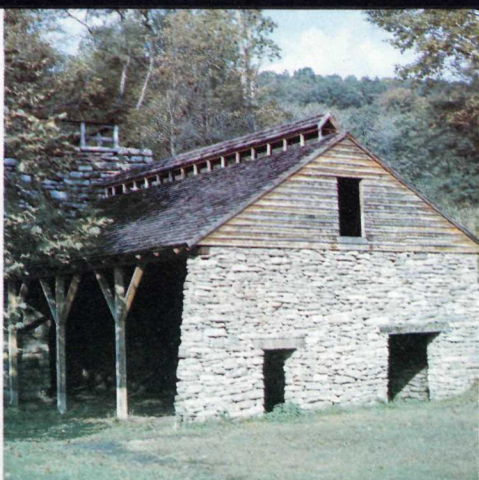


# Catoctin Mountains

Catoctin Mountain Park /  
Cunningham Falls State Park  
Maryland



The Catoctin Mountains have a wealth of scenery, wildlife and wildflowers, and historic buildings. Take time to get off the park roads and walk on the trails so that you can savor this special quality of the area.

## A Mountain Heritage

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 the two parks. Catoctin Mountain Park on the north is managed by the National Park Service, and Cunningham Falls State Park on the south is run by Maryland.

Man's story here begins with the Indians, although little evidence remains of those who lived in Maryland before the arrival of Europeans. We do know that many small tribes farmed, hunted, and fished here. When the first Europeans arrived in Maryland, the Indians were engaged in a series of wars, and Maryland had become a middle or neutral ground where no Indians lived permanently. In 1732 as settlers began to arrive in the Monocacy River Valley, Indians were seldom seen. Tradition says, however, that the name "Catoctin" came from a tribe, the Kittoctons, who lived at the foot of the mountains near the Potomac.

The first Europeans were second-generation Americans and German immigrants. They had pushed west from Philadelphia until they reached the Susquehanna River and then turned southwest. They settled along the Monocacy River because of Lord Baltimore's attractive offer of 200 acres of land rent free for three years and one cent an acre each year thereafter. At mid-century more Germans, and some Swiss and Scotch-Irish pioneers came into the area.

Some of these settlers became loggers or charcoal makers supply-

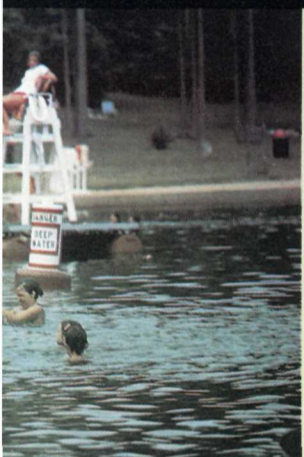
ing the Catoctin Iron Furnace, the remains of which are in Cunningham Falls State Park. Others supplied oak and chestnut bark, rich sources of tannin, to the developing tanneries in the Monocacy Valley. Farms were established in the mountain-top valleys. Today, you can find remnants of these old farms—stone fences and cellar pits—as you walk through the woods.

Over the years people started to leave the Catoctin area because the resources were becoming depleted from the clear-cutting for charcoal making, the stripping of bark for tanning, and logging. It was becoming more and more difficult for the people on the mountain to eke out a living.

In 1936, more than 4,046 hectares (10,000 acres) were acquired by the Federal government and developed as the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area. Under the management of the National Park Service and the Maryland Park Service, the land has been permitted to develop into an eastern hardwood climax forest, much as it was when seen by the first Europeans.

As you walk the trails 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 or a hike in the parks, and with an open mind and keen eyes, let the mountain tell you its story.

## Things to See and Do



### GENERAL INFORMATION

Camp David, the Presidential retreat is located within Catoctin Mountain Park. It is not visible from the roads and is closed to the public.

In these two parks you can find many recreational opportunities. Camping, picnicking, hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, snowshoeing, swimming, sailing, and fishing are just a sampling of the things you can do here.

For specific information about the National Park Service area you should go to the Catoctin Mountain Park Visitor Center, which is open all year and contains a small museum. The Cunningham Falls State Park office, in the William Houck area, is open all year (weather permitting). You can get a schedule of special weekend events at the visitor centers.

**Picnicking.** The Owens Creek, Chestnut,

Manor, and William Houck areas have restrooms, tables, and fireplaces. Isolated picnic tables are scattered throughout the parks, but fires are permitted only at the four developed areas. A 30-table shelter may be reserved at the Manor area; a fee is charged.

**Environmental Education.** School groups may use park facilities for this purpose. Arrangements for tours and ranger assistance should be made in advance through the park superintendents.

**Fall Festival.** The parks participate with local organizations in a Colorfest Weekend held the second weekend of October to coincide with the height of the fall color display in the Catoctin Mountains.

### TRAILS

Watch your footing on rock formations, for they can be slippery. Do not run. Beware of snakes along stone fences, in downed trees, and logs. Treat them gently.

The parks have a wealth of trails for every purpose. About 40 kilometers (25 miles) of trails are available for hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing; many lead to outstanding vistas. Four trails—Hog Rock, Browns Farm Environmental Study Area, Cunningham Falls, and Renaissance—are self-guiding and nature-oriented and have leaflets at the trailheads. The Blue Blazes

Whiskey Still, Charcoal, and Spicebush trails have descriptive signs along the way. From April 1 to December 1 a horse trail is open. Horses are not allowed on any other trails. Park only in designated areas rather than along the roads. For specific information about individual trails, see the chart above the map on the reverse side.

### SCENIC DRIVES

A self-guiding auto tour of 11 kilometers (7 miles) along the backroads of the Catoctin ridge begins at the intersection of Park Central and Manahan roads. A scenic overlook on the east side of Hunting Creek Lake

offers a panoramic view of the water and the woods. The lake is south of Md. 77 by way of Catoctin Hollow Road. Park roads are not high-speed highways; posted speed limits are enforced.

### CAMPING

Build fires only in fireplaces and deposit litter in trash containers.

Camping is allowed only in campgrounds. William Houck and Manor campgrounds are open mid-April through October. Owens Creek campground is open mid-April through the third weekend in November. Each area has restrooms, tables, and fireplaces. Trailers longer than 6.7 meters (22 feet) are prohibited. Camping is limited to

7 consecutive days and a total of 14 days per season at Owens Creek and to a total of 14 consecutive days at Manor and William Houck. Misty Mount, Greentop, and Round Meadow are used for environmental education. On spring and fall weekends, however, they can be reserved by organized groups.

### WATER SPORTS

For your safety when swimming, stay within the guarded beach areas.

Hunting Creek Lake has two sandy beaches and a modern bathhouse. The lake is stocked, and there is stream fishing on Owens Creek, Big Hunting Creek, and Little

Hunting Creek. A Maryland license with trout stamp is required for all 16 and older. Canoes may be rented summer and fall.

### SOME DIFFERENCES

**Catoctin Mountain Park.** Pets are permitted to stay overnight at Owens Creek but must be on a leash. They are not allowed in buildings or in group camps. No firearms are permitted in the park. Do not hunt, kill, wound, frighten, or capture wildlife. Do not deface or remove trees, wildflowers, plants, or rocks.

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

**Cunningham Falls State Park.** Pets are not permitted in developed areas or overnight and on trails only on a leash. Firearms are permitted only in the "Hunting Area." Obey State fishing regulations. Do not deface or remove trees, wildflowers, plants, or rocks.

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 William Houck area. The address is Thurmont, MD 21788. Telephone: 301-271-2495 or 271-7574.

# Guide and Map

## Trail Guide

All the trails and self-guiding trails in both parks are described here. Many trails interconnect so you may wish to plan a circular route to avoid retracing your own steps. The trails are listed in alphabetical order of destination or name.

Round Trip Distance	Round Trip Time	Ascent	Destination Name of Trail	Trailhead	Description	Remarks
14.5km/9mi	6 hours	341m/1120ft	<b>Cat Rock</b>	Manor Area	<b>Strenuous</b> Passes Bobs Hill; magnificent views	Continues to Md. 77
4.8km/3mi	2 hours	213m/700ft	<b>Cat Rock</b>	Parking lot across from NPS Admin. Office on Md. 77	<b>Strenuous</b> Last leg of trail steep; beautiful overlook	Continues to Manor Area
3.5km/2.2mi	2 hours	158m/520ft	<b>Chimney Rock</b>	NPS Administrative Office on Md. 77	<b>Strenuous</b> Rock formations and scenic view; use care on slippery rocks	Continues to Wolf Rock
.5km/.3mi	½ hour	12m/40ft	<b>Cunningham Falls</b>	Parking lot on Md. 77	<b>Easy</b> Shortest access to falls	Continues to William Houck Area
1.3km/.8mi	1 hour	6m/20ft	<b>Cunningham Falls (lower trail)</b>	William Houck Area	<b>Moderate</b> Follows Hunting Creek to falls	Connects with Cunningham Falls (cliff trail)
1.3km/.8mi	1¼ hours	91m/300ft	<b>Cunningham Falls (cliff trail)</b>	William Houck Area	<b>Strenuous</b> Rough terrain and rock outcrops	Connects with Cunningham Falls (lower trail)
1.6km/1mi	¾ hour	73m/240ft	<b>Thurmont Vista</b>	Thurmont Vista parking lot on Park Central Road	<b>Moderate</b> View of town of Thurmont	Continues to Wolf Rock and Chimney Rock
2.9km/1.8mi	1¼ hours	122m/400ft	<b>Wolf Rock</b>	Wolf Rock parking lot on Park Central Road or visitor center	<b>Strenuous</b> Rock formations and scenic view; use care on slippery rocks	Continues to Chimney Rock

## Self-guiding Trails

1km/.6mi	½ hour	18m/60ft	<b>Blue Blazes Whiskey Still</b>	Lot across Park Central Road from visitor center	<b>Easy</b> Trailside interpretive signs	Whiskey-making demonstrations
.6km/.4mi	½ hour	6m/20ft	<b>Brown's Farm</b>	Owens Creek Picnic Area	<b>Easy</b> Printed interpretive guide	See ecological relationships; excellent for school groups
.8km/.5mi	½ hour	6m/20ft	<b>Charcoal</b>	Thurmont Vista parking lot on Park Central Road	<b>Easy</b> Trailside interpretive signs	Story of charcoal making in the 1800s
4.5km/2.8mi	2 hours	73m/240ft	<b>Cunningham Falls</b>	Lot across Park Central Road from visitor center	<b>Moderate</b> Printed interpretive guide	Goes from the visitor center to the falls
2.4km/1.5mi	1¼ hours	79m/260ft	<b>Deerfield</b>	Owens Creek campground, near site 30	<b>Moderate</b> Printed interpretive guide	Non-campers park near bulletin board
1.6km/1mi	¾ hour	24m/80ft	<b>Hog Rock</b>	Hog Rock parking lot on Park Central Road	<b>Easy</b> Printed interpretive guide	Continues to Cunningham Falls
.8km/.5mi	½ hour	21m/70ft	<b>Renaissance</b>	Manor Area	<b>Easy</b> Printed interpretive guide	A walk through second-growth forest
.3km/.2mi	½ hour	—	<b>Spicebush</b>	Chestnut Picnic Area	<b>Easy</b> Trailside interpretive signs	Teaches forest ecology; hard surface for handicap use

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## Catoctin Mountain Park / Cunningham Falls State Park

