

THE FRIENDS OF
RIDLEY CREEK
STATE PARK



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PLANNING FOR PENNSYLVANIA'S STATE PARKS OF TOMORROW

by Lauren Bacigalupi

I took the survey, did you? If you're thinking 'what survey is she talking about?' - read on!

Pennsylvania state parks are putting together their strategic plan for the next 25 years...Yes, you read that right- 25 years- and they want to know what you would like to have, get, and participate in, at these parks. When you think about it, that's pretty great news. And while many of us will simply be using these beautiful places for walking in our golden years, our children, grandchildren, and their children will have these amazing places to love and enjoy just like we do today.

So, consider this: We have 121 state parks in PA covering over 300,000 acres - which means there is a park within 25 miles of nearly every Pennsylvanian. These parks in total see over 40 million visits each year and do not charge an entry fee! Add in the

need to preserve well-functioning ecosystems and habitats, along with healthy native plants, animals, and clean water and you begin to realize that working to conserve our natural resources and planning for the future of these parks is a tremendous responsibility.

This past July, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) began handing out a survey called Penn's Parks for All to anyone interested in participating. This survey allows you to weigh in on the future of our parks. The last assessment survey was done 25 years ago and influenced the modernized facilities we enjoy today. This survey will guide the PA park system for the next 25

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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!

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years, so if you want input, this is your chance!

If you're wondering- what would I want- here are some questions to think about:

What would make your visits to the parks better? Canoeing? Camping? Fishing?

If my park starting doing *this* it would never feel the

same to me...

In the winter months, I wish we could...

The survey asks you all these types of questions and really gets you thinking about the natural beautiful resources available to you at these parks. The survey will be available until October 31, 2017. So log on now and take the survey at

www.pennsparksforall.com. It may even spur you to go check out some parks a little further down the road...you know it will only be about 25 miles away!

Lauren Bacigalupi is a member of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park.

EXPLORING PENNSYLVANIA'S SINNEMAHONING STATE PARK

It is no secret that each and every Pennsylvania state park has a very unique feel and provides its own special experience to those who venture there. Ridley Creek is very unique by its sheer size and expansive open undeveloped space when compared to its surroundings. But as you go out into rural PA, state parks don't have that automatic advantage, forcing them to provide charm to their visitors in other ways.

In this newsletter, we are going to look at a park that has managed to do just that. It is called Sinnemahoning State Park and it straddles the border of Southern Potter County and Northern Cameron County in North Central Pennsylvania. The park is unique in many ways. First, it is shaped unusually. It's very long and narrow and flanks both shorelines of the First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek as it runs through the valley between the Susquehannock and Elk

State Forests.

The name Sinnemahoning comes from the Lenape Native American language and means "Stony Lick." This was derived from the fact that there was reportedly a salt lick found in the vicinity at some point. The First Fork Sinnemahoning Creek is a tributary of the much larger Sinnemahoning Creek that

runs 15.7 miles through the woods of rural Pennsylvania between the towns of Driftwood and Keating.

Amenity-wise there are several wildlife viewing areas that have trails, raised platforms, and other accessibility features that enhance the ability to take in the scenery and perhaps spot a coyote,



Sinnemahoning State Park

black bear, white tailed deer, groundhog, wild turkey, roughed grouse, or one of the other special creatures that live in the region. Sinnemahoning State Park is also home to the seldomly seen elk and bald eagle.

There is a 35-site campground for those looking to rough it. Those not looking to rough it are welcome to overnight as well, as the campground is improved with running water and electricity. There is also a newly built visitors center that falls within the design theme of the other newly built welcome centers at other parks.

At the southern end is the 157-acre George B. Stevenson Dam that was built by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1955 as part of its efforts to control flooding throughout various parts of the state. Lately, the water level has fluctuated and at times the reservoir has been nearly empty due to construction projects, but when full it provides many recreational opportunities to park visitors, even if it's only standing on the shoreline and enjoying the impressive views.

There are also miles of trails for hiking in the summer and snowmobiling in the winter. The fishing season continues year round for those willing to break the ice during the cold months.

In addition to just being a special park nestled between the mountains, Sinnemahoning is also special in the sense of



Sinnemahoning Park Office

what it represents. It is a nice demonstration of what the Pennsylvania wilds is like. It's a very different world from what we experience here in the western Philadelphia suburbs.

There is a little known fact that the road that runs by Sinnemahoning was actually rebuilt and heavily improved as the region's allure drew state officials and politicians from Harrisburg to buy camps and recreational properties in northern PA. The story has it that those officials then lobbied to improve the roadway to make getting upstate on weekends easier. But you don't have to be a politician or public official to enjoy and appreciate traveling the state or visiting Sinnemahoning or any state

park.

For those who want to experience a neat demonstration of what the rural northwoods of Pennsylvania is like, a visit to Sinnemahoning State Park is definitely worth a trip!

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

ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST FLAUNTS DIFFERENT SEASONS AND ASPECTS OF RIDLEY

On June 21, the summer solstice promised a perfect backdrop for this year's annual photo contest reception on the Hunting Hill Mansion patio. But some rain storms had different plans.

Nevertheless, Friends of Ridley Creek State Park, photographers, and their family members enjoyed refreshments inside the mansion while honoring this year's winners and viewing a couple dozen photo entries depicting various seasons and aspects of our beloved park. From horses and woodpeckers to storied tree trunks and promising blossoms, contestants' pictures covered and celebrated Ridley from every angle.

Adult Category

First place was awarded to Jenn Walker of Garnett Valley for *Standing Out*, which focuses beautifully on crisp, burnt orange leaves against a background of bare trees. Jenn, who won second place in 2015, visits the park a few times a week and especially enjoys long walks during summer evenings. To aspiring and other amateur photographer, she advises, "Be observant of your surroundings... Each season brings something new."

Second place was awarded to Donna Colleluori of Aldan for *Traces Through the Trees*, which makes the viewer wonder who walked through the snowy woods that day and where was the destination. Donna owns and runs a painting contracting business and suggests you "keep your eyes open" in order to capture a winning photograph. "Even the ordinary can be beautiful," she says.

Qwinyetta Maldonado of Philadelphia was awarded third prize for *Pathways*, her picture of a

trail winding through the woods in autumn. It displays Ridley's awesome fall palette. While visiting the park almost monthly, she knows what kind of photos she's good at taking and tries to draw in the viewer and pique their curiosity.

Honorable Mention was awarded to Mei McNeill for *Spring in the Park*, which was one of the few entries showing people. While many photographers capture the park's natural beauty or wildlife, Mei frames bicyclists under the tunnel on the Multi-Use Trail shrouded in bright green growth. Mei, a housewife who has lived in Broomall for 16 years, visits the park several times a month and advises others to "pick the right angle and go with your feelings."

Youth Category (age 18 and younger)

Rachel Beresford took first place in the Youth Category for her picture *Lost & Found*, which depicts one of the Park's resident felines who lives near the Sycamore Mills entrance. Rachel is in 10th grade at Springfield High School and visits the park several times a month to hike or fish. To get her winning photograph, Rachel says, "You have to make the most of your camera every time it's in your hands, take a few extra shots every time you have the chance."



Jenn Walker - 'Standing Out'



Rachel Beresford - Lost & Found

Contest judge Mike Berman, Treasurer and long-time board member of the Media Arts Council, presented each winner with her ribbon and visited with

contestants during the reception to talk about all of the photographs. The Media Arts Council, located at 609-B W. State Street, supports local artists and integrates

a wide range of arts into the life of the entire community.

Congratulations to the winners and all the contestants who celebrated Ridley through their lenses. Visit www.friendsofrcsp.org to see all of the entries from this year's contest.

As you visit the Park with your camera in the coming months, remember all the great advice our winners provided and remember that the photo contest deadline is in early June.

This article is contributed by Friends Board Member Sandy Farnan, Co-Chair of Publicity.

GOOD-BYE TO PARK MANAGER JAMES WASELL

In our last newsletter, we welcomed new Park Manager James Wassell. Now we must bid him good-bye, as he has decided to leave Ridley to manage Lackawanna State Park. James told us, "It was not something I was planning or thinking about, but an opportunity to manage my dream park where my DCNR career started, presented itself. I thought

about this opportunity and the many pros and cons on leaving Ridley Creek complex for my dream park. In the end, I decided that I could not pass up on this opportunity."

We are sorry to see James go. He left us with encouraging words of appreciation for his experience here: "I have only worked at Ridley Creek for a short time and have

grown to know many of you and truly enjoy this lovely park. Ridley Creek will always be a special place to me and I am sure to come back and visit when I can. While I may be leaving, the staff here is one of the best in the state so I completely believe the park will continue to move in a forward direction."

FRIENDS OF RIDLEY TABLING AT MEDIA FAIR IN OCTOBER

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park is planning to staff a table at the Media Food & Craft Fair on Sunday, October 1 (rain date Sunday, October 8) from 9 am to 5 pm. As

we have done in previous years, we will display photographs of trail work projects, give out Friends brochures and park maps, talk to people interested in the park, collect donations, and recruit new members. We have lovely mugs with

our logo on them to give to those joining or renewing membership. The Fair is a popular event every Fall in Media, with 40 restaurants, 75 craft vendors, live music, and games for children. Come on out and look for us there!