

## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are the “stories” that convey the purpose and significance of the park. Identification of interpretive themes are part of a park’s basic foundation document, which provides the basis for interpretive and education programs at Catoctin Mountain Park. These themes were identified in the long-range interpretive plan for the park (July 2008) and revised for consistency with the significance statements drafted at the foundation document workshop.

The following interpretive themes have been developed for Catoctin Mountain Park:

### Interpretive Theme 1: People – Life on the Mountain

Basic skills once used for survival introduce park visitors to traditional mountain occupations.

#### Subthemes

- Rhyolite speaks of American Indian tool making and the idea of neutral territory for mutual benefit.
- Cellar holes, building foundations, and stone fences are evidence of farms that once dotted the landscape.
- The blacksmith shop in Round Meadow demonstrates the role of the smithy in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- Restructuring the land into a recreation area provides visitors with an opportunity for healthy recreation.
- Availability of a camp designed for persons with disabilities allows every visitor the benefit of outdoor activities.



### Interpretive Theme 2: Fun – Making Memories

People from all generations and all walks of life discover opportunities for memorable experiences in Catoctin Mountain Park.

#### Subthemes

- Visitors can experience the thrill of discovery and a sense of adventure through a variety of resource-compatible recreational opportunities.
- Visitors seeking personal reflection, serenity, solitude, fitness, and renewal will find many opportunities at Catoctin Mountain Park.
- Recreational activities change with the seasons, from identifying spring wildflowers, to fishing in the summer, to “leaf peeping” in the fall, to skiing in a winter wonderland.
- Recreation provides visitors with opportunities for social and family interactions.
- Recreational activities may be undertaken individually or with others; they may be planned or spontaneous, and they may be passive or active.

Above: Totem circa 1957. NPS photo

### Interpretive Theme 3: Renewal – Second Chances

Catoctin Mountain Park dynamically demonstrates the regeneration of disturbed lands.

#### Subthemes

- Catoctin Mountain Park is an evolving example of resource stewardship where interactions between natural resources and local cultures have shifted from subsistence to sustainability.
- Continued regeneration of disturbed lands is supported by resource protection, monitoring, and research.
- Catoctin Mountain Park is an outdoor classroom revealing relationships between nature and people.
- Increasing numbers of nonnative plant species, wildlife population imbalances, and human infringement issues continually demonstrate nature's reaction to external forces.



### Interpretive Theme 4: Renewal – Evolution and Recent History

Catoctin Mountain Park represents the legacy of regrowth and the ongoing values of natural stewardship.

#### Subthemes

- Catoctin Mountain Park is a place where WPA, Civilian Conservation Corps, Job Corps, and Youth Conservation Corps enrollees learned basic job skills while participating in projects contributing to the renewal of the forest environment.
- The legacy of the Recreational Demonstration Area at Catoctin Mountain Park led to the ongoing operation of cabin camps, such as Camp Greentop, and the establishment of the Presidential Retreat.



Top Right: Vintage park sign. NPS photo

Above: Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees building park roads in the 1940s. NPS photo