



Park Manager's Report

Oil Creek State Park is off to another busy start in 2018. We have a full staff that is ready to start working on our many projects lined up for the summer. One of the first projects completed in 2018 was the construction of three Adirondack shelters in our Wildcat Hollow organized tenting area. This project was a joint effort between park staff and the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps. These shelters are an added amenity to our popular organized group tenting area. So far, they have been a big hit.



Some of the other projects set to take place in 2018 are adding solar lighting to the ski hut, fixing our sidewalks at restroom locations, replacement of culverts along the bike trail, repointing three chimneys at our Wolfkiel site, and invasive plant treatment and stream restoration at the Boughton Bridge. Oh yeah, and then there are our daily/routine duties plus all the unexpected projects that are sure to pop up throughout the season. It's good to be busy though.

As we continue to gear up for the summer, I look forward to a busy and enjoyable summer season. We will continue to provide exciting and informative educational programming. Program schedules can be viewed on our calendar of events, located on the Oil Creek website or call the park office for more information. If anyone has a comment on what we can be doing better or if there is



something you would like to see in the park that we currently do not offer, please call or email us. While I can't make promises, I welcome your input.

Have a safe summer,

Dave Hallman

Park Manager

Chicks-in-the-Sticks

Fifth Annual
Chick-in-the-Sticks

Yoga

Registration Ends June 10th

The Friends of Oil Creek State Park's Fifth Annual *Chicks-in-the-Sticks* event will be held Saturday, June 16, 2018. *Chicks-in-the-Sticks* is a full day of outdoor workshops for women. The workshops are hands on, and the participants will produce an item, be introduced to a skill, or get materials they can take home from each class.

Twenty-one workshops will be offered. The workshops will include many activities such as: basic kayaking, cycling, archery, geocaching, and shelter and fire building. Terrarium building, needle wool felting, and the art of wood burning are examples of workshops where women will have the opportunity of making an item to take home. Women will also be able to choose workshops where they will be introduced to topics such as medicinal uses of herbs, bird identification, invasive plant ID and fly casting/fly fishing. "Come Forest Bathing" is a workshop about using your senses to take in the sights, sounds, smells and tastes that surround you in the forest. The day will consist of each woman choosing four workshops: two in the morning and two in the afternoon.



Lunch will be provided. There will also be a 50/50 drawing and auction. A trapping demonstration will be presented during the lunch period.

Dutch oven cooking

Kayaking instruction



Raffle selection

Abandoned Well Plugging

The first commercial oil well was drilled just north of Oil Creek State Park. Following that discovery the land that is now Oil Creek State Park became one of the most densely drilled places in the US. The remains of those “old days” now exist as abandoned and orphaned wells throughout the park. Unplugged or improperly plugged wells are an environmental problem. They allow oil and gas from deep within the well to contaminate water layers closer to the surface. These watery layers feed the springs and seeps that generate the many streams within the park. Abandoned wells also represent a physical hazard to hiker and hunters. As the well deteriorates, the soil near the surface begins to cave in and large open holes develop.

Each year members of the Orphan Wells Project walk the hillsides of the park looking for abandoned wells. The purpose of the project is to get the wells properly plugged. Over 1200 wells have been located so far. Hundred have been properly plugged through the efforts of DEP, but there are still many more to go. Between 1997 and 2010, eleven plugging contracts worth 2.2 million dollars have plugged 528 wells in the Park. During the summer and fall of this year more wells will be plugged through a grant obtained by the Venango Conservation District. The grant for approximately \$240,000 will be used to plug 11 wells in the Pioneer area of the park. The plugging area was specifically chosen because many wells are located close to the Gerard Hiking trail.

Water Quality Study

In May members of the Venango PA Senior Environmental Corps conducted a macro-invertebrate study of Benninghoff Run. The group's members are all retired but still have an active interest in water quality. The study involves collecting, identifying and counting macro-invertebrates such as mayfly, stonefly, caddis fly and other larva in the stream. The Benninghoff Run watershed had extensive well plugging in past years. The results of the study indicated that the water quality is good and the stream is healthy.



Over-The-Hill-Gang

Before– Tree across the trail



The Over-the-Hill Gang has been out every Wednesday on their regular runs. They have been over the entire Park at least once and on much of the trail numerous times. In addition to doing their regular trail maintenance, they have processed firewood for shelters at Wolfkeil and Cow Run. A big project, which is pictured, was the cutting up and removing of a huge tree on the west side of the Gerard on the Titusville end. The tree fell right before OC100 , and removing the tree be-

fore the race was impossible so the trail was diverted for the race. Plans for the future include: re-blazing sections of the Gerard, water diversion, and regular trail maintenance. Another future project will be replacing the entire boardwalk just south the Jersey parking lot which will be funded by Drake Well.

After– The tree was cut and the trail opened.



The Gang would like to thank the Oil Creek Friends for all their support and the funding of their projects and equipment...a special thanks for the weed-eater and new chain saw which was purchased recently.

In May, Denny Pattison, Rob McCall, and Dave Hallman went to Harrisburg for the ceremony honoring The Over-the-Hill-Gang who received the volunteer of the year award from Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation. Governor Tom Wolf sent an excellent congratulatory letter to the Gang which they felt was a wonderful acknowledgment. They were quite honored.

The Gang out on another beautiful day.



Built in the early 1980s, the Oil Creek State Park bicycle trail was the first, and, for about a decade, the only, official bike trail in the area. The trail is a little less than 10 miles long, winding along Oil Creek from Petroleum Center north to Drake Well and on into Titusville, following the path of a steam engine railroad built in the 1860s.

The trail is paved and is suitable for walking, running, roller-blading, roller-skating, roller-skiing and whatever non-motorized conveyance somebody thinks up next. The trail turned out to be one of the first completed links in the still-unfinished Erie to Pittsburgh trail system.



The trail is basically flat, rising gently from south to north, which makes starting and finishing in Petroleum Center a good choice, with the return trip being just a little easier. The trail crosses Oil Creek at Pioneer on a converted train trestle, and numerous benches and picnic tables invite travelers to stop and enjoy scenic vistas of the beautiful stream and surrounding valley. Fishermen/women can be seen catching fish in the renowned trout waters of Oil Creek.

On hot and humid days the Oil Creek bike trail is the best choice among the many excellent bike trail opportunities we now have in the area - there is abundant shade, and the water of Oil Creek keeps the surrounding air temperature at least a few degrees cooler. Of course, the air movement created by riding the bike helps, and if it's hot enough and you're adventurous enough, jumping in the stream will do the trick.



There are about 15 historical markers along the trail commemorating various sites and other subjects from the 1860s oil boom in "The Valley that Changed the World." Included are long-gone villages – such as Funkville, Pioneer and Boughton - and oil producing areas, generally referred to as "farms," including Hyde & Egbert, Shaffer and Miller. Other markers tell of technological developments in the oil industry such as central power (running several oil pumps from one engine), and there's a replica flat-bottom boat for transporting barrels of oil down the creek. A sign marks the location of the Van Syckle pipeline - the world's first oil pipeline. You can still smell sulfuric acid from the

Boughton Acid Works, which ceased operations 100 years ago. Look at the old photographs of the stripped land, oil derricks and polluted streams, and then look at how beautiful the area is today. It is heartening to see how the earth can recover from such devastation (at least to a point – consider the unending search for and plugging of abandoned oil wells). History buffs may want to make a solo journey to study the markers so as to avoid annoying those who would prefer to keep moving! It's fun to imagine rounding the bend in the trail and finding yourself back in the 1860s and 70s, with workers looking at you as they would an alien from outer space and having difficulty understanding that you're doing this for "exercise."

So get out and enjoy the trail, and let's hope progress can be made on the "missing link" between Petroleum Center and Rouseville. Ride on!



In Memory Of...



Memorial Day has just passed which for many marks the beginning of summer. Memorial Day made me think about the recent memorial donations the Friends of Oil Creek received because two families graciously named us as recipient. We have also received several memorial donations in the past as well. This is such a wonderful way to honor a loved one's memory! Helping a state park such as Oil Creek to continue in their mission to preserve nature and provide outdoor activities is a way to leave behind a

lasting legacy for future generations. Families can also provide input as to what they might like the donations to go towards. The Friends work hard to see that all our funds are wisely spent towards helping Oil Creek to remain the excellent park that it is. Memorial donations are greatly appreciated and we hope bring peace comfort to those who are grieving. There is so much life to celebrate at Oil Creek. Growing plants and trees of all kinds and colors, small lizards, newts, and reptiles, plus a huge variety of critters and birds. The woods and streams are pulsing with life! What a place to remember a life well lived and to share that memory with others!

With much gratitude,
Peg Sims
President FOCSP



Oil Creek Eagles

These pictures were taken by Timothy Rudisille. Timothy takes many pictures at Oil Creek. His pictures are amazing. This particular nest has been in the Park for quite awhile. It blew down last year, and the eagles rebuilt it.





The Friends
of
Oil Creek State Park
are a chapter of the
Pennsylvania Parks and
Forest Foundation



Upcoming Events:

Races

- Drake Well Marathon and Half—August 5, 2018
- OC100— Date not set

Events

- Chicks-in –the Sticks: June 16, 2018
- Oil Creek Biathlon August 11, 2018
- Other Park events including Chris Mosebach, the Park Naturalist, will be listed on our web site and in future newsletters as they become official.

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."



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: oilcreekfriends@gmail.com**
- **Website: www.friendsocsp.org**



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