



# The Friends

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SPRING/ SUMMER 2023

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**EARTH DAY** ..... 1

**RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK MANSION TOURS**..... 2

**PHOTO CONTEST RETURNS** ..... 2

**THANK YOU DAVE CASE** ..... 3

**TREASURER OPPORTUNITY** ..... 4

**CANDLELIGHT CELEBRATION** ..... 4

**GIFFORD PINCHOT STATE PARK** ..... 5

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### MONTHLY TRAIL WORK

First Saturday of each month, 9 am.

### EARTH DAY HIKE

Saturday, April 22, 10 am, pre-registration required.

### PHOTO CONTEST AWARD CEREMONY

Wednesday, June 21, 6 pm, at the Mansion.

### MANSION TOURS:

Weekend of July 14-16, details to be announced.

### NEWS ALERT

April 1, 2023 is the opening day of the trout season at Ridley Creek State Park.

### FRIENDS OF RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor..... Joan Nikelsky  
Design.....Mark Dougherty

## Happy Earth Day!

*by Gary Sawyer, Board member and Trails Co-chair*



Spring is a popular season in our park, a time to appreciate nature and a new season of life in the woods. This year Earth Day falls on Saturday, April 22 – that makes it a convenient time to offer a hike through the trails in the park!

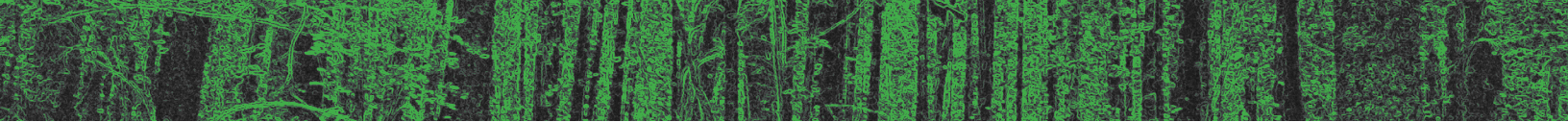
The roughly 5-mile hike will begin promptly at 10 am, led by our Trails Co-chair Gary Sawyer, and will follow trails along the creek and over a few of the hills in the park. We will admire the early wildflowers, like this spring ephemeral, a Trout Lilly.

Registration is limited to 15 people. We'll have light refreshments following the hike. We should be finished by noon. So get your hiking boots ready and sign up!

You'll need to send an email to [membership@FriendsofRCSP.org](mailto:membership@FriendsofRCSP.org), stating your full name and names of any others coming with you, email addresses for each one, and a contact phone number. You will be asked to confirm your attendance a few days before April 22 so please check your email during this time. Once you confirm you are coming, we will send you information about the meeting place for the hike. Significant rain will cancel the event and we will let you know the day before.

The sign up will be "first registered, first on list" of the 15-participant max. After that, we will keep a waiting list in case of cancellations.





# Ridley Creek State Park Mansion Tours

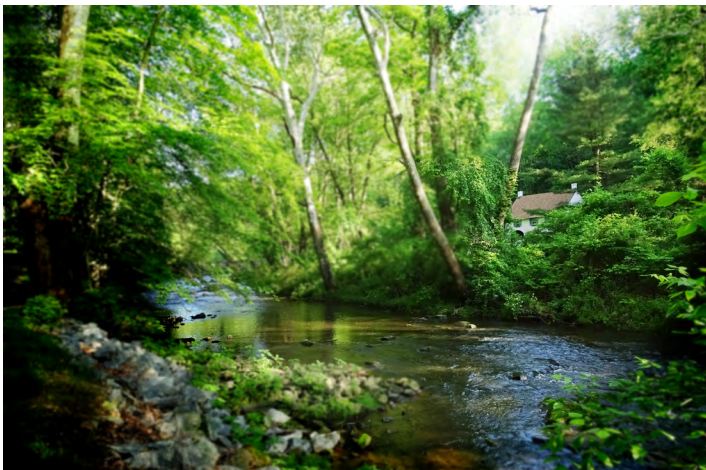
by Jack Miller, Friends President

October 2022, during our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the opening of Ridley Creek State Park to the public, we offered free tours of the Hunting Hill Mansion, an historic building that serves as the headquarters of Ridley Creek State Park. There was a 10-person limit on the number of participants on each tour due to the narrow hallways in certain areas of the building. Registrants for each mansion tour reached the limit very quickly and some people missed out on this opportunity.

So we have been looking for an opportunity to offer guided mansion tours again. We have reserved the mansion for tours during the weekend of July 14, 15, and 16, 2023. We will once again request advance registration for each guided tour once the schedule is confirmed. We will also offer self-guided tours of the outside of the mansion, which will help participants understand how a mansion built in 1912 had running water, indoor toilets, and underground electrical service.

A 30-page booklet written by Keith Lockhart was sold at our 50th Anniversary Celebration and will be available during the July event for \$5. It is chock full of historical photographs and articles from old newspapers that describe the people, buildings, and events from the past that led to what is currently Ridley Creek State Park.

Please save these dates if you want to see the mansion and learn its history. You can watch for an announcement on the Friends bulletin boards in the park and/or go to the Friends website [www.friendsofRCSP.org](http://www.friendsofRCSP.org) for sign-up information when the date gets closer.



Miller's House, 2nd prize 2016, by Susan Brooks



Fog at Hunting Hill Mansion, 1st prize 2008, by Peter Smyth

## The Photo Contest Returns

By Joan Nikelsky, Friends Vice-President

The Friends of Ridley are pleased to announce the return of the annual photo contest, after a 3-year hiatus due to the pandemic. The photo contest has been one of our most popular events and we have collected many beautiful photographs that have been submitted over the years. Past entries can be seen on our website [www.FriendsofRCSP.org](http://www.FriendsofRCSP.org) - click on "photo contest" on the left panel. You can go back as far as 2004! We often display photos from past contests at our events and we publish some of them in our newsletter, as you can see here.

There will be a display of all submitted entries and a reward ceremony on Wednesday, June 21, at 6 pm in the ballroom of the Hunting Hill Mansion. Cash prizes will be given for first, second, and third place, and for honorable mention. If there are youth entries (under age 18), prizes will be given for that category.

The deadline for submitting up to 3 photos is Thursday, June 15, to allow time for judging. Bring your photos to the park office, which is inside the Hunting Hill Mansion. The hours of the office are Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm. When the time gets closer to the deadline, we usually set up a box outside the building for off-hour submissions.

Board member and Events Chair Paul Mickle is organizing the contest and is selecting a judge for the event. You have the option of submitting your photos as late as Tuesday, June 20 in the morning, but they will not be eligible for an award.

The rules and entry form are available on our website [www.FriendsofRCSP.org](http://www.FriendsofRCSP.org). Also, flyers have been posted in boxes on the Multi-Use Trail. Please direct questions to [photocontest@FriendsofRCSP.org](mailto:photocontest@FriendsofRCSP.org).

# Volunteering for the Friends and Appreciations for Dave Case

by Jack Miller, Friends President

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park is a volunteer organization. We truly appreciate each volunteer who shares some of their free time and talents at our activities to improve the visitor experience at Ridley Creek State Park. There is a special group of volunteers who fill positions on the Board. We need to have a Board of Directors to maintain our standing as a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF). We get our accident insurance from PPFF, we get training through PPFF, we get our state tax exemption through PPFF, and being a chapter of PPFF gives us credibility as a state-sponsored organization run by and for volunteers.



When a volunteer makes the commitment to become a Board member, we share the load of the administrative duties and responsibilities. This enables each Board member to spend their time in their area of expertise and minimizes their time working in areas not familiar to them. We get great ideas from Board members at our meetings, especially when we create plans to carry out projects for our park. We also solicit ideas from all our other volunteers who work on park projects.

From time to time, a Board member needs to move on from their responsibilities and then we must look for a replacement. This happened in 2017 when our Treasurer, Cate Bolduc, announced she would be moving to Las Vegas, Nevada to be nearer to her family. The Board advertised for someone to take on the Treasurer position and a member of our newsletter staff, Lauren Bacigalupi, offered to ask her husband if he would do it. She must have been very convincing because her husband accepted!

We happily welcomed Dave Case as the Treasurer for the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park. Dave quickly got up to speed with the procedures set up by PPFF and was soon accepting membership dues and donations. He also made sure the bills got paid after receiving check requests and getting Board approval and the signature of the Park Manager. It is hard to believe this was over 5 years ago. During that time, Dave kept the books straight, got checks quickly to the banks and had every expense reimbursed.

In 2022, the Friends began planning the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the park to the public, to take place on a Wednesday evening and a Saturday in October. We were struggling to deal with pre-registration for the many activities being planned, as well as what to do about publicity, crowd control, parking, refreshments, solicitation of volunteer support, signage, and much more. Dave Case introduced us to Sarah Haas, an event planner, who quickly provided all the answers – and organizing ability – that we needed to actually get the 50th anniversary event going.

Dave took the lead in the overseeing all the various activities, coordinating with Sarah, and working on the budget for the event. He prepared for and led guided tours of the mansion at the Wednesday evening event. There was so much to be done to plan a successful anniversary and Dave made it all happen. There was a lot of responsibility on his shoulders, as he had his family and a full-time job which required his attention. We found that Dave would do whatever it took to make sure the job got done properly and on time.

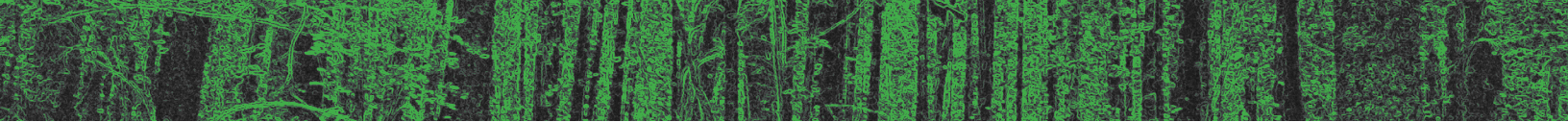
Dave also attended first Saturday trail work with his family. He wondered if we could get a group of volunteers to help him clear his 5 ½ acres when he was trying to keep ahead of the spring and summer growth!

Now Dave Case has announced that he will be leaving the Treasurer's position to pursue other volunteer opportunities. We would like to take this time to thank Dave for all his dedication to the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park. Dave came to our organization to fill an open position and ended up filling several other positions while maintaining the duties of Treasurer. Our anniversary celebration would not have been as successful without his input. Thank you, Dave, for sharing your time and talents with us!

We are looking for someone to take on the position of Treasurer for the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park. That someone will not be taking the place of Dave Case -- one person could not do all that! If you know of someone who may be willing to help us, please let us know. Nominate your spouse – that has been successful in the past.

And if you have some more free time, you can join me in a work party at Dave Case's home to help him attack his overgrown vegetation. We all owe Dave our thanks for a job done well - extremely well.





## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: TREASURER

Do you like keeping track of finances? Are you looking for a way to contribute volunteer support to the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park? If so, we need you!

The Friends are looking for a new Board Treasurer. The ideal candidate for this volunteer position would have non-profit board experience and a passion for Ridley Creek State Park and the environment. You will receive training by the former Treasurer.

The Friend's funds are managed by our parent organization, the Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation (PPFF), headquartered in Harrisburg. As Treasurer you will communicate with the PPFF bookkeeper to maintain accurate and up-to-date records of our funds. You will collect and process membership dues and donation checks, if mailed, and keep accurate records of donations.

### Responsibilities:

- Must have access to Microsoft Excel, printer, copier, and digital scanner.
- Manage and have oversight of all aspects of the Friend's finances.
- Process reimbursement requests from other Board members.
- If possible, pick up mail from the Friend's mailbox in the park office (M-F 8am-4pm).
- Send info on new memberships and renewals to Membership Chair (if dues have been mailed, now a rare occasion).
- Be available for Board meetings, held several times a year.

If you are interested, please send a letter of interest to Jack Miller at [president@friendsofrcsp.org](mailto:president@friendsofrcsp.org).

## Candlelight Gratitude Celebration

*by Jack Miller, Friends President*

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park were honored to be invited to the 2023 Candlelight Gratitude Celebration held on February 5 in the Media Community Center. This event was organized by Transition Town Media, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to making a stronger more resilient future for all of us in the Greater Media area. Their goal is to create a more self-sustaining community and share local resources. They have several projects, such as group buys of solar panels and support of the Media Free Store for sharing re-used items to keep them out of the waste stream.

The Candlelight Gratitude Celebrations were started several years ago to gather local non-profit organizations for an evening of getting to know one another. A buffet dinner is offered and each organization is asked to bring a dish to share. The dessert table at this event almost equaled the size of the entrée table!

Each group is permitted space on a display table and the chance to make a short speech about their organization. There were at least 20 different organizations in attendance and there was plenty of time to talk to many members of the groups there.

The Friends were represented at the Celebration by myself, Gary Sawyer, and Paul Mickle, who also spoke for the Media Food Bank. We offered copies of our 50th Anniversary Booklet and heard several stories from people who spend a lot of time at Ridley Creek State Park.

The event was well organized and each group made a lot of great contacts. Later in the spring I look forward to visiting Strawflower Farm, one of the attendee groups, which offers "cut your own" flower bouquets. There was a lot of positive information shared during the evening. We look forward to future occasions to connect with others at the next Candlelight Gratitude Celebration.



*Gary Sawyer, left, and Jack Miller, right, present at Gratitude event*





#### **GIFFORD PINCHOT STATE PARK**

2200 Rosstown Road  
Lewisberry, PA 17339-9787  
Phone: 717-432-5011

**MAPS**

**HISTORY**

**NEARBY ATTRACTIONS**

## **Exploring Pennsylvania's Parks: Gifford Pinchot State Park**

*This article is twelfth in a series about other state parks in Pennsylvania, contributed by Friends Board member, the much-traveled Paul Mickle.*

In this edition of our state parks tour we will travel west to York County and explore the southern Harrisburg suburbs and a place called Gifford Pinchot State Park. Like several other parks we've looked at, Gifford Pinchot is centered around a lake.

The name of the park came from a former Pennsylvania Governor, Gifford Pinchot, who was a figurehead in the conservation community. It was designed and constructed in the 1950s and was opened to the public in 1961.

In terms of amenities, Gifford Pinchot has the traditional variety of a state park with a lake. The entire park is 2,338 acres with 340 of those acres containing the lake. Visitors can go swimming, boating, and fishing on the water and then hiking, camping, and cross-country skiing on the surrounding land. Several hiking trails go through the park with the most notable being the Mason-Dixon trail.

Overall the area has a very laid back and calming atmosphere and is mostly surrounded by rolling farm fields and woodlands. The park's 309-site campground is primarily at the southern end, although there are a few cabins scattered around the lake. The campground was built in 1968 and has all the various campground amenities, including tent accommodations, yurts, cottages, cabins, and hookups for recreational vehicles.

The nearest cities are Harrisburg and York, with roughly a 15-mile car ride through rural farmland to each of them. So for those looking for the dramatic mountain scenery in northern Pennsylvania or the quick escape from urban life, Gifford Pinchot may not be the most exciting of places, but for those who just want to enjoy nature and have a quiet experience, Gifford Pinchot is worth the trip.