

SEPTEMBER 2024

THE CASCADE

*FRIENDS OF
CUNNINGHAM FALLS AND
GAMBRILL STATE PARKS*

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK SPURRIER

THE CASCADE by Friends of CFGSP



In This ISSUE

*'Welcome to **Your** State Parks' by Mark Spurrier, Park Ranger Manager, Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks. Page 3, 4

*Elevate Your Atmosphere! Upcoming and past events. Page 5

*To Do: Post your favorite picture from visiting the park on our fb site. www.cunninghamgambrill.org

*Smokey Bear celebrates 80 years! Visit the Visitor's Center or Nature Center for a free book mark. Page 5

*To Do: Post your favorite picnic or camping recipe on our fb site. Look for recipes in our next Newsletter.

*Action Page: We Need You! Please donate to a great cause and become a Friend. Volunteer with us! Email/call w/questions. Page 6





WELCOME TO YOUR STATE PARKS!



*By Mark Spurrier, Park Ranger Manager,
Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks*

Welcome to your state parks! I am grateful for this opportunity to share with you a few thoughts. It is the mission of the Maryland Park Service to manage the natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources to provide for the wise stewardship and enjoyment by people. Like all mission statements, that sentence is broad and encompassing, but what does that mean to you and the resources we care for here at Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks? I hope to shed some light on that in next few paragraphs and why you as a Friend or volunteer are so important.

Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks consist of 7357 acres of mature forests, mountainous rock outcrops, trout streams, a 44 acre lake and of course, Cunningham Falls, 77 ft long cascading waterfall, the longest in Maryland. We are also home to several protected species of wildlife and plants. Our staff works hard to protect these natural resources in many ways. Our biggest threats are climate change and invasive species. Protecting our lake's water quality is a top priority for the park. In recent months, we have installed ultrasonic buoys in Hunting Creek Lake to help reduce harmful algae blooms caused by increased nutrients, like phosphorus, that have collected in the lake. The buoys allow us to control the naturally occurring algae without using chemicals that can negatively impact the trout that rely on the water that we release. Maintaining forest health has been another high priority for the staff. Volunteers have been critical to the success of our invasive species management programs. Hundreds of donated hours of service have been given to remove invasive plants, replant trees, establish forest restoration areas and monitor for forest pests.

Understanding where one comes from and maintaining traditions is an important part of what makes us who we are. The Friends have been vital in hosting the park's largest event, the Maple Syrup Festival. This family friendly festival has been a local tradition for over 50 years and draws thousands of visitors annually. Hosted every March, it has become a rite of spring and a highlight for generations of visitors.

Telling the stories of the past is an important part of what we do even though some of those stories may be hard to hear or comprehend. Catoclin Furnace is an iron making site that was in production in some capacity from 1774 to 1903. The labor force in the first half of its existence consisted largely of enslaved labor. These stories are being told at the Museum of the Iron Worker managed by our partners in the Catoclin Furnace Historical Society. Our Friends have helped to support this area, by applying for and being awarded several grants to help us preserve the structures and better interpret the site. Gambrill State Park is an historic site in its own right being home to "Iron Mike", a statue honoring the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the work they performed to create the foundation for many of the state parks we have today. Gambrill was donated to the state in 1934 by the Citizens of Frederick and built by the CCC between 1938-40. The Gambrill Tea Room is a significant architectural example of CCC craftsmanship and is one of the most rented facilities in the Maryland Park Service.



Spurrier continued from page 3

The Friends have supported the telling of that story through the procurement of the statue and exhibits in the nature center that will open to the public this year.

Our recreational opportunities abound with swimming, hiking, picnicking, camping, mountain biking and more. Combined we hosted over 900,000 visitors in the two parks last year alone. Volunteers are crucial to our ability to serve these visitors by greeting people at visitor centers and nature centers, caring for the animals at the aviary, performing regular park clean ups, being camp hosts, repairing picnic tables and more.

When I wrote "Welcome to YOUR state parks," in my introduction, I meant it. State parks are set aside for all people and citizens of the state. How they are treated demonstrates how much the community cares. In reality, the community cares as much as the staff who manages them. I am proud to say that I work with a group of partners and individuals who care deeply for these shared spaces. Your contributions, both physically and financially, really do make a difference in our ability to maintain these precious spaces for you and all of the citizens of Maryland. Thank you for all you do and will do in the future.



Iron Mike, Gambrill SP. Photo courtesy of DNR.



The Maple Syrup Festival, Cunningham Falls SP. Photo courtesy of DNR.



The Catoctin Furnace. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.



Photo courtesy of DNR.

EVENTS



Photo courtesy of John Barley



Photo courtesy of John Barley



Photo courtesy of Erin Gambrell

A Big Success! Smokey Bear's 80th Birthday Party,
Cunningham Falls SP Amphitheater, August 10,
2024.

Stay tuned to the Friends Facebook page for exciting upcoming events! Join us for 'Movie on the Mountain' nights at Gambrill State Park, where you can enjoy films under the stars. Don't miss out on the S'mores and Campfire event with Smokey Bear at the Cunningham Falls State Park Amphitheater, perfect for a cozy and educational evening. Additionally, savor the beauty of fall with our Leaf Peeper/Fall Hayrides, complete with S'mores, at the Cunningham Falls State Park Houck Lake area, Saturday/Sunday, October 12-13, 2024, 10am-4pm.

Sign up now for the 10K, 5K, and Fun Run @ Cunningham Falls SP, the most scenic running event in Frederick County, Sunday Nov 5th @ 9am.

Bring your family and friends for unforgettable outdoor experiences!



A FOX AT GAMBRILL SP



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUSTIN CALHOUN, PARK RANGER, CFGSP.



FRIENDS OF CUNNINGHAM FALLS AND GAMBRILL STATE PARKS

Mission: To support and enhance the programs and recreational offerings of Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks through charitable contributions and in-kind donations.
Non-profit 501(c)3 organization.

YOUR SUPPORT HELPS OUR PARKS THRIVE!



JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

SECURELY DONATE TO FCFGSP:



BECOME A VOLUNTEER:

Please email Claudia Padilla:
claudia.padilla@maryland.gov

DONATE

You can see this in improvements such as the renovated Nature Center at High Knob Scenic Area of Gambrill State Park, tree plantings, new safety equipment, updated vehicles and heavy equipment.

[cunninghamgambrill](#)

We sincerely value and appreciate you!

BECOME A FRIEND

Questions? Contact us at:

info@cunninghamgambrill.org

(301) 271-7574

Friends of Cunningham Falls and Gambrill
State Parks

14039 Catoctin Hollow Road
Thurmont, MD 21788