



FRIENDS OF

Pine Grove Furnace News

STATE PARK Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

FALL 2023

www.FriendsofPineGrove.org • 1100 Pine Grove Road, Gardners, PA 17324 • pinegrovefriends@gmail.com

FALL FURNACE FEST

The Friends help the park with many projects and programs throughout the year, but by far our largest event is Fall Furnace Fest. This two-day festival is held the third full weekend of October each year. In 2023 it attracted more than 8,500 visitors, vendors, and volunteers! Many people came just to carve pumpkins for the Saturday night Pumpkin Parade, pumpkin float, and Legend of the Hairy Hand on Fuller Lake. Others came for the dozens of craft and food vendors and to enjoy numerous free activities.

This year 1,343 people took the hayrides conducted by State Park staff, 1,178 people tasted apple cider freshly pressed by the Friends of Kings Gap and Pine Grove Furnace, and 423 kids dipped their own candles. This was all in addition to live music, Birds of Prey programs by Miller's Wildlife and Conservation Specialists, tours of the Ironmaster's Mansion, a charcoal-making demonstration by the Friends, beekeeping by Two Brothers Bees, and nature crafts by the Penn State Master Gardeners. And let us not forget the opportunity to meet Thaddeus Stevens (thanks to reenactor Ross Hetrick) or get your picture taken with Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl.



Crystal Hunt

Crystal Hunt took this photo of the pumpkin float on Fuller Lake

In the days leading up to the big weekend, park staff ensure everything is in place to turn the Fuller and Brickyard Day Use Areas into a festival venue. Employees mow the grass, bring out trashcans, position picnic tables, haul straw and pumpkins, prepare the pumpkin rafts, mark parking spots on Fuller Field, and make sure the Hairy Hand is ready for his appearance on Saturday evening. Work continues after the public has departed, as staff and volunteers clean up and restore the area for normal operations. Our park calls upon DCNR rangers and educators from elsewhere in Pennsylvania to assist – we are grateful for their support. Meanwhile, the Friends rely heavily on our dedicated volunteers who contributed 780 hours over a four-day period. It all makes for a fun weekend for visitors, staff, and volunteers alike. Thank you! To volunteer for the festival and our other activities, please email PGFvolunteers@gmail.com.

FIRST DAY HIKE

Across the country, First Day Hikes have become a fun way to welcome in the New Year. Depending on the weather we can have as few as 30 or more than 200 people coming out for a First Day Hike at Pine Grove Furnace State Park.

Our hikes on January 1 show off some of the trails in our park, always with the goal of providing a good experience for families and inexperienced hikers. At least part of the route will be on the Hiker-Biker-A.T. which is flat and handicap accessible; length will vary from 1-2 miles or more if desired. Bring family and friends to join us for this year's First Day Hike starting 1 p.m. at the Fuller Lake Bathhouse. As an added treat, the Friends offer free homemade cookies, mulled apple cider, hot chocolate, and coffee for everyone.



First Day Hike group photo in 2023: 132 hikers and 11 dogs participated

LEADERSHIP

Andre Weltman, *Chair*
Mary Soderberg, *Vice Chair*
Josh Burleigh, *Treasurer*
Diane Velozo, *Secretary*
Crystal Hunt
Rob Shaw
Brett Weiser
Donna Weiser

OUR MISSION

The Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park (FOPGF) exists to keep history alive and promote educational and recreational programs at the park and surrounding areas through special events and trail development while protecting the park's natural resources.

Email us at:

pinegrovefriends@gmail.com

Visit us online at:

www.FriendsofPineGrove.org

Follow us on Facebook at:

[Friends-of-Pine-Grove-Furnace-State-Park](https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Pine-Grove-Furnace-State-Park)

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park formed in August 2010 as a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Official registration may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

BICYCLE TIRE PUMP AND REPAIR STANDS

The park's Maintenance staff recently installed two more bike repair stands purchased by the Friends. Each location has a tire pump (compatible with both Presta and Schrader valves) plus basic tools for bicycle repairs.

The new stations are at the entrance to the Family Campground and at the yellow gate where Old Railroad Bed Road meets up with the "Hiker-Biker-A.T." east from Fuller Lake. These two repair stands are in addition to an identical stand purchased by the Friends and installed at the General Store in summer of 2022.



Newly installed bicycle repair stand at the Family Campground



The air pump in use at the General Store



Scan QR code for more information on park events

– or go to –

https://events.dcnr.pa.gov/pine_grove_furnace_state_park



Scan QR code to join the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace and to help support our state park.



FOLLOW US
ON FACEBOOK

To keep up with the State Park and the Friends, follow us on Facebook. The Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park Facebook page is a team effort of volunteers and park staff to provide you information about the park and the region.

—Activity Calendar 2024—

FIRST DAY HIKE, MONDAY, JANUARY 1: Start the year with an easy hike beginning at 1 p.m. at Fuller Bathhouse.

EARTH DAY, APRIL 27: Celebrate Earth Day with a morning of volunteering followed by a grilled lunch from the Friends.

IRON RUN AND CHARCOAL CHALLENGE, JUNE 8: Watch for details in early 2024 on registration for our annual fundraiser half-marathon race and 5K run/walk.

FALL FURNACE FEST, WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 19–20: A family weekend with food and craft vendors, hayrides, live music, and historical demonstrations.

• For more information and updates, go to www.FriendsofPineGrove.org. •