



FRIENDS OF

Pine Grove Furnace News

STATE PARK Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

SPRING 2021

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Meet the Park Manager

Our new Park Manager, Chris Houck, grew up hiking, camping, and fishing with his family in Centre County, Pennsylvania. Those outdoor experiences led him to volunteering at Black Moshannon State Park and eventually getting a degree in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management from Penn State. Chris began his career in the DCNR park system as a semi-skilled laborer at Black Moshannon. After a couple of years as a Ranger 1, Chris was accepted into DCNR's Manager Trainee Program. His first manager assignment was at Memorial Lake and Swatara State Parks, followed by a promotion to assistant manager for the large French Creek State Park in Berks County. In August 2020, Chris was appointed manager of Pine Grove Furnace. Chris' experiences at other parks should serve him well as he manages this small but very busy park!



Earlier this spring, we asked Chris why he chose to work in the state park system and what brought him specifically to Pine Grove Furnace State Park. Chris responded by saying "Being involved in the outdoors from a young age and engaging in various forms of outdoor recreation throughout my life initially got me interested in a career involving the natural resources. In college I learned about the early conservation efforts of Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir to preserve the natural landscape for the public. Hearing their stories motivated me to get into park management."

When asked why he chose Pine Grove, Chris said "Besides the great location with an abundance of outdoor recreation and natural resources, I felt Pine Grove Furnace would provide me opportunities and challenges to grow as a manager. Pine Grove Furnace is a beautiful, historic park with a great team of staff and volunteers. It offers a wide variety of recreation, resources, engaged partner organizations, and unique features that you don't often find in one place."

According to Chris, increased visitation has been the biggest challenge that he has faced in his first year. "Visitation grew by 29 percent last year and has continued to climb in 2021. Not only has this translated into increased litter and more maintenance demands, but many of these visitors are new to state parks and the outdoors. As a result, we've been spending extra time educating new visitors about basic park rules and park etiquette such as Leave No Trace."

~ Please welcome Chris Houck to Pine Grove! And remember, Leave No Trace. ~

New Campground Entrance



The new entrance to the Family Campground is getting a lot of use this year! This project was a joint effort of park staff and volunteers primarily to eliminate a sharp turn to enter the campground, but it has the added benefit of bringing newly arriving campers past both the Campground Host site and the firewood shed. The staff prepared the site, including running the water lines, and the Friends paid for the paving.

An information kiosk at the entrance allows campers to easily see their campsite assignment and where it is located in the campground—if you have a reservation, there is no need to stop at the Park Office to check in.

Another new feature is for campers arriving after hours without a reservation: they will be able to see if there are any available sites and immediately reserve and pay for a site for a single night.

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.pinegrovefriends.org

Follow us on Facebook at:

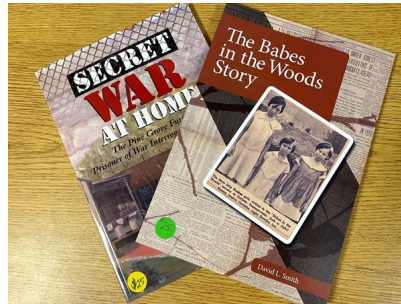
[Friends-of-Pine-Grove-Furnace-State-Park](https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Pine-Grove-Furnace-State-Park)

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.

Merchandise Sales

One of the ways that the Friends raise money is through the sale of park-related merchandise in the Park Office/Visitors Center. Stop in and check out the clothing options including sweatshirts, t-shirts, fleeces, and hats. We have a number of books regarding local history, picture notecards, and trail maps of the Michaux State Forest and the Appalachian Trail.

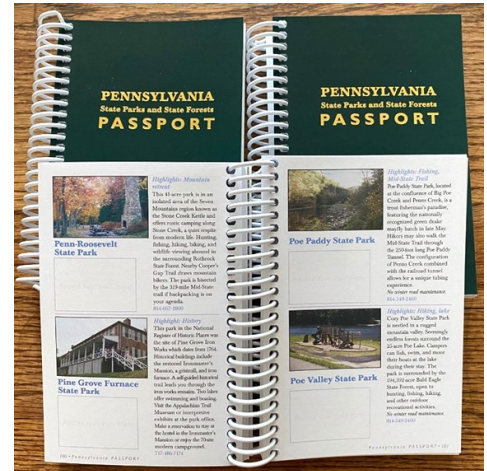
Note: we are not able to accept credit cards, so please be prepared to pay in cash.



Books about local history



Assorted t-shirts, fleeces, and sweatshirts are available



State Park Passport Book (\$10)



Collect our annual Park patches (\$5)



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 2021—

All events are tentative until further notice. Please watch for updates on our website, Facebook, the DCNR calendar, and Park kiosks.

VAN WAGNER CONCERT, SATURDAY, JULY 24, 1-2 P.M.: Bring your family for a program of stories and songs at the pavilion at Laurel Lake. Van Wagner will share his own experiences as a miner and logger as he sings about the history and environment of Pennsylvania.

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 9 A.M. TO NOON: Support Pine Grove Furnace with a morning of volunteering and giving back to the Park. We plan to plant replacement trees, among other activities.

FALL FURNACE FEST, OCTOBER 16 AND 17: A family weekend with food and craft vendors, entertainment, and historical demonstrations. Saturday night will feature the annual pumpkin parade and the legend of the Hairy Hand.

• For more information and updates, go to www.pinegrovefriends.org/home/upcoming_events. •