

The Friends

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FALL/WINTER 2024



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY TRAIL WORK

First Saturday of each month, 9 am, meet at the Mansion.

STATE STREET FALL FESTIVAL

Sunday, October 6, 11-5, Media
Rain date Sunday, October 13

FIRST DAY HIKE

Wednesday, January 1, 2025
at 10 am. See article for details.

FRIENDS OF RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor..... Joan Nikelsky
Design.....Mark Dougherty



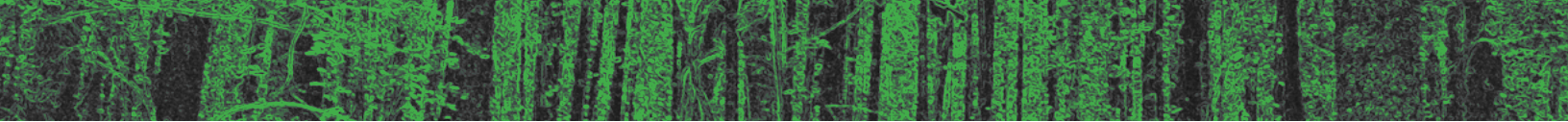
State Street Fall Festival Returns!

The Media Business Authority has organized a free event on State Street in Media from 11 am to 5 pm on Sunday, October 6, 2024. It will be a mix of food, music, artists, crafters, nonprofit organizations, and family fun. State Street will be closed to traffic and visitors will be able to roam the streets, visit the booths, and enjoy the day. The rain date is Sunday, October 13. **For further information, go to: [State Street Fall Festival | Visit Media PA.](#)**

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park will have a booth at the Festival. We do not know the location of our booth now, but we hope you will find us as you wander around. We will have a white canopy and our green Friends of Ridley Creek State Park banner. You can view some beautiful photo contest entries, pick up our brochure and other hand-outs, sign up to be on our mailing list, become a member, buy a booklet about the history of the park, and more!

If you would like to take a shift staffing the booth, please let us know. That way our volunteers will get a chance to tour the area as well. Send us a message at members@friendsofrcsp.org.

We hope to see a lot of Friends on October 6!



January 1st Hike in Ridley Creek State Park

by Gary Sawyer, Board Member and Trails Co-Chair

What will you be doing on New Years Day 2025? Come celebrate it with us at Ridley Creek State Park. The Friends of Ridley are again hosting a First Day Hike along the Equestrian Trail, beginning promptly at 10 am, Wednesday, January 1, behind Pavilion #8.

Gary Sawyer will lead a 3.5-mile lollipop loop with views of the creek and a stop at the historic hilltop Russell Cemetery. It is expected to last 2 to 2 ½ hours.

The hike starts at the parking lot behind Pavilion 8, descends to the creek at Gradyville Road, passes by an area recovering from a tornado in 2019, and winds

around a lovely wooded section up and over Hunting Hill and the Russell Cemetery. The trail is wide, mostly gravel, with good footing. Be prepared for early January weather conditions, and for elevation gains of about 350 ft.

We will have hot chocolate, coffee, and light refreshments at the trailhead after the hike. We have a limit of 25 participants for the hike. Dogs are allowed on leash at all times. Please register by email to Gary at muddyboots@comcast.net to secure a spot.

Appreciations for Volunteer Aidan Sudall

by Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator Tim Higgins

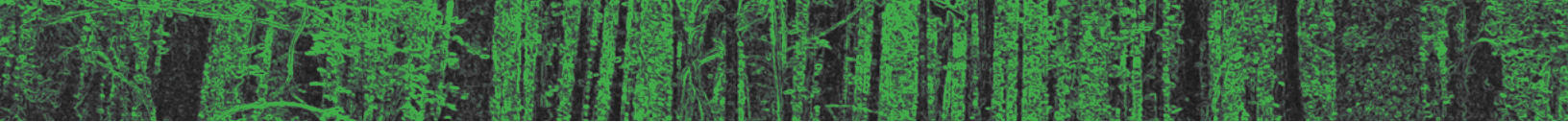
At an early age, Aidan Sudall had an interest in the outdoors and the environment. He was about 10 years old when he first started volunteering at Ridley Creek State Park in the Adopt-a-Trail program. He began working on the Yellow Trail from Area 16 to Area 17. His parents would drive Aidan to and from the park and helped initially, before he could drive.

When Aidan was asked if he would backfill for a vacancy on the White Trail, he gladly accepted and added a section of the White Trail (to the “cow bridge”) to his original assignment. Aidan continued doing his trail work even after he started school at Penn State University’s main campus. He was also employed at Valley Forge National Historical Park, in the Youth Conservation Corps program, during his high school summers.

But now he is leaving us because he is working at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an intern in the Pathways program. He hopes for a permanent job with the EPA after he graduates from Penn State with a degree in Environmental Resource Management. Good luck to you, Aidan!

On behalf of the Friends of Ridley, I wrote a thank you note to Aidan, saying “you have shown real dedication to improving the park environment and I believe you’ll be a tremendous asset to the EPA and to the environmental health of the country. Ridley Creek State Park and I will certainly miss you, but we wish you all the best in all your future endeavors.”





Ceremony for New Children’s Playground Held in April

The Friends of Ridley Creek State Park held our official ribbon cutting ceremony for the new “sensory playground” at Area 8 (near the stables) on April 20. It features a dozen interactive panes and activities for smaller children to enjoy while at the park. There are imaginative panels that invite children to hunt for treasure, listen for natural sounds, and solve some motion puzzles.

Park Manager Lexi Rose cut the ribbon at the ceremony and said, “This new playground adds a fun dimension to our wonderful park, and I am thankful to the Ridley Creek State Park Friends group for making this playground possible.” The project was made possible in part by support from the Friends of \$25,000 of funds that come from members and donors.

Sensory playgrounds provide nurturing and inclusive environments that are designed to stimulate the senses such as sight, sound, smell, touch, balance, and proprioception. They support brain development, enhanced memory, development of ability to do complex tasks, and problem solving.

The monthly first Saturday volunteer trail work team spent several workdays helping to prepare the site, including installing a 12-inch high retaining barrier to hold in the wood chip floor of the playground. [See the Spring/Summer 2024 issue](#) of the Friends newsletter for some great pictures of the trail workers getting the playground ready for the opening ceremony.



Park Manager Lexi Rose cuts the ribbon for the new Area 8 sensory playground.

Since then, two new park benches supplied by the Friends and a picnic table supplied by the park have been installed, giving parents a place to sit and keep an eye on their children.

We appreciate our dedicated group of volunteers, donors, and members who make these projects possible. Thanks to every one of you for helping us do what we do.

Congratulations to Vanita Williams!

If you ever came into the mansion park office and had a question, you were probably greeted by a friendly staff member and got the help you needed. The Friends recently learned that Vanita Williams is retiring after 25 + years of service. Her last day at the park was September 6.

As Administrative Assistant, Vanita was the person who knew how the office was run and she assisted in training several park managers over the years. She has been very helpful to the Friends during her time here; for example, holding all our mail and photo contest submissions as they came in, and turning in our yearly order for volunteer hats and vests to help identify our trail workers. Mostly, Vanita was a true friend of the Friends of Ridley Creek State Park. We will miss her.

Of course, a replacement will be hired, and we hope they can match Vanita’s knowledge and dedication. The Friends greatly appreciate her contribution to our endeavors and to public relations at the park. We congratulate Vanita for taking a well-earned retirement and hope she stays in touch.





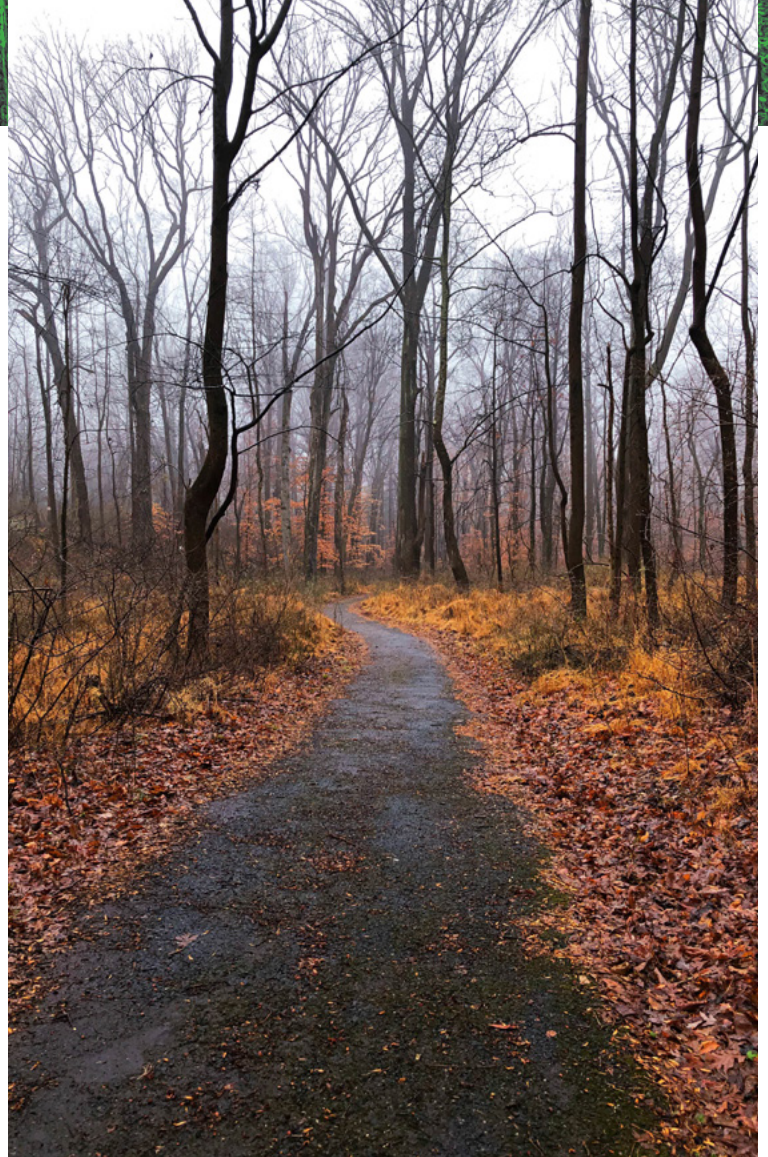
2024 Photo Contest Results

by Paul Mickle, Photo Contest Coordinator

The Friends of Ridley Creek Photo Contest returned for another successful season. As usual, many photos were submitted to showcase the park in all four seasons. This year's judge, Jayne Toohey, spent a lot of time going over each entry before narrowing it down to the winners.

Winning first prize was returning participant Jenn Walker with her photo titled "December Fog." Another returning participant, Tom Hooper, won second place with his photo called "Shades of Green." Third place winner Randy Rainville submitted a photo called "Ridley Creek and Rock." There was also an Honorable Mention entitled "Close Encounter" given to second place winner Tom Hooper.

The awards ceremony was held on Wednesday, June 26th, and there was a nice number of non-participants who also attended. It is always a good opportunity to get to know fellow park users and hear about their experiences. It has become clear that photo contest participants look for photo opportunities year-round in preparation for this event. It is also great to see many photographers return year after year.



December Fog, 1st prize 2024, by Jenn Walker



Shades of Green, 2nd prize 2024, by Tom Hooper



Exploring Pennsylvania's Parks: Neshaminy State Park

This article is the fifteenth in a series about other state parks in Pennsylvania, contributed by Friends Board member, the much-traveled Paul Mickle.

In this edition of our state parks tour series, we will be returning to Bucks County to visit a place called Neshaminy State Park. The park is located along the Delaware River in southern Bucks County on the north side of Philadelphia.

The park is around 330 acres and includes walking trails, open lawns, picnic areas, a swimming pool, and a marina for docking boats sailing up and down the Delaware River. Even though the park is over 100 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, the riverbanks react to the tidal changes and the waterfront areas have a nautical feel. In addition to being on the Delaware River, the park also surrounds the confluence of Neshaminy Creek, giving it lots of waterfront views.

The land for Neshaminy State Park originated as part of the Logan Family Estate, which holds significance because James Logan was the secretary to William Penn. The park was officially founded in 1956 and continues to offer

outdoor activities in many forms. There are over 4 miles of hiking trails, both paved and dirt, as well as expansive views of the riverway and waterfront. Swimming is permitted in the pool and fishing is permitted in the river, however the fishing regulations are set by the Fish and Game Commission.

Neshaminy State Park rose to notoriety in the state parks world a few months ago by being named Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation's 2024 State Park of the Year. Receiving the award at the 2024 Awards Banquet was Neshaminy's Park Manager Kaitlyn Gunderson-Thorpe. Kaitlyn also has ties to Ridley Creek State Park, as she started here as a ranger trainee with Lead Ranger Tony Mosloskie in 2014. On behalf of the Friends of Ridley Creek, a big congratulations to Kaitlyn and her Neshaminy State Park. It is always nice to see your neighbors succeed, so if you ever want a neat place to explore with a waterfront view, Neshaminy State Park might be worth a trip.

NESHAMINY STATE PARK

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MAPS

HISTORY

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS