

The Pinchot Eagle



Friends of Pinchot State Park

January 2022

Many thanks to all of the Friends, volunteers, community members, and park staff for rising to the pandemic challenge and paying your outdoor life forward—with your continued

participation, support, interest, and time.



*When your world gets small,
nature lets you live large!*

-Kathleen Wolf



Gifford Pinchot State Park
Toboggan Run... 1960's

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Vernal Pool Monitoring

By Jim Hugar

Collaboration With Master Watershed Stewards Enhances Vernal Pool Monitoring

For many years, the local citizen scientists and the Friends of Pinchot have been engaged in various activities associated with Gifford Pinchot State Park's vernal pools. In 2016, restoration of several pools took place to enhance their ability to retain water long enough to support the life cycle of the various inhabitants. This effort was followed by the planting of species native to Pinchot and the installation of protective fencing to allow the plants to become established. In addition to these efforts, volunteers have removed invasive plants and thinned overgrowth. In 2018, the Friends reached out to the Master Watershed Stewards (MWS), part of the Pennsylvania State University Extension in York County, to seek assistance in the monitoring efforts. This collaboration has enhanced the monitoring capa-

bilities and brought on additional resources to assist in this effort. The MWS set up a monthly program to observe plant condition and growth status from March through October. In addition to the observation of the aquatic plant and animal life, MWS labeled fenced-in areas to better track plants and their health. Stewards improved the record keeping by creating a database of the types of plants, their location, and conditions. This year, MWS created plant identification sheets for the typical plants found at the pools. This effort is intended to improve plant identification and tracking during all stages of plant growth as well as assist in the education of other volunteers and observers. Stewards began testing water quality for **dissolved oxygen** (a measure of how much oxygen is dissolved in the water—the

amount of oxygen available to living aquatic organisms), **PH** (a measure of water acidity/basicity) and **conductivity** (a measure of the ability of water to pass an electrical current and is useful as a general measure of water quality).

What's ahead? The Friends and MWS will continue to monitor the pools starting in March. In addition, we hope to include some activities to remove invasive species. Discussions are also ongoing regarding the installation of staff gauges to allow for tracking of water levels.

To learn more about vernal pools in Pennsylvania visit:

<https://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/VernalPools.aspx>

<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/vernal-pools>



PHOTOS BY JIM HUGAR



Winter brings solitude to the vernal pools while life continues around and under the pools. Some amphibian species spend the winter under water—below the surface ice, on top of the pool bottom, or buried in the substrates. This includes, among others, the Northern Green Frog and its tadpoles.

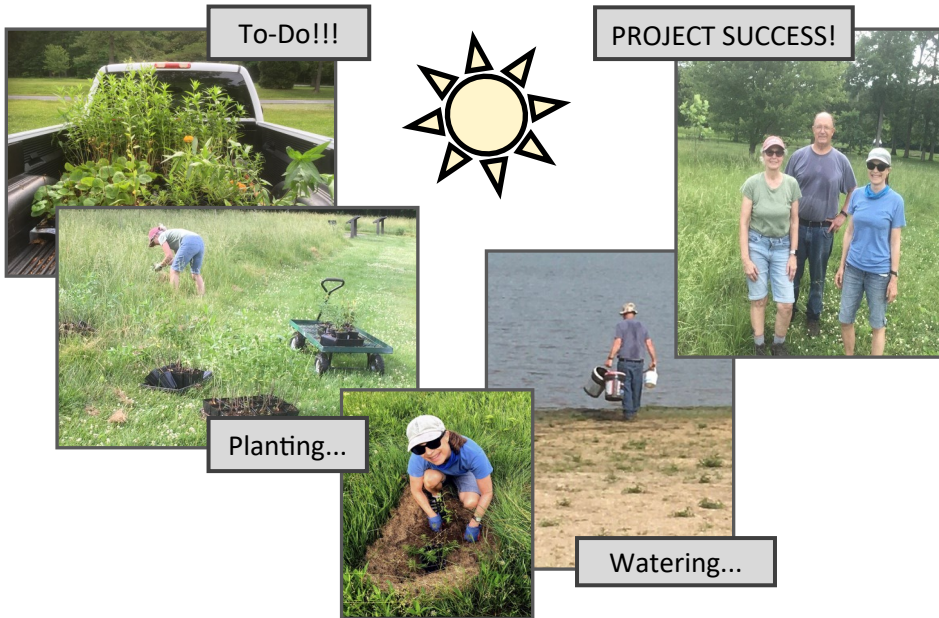
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VOLUNTEER CORNER

Day Use Area Landscaping

This past June, *Environmental Committee* members spent several days planting over 150 native plants in the “no-mow” zone of **Conewago Day Use Area**.

Plant species included butterfly milkweed, swamp milkweed, and golden ragwort, and park staff reported beautiful blooms throughout the summer!



Why Plant Natives?

Native plants can help with air quality by reducing area for mowing and sequestering carbon.

Firewood

Splitting, Stacking, & Bundling...

The *Wood Committee* had another very busy year, preparing and selling over 7600 bundles to campers this past season—stellar!!! **Many thanks to our wood team volunteers!!!**



DONATION CORNER

Thank you to all of the generous members and donors who contributed to Friends of Pinchot State Park throughout this past year.

Contributions helped to fund many park projects; major initiatives for the past calendar year included turtle platform restoration and trail maintenance.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Souvenir Patch Contest



In 2021, the Friends added souvenir patches to the park merchandise available for purchase, to be redesigned annually for collectors. This past year, the Friends enlisted community help in designing Pinchot's 2022 collector's patch by hosting a photo contest. Presented here are the 1st and 2nd place winners. **Thank you to all who participated!!!**

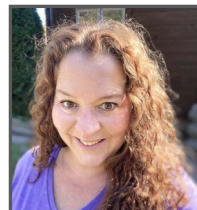


1st Place

Submitted by Phoebe Philippides



Submitted by Jodi Crum



2nd Place

Pinchotween

By Beth Kepley-McNutt

The 16th annual Pinchotween was held on Saturday, October 16, and despite some windy and rainy weather, it was a success! It was the first year for what we hope will be an annual event: a pet costume contest held during the afternoon in

Conewago Day Use Area, with special guests from **Canine Rescue of Central PA**. Founded in 2002, Canine Rescue is an all-breed, all-volunteer, no-kill rescue dedicated to helping any dog in a helpless situation, ultimately finding loving families for as many as possible. [<https://www.crcpa.org>]



Site #308 came away as our winner with their "Stranger Things" themed site.

Campground trick-or-treat was held during daylight hours and had no set route, so participants could stop at as many sites as their legs and sweet tooth would allow! A campground parade was held at 6 PM, featuring park equipment and vehicles, the PA Fish and Boat Commission, and PA Game Commission. Candy was handed out and campsite decorations were judged.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

First Day Hike

Despite the rainy and foggy start to the New Year, Pennsylvania state parks still hosted the annual First Day Hikes, with many Friends groups and community members participating across the state! Gifford Pinchot led two 1.5 mile walks on trails near Conewago Day Use Area—one in the morning and one in the afternoon, boasting a total attendance of 49 humans and 4 canine companions... What a great way to kick off the New Year!



Upcoming...

Trail Care Days* [hiking area improvements]

Habitat Work* [meadow restoration & native plant fencing]

Firewood Prep* [splitting & bundling]

Bench Construction* [Environmental Learning Center project]

Memorabilia

"Behind the Scenes"—

An update on *The Pinchot Eagle's* editing assistants, Blanche and Belva...

Blanche and Smokey reflect on good times at Pinchot!



Belva models the ****NEW**** Friends of Pinchot winter beanie!

FRIENDS OF
Pinchot
STATE PARK
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

FOR SALE

T-Shirts.....	\$15
Ball Caps.....	\$10
Beanies.....	\$10
Tote Bags.....	\$15
PA Passports.....	\$10
GIPI Stickers.....	\$2
Patches.....	\$5

Merchandise is available at Friends of Pinchot community events when campground is closed for the season.

~ PROCEEDS HELP TO FUND IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PARK ~

★ THANK YOU! ★

*Kindly reference our website [www.friendsofpinchot.org] or visit us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/FriendsofPinchot/] for more information!

NATIVE PLANT SALE

From Spring to Fall...

By Betsy Leppo

Spring is a popular season for planting as folks emerge from the long winter and bask in the sunlight, eager for outside projects. But fall is also a great season to plant native perennials and shrubs, when the empty spots in the yard and garden are easy to spot. Tucking plants into warm beds of soil under

a blue autumn sky is a most enjoyable gardening experience. The long, hot, dry spells of summer are past, and plants need less tending as they establish under cooler temperatures and fall rain showers. By spring, all you need to do is eagerly watch for the fruits of your labor to push up through the leaves!



PHOTOS BY BETSY LEPPA



In the spring of 2020 and 2021, the Friends of Pinchot couldn't hold their annual plant sale due to COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings. But by September of 2021, we were able to host two outdoor sales where we featured a new selection of

plants and shrubs. Turnout was lower than for our previous spring sales, but we did attract more seasoned gardeners who purchased larger numbers of plants. After our sales, we still had plenty of plants remaining, and we were fortunate to be grant-

ed a spot at the Native Plant Sale at John Rudy County Park on September 25. This event featured a variety of native plant vendors, along with educational displays and talks. Our thanks to York County Parks for allowing us to bring our plants to this sale.

We had 14 volunteers collectively donate about 27 days of time to prepare for and run the native plant sales this year. We are thankful for their enthusiasm for potting plants, watering plants, shading plants from blistering

sun, protecting plants from nibbling wildlife, rescuing plants from hurricane floodwaters, shuttling plants from point A to point B, and repeatedly getting their hands, clothes and vehicles dirty! All the proceeds from our

native plant sales go to the Friends of Pinchot State Park and are invested back into Gifford Pinchot State Park to make it a better place for visitors and wildlife.



NATIVE PLANT SALE

And Winter to Spring!

By Betsy Leppo

We found two black swallowtail caterpillars happily munching on the leaves of several golden alexander (*Zizia aurea*) plants we were growing for the native plant sale. Black swallowtail caterpillars only feed on plants in the parsley/carrot

family (umbellifers). Feeding moth and butterfly caterpillars is a great way to help pollinators and birds. Native plants feed caterpillars and adult birds, and songbirds feed caterpillars to their babies!

PHOTOS BY BETSY LEPPA



Papilio polyxenes (Black Swallowtail)

The chrysalis will overwinter and an adult will emerge next spring.

Native Perennial Wildflowers

Yarrow - variety Desert Eve Terracotta (*Achillea millefolium*)

Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Whorled Milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*)

New England Aster - variety Grape Crush (*Aster novae-angliae*)

Hyssop-leaf Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium hyssopifolium*)

Coral Bells – variety Dale's Strain (*Heuchera americana*)

Allegheny Spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*)

Beard Tongue - variety Husker Red (*Penstemon digitalis*)

Woodland Phlox - variety Blue Moon (*Phlox divaricata*)

Creeping Phlox - variety Sherwood Purple (*Phlox stolonifera*)

Stonewort - variety Larinem Park (*Sedum ternatum*)

Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*)

Native Grass

Purple Lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*)

Native Shrubs

Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*)

New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)

American Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)

Arrowwood Viburnum (*Viburnum dentatum*)



Why Plant Natives?

Native plants provide food and shelter for wildlife, and support pollinators.



LAKE DRAWDOWN

Project Summary

The unplanned extended drawdown of Pinchot Lake lasted for most of 2021, until the remnants of Hurricane Ida brought the lake back to normal pool in September. While the improvement projects were meaningful, the unexpected lowered lake level greatly impacted this past season's park recreation.

By Gavin Smith

While shoreline anglers enjoyed greater access opportunities around the lake and most kayakers were able to walk into the water to launch, user groups such as rowers, sailors, and other boaters experienced great challenges in launching. A good portion of the park's

campers and other overnight visitors made reservations during less-than-optimal conditions, while the great many who utilize Pinchot Lake as their primary swimming destination during the summer did not have that opportunity at all. Most lake-based events were impacted, postponed, or cancelled altogether.

Much of the drawdown effects were disappointing, to say the least, and the park's staff was certainly empathetic to its impact on our visitors. That there were more than a few questions from the public about the validity and reasons for the drawdown was certainly understandable.

Pinchot Lake's drawdown was executed under permit from the PA Fish & Boat Commission. **The necessity for the lake level to be dropped and maintained at least five vertical feet below normal pool, during the course of a number of contracted improvement projects, was determined by the Department of Conservation & Natural Resource's engineers.** It

was a calculation based on drawn plans and was not an arbitrary decision. For instance, the placement of pilings, for the newly installed accessible ADA-compliant (Americans with Disabilities Act) fishing pier in Conewago Day Use Area, required heavy equipment to access as far as 40 feet out from the shore and to stably operate on the dried lakebed.



Through the course of the contracted work, over the fall/winter/spring of 2020 into 2021, maintaining that five-foot mark (by letting water through the dam gate) was not an exact science. Some weeks, with no precipitation and steady lake pool, required the gate to be open at only 2%—just enough to keep water in Beaver Creek as it exits the lake. Other weeks had us scrambling to open the gate after a good rain or snow melt in order to prevent heavy equipment from being flooded.

On May 14, once contractors informed us that they were beyond any project stages which would require the drawdown, we discontinued maintaining the lowered level. From then on, that the park and surrounding areas would have received such little rain, was unanticipated and unavoidable.

Throughout the summer, park staff was as hopeful as any visitor for a return to normal lake pool (and a return to normalcy). However, it took until early September for the lake to finally swell to its typical capacity, as the remnants of Hurricane Ida passed through the local area and Gifford Pinchot State Park.



While the immediate aftermath of these improvements had in some way impacted the experience of all of the park's visitors in 2021, the hope is that the public finds value in the new improvements for the following park areas:

- Quaker Race Day Use Area*—new fencing/gate for improved access to Quaker Race beach for all ages/abilities
- Conewago Day Use Area*—new retaining wall & pier for improved shoreline access for anglers of all ages/abilities
- Boat Mooring Areas #2 & #3*—new dock system and walkway for improved access

May the net gain to the lake experience over time prove to be worth the wait!

A few good men...

Jim Merlino Retires from the FOPSP Board After 11 Years of Service

Jim Merlino was a founding member of the Friends of Pinchot State Park back in 2009. He served as chairman for nine years and continued as a regular board member for another two years. During his years at the helm of the FOPSP, Jim worked with park management to install four new playgrounds, add new park benches, and replace aging picnic tables. He faithfully helped with a variety of FOPSP fundraisers and workdays, especially preparing firewood for sale in the campground. Jim helped organize and implement projects to improve trails for hikers and habitats for wildlife. He supported the park's environmental education programming, our first native plant sale, and Pinchotween, the much-anticipated park event of the fall season.

Jim is driven by a desire to give back to his community and to the natural places that are important to him. It's an impressive arc for a city boy from Pittsburgh, who took his \$300 bonus after serving in Vietnam to purchase sleeping bags, tent, stove and lantern to get a start in camping!

Since 2008, Jim and his wife, Kim have spent many months each year hosting in the campground. Jim especially enjoys meeting and talking to visitors, fishing, boating, and even sharing campsite #293 with the occasional black rat snake!

Jim's investment of his time and talents helped to build a strong foundation on which the Friends group will continue to grow. Jim provided continuity during three changes of the guard at the park manager level. His involvement with the board for several years after he left the chairman position was essential in helping the Friends group transition to a new leadership team. We also recognize Jim's spouse, Kim Merlino, for her years of volunteerism and support of the Friends group. It was a privilege to work with both of you and we appreciate everything you have done!



Brian Heath, Park Manager, Accepts New Placement

As we were going to press, we learned that Brian Heath has accepted a new position as Park Manager of the Delaware Canal State Park Complex. Mr. Heath was the Park Manager for Gifford Pinchot, Samuel S. Lewis, and Susquehannock State Parks since 2019. The Friends group thanks Mr. Heath for his support these past two years and wishes him the best!

TRIBUTES

Remembering Ted Prindle, Long-time FOPSP Board Member

We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Ted Prindle, a cherished member of the Friends of Pinchot family. Ted was one of the founding members of our Friends group, serving as co-chair alongside Jim Merlino for 9 years, then continuing on the board for another four years. Ted and his wife, Rose began their service at Gifford Pinchot State Park working as campground hosts. Their friendly faces greeted campers for nearly twenty years. Folks knew to check campsite #192 for their golf cart. If it was parked there, you knew they were home and would welcome you in for a chat. If the golf cart was missing and it was between 8 AM and 12 PM on a Monday through Thursday, odds were good you would find them at the wood shed.



There they spent countless hours working with a small but mighty group of volunteers—splitting, bundling, and stacking wood for sale in the campground.

Ted was instrumental in launching the *Wood Committee* and maintaining the wood sale program in the campground, which quickly became the biggest fundraiser for the Friends of Pinchot.

Over the thirteen years the wood sales have been in place, they have generated over \$250,000 for the Friends of Pinchot. This money has gone directly back into the park and funded a variety of projects big and small, including: installation and maintenance of four new playgrounds, additional park benches and picnic tables, up-

graded furnishings in the cabin complex, improvements to the trail system, additional lake habitat structures to support turtles and fish, planting of trees, restoration of wildflower meadows and vernal pools, and creation of a dedicated fund for future development of educational displays for the Environmental Learning Center. All of these things are tangible reminders of Ted's years of service and commitment to the park. As Ted couldn't do this work alone, he gently encouraged others to bring their talents to the Friends of Pinchot... some of whom became fast friends—sharing laughs, donuts and coffee next to the never-ending pile of wood to be processed.



TRIBUTES

Remembering Ted...

We also remember Ted through the thousands of photographs he took—a window into his love for the people, places, and wildlife around him.



EGRET by Ted Prindle—SEPTEMBER 2010

OWL by Ted Prindle—JULY 2010



"There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature." -Rachel Carson



Ted will be greatly missed. We are grateful for his contributions to the park which will continue to enrich the lives of visitors for years to come.

For general information, please email FriendsofPinchot@gmail.com,
 visit our website at www.friendsofpinchot.org,
 or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FriendsofPinchot/.
 You may also call the Gifford Pinchot State Park office at (717) 432-5011.



Happy New Year!
 Be well!



Gifford Pinchot State Park continues to be more essential to our community than ever...
 providing healthy outdoor activity & much needed respite for ALL!
 Please... consider becoming a Friend of Pinchot!

FRIENDS OF Pinchot STATE PARK
 Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

2200 Rosstown Road
 Lewisberry, PA 17339
 (717) 432-5011
FriendsofPinchot@gmail.com

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This volunteer advisory board is dedicated to preserving, protecting and enhancing the natural and recreational resources of Gifford Pinchot State Park for present and future generations.

Friends of Pinchot State Park is a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF). The PPFF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

FRIENDS OF PINCHOT STATE PARK

2022-23 Annual Membership Application

Make checks payable to: PPF
 (include FOPSP on the memo line)

Mail form with payment to: Friends of Pinchot State Park,
 2200 Rosstown Road, Lewisberry, PA 17339

NEW MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____
 State/Zip Code _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

I would like to receive the newsletter via email.
 I would like to receive a printed copy of the newsletter in the mail.
 I am interested in volunteering.

All members receive a FOPSP membership card, a newsletter subscription to *The Pinchot Eagle*, and discounts on various FOPSP apparel. New members receive a complimentary 4" x 6" oval "GIPI" (Gifford Pinchot) bumper sticker.

___ Senior (age 62+)	\$10.00	___ Purchase the annual GPSP
___ Individual	\$15.00	souvenir patch: Add \$5.00
___ Family	\$25.00	___ Additional tax-deductible
___ Damselfly Sponsor	\$50.00	contribution of \$_____
___ Dragonfly Sponsor	\$100.00	
___ Corporate	\$250.00+	TOTAL \$ _____

Friends of Pinchot State Park was formed in March 2009 as a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF). The PPFF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions to PPFF are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. The official registration of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Memberships are for one year, June 1 through May 31.

The vast possibilities of our great future will become realities only if we make ourselves responsible for that future.

-Gifford Pinchot


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