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May Update on the Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH): Official Opening and Tour Schedule

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.



May brings the opening of the Neill Log House to the public for walk-in and scheduled tours. The opening date was planned to be Sunday, May 4, but damage from the horrendous storm on April 29 has caused a postponement to Wednesday, May 7. Check the Pittsburgh City Parks “Neill Log House” site at <https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/Recreation-Events/Park-Facilities/The-Neill-Log-House> for updates. Below is the press release that was sent out announcing the opening and tour schedules.

MAY OPENING OF THE NEILL LOG HOUSE IN SCHENLEY PARK ANNOUNCED THROUGH CITY PARKS WEBSITE

Squirrel Hill Historical Society, Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH)

Tony Indovina, FONLH President

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Release date: May 1, 2025



The Neill Log House, 5229 E. Circuit Rd. in Schenley Park, Pittsburgh, PA, is now open to the public after being closed for more than 30 years. City Park Rangers, in collaboration with Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH), the group that recently renovated the historic structure owned by the city, is beginning scheduled openings in May, extending through the 2025 season. FONLH began its efforts in 2021 as a collaboration between the Squirrel Hill Historical Society and the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition.

For information about planning a walk-in or scheduled tour, go to the Pittsburgh City Parks “Neill Log House” site at <https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/Recreation-Events/Park-Facilities/The-Neill-Log-House>.

The Neill Log House is one of only five remaining city structures from the 18th century and is on the exact site where it was first constructed, with its original fireplace, chimney, and sandstone foundation. It has been dated to 1795 through testing of some of the wood in the house. It is considered to be a restoration to original architectural standards of the reconstruction by Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) in 1969. Visitors will learn about the historic significance of the house and its people, with furnishings authentic to the period, on an expanded site with native and period plantings.

Note that the site is not handicap-accessible, and visitors must be able to walk up the new stone steps, which have a handrail installed by the city.

Because the house sits near a spring on an ancient Native American trail, Merriwether Lewis is believed to have stopped there on his last trip to Pittsburgh to outfit and launch his keelboat prior to Lewis and Clark’s Voyage of Discovery.

To learn more about the history of the Neill Log House and those who have worked to maintain it, go to squirrelhillhistory.org and click on the link “Neill Log House.”

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Note on volunteering for the Neill Log House: 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.