

# Catoctin

CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN PARK  
CUNNINGHAM FALLS STATE PARK  
MARYLAND

## A STORY OF MAN AND HIS USE OF THE LAND

On Catoctin Mountain you can read the story of a group of people and the effect they had on the land. It is written in old stone fences, logging roads, and the growth that now covers the land. You can find it along the old Hagerstown-Westminster Turnpike that crosses the mountains from east to west and separates two parks, Catoctin Mountain Park on the north, a unit of the National Park System, and Cunningham Falls State Park on the south. For whatever reason you visit the parks—to hike, picnic, camp, fish, or enjoy a scenic drive—read the story well, and you will leave with a better understanding of the world.

### Indians and Settlers Find the Valley

Man's story here begins with the Indians, although little evidence remains of those who lived in Maryland before 1608. We know many small tribes of what historians call the Southeastern Farmers and Northeastern Woodsmen lived here by farming, hunting, and fishing. These people did not claim ownership of the land; they used it for the benefit of all.

When the first European explorers arrived in Maryland, the Indians were engaged in a series of wars. Gradually the Indians moved their communities toward the centers of their nations for mutual protection. Maryland became a middle or neutral ground where no Indians lived permanently, but it was crossed by hunting and warring parties.

In 1732 as settlers began to arrive in the Monocacy River Valley at the foot of Catoctin, Indians were seldom seen. The belief is, however, that the name "Catoctin" came from a tribe, the Kittoctons, who had lived at the foot of the mountains near the Potomac.

The first settlers were a mixture of second generation Americans and immigrants from the Palatinate—the "bread basket" section of Germany—who were seeking religious freedom. They had pushed west from Philadelphia until they reached the Susquehanna River and then turned southwest, following old Indian trails—first walking, then using wagons after the trails became wider. They began to settle along the Monocacy River, attracted by Lord Baltimore's offer of 200 acres of land rent free for 3 years and 1 cent an acre each year thereafter.

About 1758 the immigrants included a number of Swiss, who selected the mountain valleys for their farm settlements. They were soon followed by more German farmers and were later joined by Scotch-Irish settlers.

### Farmers, Loggers Move Up the Slopes

Man's use of Catoctin Mountain evolved in two patterns. On the eastern slope he turned the available resources to industrial use; in the shallow valleys on top of the ridge he farmed and created settlements.

As you hike or drive the eastern slope, you will notice traces of old logging roads through the forests. Originally the timber was used for making charcoal to fuel the Catoctin Iron Furnace, located in the State park at the foot of the ridge. A self-

guiding walk at the Thurmont Vista parking area in the national park shows charcoal making as it was practiced on Catoctin Mountain.

As the villages in Monocacy Valley developed, tanneries came into existence. The tanners turned to the hills for oak and chestnut bark, rich sources of tannin. Logging was also practiced on the eastern slope. In Catoctin Mountain Park, near the Owens Creek Campground, an old waterpowered vertical sawmill is restored.

For a time during the early 1800's, the Hagerstown-Westminster Turnpike, now Md. 77, crossed Catoctin and served as a major link with the National Road running from Cumberland, Md., into the Ohio Country.

The first settlers in the mountain-top valleys were farmers. They cleared their fields, planted crops, and built homes and barns. Remnants of these old farms can be found as you stroll in the woods—stone fences and cellar pits where farmhouses once stood. Many of the farmers supplemented their living by working at Catoctin Furnace and by logging.

Clear-cutting of the land for charcoal making, stripping trees of the bark for tanning, logging, and unscientific farming practices contributed to the overuse and destruction of the land, and with the passing years it became more and more difficult for the mountain people to eke out a living.

### Man Helps Restore the Land

In 1936, more than 4,046 hectares (10,000 acres) were acquired by the Federal Government and

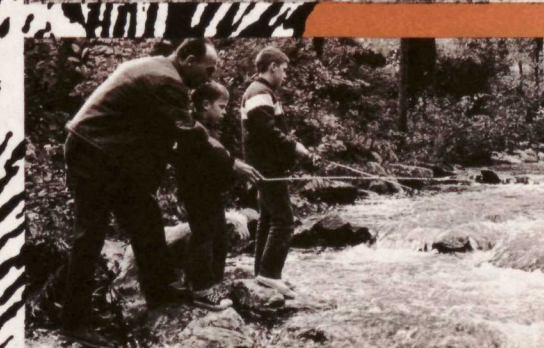
Metric measurements are being introduced in National Park Service publications to help Americans become acquainted with the metric system and to make interpretation more meaningful for park visitors from other nations.

developed to demonstrate the possibilities of creating parks from wornout lands. This tract was called the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area.

In 1954 the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area was divided into two parts, with Md. 77 separating them. The Federal Government retained 2,334 hectares (5,769 acres) to the north—the present-day Catoctin Mountain Park, a unit of the National Park System. The remainder was deeded to the State of Maryland to be managed for recreational use. This area of 1,799 hectares (4,446 acres) was named Cunningham Falls State Park. Under the management of the National Park Service and the Maryland Park Service, the original recreational demonstration area has been permitted to develop toward an eastern hardwood climax forest.

As you walk the trails of the eastern slope you will find chestnut oak, hickory, black birch, and a scattering of other trees. Old fields in the mountain valleys are now covered with black locust, wild cherry, sassafras, and yellow-poplar. In moist areas you will find red oak, beech, yellow-poplar, yellow birch, hemlock, ash, and white oak. And along the way you may encounter some of the animals that make Catoctin their home.

Take a walk on Catoctin, and with open mind and keen eyes let the mountain tell you its story.



Whitetail deer, once almost extinct here, make Catoctin their home again, and raccoons, woodchucks, gray squirrels, and a few red and gray foxes live here, too.

Ruffed grouse, barred owls, and turkey vultures are common throughout the year, while in the spring, a variety of migratory song birds visit. Abandoned farms that looked much like this one some 30 years ago are reverting back to forest, and in the quietness of the glens fishermen can test their skill in a racing mountain stream.

## A PART OF THE APPALACHIANS

More than 600 million years ago Eastern North America was shaped by increasing pressures within the earth. As the forces increased, the surface cracked, allowing a great quantity of molten rock from the earth's interior to cover the land. Now known as the Catoctin greenstone, a remnant of this lava flow may be seen as distinctive green rock along Hog Rock Trail and at Cunningham Falls.

As time passed, the land subsided beneath encroaching seas and the cooled lava became the sea floor. For millions of years this floor was buried beneath thousands of feet of sediments, whose great weight compacted the bottom layers into the weather-resistant Weaverton quartzite. Today this formation is the crest of the entire Catoctin ridge. Examples can be seen at Wolf, Chimney, and Cat Rocks.

As the seas receded and the weight on the underlying rocks lessened, the earth's crust was again deformed by pressures from beneath its surface. This time, however, the crust was folded, wrinkled, and uplifted. Thus was formed the Appalachian Mountain chain. When young, it was a majestic range, higher than the Rocky Mountains of today.

Surface forces—wind and rain, heat and cold—acted on this great mountain chain. The rocks slowly cracked, crumbled, and were eroded away. The mountains you enjoy today are but the roots of the original formation.

## HELP PROTECT YOURSELF AND THE PARKS

Build *fires* only in fireplaces.

*Pets* are not permitted in developed areas or overnight in Cunningham Falls State Park. They are allowed on the trails if on a leash. In Catoctin Mountain Park they are permitted overnight at the Owens Creek Campground but must be on a leash. They are not allowed in buildings or in group camps.

Deposit *litter* in receptacles provided at all parking and picnic areas and at the campgrounds.

Obey State *fishing* regulations.

Leave *natural and historical features* as you find them. Do not deface or remove trees, wildflowers, other plants, or rocks.

*Firearms and weapons* (including air pistols, bows, and slingshots) are not allowed in Catoctin Mountain Park or in the "No Hunting Areas" of Cunningham Falls State Park. Hunting, killing, wounding, frightening or capture of wildlife is forbidden.

*Motorized equipment* is allowed on hard surfaced roads only.

FOR YOUR SAFETY, please observe the following:

- Watch your footing on rock formations; they are especially slippery when wet.
- Wear only hiking footwear on trails.
- Do not run on trails; you can lose your footing.
- Stay on trails; shortcuts can cause accidents.
- Beware of snakes along stone fences and logs.
- Drive carefully; roads are narrow, winding and very slippery when wet or snow covered.

## ADMINISTRATION

*Cunningham Falls State Park* is administered by the Maryland Park Service, an agency of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Park headquarters is located in the Manor area, 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) south of Thurmont on U.S. 15. The address is Thurmont, MD 21788; telephone (301) 271-2495.

*Catoctin Mountain Park* is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Thurmont, MD 21788, is in immediate charge. Telephone (301) 824-2574.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO

You can find many recreational opportunities in the two parks that straddle Md. 77 as it turns west off U.S. 15. In the national park—Catoctin Mountain Park—north of Md. 77 are campgrounds and picnic areas, folk-craft demonstrations and interpretive programs, nature walks and hiking trails, all connected by roads and trails that criss-cross and wind through the park. Cunningham Falls State Park, south of Md. 77, has picnicking and camping areas, nature walks and trails, and a man-made lake covering 17 hectares (42 acres) that provides facilities for swimming, fishing, and boating.

In the list of activities below, those followed by a star (\*) are in Cunningham Falls State Park; the others are in the national park.

**Information and interpretive services.** Information and schedules of the interpretive programs offered may be obtained at the Catoctin Mountain Park visitor center, just off Md. 77, where there is also a small museum. At Round Meadow on Sunday afternoons during the summer and fall, the "Man in His Environment" museum is open and folk-craft demonstrations are presented.

The State park operates an information kiosk just inside the Manor area (\*), which is west of U.S. 15 about 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) south of Thurmont.

**Scenic drives.** Park, State, and county roads wind through the hardwood forest for many kilometers. A self-guiding auto tour of 11 kilometers (7 miles) along the back roads of the Catoctin ridge begins at the intersection of Park Central Road and Manahan Road and leads to places of scenic and historic interest. A scenic overlook on the east side of Hunting Creek Lake (\*) offers a panoramic view of the lake area. The lake is south of Md. 77 by way of Catoctin Hollow Road. Park roads are not high-speed highways; for your safety, posted speed limits are enforced.

**Picnicking.** Four developed picnic areas, Owens Creek, Chestnut, Manor (\*), and William Houck (\*), offer modern restrooms, tables, fireplaces, and trash receptacles. Picnic tables are located at other spots throughout the park; fires are not permitted at those sites. Facilities for group picnicking and a 30-table shelter may be rented by reservation at the Manor area (\*).

**Self-guiding trails.** Hog Rock Trail, Cunningham Falls Trail, from the visitor center to the falls, and Renaissance Trail (\*), in the Manor area, are nature-oriented, with leaflets available at the trailheads. Blue Blazes Still Trail starts at the visitor center. Charcoal Trail, starting at Thurmont Vista parking area, has signs that explain the charcoaling process, and descriptive signs are found at Catoctin Furnace (\*), across U.S. 15 near the Manor area (\*).

**Hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.** About 40 kilometers (25 miles) of well-marked trails, such as Wolf Rock, Cat Rock (\*), and Thurmont Vista, traverse both parks, leading to out-

standing views and natural features. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are permitted on any of these trails. Parking areas are provided at trailheads; parking in undesignated areas is not allowed.

**Snowmobile and bridle trail.** This 9.7-kilometer (6-mile) trail is open for snowmobiles December 1 to April 1 and for horses the remainder of the year. Snowmobiles and horses are not allowed on hiking trails. They are restricted to this trail except for about 11 additional kilometers (7 miles) that are open to horses from April 1 to December 1.

**Camping.** The Owens Creek Campground and Manor Campground (\*) are open from mid-April through October for family camping, with 15 sites in Owens Creek open through November. Modern restrooms, tables, and fireplaces are provided. Because of the terrain, trailers longer than 6.7 meters (22 feet) are not permitted. Camping is limited to 5 consecutive days and a total of 14 days per season at Owens Creek and to 14 consecutive days at Manor Campground (\*).

Poplar Grove tent camping area can be used by Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other youth organizations on a reservation basis. For information contact national park headquarters.

Camping is allowed in designated areas only.

**Group camps.** Three camps—Misty Mount, Greentop, and Round Meadow—are used primarily for environmental education. On spring and fall weekends they are open to organized groups on a reservation basis. During the summer they are used to provide an outdoor experience for scouts, 4-H clubs, the handicapped, underprivileged, and others.

**Camp David.** The Presidential retreat is closed to the public.

**Environmental education.** School groups may use park facilities for this purpose. The folk-craft center is open certain weekdays in spring and fall. Arrangements for tours and ranger assistance should be made in advance through the park superintendents.

**Swimming, fishing, and boating.** Hunting Creek Lake (\*) has two sandy beaches, served by a modern bathhouse and concession building, with picnicking areas nearby. For your safety, never swim alone, and stay within protected and guarded areas.

The lake is stocked with fish, and a Maryland fishing license with trout stamp is required for persons 16 years of age and older. Stream fishing on Owens Creek and Big Hunting Creek (\*) is also regulated by the State of Maryland.

**Fall festival.** The parks participate with local organizations in a Colorfest Weekend held the second weekend of October to coincide with the fall foliage display at Catoctin. Craft demonstrations are featured.

