

Cunningham Falls State Park

eNEWS

Fall/ Winter 2010



Manager's Message

Winter and Fall are a great time to reflect on the past and plan for the future. Often we are so busy with our day to day lives that we miss opportunities to serve others, do activities that give us a deeper sense of fulfillment, or make new connections within our community. Volunteering creates that opportunity to serve not only ourselves but also others, our community, the environment, and ultimately the world at large. Volunteers are a critical aspect to the daily operation of both Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks. Simply, some of our services offered to the public could not be offered without the manpower and funding given by volunteers. Whether you desire to serve as a camp host, member of a trail maintenance crew, as a volunteer ranger, to help out at a special event, or as a supportive member and advocate of our Friends of Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks, there's a role tailored to your time and talents. You might even have a skill that we didn't know we needed until you took the initiative to share it with us! If you would like to gain new experiences, make new friends, or just get outside please go to our website at www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/cunningham.asp to view current volunteer opportunities and to request an application. Your contribution is priceless.

~ Mark Maas

Captain Mark Maas became the new Manager of Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks in July 2010. He was the Assistant Manager of both parks for the past nine years. Captain Maas is an avid firearms instructor and expert pancake flipper. Come see him in action at the Annual Maple Syrup Demonstration on the 2nd and 3rd weekends of March 2011. He and his wife, Gayle, are proud parents of a daughter and three feisty Chihuahuas.

Volunteers remove invasive species.



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www.dnr.maryland.gov

Cunningham Falls State Park



Spring 2010

eNEWS

Address
Cunningham Falls State Park
14039 Catocin Hollow Road
Thurmont, Maryland 21788

Phone
301-271-7574

Website
www.dnr.maryland.gov

Reservations
1-888-432-CAMP

General Information
1-800-830-3974

Park Watch
1-800-825-PARK

TTY Users
Call via the MD Relay

Is There Hope for Hemlocks?

If you've been to Cunningham Falls in recent years, you might remember seeing many large, beautiful, majestic... *stumps*. Not too many years ago, Eastern Hemlock trees were abundant throughout the park. They added splendor to the landscape and shade for the stream valley—helping to keep the water cool, filtering out sediment, and absorbing nutrient run off. In recent years, however, hemlocks have suffered serious decline due to a tiny insect called the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA).

Native to Asia, the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (*Adelges tsugae*) is a small, aphid-like insect that threatens to destroy the Eastern Hemlock. HWA was first reported in the Eastern United States in 1951 near Richmond, Virginia. By 2005, this forest pest was found in portions of 16 States from Maine to Georgia, where infestations covered about half of the range of hemlock. Areas of extensive tree mortality and decline are found throughout the infested area. Hemlock decline and mortality generally occur within 4 to 10 years of infestation.

The hemlock woolly adelgid is tiny, less than 1/16-inch long, and varies from dark reddish-brown to purplish-black in color. As it matures, it produces a covering of wool-like wax filaments to protect itself and its eggs from natural enemies and prevent them from drying out. This “wool” (ovisac) is most easily seen when the adelgid is mature and laying eggs. Ovisacs can be readily observed from late fall to early summer on the underside of the outermost branch tips of hemlock trees.



What's Being Done about HWA at Cunningham Falls

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is currently planning a two-fold approach to address the HWA problem at Cunningham Falls State Park. The first part of the proposed plan will involve the use of chemical control. Hemlocks exhibiting a viable, live crown will be treated

with insecticides. Insecticides have proven effective on large trees when applied to the soil around the base of the tree or injected directly into the stem. However, this type of chemical control is limited to individual tree treatments in readily accessible, non-environmentally sensitive areas. In forests where large numbers of hemlocks are infested, insecticide treatment is generally not feasible. Chemical treatments will offer, at best, a short-term solution. The second part of the proposed plan will involve a more long-term approach. In order to help re-establish an evergreen canopy in areas severely impacted by HWA, a mixture of alternative evergreens and hardwood trees will be planted to replace the dead and dying hemlocks. These replacement trees will help provide shade for Hunting Creek, which will help keep the stream's temperature to a level that will continue to support trout and other important aquatic life.

For more information about HWA, visit www.mda.state.md.us.

Chuck Harris



Mommy & Me... & an Owl Makes Three!

Cunningham Falls will be hosting an exciting program called “**Mommy & Me & an Owl Makes Three!**” The program is designed for Moms and Dads with children ages 5 and under. “My goal is to give parents an opportunity to bond with their kids, while enjoying some fun nature-based activities,” says Ranger Jen Miller, who developed the program. Activities will include stories, songs, puppets, games, and crafts—each with a nature theme, which will change monthly. “The program will also feature a visit from a very special friend,” adds Ranger Miller.

The program will take place on the first Wednesday of every month at the Manor Area Visitor Center at Cunningham Falls State Park. The Manor Area is directly across Rt. 15 from the Catocin Zoo. Each program will begin at

10 am and will last around 30 to 45 minutes. There will be a \$1.00 fee to cover craft supplies, and donations are always welcome.

Jen Miller

Winter Scavenger Hunt

Grab your camera and see if you can photograph all 10 things listed below at Cunningham Falls State Park!

1. A rock that's bigger than you.
2. A tree that still has green foliage.
3. Something that smells good.
4. A bridge.
5. Something red.
6. An animal's home.
7. Something squishy.
8. An animal track.
9. A leaf.
10. Something old.



www.dnr.maryland.gov

Camping at Cunningham Falls

Camper Cabins: A Cozier Way to Camp

Does the thought of camping bring to mind hardship? Does it make you think of sleepless nights, missing tent poles, or maybe a soggy sleeping bag? If so, maybe it's time to try out a camper cabin!

"Camping doesn't have to mean 'roughing it' anymore," according to Mark Maas, Park Manager of Cunningham Falls State Park. "A camper cabin allows you to combine all of the fun of camping with some of the comforts of home."

Cunningham Falls has 13 camper cabins available for rent at the William Houck Area Campground. Camper cabins are small rustic cabins with beds for four to six people. The cabins have electrical outlets, lights, and lockable doors and windows. Each cabin also has a lovely front porch with a porch light. Grills are provided for outdoor cooking, and restroom facilities are located nearby.



"Whether you're a first-time camper or just looking for a convenient getaway, camper cabins can be a great way to enjoy the outdoors," says Maas. Camping will be available at the William Houck Area until October 24th and until December 13th in the Manor Area of Cunningham Falls for the 2010 season. For more information about camper cabins, call Cunningham Falls at 301-271-7574 or visit www.dnr.maryland.gov.

Make YOUR Reservation
Online Today!
www.dnr.maryland.gov
Or Call 1-888-432-CAMP



Deer, Do Be Careful!

The change of the season brings numerous opportunities. Fall provides perfect weather for hikes to see spectacular leaf color. The summer's harvest is in and leaves time for a multitude of cozy festivals to pop up throughout the countryside. Fall also marks the beginning of deer hunting season in Maryland.

Many outdoorsmen and women plan, prepare, and dream all year long for the start of white-tailed deer season. Cunningham Falls State Park offers 3,500 acres available to bow, muzzleloader, shotgun, and rifle hunting for furbearers, forest game, and deer with proper licensing.

Safety should be the top priority for a hunter as they prepare to go into the woods and while they are engaged in sport. According to Natural Resources Police Officer Richard Doney, the #1 top safety hazard are falls taken by hunters from tree stands. Officer Doney is a hunter safety instructor for Washington County and highly recommends using a safety harness when in a tree stand. The use of a tree stand is allowed during hunting season at Cunningham Falls as long as it is not permanently attached to the tree and is removed daily.

Hunting season begins for bow hunters on September 15, 2010. Special accommodations are made to assist mobility-impaired hunters. Reservations for handicapped hunting must be made with the park's administration office at (301)271-7574. Please go to www.dnr.maryland.gov for more hunting information.

Help **STOP** the Beetle!

Maryland State Parks need your help to stop the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer. The Emerald Ash Borer is a dangerous beetle from Asia that attacks and kills Ash trees. The beetle has killed millions of trees in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. Unfortunately, it has been found in Prince George's and Charles Counties in Maryland.



Emerald Ash Borer What **YOU** Can Do...

The Emerald Ash Borer is spread when people unknowingly transport pest-infested firewood to other locations. You can help stop the spread of this invasive insect by not bringing firewood with you when you camp.

**Don't pack firewood...
Buy it where you'll burn it!**

Firewood is available for sale at the Camp Store at Cunningham Falls. For more information, visit www.emeraldashborer.info or call 410-841-5920.



www.dnr.maryland.gov

EVENTS CALENDAR

Fall/ Winter 2010

Schedule of Events for Cunningham Falls/ Gambrill State Parks

October 16th—Spirits of the Furnace

Starting at 7pm have a spirit filled adventure in the Manor Area of Cunningham Falls State Park. Come on a guided night hike along the Catoctin Furnace Trail that will make frequent stops to hear tales and historical accounts told by costumed characters of days gone by. What is true and what is just plain ghostly? You decided. Enjoy warm apple cider and roast marshmallows over an open fire to warm up and learn more about the history of the Catoctin Mountains and the Catoctin Iron Furnace. Tickets must be purchased in advance for this event as it has been very popular in the past. \$5 per person, children under age 10 years are free. Stop by the Manor Area Visitors Center to purchase tickets or call (301)271-7574 or email jmiller@dnr.state.md.us for more information. **Please wear sturdy shoes for hiking and bring a flashlight.**

October 24th– Last night to camp at the William Houck Campground

Camping available at the Manor Campground on a first come, first serve basis until mid-December 2010.

December 11th - Museums by Candlelight

Visit the Visitors Center in the Manor Area of Cunningham Falls from 12 pm to 5 pm to experience how Christmas may have been celebrated by the immigrant families that worked in the Catoctin Iron Furnace. Enjoy warm treats and make a craft to take home.

First Wednesday of Every Month— Mommy & Me & an Owl Makes Three

Moms and Dads can bond with their young for a 30 to 45 minute program filled with nature-themed stories, songs, puppets, crafts, and a visit from a very special friend. Starts at 10 am at the Visitors Center in the Manor Area and a fee of \$1 to cover craft supplies.

Scales & Tales -

Scales & Tales was started in the 1980's as a way to help permanently injured birds of prey and reptiles and to teach the principles of stewardship. It remains the most popular program offered by the Maryland Park Service. Scales & Tales programs are available year round and must be scheduled in advance. Please contact administration office at (301) 271-7574 or email jmiller@dnr.state.md.us for program information.



Raccoons shouldn't be the only creatures in the park having winter fun exploring ! Make sure to come to Cunningham Falls and Gambrill State Parks to listen to the quiet a new snowfall brings to the forest, snowshoe down a trail, make a snow angel, go sledding down a hill, or follow animal tracks. What can it be—a rabbit, a fox? Get outside and find out! An adventure awaits you here!