



Summer/Fall Newsletter 2026

Park Manager's report

This summer we had the first confirmed venomous snake bite in the 15 years that I have been here, and I am unaware of any confirmed cases before I arrived. Up until this point in my career, I have never seen or had a confirmed sighting of a venomous snake within the park's borders. So, I thought it would be a good idea to refresh everyone's knowledge of the venomous snakes that we have here in Pa.

We have three venomous snakes that reside in our beautiful state -- which are the Timber Rattlesnake, Northern Copperhead, and the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake. Our venomous snakes have a triangular shaped head with vertical slit pupils. Like a cat, they also have heat-sensing pits between the eye and nostrils which they use to locate prey. The Timber Rattlesnake prefers high elevation forests and ridges with rocky outcrops where the Massasauga is endangered and only found in specific wetlands. Copperheads primarily enjoy wooded hillsides, rocky outcrops, and areas near streams or wetlands.

When encountering a snake of any kind it is best to give them their space. If you do find yourself in the presence of a venomous snake, you should keep your distance and back away slowly. If you are bitten, you should keep yourself as calm as possible and seek medical attention as quickly as you can. Remembering the details about the snake's appearance can go along way when determining the type of antivenom you need. The antivenom for a timber rattlesnake bite will not work on someone that was bitten by a copperhead and visa versa.

While this is an extremely rare occurrence in this part of the state, it is not out of the realm of possibility that you may encounter one at some point. The person that was bitten in the park got lucky, especially since he decided to wait three hours before calling 911. I am pleased to report that he did receive the appropriate antivenom and is doing well. So, when you are out and about, please stay alert and aware of your surroundings. The best rule of thumb, especially if you do not know your snakes, is to just give them space. They don't want to bite you anymore than you want to get bitten.

Stay Safe,
David Hallman
Park Manager.



Thanks Dot Monahan for this pic!

Great pics from Dot Monahan



OVER THE HILL GANG

Most of our activities this summer have been related to frequent and recurring storm damage. We have had almost continuous work to do reacting to the downed trees along the trail, sometimes returning to the same areas for new damage week to week. Some of our crew have been working far “above and beyond” our normal Wednesday activities, and their effort is greatly appreciated.



Howard Wurzbacher– OTHG

A note about the OTHG

The Over the Hill Gang is made up of volunteers who meet each Wednesday and work on parts of the Gerard trail they deem in need of maintenance. They have a regular schedule, but weather often dictate changes to their plans. The Gang often hears of problem areas from hikers and runners. Our Gerard Trail and the connecting trails are superb- thanks almost entirely to the efforts of the OTHG.

The OTHG is funded primarily through the Friends’ group. When making donations to FOCSP you may specify the donation to go directly to the OTHG.



Friends of Oil Creek State Park

Since 2005

Oil Creek Park Office

The Friends of Oil Creek State Park 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.” Since the inception in 2005 that has been the intention for the FOCSP.

John Kolojejchick is the only director who has been on the board since 2005. He has been a part of many evolutions within the group. John recalls the various Park managers with whom the group has worked. John states the original group focused on the individual talents of the board members and what they could bring to the group. Today the Friends work on projects as a group.

John is very pleased and proud of the direction the Friends have gone since 2005. Projects and activities such as the biathlon, Chicks in the Sticks, helping with grants for the playgrounds, keeping the ski trails in order, and supporting & sponsoring the Over the Hill Gang are just a few of the initiatives that have come to fruition since the Friends creation.

The future for the Friends will continue with great activities such as mentioned above, but also to have more involvement with the community. The Friends community involvement has been increasing in the last few years by doing outreach and participating in community activities such as May Mart in Franklin, the Children's Fair in Oil City, and National Night Out in Rouseville. The group is presently working very hard to help make the Park more ADA accessible. ADA accessibility equipment has been added to the playground, and there are other ADA projects in the works. The Friends are also in partner-

ship with a local college to work on preservation and cleaning of the numerous cemeteries within the Park. One more recent activity the Friends have taken on is the trail maintenance of Wildcat Hollow.

Oil Creek State Park is an amazing and beautiful place. The Friends are very proud to have the opportunity to help support it!

Overhanging rock in Wildcat Hollow



Thank you Dave Bowser- Wildlife Journey Photography
for the amazing photos
on the next two pages!



Dave Bowser
Wildlife Journey Photography



Note From the President

Our Friends group had a busy summer representing the Park at various events. Thanks to the Park Educator, Laryssa Remmick, we had the opportunity to learn a new craft to teach children about the park. At the Children's Fair event during the 2026 Oil Heritage Festival, we engaged the children with Japanese Fish Painting. This craft used water soluble paint and silicon replicas of perch, bass, walleye and trout. As the kids would paint their fish and use the painted fish to make a print on paper, Laryssa would talk to them about the fish they selected. It was a very interesting process and a lot of fun!

The PA Fish & Boat Commission had Rynd Farm and the OC & T RR Station stocked for Rainbow Trout on October 1st. These are delayed harvest artificial lure regulated areas. Kindly refer to <https://fbweb.pa.gov/TroutStocking> for additional information.

Our very hot summer is winding down and it is time to check out the adjustments the Park's flora and fauna are making to get ready for winter.

With the cooler temperatures, it is more comfortable to enjoy the woods. Walking along the trails or taking a break on the bike path, there are different sounds as the insects sing their autumn songs. Squirrels and chipmunks starting to gather food for the winter. Fawns born last spring are almost as tall as their Moms.

Come enjoy the cooler breezes and beautiful scenery of our extraordinary park!

Jen McAlevy -Friends of Oil Creek President



Thanks Dot for these great photos!



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. 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
- Website— www.friendsocsp.org Call Park Office—814-676-5915

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Thanks Dot Monahan
for this and all your
wonderful pictures.



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

