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 in the State Park Office. Memberships run March to March; if you join now, we’ll extend your membership through March 2021.

Our group was formed in 2010 as a non-profit chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation (PPFF) which has more than 40 similar groups in PA State Parks (and a few State Forests too, including the new Friends of Michaux S.F. formed in Spring 2019). Friends volunteers and supporters provide a little “value added” to busy State Parks which serve the public using limited resources and personnel. At Pine Grove Furnace, we work closely with park staff to maintain quality public programs at our very busy little park. We raise money for special projects while promoting education, conservation and recreation.

Our regular fundraisers include the 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 and is used solely for the benefit of our park. As a chapter of PPFF we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization, and donations are tax deductible.

We continue to cut, split and stack wood for firewood sales – a special thank you to the dedicated volunteers who help 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 the nine and a half years our group has existed, we’ve done our best to improve the park for hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. We repaired the top of the historic iron furnace stack, purchased two playgrounds for the campground and Fuller Lake, supported construction of a “natural” play area at Laurel Lake, bought a kayak EZ-dock for Laurel Lake, and paid to replace locksets on buildings and gates all across the park, simplifying the daily workload of park staff. We are also paying for a project currently underway to improve the entrance/exit area of the family campground. The Friends also regularly help maintain State Park hiking trails.

In 2016 the Friends paid for and our volunteers installed a substantial hiking bridge along Mountain Creek Trail; we are now working to install another large bridge across the creek, to connect that trail with the Koppenhaver Trail loop. This will create exciting new hiking opportunities in and near the park by linking trails between the two lakes as well as allowing easier off-road connections with Pole Steeple and the A.T. Our group was just awarded two grants amounting to $70,000 for this major project which will total nearly $120,000. The remainder of the funding will come from the Friends. Your donations are appreciated!

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 Pine Grove Furnace State Park continue to be one of the best State Parks in Pennsylvania. We hope to see you at the park throughout 2020.

Sincerely,

André Weltman
Chairman, Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park

Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization—contributions to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. No goods or services were received in exchange for this contribution. The official registration of PPFF may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.
EARTH DAY – SATURDAY, APRIL 25: Volunteers 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.

WOODSY OWL WEEKEND – WEEKEND OF MAY 16: Two days of free camping (overnight on May 15 and May 16) in exchange for one morning (Saturday May 16) 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.

10TH ANNUAL IRON RUN AND CHARCOAL CHALLENGE – SATURDAY, JUNE 13: 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: email PGFvolunteers@gmail.com.

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26: Volunteers 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.

12TH ANNUAL FALL FURNACE FEST – WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 17-18: Join us for a two-day family-oriented event with live music, craft & food vendors, history demonstrations, pumpkin carving, scarecrow making, hay wagon rides, and the legendary story of the “Hairy Hand” (on Saturday evening). Most activities are free. Volunteers are needed: 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 (PPFF), was formed in 2010 to foster volunteering and recreational and historical activities at Pine Grove Furnace State Park. As a chapter of PPFF, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to the Friends are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. PPFF 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