

Dear Friends:

Thank you for supporting the *Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park*. We hope you will renew your membership, or join for the first time. Members receive a discount card for merchandise sales in the State Park Office. Memberships formally run from March to March; if you join now, we'll extend your membership through March 2020.

As the Friends group enters a 9th full year as a volunteer non-profit chapter of the *PA Parks & Forests Foundation*, I am proud of the ongoing efforts by volunteers and supporters to help our small but very busy State Park. Our group continues to work with park staff to maintain quality educational and recreational programs at this jewel of the South Mountain landscape.

One of our primary goals is to raise money for park projects. Our regular fundraisers include Fall Furnace Fest (with the famous pumpkin float and Hairy Hand story at Fuller Lake); the Iron Run half-marathon & Charcoal Challenge 5k run/walk; campground firewood sales; and merchandise sales. All money we raise stays at this park to support recreation, conservation and education.

We continue to cut, split and stack wood for firewood sales – a special thank you to the dedicated volunteers who help us with that ongoing and time-consuming task. The Friends group also supports Earth Day, National Public Lands Day, and the Woodsy Owl Weekend by coordinating a potluck lunch for volunteers at those events. We are grateful for the many volunteers who help to maintain trails and bridges, remove invasive plant species, and volunteer at special events like Fall Furnace Fest.

In past years, the Friends group repaired the historic furnace stack in the center of the park, purchased two large playgrounds for the campground and Fuller Lake, and supported construction of a “natural” play area at Laurel Lake. In 2018 we paid to replace locksets on numerous buildings and gates all across the park, simplifying the daily workload of park staff.

Looking forward to 2019 and beyond, we have lots of plans to continue to improve the visitor experience at Pine Grove Furnace. Two years ago the Friends paid for and built a substantial hiking bridge on Mountain Creek Trail; we are now beginning the process to install a second bridge across the creek, to connect that trail with Koppenhaver Trail. We will need to schedule several workdays in early 2019 to restore footpaths hard-hit by unending rain in 2018 (which just doesn't seem to end: as I write, the local forecast calls for another inch or more of rain, less than one week before Christmas!) Please watch for trail volunteer requests via our website, Facebook and emails to our member list. The Friends also look forward to supporting reconfiguration of the Family Campground entrance/exit, and a new kayak EZ-dock at Laurel Lake.

If you can help by volunteering at the Iron Run or Fall Furnace Fest, or if you can join our “firewood splitting parties” and trail workdays, please send an email to PGFvolunteers@gmail.com.

Your membership helps to ensure that Pine Grove Furnace State Park continues to be one of the best State Parks in Pennsylvania. We hope to see you at the park throughout 2019.

Sincerely,



André Weltman
Chairman, *Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park*

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www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Pine-Grove-Furnace-State-Park-131815140192988



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
at Pine Grove Furnace State Park for 2019

Mark these 2019 dates on your calendars!

Earth Day and Friends Annual Meeting – Saturday, April 27: Volunteers will work on park trails and do other tasks to get the park ready for the season. Afterwards, we will have a potluck lunch with burgers & hotdogs grilled by the Friends group – lunch participants should bring a covered dish to share. After lunch, please join us at 1 PM for a Friends annual meeting with updates on our park and on other activities in the Michaux State Forest and statewide.

Woody Owl Weekend – weekend of May 18: Two days of free camping (overnight on May 17 and May 18) in exchange for one morning (Saturday May 18) of volunteering in the park. A fun family weekend! Please contact the State Park Office at 717-486-7174 for details and to sign up.

9th Annual Iron Run and Charcoal Challenge – Saturday, June 8: A half-marathon trail race and a 5k run or walk, to raise funds for projects supported by the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace. Participate as a volunteer or as a runner. Full information and race registration will be posted on RunReg.com by the end of February. Volunteers are needed: please email PGFvolunteers@gmail.com.

National Public Lands Day – Saturday, September 28: Volunteers will work on various tasks around the park during the morning. Afterwards, we'll have a potluck lunch with burgers & hotdogs grilled by the Friends group – lunch participants should bring a covered dish to share.

11th Annual Fall Furnace Fest – weekend of October 19-20: Join us for a two-day family-oriented event with live music, craft & food vendors, history demonstrations, hay wagon rides, pumpkin carving, scarecrow making, and the legendary story of the "Hairy Hand" (on Saturday evening). Most activities are free. Volunteers are needed: please email PGFvolunteers@gmail.com.

Ongoing Volunteer Opportunities: Volunteers are not just limited to helping at the park during the specific volunteer events. Throughout the year volunteers are needed to work on new or ongoing park projects and environmental education programs. Whether you are one person or 25, we can use your help. Please call the State Park Office to set-up a volunteer work day and talk about possible projects: 717-486-7174.

Volunteer Registration: The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has created a *Conservation Volunteer Database* as a way to solicit volunteers for state parks and keep track of their time. This is an important tool for Pine Grove Furnace to document the number of volunteer hours throughout the year. To sign up as a volunteer at Pine Grove Furnace or any other State Park, please visit the DCNR website and complete the volunteer application at www.volunteers.dcnr.state.pa.us

The Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park, a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, was formed in 2010 to foster volunteerism and recreational and historical activities at Pine Grove Furnace State Park. As a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to the Friends are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation is registered with the PA Department of State; registration information may be obtained by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Visit us on Facebook, or at our website: www.PineGroveFriends.org