

THE FRIENDS OF  
RIDLEY CREEK  
STATE PARK



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# The Friends

VOL IX ISSUE 1

SPRING/SUMMER 2016

## CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS!

### New Date and Time for Photo Contest

For the first time, we are holding the award ceremony for the annual photo contest in June. The 2016 Friends of Ridley Creek State Park Photo Contest prizes will be given out on Friday evening June 24, at 6:00 pm in the mansion area outdoors. (Rain location will be in the mansion) The contest is open to amateur photographers of all ages, including children. We especially encourage youth under 18 to enter the contest!

There will be several prizes in adult and youth categories. We are trying out some new ideas, so the specific prizes are to be announced. Look for the contest rules, entry form, and updated information on the Friends website [www.FriendsofRCSP.org](http://www.FriendsofRCSP.org). Flyers have been posted in the park on the bulletin boards of the Multi-Use Trail. Note that the submission deadline for photos eligible to win prizes is Friday, June 17, one week prior to the award ceremony.

Photos of all seasons are welcome. So start gathering your summer, fall, and winter pictures, and then take some spring pictures and submit your best entries. The photo contest has always been one of our most popular fundraisers, while also raising awareness of the park and the Friends.

Come and bring your family and friends to the award ceremony to look at all the beautiful pictures of our park! Light refreshments will be served. We are also setting up a collection box for canned food items for the local Food Bank, so bring a donation if you can. See you there!

### **Volunteers Requested**

Would you like to help with flyer distribution, prize solicitation, and/or set up for the photo contest award ceremony? We would appreciate it! Please leave a message for Paul Mickle at the Friends of Ridley phone voicemail 484-442-0223. Thanks!

### 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!

# EXPLORING PENNSYLVANIA'S CHERRY SPRINGS STATE PARK

Being so close to Philadelphia, the largest city in the state, Ridley Creek State Park is easily a "one of a kind" place. But it is often forgotten that although the park is a treasure to the local region, it is part of a much larger network of state parks scattered across the state of Pennsylvania. There are, in fact, 121 Pennsylvania state parks that are open to the public for recreational use. The parks vary in many different ways, so while Ridley Creek is the focal point for Delaware County, for this article we are going to travel across the state and briefly explore a fellow state park.

Pennsylvania has a total of 67 counties and 61 of them contain at least one state park or state park equivalent. In the rural countryside, it is quite common for each county to only have one or possibly two parks, with the next one being tens of miles away. Today we are going up on the



northern tier, which - for those who aren't familiar - is the top row of counties that border the state of New York. The destination is Potter County, three counties east from Erie in the center of the state. Potter County has only one state park, but it's a famous one, known nationally in the

astronomy world. It is called Cherry Springs State Park and is notable for being one of the best stargazing sites on the east coast.

Aside from being isolated from the surrounding light pollution, it is sheltered by the neighboring mountains that shield out even more residual light. This makes watching the night sky a very rare and intriguing experience, as visitors are truly left in the dark once the sun goes down. The park is clearly set up to cater to both amateur and professional astronomers with lots of observation facilities and equipment - even an outdoor classroom.

The 82-acre property is primarily grassy fields and open meadows, allowing clear vantage points of the night sky. Aside from the stargazing, Cherry Springs is also perched in a part of the state that has skiing, snowmobiling,



hiking, camping, sightseeing, mountain biking, and all kinds of other activities to entertain outdoor enthusiasts.

Those not interested in camping in the onsite rustic campground will likely stay overnight in the small town of Coudersport 15 miles away. Coudersport is the county seat of Potter County and a true demonstration of what a small northern Pennsylvania town

looks like. Anchored by the Courthouse, it is what some could argue is a scaled down version of our Media.

So the next time you're out wandering the trails or jogging on the bike path at our beloved Ridley Creek, take a minute to reflect on the expansive state and vast network of parks we are fortunate to have all across Pennsylvania. It's no surprise

that most of the visitors Ridley Creek gets will not venture out to Cherry Springs or even close, but for those willing to make the trip, Cherry Springs and Potter County is definitely worth a visit.

*This article was contributed by Board member and Program Chair Paul Mickle.*

## THE FRIENDS ON FACEBOOK

Did you know that The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park is on Facebook? If you don't, please take a look to stay updated between newsletters.

Our page started in 2011 and over the past 6 years, we have over 700 likes!! While that is all well and good, we still want people to know that "The Friends" is not just people who like Ridley Creek State Park, but The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park is a 501(c)(3) organization through our affiliation with the Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation. We raise funds and provide volunteers to close the gap in park-funded upkeep, maintenance, and preservation.

So, whether you "Like" us



on Facebook or are already a member of the Friends group, please consider joining or renewing your membership. Annual membership dues are \$20 for individuals, \$15 for seniors and students, and \$30 for families; your donations stay within the Park.

We send annual membership renewal letters by email now,

so if you are or were a member and changed your email address recently, you might have missed getting a renewal notification. Please check your records or notify the Membership Chair (Joan Nikelsky, 215-498-5346) if you think your renewal is overdue.

We'd also love to have you volunteer. There are positions to fill and many of them have been filled by the same people for years. We'd love new ideas, energy, and love for our park. Please share this message and invite a friend to join!

*This article was contributed by Friends Publicity Chair Pam Cloud, who maintains the Friends Facebook page.*

## EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22ND 2016

Earth Day is Friday, April 22nd this year, take the day or even the whole week to visit the park and enjoy being outside with nature.



## MEMBERS AND TRAIL WORKERS PICNIC MAY 7

This year, our annual member and volunteer appreciation picnic will be on Saturday May 7 at noon, after the trail workday. The picnic is free to all trail workers and members of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and will be held rain or shine.

The location for the event is Pavilion 14, which is a sheltered site at the end of Sandy Flash Drive South. The picnic offerings will feature hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, coleslaw, beverages, and other picnic fare. People are welcome to bring a dish to share. Day-old breads and pastries donated by Panera

will be available for the taking during the picnic. What a treat!

Following the picnic, the Friends annual meeting will include officer elections. Current members of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and newly signed up members will be able to vote. The offices of President and Vice-President are up for election; these posts are currently held by Jack Miller and Joan Nikelsky, respectively. We will also elect a Treasurer, a position vacated last year and currently being filled on an interim basis by Cate Bolduc, who was appointed

by the Board in February. We appreciate her volunteering to fill this important post and we commend our past Treasurer, Tim Higgins, for carrying on the Treasurer duties to that point.

We welcome you to consider running for any of these positions. If you are interested, just e-mail [members@friendsofrcsp.org](mailto:members@friendsofrcsp.org) or call Joan at 610-498-5346.

Please RSVP for the picnic so we can plan the food. E-mail [members@friendsofrcsp.org](mailto:members@friendsofrcsp.org) or call Joan at 610-498-5346 by Wednesday, May 4, if you can. We hope to see you there!

## HUNTING AT RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK

Ridley Creek State Park's 2600 acres is home to many creatures great and small. Only one, the white tail deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), can be hunted. The park manages the deer population by allowing hunters access to the park under controlled conditions.

Archery hunting is allowed north of Gradyville Road and much of the area north of the creek itself, including the general area of the Orange Trail. Archery season is typically from mid-September to the third weekend in January. Hunters must have a general hunting license, archery license, and the appropriate tag for the deer they are looking to harvest issued by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Certain weeks of the archery season are open to antlerless

deer only. Hunters can use portable or climbing deer stands in the area designated for archery hunting; however, they cannot leave them overnight or use any type of permanent stand. Stands that cause any damage to trees such as screw-in steps are also prohibited.

There are two days each season when the entire park is closed for shotgun hunting. These are typically the two Thursdays following Thanksgiving. The park coordinates these dates with special hunting at neighboring Tyler Arboretum. However, hunters in Ridley cannot hunt in Tyler, and vice-versa. The Park requires shotgun hunters to submit an application; a lottery is held for the 250 permits to hunt on a given day.

Selected hunters must have a general hunting license, at

least one antlerless tag for Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 5D, the park permit, and one form of identification. Game Commission regulations still apply during the hunt. Rangers are stationed at park entrances during the hunt to keep people out, and there are roving rangers in the park interior as well. Game Commission officers are also on site.

In 2012, shotgun hunters took 145 deer from the park, but since then the culling has been steadier at 74-87 in a season. Archers typically take about 40 deer in a season.

One way to determine the health of the deer herd is to see what they have been eating. Each spring, before buds begin to swell and leaf out, Park Manager Mike

*Continued on Page 6*

# APPRECIATION OF TIM HIGGINS

For the first time in many years, the name “Tim Higgins” will not appear in the list of Board members for the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park. The last time Board elections were to be held for Treasurer, Tim said he decided not to run for another term. To ensure a smooth transition, Tim trained his successor, Cate Bolduc, in the processes used by the Friends and PPF to see that all Friends funds, member dues, and donations are credited to and available for use in Ridley Creek State Park. During his many years of service on the Board, Tim always assured a smooth progression to those who followed in his footsteps.

Who is Tim Higgins, you may ask? If you adopt a hiking trail within Ridley Creek State Park, Tim Higgins provides your maintenance tools and a map of your section of trail. If you attended any of the past December holiday parties in the mansion, your bartender was probably Tim Higgins, working with his lovely wife Liz in their matching white shirts and black bow ties. If you attended the History Walk around the Multi-Use Trail (MUT) in the Spring of 2014, your tour leader was Tim Higgins. If you were involved in the invasive plant removal group, Tim Higgins was your leader, coordinating training, getting licenses to use herbicides, and supplying the spray equipment and tools. The invasive plant group was

recognized by the state for their efforts to clear sections of the Park from non-native plants.

Tim was also President of the Friends for many years. Tim coordinated the food required for the Friends annual picnic and usually was the chef for the occasion as well. In all these activities, you notice one common thread: Tim Higgins was the guy in the background, working hard to ensure everyone felt needed



and appreciated. Each of Tim’s volunteer jobs required many hours of his own time in planning, trips to Costco, and trips to Newtown Square True Value. Tim was one of the Board members who researched possible sources for the new posts along the hiking trails; he visited other parks to see their signage and used his experiences to help us make a final decision on the trail posts now installed throughout the park. Tim also

arranged for the tenth mile markers to be painted on the MUT.

It is hard to find any area of Ridley Creek State Park that has not benefitted from Tim Higgins’ hard work, dedication, and leadership. We appreciate knowing Tim and working side by side with him. He still maintains a great sense of humor and has a wide smile and a contagious laugh.

Fortunately, even though Tim has retired from “official” positions, he still coordinates the Adopt a Trail Program and takes part in our monthly trail work. We all still have the opportunity to work with a great proponent of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and a real nice guy.

Thank you, Mr. Higgins, for your years of leadership. We look forward to many more years of working with you. Your footprints are everywhere.

*This article was contributed by Jack Miller, President of the Friends.*

*Hunting from Page 4*

Kutzmonich and Chief Ranger Tony Mosloskie do a browse survey, where they look to see what species of plants are being eaten and how hard they are being eaten. It takes a trained eye to spot the twigs that deer have nibbled on. "If they are browsing only on their favorite species, they are doing well. If they are browsing on their least preferred species, then the population is stressed," says Kutzmonich.

Hunting dates and

regulations can change, so it's a good idea to check ahead if you have any questions about hunting or other park activities. We are fortunate to have a park that can accommodate the interests of sportsmen - hunters and fishermen alike.

*This article was contributed by Gary Sawyer, Trails Chair, Board member, and Recording Secretary.*

## NEW TREASURER WELCOMED

The Friends Board appointed an interim Treasurer due to the departure of Tim Higgins. Cate Bolduc agreed to take on that responsibility and we are all grateful. Cate joined the Friends in 2012 and began volunteering in 2014 by designing the Friends newsletter. You have probably been very impressed with the high quality of the newsletter design, thanks to Cate. Her full-time career is Marketing Manager at the Springfield Mall.

At the annual picnic on June 4, when we hold officer elections, Friends members who attend will be able to vote for Cate to serve a two-year term as Treasurer.

Welcome to the Board, Cate!

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY TRAIL WORK. MEET AT PARK OFFICE

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH, 9AM.

FREE PICNIC FOR FRIENDS MEMBERS AND TRAIL WORKERS

SATURDAY, MAY 7TH, NOON AT PAVILION 14

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ENTRIES FOR THE FRIENDS PHOTO CONTEST

FRIDAY, JUNE 17TH, TILL 4PM IN PARK OFFICE

AWARD CEREMONY FOR THE FRIENDS PHOTO CONTEST - OPEN TO PUBLIC

FRIDAY, JUNE 24TH, 6PM IN MANSION AREA