

Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation Fact Sheet for Friends Groups—Art in the Park

Art—like beauty—is in the eye of the beholder and *Art in the Park* events can take as many forms as there are eyes to behold them! Whatever its form, *Art in the Park* is a great way to connect art, people of all ages, and nature!

For purposes of this fact sheet, *Art in the Park* refers specifically to sponsoring a step by step painting class. The event can be offered several times during the year in different seasons. The Friends group would purchase the easels, brushes, paint, and canvas. The participant brings their own chair. The original outlay of money for supplies will be recouped by a fee paid to participate. The easels and brushes will be reused each time you hold the event.

A “painting party” shop may be in your town or nearby. And enterprises usually involve a party atmosphere, we think nature can be liberating participants’ creativity!



A lakeside is the perfect setting for an art class
Photo: Friends of Cowans Gap

Instructor: Ask local artists if they are interested in providing their expertise. To find interested people you can ask on Facebook, contact art teachers and local artists. See if you can offer free camp site for the weekend of the class to the instructor as a thank you.

have opened recently in although these commercial adding a little wine to the that just being outside in enough to unleash your

Location: Any beautiful setting in your state park or forest! Nature is the inspiration! Be sure there is a large enough spot to set up easels and chairs for your artists. Having a pavilion or pop-ups to use in case of rain would be helpful.



The finished product
Photo: Friends of Cowans Gap

Promotion: Use Facebook and local papers to advertise the date, time and how to sign up. Also flyers in the park office and on bulletin boards.

Sponsorship: Ask at local craft stores to see if they are willing to donate paint, brushes, canvas, and easels.

Price: \$25 per person for the instruction and they get to take home their art work.

Thanks to the The Friends of Cowans Gap, the source for much of the information in this fact sheet.

Additional Friends Group Resources/Ideas

- The Friends of Nolde Forest have sponsored an art competition for local schools. Russell Slocum, owner of the art gallery where the works appear, helped to organize.
- For the Friends of Ridley Creek, art has taken the form of photography, with an annual photo contest to salute submissions taken in the park.
- The Friends of Shawnee & Blue Knob have in the past sponsored an art show and gallery with works from local artists, photographers, and craftspeople on display at the Shawnee Beachhouse throughout much of the summer. If you have a good, high-traffic location (and the ability to watch over the art works at specific times), you might consider this version of the event.



The entries go on display



An art show is a great time for a gala opening/party



Talent comes in many sizes

Ann Harting of the Friends of Cook Forest is a working artist herself and shared these hints from the gallery where she works for hosting a plein air (open air painting) type event:

- Don't worry about providing easels unless you have access to sturdy tables to put them on. Spiral bound watercolor pads or watercolor paper masking taped on all four sides to a board is all they need.. Heavy cardboard like the back of a tablet works well.
- Be wary of inexpensive watercolor paint trays. The brushes are too small and the bristles are usually plastic. Each student should have access to 3 brushes. Check out Dick Blick art supplies for a good set: <https://www.dickblick.com/items/princeton-select-brush-set-brush-set-no-3-set-of-3/>. You may be able to qualify for an educators discount through the Park. You'd certainly qualify for tax exempt.
- Students should work small— 9x12 at the most. Think of something comfortable in their lap and not too overwhelming in scale/size
- Provide a view finder. You can make these yourself from cardboard. Think of 2 "L's" or a mat cut in half diagonally. This will give the student an area to focus on so it is not so overwhelming.
- Finally, consider whether the event is a fundraiser, or just a fun activity. If it's a fundraiser, charge for the supplies, plus an additional amount for the fundraising project. If there is a paid instructor and this is just a fun activity your group is hosting, charge for supplies and the instructor fee (unless it would be cost prohibitive). If you have enough money to pay for the instructor with approved group funds, you have the opportunity to make it a "several times a year" event.