

The Friends

VOL XII ISSUE 2

FALL/ WINTER 2019



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY TRAIL WORK

First Saturday of each month, 9AM.

MEDIA FAIR

Sunday, October 6
See article for details.

CHESTER RIDLEY CRUM WATERSHEDS ASSOCIATION 2019 PHOTO CONTEST

- Submission deadline: September 1, 2019
- No fee to enter
- [See CRC Website for details](#)

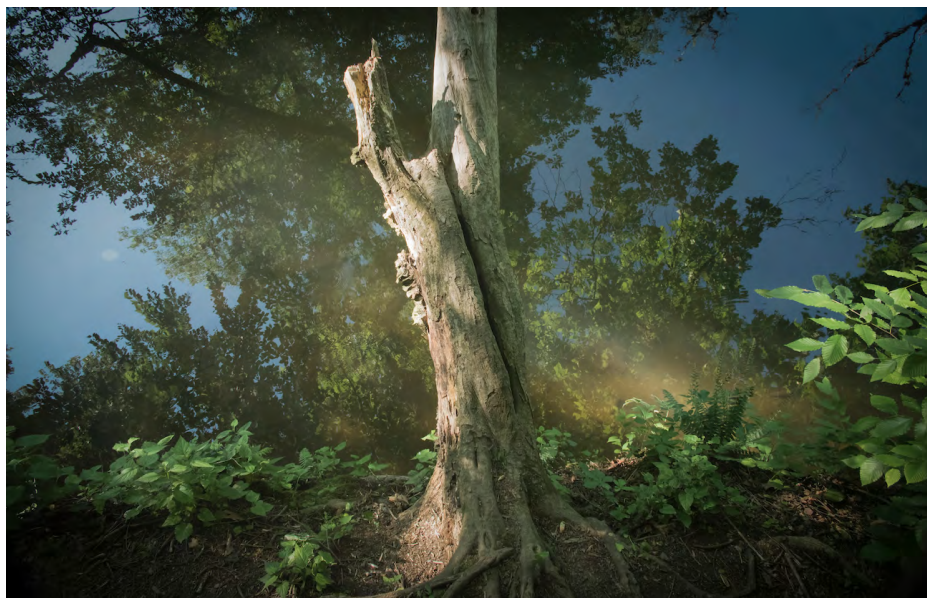
FRIENDS OF RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor..... Joan Nikelsky

Design.....Mark Dougherty

The Winner’s Circle: Photo Contest 2019

by Friends member Lauren Bacigalupi



1st Place Photo “Tree of Water” by Ryan Brinker

It was a picture perfect afternoon on the veranda of the Hunting Hill Mansion at Ridley Creek State Park. The sun peeking through the trees highlighted the amazing photos hanging for onlookers to admire. The 15th Annual Friends of Ridley Creek Photo Contest brought everyone from the novice to the experienced photographer out to our beloved park to find what inspired them most.

Thirty-six entries made this year’s contest tough work for judges Elizabeth and Mark Duckworth. Back in 2013, Elizabeth was a contest entrant and took home first prize for her piece called *Tranquil Beauty*. Elizabeth is a Temple University grad with a degree in photography. She had spent many hours of her childhood hiking in Ridley Creek State Park with her father and sister. She was excited to be a judge because she wanted to “choose photographs that represent the beauty of this park, the otherworldly reflections in the water you can’t see anywhere else and the once in a lifetime atmospheric qualities that can only be found in nature.” Mark Duckworth, Elizabeth’s father, served as an assistant judge. Mark said “the best part about this contest is it gets people to look at this park differently. Now, even I notice things I didn’t notice before.”

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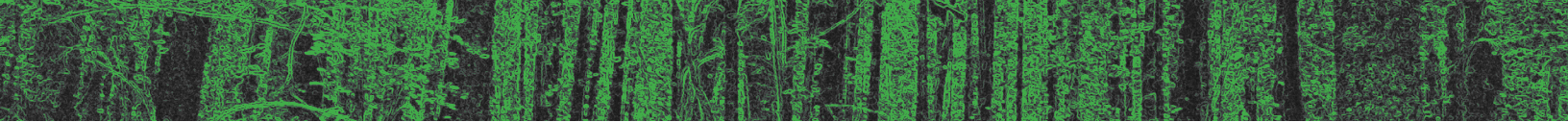


Photo contest continued

On this lovely summer night, as the photographers and guests gathered around, Friends of Ridley Creek President Jack Miller began talking about the beautiful works of art before us. You could see the artists listening with anticipation if their name was going to be called and it was fun to watch their faces light up when they heard it!

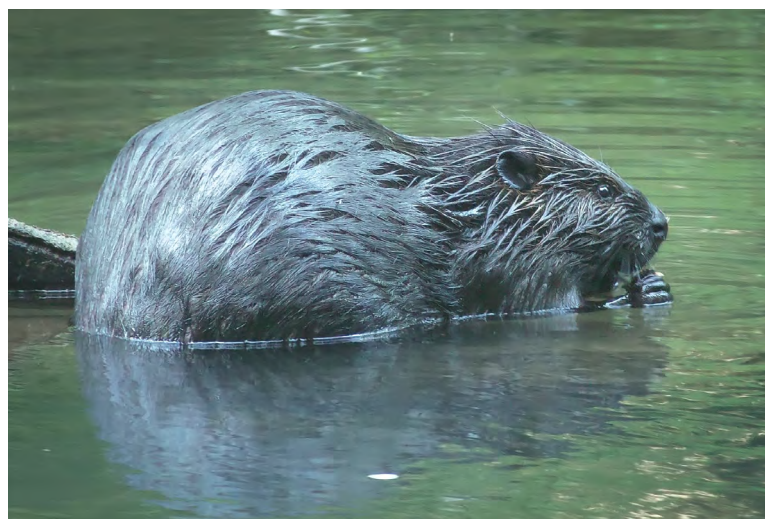
This year, one artist walked away with two awards! Ryan Brinker's talent had our judges so delighted, he ended up winning first prize for his work titled *Tree of Water* and taking home Honorable Mention for a second photo titled *The Beaver*. When Ryan's name was called as our First Prize winner, he said, "You made my day, my week, my year!" Ryan talked a bit about how he got the winning shot and this writer's take away was that he saw the beauty in his mind long before he actually saw it through his lens. It took him awhile to figure out how to position himself to capture the moment. As you look at the photo, we think you'll be baffled trying to figure out how he did it too. After talking with Ryan, it is clear he is a creative soul, playing guitar and drums in his free time, so I'm sure we will see him again in next year's contest. Be sure to check out Ryan's article in this newsletter about his journey in getting the shot when your subject is a chunky little ball of hair with a job to do!

Our Second Prize winner this year, for his work titled *The Lifting Fog*, is no stranger to our Friends photo contest. Bruce Lewis has been entering our contests for many years and though the judging is done without regard to the artists' name and with different judges each year, Bruce's work has been recognized many times over, year after year. That's talent you can't hide! The third place ribbon went to Jenn Walker for her work titled *Winter Horizon* and another Honorable Mention went to Bryan Cohen for *Fresh Fish*.

Our park continues to amaze and inspire all who visit. After nearly 10 years of hiking the trails here, I still look at these photographs each year and think - I have to find that spot! The beauty never fails regardless of the season. Check out all the works of art from this year and years' past on our website. Maybe it will inspire you to bring your camera on your next hike or even better, maybe it will make you want to join our Friends of Ridley Creek group! The more volunteers we have, the more we can do to help this beautiful, green space thrive



2nd Place Photo "The Lifting Fog" by Bruce Lewis



Honorable Mention "The Beaver" by Ryan Brinker

Filming “The Beaver’s Breakfast”

by Ryan Brinker, double prize winner, Friends photo contest

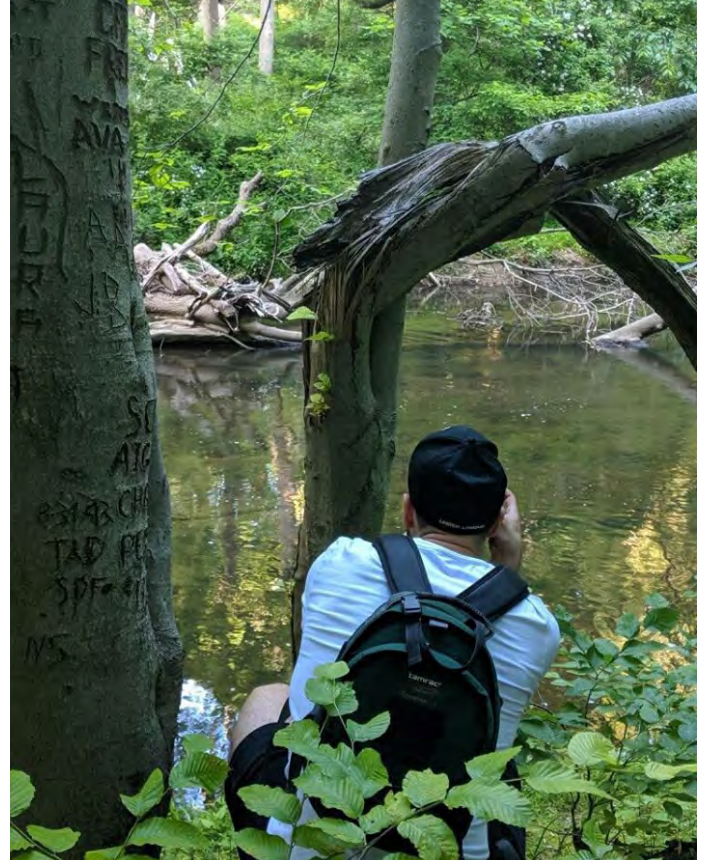
In the realm of creativity, meaningful pieces of work often come at unpredictable times.

Whether you are in front of a canvas, staring at a computer screen, holding a musical instrument, or pressing your face against a camera viewfinder, the artist is often pleasantly surprised when lifted into the grips of a creative moment. During a walk at the park along the creek on Memorial Day 2019, with my girlfriend by my side and camera bag on my shoulder, I was fortunate enough to have one of these moments. This particular time, unlike any others I’ve experienced through the viewfinder, involved the direct observation of a beaver.

It began just after I photographed the “Tree of Water” (I was completely ecstatic when it won first place in the Friends of Ridley photo contest) and I immediately began recording some stock video footage to capture the water movement, in case it came handy in other work. Lo and behold, as I was staring up at the LCD screen, I saw something swim into frame from the upper right corner, and gradually make its way to the left and out of frame. I peered over into the water and saw a beaver swimming upstream while investigating the creek bank. I then whispered (loudly) to my girlfriend and excitedly pointed down at the water.

Typically, when you catch a glimpse of an uncommonly-seen animal (especially nocturnal and semi-aquatic) like a beaver, you lose sight of it within a few minutes once it submerges or wanders into some brush. This was not the case for us. Though we did constantly lose and regain sight of it, we were able to follow it upstream and back downstream for about thirty plus minutes. Throughout, I had my DSLR (technically it’s a mirrorless camera) with the basic kit 4-5.6/75-300mm lens mounted and recorded as much footage as I could of the beaver swimming, eating, and even cleaning itself. As it’s not unusual for me to record footage without any foreseeable plans, it wasn’t until I arrived home and reviewed all the footage that I realized a short documentary could be created with it.

While formulating the video, I realized two other things. The first was that this video would need some narration and music to make it whole. The other was that a small piece of the footage provided a wonderful still image (“The Beaver”), which also later received an award (Honorable Mention) in the Friends photo contest. Proceeding with the audio, I hopped on a few various websites and gathered information to provide a general overview of this rodent’s characteristics and habits, grabbed



Ryan Brinker filming “The Beaver’s Breakfast”

a microphone, and read through each line several times until I was satisfied.

As for the music, since I did not have anything in my (self-produced) library of tracks that seemed to properly fit, I went ahead with writing and producing some pleasant background music using a MIDI keyboard and Ableton Live, which is my preferred DAW (digital audio workstation). The sound of a classic piano in combination with a warm and mellow synthesizer felt appropriate. After adding a touch of reverb and delay effects, I played out a fitting melody, mixed it in, and completed the video.

In reflection upon completion, I had no idea my trip to Ridley Creek State Park that day was going to present me with such an opportunity for creativity. Sharing my passion in creation of these images, both online and with the Friends of RCSP members and other photographers at the photo contest, was not only extremely rewarding, but it also added to my self-motivation and list of reasons to continue immersing myself in nature. It’s truly unpredictable, and you never know what you’ll miss if you don’t take a walk through the park.

You can view Ryan’s beaver video by clicking on a link to it on our website www.FriendsofRCSP.org.



Exploring Pennsylvania's Parks: Ole Bull State Park

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

As we've seen in previous articles in this series, Pennsylvania has a wide variety of landscapes and its state parks come in all varieties of shapes and sizes. In fact it is impressive how some parks have been tucked into places where you wouldn't necessarily expect to find them, yet they still manage to find their unique charm in the parks system. Ole Bull State Park lives right up to that and proves to be another special place in an often overlooked region of Pennsylvania.

The name Ole Bull is actually pronounced "Olay-Bull" and like many parks in Pennsylvania, it was named after a specific person of notable regional significance. In this instance the man's name was Ole Borneman Bull, a violinist from Norway, who came to Pennsylvania periodically during the 1800s. During his visits he coined the idea of creating a new Norwegian colony. In 1852 he purchased around 11,000 acres in Pennsylvania's Black Forest region in the north central part of the state for slightly over \$10,000. The surrounding region was called the Black Forest because of the steep slopes and heavily dense woodlands. Within the 11,000 acres there were 4 colonies created and one was designated to house Ole Bull's

castle. Sadly, the entire settlement was short lived and the project abandoned within a year, mainly because the settlers couldn't handle clearing the densely sloped landscape for farming.

In the end most of the pioneers ended up moving west and settled in Minnesota and surrounding states. After their departure, the region was swept up into the lumbering boom and was clear cut during the late 1800s. Once it no longer had marketable timber, the land was eventually purchased by the state of Pennsylvania and designated as a park in 1925. Although Ole Bull's intentions for settlement in PA may have been unsuccessful, there was a statue erected and funded by Norwegian citizens and placed in what was once his land and is now Ole Bull State Park.

The park, however, is much smaller than the 11,000 acres of Ole Bull's original tract. At 132 acres, it is on the smaller side of state parks, but it holds a distinct and unique atmosphere just the same. It is centered around Kettle Creek and packs a lot of outdoor activities into its small size. There is a

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OLE BULL STATE PARK

31 Valhalla Lane

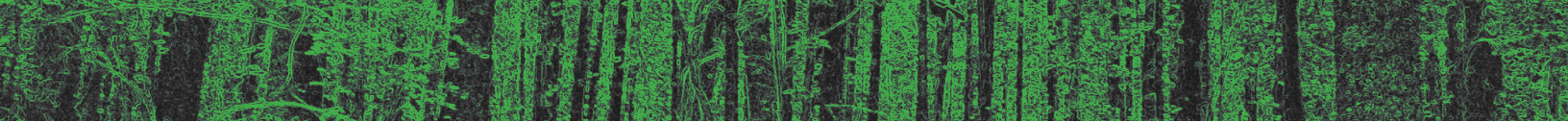
Cross Fork, PA 17729-9701

Phone: 814-435-5000

MAPS

HISTORY

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS



Ole Bull State Park continued

modernized campground, a beach, picnic areas, lots of fishing opportunities, and 25 acres designated for hunting. Being on the border of Susquehannock State Forest also opens up recreational opportunities, as Ole Bull State Park is one of the trailheads leading into 85 miles of trail systems for endless hiking adventures.

Many of the facilities, including a small dam for the swimming hole, were built during the Great Depression by the Civilian Conservation Corps, but over the years various other unique structures have been added. Some of the most notable have been a series of bridges that transport anything from pedestrians to motor homes over the Kettle Creek to the campground on the other side. A short hike from the campground takes visitors to the site of Nordjenskald, the “castle” Ole Bull had commissioned to be built. The term castle is a bit of an overstatement considering the modest cabin it was intended to be, but the outward view is impressive.

Even the ride to get to Ole Bull State Park is arguably adventurous. The only road running through the region is PA highway 144, which is about 100 miles long and sometimes called “The High Plateau Scenic Byway.” As it runs through the northern woods, highway 144 is a link connecting central PA to the northern tier, but it is not used nearly as heavily as Route 44, making 144 much quieter and less travelled. As scenic and as remote as it may be, however, those passing through the region who are looking for a neat little hideaway to explore should make a point to stop and visit Ole Bull State Park.



Last year's Media Fair Friends of Ridley table: President Jack Miller and Vice-President Joan Nikelsky with Friends member and newsletter reporter Lauren Bacigalupi and her son Lucas.

LOOK FOR US AT MEDIA FAIR OCTOBER 6

Once again the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park will be staffing a table at the annual Media Food & Craft Fair on Sunday, October 6 (rain date Sunday, October 13) from 9 am to 5 pm. We will have displays and photographs of trail work projects, Friends brochures, and park maps, including our new trail map.

We always talk to people interested in the park, give you an opportunity to sign up for our email list, collect donations, and recruit new members. We have lovely mugs with our logo on them to give to those joining or renewing their membership. The Fair is a popular event every Fall in Media, with 40 restaurants, 75 craft vendors, live music, and games for children. We hope to see you there!

Better yet, if you are able to spend a little time, join our tabling effort by volunteering to sit at our table for an hour or so, to allow other Friends table volunteers to take some time off to see the rest of the Fair. It's fun. Meet people. Everyone wins! Contact Jack Miller (president@friendsofrcsp.org)

The Power that Keeps the Trails Open

By Tim Higgins, long-time Friends member



A section of the Blue Trail, showing dense vegetation trying to choke off the trail.

Have you ever wondered, while hiking or running the trails of Ridley Creek State Parks: How do the trails stay clear of fallen trees or encroaching vegetation? Much of this work is done by a dedicated group of volunteers who “Adopt A Trail” and agree to visit their trails a couple times each month during the growing season. This idea was originally suggested to me by a trail user, Bob Redfern, several years ago. Since that time about a dozen volunteers have adopted sections of the trails, walking them to observe the condition of the trails and reporting back to the trail chairpersons any problems such as large tree blow downs, major erosion problems, or any problem they can’t individually correct. The first Saturday of the month trail work crew will then address these problems.

The trail Adopters provide a close inspection for major problems and they clip back, using hand tools, the constant growing vegetation. With the advent of invasive plant species, clipping vegetation can be an arduous task in many trail sections. Multiflora rose, Mile-A-Minute vine, Oriental Bittersweet, Winged Euonymus and Bush Honeysuckle are all major flora that can quickly choke off a trail. Another function the “Adopters” provide is picking up any litter from the trails. Fortunately, park users are quite responsible so litter is not much of a problem.

Adopters are of both genders and all ages ranging from 14 years of age to the late seventies like myself. The Adopters complete their responsibilities according to their own schedules and the needs of the trails dictated by the growing season and the amount of precipitation. The past couple of years there has been very active plant growth with our wet growing season, keeping the Adopters quite busy. The Adopters are motivated by a strong affinity to the outdoors, a love of the park, and an active desire to give back to the community.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Adopt-A-Trail program or would like more information, you can contact me at timhiggins2@msn.com or phone 610-608-4388.