



# MARYLAND PARK SERVICE

2019

ANNUAL REPORT



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Cover Photo: New Germany State Park



Patuxent River, submitted to the 2019 Photo Contest by Tina Rye



Larry Hogan, Governor | Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary



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# A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



**2019 was a banner year in many respects.** The Maryland Park Service was recognized by the National Recreation and Parks Association as a finalist for the 2019 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. The value and importance of State Parks was reflected yet again in our park attendance number, which grew to 14.9 million, a 1.5 million increase over the prior year. We completed numerous legacy projects including opening Wolf Den Run State Park, our first park for off-road vehicles, and renovating the historic Sang Run Election House, the oldest polling place of its type in the region. All of these accomplishments were achieved in the midst of real challenges, including a tornado that struck Elk Neck State Park.

State Parks made great strides in preserving our state's natural resources. The Bloede Dam at Patapsco Valley State Park was successfully removed, effectively restoring and opening 60 miles of river habitat, including the mainstem and many tributaries, to anadromous and resident fish. Our dedicated Maryland Conservation Corps crews worked across the state to mitigate the impact of invasive plants, reforest over 300 acres, and establish 300 acres of pollinator habitat.

Interpreting outstanding natural, cultural, and historical resources is another important component of the Maryland Park Service mission. Our interpretive programs reached over 266,000 park visitors in 2019, including over 1,000 Spanish-speaking visitors participating in our "Es Mi Parque" program. In partnership with the Girl Scouts of America, we hosted the first annual "Girl Scouts Love State Parks" weekend. Also, visitors to Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park viewed a new orientation film honoring the life and work of Harriet Tubman, who risked all in the name of freedom and equality.

Visitors enjoyed enhanced amenities at several popular State Parks in 2019. Wolf Den Run State Park celebrated its grand opening, major upgrades were made to the Fair Hill NRMA equestrian facilities, a comprehensive sand dune / campground realignment project was completed at Assateague State Park, and stunning new trails opened at Deep Creek Lake and Palmer State Parks. Seeing our visitors enjoy these wonderful resources has been quite fulfilling!

2019 was indeed a banner year thanks to our hard-working, skilled, and dedicated staff and the volunteers and partners who support them. I look forward to all the great things we will accomplish together over the next year.

*Nita Saffaria*

# WHO WE ARE

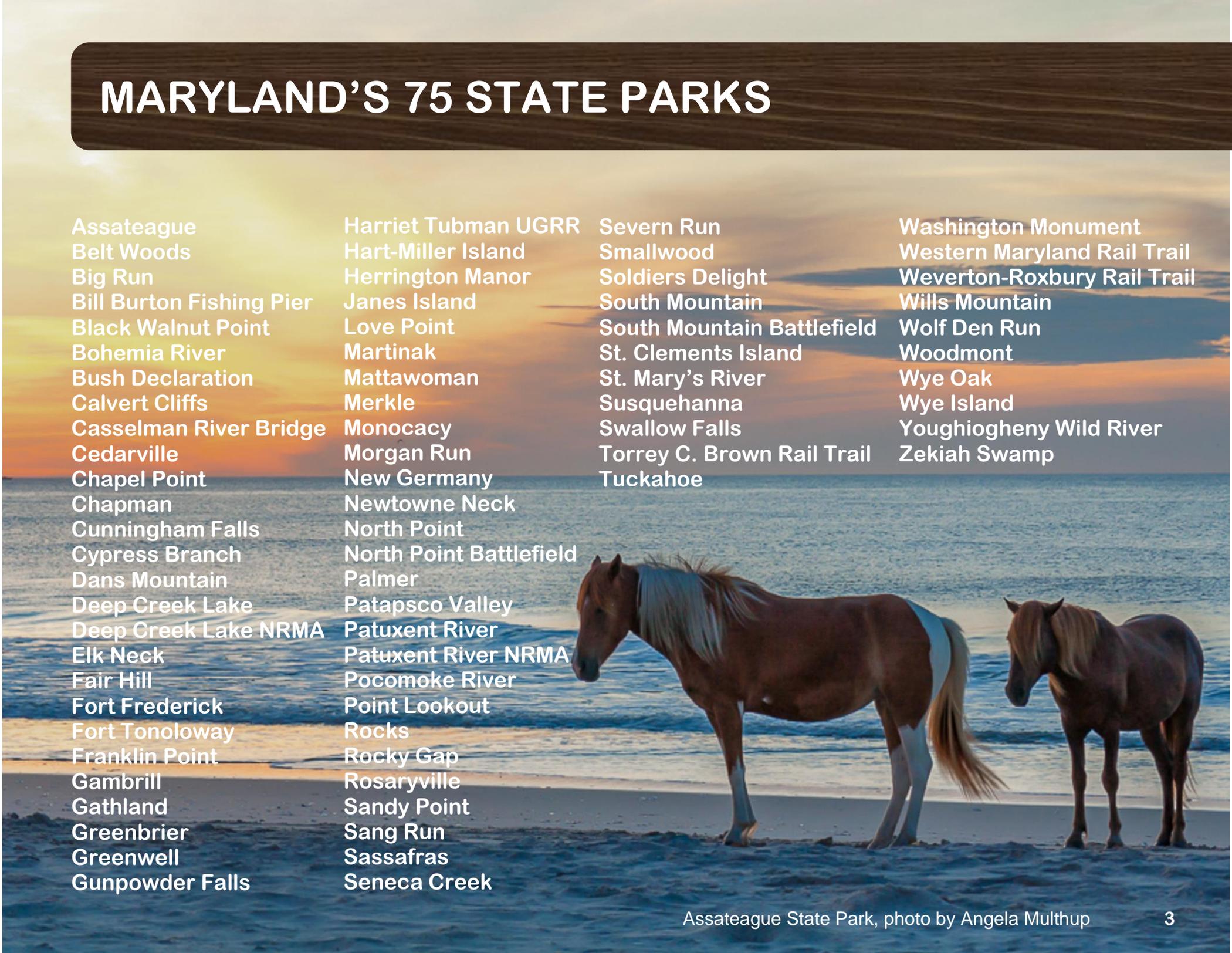
**THE MISSION** of the Maryland Park Service is to manage the natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources to provide for wise stewardship and enjoyment by people.

## OUR BRAND PROMISE:

- Nourish the well-being of children in ways that only nature can provide.
- Connect people to the beauty and serenity of nature in safe and welcoming places that belong to them.
- Reveal historical sites and relics that tell inspiring stories that give context and meaning to our lives today.
- Leave people feeling stress-free, even revitalized, and with happy memories to sustain them.
- Create places to relax in the reassuring presence of a friendly and dedicated park ranger who inspires and supports a desire to be a good steward of the Earth.



# MARYLAND'S 75 STATE PARKS



Assateague  
Belt Woods  
Big Run  
Bill Burton Fishing Pier  
Black Walnut Point  
Bohemia River  
Bush Declaration  
Calvert Cliffs  
Casselman River Bridge  
Cedarville  
Chapel Point  
Chapman  
Cunningham Falls  
Cypress Branch  
Dans Mountain  
Deep Creek Lake  
Deep Creek Lake NRMA  
Elk Neck  
Fair Hill  
Fort Frederick  
Fort Tonoloway  
Franklin Point  
Gambrill  
Gathland  
Greenbrier  
Greenwell  
Gunpowder Falls  
Harriet Tubman UGRR  
Hart-Miller Island  
Herrington Manor  
Janes Island  
Love Point  
Martinak  
Mattawoman  
Merkle  
Monocacy  
Morgan Run  
New Germany  
Newtowne Neck  
North Point  
North Point Battlefield  
Palmer  
Patapsco Valley  
Patuxent River  
Patuxent River NRMA  
Pocomoke River  
Point Lookout  
Rocks  
Rocky Gap  
Rosaryville  
Sandy Point  
Sang Run  
Sassafras  
Seneca Creek  
Severn Run  
Smallwood  
Soldiers Delight  
South Mountain  
South Mountain Battlefield  
St. Clements Island  
St. Mary's River  
Susquehanna  
Swallow Falls  
Torrey C. Brown Rail Trail  
Tuckahoe  
Washington Monument  
Western Maryland Rail Trail  
Weverton-Roxbury Rail Trail  
Wills Mountain  
Wolf Den Run  
Woodmont  
Wye Oak  
Wye Island  
Youghiogheny Wild River  
Zekiah Swamp

# NEW STATE PARKS



**Wolf Den Run State Park celebrated its grand opening on August 28, 2019. Located on nearly 2,000 acres in Garrett County, Wolf Den Run is the first state park to offer off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails. The property comprises approximately three miles of frontage on the Potomac River's North Branch, three brook trout streams, and 1,700 acres of mixed forest.**



Superintendent Settina, Secretary Haddaway-Riccio, Lt. Gov. Rutherford, Wolf Den Run State Park Grand Opening

# MARYLAND PARK SERVICE WORKFORCE



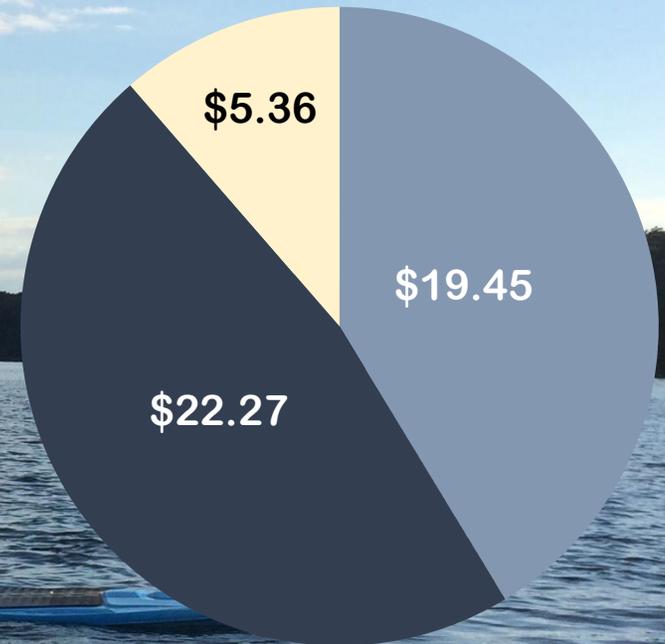
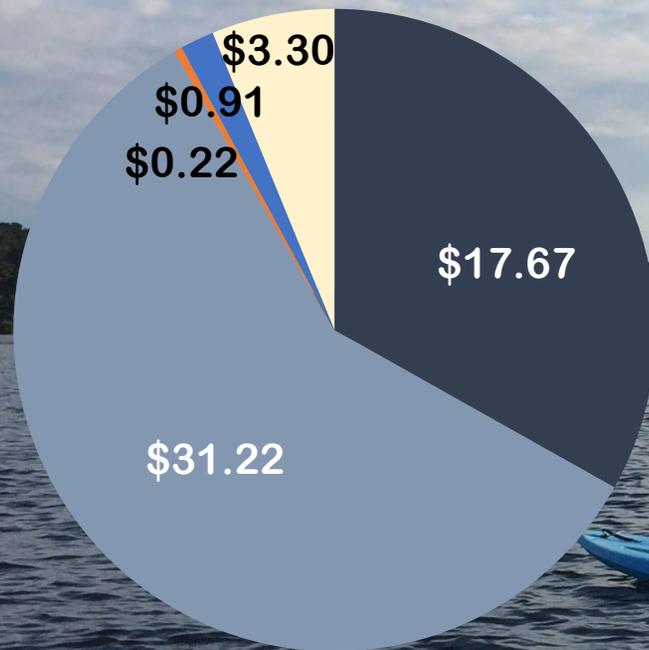
"It's truly amazing what we accomplish together." – MPS Headquarters Staff

**52** MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEES, **56** MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEES, **78** RANGERS, **34** ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES, **54** LONG-TERM CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYEES, **775+** SEASONAL EMPLOYEES

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

**FY 2019 REVENUE**  
**\$53.33 MILLION**

**FY 2019 EXPENDITURES**  
**\$52.08 MILLION**



■ Park Generated

■ Federal

■ General Fund

■ Program Open Space

■ Other State Agency Funds

■ Salaries

■ Operations

■ County Payments

# PARK OPERATIONS

- Parks experienced a 10% increase in visitation, from 13.4 million in 2018 to 14.9 million, in 2019.
- During peak season, 12 state parks filled to capacity 101 times.
- Over 65,000 reservations were made, and 149,000 nights were booked at Maryland State Parks in 2019.
- A successful pilot day-use reservation system was launched for the Falling Branch/ Kilgore Falls Area at Rocks State Park.
- Over 175 people earned the title of “super volunteer” by volunteering more 100 hours in our parks!



Sandy Point State Park



Tuckahoe State Park

# INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMMING AND EDUCATION

- Over 266,000 park visitors participated in interpretive and educational programs throughout the state.
- 1,000 family teams participated in the Park Quest program in over 24 state parks.
- Maryland participated in the first annual Girl Scouts Love State Parks weekend in July with camping and badge activities available for scout troops in multiple parks.

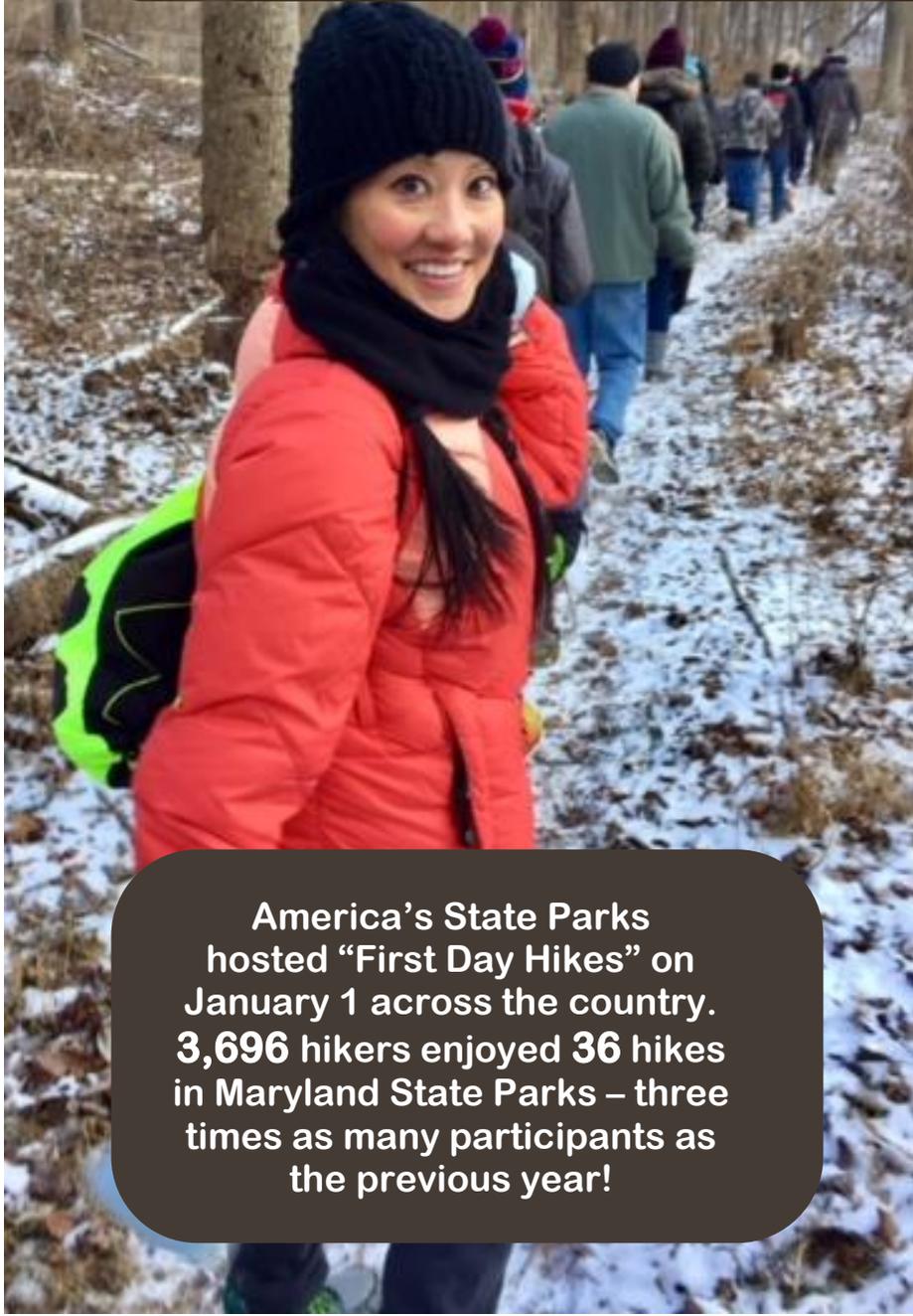


Maryland Park Service staff were trained in snorkeling as a new interpretive program to explore aquatic life in streams and rivers.



Nearly 1,300 visitors attended Es Mi Parque events to participate in water safety programs and other outdoor activities.

# SIGNATURE EVENTS



America's State Parks hosted "First Day Hikes" on January 1 across the country. **3,696** hikers enjoyed **36** hikes in Maryland State Parks – three times as many participants as the previous year!



- New Germany State Park hosted its annual summer event, "Old Time Jams," featuring local bluegrass musicians.
- Sang Run State Park allowed visitors to enjoy the traditional fun of hayrides, cider making, apply butter churning, candle dipping, scarecrow stuffing, pumpkin picking and more!
- Nearly 500 visitors celebrated the fall migration of the monarch butterfly at the first annual Monarchs & Milkweed at Merkle: A Butterfly Festival at the Merkle Wildlife NRMA.
- This year's Harriet Tubman Emancipation Celebration featured the public premier of *Harriet Tubman: Soldier of Freedom*, to include a standing-room only a cappella concert, moving interpretations of traditional gospels and spirituals, and the participation of hundreds of visitors and multiple state and federal partners.

# ANNUAL SIGNATURE EVENTS

## SPRING

- Youth Fishing Rodeos
- Maple Syrup Festival at Cunningham Falls
- Egg Hunts

- Colonial Market Fair at Fort Frederick
- National Trails Day Events

## SUMMER

- French & Indian War Muster at Fort Frederick
- Blue & Gray Days at Point Lookout
- Art in the Park at Deep Creek Lake
- Old Time Jams at New Germany
- Great American Backyard Campouts

## FALL

- Harriet Tubman Emancipation Celebration
- National Public Lands Day Celebrations
- Fall Festival at Sang Run
- Apple Butter Boil Festival at Swallow Falls
- Monarchs & Milkweed at Merkle
- Greeting of the Geese at Merkle

## WINTER

- First Day Hikes

- Holiday Open Houses
- Light Displays

# CUSTOMER SERVICE



Kilgore Falls, Rocks State Park

- **93%** of visitors said they wanted to visit a state park again.
- **92%** of visitors said visiting a state park was important to their health and feeling good.
- **90%** of visitors said park staff were friendly.
- **88%** of visitors rated their park visit as above average or excellent.

"I've camped at Cunningham Falls before, but this was the first time with a child. It was my toddler's first camping experience, and because it was so **magical** for him, it was incredibly magical for his parents as well! The campsite was so well-maintained, and the bathrooms were some of the **cleanest I've come across.**"

- Comment from the Customer Satisfaction Survey

# NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION



Bloede Dam Demolition

- The Bloede Dam at Patapsco Valley State Park was removed, opening 60 miles of river habitat for anadromous fish species. This was one of the most important dam removal projects in the Mid-Atlantic and has already resulted in migratory fish sightings as far upstream as Daniels Dam, north of Interstate 70.
- Staff planted native pollinator plants and constructed bee nesting sites at the Rock Ridge Area of Rocks State Park.
- Staff conducted an 83-acre controlled burn and meadow planting at Sassafras NRMA to reestablish native and endangered plant species.
- A pollinator trail was established at Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary, featuring over half an acre of milkweed that attracts butterflies.
- Staff fought the spread of invasive plants and reforested over 300 acres of state land.

# CULTURAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park

- Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park premiered a new film, *Harriet Tubman: Soldier of Freedom* – currently the most viewed video on the DNR YouTube channel.

- A new Artifact Collection Policy was developed to better track and preserve historic resources.
- New interpretive exhibits were unveiled at Compton's Gap at South Mountain State Battlefield, as well as at the Monkton Station on the Torrey C. Brown Rail Trail.

# CAPITAL AND CRITICAL MAINTENANCE

- The historic Sang Run Election House in Sang Run State Park was restored, preserving the only documented surviving election house in Western Maryland and one of the oldest in the state.
- A dune stabilization project was completed at Assateague State Park to improve the park's sustainability to withstand storms and rising sea levels. Campsites and roads were relocated away from the base of dunes and 6 new electric campsites and 5 new hike-in campsites were constructed.



Sang Run Election House



Fair Hill NRMA

- The equestrian infrastructure at Fair Hill NRMA was significantly enhanced through the installation of new turf and safety improvements, construction of steeplechase racing and training areas and development of new dressage and show jumping arenas.

# EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & ADMINISTRATION

Ranger School Class of 2019  
Janes Island State Park



The Training Division hosted a month-long Ranger School for 18 new park rangers and a week-long professional Maintenance School for over two dozen maintenance employees from throughout the state. Also, over 60 employees attended two-day interpretive skills training that honed skills in a diversity of issues that ranged from invasive species to the history of Maryland State Parks.

The Maryland Park Service was honored as one of three finalists for the National Recreation and Parks Association's 2019 Gold Medal Award for Excellence in the Field of Parks and Recreation Management.



# MARYLAND CONSERVATION CORPS



Tuckahoe State Park

The Maryland Conservation Corps (MCC) provides young adults with opportunities for professional development and to receive hands-on training in a variety of environmental and natural resource-based careers through a supportive, team-based framework. The program focuses on three critical areas of conservation work: environmental and park infrastructure restoration; trail and waterway improvement; and environmental education and interpretation.

- MCC treated nearly **4,000** hemlock trees to prevent damage from the hemlock woolly adelgid and **175** ash trees to prevent damage from the invasive emerald ash borer.
- MCC improved **2,112** acres of park and public lands through efforts such as the removal of over **3,000** lbs of trash and **50** tires and the creation of **4** miles of trails at Wolf Den Run State Park.
- MCC participants delivered environmental education programs to **34,809** park visitors and mentored more than **400** underserved youth through the Conservation Jobs Corps program.

# CONSERVATION JOBS CORPS



The Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC) provides youth with the opportunity to conserve Maryland State Parks and public lands, while learning practical job skills that will prepare them for the future.

- CJC employed **353** youth who completed **111** projects at **15** park sites over a five-week period.
- **21** former CJC youth rejoined the program as staff members.
- **265** CJC youth went camping for the first time ever!

# VETERANS CONSERVATION CORPS

The Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC) provides full time jobs to veterans in state parks. VCC participants complete conservation projects in areas such as recreation enhancement, park operations, wetland restoration, and trail maintenance and construction. Corps Members are trained in enriching and marketable skills, such as emergency response, chainsaw safety, hazardous tree removal, trail construction, environmental education and invasive species removal.

- The VCC planted **250** native plant species across Point Lookout State Park and constructed and deployed more than **35** oyster reef balls in the St. Mary's River.
- The VCC improved **43,564** square feet of state park lands by removing truckloads of invasive species that had rendered areas inaccessible.
- More than **36** miles of trails were maintained, improved and repaired to enhance recreational opportunities and protect natural resources.



# TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS



Western Maryland Rail Trail



Deep Creek Lake State Park

- The Western Maryland Rail Trail was extended four miles from Sideling Hill to Little Orleans and the Potomac River, improving access to the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, Indigo Tunnel and campgrounds.
- Nearly 15 miles of gorgeous new trails were created at Deep Creek Lake State Park, including routes in previously inaccessible areas along Cherry Creek.
- A new trail was completed at Palmer State Park, allowing visitors to enjoy a four-mile loop from the uplands to Deer Creek, including ruins of a former flint mill.
- In response to flooding damage and removal of the Bloede Dam, significant repairs and improvements were made to the highly popular Grist Mill Trail, a 2.5-mile paved accessible trail on the banks of the Patapsco River in Baltimore County.

# OUR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS



Friends of Cunningham Falls State Park  
Volunteers, Maple Syrup Festival

State Park Friends groups are nonprofit foundations affiliated with the Maryland Park Service. These organizations are comprised of dedicated volunteers who raise funds for park improvements and programs and provide invaluable volunteer support for special events and park operations and maintenance.

Friends of Assateague State Park  
Friends of Maryland State Forests and Parks  
Friends of Janes Island State Park  
Friends of Martinak State Park  
Friends of New Germany State Park  
Western Garrett County State Park Volunteers  
Friends of Cunningham Falls State Park  
The Volunteer Team (Rocky Gap State Park)  
Dans Mountain Park Association  
Friends of Fort Frederick State Park  
Save Fair Hill  
North Point State Park Volunteers  
Soldiers Delight Conservation  
Friends of Calvert Cliffs State Park  
Friends of Point Lookout State Park  
Point Lookout Lighthouse Preservation Society  
Friends of Seneca Creek Stone Cutting/  
Benjamin Harrison Society  
Gunpowder United Mountain Bike Operators  
Percy Lee Dairy Farm Foundation  
Graham Equestrian Center  
Friends of Helen Avalynne Tawes Garden  
Piscataway Conoy Tribe  
Friends of the Patapsco Valley State Park  
National Steeplechase Foundation  
Turkey Point Light Station  
Catoctin Forest Alliance  
Maryland OHV Alliance  
West Rhode Riverkeeper  
Rosaryville Conservancy

# MORE INFORMATION

## INFORMATION:

1-800-830-3947

[dnr.maryland.gov](http://dnr.maryland.gov)

## RESERVATIONS:

1-888-432-2267

[parkreservations.maryland.gov](http://parkreservations.maryland.gov)

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1-800-830-3947

[customerservice.dnr@maryland.gov](mailto:customerservice.dnr@maryland.gov)

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Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford, Tuckahoe State Park