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The Friends

VOLUME VI ISSUE I

SPRING / SUMMER 2013

Tenth-Mile Markers to be Restored to the Multi-Use Trail

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park, with the support of park management, have taken on the job of restoring the popular distance markings on the Multi-Use Trail. As many of you have noticed, the tenth-mile markers have been fading. Several years ago it was decided that a less labor-intensive manner of distance marking be implemented employing posts at 1/2 mile intervals. For many

this proved to be unsatisfactory because they start and finish their timed travel at different points along the MUT and for various other reasons.

After receiving a number of requests from users of the Park for the reinstatement of the tenth-mile markers, the Friends approached park management with a proposal to take on the cost, implementation, and

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Streams Cleanup Scheduled for May 4

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park is participating in a spring cleanup in the Park on May 4, in conjunction with the Chester-Ridley-Crum (CRC) Watersheds Association's annual Streams Cleanup Day. This is the same day as our monthly trail work, so our group will meet at the Mansion at 9 am and we will be working on a trail as part of the spring cleanup.

Friends President Jack Miller is serving as Ridley's Coordinator on behalf of the Friends' trail workers. Participants will receive a T-shirt and lunch after the event at about noon, served at Picnic Area 8 in the park. If you are planning to attend, please register at CRC's website <http://crcwatersheds.org/resources/view/272>



so you will be counted in for a T-shirt and lunch. Be sure to indicate you are with the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park in Block 4 of the sign-in sheet there. We will be supporting Site 15.

Come and join CRC and other community volunteers at Ridley Creek State Park, an effort shared by 20 different sites throughout our watersheds!

Tenth-Mile Markers (Continued from page 1)

maintenance of the markers. Park management agreed that this is a worthwhile endeavor and said they could be revived in a modified form showing the running distance along the perimeter of the road surface.

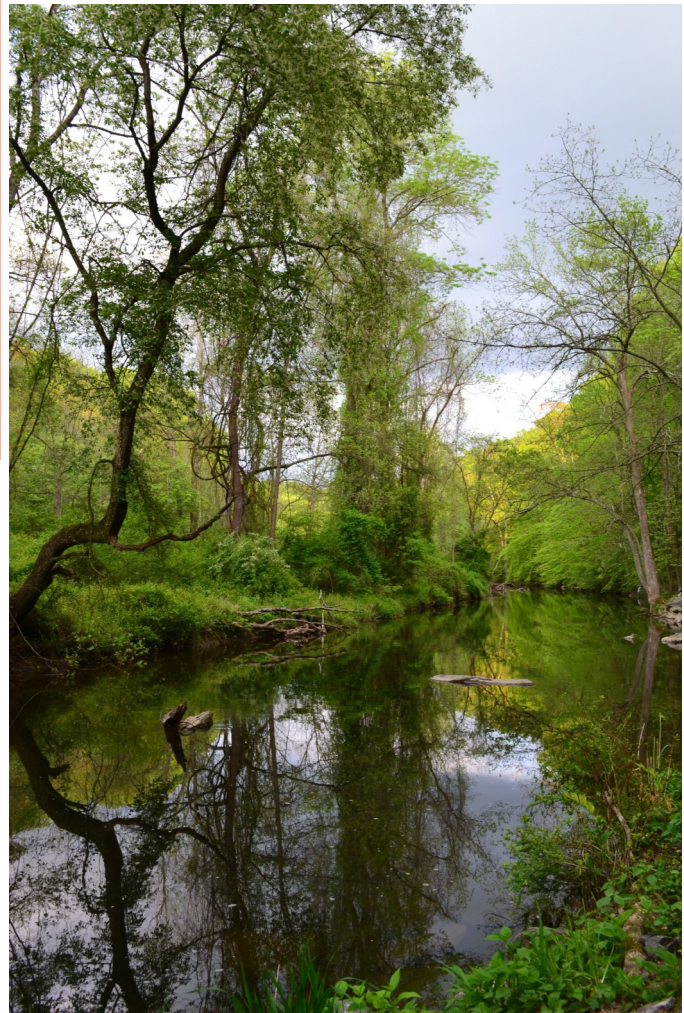
The Friends have recently approved a contractor's bid to restore the markers. We are projecting that this project will be done before the start of summer.

This article was contributed by Friends Board member and Treasurer Tim Higgins.

Winners of 2013 Photo Contest

On Sunday, January 27, the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park held their annual Photo Contest in the Hunting Hill mansion. Although submissions were mysteriously down, the quality was up! New entries were displayed along with nearly a hundred photos from previous years - all making for a visual montage of the park as seen through the eyes of its visitors. Richard Johnson, Director of the Art Gallery at Delaware County Community College, kindly served another year as the contest judge and also offered sage advice to those looking to hone their skills or upgrade their photo tech knowledge. After the contest, park historian Kay Ferrari gave her signature tour of the mansion to interested attendees. Hot drinks and food topped off an enjoyable day.

1st Place in the Adult category went to an



*First Prize Winner: Tranquil Beauty
by E. Duckworth*

aspiring young photographer, Elizabeth Duckworth, for *Tranquil Beauty*, an enchanting photo that captures Ridley Creek in a nuanced cloak of green. Elizabeth was there with her father and a friend and said she plans to pursue a career in photography. It looks like she is off to a picture-perfect start! The Friends of Ridley Creek wish her well and look forward to following her career over the coming years.

2nd Place, Adults, went to Carmen Smargiassi for *Endless*, a crisp black and white of a 3-rail pasture fence stretching into a brooding autumn horizon.

Adults 3rd Place went to James Talone for *River of Gold*, an apt title for an image which captures Ridley Creek as if it were a meandering flow of molten precious metal.

Honorable Mention for Adults went to Syndy Salko for her submission, *Reflections of Fall*.

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1st Place in the Youth category went to Jessica Davis for Open Gates, where she layers perception and depth of field as seen through the gates descending the mansion's garden.

2nd Place for Youth went to Tommy Salko for his photo, Downy Woodpecker, of a woodpecker having an afternoon meal at a feeder.

All digital images that were submitted can be viewed at: <http://friendsofrcsp.org/>

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park would like to thank all photographers for their submissions and remind everyone to keep their shutters active over the coming year and we'll see them in 2014!

This article was contributed by Friends member Keith Parsons.



Left to right: Keith Parsons, Joan Nikelsky, Tim Higgins, Jack Miller, Paul Mickle.

Picnic June 1 for Friends Members and Trail Workers

Mark your calendars for our annual member and volunteer appreciation picnic on Saturday June 1 at noon, after the trail workday. The picnic is open to all trail workers and members of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and will be followed by a brief annual meeting for Friends members.

The location for the event is Pavilion 8, which is a sheltered site off Sandy Flash Drive South, a left turn just beyond the stables and road to the Mansion if you're coming from Gradyville Road. The picnic will be held rain or shine and is



compliments of the Friends: hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, coleslaw, beverages, and other picnic fare. People are welcome to bring a dessert or other dish to share.

The annual meeting will include officer elections. Tim Higgins is up for re-election as Treasurer. Current members of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and newly signed up members will be able to vote.

Please RSVP for the picnic so we can plan the food. E-mail members@friendsofrcsp.org or call Joan at 610-498-5346 by Thursday, May 30, if you can. We hope to see you there!

Friends of RCSP VoiceMail

Please contact your Friends at any time with your comments and/or questions. Leave a message at 484-442-0223, and someone will get back to you ASAP!

What's the Story on Invasive Plants?

Many people wonder “What is an invasive plant?” Others ask “What is the problem with these plants?” To be brief, an invasive plant is one that evolved on a different continent and is now here in North America. Before the 18th century, plants could not travel from continent to continent. Since then, plants are being moved intercontinentally with increasing frequency, some on purpose for ornamental or aesthetic reasons, such as Japanese Knotweed and Burnish Bush (Winged Euonymus). Other plants become introduced accidentally – for example, Japanese Stiltgrass and Mile-a-Minute.

Regardless of how invasive plants have been introduced, they can become problematic because there are no natural checks on their population and spread. Native plants (those that stay in areas where they developed) are part of the balance of the ecosystem in which they live. They have natural enemies, insects, diseases, and other plants that compete with them within the developed ecosystem. Invasive plants (those that have been introduced from another continent and are aggressive growers) have no checks on their spread and can outcompete a native plant, even replacing it in the developed ecosystem.

Then a cascade of changes begins. Insect herbivores and other predators don't recognize or receive any benefits from the invasive plant, so they prey more heavily on the native plants. Because of this, there are fewer seedlings for these plants in Ridley Creek State Park. Birds depend heavily on insects as a food source. The insect population decreases when there are fewer native plants to feed on; then the birds have reduced food



Japanese Stiltgrass



Mile-a-Minute



Winged Euonymus

sources and a more hostile environment for propagating. Thus, changes spread throughout the entire ecosystem.

This problem has grown and is becoming more evident in Ridley Creek State Park. Prior to the 18th century, the land on which the park sits was primarily woodlands. During the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, the forests were removed and replaced with desirable crop vegetation as the land was used more and more for farming. Since the land is no longer being farmed, non-native, or invasive, plants have an advantageous opportunity to move in.

Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) commissioned a study of the plants of Ridley Creek State Park in 2007-2008. The study was conducted by two renowned botanist PhDs, Ann Rhoads and Timothy Block, of the University of Pennsylvania and Morris Arboretum. Their report, “Vegetation of Ridley Creek State Park,” is available on the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park website, www.friendsofrcsp.org under “Activities/Invasives.” The report, among other things, divides the park into five vegetative categories and contains recommendations on how best to manage the plant life in the park. Based on this report, in 2008 the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park began our efforts to mitigate invasive plant intrusion and preserve the native areas in the Park.

Stay tuned for future reports on these efforts!

This article was contributed by Friends Board member and Treasurer Tim Higgins.

Park's 40th Anniversary Celebrated

Ridley Creek's 40th anniversary as a state park was celebrated by the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park at a gala event and open house at the Mansion on Sunday, October 21, 2012. Over 100 people came by during the afternoon.

There were tours of the Mansion and Hidden Valley horse stables, a historical display of photos and articles, interesting stories about the history of the park and Mansion from tour guide, Kay Ferrari, and park resident Tish Mayo, 40th anniversary mementos, refreshments, and a special anniversary cake. In addition, Park Manager Mike Kutzmonich greeted the attendees and long-time Park Ranger Mike Bonner talked about his role as a park ranger at Ridley Creek for the last 12 seasons.

Information tables and displays from groups that are active in the park included the Colonial Plantation, which led a project of making corn husk dolls; the Craft Guild; and two fishing groups: Delco Anglers, and Delco Manning Chapter #320 of Trout Unlimited, which gave fly tying demonstrations and displayed a model of the fly fishing section of Ridley Creek. The Chester-Ridley-Crum Watershed Association sponsored a nature slide show presented by Tom Reeves, a horticulturalist and experienced nature guide. In

addition, Tish Mayo, "artist-in-residence," displayed some of her paintings and photographs of the park.

Another event was the 40-mile Hiking Challenge. Hikers who registered for this pledged to do 40+ miles in the park over a period of 10 weeks, from August 12 until October 21. Nine hikers achieved 40 miles or more, and special prizes were awarded to them along with Certificates of Achievement. George Blohm, who hiked 119.2 miles, commented, "While I appreciate a prize, I do this for one prize - my health - and RCSP has been 'the place' that has helped me achieve better health."

Echoing that thought, 146-mile achiever Varinder Mohan commented, "I do not consider this an exceptional accomplishment because this is my physical fitness regimen and not a challenge." He added, "I would like to say that Ridley Creek State Park is a huge resource to the communities surrounding the park. It offers beautiful vistas and a serene environment that lets people of all ages unwind and relax in a natural setting, and for a number of us, a place to improve the fitness level. Efforts put forth by the Friends of Ridley in preserving this resource are remarkable."

We thank our contributing merchants who graciously donated the prizes. Be sure to patronize them:

- Blueberry Bog, Media
- Dr. Jason Connor, chiropractor, Rosemont
- Earth & State, Media
- Honey by the Bees (Warren Graham), Ridley Creek State Park
- Jean Wood Gupta, herbalist, Newtown Square
- Lotus Farm to Table, Media
- Margaret Kuo's restaurant, Media
- Reiki Healing Center, Media
- Stephen's on State restaurant, Media
- Ten Thousand Villages, Media
- Trader Joe's, Media

We congratulate these hikers for entering the Ridley Creek State Park 40-mile Challenge and achieving the listed miles!

- Varinder Mohan - 146 miles
- George Blohm - 119.2 miles
- Tim Higgins - 75.5 miles
- Dina Cianci - 50 miles
- Richard Patterson - 49 miles
- Thomas Caldwell - 47.2 miles
- Linda Pellegrino - 40 miles
- Leslie Stack - 40 miles
- Stephanie Spence - 40 miles



Calendar of Events

- First Saturday of each month, 9 am – Monthly trail work. Meet at park office.
- Saturday, May 4 – 9 am - Annual Streams Cleanup – trail workday in conjunction with Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association.
- Saturday, June 1, noon – Free picnic for Friends members and trail workers at Pavilion 8.