

# **FWCCSP RECORD**

**Newsletter of the Friends of White Clay Creek State Park**

**Friends of White Clay Creek State Park**

**P.O. Box 9734**

**Newark, DE 19714-9734**

**[www.whiteclayfriends.org](http://www.whiteclayfriends.org)**

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## **Friends Meeting on December 1 to Feature Presentation by Dr. Cara Lee Blume: “Millers, Miners and American Indian Farmers along White Clay Creek—History in White Clay Creek State Park”**

Over the last 25 years, Dr. Cara Lee Blume has researched the history of White Clay Creek State Park, focusing on the people who lived there and their relationship with the land. In her presentation, she will discuss the settlement of the area included in the Carpenter Recreation Area, White Clay Creek Preserve, and Whiteley Farm (now known as Possum Hill) and the many ways people have made a living from this diverse landscape. Dr. Blume is Cultural Heritage Program Manager for the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation.

The meeting will start at 7:00 pm on Monday, December 1, at the park’s Deerfield Golf and Tennis Club. This event is free and open to the general public. No reservations are required. For more information call 302-239-2471.

Deerfield is located at 507 Thompson Station Road, north of Newark. From Newark, proceed north on Paper Mill Road. At Milford Crossroads (location of Bank of America facility and Shell Station) go west on Thompson Station Road and watch for the well-marked entrance on the left.

## **Friends Receive Award for Excellence in Park Interpretation Support**

On September 11, the Friends received the 2008 Award for Excellence in Interpretive Support from the Chesapeake Region of the National Association for Interpretation. Friend’s president Andy Urquhart accepted the award at a luncheon meeting in Annapolis, Maryland, on behalf of the Friends organization.

The award recognizes the many ways in which the Friends support the interpretation work of the nature center staff, including working to upgrade the exhibits at the center, staffing the center on weekends, leading some public nature education programs, researching the history of the park area, and providing financial support for disadvantaged children to participate in during- and after-school programs and in summer camps.

## **New Volunteer Project Contemplated for Children and Parents**

We would like to start a project involving monthly volunteer activities for children and their parents. While this project is still in the early conceptual stages, we see lots of potential objectives and benefits for such a program:

- Get kids outdoors
- Get kids physically active
- Teach children about volunteer work at an early age
- Involve children and parents together, to increase carry-over to “everyday” life
- Include environmental education in the volunteer activities, where possible
- Use the internet for relevant information, linking outdoor activities with electronic media interests
- Accomplish some useful work for the park and the surrounding community

We think this could potentially be a really important contribution to the lives of area children, perhaps changing some lives in ways that would help combat childhood obesity and expand interests beyond the internet and electronic games.

To get this project going, we need a project leader to coordinate the overall program and, as we envision it, activity leaders for each of the monthly work days (a couple of these are covered already). We have strong support from the nature center staff for this concept, so they will be an important resource to work with us.

We would appreciate feedback from our members about the value of this idea and thoughts about how to improve it. Of course, we also need volunteer leaders. Comments and expressions of interest should be directed to Andy Urquhart at [aurqu@aol.com](mailto:aurqu@aol.com) or 302-239-2471.

## **2008 Bluebird Monitoring Season a Success**

The 2008 bluebird monitoring season was a great success with 10 monitors reporting 122 Eastern Bluebirds, 88 Tree Swallows, and 58 House Wrens fledged. We were very fortunate to have hard working, dedicated volunteers for everything from box construction and installation to weekly monitoring.

Plans for the 2009 season include construction of cylindrical predator guards designed to keep out the racoons and snakes that have been an ongoing problem. In addition, nest boxes that were unproductive will be moved to more desirable locations this winter to increase the likelihood of future bluebird nesting.

If you are interested in becoming a bluebird monitor, please contact Wendy Keepports at [Wkeepports@comcast.net](mailto:Wkeepports@comcast.net).

## **Trail Construction is Up and Running.**

After more than a nine-month hiatus, the Friends are once again doing trail construction work in support of the park. The current project, in conjunction with the state parks trail crew, is a 400-foot re-route of part of the David English trail near the twin ponds area. It is a great work location reached by a beautiful uphill 0.2-mile walk.

The first work session focused on clearing vegetation; some sections were totally overgrown with multi-flora rose. In the second work session, construction of the three-foot-wide trail involved digging down a few inches to mineral soil and bench cutting into the sloping terrain. About 80 feet of trail was completed.

Chip Kneavel and Doug Rawlings of the state parks trail crew were great teachers who provided instruction and training as needed. They also did the initial trail layout.

The first two sessions had 7 and 6 people working, respectively. The next session is scheduled for Saturday, December 6, at 9 am. We could use a lot more help. It's good physical work that will give you satisfaction for a job well done. Contact Mike Ott at 738-6652 or Joe Castagnola at 610- 255-0365 if you would like to help.

### **Friends Volunteers Staff the Nature Center**

Again this year, the Friends ran its program for staffing the Chambers House Nature Center on Sundays from April through November. We also covered a few Saturdays during the summer. This makes it possible for the nature center to remain open to visitors each weekend day during the park's busiest months. Our 14 volunteers spent 282 hours welcoming over 500 visitors during our staffing times.

Each year, new volunteers are needed to replace people who leave or are unable to continue staffing. Volunteer activities include welcoming visitors, providing them with information and answering their questions, performing tasks to help the nature center function smoothly, answering the phone, and helping someone on the naturalist staff get ready for a program.

What do volunteers enjoy about the program?

Satisfaction of doing something that directly benefits the park and its visitors;

Learning more about the park's history, natural features, and programs;

Meeting and interacting with interesting people;

Spending a few hours in our beautiful park.

If you would like to become a nature center volunteer in 2009, contact our Project Coordinator Jim Ries at 239-1658.

### **Notes from the Nature Center – Jen Papillo**

First, the big news! Angel is the proud mom of a new baby girl – Shaylen Anella Burns. Shaylen was born on November 4, and both mother and daughter are doing well. Angel is on leave but expects to return soon.

We've had another great year at the park, and so much of it has been made possible by the Friends. We were able to continue our after-school programming for the Latin American Community Center this year; our shed project is very close to being complete; we were able to bring out hundreds of school children for field trips; and again we were able to keep the nature center open throughout the entire fee season. Thank you again for your continued support and dedication to this beautiful park!

## **New Storage Shed Being Purchased for the Nature Center**

To meet a long time and increasing need at the nature center, the Friends are purchasing a new shed for accessible storage of project materials. As programs have grown with no increase in available building space, the shed has become a critical need. The project will cost an estimated \$1,875 from Friends' funds and should be available before the end of the year.

## **New Leaders Needed**

As we add new projects or as people move away or move on, we are always looking for new leaders for the organization. A leadership role in the Friends may involve only a modest investment of time and effort for a large return of satisfaction for having made a valuable contribution to a worthwhile cause. The organization is big enough to provide the support and resources needed to help leaders make their projects successful. This could also be an opportunity for new leaders to learn or refine valuable skills in coordinating and working with people on volunteer projects.

Currently, we need new leaders for our nature center staffing project and for our new concept for child/parent volunteer activities. We could also use a new Membership Chair to spell Lisa Wool, who has moved to North Wilmington and is happy to continue to support us as chair but is unable to participate in meetings and activities because of the distances involved. Interested persons in these or any other roles should contact Jim Ries, Projects Coordinator, at 239-1658 or [dries@udel.edu](mailto:dries@udel.edu), or Andy Urquhart at 239-2471 or [aurqu@aol.com](mailto:aurqu@aol.com).

## **Friends Organization Continues to Grow**

Recently we reached a total membership of 455 people, the first time in our history that we have exceeded 450 members (we count family memberships as 2 members). We also have almost \$19,000 in available operating funds for future use. While our initial period of rapid growth ended a few years ago, we are pleased that the organization continues to grow at a moderate rate, enabling us to do more to support the park and its surroundings.

## **Hunting Schedules Available on Friends' Web Site**

If you are thinking about taking a hike in the park and are wondering whether there will be deer hunting occurring where you want to go, check out the schedules given on our web site, [www.WhiteClayFriends.org](http://www.WhiteClayFriends.org). On the main menu, point to News/Notices, click on Notices, and scroll down to the items about hunting in the Delaware and Pennsylvania state parks. One simple rule to remember is that there is no hunting in either park on Sundays.

Although the parks do not close for archery or muzzleloader (PA) hunting, a good precaution is to wear some blaze orange clothing when out in the parks during these times.

## **Calendar of Scheduled Activities**

December 6, 2008	Trail Improvement Work
December 14	Executive Committee Meeting
January 12, 2009	Executive Committee Meeting
February 9	Executive Committee Meeting
March 7	Trail Improvement Work
March 9	Executive Committee Meeting
April 13	Executive Committee Meeting
April 18	Trail Improvement Work – Christina River Cleanup
May 2	Trail Improvement Work
May 11	Executive Committee Meeting
June 6	Trail Improvement Work – National Trails Day
June 15	Executive Committee and Advisory Board Meetings
July 11	Trail Improvement Work
August 1	Trail Improvement Work
August 10	Executive Committee Meeting
September 12	Trail Improvement Work
September 14	Executive Committee Meeting
October 3	Trail Improvement Work
October 12	Executive Committee Meeting
November 8	Trail Improvement Work
December 6	Trail Improvement Work
December 14	Executive Committee Meeting

### Projects and Project Leaders

**Adopt-a-Highway:** Dee and Dick Benson, 410-398-4180

**Adopt-a-Trail:** Mike Ott, 738-6652

**Advocacy:** Andy Urquhart, 239-2471

**Birders Guide:** Gene Hess, 738-4690, and Andy Urquhart, 239-2471

**Bluebird Boxes:** Wendy Keepports, 234-2935

**Judge Morris Support Group:** Cathy Duffus, 731-9794

**Kestrel Boxes:** Andy Urquhart, 239-2471

**Historical Booklet:** Debbie Keese, 369-9128, and Andrea Cassel, 737-3319

**Light Construction:** Nick McFadden, 368-6900

**Member-led Park Programs:** Angel Burns, 368-6560

**Nature Center Staffing:** Jim Ries, 239-1658

**Nature Center Exhibits:** Andy Urquhart, 239-2471

**Newark Community Day:** Open

**Oral Histories:** Andrea Cassel, 737-3319

**Park Office Plantings:** Wendy Keepports, 234-2935

**Reforestation:** Christa Stefanisko, 369-1933

**Scholarship Funds:** Angel Burns, 368-6560

**Trail Benches:** Andy Urquhart, 239-2471

**Trail Improvement Work:** Mike Ott, 738-6652, and Joe Castagnola, 610-255-0365

**Water Ice Sales:** John Schwander, 737-7901

**Wayside Historical Markers:** Open

**Website:** Rick Hall, 831-1295, and Pat Walters

**Wildlife Habitat Protection:** Andy Urquhart, 239-2471

### Executive Committee

**President:** Andy Urquhart, 239-2471, [aurqu@aol.com](mailto:aurqu@aol.com)

**Vice-president:** Wendy Keepports, 234-2935, [wkeepports@comcast.net](mailto:wkeepports@comcast.net)

**Secretary and Newsletter Editor:** Dick Benson, 410-398-4180, [rbenson6@comcast.net](mailto:rbenson6@comcast.net)

**Treasurer:** Ken Daws, 737-8120, [wahkegan@hotmail.com](mailto:wahkegan@hotmail.com)

**Membership Chair:** Lisa Wool, 562-9788, [lwool@delawareestuary.org](mailto:lwool@delawareestuary.org)

**Projects Committee Chair:** Jim Ries, 239-1658, [dries@udel.edu](mailto:dries@udel.edu)

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### Membership Application

**Join us!** If you are not already a member and would like to join, please return this form with your check made payable to Friends of White Clay Creek State Park. Annual dues are \$5.00 for students, \$10.00 for individuals, and \$15.00 for families. Any extra donation with your dues would be appreciated and put to good use.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends of White Clay Creek State Park, Inc.**  
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