



# Friends of Oil Creek State Park~

## Brief Winter Newsletter

It was a great winter at Oil Creek State Park where winter condions were just right for many activities !



Hiking along the Gerard

Cross country Skiing

Snowshoeing at Wild Cat Hollow

Gregg-Pioneer Falls

Bench at Benninghoff Hill



# XC Skiing Was Great This Year

Winter was really winter this year which was a big improvement over the last few winters, at least in the eyes of winter sports enthusiasts. Cross Country skiing began just before Christmas and then came on strong for most of January and all of February in the park. Fortunately the temperatures remained fairly consistent so we were able to maintain our base of snow on the trails and keep things frozen over. Whenever there was a couple of new inches of snow the trails would be groomed and stay nice for several days. It was great to see all our familiar ski friends and to make many new friends. Several hikers, runners, and bicyclists discovered the joy of Cross Country skiing this winter and are now converts to the sport. Many folks got in over 30 days of skiing and the number of skier visits was the second highest in 10 years. There is nothing to compare to skiing along the Hemlock Ridge in winter or double poling through sections of the trail. What a fantastic way to spend the winter in Oil Creek State Park.

Happy Trails, Peg Sims, FOCSP Chair



# Over-The-Hill Gang

Despite icy conditions of trails and access roads , the Over the Hill Gang removed downed trees from several sections of trail this winter. All trail sections were open to hikers throughout the season. The Gang inspected projects that had been completed last Fall and we were pleased to find bridges and boardwalks in good condition. We identified some areas that could use bumper/fender work and this will be scheduled for Spring and Summer work.

A bridge over Jones Run was measured for addition of railings on both sides of the bridge. This work will be scheduled for early Spring.

The Gang spent several Wednesdays splitting and stacking firewood for Cow Run and Wolfkiel shelters. We recently removed a tree that had fallen at Blood Farm and took down another tree with a broken top in the same area. The wood from these trees was cut to firewood length and split for use at the overnight shelters.

The OTHG is looking forward to another year maintaining the Girard Hiking Trail.  
Denny Pattison  
OTHG



## Oil Creek State Park 2021 Educational Programming

Ivy Kuberry, EES

I'm happy to say that I am finally back at the park for the 2021 season! At the time of writing this article, I am still unable to provide in-person programming, which has made things a bit difficult. However, some self-led family programs and educational videos are in the works. We've created a few family-style scavenger hunts that folks can either find on our Facebook page or pick up at the park office. Upon completion of the scavenger hunts, children can stop in and pick up a prize out of our prize box, which contains items like stickers, magnets, seed packets, pencils, temporary tattoos, and Smokey Bear coloring books. There is no requirement to prove that anyone found the items on the lists, but it's a great excuse to get outside and spend time with family. Currently we have a Winter Scavenger Hunt and a SCATvenger Hunt available, and others will be posted throughout the year.



Also in the works is a family-style self-led birding program. I created 'birds' out of laminated photographs that will be either stuck into the ground with Popsicle sticks or tied into bushes and trees. Families will be able to pick up a list of birds and a set of sanitized binoculars before heading out into the Egbert Farm Day Use Area to search for all 43 species that will be hidden. Each bird is numbered on the back, and the number corresponds to a bird on the bird list. The first five families to find at least 40 of the birds will win a bird box to take home. The date for this program has not been set, but it will be soon, so keep an eye on our Facebook page!

Our new educational video series will also be posted via Facebook, and it is titled "Trail Talk." The series will feature a variety of historical sites, geologic features, and plant and animal life. We plan on releasing at least two videos a month in an effort to educate visitors about our cultural, historical, and environmental resources while encouraging them to get out and explore the trails. I also hope to film a mini tour of the Petroleum Centre Train Station so people can 'visit' without the facility actually being open. We are waiting on a few pieces of equipment to come in that will help out with online programming, so hopefully soon we will be able to provide live webinars as well! Although this year is proving to be a bit challenging when it comes to programming, it is forcing us to really work on our online presence. I think this will help us reach more people over time, and hopefully increase interest in the park!

If you have any ideas for Trail Talk video topics that you would like to share, please contact me at [ikuberry@pa.gov](mailto:ikuberry@pa.gov) or call 814.676.1810. I plan to keep a running list of topics so that we don't run out of ideas! Thank you.

# Membership

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

Your membership helps maintain existing projects in Oil Creek State Park. Your contributions also help maintain new initiatives in the Park. Your membership also helps to maintain the Gerard hiking trail, the bike trail, and the ski trails. In addition, these resources fund the “Over the Hill Gang”.

If you haven't renewed your membership or would like to become a member, follow the link to become a friend of Oil Creek State Park: [www.friendsocsp.org](http://www.friendsocsp.org). The membership prices: single \$10, family \$25, and corporate/business/group \$100. You can also become a Friends member or renew your membership by contacting the FOCSP in one of the ways listed below:

- Write the Friends of Oil Creek  
PO Box# 1273 Oil City, Pa 16301
- E-Mail– [oilcreekfriends@gmail.com](mailto:oilcreekfriends@gmail.com)
- Website– [www.friendsocsp.org](http://www.friendsocsp.org)
- Call Park Office—814 676-5915



The Friends of Oil Creek State Park is a Chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation



## 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.