



Friends of Pine Grove Furnace S.P.
1100 Pine Grove Road
Gardners, PA 17324
January 2024

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 our merchandise sold in the State Park Office. Memberships run March to March; if you join now, we'll extend your membership through March 2025. This year, we're introducing "Lifetime" memberships in addition to our existing Individual memberships (\$10 per year) and Family (\$15 per year). Lifetime memberships are offered at \$200 for individuals and \$300 for families.

We are a chapter of the non-profit *Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation* (PPFF) which has around four dozen similar groups across PA. Friends volunteers and supporters provide a little "value added" to State Parks and State Forests serving the public using limited resources and personnel.

Since 2010 our Friends group has fostered volunteerism and supported recreation, education and conservation at Pine Grove Furnace State Park, a very busy spot in the South Mountain region. Over the past decade Pine Grove Furnace averaged over 350,000 visits annually: that's a lot for a park of less than 700 acres!

One of our major activities each year is working with State Park staff to hold the Fall Furnace Fest which saw near-record attendance in 2023. The fun-filled two-day family event includes craft and food vendors, history demonstrations including making candles, apple cider and charcoal, hayrides, live music, scarecrow making and pumpkin carving, and the famous pumpkin parade and pumpkin float on Fuller Lake with the Legend of the Hairy Hand. The festival is always the 3rd full weekend of October – so in 2024 it will be Saturday and Sunday, October 19-20.

We also hold the annual Iron Run half-marathon and Charcoal Challenge 5k run/walk, concurrent community races which serve as fundraisers for the Friends. These races will again be held this year, on the second Saturday in June – mark your calendars for the morning of June 8, 2024; online registration will become available in February.

For both Fall Furnace Fest and the June races, as well as trail maintenance and other park improvements, we are always looking for volunteers. If you can help us help the park, please send us an email at PGFvolunteers@gmail.com

A popular way to "give back" to the State Park is at special Saturday volunteer days: Earth Day (April 27), Summer Volunteer Clean-Up (June 15), and National Public Lands Day (September 28). After a morning of working with park staff on a variety of tasks, the Friends host a grilled lunch of burgers and hotdogs – plus, your potluck covered dishes are welcome. For details, see the DCNR online calendar at https://events.dcnr.pa.gov/pine_grove_furnace_state_park as we approach those dates. We also hope to

see you around the park for a First Day Hike (this past January 1, we hosted 120 people), the Walk in Penns Woods in October, and history tours and concerts between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

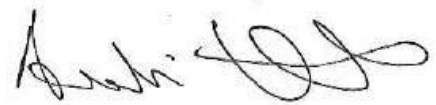
The Friends support a variety of educational activities on both nature and history. We are now working with DCNR to improve existing “wayside” displays and create new ones to better interpret the 250-year story of Pine Grove Furnace as first an industrial center then as a tourist destination. We also help with removal of invasive plants like barberry, and replacement with native vegetation – including financial support of a native habitat restoration project along Mountain Creek, led by the Michaux Forest Association.

We continue to cut, split and stack locally sourced firewood for sale in the Family Campground. This is not just a fundraiser; it’s a service to campers so they have wood readily available when they arrive. Plus, using only *locally sourced* firewood avoids long-distance movement of forest pests and pathogens that can be hiding in the wood.

Thanks to memberships, donations, money raised during special events, and the sale of firewood and merchandise, the Friends have been able to contribute substantial amounts of money to Pine Grove Furnace State Park. We recently tallied our expenditures on park programs and infrastructure since we were founded in 2010. It came to more than \$350,000! That includes our direct funds as well as a few grants we obtained for major projects such as the new hiking bridge installed in 2020 to connect Koppenhaver and Mountain Creek Trails at Old Railroad Bed Road.

As a chapter of the PA Parks and Forests Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, donations to *Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park* are tax-deductible as allowed by law. Won’t you please join us?

Sincerely,



Andre Weltman, Chairman
PineGroveFriends@gmail.com
www.FriendsofPineGrove.org



www.Facebook.com at “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. The official registration of PPFF may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.