Report

WELCOME WARMER WEATHER

The robins are back making their nests, the trout are stocked in the cool waters, the turkeys are strutting and calling for mates, and the skunk cabbage is popping out of the muddy soil.

So what are YOU doing?

Me? I will be outside doing all the yard work that has been left undone for so long; raking leaves, picking up sticks , clearing the vegetable garden, and ordering all the latest tomato seeds. I also need to clean out the garage, and then paint the living room walls. The Honey Do List is BIG this year..... But wait the Sun is shining the rain has stopped.

Maybe I will grab my fishing pole, bicycle, pack a lunch, and head out to Oil Creek. The Hope I Do Honey List can wait. I will just have to take my honey with me. She too will forget all about work as soon as we make it to the park.

Remember, "All work and no play make for a dull day". So whatever your idea of fun is: hiking, biking, fishing, or bird watching, gather your family and make Oil Creek State Park your outdoor destination. While you're here, stop in the park office and check out the upcoming events.

Sincerely,
Rob McCall
Friends of Oil Creek State Park

See you at our Park.



Bridge at Miller Farm

Park Events

Teacher Workshop: Project Learning Tree: Early Childhood



Earn 4 Act 48 or PQAS hours & learn a few new methods to excite children's imagination & foster a sense of wonder about our natural world!

**When: Tuesday, August 05, 2014
9:00 am to 2:00 pm**



**Meet: Environmental Classroom
Pymatuning State Park
2260 Williamsfield Road
Jamestown, PA 16134**

Cost: \$10.00 includes, PLT Curriculum, snacks & materials.

Registration
Deadline is:
July 05, 2014

For more information or to register, please contact, Linda Armstrong at, 724-932-3142.



Teacher Workshop: Growing Up Wild- Early Childhood



Earn 4 Act 48 or PQAS hours & learn some new methods to engage children in learning about the environment.

**When: Tues., July 15, 2014
9:00 am – 2:00 pm**

**Meet: Amphitheater
Oil Creek State Park
305 State Park Road
Oil City, PA 16301**

Cost: \$10.00, includes GUV curriculum, snacks & materials

Growing Up Wild is the early childhood supplement to Project Wild. Project Wild in Pennsylvania is sponsored by the PA Game Commission.

Registration
Deadline is:
June 15, 2014

For questions or to register, please call the park office at, 814-676-5915.



Backpacking for Beginners

Oil Creek State Park

May 10th at 10:00 AM – May 11th at 1:00 PM 2014

Participate in a 4.67 mile hike the first day, an over-night stay in an Adirondack shelter and a 3.75 mile hike the second day.

Participants will learn proper equipment usage, backpacking techniques, basic map reading skills, backpack cooking, bear hangs and knot tying. Ages 12-adult

Cost is \$50.00 for food, shelter reservations and program.

A non-refundable deposit of \$20.00 is due at registration.

Please make checks out to:

The Commonwealth of PA and send the money to:

Oil Creek State Park
305 State Park Road
Oil City, PA 16301

Please call the park office at 814-676-5915 for further details or to answer any questions.



Membership

The Friends of Oil Creek would like to thank everyone who renewed their membership and to thank the many new members.

Your membership helps maintain existing projects in the Park. Your contributions also support new initiatives throughout the Park. Your dues contribute to the trail maintenance of the Gerard trail, the bike trail, and the ski trails. In addition, these resources help fund the “Over-The-Hill Gang’s” efforts to keep the trails clear and to erect and maintain the many bridges and benches along the Gerard trail.

If you haven’t renewed your membership or would like to join the Friends of Oil Creek, follow the link on our web page ... www.friendsocsp.org . The membership prices are : single \$10, family \$25, and corporate/business/group \$100.

You can become a member or renew your membership by contacting the FOCSP in one of the ways listed below. Our web site has a direct link.

- **Oil Creek Office**
305 State Park Road
Oil City, PA 16301
Park Office Phone: 814-676-5915
- **E-Mail: friendsocsp@gmail.com**
- **Website: www.friendsocsp.org**



Bridges throughout the park are done through combined efforts of the Park Staff, The Friends Group, and The Over-The-Hill Gang