

Hunting for Conservation: Managing Wildlife, Preserving Habitat

General hunting is permitted within a designated 1,000-acre area of the park.

Hunting plays a vital role in Maryland's wildlife management. Responsible hunting helps keep populations—such as white-tailed deer—at healthy, sustainable levels. Without natural predators, deer can quickly become overpopulated, which leads to overbrowsing. This not only damages native vegetation but also affects the broader ecosystem, including birds and smaller mammals that depend on the same habitat.

By managing wildlife populations, hunters help reduce the spread of disease, improve herd health, and protect the balance of natural resources. Hunting in Maryland is a deeply rooted tradition that also serves a modern purpose: conserving the land for future generations of both people and wildlife.

Thank you for supporting ethical, regulated hunting practices and helping to protect Maryland's natural heritage.



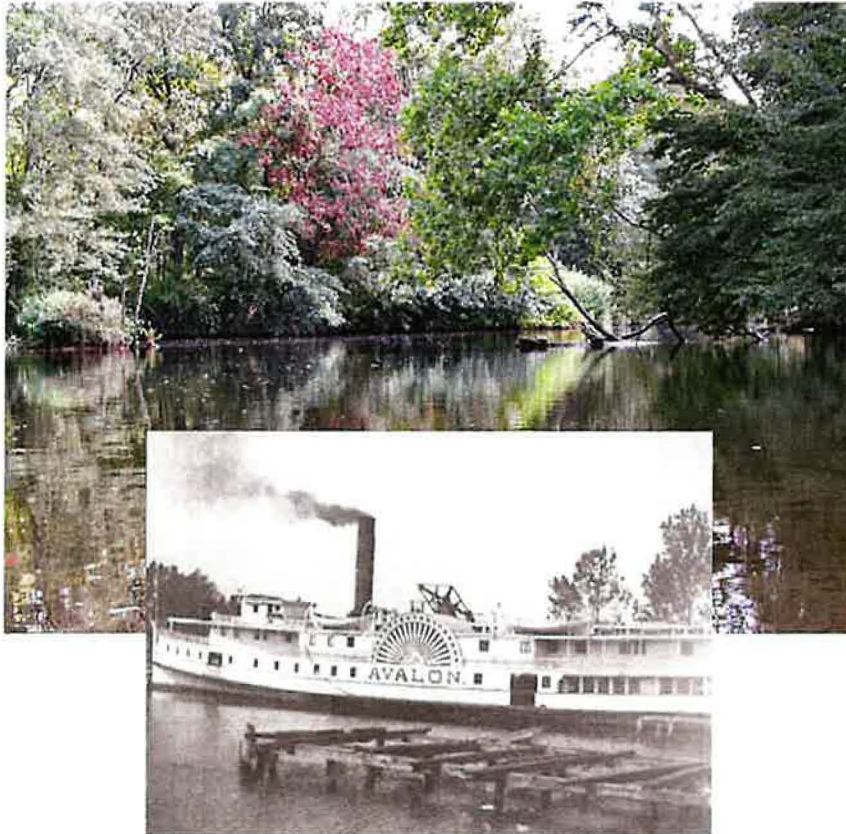


From Steamboats to Kayaks: The Changing Course of Tuckahoe Creek

In the 1800s, the rhythmic chuff of steamboats echoed along the Choptank River as they turned into the narrow, winding waters of Tuckahoe Creek. These vessels carried goods and passengers upstream, their journey ending in the small hamlet of Hillsboro, Maryland—where the creek narrowed and the water grew too shallow to go farther.

Over time, Tuckahoe Creek, like many tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay, has changed. Erosion and runoff have filled the creek bed with sediment, making the water shallower and ending its age of steam-powered navigation.

Yet today, the upper Tuckahoe is more alive than ever. What steamboats once bypassed, paddlers now treasure. The "un navigable" stretch beyond Hillsboro has become the heart of Tuckahoe State Park—offering peaceful kayaking, excellent fishing, and a haven for wildlife.



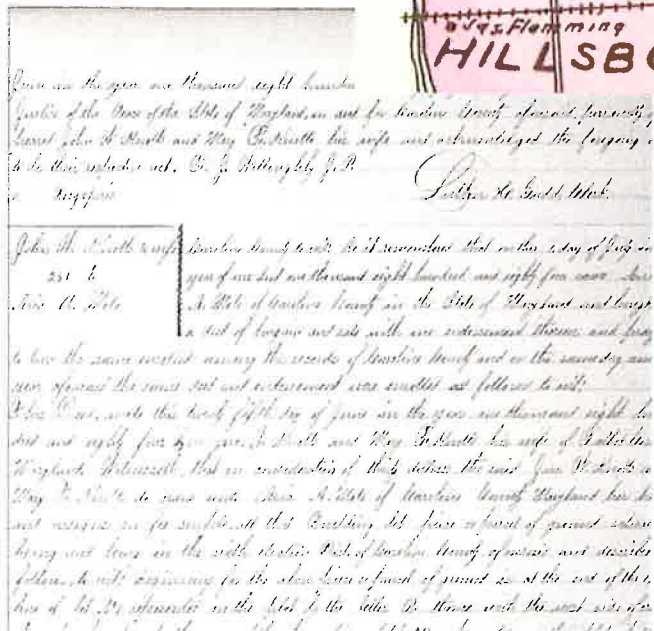
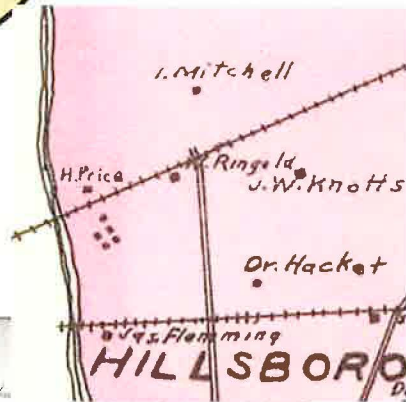


Echoes of Sandtown: A Hidden History

At first glance, this may look like just another patch of woods. But more than a century ago, this land was home to a small but vibrant African American community known as Sandtown.

In the early 1880s, local landowner John Knotts subdivided a portion of his property south of the Delaware & Chesapeake Railroad tracks and near the banks of Tuckahoe Creek into modest lots—each about a quarter to a third of an acre. These parcels were purchased by Black families from the surrounding area, who built homes and established a close-knit community during an era when land ownership offered a rare path to stability and self-sufficiency.

Known as Sandtown, the community thrived quietly into the early 20th century, with families living, working, and raising children here until at least the 1920s. Though no buildings remain today, the roots of this community still lie beneath the forest floor—part of the hidden heritage of Caroline County.





A Home in the Margins: The Tenant House

Nestled among the trees, this modest structure is one of the last surviving traces of a working farm that once stood here—part of a landscape that, like much of what is now Tuckahoe State Park, was shaped by agriculture and the people who labored on it.

Built sometime before 1880—perhaps even earlier—this one-and-a-half-story, single-room house was likely home to a tenant farmer. Its simple frame construction, lack of foundation, and utilitarian layout (one room up, one down, with a small lean-to addition that may have served as a kitchen) reflect a life of hard work and limited means. Inside, the house has plaster walls over rough oak lath, wooden floors, a steep staircase, and a brick chimney that once vented a stove.

Recent research suggests this home may have deeper roots. The style and materials hint at an origin as early as the 1870s—or even pre-Civil War—possibly as housing for an enslaved family, later adapted by African American tenant farmers well into the 20th century. Though the exact residents of this house remain unknown, census records and historic maps show that many more African American families lived in this area than homes officially recorded—suggesting lives lived in the shadows of the historical record.

Though the rest of the farmstead was removed after the state acquired the land in 1967, this house quietly endured. Today, it stands as a rare and powerful reminder of those whose stories are too often left untold.





Crossroads of Time: The Tuckahoe Creek Railroad Bridge

The Railroad Bridge has spanned this waterway for over a century. Built in 1909 by the Pennsylvania Railroad, the steel and concrete bridge once carried freight and passengers across the Eastern Shore as part of the Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia Railway. The line later became part of the Chesapeake Railroad, which ceased operations in 1997—marking the end of train traffic on this stretch of track.

In 2019, it underwent rehabilitation to support pedestrian and equestrian as part of a rails-to-trails project. The bridge now connects with the Sandtown Trail, opening up a once-inaccessible part of the park.

Spanning 100 feet and standing 26 feet tall, this historic structure remains a powerful reminder of the railroad era that helped shape the Eastern Shore. Today, it links past and present—carrying not trains, but trail-goers into nature and history alike.



Ridgely Train Station Early 1900's



Pawpaw: A Tropical Taste in Maryland

With its broad, lush leaves and custard-like fruit, the pawpaw tree (*Asimina triloba*) looks like it belongs in the tropics—but it's actually a native of the eastern United States and a hidden gem of our local forests.

Pawpaws typically grow 15–30 feet tall, but this towering 44-foot specimen is something special. In 2023, it was crowned the Queen Anne's County Champion Pawpaw by the Maryland Big Tree Program.

Each fall, the pawpaw produces a soft, sweet fruit that's rich in nutrients and full of flavor—often described as a blend of banana, mango, and melon.

Pawpaws thrive in fertile, well-drained soil with a mix of sun and shade, and they're impressively resistant to pests and disease. Once a favorite of Native Americans and early settlers, the pawpaw is now enjoying a quiet comeback in gardens, orchards, and conservation areas.

So take a moment to admire this champion—it's a rare local example of one of America's most unusual native fruit trees.





When Does Trash Become Treasure?

Every year, visitors hike into the park with something in hand, eager to "show a ranger" what they've discovered—rusty cans, broken bottles, old tools, and other mysterious odds and ends. Some come hoping they've found a piece of history. Others just think they're helping by cleaning up what looks like trash.

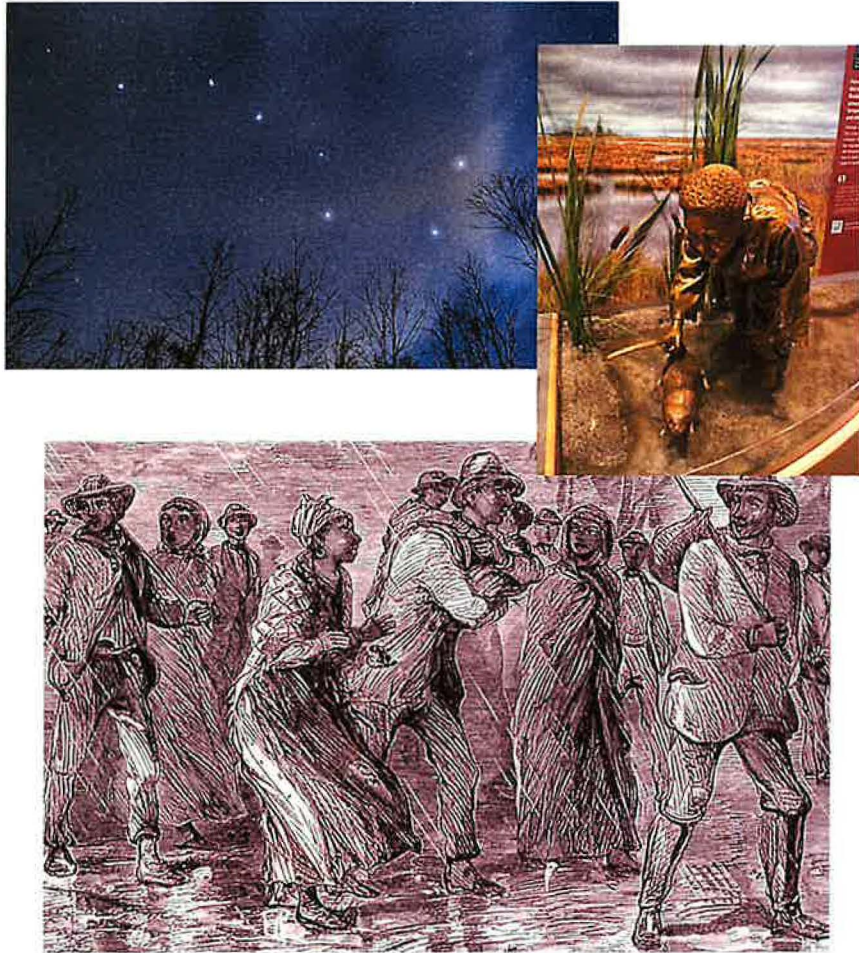
But here's the question we ask ourselves again and again: When does a pile of rusty junk stop being garbage—and start telling a story?

Sometimes, what looks like litter is actually an important clue to the lives of people who came before us. Other times... it's just yesterday's trash.

Curious how archaeologists make the call? Scan the QR code to learn more from our partners at the National Park Service—and find out how history can hide in the most unexpected places.



Survival and Resistance: The Underground Railroad



Queen Anne's County, Maryland, played a powerful role in the history of the Underground Railroad—serving both as a critical corridor for freedom seekers heading north and as a place where brave individuals risked everything to help them along the way.

The long, dangerous journeys through forests and across marshes demanded not only immense courage, but also a deep, practical knowledge of the land—of shifting tides, changing seasons, weather patterns, edible plants, and the habits of wildlife—skills often rooted in generations of experience living close to nature.

Restoring the Forest, Healing the Land: Reforestation at Tuckahoe



7 Species of Oaks
2 Species of Pines
3 Species of
Dogwoods
& More!



In 2023, Tuckahoe State Park took a major step toward ecological restoration. In partnership with Washington College's Natural Lands Project, the park completed Phase 1 of a large-scale reforestation effort—planting over 57,000 native trees across former farmland.

Why does this matter? Trees play a vital role in protecting the Chesapeake Bay. As they grow, they filter rainwater, reduce erosion, and absorb excess nutrients that would otherwise wash into streams and rivers. At the same time, this reforested area will provide critical habitat for birds, pollinators, and countless other native species.

This is more than a planting—it's a long-term investment in the health of Tuckahoe Creek, the surrounding watershed, and the future of our shared landscape. And we're just getting started.

Greiner's Fishing Bridge: A Hidden Gem On Tuckahoe Creek

Tucked along the tranquil waters of Tuckahoe Creek, Greiner's Fishing Bridge is a cherished local treasure for anglers, hikers, and nature lovers alike. Straddling the line between Queen Anne's and Caroline counties, the bridge offers not only a prime spot for casting a line but also sweeping views of the peaceful creek and easy access to surrounding nature trails on both sides of the water.

Whether you're hoping to catch the seasonal runs of yellow and white perch or watch the American and hickory shad make their spring return, this scenic spot offers some of the most diverse fishing opportunities in the region. With its mix of rich wildlife, shaded trails, and relaxing waterfront ambiance, Greiner's Fishing Bridge is the perfect destination for anyone looking to enjoy the best of Maryland's Eastern Shore outdoors.



LEFT: YELLOW PERCH



RIGHT: HICKORY SHAD