



Park Manager's Report

As winter continues to give us a mixed bag of temperatures and precipitation, I am thankful that we have had some good days for our winter activities. There have been more skiable X-country days this year that we have had the past two years combined. The sledding hill has started to get some use, and I expect it will continue to grow in popularity as more people find out that we have one. Please, help spread the word if you can. The shelters, despite some of the frigid temps, are still being occupied by some brave souls. All in all, it has been a good start to the winter season and I hope that it continues.



Eagle update: As many of you are aware we lost our eagles next last spring due to high winds. This pair of eagles have nested in the same location since the spring of 2012. Recently, I decided to take advantage of our warmer weather and hike back to where the nest was, and I am happy to report that they have rebuilt the nest in the same tree! Earlier I had contacted the PGC and they told me that if the tree was still standing that they may re-nest there. Glad to see that they are still calling Oil Creek home.

Ice on the creek: April will mark my sixth year here at Oil Creek. In that time, I have seen some interesting “ice let outs” in the park. This year however takes the cake. This is also the first year that I witnessed it happening. Usually I am out of town when it happens, or it takes place throughout the night while I am sleeping. I have seen some high water in the park and have seen the ice push up and on to our bike trail and even onto portions of our picnic areas. However, this is the first time that I have seen it completely flood the Blood



Farm picnic area. Apparently, the ice buildup behind the dam was so intense that when it let loose, it completely swallowed up Blood Farm. If you feel like taking a ride, you can still see the piles of ice throughout the picnic area and in the parking lot. You probably won't be able to walk the interpretive trail... there are still sections that have piles of ice 4 to 5 feet high blocking the trail. Just goes to show you that Mother Nature can do what she wants.

Enjoy the rest of Winter! Dave Hallman

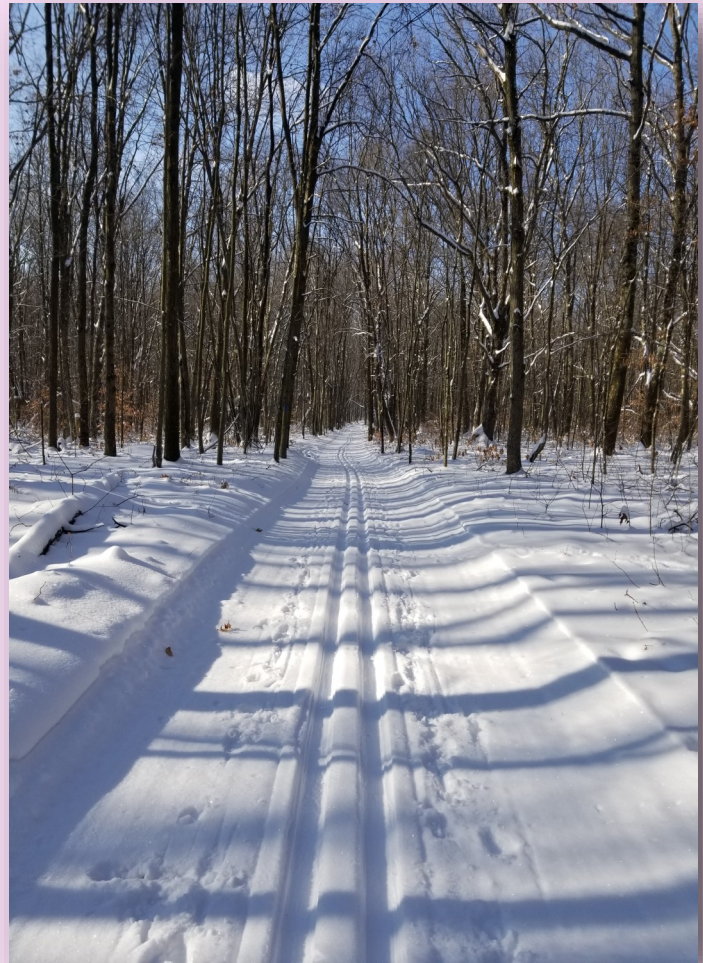
Cross Country Skiing

The 2017-2018 cross-country ski season at OCSF has been rather marginal overall, but at this writing the snow is pounding down pretty well, so we'll hope for the best. Even though the season has been sporadic so far, John's grooming has kept what snow we did get skiable as long as possible. The art of proper grooming is more important in less snowy areas like ours to maximize the ski season, and we appreciate John's expertise and experience as a Master Groomer (newly conferred title). Also, the off-season maintenance has eliminated or reduced most of the wet areas.

And looking on the bright side, the lack of tracks on occasion makes us sharpen our ski control and balance, as does "stepping" over and around those dastardly oak and beech leaves that fall in the tracks and stay there, tucked safely out of the wind! And skiing around the occasional wet or bare area is also good for balance and coordination. It's just a good idea to have an extra pair of skis you don't mind banging around – they are remarkably durable. For some of us, as long as there is some degree of glide, it's a good day to ski. It's amazing how unexpectedly good the skiing can be in warm conditions, even in a steady rain. The Swedes have an expression: There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing. So find your best gear and get off the couch!

It is the balance aspect that is one of the reasons cross-country skiing is considered one of the best, if not *the* best, aerobic exercises – full-body, low-impact (okay to do after hip replacement when running isn't), and, most important, FUN! Maintaining balance is especially important as we age, and lots of us *Nordiques* ain't exactly spring chickens. A new study shows that cross-country skiing on a regular basis enables people to live to over 150 years old! (Okay, the study is ongoing, but we're pretty sure that will be the conclusion.)

Which brings us to the next point – those of us who love the sport should encourage others, and especially young folks, to give it a try. They can be part of the study to see who makes it to 150! Snow's still coming – Bring it on!



Over-The-Hill-Gang

Congratulations

Over-The-Hill-Gang

Congrats to the Over-The-Hill-Gang who will receive the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Volunteerism Award for their countless hours of maintaining the Gerard Trail (over 40 miles). They will receive the award at the PPF annual banquet on May 9th at the Susquehanna Club in New Cumberland.

The Gang is out every Wednesday where they carry out well thought out plans for the Park's upkeep. Even when the weather might inhibit trail work, the Gang continues to aid with the Park's needs as shown in this picture of them stacking wood at the Wolfkiel shelter.



When weather permits, they are out on the trails. This is a picture of the boardwalk near the Drake Well trail head on the north-east end which was completed this past fall. Another project completed last year (summer) involved remaking steps on the hill leading to where the Gerard trail intersects with the bike trail.

Thank you for all you do for the Park!

And again

Congratulations on a well deserved award!

Thank you Carl Meinstereife!

Carl is stepping down as a director of the Friends' Board. We are saddened to see him go and wish him the best. Carl has been an exemplary member. Carl joined the board a few months after the Friends group was founded in 2005. Since that time, he has contributed immeasurably with all of the Friends' projects. When asked how the Friends group has changed, he said the group really has grown in its ability to support projects- especially financially. Carl noted that not long after the group was formed the only real activity was the biathlon. (Which celebrated its 12th year last summer.) Since then, the Friends group has grown in its ability to support and financially back many projects such as Chicks-in the Sticks, OC100 dinners, cross country ski trail maintenance, various Park races, grant writing for projects such as the playground, and helping to fund the OTHG.



Carl was a Titusville High School social studies teacher for 33 years. After retirement, he began creating beautiful wood-working pieces- some small such as candle holders and others quite large such as cabinets. (Part of the cabinets he made for his dining room can be seen in the picture.) Carl and his wife Betty live in their original home and are active members in the Titusville community. Carl will continue volunteering in Oil Creek with the Over-The-Hill-Gang, and he will continue to help the Friends just not as a formal director. For this we are truly grateful because there is no one like Carl Meinstereife!

President's Report



Lately, I have been picturing Old Man Winter like the cartoon above and thinking of him as being quite fickle. What a tease he is! He can't decide whether to blow, snow, or rain. Is it winter or spring? I wish he would make up his mind! Those of us who love winter activities in the park like XC skiing, sled riding, snow shoeing, winter photography, and winter camping are rooting for snow. However, one big lesson I have learned in life is that if something is beyond your control, then don't worry about it. Just go with the flow.

So, since we can't control Old Man Winter, I suggest that on those days when there is no snow, take advantage of the park anyway. Rest the skis (all ready to go for the next time) in the corner and put on your hiking or trail running shoes and explore what the rain and warm temps have uncovered. While on the trails, pick up sticks and unplug culverts, dig a drainage ditch, or just enjoy being out. The snow will come again soon and we can get back to our favorite winter activities.

In the meantime, when at home by the fire drinking your favorite hot beverage, tune into the Friends website, click on MEMBERSHIP, and send yours in for 2018, if you haven't already done so. Your membership is put to good use throughout all the seasons in the park. Your donation enables the Friends to support the park through events, projects, trail maintenance, grant writing, acquiring equipment, and many other things you can see on our website. Please consider joining today.

And as for Old Man Winter, we will take whatever he blows our way and make the best of it!

Happy Trails,

Peg Sims, President



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



" A few feathery flakes are scattered widely through the air, and hover downward with uncertain flight, now almost alighting on the earth, now whirled again aloft into remote regions of the atmosphere."

— [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)

Upcoming Events:

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."

Races

- Meet U in % and Half Trail Race – May 19, 2018
- 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 will be listed on our website and in future newsletters as they become official. www.friendsocsp.org .



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**