



FWCCSP RECORD

February 2023

Friends President's message

It is worthwhile from time to time to look at our purpose...and borrowing from the home page of the Friends' website...

“Membership in the Friends is open to anyone with an interest in the preservation and enhancement of White Clay Creek State Park. Our members come from a variety of backgrounds, with differing interests, knowledge, and concerns for the park's protection. All share the desire to preserve the park for the benefit of current and future generations.”

We occasionally encounter different viewpoints such as recreation versus conservation (for example, will a new trail disturb a wildlife area?) We hope we can provide a forum to discuss and resolve such issues, as most of those who 'recreate' in the park are aware of the need to 'conserve' within the park in order to preserve their ability to enjoy the natural beauty of the park. We encourage you to communicate with us through the Contact link on www.whiteclaycreek.org which sends a message to the President of Friends, David Koppeser.

Also at this time let's recognize the importance of our volunteer activity. In 2022 we had 120 volunteers contribute 2000 hours to the following activities.

- Trail maintenance
- Memorial benches
- Nature Center staffing
- Pollinator gardens
- Summer concerts
- Bird box maintenance

You can join us through the Volunteers link at www.whiteclaycreek.org.

Closely aligned with the Friends group, for managing grant awards and linking with other key stakeholders in the park, is the Judge Morris Environmental Group which in 2022 contributed over 3500 hours of volunteer effort aimed at removing invasive species and introducing thousands of native plants within the Judge Morris area.

Lastly, we know that the Park will need additional funding to complete the Nature Center. The Friends can advocate with our legislators for this support, and the MORE members we have the MORE our influence, so please continue your membership and encourage your friends to join us.

A Note from the Superintendent

What is so Special About White Clay?

My employment at Delaware State Parks has taken me to civil war forts and steam car museums. As a parks patron myself, some of my other favorites are traveling back in time at Trap Pond (the bald cypress trees are amazing!), spending time on the water at Killens Pond, riding in a miniature train (again, after my dad taking me there in the 70's), lounging on more than one beach, and being able to walk a trail from my son's house (Yorklyn) to the local brewery. But what is it about the magic of White Clay?

I transferred from Auburn Valley State Park to White Clay in search of a new adventure with Parks. I was taken in by the beauty of this suburban oasis and wanted a bigger challenge. I got it! My return to Newark after graduating from University of Delaware some 32 years later (yes I was 10 when I started working for parks!) felt like a homecoming. While there is a lot of change in Newark, the heart of Newark is still the same. It is full of people who care about their environment, and respect science and conservation. I was shocked to find a park somehow protected from development for the last century. Nearly 4,000 acres, over 37 miles of trails (representing 25% of ALL the trails in Delaware State Parks!), the fact that it is intact is not a small miracle. The passion that saved all of this land from being covered by a reservoir back in the day is alive and well. I see a little of Dorothy Miller in all of the Friends of White Clay Creek State Park active members. They care about this place and it's a mission for them.

How did it all get preserved? Luck, and a downturn of the economy during the Depression. S. Hallock duPont did indeed purchase land from local farmers, and one could debate that he took advantage of people during a challenging time. However many stayed on to farm the land as tenant farmers, and at least one family's history indicates that the sale was not a negative for them. In any event, the purchase and retention of over 30 properties by duPont inadvertently ended up being our saving grace. Drive into the park and suddenly you go from suburbia to sprawling meadows with historic barns, from the busy north campus area to a world of forested creek land. Because of that purchase, because the land was retained by the family for so long, it is indeed a snapshot in time of what once was.

Our volunteers and loyal Friends members get it. This place matters, the nature and the history. Thank you for being a part of it. Make me a deal- find a friend- tell them about White Clay and encourage them to also join the Friends. The Park is so fortunate to have a wonderfully supportive Friends group- each year they fund special needs of the park, they help make the trails safe for everyone, and they ensure that your park experience is a good one. Their continued grant support funded almost \$100K in historic building repairs this past year, and well as provide native plants to replace the invasives removed by our spectacular environmental stewardship volunteer team. A larger member base translates into increased chances of grant success. Let's hit 500 members this year!

Happy Trails!

Laura

Nature Center Funding Supported



Good news for our Park! Our legislators' request for ADDITIONAL funding to complete the Nature Center project is included in the Governor's recommended budget. The \$3 million allocation will also support the move of the Park office and for the completion of "Big Pond".

Please congratulate our local legislators and encourage them to ensure these funds remain in the final version of the Bond Bill which authorizes the spending.

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Disc Golf at WCCSP

Did you know there are disc golf courses in seven Delaware State Parks? And White Clay is one of them!

There are a variety of theories on how it was first invented and more details can be found on the official Professional Disc Golf Association website <https://www.pdga.com/history>. But you don't have to be a professional to play – anyone can play!

And WCC will be adding new locations for baskets and all new disc golf tee signs, courtesy of Friends of White Clay Creek State Park.

A map of the WCC course and a score card can be found here:

<https://destateparks.com/wwwroot/downloads/discGolf/WCCSPDiscGolfCard.pdf>

Grab some friends or family members and get out there and give it a try!

Seen in the Park



This bark removal is the work of a pileated woodpecker.

Decorticate: "To remove the bark, husk, or outer covering from; To expose."

Thus, the Pileated Woodpecker is known as a decorticator!

Join us!



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The Friends have a governing body, the Executive Committee, with the President and six other members. We are in need of someone to handle **Publicity and Social Media**. This means helping, for example, with this newsletter, with Facebook, and connecting with people and organizations that use and support the Park. If you think this is of interest please send a note to whiteclaycreekfriends@gmail.com.

Quiz



Approximately how long is the WCC Disc Golf course?

- 1) 1,000-2,000 feet
- 2) 2,199 – 3,100 feet
- 3) 4,700 – 5,200 feet
- 4) 6,000 -9,999 feet

Of course there is a prize for the correct answer.....send to:
whiteclaycreekfriends@gmail.com

Upcoming Park Activities

Naturalist Led Hike

Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 10:00 AM

Ready to find a new favorite trail? Join the park naturalist on this series to explore trails and discover nature in White Clay Creek State Park. Dress for the weather, bring bottled water and come ready for adventure! Call 302-368-6900 for registration and hike location information. Free

Backyard Birding

Saturday, February 25, 2023 at 9:00 AM

Join the park naturalist to learn about winter birds. Learn about local birds, observe the feeders at the Nature Center and go on a short hike. Pre-registration required by 3 p.m. on Friday 302-368-6900. Free

Intro to Fly Fishing

Monday, February 27, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Bring any equipment you have and join Ed O'Donnell and Sam Palermo of the Friends of White Clay Creek State Park to learn the basics of fly fishing on February 27 and fly tying on March 6. Must pre-register by the Friday before the program by calling the park office (302)368-6900. Space is limited. Free

Murder at the Mansion

Friday, March 3, 2023 at 7:00 PM

It's the 1930s, the Great Depression is over, and it is a time of great prosperity for the social elite. The Balderdash's are hosting a party but this one lacks one thing, the butler. It's up to you to solve the mystery. Light refreshments provided. \$25 per person. Online registration ends 24 hours prior to the program. After that, please call 302-368-6900 before noon.

Full Moon Friday

Friday, March 3, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Join our park naturalist for an evening hike near the full moon. Online registration ends 24 hours prior to the program. After that, please call 302-368-6900 prior to 3 p.m. Meeting location provided upon registration. \$6 per person.

Murder at the Mansion

Saturday, March 4, 2023 at 7:00 PM

It's the 1930s, the Great Depression is over, and it is a time of great prosperity for the social elite. The Balderdash's are hosting a party but this one lacks one thing, the butler. It's up to you to solve the mystery. Light refreshments provided. \$25 per person. Online registration ends 24 hours prior to the program. After that, please call 302-368-6900 before noon.

Intro to Fly Tying

Monday, March 6, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Bring any equipment you have and join Ed O'Donnell and Sam Palermo of the Friends of White Clay Creek State Park to learn the basics of fly fishing on February 27 and fly tying on March 6. Must pre-register by the Friday before the program by calling the park office (302)368-6900. Space is limited. Free

Intro to Biomimicry: Inspiration from Nature

Saturday, March 18, 2023 at 10:00 AM

Join Master Naturalist Mary Osman on a hike to learn about ways nature inspires innovative solutions to everyday problems. Please call 302-368-6900 to register. Free

Stroll with the Superintendent

Saturday, March 18, 2023 at 1:00 PM

Join the park superintendent at the Judge Morris Estate for a house and grounds tour. We'll be sharing history, current improvements and more. Pre-registration required by calling 302-368-6900. Free

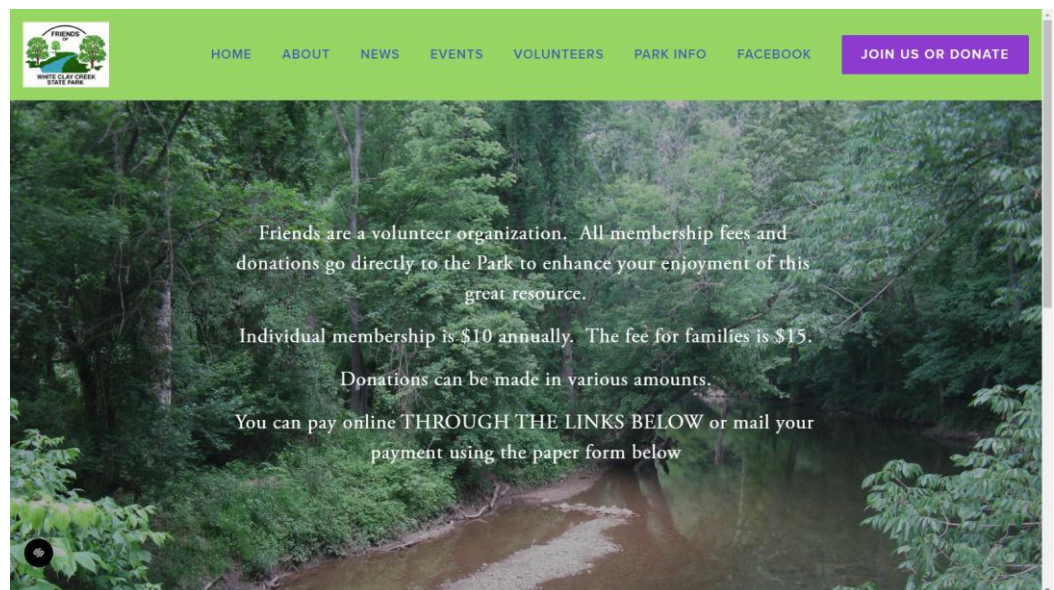
The Wedge, the Arc and the Horn

Sunday, March 19, 2023 at 1:00 PM

The Arc Corner Monument signifies a land swap between Pennsylvania and Delaware. Join local historian Mike Ott for a hike to the Arc Corner Monument and to another marker on the DE Arc for some interesting history of these boundaries. Degree of Difficulty: Moderate to difficult. Space is limited, pre-registration is required by noon, Thursday, March 26, Call 302-368-6900 for registration. Meet at the Chambers House Nature Center. Free

[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.



The screenshot shows the website for Friends of White Clay Creek State Park. The header is green with a logo on the left and navigation links: HOME, ABOUT, NEWS, EVENTS, VOLUNTEERS, PARK INFO, FACEBOOK, and a purple button labeled JOIN US OR DONATE. The main content area features a background image of a forest stream and text that reads: "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".