

Summer 2018

The Park Enthusiast

Farm Park Preservation Association



Volume 17 Issue 2

PRESERVE, PROTECT, PROMOTE

President's Message To the Members:

Check out all the Summer Events at the Park (pp. 2-5), especially the **“Public Reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 1.”** Also don't miss **Native American Day** on the first day of autumn,

For those FPPA members who were not able to attend our **Annual Meeting for FPPA Members and Friends**, see the review on p. 6.

For those renewing your memberships this quarter, please note the addition of a few questions to the renewal form on p. 11. We would very much appreciate your answers!

Due to retirements, **the FPPA Board is seeking new members.** Read about it on p. 9 and apply!

See the Park Supervisor's report on what is going on in the Park (pp.7-8).

Finally, enjoy this summer in the Park – it is a gem! We are so lucky to have it!

Tina Howell, President

The articles contained in the “Park Enthusiast” express the views of the Farm Park Preservation Association (FPPA). The FPPA makes every effort to ensure articles are factual; however, our statements do not express the views of the Norristown Farm Park (NFP) management or staff. The FPPA is an independent, non-profit organization that was established to Preserve, Protect and Promote NFP. The FPPA does not operate the NFP and is not affiliated with NFP management other than as an independent, public advisory body.



**FPPA Board
Seeks
New Board
Members
See p. 9**

**Don't Forget to
Renew Your FPPA
Membership!
Check the back
page of this
Newsletter for your
membership
expiration date.
The Farm Park
needs your
continuing support
and involvement!**

What's Happening in the Park?

By Diana Cassel, Vice President FPPA Board

Please Note: For additional programs and walks at other Parks not listed below, please visit the Montgomery County website at www.montcopa.org. On the top of the page, click on Parks, Trails and Heritage Sites. On the pull down menu, click on Parks and choose one. On the park's page, click on "Events" on the right side of page.

You must now preregister for all programs at NFP by calling 610-270-0215.

Tuesday, June 5th at 1:00 pm

Hide 'n' Seek

Take a first look at camouflage in the animal kingdom. Nature is jam-packed with creatures that are camouflaged. Can you find them? Play a game and make a camouflage craft. Take a walk with the park naturalist to look for hidden animals, everything from insects to mammals. Meet at the pavilions. Ages: 3 & up with an adult; fee: \$5 per child.

Sunday, June 10th at 2:00 pm

Terrific Trees

Join a park ranger on a tour of the park. Ranger Mike will be showcasing his favorite trees. Learn about the natural history of individual tree species and why some can grow so much bigger than the rest. Identify native versus non-native trees. Forest ecology will be covered as well. Participants will be following Mike in their cars to various parts of the park. Meet at the park office. Ages: adults & children 7 & up; free.

Tuesday, June 12th at 8:00 am

Morning Bird Walk with Kevin

Enjoy the sights and sounds of late spring on this morning bird walk with Kevin. Birds are very active at this time of the year, especially in the morning. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet in parking lot #3. Ages: adults & children 10 & up; free.

Sunday, June 17th at 2:00 pm

The 'Daring Dad' Scavenger Hunt

Bring your dad to the park this Father's Day for a challenging nature scavenger hunt. He'll have to follow a series of clues to find the items or answer questions. The first dad back with all requirements met is the winner! Families are welcome to help dad in the search. There will be lots of prizes for the dads. Meet in parking lot #2. All ages; free.

Wednesday, June 20th at 10:00 am

Knee Deep in the Creek

Celebrate the beginning of summer by bringing the family to a creek investigation. We'll examine all the creatures that are adapted to life in the water. Wear sturdy water shoes or old sneakers. Expect to get wet! If you have a net, bring it along. Meet by the kiosk in parking lot #3. Ages: adults & children 6 & up; free.

Saturday, June 30th at 8:30 pm

Fireflies: Nature's Fireworks

Join us for an evening to discover the world of fireflies or lightning bugs (which are neither flies nor bugs). Learn about their amazing behavior and life cycle. The program begins just before dusk and ends just after dusk, so bring a flashlight. Meet in parking lot #3. Ages: adults & children 6 & up; free.

Sunday, July 1st at 2:00 pm

Public Reading of the Declaration of Independence

A park ranger in period clothing will perform a reading of the Declaration of Independence. Before the advent of television and radio important government announcements were read to the public in a common square. Come ready to participate in the cheering for Liberty! There will be toasts and musket fire! The reading takes about 90 minutes. Meet at the field near the pavilions. Bring a blanket or folding chair. In case of rain, the event will be moved to the Salt Wing. All ages; free.

Tuesday, July 3rd at 8:00 am

Morning Bird Walk

Join park staff the first Tuesday of every month for a morning bird walk. Expect to see vireos, flycatchers, and other songbirds. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet in parking lot #3. All ages; free.

Saturday, July 7th at 10:00 am

The Fish of the Farm

Ranger Carlin will give a presentation on the game fish that Montgomery County has to offer. Take a close look at individual species, fishing methods, and the proper way to catch and release. Learn about the many destinations within the county to land the next "big one." Meet in the Salt Wing. Ages: adults & children ages 6 & up

Sunday, July 15th at 6:00 pm

Animal Habitat Walk

Join ranger Tim Wilson on a nature walk in the early evening. Learn about the animals that live in the park. Look for the habitats of particular animals, including their foods and shelters. Bring binoculars if you have them and wear your walking shoes. The walk will be about two miles. Pre-registration is required; meet at the park office. Ages: adults & children ages 5 & up; free.

Sunday, July 22nd at 2:00 pm

Honey Bees

Come out and meet the park's resident beekeeper, Don George. Find out about the challenges facing modern beekeepers today and the reasons for the decline in the honey bee population. Learn some bee biology and how you can help the honey bee at home. Participants will see an observation hive first-hand. The equipment used for bee keeping will be showcased. A sign-up sheet will be available for anyone wanting to attend a beginner's course on beekeeping. Taste honey and purchase some if you like. Meet in the Salt Wing next to the park office. Ages: adults & children 6 & up; free

Monday to Friday, July 23rd to 27th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Junior Naturalist Camp

Students entering 4th through 7th grade in the fall 2018 spend a week learning about the natural world around them through exploration, games, activities, and crafts. Pre-registration is required. Camp shirts are guaranteed to those registered by June 18th. Fee: \$50 per child.

Sunday, August 5th at 2:00 pm

Knee Deep in the Creek

Explore Kepner Creek for aquatic wildlife. We should find insects, fish, frogs, and salamanders. Learn to evaluate water quality using a biotic index. Wear water shoes or old sneakers and expect to get wet! If you have a net,

please bring it. All creatures will be released unharmed. Meet in parking lot #3 near the kiosk. Ages: adults & children 5 & up; free.

Monday, August 6th at 9:30 am

Ladybug Beetles

Take a closer look at ladybug beetles and other insects, especially those associated with milkweed. There are quite a variety of ladybugs and they differ in both color and the number of spots. Learn about their life cycle and habitat. Younger children can make a ladybug craft after the field activity. Elementary and middle school age children as well as adults interested in ladybugs are encouraged to attend. Meet at the pavilions. Ages: 3-12 with an adult; \$5 per child.

Tuesday, August 7th at 8:00 am

Morning Bird Walk

Believe it or not many birds begin their fall migration in the summer. Join park staff the first Tuesday of every month on a walk to see and hear birds. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet in parking lot #3. All ages; free.

Sunday, August 12th at 2:00 pm

Colonial Tails: Pets in the 18th Century

A park ranger will talk about pets that our forefathers and mothers had. What were the laws regarding pet animals in Colonial times? Sorry, 'Rover' is not invited, but this is a fun program for the whole family. The talk/slide show will be about 60 minutes. Meet in the Salt Wing. All ages; free.

Wednesday, August 15th at 10:00 am

Spiders: the Original Web Designers

Spiders were one of the first predators to walk on land, starting more than 350 million years ago. They are still one of the most successful predators. They live almost everywhere, even in your basement. Find out more about them. Go on a spider search in our meadow. Elementary and middle school age children as well as adults interested in spiders are encouraged to attend. After the field activity younger children can make a spider craft. Meet at the pavilions. Ages 3-12 with an adult; \$5 per child.

Sunday, August 26th at 10:00 am

Dragons and Damsels

No, it's not story book time! Dragonflies and damselflies represent an ancient order of insects that have been on earth since before the dinosaurs. We'll learn about their life history, territorial behavior, and how to recognize individual species. If you have an insect net and a large bug jar (not made of glass), bring them along. Meet in parking lot #3. Ages: adults & children 6 & up; free.

Sunday, August 26th at 7:30 pm

Full Moon Hike

Join a park ranger on a full moon walk. Native Americans called August's full moon the "corn moon." Find out why along with other moon trivia. Meet in parking lot #5. Ages: adults & children 8 & up; free.

Sunday, September 2nd at 6:30 pm

The Eastern Coyote

The Eastern Coyote has quietly colonized the city and suburbs of Philadelphia. Whereas bears and wolves were decimated in this area, the adaptable coyote has filled the vacancy at the top of the food chain. Our local coyotes stick to a field diet of deer, mice, voles, rabbits, and fruit, but they are not averse to eating pet food and garbage. Learn about the natural history of the elusive coyote from Ranger Tim Wilson. Meet in the Salt Wing. Ages: adults & children 6 & up; free.

Tuesday, September 4th at 8:00 am

Fall Migration Bird Walk

The fall migration of birds is in full swing now. Join our regular first-Tuesday-of-the-month walk to look for resident and migrant birds, especially hawks. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet in parking lot #3. All ages; free.

Thursday, September 6th at 1:00 pm

Insect Music

Learn about the many vocalizations of our field insects. Grasshoppers, crickets, and katydids are very noisy at this time of the year. How do they make those sounds? We'll search for noisemaking critters in the meadow and make an insect craft after our field activity. Meet at the pavilions. Ages 3 & up with an adult; fee: \$5 per child.

Saturday, September 15th at 10:00 am

Bark in the Park!

Join one of the park rangers and his dog for a pleasant stroll with your favorite four-legged friend. Time will be spent letting the dogs get to know each other. Proper dog walking etiquette, signs of aggression, and safety will be discussed. The walk should last about an hour. Be sure to bring water. Dogs must be leashed. The walk is limited to 15 dogs. Meet in the office parking lot. Ages: adults & children 8 & up; free.

Sunday, September 23rd from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm (rain date: Sunday, September 30th)

Native American Day for Kids & Families

Join us for a Native American Day for children and families. Blue Jay, Nokomis, and Darius Puff will be back with lots of Native American crafts, games, animal pelts and other please touch items, and Native American stories. Native American legends will be told at 11:30 am, 12:30 pm, and 1:30 pm. The event is held at the picnic pavilions (parking lot #3). All ages; free.

Monday, September 24th at 7:00 pm

Full Moon Hike

Late summer's harvest moon is the full moon closest to the autumnal equinox. The moon looks orange due to its closeness to the horizon. Join a park ranger on a walk in the park past sunset. Meet in parking lot #5. Ages: adults & children 8 & up; free.

Wednesday, September 26th at 1:00 pm

Animal Habitats

Learn about the home requirements of our local animals. Hear a story, play a game, and make an animal habitat craft. Walk with the park naturalist to find animal homes. Meet at the pavilions. Ages 3 & up with an adult; \$5 per child.



ANNUAL FPPA MEMBERS AND FRIENDS MEETING REVIEW

This year our Annual FPPA Members and Friends Meeting was held on April 5 at the Elmwood Park Zoo in their new Hall. Al Zone, the Executive Director and CEO of the Zoo, was the featured speaker. He gave a wonderfully interesting talk featuring how far the Zoo has come since he took over in 2012 and the plans for the future.

The Elmwood Park Zoo is considered a “boutique” Zoo. This means it takes about two to three hours to see everything and is not overwhelming for children. Visitors come back several times a year as opposed to a large Zoo, like the Philadelphia Zoo, where return visits are much less frequent.

Innovations such as bringing in giraffes, the new Trail of the Jaguar Exhibit, a zip line, improved concessions including a wine and beer bar, and having events to attract Zoo visitors have resulted in huge increases in attendance (over 600,000 visits in 2017), with projected attendance of over 1 million in 2018. This rivals the Philadelphia Zoo! The Zoo’s mission is “to foster an appreciation for wildlife and the environment that will inspire active participation in conservation.” The more visitors there are, especially children who are our future, the more this is likely to happen.

Connections with the Norristown Farm Park

One of the plans for the future is the possibility of the Zoo leasing the Castner House, an historic property built in 1802. The House, whose exterior (but not interior) has been stabilized, is located on the edge of the Park near Stanbridge Street at the end of the Schuylkill Valley Connector Trail. Al Zone would like to rehabilitate the House and make it a colonial museum open to the public and free – and he has all the money to do it. This means an historic property in the Park would be preserved for future generations at no cost to the County. Zoo attendees could cross the creek at the Zoo and walk to the Castner House in the Park. This would lead to increased visitors to the Park and more visitors to the Park means more people who would not want anything to happen to the Park. Thus, in one fell swoop, this plan would help preserve, protect and promote the Norristown Farm Park – the Farm Park Preservation Association’s mission!

Another plan involves a trolley running from the Zoo to the Castner House and from the Zoo to downtown Norristown with free parking at the Zoo. Zoo visitors could visit the Park or restaurants and attractions such as Crazy Aaron’s Puttyworld in Norristown. The trolley would run on an established freight train track which is being converted to a passenger line.

Finally, there is a connection already in place between the Zoo and the FPPA-sponsored Bluebird Trail Research Project in the Park run by Stan Robinson, a FPPA Board Member. At the meeting, Al Zone introduced Mark Pulcini, the Zoo’s horticulturist. Mark became interested in the Trail because one of his employees volunteered as a monitor of one of the trails and told him that the Project could use some help. At the same time, Mark had a surplus of volunteers and he thought the Trail Project would be a good joint effort. He would like to hold a fundraiser at the Zoo to help the Project!

It was an interesting and inspiring evening. People from the Zoo are so enthusiastic and passionate that it is catching! We thank the Zoo for letting us have our annual meeting there and for presentations given by Al Zone and Mark Pulcini. It is great that the Elmwood Park Zoo wants to have connections with the Norristown Farm Park, two Montgomery County gems! Also we want to give a big thank you to Stan Huskey, the VP for Public Relations at the Zoo, who early on reached out to the FPPA to tell us about the Zoo, give us a tour and help us set up the meeting.

Norristown Farm Park Advisory Committee Meeting Notes May 18, 2018

By Diana Cassel, Vice President FPPA Board

The Norristown Farm Park (NFP) Advisory Committee was formed when the Farm Park was separated from the Norristown State Hospital and its management turned over to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Montgomery County Division of Parks, Trails and Historic Sites (PT&HS). The NFP Advisory Committee consists of elected and appointed state and municipal officials, members of DCNR and members of Montgomery County PT&HS. Meetings are held three times per year and are open to the public. Members of the Farm Park Preservation Association (FPPA) and the Stony Creek Anglers (SCA) attend all meetings and are on the agenda to express and discuss FPPA and SCA issues.

THE NORRISTOWN FARM PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR MAY 18 WAS CANCELLED AT THE LAST MINUTE. KEN SHELLENBERGER, THE PARK SUPERVISOR, KINDLY SUPPLIED HIS REPORT THAT HE HAD PREPARED TO GIVE AT THE MEETING.

Park Supervisor's Report (as reported by Ken Shellenberger)

Hay Barn Pond

Last fall, Gilmore and Associates and A. D. Marble were hired to develop a plan to dredge the Hay Barn Pond with the goal of restoring the pond to its original depth, while at the same time, turning it into a viable warm water fishery, complete with various amenities. Phase one on the project is nearing completion. It consisted mainly of survey, engineering and design work. As part of Phase 1, a grading plan and a disposal plan were developed. A.D. Marble was recently asked to put together a cost estimate to complete Phase 2, which would address the aspects of testing and permitting. Once complete the project could go out to bid.

Milkhouse Renovations

Penn Trails Environmental recently completed a load bearing test in the basement of the Milkhouse to ensure the stability of the structure and a water infiltration (perk test) behind the staff lot to ensure that any water directed away from the building could be adequately absorbed. The County is waiting for the results of those tests. Dave Kratzer of BAU Architecture is taking into account the necessary design changes and Ann Rothman is working to address any perceived structural inadequacies. International Consultants Inc. was hired to prepare a cost estimate for the renovation project once the full scope has been developed. Once everything is in place the County will forward a set of plans to the State Department of Labor and Industry, seeking their approval of the project before it goes out to bid.

Whitehall Lot Expansion

Urban Engineers has completed a survey of the Whitehall Lot and they have developed a set of plans to double its size. The plans are now being reviewed by West Norriton Township. Once they are approved, the project will be put out to bid, hopefully later this year.

Parking Lot 1 and Lot 3 Expansion

Both lots were recently measured in-house and a set of scale drawings were created for each. In the coming weeks the County will be developing a scope of work for both lots, hoping to double their size. Once the scope of work is finalized, the County will put out an RFP for engineering and design services.

Sheetz House

The condition of the structure continues to decline at a rapid pace. The County is working to complete the last phase of the permitting process. The County hopes to secure the State Department of Labor and Industry's approval so as to have the building demolished as soon as possible.

Eagle Project

On April 14th, Justin Lawrence who happens to be the son of County Commissioner Ken Lawrence completed his Eagle project by constructing and placing 6 wood duck nest boxes at various locations throughout the park. The project was well organized and well attended. 25 volunteers contributed a combined 129 man-hours for the benefit of the project and that of the park.

Future Meeting Dates

September 28, 2018, January 25, 2019 - Both at 1:00 PM at the Visitor Center.

Notes from the FPPA Board

Our newsletter, The Park Enthusiast, is in color on our website (www.farmpark.org).

This summer look for common milkweed in the Park. This plant is essential for monarch butterfly survival. Their caterpillars only eat milkweed and the butterflies need it to lay their eggs.



THE FPPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS SEEKING NEW MEMBERS!

Several of our FPPA Board Members have served for many years and have decided to step down. It is time for new members and fresh ideas! So if you love Norristown Farm Park and would like to be a little more active in our mission of Preserving, Protecting and Promoting the Park, please consider applying to be on the FPPA Board. Following is more information to help you decide.

Duties of Board Members include the following:

- Attend FPPA Board Meetings which are held at 7 PM on the 4th Wednesday of every month except July, August and December.
- If possible, attend Norristown Farm Park Advisory Committee Meetings which are held three times a year on Friday at 1:00 PM at the Park Visitor Center.
- Brainstorming new ideas aligned with our mission and creative tactics to carry them out.
- Engage political and community leaders to help with our mission.
- Oversee and participate in various FPPA Board-sponsored activities.

Examples of Some FPPA Board Activities

- The Bluebird Trail Project, a research program for adults and children run by Board Member Stan Robinson
- The Park Enthusiast, our newsletter published quarterly
- Maintaining FPPA membership and group email lists
- Managing our website and social media sites.
- Writing grants to support projects such as preserving and restoring historical buildings.
- Future projects may include trail restoration and extension, sponsoring aikido seminars, collaboration with local schools and community groups, and more. We need your ideas!

To apply for a position on the FPPA Board, please send your resume with a short cover letter to the address below or email it to diana.cassel@comcast.net (with FPPA resume in the subject line) and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

**Farm Park Preservation Association
P.O. Box 281
Fairview Village, PA 19409-0281**



Stony Creek Anglers Summer News

By Chas Wood, SCA President

1. The **1st Annual Kids Bass Fishing Derby** will be held on Saturday, June 16 at Hoy Park on Arcola road from 8 AM to Noon. We will provide fishing poles and measure fish for prizes. Must pre-register. Rain or Shine.
2. **Catfish Derby #2** on Saturday, June 9 from 8 PM till Sunday, June 10 at 8 AM. Weight in 8 AM till 9 AM sharp. \$25 per angler. Tickets at Harry's Sportfishin' Outlet, 230 W. Germantown Pike. All fish must be alive. Boundaries: Flat Rock Dam in Gladwyne to Black Rock Dam in Phoenixville. River Front Park at the end of Haws Ave for weight in 1st prize \$500, 2nd prize \$300, 3rd prize \$100. Longest fish wins. In case of a tie, we will go by the heaviest fish. For info, call Chas at 267-438-2572.
3. **SCA Work Parties at the Trout Nursery**
 - Saturday, June 9 and Sunday, June 10 from 8 AM to 4 PM. We will supply lunch.
 - Saturday, June 16 and Sunday, June 17 from 8 AM to 4 PM. We will supply lunch.
 - Saturday, June 23 and Sunday, June 24 from 8 AM to 4 PM. We will supply lunch.
 - Saturday, June 30 and Sunday, July 1 from 8 AM to 4 PM. We will supply lunch.
 - Saturday, July 7 and Sunday, July 8 from 8 AM to 4 PM. We will supply lunch.
4. **Catfish Derby #3** on Saturday, July 14 from 8PM till Sunday, July 15 at 8 AM. Weight in 8 AM till 9 AM sharp. \$25 per angler. Tickets at Harry's Sportfishin' Outlet, 230 W. Germantown Pike. All fish must be alive. Boundaries: Flat Rock Dam in Gladwyne to Black Rock Dam in Phoenixville. River Front Park at the end of Haws Ave for weight in 1st prize \$500, 2nd prize \$300, 3rd prize \$100. Longest fish wins. In case of a tie, we will go by the heaviest fish. For info, call Chas at 267-438-2572.
5. **New Fingerlings** arrive at the Nursery on Monday, July 16 at 2 PM. All are welcome to see them.
6. We will host the **PA Federation of Sportsman Clubs** at the Nursery on Monday, July 16 at 7:30 PM. We will have a 50/50, Game Comm. Reports, PA Fish and Boat Comm. Reports, legislation updates, club news and cold drinks and refreshments will be served.
7. The **21st Montgomery County Youth Field Day** held at Camp Hart in Green Lane, PA on Saturday, August 25 from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Rain or Shine. For boys and girls 9-15. It is a free event. T-shirts to all of the kids. We will host the fishing station. Free lunch. You must pre-register at www.montcofyd.org. For information, call Chas at 267-438-2572

Farm Park Preservation Association
P.O. Box 281
Fairview Village, PA 19409-0281
Email: fppa@farmpark.org
Web site: www.farmpark.org



Membership Renewal Rates

Membership Levels

- Family \$20.00
- Individual \$15.00
- Senior Citizen \$10.00
- Student \$10.00

Supporting Levels

- Preserver \$500.00
- Protector \$250.00
- Promoter \$100.00
- Contributor \$ 50.00

Contribution

I want to make a contribution of _____

Please make checks payable to Farm Park Preservation Association, Inc. All contributions to the Farm Park Preservation Association are tax deductible.

Dues payments and contributions also can be made online.

Please Print

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Street

Apt. No

City

State

Zip Code

Email _____

Occupation (optional) _____

Skills _____

Hobbies or special interests _____

What brings you to the Park? _____

What activities/events would you like to see in the Park? _____

Would you be interested in volunteering or helping out for a specific need or activity? _____

Farm Park Preservation Association
P.O. Box 281
Fairview Village, PA 19409-0281
Email: fppa@farmpark.org

We're on the Web
www.farmpark.org
and Facebook!

"The human race is challenged more than ever before to demonstrate our mastery, not over nature but of ourselves."

- Rachel Carson



Use of this Newsletter (or any part of this Newsletter) as a political endorsement is strictly prohibited, as required by law under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

Membership Renewal Reminder

Your FPPA membership lasts four calendar quarters from the quarter in which your membership contribution is received. You will find a number in the upper right hand corner of your mailing label. Check the following table to determine the expiration date of your membership.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Membership Is Due During the Quarter Of:</u>	<u>Membership Expires</u>
1Q2018	January 1, 2018 through March 31, 2018	March 31, 2018
2Q2018	April 1, 2018 through June 30, 2018	June 30, 2018
3Q2018	July 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018	September 30, 2018
4Q2018	October 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018	December 31, 2018

If there is a 2Q2018 in the upper right hand corner of your address label, please forward your membership contribution along with this page (or a copy) no later than June 30, 2018. If there is a 1Q2018, your membership has expired and this will be your last newsletter.