

A Newsletter From Friends Of Cook Forest

July/August 2018

A LETTER FROM OUR EDITOR:

Happy Summer Everyone!!

Cook Forest State Park is in full swing, and the Park Office has all sorts of programs offered every weekend, as well as during some weekdays. Check out our program page to see some of the programs offered. And as always grab yourself a Cook Forest State Park map and just go a-walking and exploring. You never know what surprises nature has in store for you to see. Such wonder in the forest!!

The "Friends of Cook Forest" held it annual kick off the summer fund raiser over father's day weekend at Deer Meadow Campground pavilion. The campground held a 50/50 raffle and gift basket raffle. Cook Forest State Park Education Specialist, Dale Luthringer, then led a short interpretive hike back into the adjacent ancient forest to see the largest Eastern Hemlock in this part of the United States. Deer Meadow then donated the proceeds to our Friends group, which will go towards the fight against the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid that's devastating our hemlocks, and towards further education of the forest. Look for some photos of the event on our adjoining photo page.

Speaking of photo. Congratulations to Friends of Cook Forest Board member Roger Mozzarella on winning the "Fun Along the North Country Trail" photo contest. Look on our photo page for his winning photo with his granddaughter Amelia.

Also, speaking of grandparents with their grandchildren, we had a couple grandparents and grandkids join us, along with other volunteers, for our "Milkweed planting for the Monarch Butterflies" in June. And I just may add one of those photos to the page too. I know we are accomplishing our goal when parents and grandparents bring their younger folk to our work days. For those kids will continue on to be the generation that protects and cares for our forests and state parks years to come. Thank you so much!!!!

See You in the Forest,

Amanda DiBenedetto/"Friends of Cook Forest" - Chair

The Friends of Cook Forest group is organized to support, assist and promote the mission and activities of Cook Forest State Park, its properties, and facilities.

Become a member and/or volunteer and receive this newsletter regularly, stay informed and become involved.

Annual membership costs:

Individual.....\$15

Family.....\$25

Sponser.....\$50

Join Today!

Name:_____

Address:_____

Email:_____

Phone:_____

Make your check payable to:

"PPFF-Friends of Cook Forest"

PO Box 31

Cooksburg, Pa 16217

UPCOMING EVENTS AT COOK FOREST STATE PARK

FRIENDS OF COOK FOREST SPONSORED EVENTS

Stay Tuned !!!!!!!! - Date to be Announced- The Friends “Cook Trail” Work Day - This is so important. We will be announcing an up coming work day to haul gravel to fill in wet areas and clean up the Cook Interpretive Trail;. We will also be digging holes for new poles and educational signs. We are getting the trail ready for the State Parks system “Walk in Penn’s Woods” on October 8th.

STATE PARK SPONSORED EVENTS

Saturday, July 14 at 9:00- Archery Basics Basic class on target archery and improving shooting technique. Participants will also be taught safe equipment handling. Archery equipment will be provided, and no prior archery experience is necessary. Participants must register at the park office at (814)744-8407 by 7/13. No children under 10 years old, and minors must be accompanied by a participating adult. Program begins promptly at the field beside the ice skating rink along River Rd.

Thursday, July 19 at 5:00pm - Family Fishing Program The PA Fish & Boat Commission and Cook Forest State Park is offering a fishing program designed especially for families. Meet at the Children’s Fishing Pond behind the Park Office to learn basic baiting, casting, and knot tying techniques designed to help you be a better fisherman. No license required! Families must pre register at the Park Office at (814)744-8407 by 7/18.

Saturday July 21 at 8:30 am - “Clarion River Paddling Program: Portland Mills-Arroyo Bridge” Cook Forest State Park will be conducting a 6-mile interpretive historical paddling program fro Portland Mills to Arroyo Bridge for experienced kayakers only. Cost is \$50 per boat, and lunch will be provided for those who register by 7/19. Prior Cook Forest kayak training participants receive a 50% discount. Register by calling the Park Office at (814)744-8407. We will car pool up to the starting location. Make checks out to The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. (8hrs.)

Saturday July 21 at 1:00pm. - Fire Tower Historical Tour Bring your binoculars because the box of Cook Forest Fire Tower #9 will be open. Park volunteers will be on hand to tell some of the history of the Fire Tower and how it operated. The top box will be open until 3:00pm.

Thursday and Friday July 26 & 27 at 9:00am - “Advanced Tree Measuring Teacher Workshop” Intensive 2 day tree workshop focuses on learning the latest and most accurate methods of measuring big, tall, and most noteworthy trees. Be prepared for off trail vigorous hikes to champion trees. This is an Advanced Project Learning Tree workshop with the option of teachers to earn ACT 48 hours. Cost is \$75. Please contact Dale Luthringer of further information at (814)744-8475. (16 hrs.)

Thursday August 2 at 9:00am - Hellbender Hunt Please meet at the Park Office to car pool to a nearby watershed to search for the elusive Allegheny Alligator and its close relative, the mudpuppy. Be prepared to get drenched. Bring a sturdy river walking stick. Proper river footwear is a must. Pack a lunch. (5hrs.)

Saturday, August 4 at 8:30am - Clarion River Canoe & Kayak Program: Arroyo Bridge-Halton Cook Forest State Park will be conducting an interpretive historical canoe and kayak program on the Wild and Scenic Clarion River. It also contains the most challenging set of rapids on the river, “The X<Y<Z.” We will meet promptly at the Park Office and car pooling to the starting point. Bring protective footwear, and change of clothes. Lunch will be provided to those who register by 8/2. Cost is \$50 per boat. Register by calling the Park Office at (814)744-8407. Space is limited, reserve early. (8hrs.)

HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID REPORT

More than fifty years ago the Hemlock Woolley Adelgid native to Asia, was first spotted in the U.S. near Richmond, VA. Since then, this invasive pest has destroyed the majority of the Eastern Hemlocks in the Shenandoah Mountains and the Great Smokey Mountains. Five years ago the HWA was discovered in the largest and oldest stand of Eastern Hemlocks left in the Eastern United States, our own Cook Forest State Park. The Park staff has been working hard to try to save these ancient hemlocks in what has been proclaimed as a National Natural Landmark. The park service has been using pesticides, the introduction of an HWA egg eating beetle, and manpower (including Friends of Cook Forest volunteers), searching through Cook Forest State Park to find where this pest has infested. Through the Friends of Cook Forest newsletter we will keep you up-to-date on the progress protecting Cook Forest State Park's treasured Eastern Hemlocks. Prolonged freezing temperatures were a blessing to Cook Forest State Park a few years ago. It was estimated that the sub zero temperatures killed 95% of the HWA in Cook Forest State Park that year. But the HWA that survived soon multiplied. Each egg produces around 250 offspring. The Friends Group is keeping up to date on the latest survival findings of the HWA since the 2018 winter season.

Cook Forest State Park has been fortunate to have a film company, Wild Excellence Films, donate their time and talents to produce a documentary on the plight of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and the fight to save the ancient hemlocks of Cook Forest. David and Melissa Rohm of "Wild Excellence Films" spent countless hours and years filming, editing, interviewing, and following Cook Forest Workers and volunteers as they hunted for this invasive aphid, and documented what methods are being used to stop its destruction.



You have a chance to see this beautifully filmed documentary at the [Cook Forest Sawmill Center for the Arts on Saturday September 15th at 7:00. Tickets are \\$15, and all proceeds will go towards the treatment, education and protection of the hemlocks.](#)

We urge you to attend this screening if possible. Wild Excellence Films will be continuing to show "Cathedral" throughout the state, but this is the last screening scheduled in Cook Forest for the year. David and Melissa Rohm of Wild Excellence Films have raised thousands to help protect Cook Forest State Park through this film.

Also we'd like to mention, this is a big year for Wild Excellence films, and we wish them the best as they develop a PBS documentary film special about Golden Eagles in Wyoming. They spent June working with specialists and documenting these beautiful birds in the Big Horn Basin and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Another PBS documentary they are working on is the nightjar family of birds, and the threat to their populations. We will keep you posted as to when you can view these.

What Makes Cook Forest Unique (part 3 of a 3 part series)

THE MESSAGE IS IN THE TREES

**By: Dale J. Luthringer-Environmental Education Specialist
Cook Forest State Park**

***Editors note: A damaging storm took place early in May 2018, which did alter some of the data in this article. All information was current as of the beginning of May.**

So, Cook Forest has big conifers, but is that where it stops? Certainly not. I'm sure a number of our forestry friends would love to see our current state champ black cherry currently listed at 12ft CBH (46 DBH) x 139.9ft high! It is also the second tallest known black cherry in the Northeast. The tallest is nearby at 143 feet high.

But don't forget those little-big trees... Cook Forest also has the tallest known witch hazel north of the Smokies at .8ft CBH x 41.8 high! At first I thought it was a birch, but one of our past interns politely pointed out that "those aren't birch leaves!" What's also unique is that it is growing in the path of an old tornado swath that ravaged the park back in 1976. This tree isn't just the tallest known in the Northeast, its also our current state co-champ.

Even though we have many record trees, and thousands of acres of old growth forest, nothing is here forever. Old growth forest continuity is continually challenged by environmental disturbance, both natural and man made. Windstorms and lightning strike are our most common natural disturbances. Many of these trees have weathered hundreds of storms over the centuries and show the signs of these events in their bark and crown architecture. Natural disturbances are common and integral to old growth forest ecosystems in terms of species succession and crown dominance.

The most troubling type of disturbances are those that entail invasive species, such as the hemlock woolly adelgid, which was first found in the park in 2013. Left untreated, we would be doomed to allow the same path as the recent demise of most of the hemlock forests in the Great Smoky Mountains, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Eastern Pennsylvania. To date, We've treated well over 500,000 DBH inches of tree. But we've only scratched the surface of what yet needs to be done to secure our old growth hemlock stands for posterity. 100 years ago, Anthony Wayne Cook fought to save the forest from the lumberman's axe. Today, we fight to save the forest from a tiny invasive insect.

The Friends of Cook Forest Welcome "The Cook Forest Conservancy"

A new non-profit agency has entered into our neck of the Woods, The Cook Forest Conservancy. We welcome its director Kelly Cubertson who has come to further foster the protection of our beautiful and unique Cook Forest State Park. Kelly says the the CFC is dedicated to protecting and improving the lands, waters, and wildlife of the Cook Forest State Park ecosystem now and for future generations. Some of their first projects include; landowner assistance regarding HWA treatments, and control abatements of other invasives. Also, Riparian buffers, and to illustrate why they're important, and how they're created and maintained, and the coordination of expanded visitor and resident trash recycling.



FRIENDS OF COOK FOREST

Volunteer Opportunities

Trail Stewardship: Monitor and maintain trail conditions, as well as planning and assisting in the restoration of existing trails, their signage and educational qualities.

Habitat Enhancement: Remove invasive plants, in addition to planting vegetation that will improve the habitat of natural native forest species.

Education and Recreation: Program hosting, lead hikes, assist with special events and seminars.

Additional: Administrative tasks, grant writing, public relations, and fundraising, volunteer at meetings, and board positions.

*Gmail: friendsofcookforest@gmail.com

Membership Benefits:

*Subscription to the Friends of Cook Forest newsletter.

*Supporting the protection, improvements, and activities of the "2018 Park of the Year - Cook Forest State Park."

*Meet people with similar interests

*Stay connected and informed

www.facebook.com/friends





FRIENDS OF
Cook Forest
STATE PARK
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

Membership Form

☐ New Membership

☐ Renewal Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Individual ☐ \$15.00

Family ☐ \$25.00

Organization ☐ \$35.00

Supporting ☐ \$50.00

Additional Contribution \$ _____ Total Enclosed \$ _____

Can you spend time as a volunteer? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Make checks payable to **PPFF** and write *Friends of Cook Forest* on the memo line. Mail to:

Friends of Cook Forest
PO Box 31
Cooksburg, PA 16217

THANK YOU!

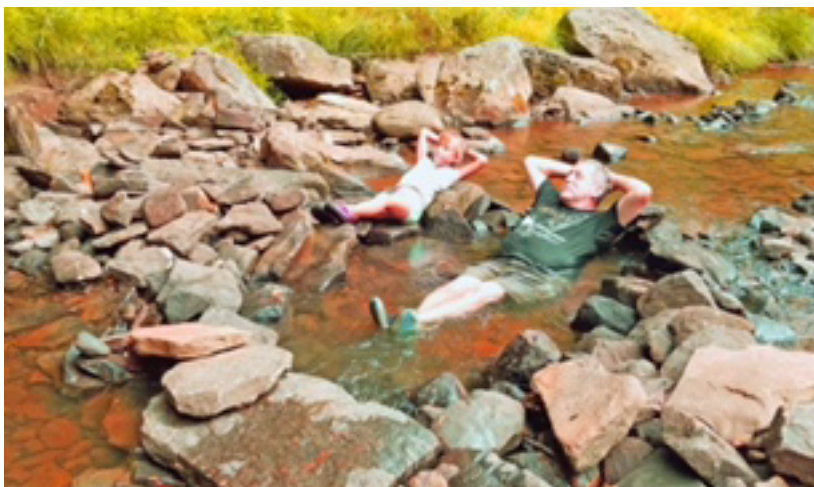
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“Hug a Tree, and Save a Forest.” One of our child participants asked Cook Forest Education Specialist, Dale Luthringer, How many kids it would take to wrap themselves around the largest Eastern Hemlock in this part of the United States. We did it, and found out six, with outstretched arms. Almost 100 people attended the “Friends of Cook Forest” raffle and gift basket drawing, raising almost \$1,000 for the non-profit organization. About thirty people then continued on with Dale to see and learn about the “Susquahannock.”



Thank you to our volunteers who planted more than 500 milkweed seeds in Cook Forest State Park in June. All enjoyed coffee and cookies, as “Friends” member, Alicia MacBeth, gave an educational program on the milkweed plant, and its importance to the Monarch Butterfly. After the planting, each volunteer was given an additional packet of 20 seeds to start a monarch butterfly garden at home. And thank you to board member, Roger Mazzarella for leading the troops and explaining how to plant the seeds. It’s been a big month for Roger!!



Congratulations to Friends of Cook Forest Board member, Roger Mazzarella, for recently winning the “Fun Along the North Country Trail” Photo Contest. Here is the winning photo of him and his grand daughter, Amelia, lounging in the cooling waters of Tom’s Run in Cook Forest on a hot summer day. Amelia likes to build “resort dams” in the run featuring fairy caves and fairly falls, when not squirting her grand father with a water gun.

Roger started camping in Cook Forest with his family when he was a child.