



## From The President

Hopefully everyone fared well during the late December blizzard. Thankfully, Knox Farm survived with some minor tree and gutter damage. The Friends of Knox Farm had a great 2022 and we look forward to 2023 being just as terrific! Our main focus for the new year will be improving and repairing the stables. With the ongoing functions at the Mansion and Guesthouse, Bark Bash and possibly the return of the Holiday Arts and Crafts show our list keeps growing.

Your volunteer efforts and membership are key to moving forward with our mission.

The Friends board of directors along with our executive director wish everyone a wonderful winter season and look forward to seeing you in the park. Thanks!

DAVE  
SCHIFFERLE  
*President*

## New Park Manager at Knox

### Welcome Steve Lee: Knox Farm State Park Manager

In November, we welcomed Steve Lee as Knox Farm State Park's newest Park Manager. A deserved promotion within the Park's system for Andy Hillman precipitated this hire. (Andy continues to make his home here in East Aurora, and has been instrumental in a smooth transition for Steve. We are fortunate to have Andy at the park!)

Steve began his career with NYS Parks in April of 2000 at Golden Hill State Park. He has steadily worked his way through the Niagara region and for the past nine years has served the park system as the supervisor of the SPIF (State Park Infrastructure Fund) team. Steve specializes in construction and state procurement and is gifted in balancing multiple priorities. In the fall of 2022, Steve received a special achievement award from NYS for his work at Four Mile Creek State Park; transforming that site from a problematic park into one that now receives consistent praise from its patrons. Steve has put many changes and repairs into effect here at Knox in the past few months, along with TWO post blizzard cleanups.

With continued work on the mansion and ambitious plans for the stables, Steve is an ideal State partner for The Friends organization. You are more likely to find Steve in a truck or out on the park grounds than in his office; please help us make him welcome if you see him on your visit.

### Executive Director

KATHLEEN YORK

### Operations Manager

MARCIA MCNALLIE

### Board of Directors

DAVE SCHIFFERLE

*President*

CHARLIE KETTNER

*Vice President*

MELISSA STEVENER-CRYAN

*Treasurer*

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### Board Members

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JODY VALDES

JACOB MERRILL

DAVE NORTON

TYLER BAUER

SONIA TITO

2023 is starting as a season of new faces at Knox. For those of you who don't like change, please be assured, these are all good and welcome additions to the park, and will result in an increased stewardship of our treasured space.

- Stephen Lee stepped into the park manager role at Knox Farm State Park in the fall of 2022 and quickly began implementing improvements and changes. A more detailed introduction is included above.
- The Interpretive Department at NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has also made some changes that will impact Knox Farm. If you have ever participated in a guided nature tour at Knox, you have met and been charmed by Matt Nusstein.

Matt has served as the Niagara Region Environmental Educator for the Interpretive Programs Office at several parks, including Knox. Matt will be transferring his skills to Letchworth State Park (Humphrey Nature Center), and we wish him every success. Moving forward, Nicole Czarnecki will be leading and guiding programs at Knox. Please consider signing up for a winter interpretive program as an added way to enjoy the park, and to help us welcome Nicole.



- Within the Friends organization, we are transitioning leadership. I would personally like to extend huge gratitude to Paul Battaglia and Jerry Irving who have both served as president and vice-president of The Friends board during my time here. Their commitment to the park is steadfast. Their thoughtful leadership at the organizational level has guided me into a position that I am exceptionally proud of. Both Jerry and Paul's executive terms expired this fall. Dave Schifferle and Charlie Kettner have stepped into the president and vice-president roles respectively, and I look forward to working with them. Dave and Charlie were both instrumental in the successful restoration of the Guest House in 2020 and 2021, and are excited about the initiatives we have for the coming year.
- In 2021 we expanded our agreement with NYS to include management of the Guest House and the Stables, (in addition to the Mansion). The on-site management of these properties has been assumed by longtime "Friend" and board member, Martha Augat. Martha filled this role in 2021 on a volunteer basis and has brought many years of hospitality experience to our organization. She began working with our Operations Manager, Marcia McNallie in 2022, so while this "welcome" is somewhat belated, it is a great opportunity to showcase a recent change to the organization's structure that was driven by a focus on the best interests of our renters and the three properties.
- Each of these new faces represents a dedicated person who's professional and personal goal is to enhance the visitor experience at Knox. This is a very exciting time for the park with an influx of new energy and ideas.

KATHLEEN YORK  
*Executive Director*  
admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org

# Thank you to our Business Partners:



**JOE CECCONI'S**  
**CHRYSLER COMPLEX**



Mind Squad  
HR, inside and out[sourced]



MARTHA BUYER

Communications Technology Law

DEBORAH R HILL PAINTINGS



Rutecki agency



## Stables Campaign

The Friends of Knox Farm State Park conducted our first year-end campaign in November and December of 2022. A huge THANK YOU to all our supporters that responded to this campaign. The Stables restoration will take many years and millions of dollars. We are thrilled to be taking these first steps in partnership with the state and with the support of our Friends. Over \$7,000 was raised and will be used to begin work on restoring the windows at the stables. Some of this work will utilize volunteers; so if you are experienced in window glazing, painting, or repairs, and are interested in helping, please email us! (admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org)

### Help support the Stables Campaign:

- [Online Donations at our website:](https://www.friendsofknoxfarm.org/)  
<https://www.friendsofknoxfarm.org/>

**2023 initiatives include:**  
Stables aisleway repair/replacement  
Window and door restoration

## Spring Intern:



Rachael Kroneiss is another new face at Knox. Rachael is in her senior year at UB with a Communications major and will be helping with internal operations, fundraising, and technical support in the office this spring. Rachael has already begun sorting out our volunteer database and I have high hopes for a new level of organization this year! She will also be learning about the many facets of the not-for-profit world, and our unique partnership with NYS Parks.

Welcome Rachael!

## Library in the Woods:

Winter is the time to cozy up with a book (and maybe a furry friend?) This is a great time to remind you about the Library in The Woods; Knox Farm's "Give-and-Take" library. If you aren't familiar with it, it is located at the entrance to the wooded trails; trail head adjacent to the main parking lot. Reminder: it is a GIVE and take... feel free to donate a book or two when you visit. One more way to support the park!



## Knox Nature News

While many of the bird species found in the park have flown south for the winter, some northern species consider our part of the world “south” and spend the winter here with us. American tree sparrows, snow buntings and rough-legged hawks regularly move into our region in the winter months, escaping the extreme cold of their northern homes.

These visitors from the north make winter birding fun, and last winter one bird in particular made for an exciting 3 months in the park. A northern shrike was first observed by Brad Felton in November 2021, the bird spent several months in the park and was last reported in early February 2022. What makes this sighting so interesting? Not only was this the first documented occurrence of a northern shrike in Knox Farm, but the life history of this species is quite unique in and of itself.

Northern shrikes stand out because of their unusual hunting habits. The bird’s Latin name, *Lanius borealis*, “northern butcher or butcher bird”, alludes to its behavior. While northern shrikes are a species of songbird, they differ from the majority in that they are predatory. With the appetite of a hawk or owl, the northern shrike hunts and kills for a living but again, remaining different. Because the shrike is small, think robin sized, it kills not with powerful talons, but with its sharp, hooked bill.

The shrike begins its hunt perched atop a tall shrub or tree at the edge of a field where it surveys the surrounding area for songbirds, and small mammals. At Knox Farm there are plenty of grassy fields surrounded by tall trees, the perfect hunting grounds. With a sentinel’s gaze, the shrike patiently waits for its prey. Once the prey is located, the shrike swoops down and delivers a killing blow to its victim with its hooked bill, dispatching its meal quickly and efficiently.

You may hear a birdwatcher refer to the northern shrike as the “butcher bird”. This alternate name reflects another unique behavior exhibited. If prey is abundant to the shrike, it may kill more than it can consume in a single sitting. If so, it will store the extra prey for later, skewering it to a thorn or sharp object, butcher style, until needed.

On several occasions, onlookers at Knox witnessed a local red-tailed hawk taking advantage of this butchering habit. The hawk quickly learned a readily available food supply was hanging from the tree and was often successful in reaping the rewards of the shrikes’ hunting forays. While the shrike was wise to the pirating of its food cache, it was too small to deter the much larger red-tailed hawk. A local environmental education group caught some of this interaction on video which can be viewed by copying and pasting the following url ([https://www.facebook.com/earthspiritedu/videos/102699667119\\_1226](https://www.facebook.com/earthspiritedu/videos/102699667119_1226)). Be on the look out for a northern shrike this winter and if you do find one, take some time to enjoy this special visitor from the north.



Northern Shrike

MATT NUSSTEIN  
*Park Naturalist*





# Knox Farm State Park INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS *January - February 2023*



**Sunday January 1st  
11:00am-12:30 pm  
First Day Dog Walk**



**Welcome in the new year with your best friend and a park naturalist! Together, we will explore wintry wonders of Knox Farm. Please make sure you and your dog are prepared to be out in the elements. Additionally, all dogs should be on a non-retractable leash no more than 6 ft. in length.**

**Call 716-282-5154 to register**



**Saturday January 21st  
10:00am-12:00pm  
Ski-mour Knox: Beginners**

**Enjoy a relaxing morning of cross-country skiing along the beautiful rolling hills of the former Knox family estate. This outing is best for beginner skiers and we have a limited number of skis available to borrow.**

**Call 716-549-1050 to register**

**Saturday January 21st  
1:30pm-3:30pm  
Ski-mour Knox: Intermediate**



**Enjoy a relaxing morning of cross-country skiing along the beautiful rolling hills of the former Knox family estate. This outing is best for intermediate level skiers and we have a limited number of skis available to borrow.**

**Call 716-549-1050 to register**



**Friday February 17th  
10:00am-12:00pm  
Great Backyard Bird Count**



Blue Jay

**Get your binoculars ready and join us for the Great Backyard Bird Count! Sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, this annual community science project invites bird watchers of all ages to count birds and help create a real-time snapshot of bird populations.**

**Call 716-549-1050 to register**



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

[www.parks.ny.gov](http://www.parks.ny.gov)



# Knox Farm State Park INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS *January - February 2023*



**Friday February 17th**  
**1:00pm-3:00 pm**  
**Winter Tree I.D**



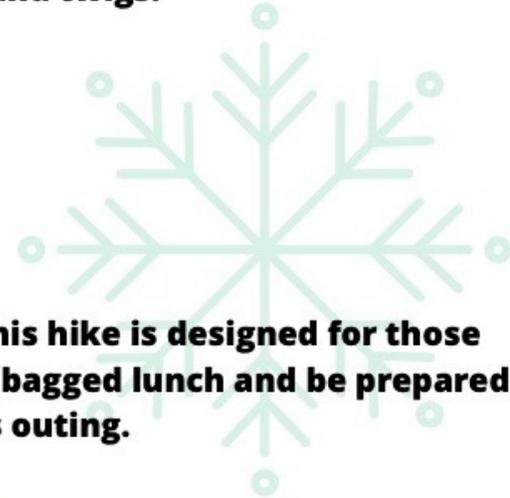
White Pine Cone

**Identifying tree species in winter can be an exciting challenge. Hone your skills and learn to identify trees based on their shape, bark and twigs.**

**Call 716-549-1050 to register**

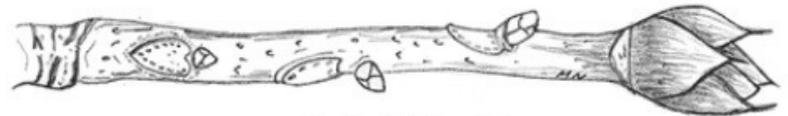


**Saturday February 25th**  
**10:00am-2:00 pm**  
**Frozen Falls Walk**



**Embark on a winter snowshoe to enjoy a frozen Knox Falls. This hike is designed for those who enjoy the thrill of a more demanding nature walk. Bring a bagged lunch and be prepared for the weather during the several hours outing.**

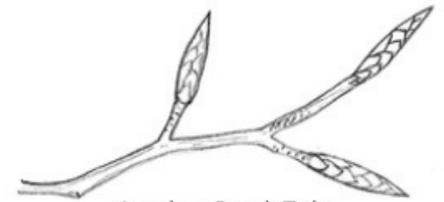
**Call 716-549-1050 to register**



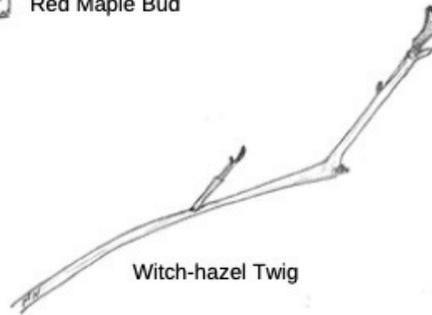
Shagbark Hickory Twig



Red Maple Bud



American Beech Twig



Witch-hazel Twig



Scan the QR code to sign up for our eNewsletter and stay up to date with all of our office's programming!



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](http://www.friendsofknoxfarm.org)  
or mailed to:

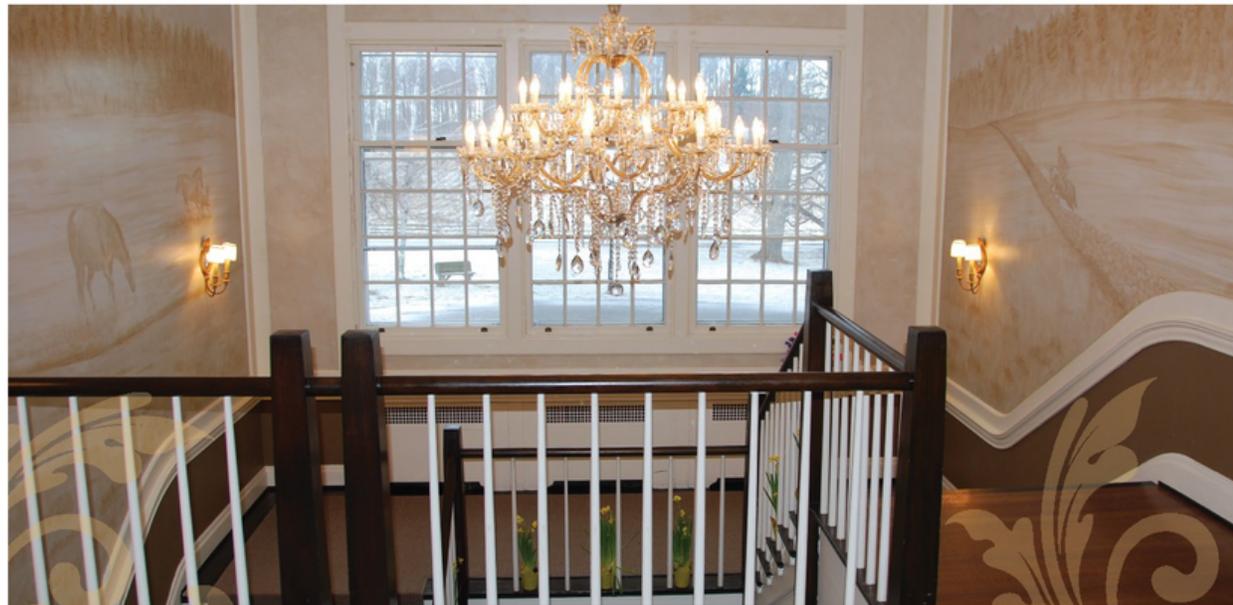
Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Inc.  
P.O. Box 601, East Aurora, NY 14052

Questions? email: [admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org](mailto: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, [FRIENDSOFKNOXFARM.ORG/WEDDINGS](http://FRIENDSOFKNOXFARM.ORG/WEDDINGS)



## 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](mailto: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](http://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.