



MFA NEWS

Inside This Issue

- MFA Board of Directors Page 2
- Patrol Report Page 2
- Michaux Forest News Page 3
- Cooke Twp. News Page 4
- Friends of PGFSP Page 5

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHAUX FOREST ASSOCIATION

Fall 2017

www.michauxforestassociation.org

Editor: Judy Prescott



The President's Column

By Mark Colucci

After a warm beginning for the month of October, the camp fire is always more enjoyable as the cooler temperatures of autumn descend upon us. I purchased my cabin in 2004 after first discovering the Michaux years earlier while on a weekend mountain biking trip with friends. I remember being impressed with the massive pines and the log cabins which dotted the forest roads. After all these years, Michaux remains one of my all-time favorite places to mountain bike. Like many of you, I feel fortunate to own a cabin in an area as diverse as the Michaux, offering so many recreational opportunities. If you haven't already done so, take the opportunity to hike the Mountain Creek trail and cross the new bridge installed by the Friends Group last year. It is a beautiful walk, especially this time of year. In utilizing Michaux's

resources we all share a common responsibility of protecting and preserving the area for future generations. Aside from taking advantage of the great outdoors, my wife Melissa and I undertook a challenging renovation/restoration project this year on the log section of our cabin, which was built in the 1940s. This project just took on a life of its own, as we addressed one issue, we uncovered another and so it goes... We have repaired logs and re-chinked, installed a new fireplace mantel along with some badly needed masonry work (done by a professional), insulation, new ceiling, porch and railing. Seems we've left nothing untouched. Months later we're nearing completion and it has been a real learning experience and a great excuse to spend time at our cabin.

After serving the MFA for 5 years, I now look forward to representing you as President, along with my fellow board members. Thanks to Deb Rosevear, our past President, for the fantastic job she did during her term. Deb is committed to the MFA, remaining active by continuing to attend our meetings, which is greatly appreciated! The board of directors held their fall meeting on October 1st and decided that our web site will be redeveloped. Many thanks to Larry Gibble for maintaining our current site for many years and we wish him well. We currently have a full board of 12 and recently welcomed both Loren Whitehead Swivel and Mike Romano to the board. We will have one vacancy in June of 2018 as Jim Walters' term comes to an end. Jim also served as MFA President during his 8-year term and we also thank Jim for his service and dedication.

We especially appreciate our members and as a friendly reminder, MFA membership payment is due by June 30th each year. A valuable service included with your membership is the cabin inspections performed each month. The MFA will not be able to continue cabin inspections for those who allow their membership to lapse. Conveniently, you can make payments at our annual membership meeting/picnic in June. If you are unable to attend the picnic you may mail a check to:

Warren Hardman, MFA Treasurer
1109 Rana Villa Ave.
Camp Hill, Pa 17011

In closing, please consider becoming a board member or volunteering to assist in the development and maintenance of the MFA web site project. If you are interested, please reach out to us. Contact information is on page 2 of this news-





**MFA
Patrol
Report**
*By Richard
Baish*

Greetings,

Summer has "breezed" by quickly and fall temperatures are upon us. The many summer storms caused some damages to a few cabin sites, but all in all, they were not too detrimental. Vandalism issues to properties were also rare, but unfortunately that usually changes during the fall and winter. If this year is similar to last, we not only have to worry about human perpetrators, but we need to take measures to dissuade the bears and critters from frequenting our camp sites. While the bears were not an issue this summer I have noticed signs of the bear during my fall inspections.

Grilling season is over so clean those burners well so they don't attract the bears, because I have seen quite a few confrontations between bears and grills...and the grills have yet to win! Also, be careful if you store corn or birdseed, as it is easy for many of our various mountain animals to tear screens and chew through wooden doors to access such a tasty treat.

I am glad to report that my inspections did not find many problems this summer. It makes for a boring report, but I am sure we all welcome that in favor of negative news!

One final thing, I would like to add a personal note. My loyal canine companion, Diesel, who accompanied me on many of my inspections the past fourteen years, passed away in July. I mention this loss, as I know many of you had come to recognize and know him by name and were very kind to him. For this fact, I thank you all, I will miss him.

Best wishes for a happy and safe winter season.

Sincerely,
Richard G. Baish

**The MFA 2014
Fall Litter Patrol Report**

Adopt-A-Highway Report

Thanks to a great group of volunteers and beautiful weather, we had four perfect days to pick up litter from Laurel Lake to the Pine Grove Furnace Ranger Station. We noticed that there was less trash along the highway in September, so we're hoping that trend continues. There were no really unusual items, although someone is without their cell phone! Special welcome to our two newest volunteers, Tom and Linda Reidenbaugh, and as always, our thanks to the following who made the 2017 program a success:

Pat Bolden, Jim and Patti Deppen, Warren Hardman, Bill Jenkins, Tom and Linda Reidenbaugh, Mike Rish, Mary Soderberg, John Stine and Martin Yespy



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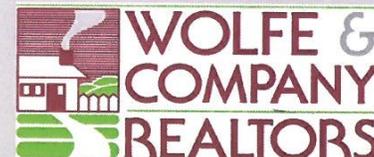
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Roy Brubaker
District Forester

Keith Ewan, who was managing the northern campsite leases for us, recently moved back to Buchanan State Forest. We have posted the Rec Forester position and hope to have someone assigned to the position as soon as possible. Until that time please call the office; hopefully between the front desk, Michelle, and myself, we'll be able to cover any needs until we have filled the position.

There are a number of prescribed burn projects slated for this fall/winter, as long as the conditions are conducive. These are the barrens restoration project along the AT along ridge road (around 400 acres) and a larger tract down the west side of the mountain coming up past Buzzard Rocks and Hairy Springs, ending at Ridge Road. While we expect minimal impacts to the area most frequented/occupied by MFA members, there may be some smoke drift for several days. The areas of smoke most likely impacted will be along Woodrow Road and potentially as far south along

233 as Miltonberger. We will be putting out communications closer to the time if it appears long term weather forecast predict an available window to conduct these burns. We will also be posting travel advisories along roadways likely to be impacted by smoke drift.

We are continuing surveillance camera and graffiti removal work on Hammonds and Buzzards Rocks, as well as on Pole Steeple. While I think our efforts are generally successful, we are noticing some dispersion of the activity into other rocky outcropping areas in the vicinity; which we expected. Most lately, a previously very secluded outcropping site down in Spruce Run Vista area pretty much got covered with paint in a very short time span. These more remote locations are even harder to clean up and protect than the ones close to the roads (Like Buzzard and Hammonds). We can use all the help we can get keeping an eye out for both fresh graffiti; and for the culprits who insist on carrying on this activity on the state forest. Please encourage MFA members to contact the office if they find fresh graffiti sites while recreating in the forest, as the sooner we can get it off the better.

We've had an extremely busy summer; with numerous staff participating in western fire detail. We also have three other open positions (besides the rec forester position) that we have not been able to fill due to complement freeze. Subsequently we are really feeling the pinch these days and may not be able to respond to requests that require a site visit in as

timely a manner as we might normally wish. Hopefully by winter, things will feel a little more "normal." Although I'm beginning to accept that this may just be "normal" for us for the foreseeable future

Finally, it is important to note that all of Michaux is within the Pennsylvania Game Commissions (PGC) Disease Management (DMA) area 3 for Chronic Wasting Disease. With the inclusion in this area, there are some additional regulatory changes to the game laws that impact both hunters and non-hunters alike, so it would be good to encourage MFA members to visit the PGC link for information on Chronic Wasting Disease and the strategies being implemented through the DMA's.

More info on CWD and the DMA's is available at the PGC website: <http://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/Wildlife-RelatedDiseases/Pages/ChronicWastingDisease.aspx>

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What's Cooking in Cooke: Issues Around the Neighborhood

Andre Weltman, Twp. Planning Committee

As a reminder, Cooke Township ordinances, resolutions and other information are available on our website <http://www.timberhilltech.com/Cooke/index.html>. Questions may also be emailed to cooketwp@kuhncom.net.

Please feel free to attend Township Board of Supervisors meetings, usually held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 P.M. at the Township building, 1700 Centerville Road. Your attendance and participation are always welcome. (Before dropping by, check for schedule changes on our website or on the bulletin board next to the front door).

TRANSITIONS

Township Supervisor Bill Jones will be resigning by the end of this year, after a full 15 years serving Cooke. The remaining Supervisors will need to find a Township resident to appoint in his place to fulfill the remainder of his term. Supervisor Ink Burkett will also be stepping down; a replacement for Ink will probably be elected by write-in vote in the November 2017 election.

Finally, Secretary/Treasurer Carol Jones resigned at the end of October. The Township will need a replacement knowledgeable in using QuickBooks; note that the Secretary and Treasurer (unlike Supervisor) do not need to reside in Cooke Township.

ROADS

Recent storms with high winds dropped trees across our roads in multiple places, taking down power lines and some utility poles – just part of being up on a mountain in the middle of a forest. The Township road crew is stockpiling anti-skid and salt as we approach what the *Farmer's Almanac* claims will be a long Winter with lots of precipitation. We expect to have several roads “seal-coated” next year when weather allows.

It may be of interest to share the ages of Cooke Township vehicles. The most elderly, a Huber grader, dates back to 1964 – this half-century-old equipment is about to be sold. For plowing, the two pickups and a dump truck are 7, 12, and 19 years old. The newest items are a backhoe acquired in 2012 and a tractor with front loader acquired in 2014. We do try to use taxpayer money wisely and extend the lifespan of road equipment as far as seems practical!

It was previously reported by Penn DOT that a bridge on Route 233 crossing Tom's Run near the State Park office would be replaced in September 2017, closing the road to all traffic for a couple weeks. However, the contractor delayed project “JV238” until next April. Stay tuned for more details – advisory signs will be posted widely before Route 233 is shut down in the Spring. For more, see <http://parapidbridges.com/bridgesbycounty/CumberlandCounty/bridge238.html>.

UCC CABIN EXEMPTIONS

To repeat information shared in this newsletter a few years ago: the statewide Uniform Construction Code (UCC) is Act 45 of 1999, which went into effect in mid-2004 with amendments. The UCC requires building permits and inspections for new construction and many but not all other building activities in order to meet a standardized engineering code.

State legislators created an exemption from the inspection process for “recreational cabins.” This involves a formal attestation to the Township using the law's specific definition of such

a cabin. To apply for an exemption, please use the PA Department of Labor & Industry website at <http://www.dli.pa.gov/ucc/Documents/form/ucc-13.pdf> to find Form UCC-13 “Recreational Cabin affidavit.” After you submit it to the Township, this paperwork must be approved: exemption from UCC inspections does not take effect until your completed UCC-13 is accepted at the next regularly scheduled Cooke Township Supervisors meeting. If you are considering work on your cabin and want to circumvent UCC safety inspections using this process, we suggest you first discuss it in detail with your insurance company and with the electric company.

CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Please remember that building permits are required in Cooke Township. In many instances work will also invoke the State-mandated Uniform Construction Code inspection process. Don't start any building work unless you have checked with the Township directly. This applies to all properties, and includes those overseen by the State Park or State Forest. Don't assume your contractor has taken care of this legal requirement – it is your responsibility to follow the law. Failure to comply can result in stop-work orders and fines.

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Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park

By Mary Soderberg,
Vice-Chair

Imagine hosting a party for 8,000 of your friends! That's what Fall Fest is all about! Many thanks to the staff, vendors, local businesses, musicians and volunteers who worked to make Fall Fest a success. The primary goal is always to have a fun and safe family event and based on the number of smiling faces, I think we succeeded. This year we were fortunate to have two beautiful sunny days for Fall Fest which brought out about 8,000 people.

The park provides the beautiful venue, parking and the hayrides, but most of the rest is on the Friends. The entertainment, the vendors, the pumpkin parade, the scare crows, the silent auction and the historical demonstrations are all organized and managed by volunteers wearing the Friends' signature orange t-shirts.

One of the most popular attractions was the hayride. In an effort to reduce the waiting lines, the park added a third hay wagon this year. Park and forestry staff teamed up to transport over 2,000 people during the two-day event!

In addition to craft and food vendors, we had a number of demonstrations. A crew of volunteer colliers demonstrated how charcoal was made to fuel the stone furnace to make iron. Other demonstrations included Civilian Conservation Corps reenactors, blacksmithing, bee keeping, pottery making, candle dipping and cider making.

The highlight of the weekend was the Legend of the Hairy Hand. On Saturday, about 250 pumpkins were carved during the day. Later that evening, Cindy Dunn, Secretary of DCNR, led hundreds of children and adults carrying their lit pumpkins down to Fuller Lake to offer up to the Hairy Hand. The jack o' lanterns floating on a raft on the lake is one of the favorite memories of Fall Fest.

Next year's Fall Fest will be on October 20 and 21, the third weekend of the month. Food and craft vendors have already begun to sign up and people are beginning to make campground reservations. If you want to help us next year, email Diane Velozo at pgfvolunteers@gmail.com.

Meanwhile, we are planning for the second annual "First Day Hike" on Mountain Creek Trail. More than a hundred park enthusiasts showed up for this year's New Year's Day hike. Next January's hike will be similar, but will begin

at the Fuller Lake Bath House and head down the Old Railroad Bed Road to Mountain Creek Trail. Homemade cookies and mulled cider will be served again.

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. To become a member of the Friends visit our website at: <http://www.pinegrovefriends.org/>

Key 2018 Dates for the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park

January 1: First Day Hike, meet at the Fuller Lake Bath House at 1pm

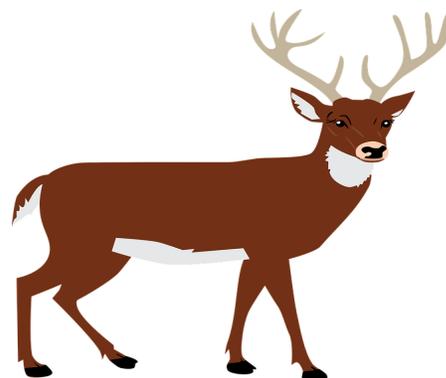
April 21: Earth Day, a day for volunteers to help the park prepare for the season.

May 19: Woodsy Owl Weekend, free camping in exchange for a morning of volunteering.

June 9: 7th Annual fundraiser trail races, Iron Run half-marathon and a Charcoal Challenge 5k run/walk.

September 29: National Public Lands Volunteer Work Day.

October 20-21: Tenth annual Fall Furnace Fest, two-day family event in the



Park News
Pine Grove Furnace
By:
Michael Kutzmonich

I just recently completed my first year as the park manager of Pine Grove Furnace State Park and had quite an enjoyable first season. I'd first like to thank my staff here at the park for their incredible efforts in providing a fantastic resource and experience for our patrons. I honestly feel that this park is second to none in appearance and in the pride of our work among the staff. With completing my first season I have had the opportunity to see the park operation throughout the entire season and see what we do well and where we need to make some changes. I believe we have a well-oiled machine here at the park and we provide an excellent service to the public.

This past season we had several memorable days here at the park with some great stewardship events that benefitted the park. On May 20 and 21 we hosted Woodsy Owl Weekend where we had close to one hundred participants perform many projects in the park consisting of flower bed maintenance, invasive removal, and tree planting. On September 30 we hosted a volunteer day for National Public Lands Day. We had over 30 volunteers that did flower bed maintenance, invasive removal, and native shrub planting. Thanks to the staff for planning a great day and the Friends for their help with both events and for providing a picnic lunch for the volunteers.

As I write this article in late October we are still anxiously awaiting the opening of the CXT restroom in the Organized Group Tenting Area. I am hopeful that we will have it operational soon. There were some issues with the building that occurred in transit from Texas that set the project back. Those issues have been remedied and cross your fingers, the facility will be open soon.

The ninth annual Fall Furnace Fest was in October. As the park manager, my first and foremost concern is public safety and incidents. Thankfully I can report we had no issues of note in this

area. The weekend went famously and I couldn't be more pleased and proud of my staff and Friends Group. The operational changes, planning, organization, and implementation were performed admirably and the results speak for themselves. We had approximately 8,000 people attend over the two days, which is the highest attendance we have had for the festival.

At this time it would be prudent to distribute some information concerning Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) that may potentially impact us here in the South Mountain Area. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has placed the park and forest into Disease Management Area (DMA) 2. The delineation of this DMA expansion is in response to the documented presence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) at a local captive deer facility.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a transmissible neurological disease of cervids (deer and elk) that is characterized by loss of body condition, behavioral abnormalities, and death. CWD is classified as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE), and is like mad cow disease in cattle and scrapie in sheep. CWD can reduce the population size of infected deer and elk herds. It is always fatal, and there is no known cure or control for the disease.

Pa. Game Commission disease management efforts and strategies being implemented are designed to assist with the following:

1. Identify local disease outbreak "hotspots" through increased monitoring and sampling efforts.
2. Monitor the prevalence within areas where the disease has been documented.
3. Slow the spread of the disease throughout the state's wild deer herd
4. Educate PA citizens to ensure they understand the severity of the disease and the management and regulatory approach being taken to mitigate its impacts

DCNR Park and Forest managers within the DMA are cooperating with the South-Central Region of the Pennsylvania Game Commission to ensure every effort is made to mitigate the potentially serious impacts of this disease on the local and state-wide deer herd. Please contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission if you encounter a deer showing any of the symptoms of CWD, or if you find deer carcasses or parts within the DMA. Recreational users in Pine Grove Furnace State Park and the surrounding Michaux State Forest in addition to an informed and alert public will ultimately be the most effective monitoring tool for managing this disease outbreak.

If you have questions or concerns about the information found in this article, please contact the South Central Regional Office of the Pennsylvania Game Commission at 814-643-1831.

I would like to wish you all a very nice fall and upcoming holiday season.



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 full color fall newsletter.



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Would your Cabin Survive?

In the aftermath of one of Pennsylvania's worst modern day wildfires, and then the catastrophic Chimney Tops 2 fire in Gatlinburg, TN in the fall of 2016, it was clear that there was very little preparation done to prevent the loss of property, primarily cabins and houses, prior to the wildfires sweeping through the area. The 16-Mile Fire and Beartown Fire in the Poconos in the spring of 2016 was a huge wake up call to me, and the lack of preparedness we have with our Michaux State Forest cabins across

the forest.

When the fall of 2016 rolled around, and Gatlinburg for all intensive purposes was completely burned over leaving a path of burnt destruction, the idea of it'll never happen to me/us was clearly a false sense of security and ignorance to the realities of Mother Nature. So, I ask you this. "If the worst would happen, and we had a '16-Mile' or 'Chimney Tops 2' fire within the Michaux, would your cabin survive?"

Just on the Michaux in the past few years, we've had multiple wildfires in which had they not been stopped and contained, would have threatened and/or damaged cabins in the area.

This past spring on the Tumbling Run Game Preserve, the 24 acre wildfire which was caused by an unattended campfire was close enough to threatening the historic stone cabin on the property that everyone could feel the sense of urgency to gain control of the fire before it got into a position to burn over the structure. In the past few

years, other wildfires off Woodrow Road could very well had threatened or burned up to Michaux Road, burning over numerous state forest cabins along Michaux Road. The reality for the potential of catastrophic damages due to wildfires is here, but do you as the cabin owner have the sense of urgency to ensure your cabin is prepared each year?

A few simple steps and annual maintenance can drastically increase the odds of your cabin surviving a wildfire and make the job of our forestry staff and fire fighters a lot safer. Below is a list taken directly from "Firewise.org", an organization aimed at educating the public on how to reduce the risks of damage from wildfires to life and property. Further information can be obtained from www.firewise.org, or by contacting your local Bureau of Forestry Fire Forester at your nearest DCNR Office.

Philip M. Bietsch | Fire Forester
PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Bureau of Forestry | District #1 | Michaux State Forest
10099 Lincoln Way East

Cabin Fire Safety List

- Clear needles, leaves and other debris from the roof, gutters, eaves, porches and decks.
- To reduce ember penetration, replace or repair loose or missing roof shingles or tiles, and caulk any gaps or openings on roof edge.
- Cover exterior attic vents, and enclose under-eave and soffit vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/2 inch .
- Remove items stored under deck or porches; replace vegetation in these areas with rock or grave;
- Remove flammable items within 30 feet of all structures including firewood piles, portable propane tanks and dry and dead vegetation.
- Talk to your neighbors and create a plan for how to address your wildfire safety challenge together.

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