



Spring 2015
Volume 15

Friends of Oil Creek State Park

“I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in: ...”

Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
Oberon (Fairy king) describing Titinia's (Fairy queen)
bower



Park Manager's Report

With our busy season well under way the staff at Oil Creek is working diligently on many projects that we have planned for 2015. Some of the larger projects consist of ditching, trimming and culvert replacement along the entire bike trail. The park will handle a large portion of this while a contractor is slated to replace two larger culverts at Miller Farm and Shaffer run. The culvert projects will most likely result in the temporary closure of the bike this fall.

Additional projects consist of...log and stone deflectors at the southern entrance of our bike trail (erosion control), rehab of the interpretive trail at Blood Farm, trail work at Wildcat Hollow, rail replacement and painting on the bike trail bridge, and removal a dozens of dead and dying ash trees throughout our picnic areas due to the infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer. There will be many trees removed over the next few years which will leave our picnic areas look much different. The park has been working closely with DCNR's resource management section to develop an appropriate management plan which will include the replanting of native trees.

In other news, our environmental educator Chris Mosebach has been extremely busy conducting a wide range of programming here at the park. Chris's programs have been well received and will continue throughout the summer. To learn more about our educational programming you can call the park office or visit the calendar of events located on the parks website.

Stay Safe,

Dave Hallman

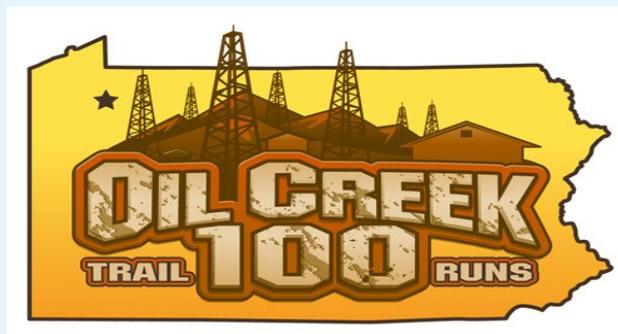


FRIENDS OF OIL
CREEK MISSION
STATEMENT :

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



The racing season has begun for us trail runners. We have worked hard throughout the winter and spring and are ready for the challenges we have ahead of us. There was a supported group trail run on Sunday, June 28th. The "supported" part means that the OC100 race director, Tom Jennings, goes around the Gerard Hiking Trail in Oil Creek State Park and puts out food and water for the large group of runners that day. This allows those who are new to the trail to run it and get advice from the local experienced runners and see how the aid stations are set up during the actual race in October.

I would also like to tell a little about a friend of mine who attempted his first 100 mile race recently... Some ultra runners do it for fun, others do it to compete, but all of us do it to find out who we really are and to push ourselves physically, mentally, and spiritually. My friend did not finish the race, but more importantly, he found out who he is and how far he can really push his limits. He pushed himself until he could literally not take another step. When you do this, it opens up another level of pride and self-realization that you never thought you had. In my opinion, this is more important than a finisher’s medal. Have you found your limits??



Nature Printing prints drying during Chicks-in-the-Sticks

Chicks-in-the-Sticks

Bicycle Maintenance



June 13th was our second annual Chicks-in-the-Sticks event. 58 women participated in it, and there were 21 different class activities to choose from. It seems that everyone had a great time. However, it wasn't without it's problems.

Last year the weather was just about perfect. This year it didn't cooperate quite as well. Volunteers spent Friday morning setting up canopies, tables and chairs and getting ready for everything in general. Most everything was ready by 1 PM.

But along about 5 PM mother nature decided to have her own way with things , and she brewed up a very windy thunderstorm. The wind blew hard , and the rain poured down. About 6 PM I went down to see what damage had been done. I was very surprised to see canopies that were standing in wide open spaces still standing. Things looked good at first. But then I saw where a very narrow band of wind must have ripped through a wooded section and destroyed three canopies and severely damaged one other.

Joe Smith and I scrambled around Friday evening buying three new canopies and pipes to repair the fourth one. Early Saturday morning , all of the volunteers were very busy trying to get everything in order. We got everything all set up just in time for the first events.

But Ma nature still wasn't done with us yet. She rained lightly for a short time in the morning. That made a few things a little uncomfortable, but the ladies were real troopers and toughed it out. After that the weather wasn't too bad the rest of the day.

Two of our activities were constricted a bit though due to the high and muddy water of Oil Creek. The participants weren't able to wade into it to search for aquatic insects for that class, and we felt it was moving a little too fast for safety to let the kayakers actually spend any time on the water in the kayaks. But the instructors took this in stride and did a great job of presenting as much information to their classes as they could without the hands-on part being possible.

As usual, Ed's Smokin' Bar-B-Q and Tambra's ice cream were delicious! And there were over forty items available for the raffle. A change in the way the raffle was operated helped to speed that up a little this year so the ladies didn't have to wait around so long at the end of the day.

Baxter may have been the highlight of lunchtime though. He is a bloodhound rescue dog that belongs to the Venango County Sheriff's Department and is used for trailing. He and his handler Ryan put on a demonstration of how he can find a person by using his nose following a scent trail. He couldn't get enough of people petting him after his performance.

None of this would have been possible without the help of all the volunteers who pitched in. Some did the "grunt work", and others were instructors. While all of these instructors are very knowledgeable about what they taught, none of them were paid to do this. All we have to offer them is a very heart-felt Thank You. They gave generously of their time and talents to help these women become more familiar with various outdoor activities. Hopefully they will continue on doing these things for many years on their own or with friends and family.

We'd also like to thank our sponsors for the many generous donations they contributed to this cause. We haven't had a meeting yet to see what the financial situation is from this event, but I'm guessing it will be in the red this year because of the weather damage to equipment. But the main purpose of this event is education, and from that standpoint, it looks like it was a complete success!

Thank you ladies for attending, and we hope to see you all there again next year...with a friend!

Kirby Neubert – Committee chairman

Fly Fishing Casting



Nature Printing



Geocaching

Biathlon 2015

10th Year

10th Anniversary

Oil Creek State Park

Summer Biathlon

August 8, 2015



Friends of Oil Creek Summer Biathlon

Which state park is the only state park to host a summer biathlon? If you guessed Oil Creek State Park you are correct! On August 8, 2012 the Friends of Oil Creek State Park will host the 10th Annual Summer Biathlon. This unique and exciting event combines the skills of running a 6K and shooting a .22 caliber rifle.

Competitors will run a 1.2 mile loop, then shoot 5 shots prone at a 4.5" metal knock down target 33 meters away. For each missed target, a 70 meter penalty loop is run. Next , the 1.2 mile loop is repeated coming back in the range to shoot standing, run penalty loops if needed, and finish with another 1.2 mile loop. We welcome the inexperienced biathlete so come out and try it! No rifles needed, rifles and ammo are provided by the Pennsylvania Biathlon Club.

Over the years improvements have been made to the range by the park staff and volunteers have maintained the trails. The event highlights the beauty and diversity of the park. It draws people from New York, New Jersey, Ohio, West Virginia, and Maryland as well as all over Pennsylvania.

The Summer Biathlon is the major fund raiser for the Friends Group. The proceeds have contributed to many projects in the park over the last 6 years. For the biathlon to be a successful fund raiser it requires many volunteers as well as participants and sponsors. You can get involved by participating, volunteering, sponsoring, or just coming out to support the event. Entry forms can be found on our website at www.orgsites.com/PA/focsp or at the park office. For information or to volunteer or donate contact John Sims, Race Director at pjam@venustel.com or call (814)354-2802.

For more info on Biathlon visit:

www.usbiathlon.com or www.friendsocsp.org

Registration is now closed entry limit has been reached

Oil Creek State Park's Upcoming Events

—Discover E– Penn’s Adventures Ages 9-12

Oil Creek State Park Wednesday July 8, 2015 from noon.. Bring bike , snacks, and a drink to ride the 10 mile bike trail and learn about the park

—Friends of Oil Creek Biathlon August 8th starting at 7:30

—Friends of Oil Creek State Park’s monthly meetings...Meetings are at the Park’s Office Amphitheater starting at 6 pm July 9th August 6th

—Ski trail Maintenance– The ski trails are in good shape. Trail work will begin in the fall.



January 2015



July 2015

Orphan Well Project



In May Mercyhurst University professor Thomas Cook and students from his Environmental Health class visited the park to learn about the problems abandoned wells cause to the environment. Students, instructed by members of the Orphan Well Project, walked the Delzell Trail at Egbert Farm and learned about tie downs, rod lines, wooden tanks, piping and well casing so they could later identify abandoned wells on game land 253 near the park. The program taught students about how the well bore acts as a conduit which allows materials from normally separate layers to mix together.

Gas and oil come to the surface and mix into the water table and contaminate springs, streams and water wells. Wells also collapse and are hazards to hunters and hikers in the Park. The group located 22 abandoned wells during the daylong event.

Recently the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) conducted high-resolution, helicopter magnetic surveys over 14.6 square miles of Oil Creek State Park which contains more than 900 known abandoned wells, including some of the oldest in the United States. Richard Hammack of NETL said “The project’s objective is to evaluate the ability of helicopter magnetic surveys to locate existing wells in heavily vegetated areas of varying terrain. Magnetic surveys locate wells by detecting the unique magnetic signature of vertical, steel well casing, which is depicted on magnetic maps as a ‘bull’s eye’ type anomaly centered directly over the well.” Later this summer and fall members of the Orphan Well Project will be working with NETL staff to compare ground identified locations with those of the magnetic survey.

Pennsylvania has a 150-year history of oil and gas production, the longest of any state, resulting in more than 333,000 known wells. However, unknown wells may exist because innumerable wells were drilled during Pennsylvania’s early years when incomplete records were kept of well locations. Early wells are likely to be unsealed because there were no laws that required effective plugging when the wells were abandoned. Now, many unrecorded wells are thought to be in areas of emerging



shale gas and shale oil development where open wellbores might provide a pathway for undesired upward migration of fluids and gas from hydraulically fractured reservoirs. In June students from Princeton, Stanford and Ohio State Universities visited the park to measure gas leaking from plugged and open abandoned wells. The results of the research will allow scientists to better understand the underground migration of gas and its leakage to the surface.



SUMMER IN OIL CREEK



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

www.friendsocsp.org

President's Report

VOLUNTEERISM IN THE PARK

Volunteerism has long been part of the American way and is critical to the success of our state parks. Oil Creek is fortunate in that it has dedicated and energetic people who are willing to give of their time and talents to the park.

The Friends of Oil Creek, as part of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation, is a group of volunteers dedicated to supporting the park through its many projects and events. It takes many hands and lots of hours to accomplish this. Volunteers are very appreciated.

Volunteer opportunities can include just about anything like trail up-keep, weeding and planting flower gardens, bat counts, orphan well hunting, maintaining blue bird boxes, working at the train station, serving on the Friends Board, and helping out before and during events. Events such as Chicks in the Sticks, Summer Biathlon, and the Oil Creek 100 Runs require much help to be successful.

Persons interested in volunteering at Oil Creek can call the park office (814-676-5915) or go to the DCNR web site at www.volunteers.dcnr.state.pa.us. You can also watch for postings on Facebook or the Friends website at www.friendsocsp.org.

Volunteering is a great way to meet people, learn more about the park, enjoy the wonders the park has to offer, have fun, and gain a sense of accomplishment. Summer is a good time to get started, but there are volunteer opportunities all year long.

One easy way to help the park is simply by becoming a "Friend of Oil Creek" through your individual or family membership. Financial support is also needed to accomplish many of the projects. Please consider volunteering or becoming a "Friend" this year. You'll be glad you did and so will the park!

Happy Trails,
Peg Sims, President



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



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