

*Friends of Rocky Fork
State Park*

2023 Highlights and Accomplishments



Friends Annual Program Plan

During the Board's January Mini-Retreat we worked with Park Manager Tim Pharis to jointly sign off on our first TN State Parks Program Plan.

2 PROGRAM GOALS:

- ✓ Implement the All Terrain Wheelchair project to meet all Reeve Foundation grant requirements. STATUS: **ACHIEVED**
- ✓ Formalize Trail Adoption Program STATUS: **Formalized the program.**
Identified need to develop better tracking of trail adoption work next year.

Friends Annual Program Plan

2 FUNDRAISING GOALS:

- ✓ Upper East TN Fiddlers Convention. STATUS: Projected to raise \$2500 Net.
Actual Net came in at \$3439.30
- ✓ Campaign to support All Terrain Wheelchair project. STATUS:
 - Transport Trailer – Denny Bokemeier wrote Rotary Grant which was approved. TN State Parks also provided a trailer to the park.
 - Grading of Trails – Main trail for Wheelchair was determined not to need additional grading.
 - Flint Mountain Trail grading was needed. \$10,000 cost for grading was covered by a \$5000 donation, \$2500 from the TN State Parks Spring Fundraiser and \$2500 from the Friends.

Friends Annual Program Plan

2 MEMBERSHIP GOALS:

- ✓ Board Recruitment – Recruit from individuals actively involved at the park and through our current membership. STATUS: 1 New Board Member Identified, on the slate for election today.
- General Membership – Add 20 new members and retain current members for over 100 Members. STATUS: 2022 Membership was 88. Membership as of December 2 is 99.
Please renew your membership today!

A 2024 Program Plan will be developed jointly with the Park at the 2024 Board Mini-Retreat.



All Terrain Wheelchair

Grant Committee: Carrie Hovey, Emily Goepel, Peggy Cantrell

- Under the guidance of the TN State Parks ADA Coordinator (Don Tate) the best All Terrain Wheelchair for Rocky Fork was chosen.
- Friends purchased and donated the All Terrain Wheelchair with a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.
- The Blue Ghost !





Upper East TN Fiddlers Convention

Teresa Pickett & Lotta Murray, Co-Chairs

- Return of camping, Friday night Concert and Square Dance
- New in 2023 – Folk Music Workshops – Fiddle, Banjo, Dance and Song!
- More prize levels
- Food Trucks



Friends at Fiddlers



TN Commission on the Arts Grant

- The Upper East Fiddlers Convention is a joint effort with Rocky Fork State Park, ETSU Appalachia Studies Dept, the Friends of Rocky Fork and funded through a grant from the TN Commission on the Arts each year.
- The grant in 2024 will now also include the Folk Arts program classes being held all year long. Bark basketry, stone wall building, clay for pottery making, pine needle baskets, maple syrup making, blacksmithing, etc. **These classes are popular and sell out quickly!**

New Friends Merchandise in 2023!

- Bear Paw Decals and long & short sleeve T-Shirts – Adult and Youth
- Glow-in-the-Dark Firefly short sleeve T-Shirts – Adult and Youth
- Radim Schreiber Firefly Prints on Metal – ready to hang in 2 sizes 6x9 & 11x14



Erwin Outdoor Festival

Peggy Cantrell and Andrea Bowman, Co-Chairs



DONATIONS FOR YOGA & \$1 OF EACH PINT
DONATED TO SELECT NON-PROFIT
1/2 PINT FREE FOR PARTICIPANTS

YOGA ON TAP

Free Yoga w/ NoliYogi Instructor
Peggy Cantrell

7-8 pm 4th Thursday Of Each Month

BLUE RIDGE TAPHOUSE
1001 S Industrial Dr. Erwin TN 37650

PLEASE BRING A YOGA MAT IF YOU HAVE ONE
LIMITED SUPPLY OF YOGA MATS ARE PROVIDED
FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT OWN ONE.

CHAIR YOGA AND CHAIRS AVAILABLE



FRFSP Yoga on Tap



- New fundraising event this year offered by Noli Yogi Instructor and FRFSP Friend Peggy Cantrell and hosted by Mason Schmidt at Blue Ridge Paddling.
- 20 people came for yoga, others for brews. All yoga proceeds went to the Friends, all yoga participants received a free 1/2 pint or beverage of choice. Blue Ridge Paddling donated \$1 per pint sold that evening.
- Netted: \$289 and 2 new members!

Guided Hikes Led by Friends

John Beaudet & Bob Fuller, Coordinators

- Spring Wildflowers
- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
- Carolina Mountain Club
- AT Vista



Fireflies !!

Carrie Hovey & Lotta Murray, Co-Chairs

- Friends Volunteers help the Park on their Firefly Event nights. The lottery grew from 8000 entries to 15,000 entries this year!
- Thanks again to the park for allowing the Friends to have their own firefly viewing night at the park!



Bear Track Trail Race and Bat Road Races

Lisa Hazlett, Chair

- Bear Track Trail race – 40 trailrunners
- Bat Road race – 36 runners, 4 walkers





Meet The Mountains

Emily Goepel & Carrie Hovey, Co-Chairs

- New location at Winged Deer Park
- The Blue Ghost Wheelchair made it's first off-site appearance!
- 2 guided hikes brought new visitors to Rocky Fork



Haunted Halloween Storytelling

Chairs: Entire Events Committee plus Friends Member Kathy Redman

- New this year – Friends led the Haunted Halloween event.
- Geared toward families, included a scavenger hunt!



Trail Maintenance, Park Cleanups

- The park scheduled **regular trail maintenance days** throughout the spring and summer. Friends show up and help out! You never know who you'll run into out there!



- The **first Sunday of the month is now designated as Clean Up day** through the Park website. Friends and the public are invited to help Keep Rocky Fork Beautiful!



Friends Build New Kiosk

- Kiosk built at the base of Whitehouse Cliffs Trail with trail map and photos of the volunteer build of this popular trail



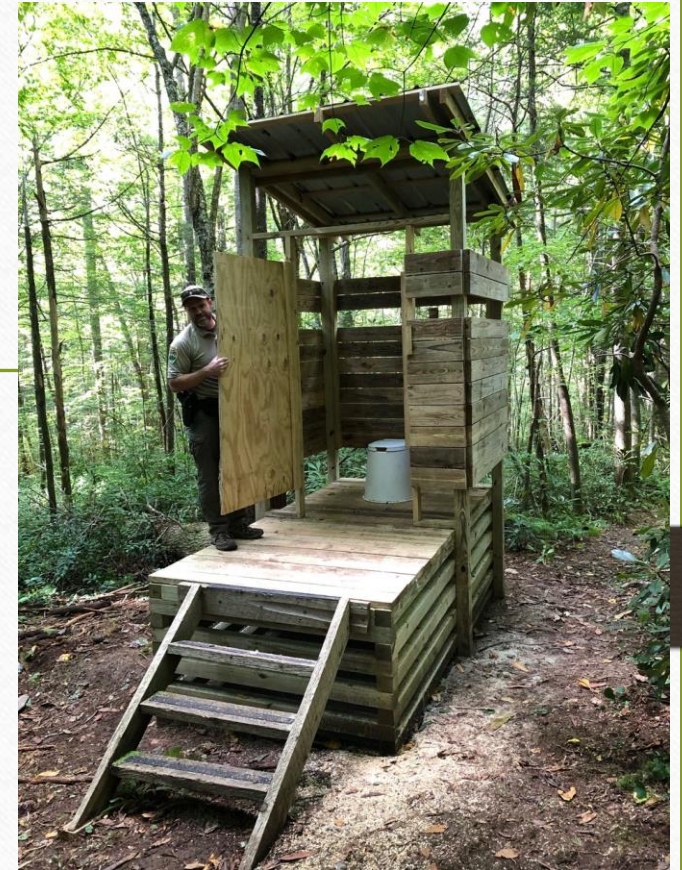
Primitive Campsite Privies

Privy at Flint Creek Campsite funded and built by NFS Volunteers, Friends and ETTA with Park Ranger Jeff

Friends funded, Friends and ETTA built the base



NFS Volunteer Day



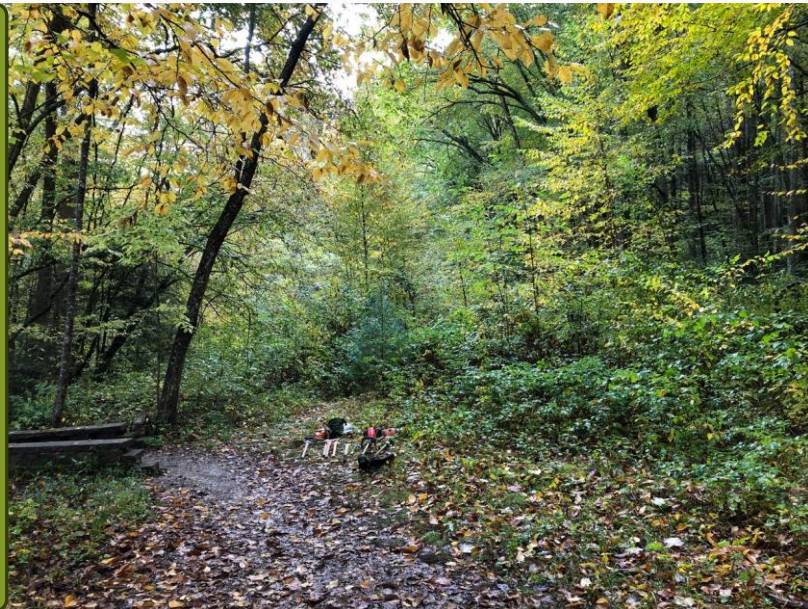
Friends funding approved for Blockstand Creek privy next

Historic field reopened

Some stumps were set up for sitting and enjoying the area – see if you can find them the next time you are out at the park

- Friends and ETTA Members worked with Park Ranger Cory to clear and reopen the field you see on the left after going over the ADA metal bridge.

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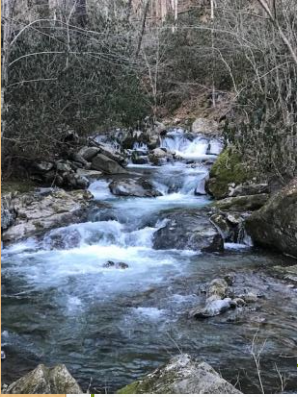
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TN State Parks Friends Conference

- Friends of Rocky Fork had fun participating in the **TN State Parks Friends Conference** – Luke Carter, Teresa Pickett, Carrie and Van Hovey
- Presented at the conference on how we created and use the **FRFSP Newsletter** to recognize Friends participation and achievements and share upcoming plans and activities. It is a record of and showcases the value the Friends group brings in support and funding to Park Leadership as well as Members.





Thank You Friends of Rocky Fork!

- Recorded Volunteer Hours for 2023 are 146 entries for 465.75 documented hours.
- We know there are many, many more undocumented hours.

