



# FWCCSP RECORD

August 2023

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## Judge Morris Estate – History of the House

The Judge Morris estate is a 504-acre property nestled along Kirkwood Highway and along Polly Drummond Road. John Barclay bought 252 acres in 1792 and built the main 2.5 story ell-shaped gray fieldstone house. The house and property changed many hands throughout the years. The 1.5 story wing, commonly called the keep, was added by Andrew Gray in the 1820s. Judge Morris purchased the house in 1934 and added the 2-story modern kitchen in 1939. When Judge Morris passed away in 1966, he left the estate to the University of DE. The University of DE kept the property for 32 years, but it was too far away from their main campus. They sold the estate and its surrounding lands to the State of DE in 1998 for \$12.5 million through funding from the Open Space Program. The Morris Farm is the largest remaining open space parcel along Kirkwood Hwy and is under an agricultural lease. Rotating crops of soybeans or corn can be found on either side of the Field Spur trail. Under the state's care, trails were formalized, and the house became a home for interpretive programs like Murder Mysteries. The Friends helped finance a new cedar shake roof last year. The old barn foundation has been stabilized, and a pollinator garden has been added by the mansion. The Park is evaluating concessionaires that would use the estate for events.



Chestnut Hill Farm near Newark. The two back buildings at the right are the original house and addition as they appeared before restoration in 1934. Below you can see the addition Morris built to the original above.



Morris Barn, demolished in 2002 due to structural failures beyond reasonable repair.

## Friends Leadership Opportunities

The Friends Executive Committee (EC) positions of Vice President and Volunteer Coordinator are in need of new leadership. Both positions meet with other EC members monthly, usually in person at Judge Morris mansion or by zoom. These meetings are attended by the Park Superintendent who provides an in-depth review of what is happening in the Park. The EC manages and sets priorities in the areas of Fund Raising, Financial Support of the Park, Volunteer Activity, and Advocacy.

Vice President - has the primary responsibility for our Events. These include the summer concerts where Friends manage the fundraising raffle, the beer garden, and food vendors. The other big event is our annual general meeting.

Volunteer Coordinator - has an overview of all our volunteer activities, and manages the teams that do our memorial bench program and pollinator garden. The other major volunteer activities are summer concerts, bird boxes, Nature Center staffing, and trail maintenance.

These are great opportunities to help the Park and get an inside view of the many exciting initiatives in the Park. Please let us know if you are interested, and we can provide more details on these positions. Contact us at [whiteclaycreekfriends@gmail.com](mailto:whiteclaycreekfriends@gmail.com).



## Come out and help the park! Volunteer Program News

A hint of autumn is in the air and the state park volunteer program is getting ready for the surge of volunteers that the fall weather brings. This article shares some news about White Clay Creek State Park's volunteer program.

In February 2023, the volunteer program main office rolled out a new volunteer management software program called Galaxy Digital. Many volunteers are using it to record their volunteer hours. Visitors to the state parks webpage can find a calendar with many opportunities to volunteer shown by date at this link <https://destateparks.galaxydigital.com/calendar>. If interested in trying out a volunteer opportunity, create an account at this link <https://destateparks.galaxydigital.com> and respond to any upcoming event. On the volunteer calendar you will see that White Clay Creek State Park events are well-represented!

Recurring events WEEKLY:

- Thursdays – Forest Restoration, 9am-11am, Judge Morris parking lot
- Sundays – Forest Restoration, 1pm-3pm, Judge Morris parking lot

Recurring events BI-WEEKLY:

- 1st and 3rd Mondays – De-Vine Intervention, 9am-11am, Nature Center parking lot
- 2nd and 4th Tuesdays – Barberryans, 9am-11am, Kranz Farm (616 New London Rd)

Recurring events MONTHLY:

- 2nd Saturdays – Weekend Weed Warriors, 9am-11am, Nine Foot Rd parking lot

Terri Tipping, leader of the Forest Restoration events, won the first ever Delaware State Parks Distinguished Service Award in 2023 for her leadership of a years-long effort to remove invasive vegetation and plant native species of trees and shrubs at the Judge Morris Estate area. Volunteers do a variety of tasks from hand pulling small plants to lopping or sawing down large shrubs and piling them neatly to decompose. The cumulative impact is impressive.

De-vine Intervention is just that – intervening by cutting vines using a curtain technique (try it and learn) so invasive vines such as oriental bittersweet don't overtop or strangle trees. This new event is led by Bill Slater, who you may find out in the park working on vines on any other day!



The 'Barberrians' are a new event to remove invasive Japanese barberry from a beautiful forest called Fall Spring Woods, not generally open to the public. Cindy Kranz Greene is co-leading this effort. Barberry is shallow rooted and can often be hand pulled and piled to decompose, allowing the native plants still found there to thrive.



The newest event has an inaugural meeting on Saturday, August 12. Master Naturalist Mary Osman, will be co-leading this event. The Weekend Weed Warriors will work on removing invasive multiflora rose from along the Whitely Farms cut through trail (aka Lover's Lane). With invasives gone, the native turtlehead plants (*Chelone glabra*) should be encouraged to raise their pretty heads.

Members of Friends of White Clay Creek State Park currently volunteer for many activities that are of tremendous benefit to the park. Friends work with Allen Sievert to staff the Nature Center on weekends, with George Probst to monitor bluebirds, with Mike Czupryna to keep trail edges mowed and weeds whacked. And of course, the Friends board and a small army of concert volunteers work the 50-50 raffle, and the drinks tent to make concerts extra fun!

Thank you, Friends, for all you do to make this park a great place to work and play. If you have any questions about volunteering, please reach out by email to:

Ann Burruss  
ann.burruss@delaware.gov  
Manager of Volunteers WCCSP

### **Mark your Calendar for concert time!**

- Summer Wednesdays at 6:30pm at the band stage in Carpenter Recreation Area
- Bring your blanket or lawn chairs
- Free with paid admission to the park
- For weather updates call 302-368-6560 or visit the park Facebook page
- <https://destateparks.com/concerts/whiteclaycreek>



- Ole Tapas and Rita's food trucks will be onsite as well as the return of our beer garden and 50/50 raffle!



Date	Band	Music Type	Brewery
8/9/23	Spokey Speaky	Reggae	Wilmington Brew Works
8/16/23	BLEECH	Modern Alternative, Indie and Classic Rock	Autumn Arch
8/23/23	Dukes of Destiny	Blues and Soul	Autumn Arch
8/30/23	US Naval Academy Band	Variety of band tunes	NO BEER GARDEN
(Mon 3pm) 9/4/23	The LAUNCH	Tribute to Boston, Styx and Queen	Hangman Brewing
9/6/23 (6:15pm)	Acoustically Sound	Rock and Country with Strings	TBD

**Upcoming Park Activities**  
**Register online at <https://destateparks.com/whiteclaycreek>**

**Panning for Creek Gems**

**Saturday, August 12, 2023 at 10:30 AM**

Pan the creek for garnets, magnetite, and other shiny treasures! We will provide pie plates with holes in them for advanced registered participants. Water shoes and towel recommended. Cost is \$6 per person

**Panning for Creek Gems**

**Sunday, August 20, 2023 at 1:00 PM**

Pan the creek for garnets, magnetite, and other shiny treasures! We will provide pie plates with holes in them for advanced registered participants. Water shoes and towel recommended. Cost is \$6 per person

**Full Moon Friday**

**Friday, August 25, 2023 at 8:00 PM**

Join our park naturalist for an evening hike near the full moon. We'll start the hike as the sun sets and then enjoy the moonrise as we return. Online registration ends 24 hours prior to the program. After that, please call 302-368-6900. Meeting location provided upon registration. \$6 per person

**Harmony Hike**

**Saturday, August 26, 2023 at 9:00 AM**

New to the park? Ready to find a new favorite trail? Join our naturalist on this series to explore our trails. Dress for the weather, bring bottled water and come ready for adventure! Drop-Ins Welcome, registration suggested in case of weather cancellation. Call by noon on Friday to Register. Free

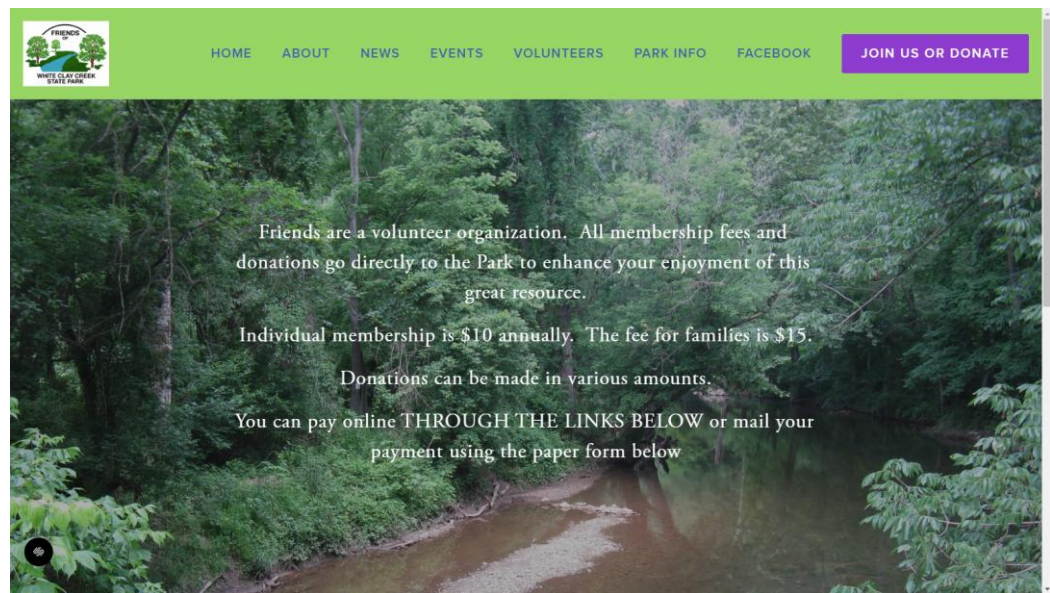
**Ethnobotany: People and Plants**

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 at 10:00 AM**

Come along on a guided 1.5 mile-hike through Judge Morris Estate as we learn about some of the many ways people utilize plants and discuss how our use of plants has shaped the modern landscape. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring plenty of water for a gentle 2-hour walk through the woods. This program is provided by Master Naturalist Mary Osman. Pre-registration is required by calling 302-368-6900. Free Program.

## Support the White Clay Creek State Park by Renewing your Membership!

The more members we have, the more our voice is heard when we seek to preserve and enhance our Park. Please go to our [website](#) and click on the purple button.



Friends of White Clay Creek State Park

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Friends are a volunteer organization. All membership fees and donations go directly to the Park to enhance your enjoyment of this great resource.

Individual membership is \$10 annually. The fee for families is \$15.

Donations can be made in various amounts.

You can pay online THROUGH THE LINKS BELOW or mail your payment using the paper form below