

Click here to return to Neill Log House Update

April Update on the Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH): Opening in Stages

April 2025

Tony Indovina, FONLH President and SHHS Board Member

Mission Statement for the Friends of the Neill Log House (FONLH Inc.)

Adopted February 2022



“We secure funds to restore and maintain the Neill Log House, foster knowledge of its historic significance, and work with interested parties to ensure the continued educational use of the structure and its site for future generations.”

Individual support for the FONLH restoration effort will always be needed. To make on-line donations by credit card or PayPal, go to the SHUC website, shuc.org, and click on the “Projects” link in the black menu bar at the top of the page. A pull-down menu will appear. Select “Friends of the Neill Log House.” Alternatively, checks can be sent to SHUC (put FONLH in the memo line) at the following address: SHUC, 5604 Solway Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15217.



For the past several months, we have announced the planned schedule for opening the Neill Log House to the public. Here it is again:

April—We have announced that we will accommodate any groups that would contact us to schedule a visit. Our Neill descendent Charlie Stewart has requested a date for a visit by a woman’s group, and our VP Mardi Isler is working with two schools for the first of our student visits. Anyone representing any other group is welcome to click the CONTACT US button on our SHHS Homepage and request a date and time to tour the house.

May—We are still planning to schedule regular seasonal hours a few days a week and one weekend day. These will be announced on the Neill Log House page of our website. It is recommended that you start looking there after mid April.



Even though this is the same information as what we announced earlier, there has been much going on behind the scene to stay on track for the season opening in May. Near the end of last year, we received a generous offer from the Department of Parks & Recreation to have a City Park Ranger be the main provider of docent services for our regular season schedule. Final approval on this offer was delayed by some unexpected budgetary issues, and we can thank our friends in DPW, Parks & Recreation, and City Council for moving us toward the final resolution. Councilperson Erika Strassburger, as head of the City Budget Committee, was instrumental in first recognizing that there was a question about whether the budget approved in December provided for the full-time position requested. And we can thank Councilperson Barb Warwick for very recently scheduling a meeting with all parties involved who worked on the solution to this issue. It has been decided that the full-time position needed will be paid for by RAD funds. At this time, it appears that there are just a few routine personnel matters before FONLH will begin its collaboration with the City Parks Department on our new Ranger Docent, who will be supervised by a Senior Park Ranger. Look for details on all of this in our May newsletter, and watch for Opening Announcements on our Website.

Some on-site log house news: Bob the Groundhog was back for a visit, digging out his favorite tunnels on the chimney side of the house again. A call back to the company that warranted their work at the end of last summer resulted in Bob being trapped humanely and taken to some woods far from the park. The company also made some adjustments to our groundhog-proof barrier.

We also expect the final electrical work to be completed before our first planned group visit in April, assuring that we’re up to code with floor outlets for our 18th Century structure.

Finally, we still need volunteers to very occasionally supplement our main team of docents. We promise to make training and materials to be presented very user-friendly, but volunteers would need to complete required Child Clearances. Contact us if interested and for instructions on applying for these in minutes. Other volunteering opportunities are in the box below.

Note on volunteering: There will be many opportunities for help going forward, including substitute docent work and other duties in the log house such as examining and preparing artifacts. And there will be much to do on the grounds, including taking care of the garden. If you are interested in volunteering, send us an email through CONTACT US on our SHHS Homepage to express any interest and inquire about specific help most needed. Donations are also being sought for a serviceable 6-ft. folding table and old floor lamp for work in the loft.