

# Friends of Rocky Fork State Park

P.O. Box 1, Flag Pond, TN 37657

Website: [www.rockyforkfriends.org](http://www.rockyforkfriends.org)

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**The fish are biting, the wildflowers are blooming ... Rocky Fork State Park is waking up to Spring! Exciting Members News, too!**

## Park News

*from RFSP Manager Tim Pharis*

### Upper East TN Fiddler's Convention

Upper East Tennessee has long been a land of deep musical traditions. Englishman Cecil Sharp knew this in 1916 when he selected Rocky Fork in Unicoi County as one of his primary stops to collect ballads. And in 1925 the famous Mountain City Fiddler's Convention attracted a who's who of southern Appalachian fiddling, and reminds us just how varied and unique this region is. The story of the music here is one about the movement of people, both in and out of these highlands, and a story about people playing music, from generation to generation, in their chosen community.

The [Upper East Tennessee Fiddler's Convention](http://www.ofiddlersconvention.com) celebrates not only the musical greats from our past but the informal players who carry on this tradition today. The convention will have contests in Fiddle, Banjo, Flatfoot Dance, Folk Song, and Stringband. Prizes for the contest total over \$3300!! Find more info at [www.ofiddlersconvention.com](http://www.ofiddlersconvention.com)

[Come out to compete, or to just sit back, watch, and tap yer toes!](#)



## Upcoming Events

### April 11

FRF Board Meeting  
Flag Pond School 6 pm

### April 30

Upper East TN Fiddler's  
Convention  
Flag Pond School 6 pm

### May/June TBD

Synchronous and Blue Ghost  
Firefly Events

In addition, check out the Rocky Fork State Park website for Park sponsored hikes and activities: [Rocky Fork State Park — Tennessee State Parks \(tnstateparks.com\)](http://Rocky Fork State Park — Tennessee State Parks (tnstateparks.com)) or their Facebook page [@RockyForkStateParkTn](https://www.facebook.com/RockyForkStateParkTn)

### Golden Trout caught in Rocky Fork !!



Loren Thomas - Selfie

Upcoming at the Ranger Station, a **new raised relief map of Rocky Fork** has been designed and donated to the park by Carl Laniak, who also created Frozen Head's raised relief map. The map covers all of Rocky Fork and some of the surrounding mountains. The Ranger Station, 280 Jennie Moore Rd, is planning to be open more frequently during the summer months.

## Park Insights

by RFSP Ranger Jeff Sweeney

### Wildflowers

It's Spring, the gap between winter and summer, and Rocky Fork is an oasis for bountiful populations of ephemeral spring flowers. They grow from March to mid-June until the weather warms and the tree canopy blocks sunlight from reaching the forest floor. There are summer and fall wildflowers, but the most common time is in Spring.

### Where To See

**Rocky Fork Trail** – Sweet White Trillium, Painted Trillium, Dwarf Crested Iris, Bluets, Heartleaf Ginger, Showy Orchis, Wild Geranium, Bloodroot, Halberd Leaf Yellow Violet, Virginia and Carolina Spring Beauty, Jack in the Pulpit

**Flint Creek Trail** – Dutchman's Breeches, Squirrel Corn, Bleeding Heart, Dwarf Crested Iris, Bluets, Trout Lily, Showy Orchis, Pink Lady Slipper, Halberd Leaf Yellow Violet, Virginia and Carolina Spring Beauty

Share your photos on the [Friends of Rocky Fork Facebook page](#) for all to enjoy!



Raised relief RF map by Carl Laniak



## Our Mission

Support and assist Rocky Fork State Park management and staff to protect, preserve, promote, and enhance Rocky Fork State Park. (Non Profit 501-C3)

## 2022 Board of Directors

John Beaudet  
Dennis Bokemeier  
Jim Bowman  
Peggy Cantrell  
Luke Carter  
Emily Goepel  
Carrie Hovey – Vice President  
Carley Lester  
Lotta Murray – Secretary  
Teresa Pickett - Treasurer  
Carl Ramsey  
Walt Ray  
Roger Rice  
Nathan Wilson – President

## Trail Ways

The trails committee recently held our annual trail adopter training session and thanks to the good turnout we now have a pretty full crew of adopters to help keep our trails in good shape. There are a few sections left if anyone else is interested and always room for more. On **April 10<sup>th</sup>** we will have our **first monthly trail work day**, we will be finishing up our spring sweep of trails if needed or working on drainage issues on Blockstand Trail if everything else is good. **Anyone is welcome to come** for this work day, not just the adopters. Bring loppers if you have them, all other tools will be provided. To help everybody plan for these monthly work days we will try for the second Sunday each month. Contact Trails Committee Chair John Beaudet, [bodaciousat@gmail.com](mailto:bodaciousat@gmail.com) if you want to help out or for more info.

As for getting out and walking, this month we point out a few good places to see the extraordinary spring ephemeral wildflowers. In Rocky Fork you don't have to walk to the remote trails to see them. Some of the best are found along the Rocky Fork Trail about ½ mile from the trailhead, on the right. This area draws a crowd, so go a little further... If you are sharp eyed you may spot Pink Lady Slippers just after the fork going up Whiteoak Flats Trail or Whitehouse Cliffs Trail. Or, for hardy hikers who make the steep climb, look for them in abundance just north of the Flint Mountain Shelter on the AT.

## Member News

**The Friends of Rocky Fork** have a lot to look forward to in 2022.

Helping in the Park with the Sparks Property to get it ready for **Dark Sky Viewing** and telescope viewing platforms that will bring a whole new area of interest to the park.

We are excited to support, in conjunction with a matching TN Arts Commission grant, Rocky Fork State Park and ETSU Appalachia Studies, the return of the **Upper East TN Fiddlers Convention**. Great talent celebrating the music of this area.

Watch for the new larger than life size Banjo that goes with the Fiddle from previous years, created by none other than our Friends Board President, Nathan Wilson.

**Friends of Rocky Fork Kiosk**  
Remember to check out our Kiosk when visiting the park!



## The Donor Corner

Acknowledgement, Thanks  
and Recognition  
2021 Donors

Donation levels are:

Bald Eagle	\$1,000 +
Peregrine Falcon	\$ 500 +
Saw-Whet Owl	\$ 100 +

Saw-Whet Owl Donors:

Linda Good  
Tony and Rene Messina  
Jennifer Fields  
Michael Butler

## 2021 Memorial Donations

In memory of Theresa Wilson

## Member Events

### April

Guided Spring Wildflower hike for members – **Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>** - watch your email for time and info

### May

Everyone knows how exciting it is to have our own **firefly event** at the park.

Watch for the lottery on the park website, but back this year will also be a **special night just for some lucky Friends Members**, watch your email for details on how to apply on a first come/first serve basis.

*And in preparation for the fireflies... the following event is open to all members*

### **Save the Date – Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> Firefly Educational Presentation and FRFSP Member Social**

We are excited to reschedule **Will Kuhn**, the director of science and research at Discover Life in America based in Gatlinburg, to share his presentation and knowledge of fireflies with us. He has a masters in entomology, a PhD in evolutionary biology, with particular interest in dragonflies. He is currently working on a firefly field guide.

After his presentation and time for Q&A, we will have a Member Social around the firepit. Food/snacks/refreshments will be provided.

***Watch for other Member Events coming this year!***

## Community Events

Several local events/festivals are returning to our area in 2022 and Friends Volunteers will be there to share information about the park and sign up new members. This Spring includes:

**NoliFest** sponsored by USA Raft – April 22-24

**Erwin Outdoor Festival** – May 7

Want to get involved? We are looking for Volunteers! If you are interested in volunteering, email us at [rockyforkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:rockyforkfriends@gmail.com) and thanks!!

## Board and Member Meetings

Board meetings are held every other month (February/April/June/ August/October in addition to the annual meeting in December and officer elections in January). Board meetings are always open to all members and the public.

Have ideas for future newsletters? Send to [rockyforkfriends@gmail.com](mailto:rockyforkfriends@gmail.com)