

# Friends of Spring Mill Newsletter – Winter 2020

## Winter

The park has a certain beauty this time of year. Not many visitors, especially on cold days and during the week. Some days, the only sound is the winds blowing through the tree branches, and the chatter of birds and squirrels. Bundle up and make a visit to enjoy the winter scenery.



## Winter Volunteer Opportunities

Check out these times and dates for an opportunity to be a volunteer!

### Souvenir Stand

Civil War Winter Camp

February 8 & 9

### Road Clean Up

March TBD

See the next page about this exciting event!

# We Reached Our Goal!

After years of working on raising funds for an all-terrain wheelchair through grants and fund-raising, the Friends of Spring Mill State Park had a chair gifted to them! Through the generosity of the Brown family from Bloomington, a Viking all-terrain chair was donated to them in November.

Thom Brown brought the chair along with a ramp, transport platform, and a second set of tires to the park. The chair had belonged to his wife Theresa. Theresa had loved nature and being outdoors. Thom recounted that when she developed ALS she still wanted a way to get outdoors. So, they looked for a chair that would allow her that same freedom she'd always enjoyed. The Browns had 60 acres in Monroe County and once they found the all-terrain chair for Theresa, she was once again able to get outside. He said every day she possibly could she wanted to be in her chair exploring the forests on their property. The chair brought her great joy and Thom hoped that it would bring other people that same ability to get outside and enjoy nature.

Thom had added a harness to the chair because his wife was very small and he didn't want to risk her falling out of the chair, which will add extra security for those who use it at Spring Mill. HE said their property wasn't flat, and had no trails, and Theresa rode it cross-country most of the time and never turned it over. He said he was amazed how stable the chair is.

Theresa passed away in March 2018.

Her son Devin Brown was at McCormick's Creek State Park earlier this fall and saw the all-terrain wheelchair that park has. He talked to Wyatt Williams and asked if Wyatt knew of any other park that might need a chair. Wyatt, who had worked with the Friends of Spring Mill State Park earlier knew they were trying to raise money for a chair and gave Devin the contact information for Teena Ligman. Devin called and after coordination with the State Disability Coordinator and with Mark Young, Spring Mill Park Manager, the gift of the chair was approved. Thom graciously delivered the chair.

Currently the park is evaluating which trails will be safe for visitors to use the chair on and finalize the guidelines for use of the chair. The Friends of Spring Mill are incredibly grateful to the Brown family for their gift.

The Friends are also evaluating what other project they might use the funds they have collected for the chair on. Several proposals have been made: including a new playground with more accessible features for children with disabilities, a launch ramp for kayaks and canoes that allow people to safely get in and out of kayaks and canoes without falling into the water, or additional accessible doors for the nature center or the interior doors for the Grissom memorial. Another possibility is a smaller all-terrain chair for children since many school groups visit the park.

The Friends are working with the Park to see what projects they would like to see us pursue and then will talk to the donors to see how they would like to see us use the funds they had earlier appropriated. We want to follow donor intent.

# Nine Trees Planted in Village

Friends of Spring Mill and the Indiana Park Alliance teamed up to help replace trees in the Village area of the park. Some of the trees were lost to storms, other to the emerald ash borer, but their shade was missed and the character of the Village began to change without its trees.

With a \$1,550 grant from the Indiana Park Alliance (IPA) and the Friends match of \$250, the park was able to buy nine large trees to plant in the Pioneer Village. The Park decided to wait until Fall to plant the trees since the grant money was received so late in the spring.

The trees were all native trees from a local nursery. Girl Scouts from Troop #6732 came out to help plant the trees. The girls and their leaders helped shovel dirt around the trees and then carry water to the new trees. They were hard workers and with their efforts the new trees should be off to a good start. Leader Amanda Dilks is shown here with Nevaeh Birchfield, Charli Alvey, Kendall Mitchell, Cloi Pridemore, Alisha Stockton, and Lesley Stockton. Mark Young, Spring Mill Park Manager pitched in to help the scouts. Amy Phillips took photos.

The Indiana Parks Alliance (IPA) is a charitable organization that supports and advocates for Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) State Parks and Nature Preserves, and the people they serve through education, promotion, fundraising and assistance for local Friends groups.



## Spring Mill Hosts Annual Friends Conference

On November 16, the Friends of Spring Mill State Park hosted the State-wide Friends conference. Friends from state parks across Indiana attended this meeting to share ideas and network. The Indiana Park Alliance pays the registration for two members from each Friend's group but in order to keep the cost down so more people could attend from each group, the Spring Mill Friends group arranged to have the meal catered in the Nature Center.



Sheree Belt, Park naturalist and other park staff rearranged the Lakeview Activity Center so that the space was spacious and easily accommodated the 57 people who attended. It looked wonderful! The group is shown here waving at the photographer.

There were several great topics covered. Over lunch we offered a tour of the Red Cross cabin with the history of the Red Cross in southern Indiana or a pinecone craft. At the conference, Coletta offered a tour of the pioneer village. The most beneficial part of the conference was when each of the Friend's groups were given 15 minutes to highlight successes or projects that they had accomplished in the last 2 years. Some groups talked about events or fundraisers, while others mentioned grants that they had gotten to buy special things for their parks. Some Friends

groups highlighted how they had generated new members, and other groups mentioned fun things they had done to support their park staff. It was a great time to be inspired by all the possibilities that we heard from other groups and encouraged on what we might want to try at Spring Mill.



One ambitious thing we did was make the conference "green" with real dishes, cloth napkins, china mugs, and real silverware. Rowena Cross Najafi suggested the idea but we all liked it and between Rowena and Teena we came up with plenty of cloth napkins, plates of various sizes, mugs, and silverware. Everything at the conference was compostable, washable, or recyclable. We did our part for the planet that day!

On Sunday the Friends groups from the southern part of the state stayed over to celebrate their major donors at a reception held at the Spring Mill Inn. Some of those who have supported the Friends of Spring Mill came and joined us in this celebration of their support. It was a lovely reception attended by many of the IDNR headquarters and local park staff. We are grateful to all those who have supported our Friends groups throughout the year and helped us accomplish so much!

## Doors for Grissom Memorial Update

Last year, the Friends of Spring Mill received a grant to purchase new doors for the Grissom Memorial that are handicap accessible.

In speaking with Mark Young, Park Manager, the doors have been purchased and have been delivered. Staff from the park should be installing the new doors in the near future.

## New Items for the Concession Stand

Friends of Spring Mill have been raising funds for the group by selling items in the village stand for the past several years. Many of the best-selling items are those made by our membership

Sewn items, woodcrafts, birdhouses, postcards, coasters, stationary and many more items are popular.

New items are needed to keep our sales going strong! If you have an item you would be willing to add to our inventory, please let Teena know!

## Members of Friends of Spring Mill State Park

Membership dues for 2020 are now being collected. Please send them to :

Friends of Spring Mill State Park  
c/o Spring Mill State Park

P.O.Box 376

Mitchell IN 47446

Individual dues \$15

Family dues \$20

## Winter Meeting Dates

January 21,

February 18,

March 17

Annual Meeting in March

April 21

Meetings begin at 6:00 P.M. in Park Office

## For more information on Friends of Spring Mill State Park

contact

Teena Ligman

812-278-0139 or [tdligman@att.net](mailto:tdligman@att.net)

Check out our Facebook Page too!

<https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Spring-Mill-State-Park-200372153942463/>