



Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc.

March 2026 Newsletter

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A new year for the Friends of Devil's Den brings some new faces to the leadership of the group. Last fall, new officers were elected and appointed to lead the organization in 2026. I accepted a nomination as President and was elected along with Wesley Schwartz as the new Vice President. Sydney Foster will serve as Secretary while John Crochet will be our Treasurer. For committee leadership: John will hold the Membership Chair while Sydney was chosen as the Newsletter Chair. Matthew Myers from Ozark Trail Runners stepped up to fulfill the role of Volunteer Chair. And while it is not an official position, Will Landreth is now functioning as our Trail Rover, tackling projects throughout the park.

We would love to see even more new faces in 2026 as we begin work to update and re-energize different aspects of the organization. We need your support. Memberships are priced as low as \$10 for students. Every dollar matters and allows us to support the mission of the park in ways that directly enhance visitors' experience. And I invite you to volunteer a little of your time as well. Our state parks have been asked to do much with the Natural State Initiative. We are fortunate to have professional, passionate, dedicated staff in our parks, but that staff is small for the task they have been given. Every bit of volunteer time is critical to the mission. We would love to have you on the team. My door is always open if you have a question or would like to share an idea.

With regards,
James Reeves

President@DevilsDen.org

Winter at the Den: Snow, Service, & What's Next



As winter blanketed Devil's Den in serene snow, we hope these snapshots bring the magic of the Ozarks to your inbox. While the park quiets under white, planning for the busy year is underway!

Our interpretive team is finalizing details for the Annual Bike Festival, set for April 3–4. We're excited to announce that on Friday, April 3, riders can join a guided night ride, a rare chance to experience the trails under the stars! Then on Saturday, April 4, we'll offer guided bike rides throughout the day for every level of mountain biker, from beginner to seasoned rider, so everyone can enjoy the Monument Trails together. We're also thrilled to share that during

the weekend we'll be hosting a screening of *The Impossible Route*, thanks to Experience Fayetteville bringing this inspiring film to the Den.

We're also looking ahead to our annual Bat-O-Rama event, and we would love to partner with the Friends of Devil's Den on a new idea. We're planning an art competition for students in grades 3–8 on the theme "Guardians of the Night: Bats of Arkansas," celebrating the important role bats play in the ecosystems of Devil's Den State Park and across the state. Students will be invited to create original artwork showing bats in action — flying, hunting, or roosting — while incorporating the park's distinctive cliffs, forests, and night skies. The winning design will be featured on the official 2027 Bat-O-Rama button.

Since the Friends group already plays an integral role in supporting park events like Bat-O-Rama, we'd love your input and would be thrilled to work with you on sponsoring this art competition. Please let us know what you think!



Please refer to our website to view the programs and activities planned through March. Many of these are great chances to enjoy the park, learn something new, or bring friends and family along.

Taylor Markham
Park Interpreter

Watch the Ozarks Wake Up at Devil's Den

Although the winter months at the park can be somewhat quieter, many activities still happen here. Believe it or not, we have campers, including tent campers. During the unpredictable weather at the end of January, a few tent campers braved the tough conditions. Most of the time, staff focus on preparing for an influx of visitors that begins in March with spring break and lasts through Thanksgiving. Many repairs and improvements are completed during those short three months before the busy season resumes. While many of these repairs, such as waterlines and utilities, are not visible, others will catch visitor's attention, such as the trees being trimmed along the roadside and in the campgrounds.

The cabin project is progressing steadily, and some cabins will open sooner than expected. Our cabins were built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), one of Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The CCCs were considered one of FDR's favorite initiatives, mainly designed to provide work for unmarried men aged 18 to 25. We have taken care to preserve the historic significance of the exterior, especially since the park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For the interior, some original paint colors have been retained, and the exterior's color is closer to its 1936 appearance. We still use samples of the original furniture, which remain as sturdy as it was 90 years ago. If you're interested in the park's CCC history, check out this website, <https://ccc.cast.uark.edu/>. It was developed at the University of Arkansas with significant help from park staff.

The Devil's Den Trail is receiving a much-needed upgrade. It was also built by the CCCs as a horse and hiking trail, and it remains one of our most popular routes. The level of traffic on this trail is incredible; it could be upwards of 50,000 hikers annually or more. There will be several new bridges and repairs to the original stone steps. The trail showcases the park's geology and is one of the best spots to observe spring wildflowers.

On your next visit, stop by the visitor center to browse our new merchandise, hike or bike a trail, or relax by the lake or creek. Each season offers something different in the park. We will soon be shifting from the starkness of winter to the harmonic motions of spring. Or as Robin Williams said, "Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'"

Tim V. Scott
Assistant Park Superintendent

What a Life Saver!



As you can see in the October Meeting Minutes, below, we were able to fund the park with a rescue wheel! This is sorely needed as it allows park employees to quickly transport visitors on the trails who need medical attention to a safe location. This could be a life saving device, and we are so proud to be able to provide it to the park!

Sydney, Secretary

Park Superintendent Jay Schneider testing the brakes during unboxing of the Terra Tamer litter trail wheel. The wheel assembly straps onto the rescue litter (hard shell stretcher) the Park already has, which can then be rolled by two rescuers (instead of carried by 4 or more) down often narrow trails.

John, Treasurer

AGENDA

Friends of Devil's Den State Park Inc.
Membership Meeting March 7th, 2026

- Call to order 1:00 p.m. at Pavilion
- Approval of September 2025 minutes
- Financial Report
 - 2025 Final
 - 2026 Year to Date
- Membership Report
- Old Business
- New Business
 - Park Staff requests for funds, and reports on past and upcoming events
 - Change date for Fall Membership Meetings
 - Bylaws revision
- Award presentations
- Adjournment: Next meeting after the Bike Race September 1902, 2026 2:30 p.m. in the AV room.

MINUTES

Friends of Devil's Den State Park Inc. Membership Meeting September 13, 2025

The meeting was called to order 3:00 pm in A/V room by Vice-President Harry Harnish, who yielded the chair to Secretary John Crochet. Also present were Treasurer Aimee Crochet, Park Superintendent Jay Schneider, James Reeves, Daniel Schwartz, Wesley Schwartz, Sydney Foster, Matthew Myers, and Will Landreth. Also present were Park Interpreter Kara Helton and guests Donald and Karen Schwartz.

The Secretary presented proxy forms from Steve and Ruth Shepherd and from Thurman and Martha Ragar in blank, and the Chair appointed Harry Harnish to represent them.

Harry moved and Wesley seconded to waive reading of the March 2025 minutes and adopt them as published in the September newsletter. Without objection it was so ordered.

The Treasurer presented a written Financial Report for 2025 YTD. Questions and answers followed. Harry moved and James seconded to accept the report. Without objection it was so ordered.

The Membership Chair gave a Membership Report of 26 total memberships as of September 12, 2025, with 19 Family memberships, 7 Individual members (including 1 Lifetime member) and 0 Organizations; for 45 voting members giving a quorum of 5 for matters on the Agenda and 15 for matters not on the Agenda. He also asked for a moment of silence for Karen Shapland, a member since 2015 who passed away in June, and condolences to her husband Rick Turnbull who remains a Family member. The passing of Barbara Huff was noted in the September newsletter.

Old Business:

Future of organization: John gave a history of the difficulties in keeping the organization running. Discussion of possible future followed, touching on trail maintenance, changes to the Park administration, the softball field, programs, and capital improvements, including the proposed trail litter wheel, which led into:

New Business

Jay submitted a written request for \$700 for the Bike Race and \$150 for the Birder Weekend live raptor program. All other programs funded in the 2025 budget don't require our funding either from not being presented or the Park budget covering them. There was also a capital item in the request which is next on the agenda.

Purchase of rescue litter trail wheel for Park: Jay's request was for \$1860 plus tax & shipping for the purchase of a "Cascade Rescue The Terra Tamer Litter Trail Wheel." John reports that as of this morning the price is \$1859.83 plus \$100 shipping—tax is not stated up front but unless exempt would be 211.72 to rural Washington County. After some discussion

Harry moved and Will seconded to spend up to \$2200.00 for the wheel or for an alternate model determined by Jay to be suitable. A voice vote was held and the motion passes.

The Treasurer submitted a written 2026 Budget proposal. John explained the discrepancy in the amount for the Bike Race of \$525 from Jay's request of \$700 as being that \$500 has been the standard amount for many years but for 2024 and 2025 the Board voted to apply the donations we received in memory of Jack Miller to temporarily replace the \$200 per year that he had donated for the Race for many years, and \$25 remains from those donations to add to the \$500 standard amount for 2026, and further that any change in the amount going forward should be by specific vote of the membership or Board. John spoke to Tim this morning and he will review the finances and get with the Board if more is needed in 2026. Harry moves and Will seconds to adopt the budget as submitted. Without objection the Budget as submitted was adopted.

Election of Officers: After discussion and introductions of those seeking office the floor was opened for nominations of each office in turn with the following results:

For President: Will nominates James Reeves. No further nominations were made, and James Reeves was elected President by voice vote.

For Vice President: Will nominates Wesley Schwartz. No further nominations were made, and Wesley Schwartz was elected President by voice vote.

For Secretary: Wesley nominates Sydney Foster. No further nominations were made, and Sydney Foster was elected Secretary by voice vote.

For Treasurer: Matthew nominates John Crochet. No further nominations were made, and John Crochet was elected Treasurer by voice vote.

Harry moved for a brief recess to allow the current officers to fill vacancies as provided by the Bylaws. Will seconded the motion to recess and without objection it was so ordered. After that brief recess the meeting was called back to order and the Secretary reported that James Reeves was appointed by consensus of the current officers to fill the vacancy in the office of President for the remainder of 2025. The new President appointed the following to Chair positions: John Crochet, Membership; Sydney Foster, Newsletter; Matthew Myers, Volunteers. [Note: After adjournment Harry Harnish resigned as Vice-President and Wesley Schwartz was appointed by consensus of the remaining officers to fill that vacancy.]

Adjournment: Next meeting 3/7/26 1:00 pm in the Pavilion after a half workday. 2026 Bike Race meeting 9/12/26 [as announced in error, actual date 9/13/26] at 2:30 pm in the AV room. Will moves and Harry seconds to adjourn. Without objection so ordered.

John Crochet, Secretary

Meet your New Board of Directors!



James Reeves
President



Wesley Schwartz
Vice President



John Crochet
Treasurer
Membership Chair



Sydney Foster
Secretary
Newsletter Chair



Calendar of Events 2026

FODD Workday and Meeting*	March 7
<i>We will be having our biannual FODD meeting on March 7th, 2026 at 1:00 PM at the pavilion. Please be there if you can! We will also have an opportunity to meet some of the members and help the park with a half work day that morning, starting at 9:00 AM. Plan to meet at the Pavilion (past the swimming pool before the playground). Bring your own lunch, and be prepared for trail work (gloves, trail footwear)!</i>	
Ozark Mountain Bike Festival	April 3rd-5th
Birder Weekend*	May 1-3
Bat-O-Rama*	June 13
Devil's Den Games	July 4
NWA Mountain Bike Championships*	Sept. 19

**Denotes a Friends of Devil's Den sponsored event or activity*

Please fill out if you are unable to attend our meeting. Mail to Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc., PO Box 623, West Fork, AR 72774-0623

PROXY

I hereby appoint _____, or, in his/her absence or inability or unwillingness to serve or if left blank, a person present appointed by the presiding officer, as my proxy at the March, 2026 membership meeting of Friends of Devil's Den State Park, Inc., with the following instructions:

To abstain on all other matters.

This proxy is revocable upon written notice to the Secretary or upon my attendance at the meeting.

Date: _____

Print name(s): _____ Signature(s): _____

For Family Memberships one signature authorizes both votes unless otherwise stated.