

Friends Of Potato Creek State Park

Newsletter-Fall 2008

President's Message

by Marci deGroot

Hello Friends,

In the past year, Alex and I have had the great pleasure of getting to know many of you, your connections to the park, and your ideas about the future of the Friends group. It has also been a pleasure to see all the seasonal changes in the park: from the wildflowers to the birds and beyond. In the coming year, I look forward to viewing these changes from new facilities that will be put into place with the support of your membership.

One such area is the springhouse on Trail 4. Aside from being a lovely spot in general, we have received most of the money we need to restore that springhouse through a grant from Bosch [Braking Systems Inc.]. This will allow park visitors a glimpse into the lives of early area settlers. It will show how they got along without refrigerators and running water by using the resources at hand.

Another area that I am very excited about is the plan to build a parking area near the wetland to the southwest. Many people tell me that they would like to be able to view the wetlands up close instead of driving by. An access point near the wetland will also give us the opportunity to view the prairie up close.

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2008 Work Days and Events- Help!

Mark these dates on your calendar and plan to Volunteer or participate. It's fun and it really helps the Park.

October 25, 2008

HALLOWEEN HAPPENINGS – The campground will bustle with Halloween weekend events. There will be a campsite decoration contest, trick or treating, a potluck dinner and more! This weekend is co-sponsored by the Friends of Potato Creek.

2009 Work Days and Events- Get ready for Next Year- *Mark your Calendar.*



FOPC members help with Worster Lake Bank Stabilization Project this summer.

February 28, 2009

Potato Creek State Park

Bluebird Nest Box Workshop 1-4 PM/ For ages 8 and up. *Advance Registration Required.* \$10 Fee

April 11, 2009

Potato Creek State Park

Egg Hunt/ \$1/pp

April 4, 2009

Potato Creek State Park

Bat House Workshop 1-4 PM

For ages 8 and up. *Advance Registration Required.* \$10 Fee

April 16, 2009
Potato Creek State Park
Turkey Hunting Workshop 7 PM

April 25, 2009
Potato Creek State Park
Wildflower Weekend

May 2-3, 2009
Potato Creek State Park
Welcome Back Weekend

June 6, 2009
National Trails Day

August 1, 2009
Potato Creek State Park
'Tater Traditions.
\$1-\$5 craft fee for materials

September 19, 2009
Potato Creek State Park
Maze Opens

September 19-20
Potato Creek State Park
Hunter Education Class - Noon-5PM (must attend both days).

September 26-27, 2009
Potato Creek State Park
Prairie Harvest Weekend –
\$1 to \$10 craft fee for materials

October 31, 2009
Potato Creek State Park
Halloween Happenings
Craft fees will apply

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I would like to see a short trail mowed through the prairie in addition to around the wetland. These two habitats are so incredibly diverse in flora and fauna that you would be hard pressed to see the same thing twice.

With our new projects come renewed senses of responsibility to the land around us. I want to

reiterate a priority that many of you share and find especially important: As Friends of a state park and stewards of our environment, we should encourage everyone to recycle and should make it a priority at all events and project workdays. Involving the Friends group in helping the park to develop a more comprehensive recycling program would be an excellent way to support our mission. Have you ever noticed that many of the discarded items we find at our cleanup days are recyclable? Alex and I are committed to making recycling facilities available to all park patrons, and we welcome any and all suggestions that you have to help us achieve this goal.

I want you to know that I am always heartened to see the dedication and genuine affection you all have for this property. Working together towards a common goal will produce great results, and I look forward to working with all of you for the ultimate benefit of the park.

Park Happenings

By Alex deGroot - Assistant Property Manager, Potato Creek State Park

The 2008 recreation season is winding down. Our busiest time of year with visitors is from Memorial Day to Labor Day. During this time all facilities are open 7 days a week, the beach is a popular place to be, boat rental is open every day from 6:30 am to 9 pm, and the campgrounds are sold out nearly every weekend.

Our visitation this year compared to years past. Day trippers may be a little fewer, but people staying for multiple days and

camping or staying in cabins seemed as strong as ever.

The fall season brings campers, hikers, birders, and horse riders out for the cooler weather and changing colors. The migratory birds are making a pit stop and continuing down south, the jackets are coming out, and the park is getting ready for snow and winter.

Fall is still a busy time for visitation at the park. The weather is great for camping and most weekends the campground is near capacity. Many birders come out to watch the fall migration, and it's a beautiful time to explore the park as the scenery changes.

Halloween is one of the last "big" weekends with sold out campgrounds, numerous park events, and the popular prairie maze. After Halloween the park visitation slows down. Gatehouses have reduced hours, portions of the campground will be closed, and most seasonal employees will have moved on.

Here are some, of the happenings that took place this season.

- We lowered Worster Lake three feet at the beginning of September to treat for the invasive gizzard shad. The treatment is necessary to reduce the number of gizzard shad and help protect more desirable fish found in the lake. Preliminary results show that the treatment was a success. A very cold winter can also be beneficial in the reduction of gizzard shad, we'll see about that one. Record rains, produced as much rain in three days as we would usually expect in the whole month of September. Amazingly the lake filled back up and was

even a few inches above normal level in three days.

- We mowed the prairie maze trail and set signs up. It was a little squishy earlier in September so hopefully October will be dryer. Thanks Tim for creating such a unique recreational opportunity. The maze is a big attraction for the park and usually hosts thousands of adventurers each fall. Hiking the maze can take 30 minutes or a couple of hours. Test your orientation skills!
- Park mechanics have gotten our snow plows, snow blowers, and snow shovels out. Some mowers and tractors have been put away for the season even though recent rains and warm weather keep employees busy with grounds maintenance.
- Park employees moved the remainder of the rock from the Friends bank stabilization project area to another bank stabilization area on the east side of the dam. As you travel on the dam look a little to the right at the peninsula to see the location of some much needed bank stabilization.
- The park trimmed trees throughout the family campground area, cabins and youth tent areas. This has taken a crew almost all summer to complete. It was long overdue and will continue as long as there are leaves on the trees.
- The park resurfaced the 70 horsemen campsites with limestone gravel. This gives a nice firm, dry, and level surface to camp on. In a few

months the family campground will close completely and all camping will be redirected to horsemen's campground.

- Park employees have been very busy with maintenance during the height of the recreational season. We also completed infrastructure repairs this summer such as repairing water lines, replacing fire hydrants, installing water shut-offs, and rehabilitating parking lot lights.

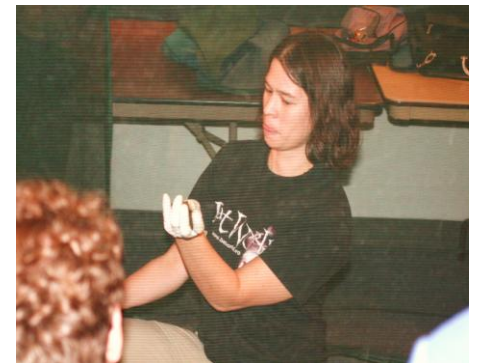
As always there are endless smaller projects going on around the park. The park does some intense fall cleaning in the cabins, winterizes most of the structures, turns water stations off, and prepares for winter recreation such as cross country snow skiing, ice fishing, and tubing/sledding. The park looks forward to the Halloween events near the end of October hosted by the Friends of Potato Creek State Park. The campground will be sold out, trick or treaters will fill the park, pumpkins will decorate the landscape and the fall colors will be about at their end. Hope to see you on the prairie maze or around the park!

Past Meeting Programs

Friends of Potato Creek State Park meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Educational programs featured at these meetings deal with our park and the natural world. On October 16th, Tom Schwartz, a Fisheries Biologist at Mixsawbah State Fish Hatchery

will discuss fish rearing operations and fisheries management.

If you attended previous meetings you: know about how to improve soils and identify soil types (July); you know the vital role bats play in our lives, how to identify Indiana bats, and build a bat house (August); and can identify key local wildflowers and explain the importance of certain local plants to the health of natural systems (September).



Laura Holman, from the Center for North American Bat Research and Conservation carefully shows FOPC members the details of an Indiana Brown Bat.

Newsletter Disclaimer and Opt-Out Notice

This newsletter is published by the Friends of Potato Creek State Park. It is not published or managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. If you do not want this news letter, contact Sylvia Kimbal, Secretary (sylvia.kimbel@comcast.net) Or write: Friends of Potato Creek State Park, P.O. Box 471, North Liberty, IN. 46554 to be removed from the mailing list. Address corrections and questions to Mark Daily, editor mrddaily@hughes.net