



FRIENDS OF

Pine Grove Furnace News

STATE PARK Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

SUMMER 2022

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PINE GROVE FURNACE, 1770s-1895

The cold-blast charcoal iron industry was central to the South Mountain region's economy in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Pine Grove was an industrial hub producing iron for a growing nation. After the local iron industry gave way to larger iron and steel production elsewhere in the late 1800s, most of the trees were gone. Only remnants of industrial structures and large piles of slag waste remained. In 1913, the land that had been stripped of natural resources for over a century was acquired by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and became State Forest and State Park land.

One hundred years ago, this forest began recovering from repeated clear-cutting to fuel the several iron furnaces along South Mountain. It took one acre of trees to fuel an iron furnace for one day! All that timber came from the thousands of acres owned by the iron companies. For example, the ironworks at Pine Grove owned 27,000 acres, much of which is today our wonderful State Park and the surrounding upper middle section of the Michaux State Forest. While the land is now covered by the regrown forest, a number of historic structures remain to help tell the story of vanished industries and the people who worked here.

EXPLORING HISTORY AT PINE GROVE FURNACE STATE PARK

In recent years, the State Park and the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace have worked to preserve and interpret this important part of our nation's industrial heritage. Andre Weltman, Chairman of the Friends group, has helped in researching the history of the area. He also works with the State Park Educator to offer a variety of public tours and presentations on local history. Check the monthly schedule posted on kiosks and the DCNR online calendar at

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

for upcoming public events—all of which are free (*note that some tours require pre-registration*). In addition to the public programs, check out www.PineGroveFriends.org (click "park brochures and history" on the left).

Andre Weltman shows iron ore during a walking tour in the park



► Boarding House: A 19th century boarding house at 1100 Pine Grove Road now serves as the State Park Office and Visitors Center. Here you can visit the park's one-room museum and pick up DCNR maps and literature. The Friends of Pine Grove Furnace sell merchandise inside including local history books as well as hats, shirts, and souvenirs. You can also get your park and forest passport stamped to record your visit. All proceeds help the Friends support recreation, education, and conservation in our park. We are not set up to accept credit cards, so please be prepared to pay in cash.



The Park Office was an 1850s boarding house and later a public inn



Museum inside the State Park Office

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.

► **Ironmaster's Mansion:** The historic red brick building completed in 1829 served as the owner's residence and a personal office. Peter Ege (1776-1847) positioned his home on a hill to literally oversee daily operations as well as display his status at the top of the social hierarchy. Today run by the Appalachian Trail Museum Society as an overnight hostel for hikers, it is also available as a rental venue for weddings and other gatherings.



The Ironmaster's Mansion which is built with bricks created on site using local raw materials



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 2022—

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY, SEPTEMBER 24: Volunteers are needed to help replace invasive plants with native plants and to maintain trails and structures in the park. Bring work gloves and be prepared to get dirty! After a morning of volunteering, the Friends will provide hamburgers and hot dogs for lunch.

FALL FURNACE FEST, OCTOBER 15 AND 16: A fun family weekend with food and craft vendors, entertainment, and historical demonstrations. Saturday evening features the annual pumpkin parade followed by the Legend of the Hairy Hand at Fuller Lake.

If you are interested in helping out, please email volunteer coordinator Diane at pgfvolunteers@gmail.com.

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

►Furnace Stack: Of the nine blast furnaces in Cumberland County, only three stone stacks still stand (one is in Boiling Springs, and another is at Big Pond but is rapidly crumbling). At Pine Grove Furnace, our 33-foot furnace stack has been restored by several generations since 1895, including a protective concrete cap that the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace paid for in 2014.

When the furnace was in operation, many buildings closely surrounded the stack. In photographs displayed near the base you can barely see the top of the stonework (don't miss the "see-through" photo display installed earlier this year).

This massive stone stack was the core of a blast furnace to smelt iron from iron ore



► Paymaster's Cabin: This building from the late 1700s, now a vacation rental sleeping six people, once served as the company clerk's office and residence. Its thick stone walls protected important business records and money.

On payday, workers would walk up one set of stairs to be paid—though typically this was simply a notation in a ledger—then descend the other stairway. A corresponding ledger inside the vanished company store recorded each family's purchases of food, clothing, and household goods.

The company store burned in 1915; its footprint is now the parking lot directly next to the Ironmaster's Mansion along Route 233.

The Paymaster's rental cabin

►Stables: Animal-drawn teamster's wagons hauled iron ore and charcoal to the furnace and carried the finished iron to market before a railroad was completed in 1870.

The former mule stables now serve as the General Store, a famous stop for Appalachian Trail hikers who can celebrate reaching the halfway point on their journey between Georgia and Maine by eating a half-gallon of ice cream in one sitting. It is a great place for lunch (best burgers along the entire trail!) and camping supplies.

The General Store is between the Ironmaster's Mansion and the Grist Mill / A.T. Museum



► **Grist Mill:** The iron company tried to be self-sufficient, producing food for workers and their families as well as for the many horses and mules here. A water-powered mill was added in 1783 to process grain grown on the five company-owned farms, one of which is today famous as Camp Michaux with its own interesting history in the 20th century (it's just a five-minute drive south from the park).

Since 2010, the former mill has been home to the Appalachian Trail Museum. Check park kiosks and www.atmuseum.org for museum hours which vary through the summer.



The A.T. Museum is in a former grist mill



► **Fuller Lake:** Many people enjoy swimming and fishing at Fuller Lake, but did you know it was originally one of several quarries providing iron ore for the furnace? It was 90 feet deep when abandoned and allowed to fill with water in the 1890s.

A new “see-through” display at the eastern end of Fuller Lake shows the open pit mine in operation.

The see-through display of Fuller Lake funded by the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace

► **Other history at Pine Grove Furnace:** There are many other historic features here, including the community cemetery at the top of Murphy Road; an iron company amusement park circled by today's Koppenhaver Trail—it later became a campground for children from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1913-1914 and was used by Girl Scouts in 1922-1967 (including a 1934 swimming pool visible along the Hiker-Biker-A.T. heading east from Fuller Lake); Laurel Lake which provided water power to a now-vanished finery forge built in 1830; the natural ice storage barn which is today the Pole Steeple parking lot; and much more. Have fun exploring!

Ice storage barn and caretaker's house to its left

