Preserving DNR’s Heritage
Committee for Maryland Conservation History
DNR’s natural resources are not disposable.

DNR’s history is not disposable, either.
Celebrating 100+ years of natural resource conservation in Maryland

- 1868: State Oyster Police Force
- 1896: State Geological Survey
- 1896: State Game Warden
- 1906: Forestry and Parks
- 1916: Conservation Commission
- 1922: Conservation Department
- 1939: Dept. of Game and Inland Fish
- 1941: Board of Natural Resources
- 1969: Dept. of Natural Resources
The Problem

- No central effort within DNR to evaluate, inventory, and preserve its historic artifacts.
- Individuals within units “squirrel” stuff away in offices or private residences.
- When storage runs out or people retire, irreplaceable artifacts and documents often go to the dumpster.
Who are we?

• Committee for Maryland Conservation History

• Mission: Preserve, promote and interpret the legacy of natural resource conservation in Maryland.

• Formed in 2004 to prepare for the Forestry & Parks Centennial

• Now open to any DNR unit with significant history and heritage
What needs preserving?

- Artifacts, documents, photographs, etc. related to the legacy of natural resource conservation in Maryland

Cannon used by Maryland Oyster Police during oyster wars of 1860’s

Fire fighting tools at Patapsco State Park, circa 1926

Uniforms, documents, and badges of the Maryland NRP
Achieving One DNR

- We need to understand who we are as an agency, where we have been and where we are going
- History helps create a shared vision for the future
- Pride in our agency helps foster professional commitment
- Public understanding of our agency and history enhances involvement in conservation

Forest wardens of Garrett County, circa 1920
Next Steps

• Involve additional DNR units.

• Consolidate artifacts into one state facility.
  • Summer intern inventorying DNR artifacts at identified locations around the state.
  • Lawson Building identified for use as artifact storehouse, workspace, and exhibit space (needs renovation).

• Get recognition at the Secretary level.

• Develop public programming to promote natural resource protection and conservation.
Public programming

- Interpretive programs at state parks
- Connecting children with conservation history
- Exhibits
- Publications
NOW is the perfect time

- Current focus on One DNR
  - Our history builds our identity as an agency
- Rare opportunities
  - Original cannon used by Oyster Police is for sale
- Upcoming retirements
  - Save our heritage from the dumpster!

Cannon used by Maryland Oyster police during oyster wars of 1860’s