



PENN'S STEWARDS News and Views



PENNSYLVANIA PARKS AND FORESTS FOUNDATION

SUMMER 2004

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“The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania’s public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all people.”

– *Pennsylvania Constitution, Article I, Section 27*

From the President...



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It is hard to believe that a year has passed since the last newsletter; something about time passing quickly when one is having fun comes to mind. The maturing of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation continues with new ways to help our parks and forests being discovered every day. Certainly the evolution of new friends groups is as important as ever. The number of groups who hold chapter status have grown to seven. The contribution these friends make to their parks is significant and I feel compelled to speak to what they do in more detail.

Many who inquire about the value added that friend groups bring to a park often make a quick jump to what they consider to be the bottom line. How much money did they raise for the park is a question often asked when more appropriately the question should be what do they do for a park. Certainly they do raise money and that money is used for a specific project. Examples of projects include playgrounds in the vicinity of campgrounds or beaches, or pavilions. Some friends groups are formed to accomplish a project and whether they continue after the successful completion of the project is uncertain. My guess is that they will. Other groups raise money to augment their parks budgets. It is a established fact that park budgets will never be sufficient to provide all the services and facilities of all patrons. Additionally friends groups provide countless hours of volunteer labor essential to enhance the spotless appearance that our citizens come to expect.

I guess the best way to capture what friends groups do for a park is to say that they provide a whole new dimension to what a park is. They give a park a persona and they give the members of the group a feeling of ownership. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has long understood the value of friends group and this fall they are starting a program intended to encourage the formation of friends groups. Although not all parks are located in proximity to population centers where groups can find members, many are. PPFF stand ready to support that initiative by offering chapter status to any new group.

FACT: On May 30, 1893, Governor Robert E. Pattison signed legislation authorizing the acquisition of the first Pennsylvania State Park, Valley Forge, Montgomery Co.

Although I tended to focus my comments on friends groups for this piece it is not my intention to slight the other missions of PPFF. We continue to provide a fund site for money donated to park managers and several land acquisitions are in the making. I will speak to them in more detail in subsequent issues. In the mean time find a park or forest you have not visited before and go take a hike.



Boyd Big Tree Conservation Area

Land developers are quick to devise new and innovative ways to convert wild spaces into anything from housing developments to shopping malls. They are so successful at what they do that they are consuming 300 plus acres a day in the Commonwealth, all in a state with virtually no population growth. Imagine if conservationists were as innovative in saving what wilderness remains, as developers were in consuming it. Picture farmer's fields reverting back to forests and fields rather than subdivisions. Imagine also that this land would be not only free from consumptive development but would be available for the enjoyment and education of all citizens of the Commonwealth. This land would be used as a place of exercise, contemplation, meditation, and communing with nature.

Wait you say, we have parks and forests that can be used for these pursuits. However, often parcels of land not located adjacent to existing parks and forests become available. They may not contain sufficient acreage to war-

Conservation Area

rant full park status with the associated costly infrastructure and staffing requirements. Yet because they are often close to large metropolitan areas they are quite attractive as a park or preserve. Until recently there was no simple solution to the dilemma of protecting the land from further develop yet making it readily available to the citizens. That is until the concept of a Conservation Area was adopted by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resource.

The concept of a Conservation Area was largely the brainchild of Mr. Joseph Ibberson, a renowned conservationist with long standing ties to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. He is a retired chief of the Division of Forest Advisory Services of the Department of Environmental Resources, the predecessor of DCNR. Besides helping with the developing of PPFF, he holds awards for the 1998 Outstanding Tree Farm in PA, the 2000 Outstanding Conservation Landowner, and the 2001

Rothrock Award. Actually his accomplishments are almost too numerous to list but certainly one which will be the keystone of his legacy will be the 350-acre tract located just north of Harrisburg in Dauphin county. The Ibberson Conservation Area is where the concept was put into practice, again, thanks to Mr. Ibberson's generous donation of land. Since the establishment of the first conservation area two others have been established, The Boyd Big Tree also located in Dauphin county and the 340-acre Varden area in Wayne county. All areas have come about because of donations of land by

FACT: Pennsylvania has 116 state parks encompassing approximately 275,644-acres of land.

concerned conservation minded individuals.

Should you have land that could be a possible candidate for a conservation area or know of someone who would consider such a donation you may contact Jack Keith who will evaluate the suitability of the land and in consultation with Mr. Ibberson help more conservation areas be created.



The Joseph E. Ibberson Conservation Area.

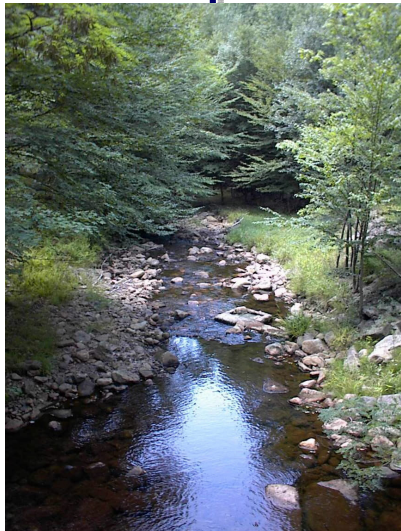
New Friends Groups

Friends groups are a vital part of the PPFF in order to give local parks the individual attention that they deserve. Citizens who are actively involved in the outdoors have already formed many groups or chapters of the PPFF. These groups offer many great services to their parks by clearing trails, educating the public, restoring park structures, and raising funds for the park.

Since the last newsletter, three new friends groups have been added to the previous four groups already involved with PPFF. Locals of Hickory Run State Park, a huge 15,500-acre park in Carbon County, established an official friends group in January of 2004 while friends of Laurel Hill State Park and Ryerson Station State Park both formed in May of 2004. Laurel Hill, located in Somerset County, is most famous for its mountainous terrain and trails wondering through huge stands of Hemlock trees. While Ryerson Station in Greene County is a 1,164-acre park with a 62-acre lake.



Falls at Laurel Hill State Park



Rocky stream in Hickory Run State Park

These three groups are in their early stages of organization with growing numbers of volunteers and plans beginning to be laid out. Ryerson Station and Hickory Run are still in the planning processes of how to go about their fundraising; however they have gotten some good volunteers for the work ahead of them. Laurel Hill friends group has started some fundraising with concessions at the park.

All seven of the friends groups associated with PPFF help their parks tremendously by keeping a close eye on what is happening at their park. The dedication of these groups and all of the volunteers involved is a wonderful influence on Pennsylvania's parks. More groups and volunteers are encouraged to join with PPFF to maintain the goal of keeping our parks as enjoyable and beautiful as they can possibly be.

WHY CREATE A FRIENDS GROUP?

- To promote the park or forest to visitors through publications and special events;
- To provide volunteer services;
- To lend expertise and knowledge to educational and interpretive programs;
- To assist the local park or forest in maintaining good community relations;
- To advise DCNR on other uses for a park or forest and to recommend improvements that could be made in programs, facilities, and access;
- To raise money through membership fees, donations, sales, and special events targeted for special needs in a park or forest;
- To solicit donations of land or direct financial contributions to conserve and protect the lands adjacent to state parks and forests subject to encroachment from development and other activities.

"The ornament of a house is the friends who frequent it."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Featured State Park ~ Ohiopyle

Picture this, a group of friends, a big rubber raft, and class four rapids rushing all around you! Whitewater boating for all experience levels is possible right here in Pennsylvania! The Youghiogheny River flows through the Ohiopyle State Park, which is situated primarily in Fayette County in the southwest corner of the state. The highlight of the park is the 14 miles of the Youghiogheny River Gorge that passes directly through the heart of the park. The name Ohiopyle is derived from the American Indian word *ohiophehla* meaning “white, frothy water”. The river is open to rafts, kayaks, and closed-deck canoes; equipment can be rented from commercial outfitters and guided trips can be scheduled for anyone looking for a good time. The follow is a list of licensed, commercial outfitters operating on the Youghiogheny River –

Laurel Highlands River Tours, 800-472-3846,
www.laurelhighlands.com.



Cucumber Falls

Ohiopyle Trading Post,
888-644-6795,
www.ohiopyletradingpost.com.

White Water Adventures,
800-992-7238, www.wwraft.com

Wilderness Voyageurs,
800-272-4141, www.wilderness-voyageurs.com

The park covers about

FACT: Pennsylvania State Parks offer about 33,232 acres of water for various types of recreational boating.

19,052-acres of the Laurel Mountains. Throughout the park there are 79 miles of hiking trails, 27 miles of biking trails, 13.2 miles of mountain biking trails, and 9.4 miles for horseback riding. They vary from easy to hard and from short to really long, but all of the trails provide excellent scenery and overlooks of the park and its surrounding areas. Four beautiful waterfalls can be seen along some of the trails, and if you get too hot, there are two natural waterslides in Meadow Run that you can slide down. Also, picnic areas are found throughout the park along with 226 campsites. There are 18,000-acres designated for hunting, trapping, and dog training in the park, however some geographical and seasonal restrictions do apply. Wilderness trout fishing is excellent on the Youghiogheny, which is stocked frequently with trout.



Ohiopyle's own natural waterslide -Meadow Run

The Ferncliff Peninsula near the center of the park is such a stunning 100-acre area that it was deemed a National Natural Landmark in 1973. The peninsula is a slightly warmer area allowing the seedlings that were brought up from Maryland and West Virginia by the northern-flowing Youghiogheny River to grow further north than they are normally found. The peninsula offers a unique environment for botanical diversity where many rare plants tend to grow. The Ferncliff Peninsula was declared a State Park Natural Area in 1992, protecting it in a natural state.

Hundreds of years ago the Native Americans enjoyed Ohiopyle for its splendor and countless natural resources. Today, we may not need to live off this land, but we can still enjoy it just as many people have done generations before us. Whether looking for an exciting trip down the Youghiogheny River, a challenging bike ride, or even just to take a stroll in the park, Ohiopyle State Park is a place for anyone to enjoy. For more information about this park go to –
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/parks/ohiopyle.htm>



The Need Continues



Thinking about our favorite park we all envision the wide variety of huge trees, green grasses, and our favorite hiking trails. What we do not see in our mind's eye is the litter that is more often than not scattered about, or an illegal dumpsite in the back corner of the park or forest. Litter, being primarily small items such as paper, food containers, and convenience products, can be intentional or an accidental act; dumping however is always an intentional act consisting of large items or large quantities of small items like appliances, tires, and bags of trash. There are an estimated 30 – 200 illegal dumpsites per county based on studies in Pennsylvania making this a concern for us all. It is a costly and difficult job to clean up litter and dumpsites and to maintain their cleanliness, but because this affects the environment and ourselves, we must do our part in helping out.

There are some people who do their reasonable share of cleaning up; while others think their part will not make a difference and may choose to ignore these nuisances or simply accept them as a part of the park itself, which is an unacceptable way of thinking. It is a shame that a few careless individuals can spoil something for the rest of us with litter but we must counteract their actions with our own actions. A perfect example of how we can make a difference is when Sue Wiseman along with family and friends decided to clear a

road where they rode their horses, resulting in 19 truckloads of trash along with the beginnings of PA CleanWays.

PA CleanWays is a non-profit organization formed in 1990 that teams together local community members including local businesses and government to help keep



A Dumpsite prior to cleanup-PA Cleanways

local communities clean. The organization carries out their mission in several ways through local communities. They use affiliates who work across the state focusing on local cleanups and organizations. PA CleanWays also acts as consultants on special projects using their technical expertise at locations such as state parks, forests, and conservation areas. They also implement community programs, local adoption programs, education, and all the

unteering. They have gained presence in 51 of the 67 counties in PA including 22 county-based chapters. Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania (PROP), Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), and Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation have all partnered with PA CleanWays to help them achieve their goals.

In 1999 PA CleanWays was awarded a statewide grant for the Pennsylvania Forest Lands Beautification Grants Program (FLBP) from DCNR. This four-part program is aimed at cleaning the majority of Pennsylvania's illegal dumping sites and keeping them clean with a zero-accumulation maintenance plan. In the first phase, 15 sites were cleaned, cleanup procedures were developed, and strategies for the FLBP were formulated and demonstrated. In the next phase, they cleaned 67 more dumpsites. In phase three they cleaned 96 sites. And in phase four they exceeded their goal by cleaning more sites and kept working hard on keeping those sites clean. During each phase, PA CleanWays exceeded their goals and cleaned over 80% of their documented dumpsites, an excellent achievement.

Litter and dump sites are damaging not only to nature and animals but to us as well, contaminating our own natural resources. This is an ongoing problem that we must all face.

Continued on page 7...

Corporate Sponsorship



Lookout deck over the Youghiogheny Falls

The parks and forests in the Commonwealth are very beautiful and well kept, however all parks need continuous maintenance and additions to keep them at their best. Adequate funding is essential to keeping our parks from becoming less than what our citizens deserve. Unfortunately recent tax shortfalls have resulted in less money reaching park managers and the backlog of deferred maintenance is mounting. This is why PPFF has begun looking to the business community for support, especially for the parks close to where they are located.

There are many instances of corporate support of parks taking place which would suggest that a more formal program could be successful on a systemic basis. Corporations much like individual citizens have a understanding of the need to give back to the community in exchange for providing a business friendly environment which is essential for the successful operating of the business. What better way for a corporation to give back to a community than to support the state park where many of their em-

ployees go for recreation. Support can take many forms, from donations of money, to matching funds for employees who volunteer at the park. Every park could use additional structures such as camping cottages, pavilions, and playgrounds. Some companies donate their products that can be used directly or sold at auction. Some companies allow employees to work on projects at the park during the workday. This technique has proven to be a good way to bring employees closer together. Besides giving back to the community and making a nicer park for everyone including their employees there are other perks to these partnerships. The employees of the company can use the facilities donated, for example, a pavilion the company built can be used to hold annual outings. Also, facilities, projects, and contributors will be recognized in park brochures, on donated structures, and many other means that show appreciation for the support.

Involvement from everyone is encouraged to maintain our parks at their utmost, so that they can continue to be enjoyed for many generations to come.

If you are interested in participating in a corporate partnering project, or if you would like to know more about the corporate partnership program, please contact PPFF.

Continued from page 6...

PA CleanWays is a fine example of how one person can make a big difference; this organization has made great strides and operates over the entire state of Pennsylvania. We all need to be aware of the damage that is being done to our environment from littering and illegal dumping so that in the future we can help to prevent damage to our world.

Check out www.pacleanways.org to find out more about them, and join the fight against illegal dumping and littering.



Snowy Cabin at Gifford Pinchot

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.PAPARKSANDFORESTS.ORG

Please detach form and mail to PPFF, P.O. Box 499, State College PA 16804-0499

Dear Parks and Forests Foundation:

- ☐ Please add my name to the general mailing list
- ☐ Please send me information on creating a partnership or friends group. My local park or forest is: _____

- ☐ To help the PPFF in its mission, please accept this contribution of:

☐ \$500 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$ _____

- ☐ Other: _____

Name

Address

Email

Phone

* Checks can be made payable to the PA Parks and Forests Foundation

Signature: _____