



# Friends of Oil Creek End of Winter 2025<sup>1</sup>



Tim Rudisille was an avid professional photographer who passed away on February 10<sup>th</sup> of this year. Through the years, Tim spent many hours at Oil Creek State Park, as well as other parks in the US - photographing nature. He could often be seen wandering through Oil Creek with his camera gear in tow. Tim was a wonderful person who generously shared his photographs with this newsletter.

With his amazing photographs, Tim had the incredible ability to capture the essence and beauty of a special moment in nature. The opportunity to look at his photographs allows us to experience that singular moment.

Even though it was for a short time, we were honored to have Tim on the Friends of Oil Creek State Park Board of Directors. We will miss his capturing of nature and his and insights into it.

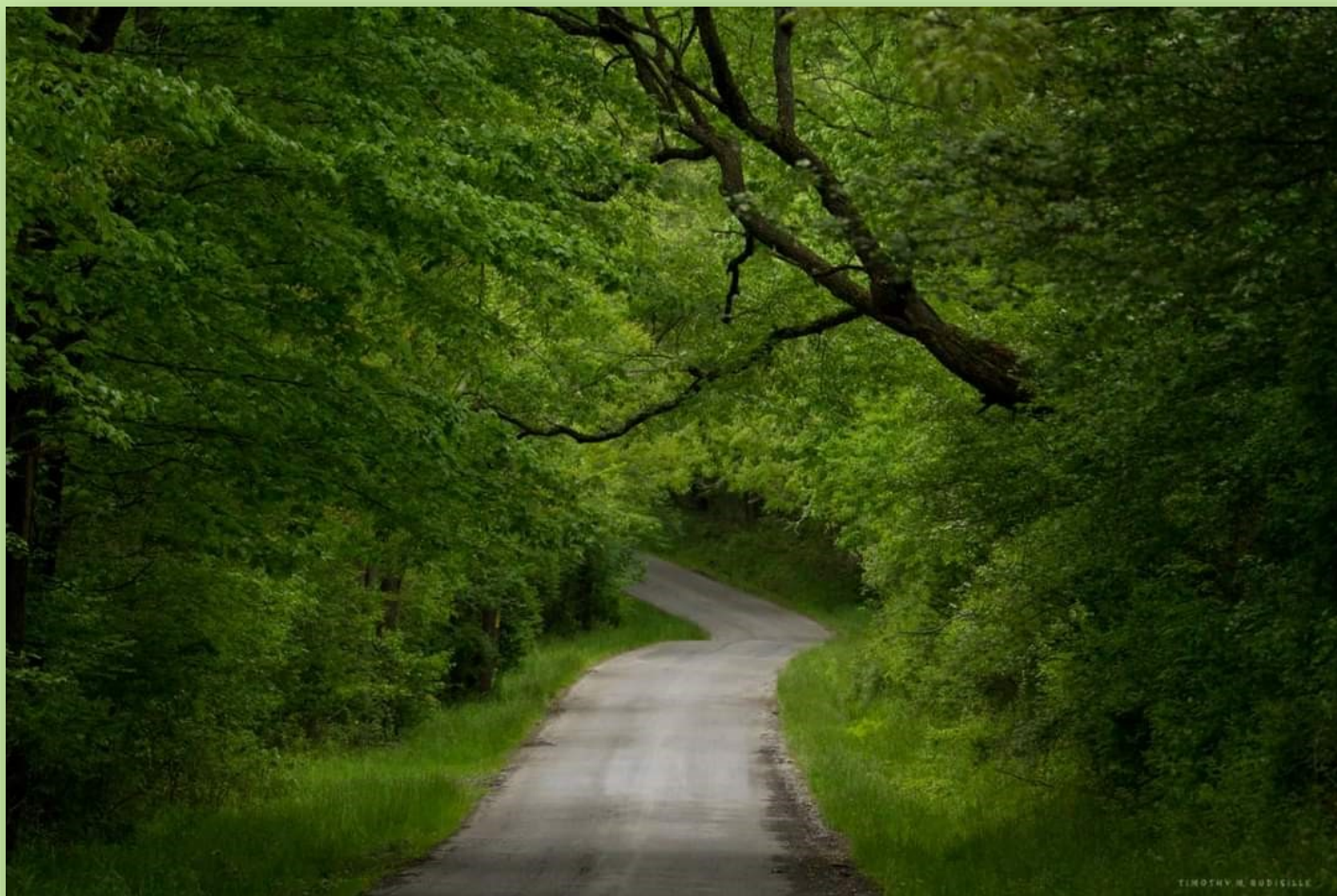
The next few pages are some of Tim's beautiful photographs

Enjoy  
the following pages of  
Tim's Amazing photographs











OC100 registration has been open for a few weeks. Heather Nelson , the race director, happily reports that there are 117 registered so far including OC Friends Board members Rebecca Beach, Rebekah Deal, and Kat Thompson.

Thank you Mike Henderson for these pictures from last year's race.



# Over-The-Hill Gang

The OTHG has been on the trails every Wednesday –weather permitting. A huge project has been clearing the Titusville end of the bike trail of a multiple tree blowdown. It has damaged the Gerard trail on the uphill side. The gang has met with park staff in deciding how to approach the damage.



*Before*



*After*

# Wintertime in Oil Creek

Wintertime at Oil Creek State Park provides a unique opportunity to experience nature through a different lens. There's something to be had by taking a break from the outside world at its busy pace and enjoy the moments out on the trail.

I've become quite the hiker over the past few years. I wouldn't consider myself a trail runner by any stretch of the imagination, albeit I have successfully participated in and completed two 50ks and one 100k during the OC 100 Races. However, as time progressed and I gained familiarity with the Park and its trails, I am able to navigate them at a much quicker pace.

Given this year's weather, and my love for year-round hiking, I was forced to slow my speed as I traversed the Gerard Trail and Blood Farm loop. This has given me a deeper appreciation for the true beauty the Park offers. I sincerely consider Oil Creek State Park a hidden gem. While, many people are aware of the park's programs and educational events, I think there is so much to take in by being out meandering the trails after a snow fall. Your senses are heightened as you become aware of the ice and snow crunching beneath your feet as you carry along. The woods seem to be quieter, maybe it is because I am taking my time, being mindful of my steps. I notice more of nature such as: deer crossing ahead, squirrels scampering up trees, and an eagle flying overhead. It is also interesting to see the different animal tracks left behind after a fresh snowfall. It gives consideration for how resilient things are.

Despite the freezing temperatures and seemingly never-ending flurries, the promise of spring and warmer days are just around the corner.

Rebecca Beach





# President's Report

Hard to believe that just a few weeks ago the temperature was in the 20's and we had plenty of snow on the ground. Because we had more snow this year, we could enjoy cross country skiing in January and February. Especially nice on the trails after a fresh powder snowfall!

Well, spring is almost here and what a terrific time of the year to get out and enjoy nature! Where better to do that than at Oil Creek State Park?

One of the reasons why spring is such a good time to see what nature has to offer are the wildlife and plants beginning another year and another generation.

Tree swallows, chickadees, and eastern bluebirds will be starting families soon. These birds use the nesting boxes around the park office from mid-April to late July.

Not only are the locals stirring about, but migrant species are passing through. Some spring visitors are Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Cerulean Warbler in the woods. Check the fields and grassy areas for Baltimore Orioles, Warbling Vireo and Fox Sparrows as they pass through to their summer homes. Along the creek and wetlands, you may hear American Woodcocks, Yellow-throated Warblers or Eastern Phoebe's taking a break on their trek to their nesting areas.

Wet areas are some of the first places spring shows up. Vernal pools are visited early by salamanders and frogs for courtship and egg laying. Spring peepers can be quite loud on a warm night.

Look for signs of the first flowers of the year, too. The hoods of skunk cabbage start growing in late winter in wet areas, and are well up before other flowers even break ground.

You'll find one of nature's "tricksters" growing alongside the roadways. Many people see the new yellow flowers and mistake them for dandelions. In truth, they are coltsfoot. Take a close look at one and, unlike dandelions, you'll see projections that look somewhat like scales all along the stem.

Get your fishing gear ready as Opening Day for trout is April 5<sup>th</sup>! On February 28<sup>th</sup> the Venango County sections of the Creek were stocked. The Crawford County sections of the Creek were stocked March 8<sup>th</sup>. Please note that a special Youth Fishing day will be March 29<sup>th</sup>. The fish will be waiting!

For those that are spring time turkey hunters, the season (bearded birds only) runs May 3 through May 17 and again from May 19 through 31. April 26<sup>th</sup> is a special day for eligible junior hunters, with required license, and mentored hunters 16 and under. This date is also bearded birds only.

Come out to the park with your walking shoes (or waterproof boots) and binoculars to experience spring in the Park!

Jen McAlevy





# 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
- Please Note: All checks should be made out to Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation (PPFF) with Friends of Oil Creek State Park listed in the memo section.



Up on Benninghoff Hill...

## 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.

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