



The Catoctin Forest Alliance Bulletin

www.catoctinforestalliance.org



Newsletter of the CFA

Vol. 15 No. 1

February 2025

Editor: Linda Sundergill

Our mission is to preserve and protect the Catoctin Mountain forest for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations

www.catoctinforestalliance.org

A Note from our President, Jim Robbins

Winter has been hard this year on the animals, trees and other plants but the moisture has been wonderful for everything. When out hiking be aware of the ice and/or snow on the trails along with rocks that can be very slick. Make sure that you are aware of the weather and any trails issues. The temperature in the mountains can be 5-10 degrees colder than in the flat land. In winter remember to review what you should be taking with you on your hike(s). Better to review and make changes than to be on the short end of things. Come hike the trails, take in the wonderful views. Experience the changes, take in the smells of the forest and visit the vistas. Make suggestions for changes that you would like to see in the present trails. Check with the visitor center for information on new trails or future ones to come. Please stay safe as you do all these things.

Special note: Mark Spurrier, former Manager of Cunningham Falls State Park and Gambrill State Park, was recently promoted to Regional Manager for the South-Central Maryland Park Service. It has been my honor to work with Mark for over 20 years. Mark is hard working, hands on, has great integrity and is a true friend. I will miss his smile and “Can Do” attitude.

SUCCESS

We have 5 young men with us this year along with their coach Jodie Coole. We have been cleaning up the Manor Area Shop to make room for additional parking, working on trails, clearing brush at the Manor House at Catoctin Furnace and exploring trails. Starting this year, we have been spending Monday at ThorpeWood taking care of the barn animals, horses, goats, cows and chickens.

Amish

The Nappanee Amish will be arriving on March 10, 2025 this year and leaving on the 4th of April. Catoctin Mountain Park has a long list of projects for them to accomplish and I have no doubts that they will accomplish them all.



Park Ranger Mark Spurrier, Former Park Manager of Cunningham Falls & Gambrill State Parks, promoted to Regional Manager



By Claudia Padilla, Lead Park Ranger, Cunningham Falls & Gambrill State Parks

While Mark leaves a void that will take some time to fill, the Maryland Park Service hasn't lost the Mark Spurrier energy completely, in fact it will be amplified, just in a different space, as he was promoted South Central Regional Manager for the Maryland Park Service covering the park complexes of Patapsco Valley State Park, Gunpowder Falls State Park and Seneca Creek State Park.

Since 2014, Spurrier has guided the park and its staff through many ups and downs of a changing world. Mark fostered existing partnerships with local organizations such as the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society and forged new ones including the creation of the Friends of CFSP/GSP and Catoctin Forest Alliance. Leading the coordination of many Maple Syrup Festivals, including the park's 50th, navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, spearheading native hemlock plantings, mentoring Juvenile Services youth and devising creative solutions to countless park problems, Mark did it all and much, much more.

Park staff sent him off with many well wishes and luck as he enters a new chapter. While he is no longer physically present in the park, his legacy of connecting people to nature carries on and expands into a new territory with new challenges. Congratulations Mark!

Note from Mel Poole, former Superintendent of Catoctin Mountain Park, Vice President of the Friends of Maryland State Parks and CFA Board Member; *“Mark was one of the best park managers I’ve ever known at cultivating friends and partnerships for parks!”*



Mark guiding a tree planting activity



Mark and wife, Debbie



March 8, 9, 15, 16

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

14274 William Houck Drive, Thurmont, MD 21788

Visit cunninghamgambrill.org for more info





Forest Therapy Walk

@ Cunningham Falls State Park



Saturday, February 22nd from 2-4PM
Meet at the William Houck Nature Center
14274 William Houck Dr.
Thurmont, MD 21788

Participants awaken their senses and engage with nature through a guided walk and meditation. For ages 16+. Dress for the weather, wear comfortable walking shoes. No registration required. Event free with park entrance fee of \$3/MD vehicle, \$5/out of state vehicle payable at honor box. Email claudia.padilla@maryland.gov with questions.





Isabella, the great horned owl, enjoys the snow at the Aviary in Cunningham Falls State Park (CFSP)

Clearing snow around the aviary and the Visitor's Center at CFSP 2/2025



Adults and children enjoy The First Day Open House at CFSP. CFA helped to sponsor this event with a grant from Wegman's.



News from Catoctin Mountain Park

By Phil Greenwalt, Chief of Interpretation and Education



The mention of February recalls various thoughts. Valentine’s Day for some. Birthdays of United States presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Although neither of those two presidents ever set foot in Catoctin Mountain Park, a multitude of other presidents from Franklin Delano Roosevelt on have. That is the connection between the park and the chief executive of the country.

The connection between Valentine’s Day and the park, well that comes from what park rangers do every day. Share the love of nature and facilitating positive experiences. This is reflected this month in our educational programs, led by education specialist Carrie Andresen-Strawn. Recently, she gave a program to 5th through 7th graders from Green Acres Middle School. The responses show the budding appreciation these students—and future park rangers possibly—now have for their national parks and outdoors.

“Thank you for teaching us about Catoctin Mountain Park”

“I didn’t know Catoctin Mountain Park was so diverse.”

“Thank you for teaching me about the park you watch over.”

And best for last:

“I loved your talk, It was my fave.”

As February concludes, we hope you find or rekindle that love of nature and your national parks. If needed, come visit, and we can help foster that!

In closing, make sure you follow us on social media and the website for any updates about how to connect and learn more about your national park.

Barbara Rue Shellenberger was a long-time cabin camp host at Misty Mount in Catoctin Mountain Park. Condolences to her family and friends. You can view her memorial using the link below. [Barbara Rue Shellenberger, \(1935 - 2025\) - ForeverMissed.com Online Memorials](#)

Free to Fourth Graders! Submitted by Judy Thompson

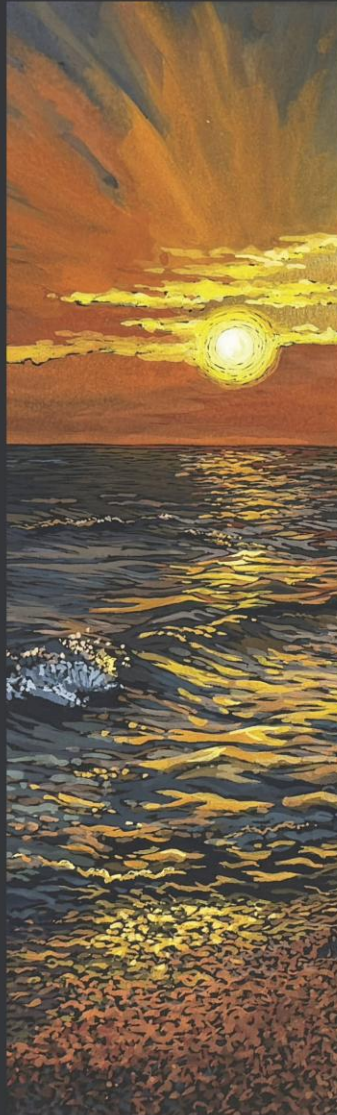
4th graders can obtain a free pass for public federal lands that includes National Parks! An entire carload is covered for park entry at drive-in parks, which can be as high as \$35 per entry. If per person entrance fees are charged, up to 3 adults and all children under 16 can be admitted for free.

The current pass is valid for 1 year ending 8/31/2025.

[every-kid-outdoors-program-provides-fourth-grade-students-with-free-entrance-to-public-lands.htm](#)

Don't miss this exhibit by CFA supporter, Kesra Hoffman.

Wonderment



Kesra Hoffman
March 2025

Reception: Sat. March 1, 4-8pm

Artist Talk: Sat. March 15, 2-3pm



437 North Market St., Frederick, MD 21701 nomagalleryfrederick.com

Gallery Hours: Fri. & Sat. 12-8pm, Sun. 12-4pm



Coming Soon

In early April part of the CFA Artist in Residence collection will be exhibited at the Visitor’s Center in Cunningham Falls State Park (CFSP). The Visitor’s Center is beside the CFSP Aviary. So stop by in May when the Visitor’s Center opens and see the AIR art then walk next door and visit Isabella the Great Horned Owl and her companions.

Join or Renew your Membership to CFA

We’d love to have you join us in our mission to protect the Catoctin Mountain forest. Your support would be a great benefit to us and the forest. To join CFA or renew your membership, please send the membership application form and a check made out to Catoctin Forest Alliance with the notation “Membership” to the address below. The yearly membership dues are \$20 per person or \$30 per couple

You can also join online at <http://www.catoctinforestalliance.org/index.php/join>.

Kathy Byrne *New members will receive a CFA patch*
CFA Treasurer
123 Ironmaster Dr.
Thurmont, MD 21788

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email address: _____

Committee Interest

Strategic Planning ____ Membership ____ Conservation/Education ____
Fundraising ____ Artist in Residence ____ Marketing/Publicity ____
Information Technology ____ Finance ____

Visit our website at www.catoctinforestalliance.org