



FRIENDS OF

# Pine Grove Furnace News

STATE PARK Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

WINTER 2020

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

## Annual First Day Hike

Statewide, the First Day Hikes have grown in leaps and bounds. In 2019, Pennsylvania state parks hosted 2,949 First Day hikers on New Year's Day. This year, 39 parks hosted 3,783 hikers—that is a 28 percent increase in one year! All total, the 3,783 hikers along with their 182 dogs walked 12,068 miles on January 1!

In Pine Grove Furnace, we were fortunate to have a beautiful day for our annual First Day Hike. John Hallas, Director of the Bureau of State Parks for DCNR, led 163 hikers and 13 dogs along a series of trails through the park. This hearty group of folks kept up their energy by consuming 440 homemade cookies, 4 gallons of hot cider, 3 gallons of cocoa, and a gallon of coffee. With all those beverages, it was a good thing that the Friends rented port-a-potties this year!



From left, Mike Kutzmonich, Jr., Andre Weltman (Chair of the Friends), Mike Kutzmonich (Park Manager), and John Hallas (Director, Bureau of State Parks)

## Fiftieth Anniversary of Earth Day

This year, in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22, volunteers will be donating their time to plant trees and native plants throughout the state to ensure that we have forested parks in years come. Most of the activities will be centered around the third full week of April—check the websites for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and PA Parks and Forests Foundation for details about Earth Day activities.



## Preparing for the Koppenhaver/Mountain Creek Trails Connector Bridge

In preparation for the proposed 60-foot trail bridge to connect the Koppenhaver and Mountain Creek Trails, Gannett Fleming, an engineering firm from Camp Hill, is now compiling the necessary information for the state permit. Grant funding totaling \$70,000 has been provided through two grants from the Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation and the Cumberland County Land Partnerships Grant Program, while the Friends will be responsible for the remaining expenses.

When completed, the bridge will connect the two primary trails between Laurel and Fuller Lakes to create a trail system in the park. *See the map on the third page which illustrates where the proposed bridge will be located.*

The exact timing of the installation will be dependent on approval and timing of the state permit, but our goal is to have the bridge installed before the end of this year.

## 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](mailto:pinegrovefriends@gmail.com)

### Visit us online at:

[www.pinegrovefriends.org](http://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 Under New Management**

The Appalachian Trail Museum took over management of the Ironmaster's Mansion on January 1, 2020. According to Larry Luxenberg, president of the Appalachian Trail Museum Board, they are looking forward to continuing the long heritage of serving overnight visitors at the Ironmaster's Hostel and to serving as a community center open to local groups and welcoming new visitors to the area.

The hostel will be managed by Missy Shank. Missy has been an active volunteer for the Museum for several years; in 2018 she was Museum Volunteer of the Year. Missy has a background in the hospitality industry and is interested in making the Ironmaster's Mansion an even more welcoming place for the community and overnight guests.

While the hostel will be open to anyone, including groups celebrating reunions, weddings, scout groups, and outdoorsmen of all types, many of the overnight visitors are hiking the adjacent Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The A.T. Museum has close ties to the hiking community and plans to make the hostel more accommodating to hikers by adopting more flexible hours, adding services for hikers, and converting the basement into a hiker's "dungeon" as a budget alternative or providing space when the rest of the hostel is rented out.

The hostel will be open for overnight guests from April 1 through October 1. Hikers will be able to stay in one of the dormitory-style bunk rooms for \$25 per night, and an extra \$10 will give them a basic dinner and breakfast. Wi-Fi and laundry facilities will be available. To make the hostel more convenient for hikers and other users, the Mansion will be open for longer periods during the day.

As a non-profit with few paid employees, the Appalachian Trail Museum can use your help! Volunteers who would be interested in helping with repairs and refurbishing the hostel, working on the outside gardening and landscaping, and also on planning and assisting with events are especially needed. The Museum will begin adding exhibits to the space. It will use some of the hostel for storage of the Museum's extensive artifact collections and could use help with all of that. Volunteers who live a long distance from the Museum and the hostel will be able to stay at the hostel for free if they work shifts at either place.

Contact information for the hostel is 717-486-4108 or 717-486-8126 or at [ironmasterspinegrove@gmail.com](mailto:ironmasterspinegrove@gmail.com).



**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 2020—**

### APRIL

**25** Earth Day—9 to 12: celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day with a morning of volunteering and giving back to the Park.

### MAY

**9** Folk musician Van Wagner will present a one-hour program at 2 p.m. at the Furnace Stack Pavilion.

**16-17** Woodsy Owl Weekend—bring your family for a weekend of camping and spend Saturday morning volunteering. Make your reservations soon.

### JUNE

**13** Iron Run and Charcoal Challenge races—online registration will be available soon on [Runreg.com](http://Runreg.com).

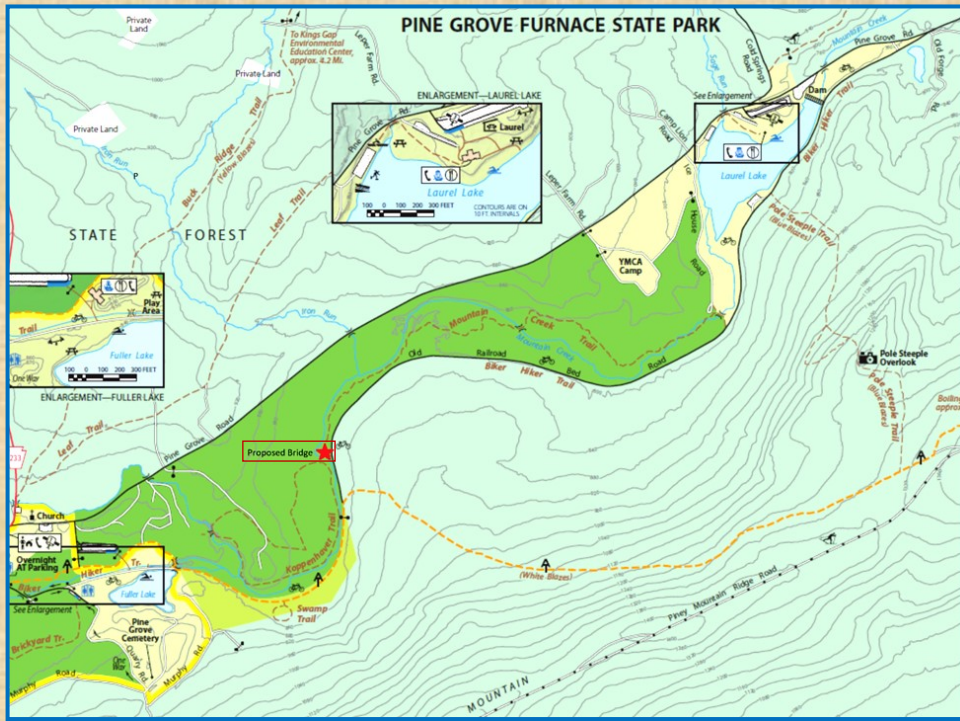
### SEPTEMBER

**26** National Public Lands Day—9 to 12: a morning of volunteering and giving back to the Park.

### OCTOBER

**17-18** Fall Furnace Fest—a family weekend with food and craft vendors, entertainment, and much more.

• For more information and updates, go to [www.pinegrovefriends.org/home/upcoming\\_events](http://www.pinegrovefriends.org/home/upcoming_events). •



The red star in the left center of the map indicates where the proposed Koppenhaver/Mountain Creek Trails Connector Bridge would be located

An enthusiastic group of 163 First Day hikers and their 13 dogs are all smiles as they begin the new year walking the trails in Pine Grove Furnace State Park



Missy Shank, new manager of the Ironmaster's Mansion, receiving the AT Museum Volunteer of the Year award



The Ironmaster's Mansion in Pine Grove Furnace State Park



Dorm room in the Ironmaster's Mansion as shown on the Appalachian Trail Museum website