

# Center for State of the Parks



## THE STATE OF CATOCTIN MOUNTAIN PARK: SUMMARY

### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PARK

Located about 60 miles from both Baltimore and Washington, D.C., Catoctin Mountain Park's 5,810 acres are home to more than 1,000 native plant and animal species. Quarry sites, charcoal hearths, a whiskey still, and rustic-style cabins are evidence of the region's human history.

Beginning in 1936, the Works Progress Administration and, later, the Civilian Conservation Corps—both federal work programs—supplied the labor to build camps, picnic areas, and administrative buildings, plant thousands of trees, and turn the former farm land into a thriving second-growth ecosystem that eventually became known as Catoctin Mountain Park. In 1942, Catoctin became home to President Franklin Roosevelt's private retreat, Shangri-la, now called Camp David.

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The park provides opportunities for visitors to enjoy hiking, camping, fishing, and other recreational activities. In 2003, approximately 620,000 visitors to Catoctin spent an estimated \$27.57 million and supported 683 local jobs (Michigan State University Money Generation Model II).



### KEY FINDINGS

- Catoctin's fiscal year 2005 budget was \$2,373,900. Modest increases over the past few years have not kept pace with inflation, salary increases, and rising utility and fuel costs.
- In response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, homeland security and law enforcement duties have increased at many parks, including Catoctin, which is home to the presidential retreat, Camp David. At this small park, this means that most staff juggle law enforcement duties with other responsibilities. The park's museum curator, for example, has a limited amount of time to preserve and interpret Catoctin's museum collection because of law enforcement activities.
- Catoctin employs about nine fewer staff than five years ago. The park's maintenance crew lost five staff, and volunteers must now do most trail maintenance. Other critical unfilled or unfunded positions include a cultural resources specialist, information technology specialist, law enforcement rangers, and a facility management specialist.
- Following the Center for State of the Parks' resource assessment methodology, current overall conditions of Catoctin's known natural resources rated a "good" score of 82 out of 100. This is one of the highest natural resources scores of all the parks



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assessed by the Center for State of the Parks to date.

- However, non-native pests such as the hemlock woolly adelgid and gypsy moth, as well as diseases such as dogwood anthracnose and butternut canker, have decimated some tree species within Catoctin and throughout the eastern United States during the last century. Resource managers are pursuing effective treatments, but additional funds are needed to successfully combat outbreaks and prevent further destruction. Because the park's natural resources base funding is limited, staff must pursue special project funding when needed.
- Overall conditions of the park's known cultural resources rated 64 out of 100, indicating "fair" conditions. Funding and staffing shortfalls make it difficult for the Park Service to properly care for and interpret cultural resources. The park lacks a cultural resources specialist with an appropriate degree and training to be dedicated to protection and management of cultural resources. Instead, the park relies heavily on the professional expertise of the Park Service National Capital Region cultural resources staff.
- The interesting history of charcoal production, iron furnace work, and presidential visits are not fully interpreted for visitors due to a lack of sufficient funding and staffing.
- Historic letters exchanged during the New Deal period, photographs of presidential visits, and artifacts used for charcoaling during the period of rural industry and agriculture are not fully cataloged and largely inaccessible to researchers and visitors.



JIM NATIONS/NPCA

### ABOUT NPCA AND THE CENTER FOR STATE OF THE PARKS

Since 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. NPCA, its 300,000 members, and hundreds of partners work together to protect the park system and preserve our nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage for generations to come.

The National Parks Conservation Association initiated the State of the Parks® program in 2000 to assess the condition of natural and cultural resources in the parks, and determine how well equipped the National Park Service is to protect the parks—its stewardship capacity. The goal is to provide information that will help policy-makers, the public, and the National Park Service improve conditions in national parks, celebrate successes as models for other parks, and ensure a lasting legacy for future generations.

### CONTACT US

For a copy of the full report published by NPCA's Center for State of the Parks on Catoctin Mountain Park, to get

Funding and staffing shortfalls make it difficult for the National Park Service to properly care for and interpret Catoctin's cultural resources.

copies of reports on other parks assessed by the Center for State of the Parks, or for more information about the Center for State of the Parks, visit [www.npca.org/stateoftheparks](http://www.npca.org/stateoftheparks) or contact Dr. James Nations, vice president of the Center for State of the Parks, at [jnations@npca.org](mailto:jnations@npca.org).

For more information about Catoctin Mountain Park, or what the public and our elected officials can do to help improve the health of this park, please contact Joy Oakes, Mid-Atlantic regional director, at [joakes@npca.org](mailto:joakes@npca.org).