

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF IN-  
TEREST:

Join us for trail work  
the first Saturday of  
each month. Contact  
Gary Sawyer, Trails  
Director, at

Muddy  
boots@comcast.net

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# The Friends

VOLUME III ISSUE I

SPRING/SUMMER 2010

## Friends of RCSP Receives Award



The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park has been honored with an award for improvement of park infrastructure from the Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation. The Infrastructure Award has been granted to us for outstanding stewardship of the park through the creation and use of dedicated work groups who provide ongoing trail maintenance, invasive species suppression, and care of the historic gardens at the park. We are pleased and proud to note our accomplishments that helped us win this award.

An active group of 10-20 volunteer trail workers assemble once a month to undertake various projects to maintain and improve the trails in the park, including extensive projects like building footbridges. The work is organized and carried out under the supervision of Friends Board members Gary Sawyer and Mark Kern.

The Friends' Adopt-A-Trail program allows individuals or groups to adopt a section of marked trails in the Park and agree to keep the trails free of encroaching vegetation, thus freeing the monthly trail work group to focus on more technical aspects of trail maintenance. In addition, the gardens and grounds are maintained periodically by volunteers under the supervision of Friends Board members.

A concerted effort has begun to control invasive plants in the park, after a University of Pennsylvania study determined that numerous non-native species were spreading and displacing native plants. Under the leadership of Board member Tim Higgins, two work weeks were

held last year, with 9-15 volunteers donating their time to root out invasive plants in an area of the park.

The invasives work prompted the supervisor of the project, Rachel Wagoner, of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, to nominate the Friends for an award, saying

"I have been so impressed with their efforts, I've only seen a small portion of all the projects they accomplish. They have dedicated many hours on some physically grueling days, but also completed some important and enduring projects."

Finally, the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park holds several social and fundraising events during the year under the expert guidance of Board member Carol Rubin – for example, our annual Photo Contest and the Holiday Dance, which had over 100 attendees this past year. The money raised by these events and by membership dues and contributions has allowed the Friends to provide funds for infrastructure improvements such as purchasing picnic tables for a new pavilion. Our funds also help with other important purchases, such as a laptop computer for use in the environmental education program and an automatic electronic defibrillator in the office.

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Foundation (PPFF) was established in 1999 to give users and supporters of Pennsylvania's parks and forests a positive way to contribute to the conservation of our publicly owned lands. PPFF creates public/private partnerships at the local, regional, and state levels, and provides a tax-deductible vehicle to allow citizens to donate or bequeath money to Pennsylvania's state parks and forests, especially through the various Friends groups that are members of PPFF.

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## Friends of RCSP Receives Award

This is the 4th annual awards program of PPF. Awards to Friends groups are given in several categories to recognize outstanding achievement in the following areas: volunteerism, education, and infrastructure. The Friends look forward to receiving our Infrastructure Award at the annual banquet of the PPF on May 4, 2010 in Harrisburg. Members of the Board Tim Higgins, President Emeritus, and Joan Nikelsky, Membership Co-Chair, are planning to attend the awards ceremony to accept the award, along with our Park Manager, Roger McChesney.



Photo by Hank Fisher, 2009 Photo Contest, 3rd prize, Adult Category

### Open House at the Park

Once again the Friends will host an Open House at the park, featuring tours of the Hunting Hill Mansion and information about activities and groups in the park. It will be on **Sunday, May 16, between 1:00 and 3:00 pm**. Last year's Open House was very successful with about 150 people passing through during the afternoon. If the weather is nice, look for us on the Multi-Use Trail, at the juncture of the trail from the Mansion parking area. In case of inclement weather, we will be in the ballroom of the Mansion.

In addition to the popular tours of the Mansion given by our park historian, Kay Ferrari, a tour will be offered of Hidden Valley Farm, the horse stable concession that resides in the park. Trail rides, pony rides, pony parties, horse boarding, and riding lessons are available at Hidden Valley Farm. The Friends will have a table, offering trail maps, free water, copies of the Friends newsletters, and membership forms and flyers for people considering joining. We will have T-shirts for sale, and 2010 calendars featuring pictures from our annual Photo Contest for give-away. We will display photos of recent events at the park, including the December holiday party at the Mansion, and have flyers for upcoming events, notably the Halloween square dance party in October and the next Photo Contest. There will also be information on invasive plants and gardening tips from our Board member and Master Gardener Alyce Zellers. We will offer a silent auction or raffle for a tree and we will have small bushes for sale, so be sure to bring some money if you join us on the Multi-Use Trail.

Among the groups to be represented at the Open House are the Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation and the Pennsylvania Resources Council. The Craft House and the Delco Anglers fishing group have also been invited to participate.



### Friends and Trail Workers Picnic Set for June 4

On Friday evening June 4, the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and the Trail Work Group will have a joint event: a free member and volunteer appreciation picnic starting at 6:00 pm, followed by a brief annual meeting for members of the Friends, and finishing with a bonfire and s'mores for people who stay afterwards.

Those who enjoy camping will have the opportunity to pitch a tent and camp out overnight. The next morning, trail workers will be treated to breakfast and then they will begin the work projects scheduled for June, featuring the building of a "bog bridge" on the red trail. The location for the event is Pavilion 17, which is a sheltered site off Sandy Flash Drive South. The picnic and other events will be held rain or shine. The picnic is compliments of the Friends: hamburgers, hot dogs, homemade coleslaw, beverages, and other picnic fare. People who can bring a dessert to share will be much appreciated.

The annual meeting will include highlights of the year's activities, appreciation of the trail workers volunteer contributions to the park, and officer elections. Current members of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park and newly signed up members will be able to vote. An RSVP is not required, but would be helpful so we can plan the food. Please e-mail [members@friendsofrcsp.org](mailto:members@friendsofrcsp.org) or call Joan at 610-498-5346 by Thursday, June 3, if you can. We hope to see you there!



# The Holiday Dance Lives On



Photo by Carol Rubin: The Mansion ballroom is ready for the Holiday Dance

Another winter holiday dance event has been scheduled for Saturday, December 4 at 7 pm at the Hunting Hill Mansion. At the request of the guests last year, the Highballs will be returning to entertain us with their music! Most people attending last year's event never sat down. Even when the time for the party to end had been reached, the guests asked for more and the Highballs reciprocated with a few more songs. The dance will feature tours of the Mansion, delicious food and holiday fare, drinks, and more. Call 610-565-3877 for information or if you would like to get involved with the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park. We could use your help!



## Hoedown Planned for October

Mark your calendars for a Halloween Hoedown at Hunting Hill set for Saturday evening, October 30 at 7 pm in the Mansion ballroom. Caller George Polk, Jr. will lead us in an energetic and sometimes funny evening of square dancing. We may even encourage costumes, as long as one can dance in them! We'll have lots of refreshments, Mansion tours including ghost stories, surprises, and fun. Join us then or let us know if you would like to help with the event. Call 610-565-3877.



## The 2010-2011 Photo Contest

The next annual Photo Contest, usually held in November, has been moved to January 2011. Hopefully, all you amateur photographers took advantage of a beautiful winter of snow this past season by taking pictures. We have always needed more winter scenes to be considered for honors and this year we certainly had enough snow and pretty blue skies. The award ceremony will be held Sunday, January 30, 2011, which will extend the opportunities for photographing all the seasons for the contest. The deadline for submissions will be Saturday, January 29. Check for entry forms on our website, at the Park office, and at our upcoming events. For more information, call 610-565-3877.



Photo by Stephen W. Wood, 2009 Photo Contest



Photo by Crystal Demeler, 2009 Photo Contest



**Would you like to volunteer your time to the park in a meaningful way? Please contact any one of the Friends' officers listed on our website at [www.friendsofrcsp.org](http://www.friendsofrcsp.org) to find out more.**



## Upcoming Events

First Saturday of each month, 9 am  
-- Regularly scheduled trail work.  
Meet at Park office.

Sunday, May 16, 1 pm – Park Open House on the Multi-Use Trail and/or in the Mansion.

Friday, June 4, 6 pm – Free picnic for Friends members and trail worker volunteers at Pavilion 17, followed by Friends annual meeting. Bonfire and campout.

Saturday, October 30, 7 pm – Halloween Hoedown in the Mansion ballroom.

Saturday, December 4, 7 pm – Winter holiday dance in the Mansion ballroom.

Sunday, January 30, 2011 – Photo Contest award ceremony

## 2010

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November 2010						
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## Remember

We are a qualified 501c3 organization and if you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, it should be made out to PPF-Friends of Ridley Creek State Park.



*The Friends Thank You for Your Continued Support and Wish You A Wonderful Spring and Summer!*