

The Friends

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SPRING/ SUMMER 2024



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NEW PLAYGROUND	1
PHOTO CONTEST RETURNS	3
RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK MANSION TOURS.....	4
ADOPT A TRAIL.....	4
FRIENDS PICNIC	5
EARTH DAY EVENTS	5
TYLER STATE PARK	6

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY TRAIL WORK

First Saturday of each month, 9 am.

NEW PLAYGROUND CEREMONY

Saturday, April 20, 1:00 pm, Area 8

EARTH DAY WEEK EVENTS

See page 5 of newsletter

FRIENDS ANNUAL PICNIC

Saturday, June 1, noon, Pavilion 8

PHOTO CONTEST AWARD CEREMONY

Wednesday, June 26, 6 pm
at the Mansion

MANSION TOURS:

Saturday, July 27, 10am-2 pm
at the Mansion

FRIENDS OF RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor..... Joan Nikelsky

Design.....Mark Dougherty

New - and Different! - Playground in the Park

by President Jack Miller and Trails Chair Gary Sawyer



The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park are pleased to announce the installation of a new “sensory playground” at Area 8 (near the stables). It consists of imaginative panels that invite young children to hunt for treasure, listen for natural sounds, and solve some motion puzzles, among the dozen activities in this 32’ x 12’ space.

We are planning an official ribbon cutting ceremony for Saturday April 20 (rain date Sunday April 21) at Area 8 starting at 1 pm. You are invited to stop by, meet with the Friends and park officials, explore the new playground, and enjoy some light refreshments.

How did this project come about? The Friends Board members meet regularly with our Park Manager, Lexi Rose, to see if we can help with any special projects the park would like to have done. In 2023 the request was to improve playground access and opportunities for younger children. Swing sets, slides, and structures to climb on - this is what we usually think of in a playground. But then Lexi told us about an innovative type of playground, as described above.

We asked for ideas from different vendors and decided on purchasing the equipment from Playworld, a manufacturer in Lewisburg PA. Several dead trees were removed in December 2023 and some rough grading was done to create the playground site. The playground was assembled and installed by the Pennsylvania State Park regional crew in January 2024.



More work needed to be done to add finishing touches, such as installing a 12-inch high retaining barrier to hold in the wood chip floor of the playground. The Friends Board Members met at the site in February to review proposals for picnic tables, benches, and the playground border.

We chose suppliers and arranged payments for each item. We needed to ensure that all the items would be obtained before our March monthly trail workday on the first Saturday.

Everything worked according to plan except the weather. March 2 was a cold day with rain all day, causing a rare postponement of trail workday until March 9. A 6-foot-long park bench supplied by the Friends and a picnic table supplied by the park will give parents a place to sit and keep an eye on children enjoying the fun. We intend to do final grading of the area and plant grass seed before the April opening ceremony.

So the next time you're with young children in the park, stop by Picnic Area 8 (near the stables) to check out this new sensory playground.

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park is a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation and was organized by a group of loyal volunteers who had been "giving back" to their park for many years. Our mission has been to increase and enhance the quality of everyone's contact with Ridley Creek State Park. We are pleased to offer the new playground as one example of fulfilling this mission.

We appreciate our great group of volunteers, donors, and members who make these projects possible. Thanks to every one of you for helping us do what we do.



Gather Your Photos for the 2024 Photo Contest!

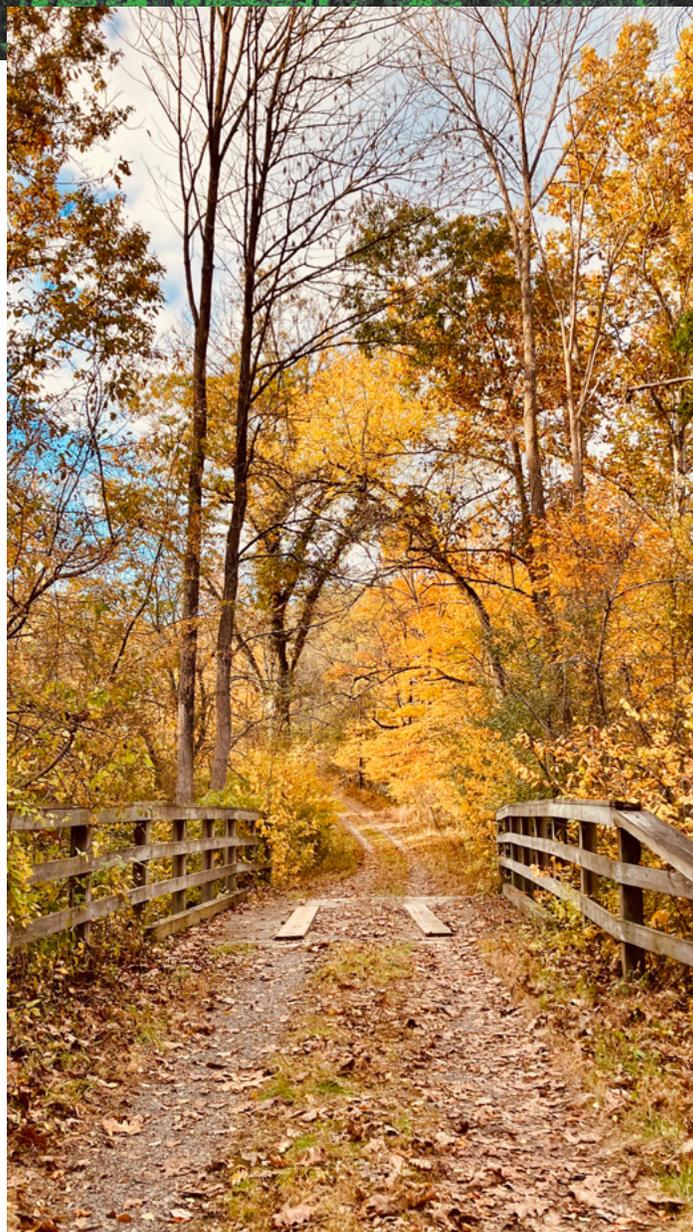
by Friends Board member Paul Mickle

The Friends of Ridley Creek is once again happy to host the annual photo contest. This event has been one of our most popular and long-standing traditions. Through the years we have collected many beautiful photographs and looked at the park through the public's perspective. Two decades of past entries can be seen on our website www.FriendsofRCSP.org - click on "photo contest" on the left panel. 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 26, 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 20, 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.

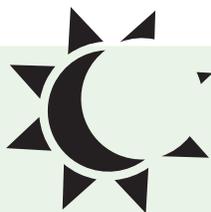
You can submit your photos as late as Tuesday, June 25 in the morning, and they will be displayed, but they will not be eligible for an award. The rules and entry form are available on our website www.FriendsofRCSP.org. Also, flyers have been posted in boxes on the Multi-Use Trail. Please direct questions to photocontest@FriendsofRCSP.org. Have fun and good luck!



Golden Hour, 1st prize 2023, by Tori McClay

SOLAR ECLIPSE APRIL 8!

Here's your chance to experience an 85-90% total eclipse of the sun on Monday, April 8, 2024 in our area. The Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation has a major article on their website of information, description, and what-to-do (and not do) to prepare for this event. Go to <https://paparksandforests.org/our-work/recreation/photo-contest/>.



TWINS FOR THE MANAGER

The Friends of Ridley are excited to announce that Ridley Creek's Park Manager Lexi Rose successfully gave birth to twins, one boy and one girl, in early January 2024. The babies and mom are all happy and healthy. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the family!





Photo by Tom Brunbaugh.

Mansion Tours Return in July

Last summer we reprised the free mansion tours that had been so popular in 2022 during our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the opening of Ridley Creek State Park to the public. The Hunting Hill Mansion is an historic building that serves as the headquarters of Ridley Creek State Park. Due to the narrow hallways in certain areas of the building, there is a 10-person limit on the number of participants on each tour. Last July some people missed out on this opportunity.

So we have decided to offer guided mansion tours in July again. We have reserved the mansion for half hour tours on Saturday July 27, 2024 from 10 am to 2 pm. There will be time for about 6 tours. We will request advance registration for each guided tour by asking people to sign up on a form linked to our website.

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.

Please save the date if you want to see the Hunting Hill 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 for sign-up information when the date gets closer.

YOU can “Adopt” a Trail: Volunteers needed for no-pressure independent trail work

by Friends member Tim Higgins, Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator

Have you ever wondered how the trails in Ridley Creek State Park stay free of encroaching vegetation? Or who removes the trees and objects that block the trails? There is a group of dedicated volunteers who regularly walk their assigned section of trail to make sure the trails are open and passable for the enjoyment of hikers and runners. The Adopt-A-Trail program has been a successful program that's been going on for the past several years.

If you are interested in giving back and hearing more, please contact Tim Higgins, the Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator at timhiggins2@gmail.com for a no-pressure chat about how the program works, what you as a volunteer adopter would be responsible for, and how you can join this altruistic naturalistic outdoor program. We need you!

Thank you for considering this invitation. All your volunteer time, about two hours a month, is done independently on your own schedule, whenever it is convenient for you.

PPFF PHOTO CONTEST DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 20

The annual Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation photo contest for 2024 will be in September, so there's plenty of time to take and submit your photos. The categories this year are a salute to the Leap Year: Awe, Beyond the Edge, 'Leap In' to New Experiences, 'Leap In' to the Lesser Known, 'Leap In' to Volunteerism, Young Photographers. For full contest details, go to https://paparksandforests.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/PPFF_2024SpringNewsletter_Web.pdf.

Earth Day Week Events at Ridley Creek State Park

This year Earth Day falls on Monday, April 22. Most Earth Day events occur on the weekend and days surrounding the weekend. Here is a list of events happening at Ridley at that time; most are sponsored by Pennsylvania's DCNR (Department of Conservation and Natural Resources).

PULLING TOGETHER: EARTH DAY INVASIVE SPECIES HIKE - THURSDAY, APRIL 18 AT 9:00 TO 11:00AM

Join your DCNR Park Naturalist for a hands-on nature hike to identify local native and invasive plants along park trails and learn how we can help protect and enhance wildlife habitat. Meet at the mansion parking lot. Full information at [DCNR Homepage](#); click on Events tab.

HOME SCHOOL NATURE ADVENTURES - FRIDAY, APRIL 19 AT 10:00AM TO 12:00PM

Discover nature with other elementary age homeschoolers (K-5) who meet up every other Friday with DCNR Park Naturalist, to explore the outdoors through a wide variety of interactive programs. Parent or guardian must accompany their child. Meet at Area 8 pavilion. Full information at [DCNR Homepage](#); click on Events tab.

OPENING CEREMONY FOR NEW PLAYGROUND - SATURDAY, APRIL 20 STARTING 1:00 PM

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park will celebrate the installation of a new "sensory playground" at Area 8 (near the stables). It consists of imaginative panels that invite young children to hunt for treasure, listen for natural sounds, and solve some motion puzzles, among the dozen activities in this 32' x 12' space. See page 1-2 of this newsletter for details.

NATIONAL LET'S GO BIRDING DAY - SATURDAY, APRIL 27 AT 7:30 TO 9:30AM

Bring your binoculars and join your DCNR Park Naturalist for a fun morning hike to search for spring migrants along back trails. Meet at mansion upper parking lot. Full information at [DCNR Homepage](#); click on Events tab.

NATIONAL SAVE THE FROGS DAY - SUNDAY, APRIL 28 AT 10:00AM TO 2:00PM

Join your DCNR Park Naturalist for a special trailside exhibit program on our vanishing amphibian friends, their natural history histories and what we can do to help them. Meet at the vernal pool on the Multi-Use Trail. Full information at [DCNR Homepage](#); click on Events tab.

You are Invited to the Friends Picnic June 1

We are planning to have our annual member and volunteer appreciation picnic on Saturday, June 1st starting at noon, rain or shine, after the trail workday. The picnic is open to all trail workers and members of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park (you can join or renew membership at the event!).

This year we will be at Pavilion 8, which is a sheltered site off Sandy Flash Drive at the top of the hill, next to the horse farm building. Follow signs for Area 8. If you missed the groundbreaking on April 20 for our new playground equipment at Area 8, you will have an opportunity to see it during the picnic.

The picnic treats are compliments of the Friends: hamburgers (both meat and meatless), hot dogs, potato salad, coleslaw, beverages, and other fare. People are welcome to bring a dessert or other dish to share

Please RSVP for the picnic so we can plan the food. E-mail members@friendsofrcsp.org or call Joan at 610-352-5685 by Wednesday, May 29, if you can. We hope to see you there!



TYLER STATE PARK

101 Swamp Road
Newtown, PA 18940-1151
Phone: 215-968-2021

MAPS

HISTORY

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Exploring Pennsylvania's Parks: Tyler State Park

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

In this edition of the state park tour we are going to Bucks County to visit Tyler State Park. Tyler State Park is smaller than Ridley Creek State Park at 1,711 acres, but it has many similar qualities - the biggest being that the Neshaminy Creek runs through it, giving it many of the same amenities and attractions as Ridley.

The history behind Tyler State Park is also similar to Ridley's. The land was owned by a wealthy family who operated the area as a farm. In the 1920s George and Stella Tyler started purchasing land in the area. George was a banker in Philadelphia and Stella was an artist. They lived in a small farmhouse until their sprawling 60 room mansion was built. It was 300 feet wide and reportedly the largest ever built in Bucks County.

When Stella died in 1963, the entire estate was willed to Temple University. During the following years, the mansion and its surrounding 200 acres were sold off to Bucks County. The building and gardens are now part of the Bucks County Community College campus. The mansion can be rented for weddings and events, just like

the Hunting Hill Mansion at Ridley. The remaining 1,711 acres became Tyler State Park in 1974, just 2 years after Ridley became a state park.

When it comes to activities, Tyler State Park offers both paved and dirt hiking trails. There is also plenty of space for biking, horseback riding, picnic areas, and a disc golf course. When it comes to water activities, park visitors can fish, canoe, or kayak. One of the old buildings was converted by the Langhorne Players Club into a community theatre, which puts on performances throughout the year. If visitors are not interested in physical activities, there are countless places to sit quietly and enjoy the sights and sounds of wildlife.

Tyler State Park sits about 33 miles from Philadelphia and is about a 40-mile drive from Ridley Creek State Park. It has a very rural feel and is a source of outdoor experiences for the surrounding northern suburban community. If you're ever looking to explore someplace new, Tyler State Park is worth considering.