“Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”

Theodore Roosevelt

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The Founders Day celebration in 2016 was extra special as it coordinated with the US Mint officially releasing the Theodore Roosevelt National Park quarter. The Mint released the quarter at a special ceremony at Painted Canyon. The scenic overlook provided a dramatic background for the event that was attended by dignitaries and area school children.

Quarters were dumped into a beautiful bowl created by FOTRNP board member, Tama Smith, owner of Prairie Fire Pottery in Beach and children in attendance each received a quarter. Rolls of quarters where then sold at the event. Friends of TRNP assisted with transportation to Painted Canyon and art tents set up for the kids to paint mural of objects found in the park. They put their handprints on the back of the canvases.

Later in the day we also served cookies and lemonade outside the Visitor Center at the park to celebrate Founders Day.
Taking part in National Trails Day, Friends of Theodore Roosevelt National Park led a hike to the Petrified Forest on June 4th. Board member, Deb Zillich led the group on a beautiful Saturday morning. New board members, Lorrie Pavlicek and Don Frye joined her, along with Kevin Charbonneau, Dale and Glenice Hansen, and Marie and David Anderson.

The loop trail is 10.5 miles long but choosing to hike 1.5 miles either left or right on the trail takes you to the petrified wood that makes up the Petrified Forest. We took the trail to the left and hiked over the hills to come upon the glory of the beautiful Petrified Forest. The geology of this area is amazing with large stumps millions of years old. We spent some time exploring the unique petrified pieces before we headed back to the trailhead and parking lot.

We had a humorous mishap on our adventure. As we started our return trip the front sole of Deb’s hiking boot began flapping like a clown shoe! Glenice Hansen came to her rescue with a bandanna, which she used to tie the front of her shoe to the sole. This worked until the last couple hundred yards when the whole sole fell off and she walked with a moccasin footed insole. If anyone has not been out to the Petrified Forest, it is well worth the trip. You can stop by the Visitor Center at Theodore Roosevelt National Park and get directions at the information desk.

Many North Dakotans love their national park, but few are truly engaged with the park and its issues. Young people have not been well engaged, but in the past year the park has seen more youth and families visit. The Friends Group hopes to help capitalize on both the recent Ken Burns film and the resurgence of family visitors and help to inspire other young people to get to know the park.

In addition, we hope to help the park reach other under-served groups, including those who often take Theodore Roosevelt National Park for granted.

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A Busy Summer and Fall at the Park

The park had a very busy and successful summer and fall. Visitation for 2016 was at 701,008 by the end of October; the total for the entirety of 2016 was 753,880. The NPS Centennial celebration kept us very busy with events:

The park conducted a bison roundup in the North Unit during the week of October 16. The current bison population in the North Unit is just above 200.

Because of the peculiarities of our hiring system, we were short staffed for the summer season, but we worked together an accomplished a lot.

Current external concerns include Hwy. 85, the proposed refinery near Fryburg, and proposed wind farms in the area.

The park’s first BioBlitz was held on June 24 & 25, with exceptional help from Dickinson State University faculty, who took the lead in collecting data.

The US Mint created a set of 16 National Park Service Centennial stamps; our park was one of those featured. The release event was on June 2; about 100 people attended.

Our biggest Centennial event was the release of the North Dakota America the Beautiful quarter, featuring the park. The reverse has an image of TR on horseback in the badlands. The event at Painted Canyon on August 25 was attended by over 850 people.

Despite two days of rain, the annual Dakota Nights Astronomy Festival on September 23-25 was again a success. Moon rocks from NASA were on display in the South Unit Visitor Center on Saturday and Sunday and there were activities for all ages.

Our guest speakers delivered their program at the Old Town Hall in Medora on the first two nights. Sunday brought a beautiful sunny day and clear skies for star gazing in the evening. About 600 people attended over the 2 1/2 days of the festival.

Thanks to the Friends for manning the rocket sales and your ongoing support.

Check us out online www.friendsoftr.org
David Schwalbe was born and raised in Killdeer right next to Little Missouri State Park. He graduated from NDSU in 1970, and has been married to Ellen Chaffee for many happy years. He is retired from ranching but still has horses and loves to ride in the Badlands especially in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. David is a member of the Badlands Conservation Alliance, Dakota Resource Council, Northwest Landowners Association, Back Country Horsemen, ND Wildlife Federation, Lewis and Clark Wildlife Club, ND Rodeo Association and Roughrider Rodeo Association.

Beginning in 1973, David and 6 friends spent 10 days camping in Theodore Roosevelt National Park and have returned every year for over 30 years.

David states: “My major concerns for Theodore Roosevelt National Park are maintaining the beauty and integrity of the park and area around it. I have seen a slow change in the upkeep of the park and would like to try and change attitudes of fellow North Dakotans toward the importance of preserving our heritage and the dangers of the onslaught of oil development next to the park.”
Dr. Paul Barnhart was born and raised in Springfield Missouri and moved to Bismarck with his family at the age of 10. He obtained an undergraduate degree from NDSU with an emphasis on wildlife management. Paul continued his education in graduate school at NDSU and obtained a PhD in Environmental and Conservation Science with his dissertation focused on the behavioral ecology of North Dakota bat species. He now is an Assistant Professor of Biology in the Natural Sciences Department at Dickinson State University. Through his graduate career, Paul spent the vast majority of his time in Theodore Roosevelt National Park and was the first person to identify several bat species in the state of North Dakota and is also credited with the discovery of the first hibernacula in North Dakota. Paul also has several peer-reviewed publication detailing his work on bats in the park. His time spent in Theodore Roosevelt National Park was very influential in his development as an ecological researcher. The uniqueness and awe-inspiration of the badlands region contributed to Paul working at Dickinson State University as it allowed closer access to this remarkable landscape. Paul currently has research permits with Theodore Roosevelt National Park and continues to work for the continued conservation of the natural resources within the park boundaries and beyond.

Paul states: “My love for this unique landscape has greatly shaped the person I am today. The beauty of Theodore Roosevelt National park has obviously inspired many to be more conservationally aware, and that to me is the most important aspect of the park. For every one hundred children that visit, if just one is inspired to protect the natural world then our society can be greatly influenced by the preservation of this park. Continued oil development in the vicinity of the park has the power to ruin that preservation and, as a conservationist, it is my life’s goal to keep this park in its natural state for as long as possible.”

Ruth Molm grew up in Belfield and after graduating from Belfield High School attended Dickinson State for 2 years. She graduated from UND with majors in French and English. She received training in Montessori Education and taught several years in south Florida. In 1980 she and her husband bought a farm in Kentucky where they raised two sons. During the summers Ruth always returned to ND so her family could enjoy Theodore Roosevelt National Park and experience the wonder she had growing up. In 2004, Ruth moved back to ND and has been teaching in the Belfield area. She lives on a farm south of town.

Ruth enjoys playing organ at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church. She also continues to enjoy Theodore Roosevelt National Park—hiking, picnicking and watching wildlife. She is pleased to be a new member on the Board of Directors for Friends of TR National Park.
The mission of this non-profit organization is to support the natural, cultural, and scenic resources, and the spirit and sense of place of the three units of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the Little Missouri River that unites them in the badlands of North Dakota.

This will be accomplished by advocating for the park, raising public awareness, engaging youth, and raising funds for projects that support the park's mission and Theodore Roosevelt's conservation legacy.

Friends of Theodore Roosevelt National Park is eager to help Theodore Roosevelt National Park with friend-raising. Our first donation of park support was to be a sponsor of the North Dakota sneak preview (September 17, 2009) of the Ken Burns Film: The National Parks - America's Best Idea. One of the Friends Group board members, Clay Jenkinson, was featured as a scholar in two episodes of the Ken Burns film series.

Membership Form

Please select a Membership Level

☐ Renewal
☐ Individual $25
☐ Family $35
☐ Student $10
☐ Young Explorer $5 (10 and under)

☐ Business $100
☐ Contributor $250
☐ Partner $500
☐ Gift (indicate level): ____________________

Additional Donation: ___________________

Full Name: ________________________________
Gift (name of recipient): ____________________
Address: _________________________________
City, State, Zip: ___________________________
Phone: __________________
Email Address: ____________________________
Amount Enclosed: ________________________

I am interested in:
☐ Serving on the Board of Directors
☐ Volunteering

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Friends of Theodore Roosevelt National Park is a Non-Profit Organization.

designed by Kaylah Denae