



Board Nominations

ATTENTION MEMBERS: Under the By-Laws of Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Inc., the Governance Committee of the Board of Directors is charged with the responsibility of recommending to the Board candidates for election to the Board at the October Annual Membership Meeting. Any member who wishes to be considered by the Committee for nomination, or who wishes to recommend a person to the Committee for consideration, should forward the name and resume of the prospective candidate to Kathleen York, the Friends' Executive Director, at the following address: P. O. Box 601, East Aurora, New York 14052 or at admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org. *Information should be submitted by July 10, 2021.*

From the President

The roots of all goodness lie in the soil of appreciation for goodness.” —Dalai Lama
I am feeling grateful for many things. Maybe it's because it's spring and the park looks so beautiful. Perhaps it's because we seem to be on the downside of the pandemic. There's more.

I am grateful for the many volunteers who helped at “I Love My Park Day, including the East Aurora Senior class.

I'm grateful for the trees donated through the Vogt Family Foundation and the new Planting Program here at the park: (<https://www.friendsofknoxfarm.org/plant-a-tree.html>).

I'm grateful for the fantastic park staff who work so hard every day to maintain the park, including our Park Manager, Andy Hillman. In case you didn't know, Andy has been covering Knox and Evangola Parks for more than a year now.

I'm grateful for the Rotary Club members and other volunteers who are at work scraping and painting the Guest House. We hope to bring it on-line by August as a unique rental venue. Martha Augat, Charlie Kettner and Dave Schifferle and doing great work to bring the house back to its former beauty.

I'm really grateful to our Board who never cease to amaze me with their dedication. We have just started work on a new Strategic Plan, so standby by for updates from Jody Valdes. Our goal is to present the plan to membership at our annual meeting in October.

I'm especially grateful to our wonderful staff, Kathleen York and Marcia McNallie. I don't know what we would do without them!

So yes, we have a lot to be grateful for. Our park is improving in so many ways, it's super exciting. We have a long way to go. Won't you help? I'm so grateful to those who have!



JERRY IRVING
President

Executive Director

KATHLEEN YORK

Director, Event & Facilities

MARCIA MCNALLIE

Board of Directors

JERRY IRVING
President

PAUL BATTAGLIA
Vice President

CAROLINE WALTER
Treasurer

CARLIE GRAVES
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Board Members

DON AUBRECHT

MARTHA AUGAT

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STANLEY EVANS

ALLEXIS FRIESS

CHARLES KETTNER

LINDA LAMANNA

DAVID SCHIFFERLE

ROBIN SHANAHAN

JODY VALDES

- With an incredibly beautiful start to the spring/summer season, we have seen a strong and steady daily visitor pattern at the park.
- With the ability utilize the mansion as a wedding and events venue again, we have seen an increase of rentals for both weddings and other special events this summer; many weeks will see two celebrations; (to accommodate postponed events from 2020).
- With The Friend's new and expanded agreement with NYS to manage the operations at the Guest House and Stables (along with the Mansion), we will be seeing an increase in usage at those two sites. The Guest House renovations are progressing beautifully and we hope to offer it as a unique lodging opportunity to wedding parties as soon as late summer. We are trialing some events at the Stables this summer to gauge the capacity and limitations of the site as we plan for the long term (and costly) process of its preservation and utilization.
- With recent Covid regulations being lifted, it looks like the largest event at Knox; Borderland, will be able to proceed at full capacity this year. With our new agreement; The Friends (and by extension the park) will directly benefit in ways not possible during past events.

These are good and necessary activities. State funding is dependent in part on attendance and usage of our parks. Without the standard state park vehicle use fee charged at most NYS Parks and Historic sites, Knox is at a disadvantage when it comes to internal revenue capacity; (good news for visitors- bad news for the park). However; as we are able to convince NYS that Knox Farm is a valuable resource to the community, we are able to justify investment in its preservation and maintenance.

- After a year of minimal traffic on the internal drives, (due to the cancellation of weddings and fundraising events), it is difficult to reacclimate to sharing the roads with vehicles that need access to the Mansion and Guest House. If you are driving within the park, the 10mph speed limit is crucial. If you are walking on the paved drive, please be conscious of the increased traffic.
- With the increased activities there has been concern for the passive use of the park and the preservation of greenspace and wildlife habitats.

These concerns are also good and necessary! I encourage public involvement as we, The Friends of Knox Farm State Park begin the process of developing our utilization and preservation plan; especially as it pertains to the Stables. This involvement must include communication. Social media can be a useful tool to spread information. It is not; however, a communication tool, and can be harmful. I am open to and welcome a dialogue with those of you who wish to become involved in advocating for the greenspace and wildlife habitats at Knox.

Our agreement with NYS allows The Friends to operate and manage the Guest House and the Stables, and comes from a well-earned trust based on our history with The Mansion and our relationship with the park system. We take the stewardship of these important structures very seriously and continuously strive to work within the mission of The Friends: "...to preserve and promote the unique character, history, and beauty of the Park for the community and for generations to come". The board of directors and I look forward to working with our members, the state, and the community as we move forward with this mission.

KATHLEEN YORK
Executive Director
admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org



Horseback Riders in Knox Farm

You may have encountered horseback riders in Knox Farm State Park. The park was originally designed for horseback riding and carriage driving when the estate was owned by the Knox family and it's still a great place to ride today. There are several of us who bring our horses to the park on a regular basis, leaving the trailers near the soccer field, we ride in and enjoy a beautiful quiet ride through wonderfully maintained trails. We usually have a ride of approximately 1-1/2 hours.

We are members of the Aurora Trail Riders, Inc., a small riding club that has been in existence since the 1940s and that usually sponsors trail rides at member's farms or public lands with a picnic afterwards. Of course, this past year we had to cancel or postpone our group activities so Knox Farm being nearby has been especially important to us although most of us have been riding at Knox Farm since before it became a State Park.

Since social distancing started, this is a great activity we can do while maintaining our distance from each other and all the other people enjoying the park as well.

We enjoy meeting people walking in the park and our horses are calm and very used to seeing most of the activities that go on in the park but can be startled. It does help if people walking would say hello since then the horses recognize you as friends. This especially helps if you happen to be riding a bicycle. Small children should stay close to you and stop riding their bike or scooter while we pass. If you are walking with your dog, please make sure to keep it on the leash.

We are so glad we have use of this great State Park!

ALEXIS DICKERSON
Friends of Knox Member





Garden Club News

A great big THANK YOU to the Knox Farm Garden Club for leading volunteers from “Love My Park Day” and the East Aurora High School as well as working tirelessly themselves to get the gardens in tip top shape! All of the gardens look fantastic and we have received many compliments. This spring 17 yards of mulch were laid, bushes trimmed, flowers and trees were planted and of course, weeds were picked! The gardeners can be found around the Main House and Secret Garden Thursday mornings from 9:00-11:00, weather permitting. Come join them and keep an eye out for their pop-up plant sale!

LISA SCHIFFERLE
Friends of Knox Member

Help support the Garden Club by donating old garden tools. We'd be happy to put to use:

- Gift Card to any area nursery-Support two places you love at the same time!
- Cordless leaf blower
- Cordless weed wacker
- Spear-head shovel
- Sturdy hand trowels
- Good quality hand pruners and loppers
- Neem oil
- Deer Stopper



Guest House Update

Great progress has been made on the renovations to the guest house in the last few months with much of the inside preparation and painting nearing completion. In addition to finishing the dining room, the HVAC system was completed, wainscoting added in the kitchen and three of the five bedrooms are freshly painted. Through one of many generous donations, we will be installing kitchen cupboards and counters in the next month and a new hot water system. Late May, we started scraping and painting the outside of the house that has not seen new paint in many years. With the help of a number of volunteers, including the Rotary and Friends of Knox, progress is showing. I'd again like to thank our volunteers and state park workers for the terrific work so far. Stay tuned for some new pictures and updates.

DAVID SCHIFFERLE
Board Member





Ever After - A Virtual Wedding Show

The Virtual Wedding Show 2021 fundraiser was scheduled for Saturday, May 8th from 10am-2pm. Admission to the show was free.

The virtual show showcased videos of vendors inside & outside The Mansion on this Facebook event, <https://fb.me/e/3lsiQBGLC>, giving you a feel of what it would be like to actually attend a wedding at The Mansion. You can still check out all the videos at any time by clicking the link above!

Big shout out to our sponsors: Knight Photography, Cardea Health Integrative, Creative Elegance Weddings and Frontier Catering! Thanks to them, the park will be a better place for all to enjoy!

There were 19 vendors participating. They include: Dessert Deli Bakery, Brenda Babe Bridal, McCarthy Tents & Events, Bushel & A Peck Event Creative and Design, Services at Sunset, Sweet, Melody's, Party of Nine, Salon Elizabeth, Not Your Average Vacation, Buffalo Sound Productions, Hollenbeck's Photography, Tap Truck Buffalo, Banner Farm WNY, The Aurora Theatre and Popcorn Shop and DJ Michael Khoury. Types of vendors included a caterer, dessert caterer, gelato/sorbet food truck, photographers, wedding planner/coordinator, wedding design vendor, floral design vendor, DJs, band, wedding officiant, rental/tent company, carriage ride service, bartending service, travel company, hairstylist/makeup artist, a spa, popcorn favor/table, theater marquee and ceremony venue and bridal shop. Please consider supporting these businesses!

There were lots of awesome giveaways/raffles! They included a free engagement photo session at Knox, a spa day package (yoga class, signature facial, and IV therapy - valued at \$250), \$200 toward a design package/day of coordination, wine & chocolate, \$100 off floral or coordination package, \$50 gift card, gallon tins of gourmet popcorn, \$200 Buffalo Sound Production gift certificate, custom tumblers & a bottle of Robert Mondavi wine, \$50 off a carriage ride, one hour photo session and a set of pint glasses and sweatshirt.

As you may have guessed, participants had lots of fun and thought it was a great show! Looks like next year we will be able to have an in-person wedding show! Yippee!

MARCIA MCNALLIE
Director, Events & Facilities

2021 Mansion Rental Season

I am ecstatic to report that this year is the busiest year ever! We're thankfully almost making up for the slow season we had last year. We have thirty-three events booked. Twenty-nine are weddings, one is a luncheon meeting, one is the Borderland VIP Party, one is a memorial reception and one is a 70th birthday party. Another wedding and private party are also in the process of potentially booking.

Next year we have seventeen weddings booked. In addition, seven weddings are penciled as well as a brunch and the Borderland VIP Party. We also have a wedding penciled for 2023, believe it or not!

I am so grateful to the Friends Board and Kathleen, the Executive Director, for keeping me on remotely. Kathleen and Martha Augut have been instrumental in making it work without a hitch. We make a great team!

Huge shout out to all our volunteer mansion monitors for their assistance at all the events! Without them, we would not have such successful seasons year after year! We are forever grateful! If you are interested in volunteering to monitor, please email Marcia at info@themansionatknoxfarm.org.

Hay Wagon Ride Fundraiser

Book a \$100 private ride for up to 10 adults by emailing Marcia at info@themansionatknoxfarm.org! Adults only please and no pets.

The 45 minute tractor pulled tour loops around the park trails and through the woods. John Glenn, the former Knox Family Farm Manager, volunteers his time to narrate. He has extensive knowledge of the Knox Family and farm history.

So far there have been three private hayride tours booked and everyone has had a blast! Board member, Charlie Kettner, volunteered to drive two of the three hayrides and Board member, Linda LaManna's husband Bob, was the other volunteer driver. We are extremely grateful for all these volunteers! Please email Marcia at the above email if you would be interested in volunteering to drive the tractor for future rides/tours.

The hay wagon has new tires that were donated by Bach's Towing! Without their donation, this fundraiser would not have been possible. Thank you!

All monies raised go to the betterment of the Park.

MARCIA MCNALLIE
Director, Events & Facilities



Knox Nature News

If you spend the day asking visitors in the park what makes Knox Farm such a special place, you'll probably get a variety of answers. Many come to enjoy the historic buildings from the Knox family, others come to relax in the peace and serenity the park provides, and of course one of the most popular answers you would get, is to enjoy spending time with their canine companion in the dog park. For me however, there is something that makes Knox Farm very unique among our state parks, and it comes in the form of a visitor from the southern interior of South America.

Hopefully that last sentence caught your attention because this visitor travels about 12,500 miles round-trip every year, in one of the longest migrations of any new world passerine. What's a passerine and why would it travel so far to Knox Farm? Well if you have worked out that we're talking about a species of bird you would be correct! Bobolinks are one of the most charismatic summertime residents in the park and they fly here every year to breed.

Bobolinks are certainly not restricted to Knox Farm alone. They can be found in other suitable locations, but the park provides some of the best viewing opportunities around, and you only need to take a few steps from the main parking lot! These boisterous birds are obligate grassland nesters, meaning they will only nest in grassland habitats, and more importantly, grassland habitats that do not get mowed during the summer months.

Here in the park our fields are mowed in August, after young Bobolinks have fledged and are capable of flight. Because most of the fields in New York are used for agriculture and are cut or harvested much earlier, suitable nesting habitat for Bobolinks and other grassland species is hard to find. Scientists have estimated over a 50% decline in grassland breeding bird species in the United States, making protected places like Knox Farm extremely important.

Males Bobolinks perform an incredible aerial display, fluttering over the field while delivering a bubbling, tinkling song which reminds some of R2D2 from Star Wars. Females construct their nest on the ground and lay 3-7 eggs which take around 10-15 days to incubate. Because nests are on the ground it is critical that visitors stay along the trails and keep from walking through the fields during the nesting season.

While mid-May through June tends to be the best time to see the captivating display flights of Bobolinks, you can find them hunting in the tall grass during any visit to the park throughout the summer months. Many of our trails provide excellent viewing locations, and as I have discovered during my time working for the park, any walk along the high grass in Knox is a rewarding experience with Bobolinks.

MATT NUSSTEIN

Park Naturalist

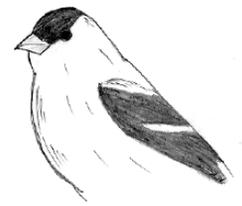


Male Bobolink





Knox Farm State Park INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS Summer 2021



American Goldfinch

*Join a park naturalist on our free interpretive programs!
All programs meet in the visitor parking area*

Saturday, July 10th

10:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.

Pollinators of Summer



Honeybee

Explore the gardens of Knox Farm to learn about local pollinators and collect data for the Empire State Native Pollinator Survey.

Call 716-549-1050 to register

Saturday, July 10th

2:00 p.m. — 4:00 p.m.

Butterfly Beauties



Red Admiral

Enjoy a relaxing walk through the wildflower meadow to explore the diversity of butterflies in the park.

Call 716-549-1050 to register

Tuesday, August 10th

9:00 p.m. — 10:30 p.m.

Under a Perseid Sky

The Perseid Meteor Shower can produce 50-100 meteors per hour, making it one of the most spectacular events of the summer! Bring a chair or blanket and enjoy the shooting stars!

Call 716-549-1050 to register

Wednesday, September 15th

1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday Woods Walk

Explore the summertime lives of the plants and animals who call Knox Farm home.

Call 716-549-1050 to register



Barn Swallow

Wednesday, September 15th

5:30 p.m. — 8:00 p.m.

Evening Waterfall Walk

Embark on a journey to Knox Falls and experience the park during twilight hours.

This is an intermediate level hike.

Call 716-549-1050 to register



Tree Swallow



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

Friends of Knox State Park and NYS Parks Partnership:

KNOX FARM PLANTING PROJECT

Improving the park one tree at a time

HONOR A LOVED ONE- OR COMMEMORATE A SPECIAL EVENT.

Plant a tree at the park:

Purchasing a tree as a gift to the park is the perfect way to remember special people and special occasions. Best of all, it supports the beauty and sustainability of the park. Your gift will be a lasting improvement to our landscape.

WHY ARE WE LOSING TREES?

Many factors contribute to the need for trees at the park:

- Stress from insect infestations.
- Extreme weather conditions including drought, heavy rainfall and blizzards.
- Heavy recreational usage in certain areas.
- Natural attrition due to age and location.

WHAT DOES MY TREE PURCHASE INCLUDE?

All donations are tax deductible and include:

- Cost of tree plus delivery, planting and maintenance.
- Tree wrap, stakes, irrigation bag, mulch.
- GPS coordinate of your tree once planted
- Engraved leaf plate to be placed on a memorial plaque inside Visitor's Center.

DO I HAVE CHOICES?

Species and location decisions are ultimately a park decision:

Donors may choose between evergreen trees and deciduous trees. All trees planted at Knox will be mature, native species and will be planted within a pre-determined landscape plan. Plantings will occur twice a year; in the spring and fall. Species decisions may be determined due to seasonal availability.

**THIS PROGRAM IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NYS PARKS
AND THE FRIENDS OF KNOX FARM STATE PARK, INC.**

Your stewardship of the park is greatly appreciated



Trees can be ordered online at:
www.friendsofknoxfarm.org

or mailed to:

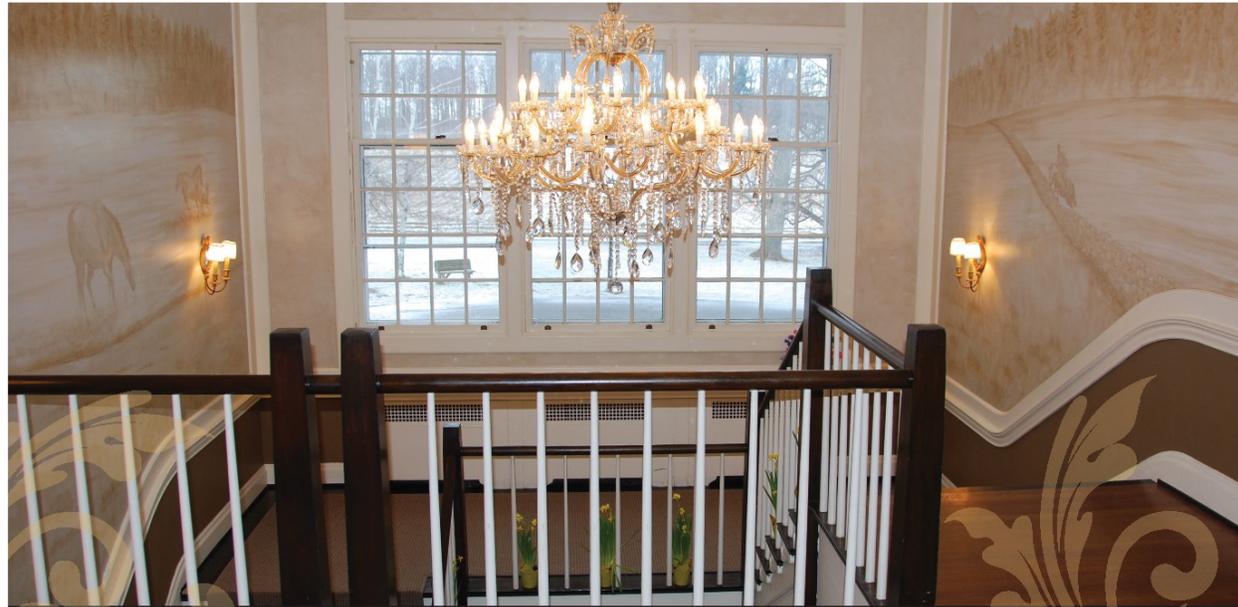
Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Inc.
P.O. Box 601, East Aurora, NY 14052

Questions? email: admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

Friends - Please Share with anyone you may know who is looking for a unique venue to hold an event. Thank You!



WELCOME TO THE
Main House
AT KNOX FARM STATE PARK



This unique venue can be rented for
weddings,
corporate events,
private parties,
& fundraising events
May through October.



For more information, availability and rates; please visit our website, weddingsatknox.com



Friends, Please be Aware

A gentle reminder to please leash and clean up after your dog.



Your Input Matters

We would like to hear from you. If you have thoughts about the park that you would like to share with the Friends Board of Directors and the readers of this newsletter, email them to us at admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org We will include them in a future issue of the newsletter as space permits.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PARTNER \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> PREMIER \$300 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PATRON \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS \$250 |

For VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES or TO JOIN ONLINE

VISIT OUR WEBSITE www.friendsofknoxfarm.org

*Business members are listed and linked on our website

About The Friends of Knox Farm State Park:

The Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation. Our primary mission is to promote, support, preserve and protect the recreational facilities, natural habitats, permanent green space and historic education programs and activities that develop an understanding and appreciation for the Park, nature and the environment. We work under a partnership with New York State Office of Parks and Recreation to facilitate our mission.