



FRIENDS OF

Pine Grove Furnace News

STATE PARK Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

WINTER 2025

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

FULLER PLAYGROUND DESTROYED

We are sad to report that extreme winds in February dropped a tree across the playground near Fuller Lake. Fortunately, the swing set right next to it was spared. The playset was purchased by the Friends in 2015 and installed by the State Park's Maintenance Department. We plan to replace it, but it will take a little while...and it will not be inexpensive. Ten years ago the playset cost \$16,000, and a similar unit will cost almost \$19,000 now.

Is it the "circle of life"? Tree destroys playground, we turn tree into firewood, sell at Campground, and raise money to buy new playground. And so it goes. Thank you to the Maintenance crew who removed the big tree and brought it in chunks to the Friends' splitting area where volunteers are taking advantage of warmer weather to begin turning logs into firewood. We are very grateful to our dedicated group of volunteers for this ongoing chore, typically done on Monday mornings when weather permits. If you would like to help, email PineGroveFriends@gmail.com.

Our Friends group sells locally sourced firewood not just as a fundraiser and a service to campers, but also to discourage long-distance transport of wood that might harbor forest pests and pathogens.



CHARCOAL CHALLENGE 5K FUN RUN

We hope you can join us for a 5K run (or walk!) on Saturday, June 14 starting at 9 a.m. The Charcoal Challenge 5K in 2025 will be a "fun run" on park trails, with no timer/bibs, but participation gifts for all participants and lots of snacks. You can purchase a race shirt for an extra fee. All proceeds support recreation, education, and conservation in our park.

For details and to register for this fundraiser event, visit <https://runsignup.com/charcoalchallengefunrun>.

We have discontinued the Iron Run half-marathon, sorry!



[Runsignup.com](https://runsignup.com)

CONCERTS IN THE PARK



Last year the Friends hosted three free history/music concerts, and we are looking forward to the same talented performers returning in 2025.

Mechanicsburg-based storyteller Matthew Dodd will present "Songs and Stories of the Red White and Blue" on May 24 and "Songs and Stories of the Civil War" on July 5.

Check the monthly DCNR calendar on park kiosks and online for these and other activities throughout the year.

FIRST DAY HIKE

A popular tradition at Pine Grove Furnace is the annual First Day Hike. Last January 1st, 156 people and 7 dogs participated in two hikes – one route was shorter and easier, while the other was a little longer. Enjoyed were more than 4 gallons of hot chocolate, 4-1/2 gallons of mulled cider, 2 dozen cups of coffee, and untold dozens of homemade cookies. Thanks for joining us!



*First Day Hikers
January 1, 2025*

LEADERSHIP

Andre Weltman, *Chair*
Mary Soderberg, *Vice Chair*
Josh Burleigh, *Treasurer*
Diane Velozo, *Secretary*
Lyle Herr
Crystal Hunt
Rob Shaw
Tyler Staley
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.

REMEMBER YOUR VISIT AND HELP US HELP THE PARK

In addition to selling firewood, the Friends of PGF raise money through memberships and donations, special events like Fall Furnace Fest in October and the 5K run/walk in June, and by selling merchandise in the State Park Office. We offer a wide range of clothing, maps, history books, and park mementos. New items include nature mini-guides, additional styles of magnets, hats and shirts, and the annual embroidered patch series. The 2025 patch shows a deer and fawn, photographed last summer on the edge of Murphy Road. Help us help the park by purchasing merchandise! Cash or check only, please.

Friends memberships start in March of each year. It is time to become a member or renew: see the weblink at the end of this newsletter, or grab a folded green handout in the Park Office. We are grateful to all our supporter and volunteers. We hope to see you around Pine Grove Furnace soon.



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 2025—

FAMILY CAMPGROUND OPENS, MARCH 28

EARTH DAY, APRIL 26: Volunteers help clean up the park, followed by a grilled lunch.

CHARCOAL CHALLENGE 5K FUN RUN, JUNE 14

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY, SEPTEMBER 27: A morning of volunteering then a grilled lunch.

FALL FURNACE FEST, WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 18–19: A family weekend with food and craft vendors, hayrides, live music, and historical demonstrations.

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

OUR NEW PARK MANAGER

Corie Eckman started at Pine Grove Furnace last September. She comes to us from nearby Colonel Denning State Park where she had been Manager since September 2022.

She studied Environmental Biology at Clarion University and spent a transformative semester in the Southwest U.S. with the National Outdoor Leadership School learning technical outdoor skills. After spending a year working for a private forestry company as a technician, she obtained a dual Master of Science degree in Parks & Resource Management and Master of Education in Environmental Education from Slippery Rock University.

Corie joined DCNR's Bureau of State Parks in 2018 as an intern at Kinzua Bridge, later worked at the Western Regional Office, and then at Colonel Denning. Corie reports she is "an avid hiker, gardener, and a novice stained glass artist", and she enjoys "adventuring" with her partner Brady and their dog Willow.

Our new Park Manager looks forward to "working alongside all the community partners and visitors here at Pine Grove in the years to come!"

Please join us in welcoming Corie to Pine Grove Furnace.



Welcome to new Park Manager Corie Eckman



Park Manager Corie Eckman greeting First Day Hikers

BLUEBIRD BOX TRAIL AT PINE GROVE FURNACE

Late last year, volunteers and the park's Environmental Educator installed new bluebird nesting boxes in various locations. If you can help by regularly checking on the boxes, please contact the State Park Office.



A male Eastern Bluebird perched near the Fuller Lake parking lot just a few weeks ago

Healthy Bluebird Nesting Tips

- Place nesting boxes in open areas with some trees and shrubs to perch in.
- Plant native plants to attract bluebirds and provide them a nutritious food source and shelter.
- Provide a bird bath or fountain and provide a perch nearby.
- Clean out nest boxes in February and also after babies fledge to encourage multiple broods.

Volunteers worked with the State Park Educator to install new nesting boxes



Bluebird entering a box near the old furnace last July