

Friends

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF MCCONNELL SPRINGS



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December 2021

Volunteer of the Year Awarded to DAR



Park Naturalist Steven Rogers presented the Volunteer of the Year Award for 2020 to the Lexington Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on behalf of The Friends of McConnell Springs.

"The ladies were very excited to receive the award and I could tell that it really meant a lot to them," Rogers said.

The Friends of McConnell Springs would like to thank them for all that they do for the Park!

See How Your Donations Helped This Year

Have you ever wondered where your money goes after you make a donation to The Friends of McConnell Springs? Some of the items that have been funded through donations include:

- Rocks used for the Dry Stone Conservancy 25-hour Marathon Wall Build in the park meadow
- A part-time AmeriCorps Service Member
- Pumpkins for the Jack-O'-Lantern Trail
- Grants for buses to bring school groups to the park for one of the many classes and activities offered by Park staff
- Materials used in Junior Naturalist bags
- Programs such as Founder's Day, History to Chew on, and the Author Series – which we hope to be able to offer again in 2022
- Displays in the Education Center



All donations are greatly appreciated and give the park funds to do many things which may not get funded otherwise. We are looking into possibly upgrading some of the trails in the park within the next few years, and making improvements in some of the other areas of the park, as well. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

Inside: Thank YOU for Giving!



Dear Friends...

Charlie Boland, Chair

I hope this finds each of you well as we enter into the holiday season. The past year and a half have provided many twists and turns as we have seen the impact of a pandemic on literally every aspect of life. Whether home, school, work, church, travel, shopping – you name it – many changes have impacted our personal lives and perspectives, as well as the collective larger communities of which we are all a part. Some impacts we will all be happy to see “in the rear view mirror”; some changes may be here to stay. It is a period of time we will all look back upon as different and life-altering by our various means of measure, understanding, and experience. And, like all trying experiences in life, there can be good things that can come out of it if we take the time to reflect and appreciate lessons learned or new benefits / perspectives gained. We’ve been forced to take a different view of things, and it is my sincere hope that each of us are approaching 2022 with a renewed sense of appreciation of our families, friends, and the world around us.

Speaking of the world around us, McConnell Springs Park proved to be a highly utilized community resource as people sought to find ways to be outside in safe settings to get a breath of fresh air and get some exercise! There were not many restrictions on “the great outdoors” and our board is pleased that so many came to enjoy the park, despite the fact that almost all of the special events we typically host throughout the year were canceled. Many thanks to Steven Rogers, McConnell Springs Park Naturalist and his great team who did a superb job of overseeing the park and are now seeing it spring back to life with great events like the Jack-O’-Lantern Trail where 5,145 people attended, as part of the big-

gest monthly visitation the park has ever recorded – 11,472 people for the month of October! We were also thrilled to host the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Dry Stone Conservancy in late June, where volunteers built a 52-foot section of dry-laid stone fence during a 25-hour marathon build (below).

I also want to thank Jake Karnes who chaired our board through a difficult 2020 with excellence, and our officers and board members who served with commitment and creativity as we brought forward new ideas and park attractions such as our new beehive operation and a new take on our annual wine barrel tasting event. Thanks to each of you, and also welcome to three great new additions to the board, Don Powell, Josh Fain, and David Baird.

Please come see us at the park soon, and we would be so grateful for your support as you consider your end of year giving. Thanks for being there for us, and please have a safe and wonderful holiday season!

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David Baird



Josh Fain



Don Powell



Buzz...is the Word at McConnell Springs

by Jon Hagee, FOMS Board Member and Beekeeper



To the left is our very capable Friends Board Member and co-beekeeper Don Powell, as we inspect the hive of Queen Victoria II, just off the pond boardwalk. This hive did very well last winter and swarmed in the spring. That means, the Queen (Victoria) and the older bees (foragers) left to look for a new home, leaving her daughter in charge. Fortunately, my friend Larry and I were able to catch the swarm, and it is now in an off-site back-up location, in case the hive runs into trouble. The backup hive is called "Queen Victoria, In Exile"! We added a second hive, just off the pond / woodland trail, early this summer.

To the right is a frame of wax comb. The brown cells you see are capped brood (unborn baby bees). The cells that look empty, and have a lot of bees on them, are actually full of eggs & larvae, they are feeding them. The Queen will lay thousands of eggs throughout the year.



The whitish looking cells are wax capped honey. The bees store it that way, and then later they will uncap it and mix it with pollen to make "bee bread" for the brood.

We are currently preparing the beehives for winter. We insulate the top, reduce the entrance to protect from the cold, mice, and other pests and make sure the bees have enough honey for the winter.

Learn more about our bees at: <https://mcconnellsprings.org/bee hive/> As well as a monthly log, at the bottom of the page, we have sensor data that shows what's going on inside the hive!

We welcome financial support for the beehives and The Friends of McConnell Springs. If you would like to help, or have any questions, you can contact us on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/McConnellSpringsPark/>

Fall Barrel Tasting

Our Plein Air Barrel Tasting event was held September 25 with plenty of sunshine and outdoor spaces for safe visiting! We plan to return to our regular last Saturday in March date for 2022 when more wineries will be able to take part. Stay tuned to our website and Facebook page for information.

Thank you to the wineries who participated: 1922 House Vineyards and Winery, Chenault Winery, Chrisman Mill Vineyards, Equus Run Vineyards, Grimes Mill Winery, Hamon Haven Winery, Jean Farris Winery and Bistro, Wildside Winery and Vineyard

Thank YOU for Giving (continued)...

Friend (\$49 and Under)

- Dr. & Mrs. Joe Arterberry
- Ms. Jane Brannon
- Ms. Angela Carpenter
- Ms. Colette Cardwell
- Mr. Mike Cooper
- Mr. and Mrs. Michael DeBoor
- Ms. Jana Faith
- Mr. Walter Johnson
- Mrs. Becky Kemper
- Ms. Terri Koontz
- Mrs. Kathryn McKinley
- Mr. Fred Mills
- Ms. Pamela Mitchell
- Ms. Deana Price
- Mr. Adam Recktenwald
- Ms. Jean Sabharwal

- Ms. Pat Waggener
- Ms. Darreldean Winkler

Grants

- Kentucky American Water Company
- Fayette County Conservancy Grant

Other donations

- Mike Matthews - 2 mounted deerheads, value of \$500

*Friends of McConnell Springs Board Member



Notes from the Naturalist...

by Steven Rogers

Many local birders know that McConnell Springs is a great location to visit to catch a glimpse at migratory birds in the spring and fall each year. The park is home to other avian residents that you may not see during the day but you can hear at night...owls! Eastern Screech Owls (*Megascops asio*) to be exact.

During a Night Hike in the summer of 2021, park staff and visitors were treated to a special surprise, the opportunity to watch a group of young Screech Owls being taught to hunt by their parents! The owls have been heard calling near dusk since that time so the staff is hopeful that this family of owls has set up residence at the park. If so, then the parents will be nesting again in the same location very soon. Even though they are small birds, barely larger than a robin, they are ferocious predators that have been known to hunt animals larger than themselves. Their small stature and impressive camouflage give them a distinct advantage over the animals they hunt, but also makes it very difficult to spot them as they roost in a tree. If you are coming

out for an evening walk be sure to look up at the top of the meadow near the bat habitat poles for signs of the owls and keep your ears open for their calls. To learn more about Screech Owls and others be sure to stop by the Ky American Water Education Center and see our owl display that includes a taxidermy Screech Owl.

New Normal at the Springs...

Just like all other places that host the public, McConnell Springs has had to adjust with rule changes and restrictions during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Restrictions began to ease in the summer of 2021, but as cases began to increase some restrictions were put back in place, such as masks inside of the Education Center. Any restrictions that are implemented at McConnell Springs will be in line with guidance issued by Mayor Linda Gorton for LFUCG facilities. If you have questions or concerns about this matter prior to your visit, please feel free to call the park at 859.225.4073 or visit <https://www.lexingtonky.gov> for the most up to date information.

Jack-O'-Lantern Trail

The 2nd Annual Jack-O'-Lantern Trail at McConnell Springs was held the last week of October 2021. The event was an amazing success by all accounts. Over 700 pumpkins were carved and donated by the public for the event and over 5,000 people visited the park over the four nights to see the jack-o'-lanterns as they lit up the trails. The carvings ranged from ghosts and witches to beloved cartoon characters and inspirational quotes, the creativity of our community was on full display. The park staff gets asked many times "what will you do with all of these pumpkins" and there isn't just one answer to that question. After all of the lights are removed, no small task, some pumpkins are

placed in the woods where they can be eaten by animals and decompose naturally. Some pumpkins are discarded if they have paint or other items that wouldn't decompose, but that usually makes up a very small percentage of the pumpkins. This year though nearly 50 pumpkins were donated to a local farm where the pumpkins were fed to pigs!



The Jack-O'-Lantern Trail appears to be here to stay as it is quickly becoming an event that is loved by our visitors. Be sure to keep an eye out for the Pumpkin Pledge in 2022 so that you can show off your own carving skills and see your jack-o'-lantern on our trails.



The Friends of McConnell Springs
P.O. Box 12196
Lexington, KY 40581-2196

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Friends Information

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/McConnellSprgs>

Facebook: Be our FRIEND: -

<https://www.facebook.com/McConnell-Springs-293733489824/>

Website: www.McConnellSprings.org

Friends – Memberships

The Friends of McConnell Springs is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Your tax-deductible donation supports the preservation of McConnell Springs and educational programs at the site. Can we count on your support in being a Friend? If so, please mail this form to the address below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Donation amount:

\$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25

other: _____

Check this box to make my donation to The Friends of McConnell Springs Endowed Fund #0527 at the BGCF.

Complete the form above and mail it with your membership donation to:

The Friends of McConnell Springs
P.O. Box 12196
Lexington, KY 40581-2196

Trailblazer (\$1,000)

Founder (\$500+)

Preservationist (\$250+)

Builder (\$100+)

Homesteader (\$50+)

Friend (\$49 - under)

No matter what membership level you give, your generosity is greatly appreciated! Thank you for your support!

Our mission

The Friends of McConnell Springs, an independent not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) organization, works in a partnership with the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Division of Parks and Recreation, dedicated to the restoration and preservation of McConnell Springs as:



- a national historic site, recognized as the pioneer encampment in the naming of Lexington, Kentucky;
- an environmental and educational resource; and
- a passive recreational park.

FRIENDS is published by the Friends of McConnell Springs

Editor: Reneé Williams

Contributors: Charlie Boland, Jon Hagee, Karen Higdon, Dick Mathy, Don Powell, Steven Rogers, and Laurie Thomas

McConnell Springs is a natural and historic site at 416 Rebmann Lane in Lexington, Ky. The park has two miles of trails that lets you explore the sinking springs, vegetation, stone fences and vestiges of historic buildings. McConnell Springs boasts more than 130 species of plants and numerous species of urban wildlife that reside at or visit the park. The unique geologic, natural and historic features are protected, providing environmental, cultural and historical education opportunities for the residents of Fayette County and elsewhere.

To learn more about McConnell Springs, call 859.225.4073 or visit www.McConnellSprings.org.