

# The Falls of Deep Creek and the “Devil’s Castle”



Rediscovering natural wonders through old maps, modern GIS tools and an obscure historical reference

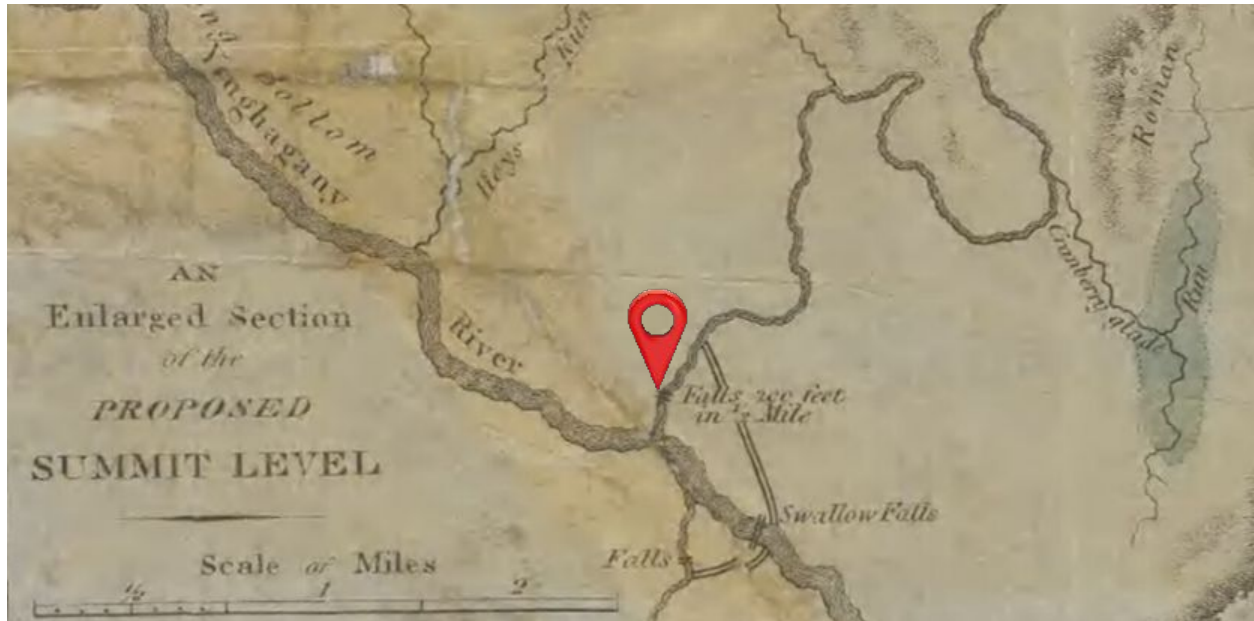
**Chris Nichols**  
**Founder, Narrows Hill**

**2024 Maryland Outdoor  
Recreation Summit  
October 10, 2025  
Rocky Gap, MD**

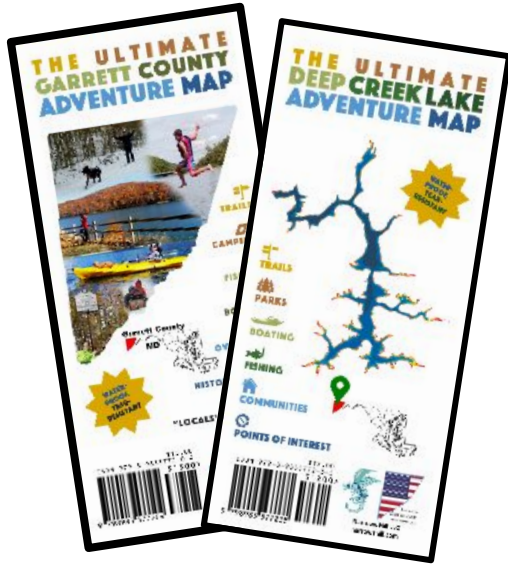
Maps: [narrowshill.com](https://narrowshill.com)

Local info and lore: [dimesy.com](https://dimesy.com)

Contact: [chris.nichols@dimesy.com](mailto:chris.nichols@dimesy.com)





# Paper maps + digital content



- Add to paper maps by creating video tours of trail “areas” on my Garrett County Adventure Map

Trail System #1 Kendall Trail Video Tour narrowshill.com




**ULTIMATE Adventure Map - Trail Video Tours**

by Chris Nichols











Playlist • Public • 48 videos • 350 views

Video trail tours of areas identified in my ULTIMATE Garrett County Adventure map. Most tours are less than ...more

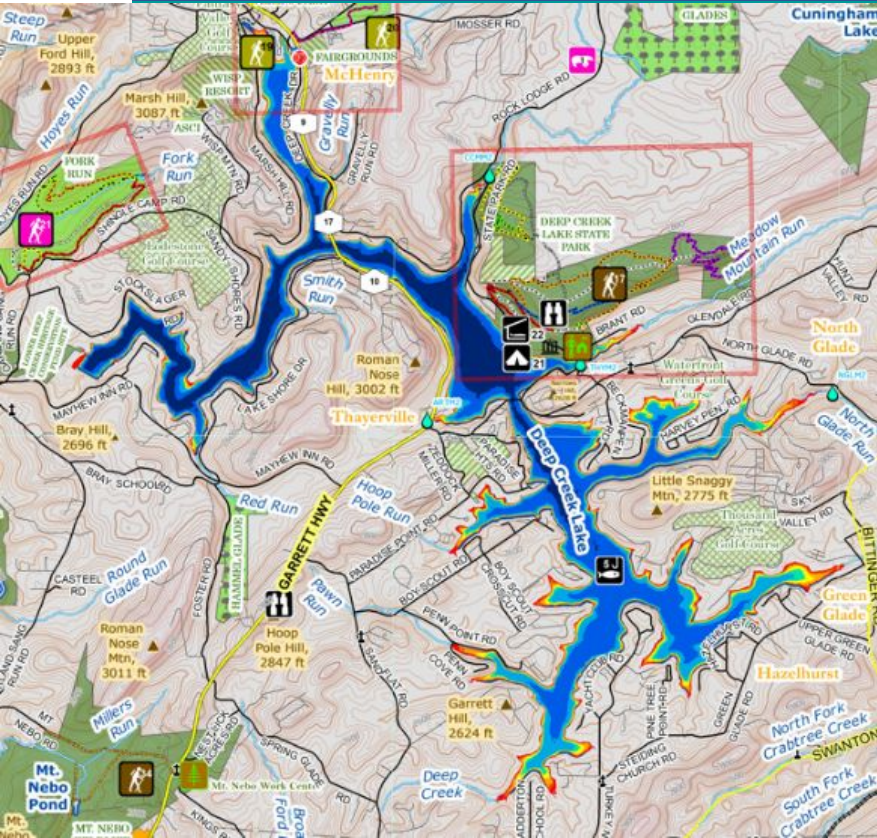
▶ Play all



Sort

Trail System #1 Kendall Trail Video Tour narrowshill.com	 	Trail #1 (Kendall Trail) from the ULTIMATE Garrett County Adventure Map Chris Nichols • 210 views • 2 years ago
Trail System #2 Margraff Plantation Trails Video Tour narrowshill.com	 	Trail #2 (Margraff Plantation Trails) from the ULTIMATE Garrett County A Chris Nichols • 84 views • 2 years ago
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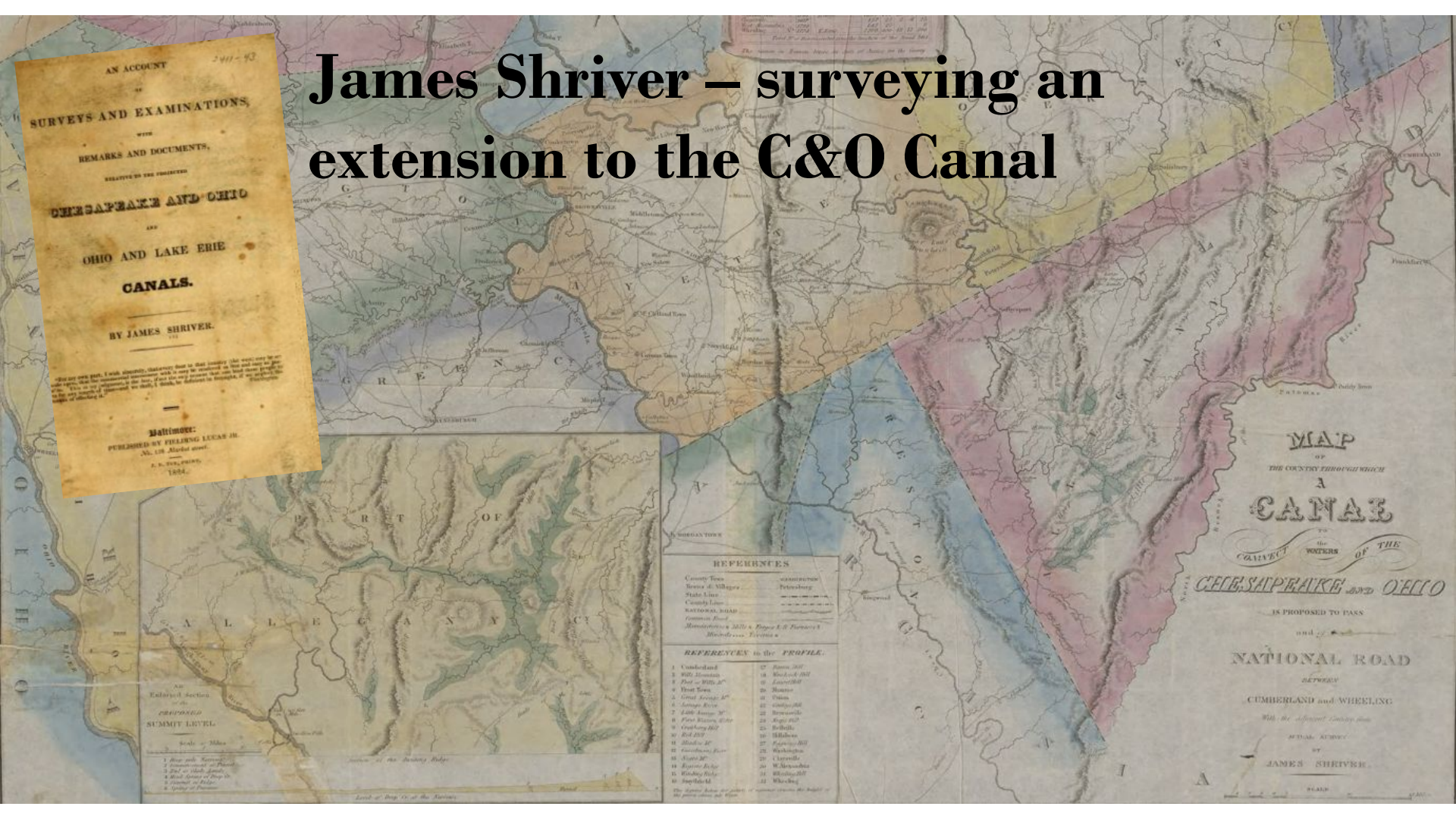
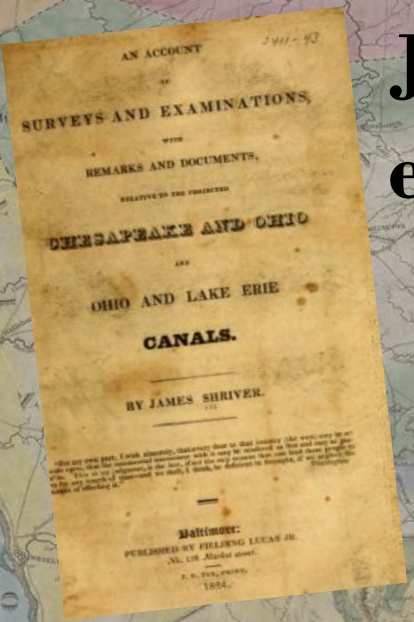
# Researching historical and special points



- Also created videos on historical and special points on the maps
- Before Deep Creek LAKE was formed in 1925, it was just Deep Creek and there is a rich history of “the Glades”, the central part of what would become Garrett County
- During research for a video “Before the Lake”, I found references to some interesting natural features which I had never heard of and have never seen any further mentions of

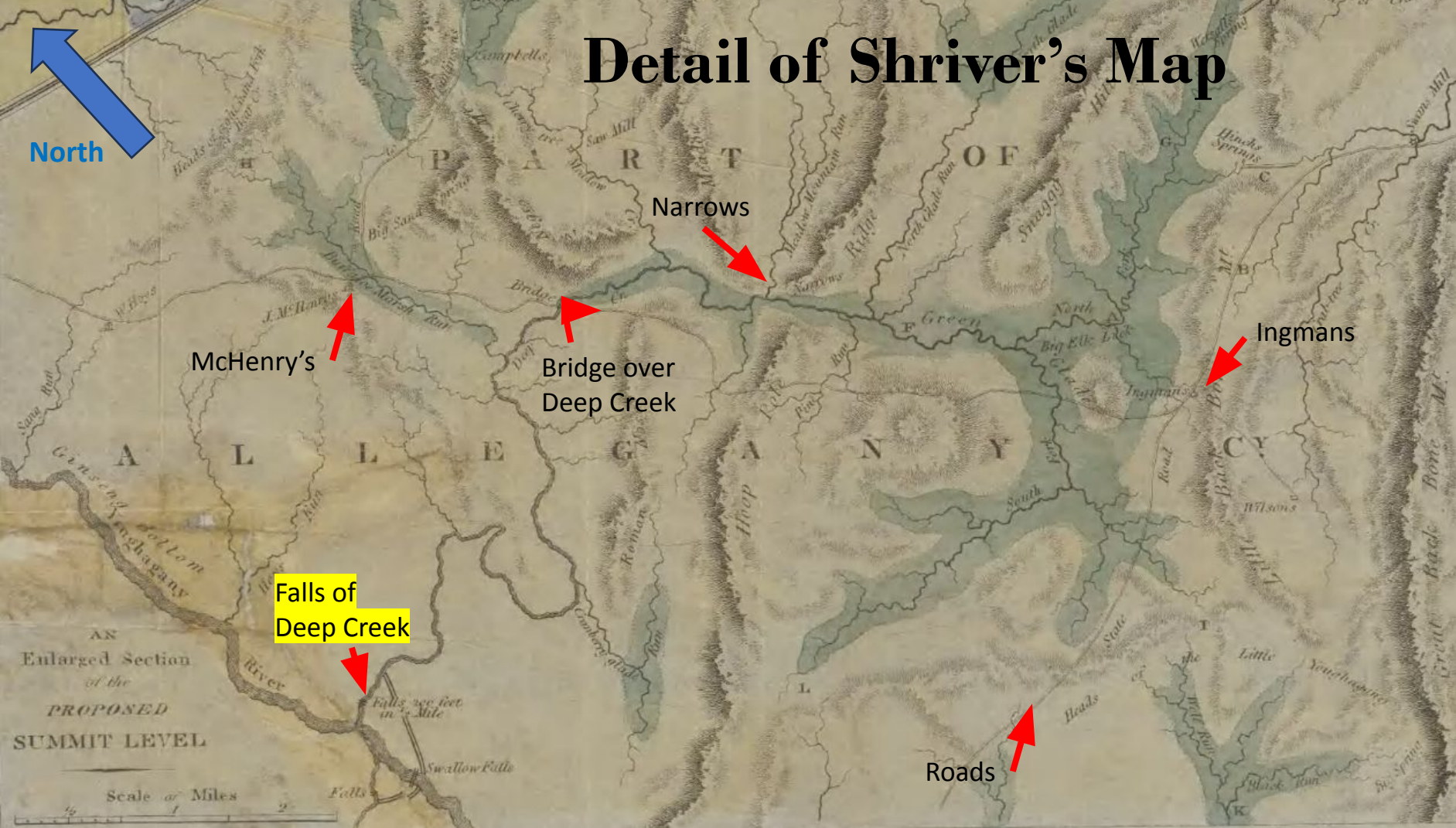


# James Shriver – surveying an extension to the C&O Canal





# Detail of Shriver's Map



Narrows

McHenry's

Bridge over  
Deep Creek

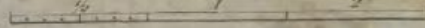
Ingmans

Falls of  
Deep Creek

Roads

AN  
Enlarged Section  
of the  
PROPOSED  
SUMMIT LEVEL

Scale of Miles



# Shriver describing the Falls of Deep Creek and Devil's Castle

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"Any attempt to describe these wild and rugged falls must fail to give a just conception of them. The stream rushing at an angle of about five degrees, over an irregular bed of rock, may be supposed to produce an extremely turbulent series of rapids. Passing along a deep ravine, worn through rock, it presents on all sides high, craggy, and abrupt precipices. At one point on the south side appears a remarkable mass of rock, in a great measure separate and distinct from the general bank, affording an alarming spectacle: the beholder standing on the opposite side of the stream, below a perpendicular rocky bank of near an hundred feet in height, on raising his eye, the summit of this terrific pile is seen completely overhanging him: *a glance at its water-worn and loosely connected base, so strongly induces the belief that the mass above him is tottering to its fall, that he is involuntarily impelled to hasten his steps onwards to avoid the apparent danger. The rude character of this pile has given it the name of the Devil's Castle.*"

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Postcard labeled  
“Falls of Deep Creek,  
1909”

Sent in after I had  
published the post  
about life before the  
Deep Creek Lake  
dam

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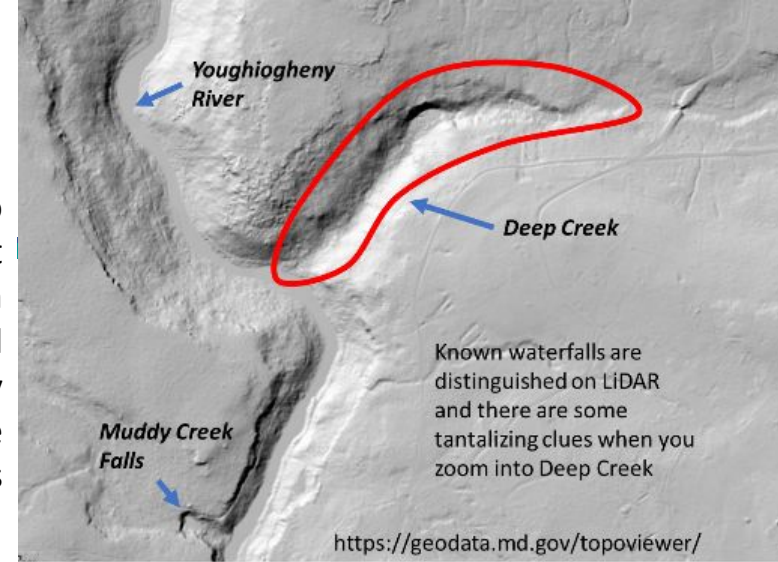


# Using modern maps and data to rediscover the falls



Navigation mapping to quickly find the area, get aerial imagery and get driving directions

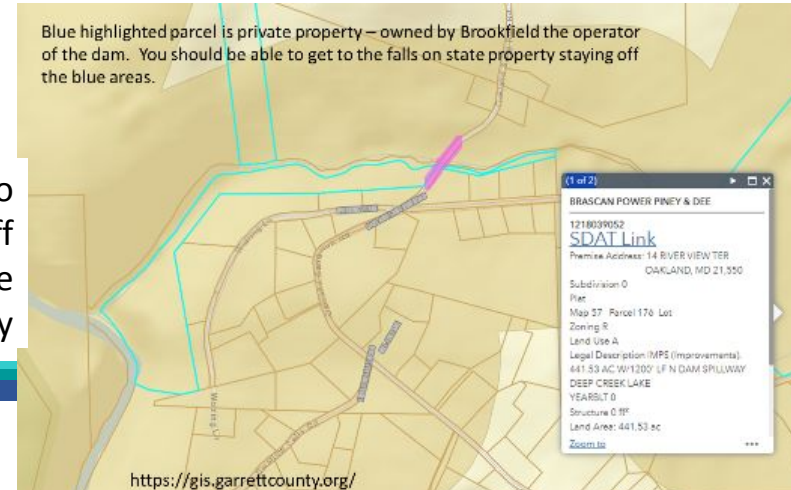
LiDAR to validate that the terrain could potentially have these features



Known waterfalls are distinguished on LiDAR and there are some tantalizing clues when you zoom into Deep Creek

<https://geodata.md.gov/topoviewer/>

Tax maps to plan a route off of private property



<https://gis.garrettcountry.org/>



# Old roadway and bridge of Oakland-Sang Run Rd





# The “Upper” Falls of Deep Creek



You arrive to this area fairly soon, and I thought these were it – the flow was just much less since it was diverted through the powerstation – on the right: was this the Devil’s Castle? Maybe Shriver exaggerated or it had fallen down?

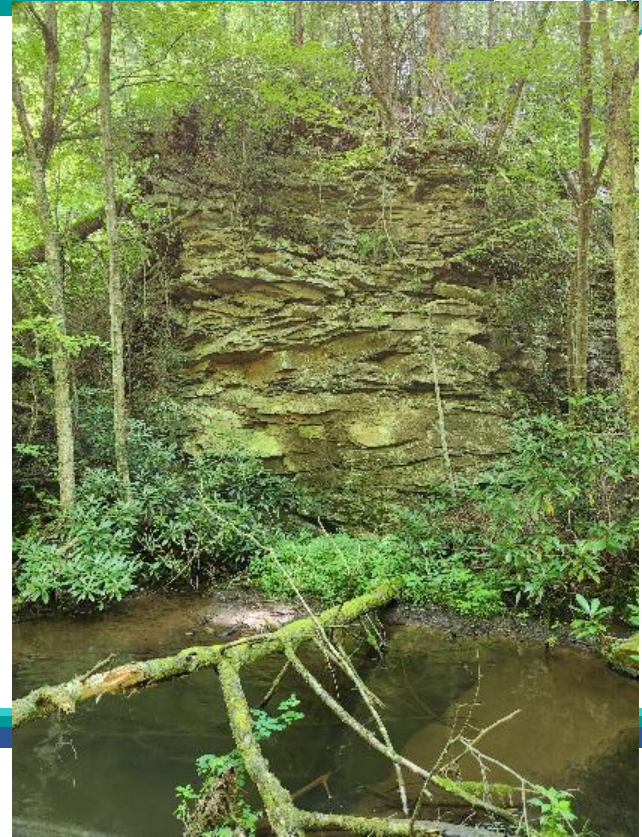




# The “Middle” falls and Devil’s Fort?



Continuing further, I found some bigger falls and a bigger rock formation that looked more like it could be the Castle, but soon found out it was just the Fort to the Castle downstream





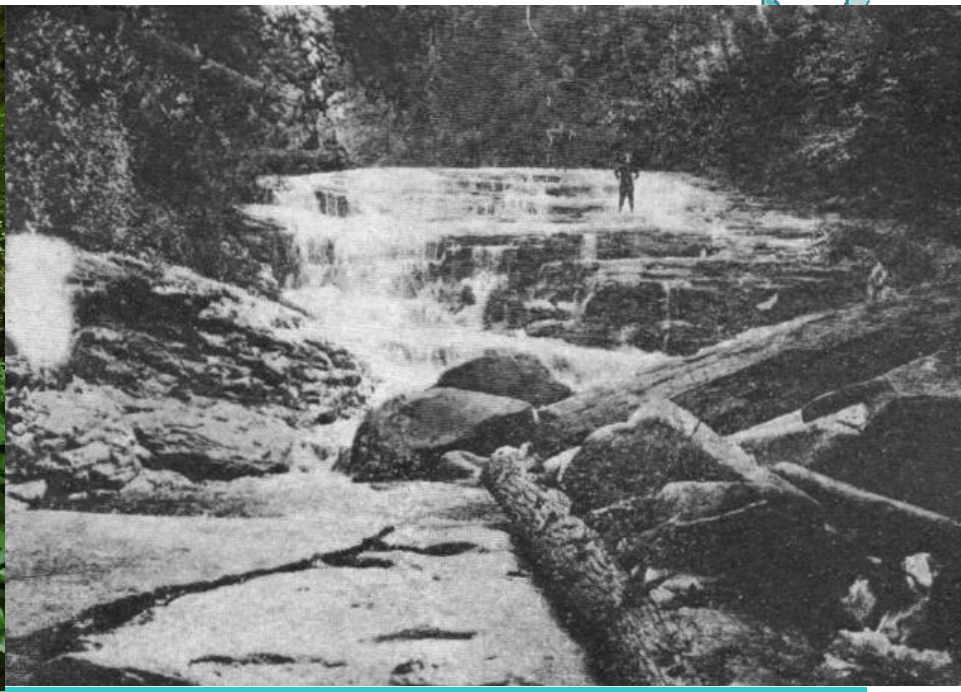
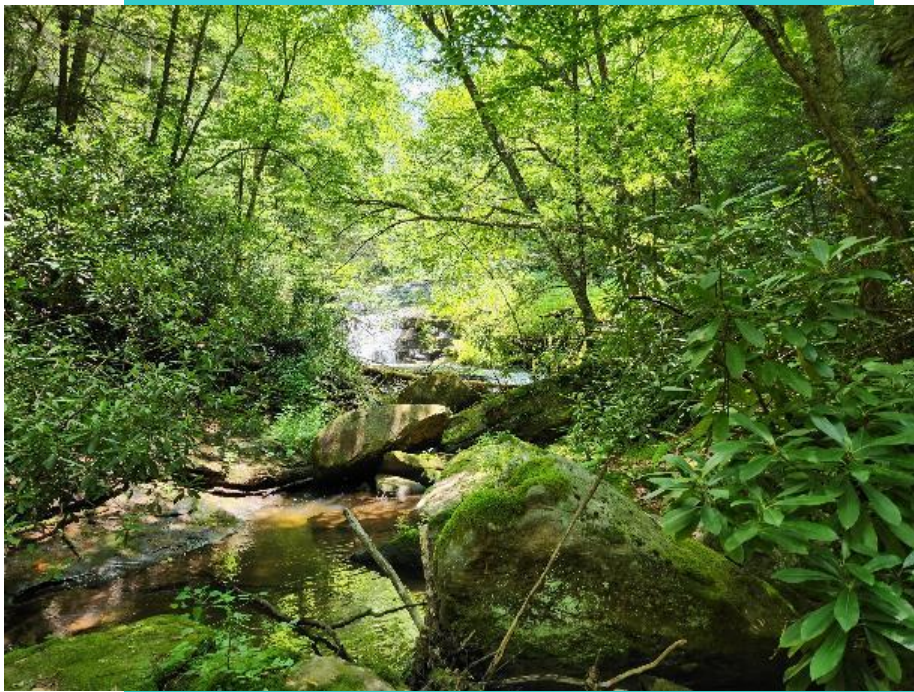
Success!







The Falls – now and then. Notice the rocks in the center of the pictures




# Some other adventures where an old map and today's technology led to a "rediscovery"



## Ferris Wheels and Freemason Gold - a History of Swallow Falls State Park




Maps: narrowhill.com Local info and lore: dimesy.com Real s



## Greater Garrett County? -

how a rainstorm and those  
scheming Penns shrank  
Maryland's borders

Summer 2023  
Chris Nichols



Maps: narrowhill.com Local info and lore: dimesy.com  
8/27/2023

Peppering in details like "an unstable alcoholic polymath", a closely-avoided case of cannibalism, and royal court intrigue helps to bring some more excitement to what is often just a metal sign or a stone in the ground



# There are still “rediscoveries” out there to be made!



There are more tools than ever to find new outdoor recreational experiences and to create a richer and more immersive experience once users are there

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For my maps: [narrowshill.com](http://narrowshill.com)

For links to my videos, local info and lore: [dimesy.com](http://dimesy.com)

